



TOOWOOMBA
REGION

Toowoomba Region Sustainable Transport Strategy

Updated April 2022





Message from the Mayor

The Toowoomba Region is a great place to live, work and visit, offering an unparalleled opportunity to enjoy a mix of city, town and rural lifestyles.

Toowoomba Regional Council is committed to supporting the future growth of our Region, while retaining diverse lifestyle options that offer residents an appealing choice.

Our refreshed Toowoomba Region Sustainable Transport Strategy (Strategy) assesses the social, economic and environmental needs of our community in a comprehensive plan for the future. This means meeting the transport needs of our community and visitors, while ensuring future development is sustainable and protects our natural environment.

The Strategy has been developed to ensure we plan responsibly for the future growth of our Region. Population forecasts indicate our Region could be home to a further 55,000 people over the next 30 years. By planning now for this future growth, we will ensure future generations enjoy all the lifestyle benefits that make the Region an attractive destination.

The predicted growth in our Region makes providing sustainable transport options more important than ever, with the goal of reducing reliance on private vehicles.

Council has a responsibility to guide policy and planning in the provision of infrastructure and services to provide more sustainable, healthy and affordable transport choices for residents and visitors.

The mix of city, town and rural communities across our Region highlights the importance of providing transport that is equitable, accessible and inclusive. A well-connected Region supports a well-connected community, with equal access to facilities and services for all residents. This document supports this vision of inclusivity with key strategies and actions.

The 2014 Strategy guided us to achieve some great accomplishments, including the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing, which was funded by the Commonwealth and Queensland governments. This refreshed Strategy continues to support future investment in transport infrastructure developments and addresses emerging transport opportunities, including E-mobility and electric vehicles.

The past few years have taught us the importance of being responsive to an ever-changing natural and economic environment. The effects of the global pandemic, along with extreme weather events experienced in our Region, will continue to be felt by our community. This document sets out a strategic direction to prepare for uncertainty and to adapt to external impacts responsively.

Cross-government relationships will be essential in delivering the vision and objectives of the Strategy and Council will continue to build on the good working relationships and partnerships with the State and Commonwealth governments, business, industry and the community.

I extend my thanks and appreciation to all who have been involved in the creation of the Strategy, including the community for their feedback and contributions.

I am excited to follow the progress of the Strategy's objectives, 'People, Place and Prosperity', which will make the Toowoomba Region an even better place to live, work, play and visit.

Cr Paul Antonio

Mayor, Toowoomba Regional Council

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TOOWOOMBA REGION

1

8% of car trips are less than **1km** - which is also a comfortable 15 minute walk.



5km

1km

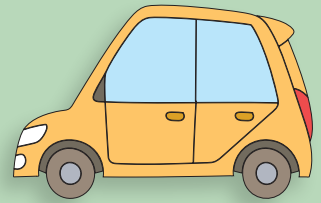


2

A further **62%** of all car trips are between **1km** and **5km**, a comfortable 20 minute cycle.

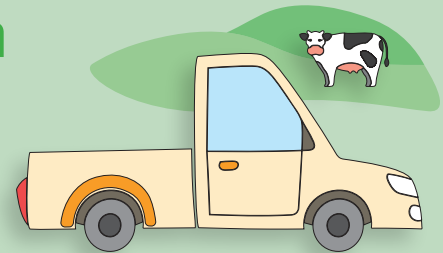
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92% of trips are currently made by car.



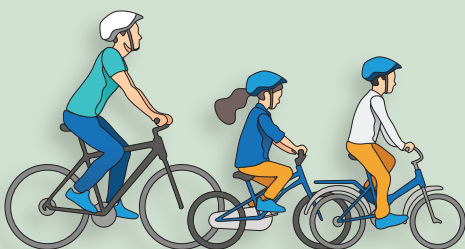
4

The region has **9,500km** of road network to manage, with majority in rural areas.



5

Over **680km** of pathways and **56km** of on-road bicycle lanes in the region.



