

Welcome to Paul's Planning Proclamations, where you will find the latest commentary on matters planning, political or just plain perturbing.

**Transport: In Competition with the Gold Coast**

Don't know about you, but thoughts of a 10-lane highway to and through the Sunshine Coast gives me the horrors. Sure we might need better road infrastructure on the Sunshine Coast, but why the need to compete with the Gold Coast and go two better?!

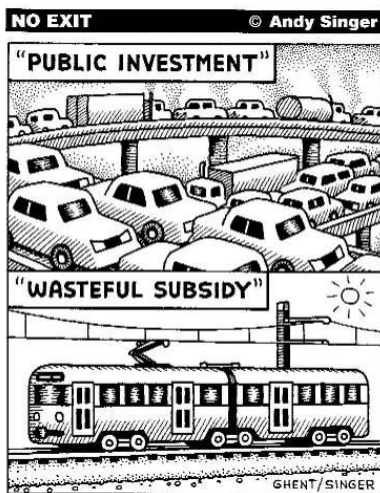
Has the Pacific Motorway solved the Gold Coast's traffic problems? Has it reduced private vehicle travel to Brisbane? Has it resulted in a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions? Has it provided an acceptable means of transport for young people and our rapidly increasing numbers of older people? The answer to all these questions is no. Sure the short-term answer to some might be yes, but if we look beyond the end our noses to the medium-long term, the Pacific Motorway will just worsen each of these problems.

So it was heartening this week to see SUNROC in action with the three Mayors of the Sunshine Coast coming out strongly in favour of examining real solutions for transport across the Sunshine Coast. Mayor Don Aldous said *We don't want 10 lanes of concrete running through the middle of the Sunshine Coast – particularly when the consultants have already identified that even with that, the motorway won't be able to cope at 2032.* For mine, we don't want 10-lanes to Brisbane either and that too has been muted.

The Mayors have called for an integrated system with rail and bus. Naturally this will need to be supplemented with road infrastructure upgrading, but currently the package is focused on roads and roads alone.

It will be interesting to see how this call from the Mayors is considered by both the State and Federal Governments. In the USA, where private motor vehicle transport reigns supreme with its attendant freeways strangling many of its cities, this is how Andy Singer of CarBusters sees investment in public and private transport infrastructure:

Is it really any different here? The first image highlights a cluttered vehicle environment where millions of dollars are spent on providing 'parking' spaces for cars with their motors running. The second caption highlights the way in which we tend to regard expenditure on public transport infrastructure.



Successive governments of both persuasions have tended to view capital investment on public transport infrastructure in exactly this way. We crow about being the low tax State and this might have been a comfortable position to have in the 70s. In the 00s, we can no longer take comfort from our low taxes, they are not delivering the infrastructure that is necessary to service our growing population and to ensure that the character of the coast is retained. Worse though, the low tax barrier makes it even more difficult to persuade our political leaders to take long-term decisions on investment in public transport.

So congratulations to the Mayors of the Sunshine Coast on asking the hard questions. We will wait with interest to see if we get some meaningful answers.