CLEARANCE
5.0 m



1

Introduction

Introduction

Context

Our region covers 12,973 square kilometres and includes the main urban centre of Toowoomba City, regional centres of Oakey, Pittsworth, Millmerran, Highfields, Crows Nest, Clifton, Greenmount and Yarraman, along with several other smaller townships.

Combining the best of both city and rural township lifestyles, our region lies at the centre of one of Australia's most productive and diverse agricultural production areas. Over its storied history, the region has transformed from this agricultural base into a diverse and strong economy. We have emerged as a significant freight hub for road, rail and air and continue to be a desirable place for work and business.

Our scenic landscapes and regional greenspaces are key to our local character, offering an enviable lifestyle with good connections to major capital cities and beyond. The region is an inclusive and environmentally diverse one that embraces its rich traditions and bold ambitions.

The Strategy

Sustainable transport will be essential to maintain the economic strength of our region, the health and wellbeing of our residents and the natural environment. Our transport system will need to balance the needs of a thriving region while maintaining its value as an attractive, healthy and affordable place to live.

Sustainable transport occurs where the social, economic and environmental needs of the community are met by the transport system now and into the future.

The Sustainable Transport Strategy (the 'Strategy') is our guide for transport policy, transport planning and future transport investment to ensure transport supports the natural and built environment into the future while allowing economic growth and maintaining social services. Moving to a sustainable future will enable us to adequately respond and be more

Figure 1-1 Locality Map



resilient to future challenges, such as climate change and natural disasters, and support stronger local and regional connectivity.

Sustainability is identified as a key pillar of our Corporate Plan and for this Strategy. It underpins all strategic and operational decision making while being supported by our strategic goals for People, Place and Prosperity. These goals ensure due consideration of environmental, social, cultural and governance factors to meet the needs of the region while treasuring those things that make living here special.

The Strategy Refresh

This is a refresh of our 2014 Strategy and has been informed by a peer review in 2020, previous detailed technical investigations and relevant technical reports. The refresh builds on the objectives outlined in the 2014 Strategy and ensures the transport system is fully integrated with the principles contained within our Corporate Plan and other strategic planning documents for the

Toowoomba Region. It also recognises and responds to current and emerging challenges and opportunities.

This refresh of the 2014 Strategy has been updated to:

- leverage current and future investment in major transport projects in and around Toowoomba City
- respond to the future rapid pace of growth of the region
- be prepared for potential impacts from climate change, disasters, and uncertainty
- frame the strategic direction for transport policy, actions and implementation that will support a more connected Toowoomba Region both locally and regionally.

Throughout this document we will clearly set out our policy directions and actions around:

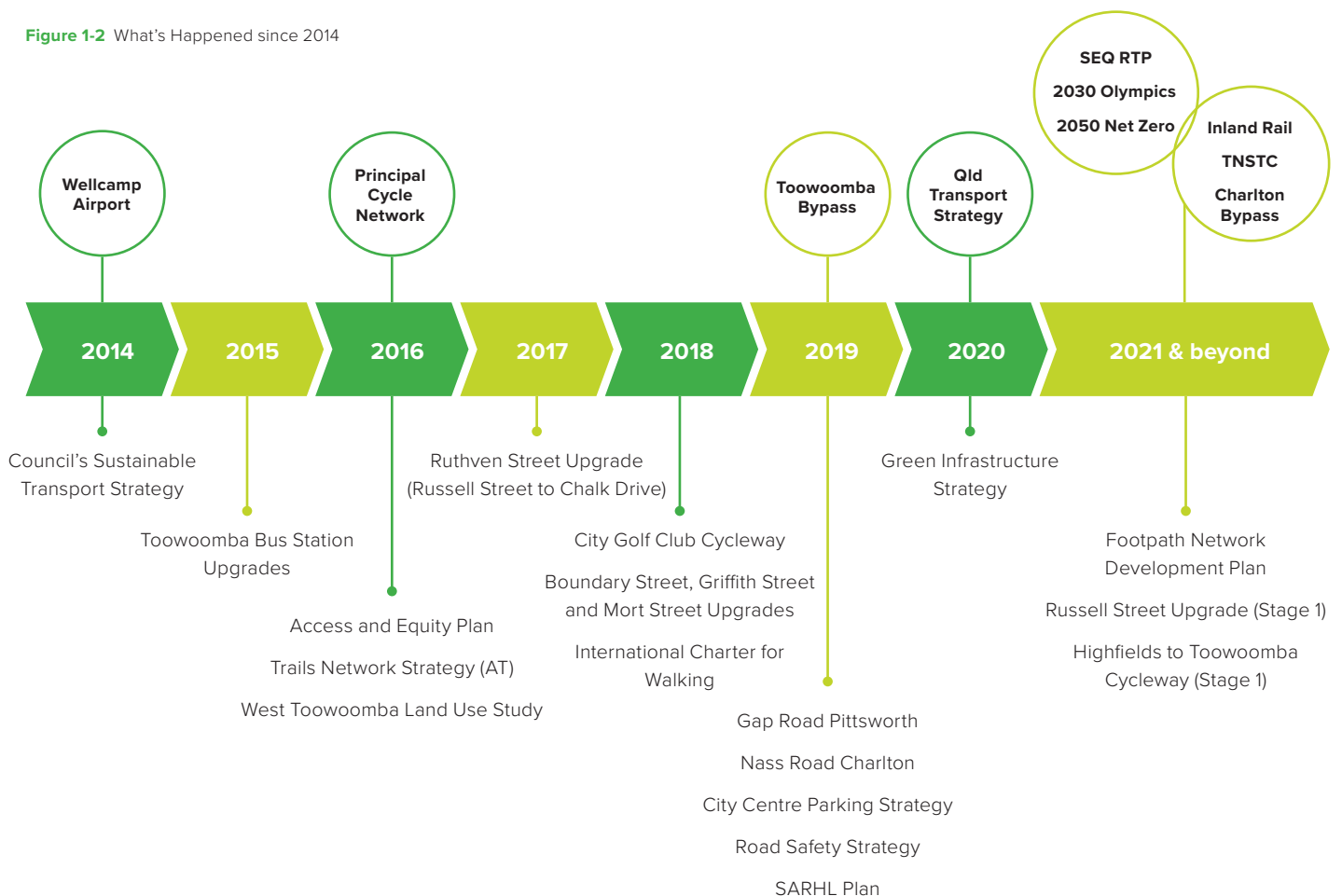
- the future challenges that our transport system needs to address and the opportunities to be leveraged (Chapter 2)

- the vision and objectives that guide the Strategy in achieving the outcomes set for improved sustainability of our transport system (Chapter 3)
- strategies to achieve the vision for the future (Chapter 4)
- setting out the framework for future implementation and investment to support the strategic direction (Chapter 5).

What's Happened since 2014

The Toowoomba Regional Council, in partnership with both the State and Federal Government, have delivered many transport projects and policy changes consistent with the objectives of the 2014 Strategy. Figure 1-2 highlights a selection of some of the key outcomes.

Figure 1-2 What's Happened since 2014



Integration with Current Planning

This Strategy has been developed within a framework of federal, state, and regional planning. This ensures that the Strategy aligns with policies and strategies across each level of Government and provides a whole-of-government approach to sustainability. Our implementation of the Strategy will be integrated with other strategies and plans in the region and state, in line with the policy context in Figure 1-3.

The Strategy will be periodically reviewed to ensure it remains up to date as policies and planning progress across each level of government.

Community Consultation

Community and stakeholder engagement was integral to the development of the 2014 Strategy. Community engagement was undertaken to both inform the public and seek local knowledge and insight into the issues and potential management strategies. This refresh has been guided by input from key stakeholders including representatives from business and industry bodies, public transport and active transport interest groups, disability groups and state government.

Figure 1-3 Policy Context



2

Future Challenges and Opportunities

Future Challenges and Opportunities

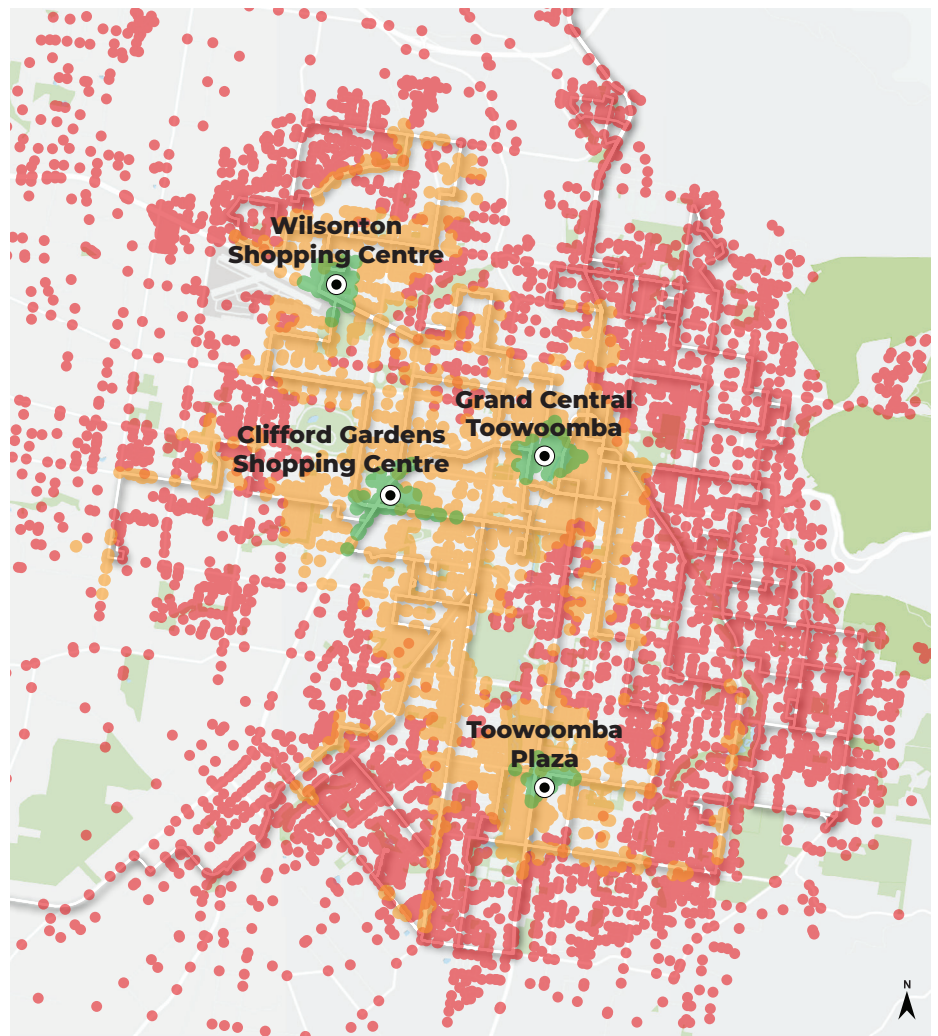
Current and emerging challenges and opportunities will impact the role and function of our region's transport infrastructure and policy settings. We need to position ourselves strategically to be able to take advantage of these opportunities, while having the necessary infrastructure and services in place to respond to the emerging challenges.

Enhanced Accessibility and Inclusivity

People choose to live in our region because of its well-designed urban areas with readily available facilities and services that are easy and safe to access. As the region continues to grow, it is vital that equitable and inclusive access to essential services is enhanced, particularly for towns and communities outside of the city of Toowoomba, persons with disabilities and lower income households.

A prime example of transport inequality is the disparity in travel times between public transport and private vehicles to access key destinations, such as major shopping destinations as shown in Figure 2-1.

Figure 2-1 Comparison of public transport and private vehicle to access major shopping.



- LEGEND**
- Travel time difference
 - Car faster > 15 mins
 - Car faster 5 - 15 mins
 - Comparative (+/- 5 mins)
 - ⊙ Major shopping centres
 - Public transport routes

Accessibility is increasingly important due to the ageing population of our region, with the proportion of residents aged over 55 years increasing by a higher percentage (2.7%) than SEQ (1.8%) and Queensland (2.3%) from 2011 to 2016¹. This ageing population will require investment in a range of alternative accessible and equitable transport options to meet the needs of less mobile members of our community.

Regional Connectivity

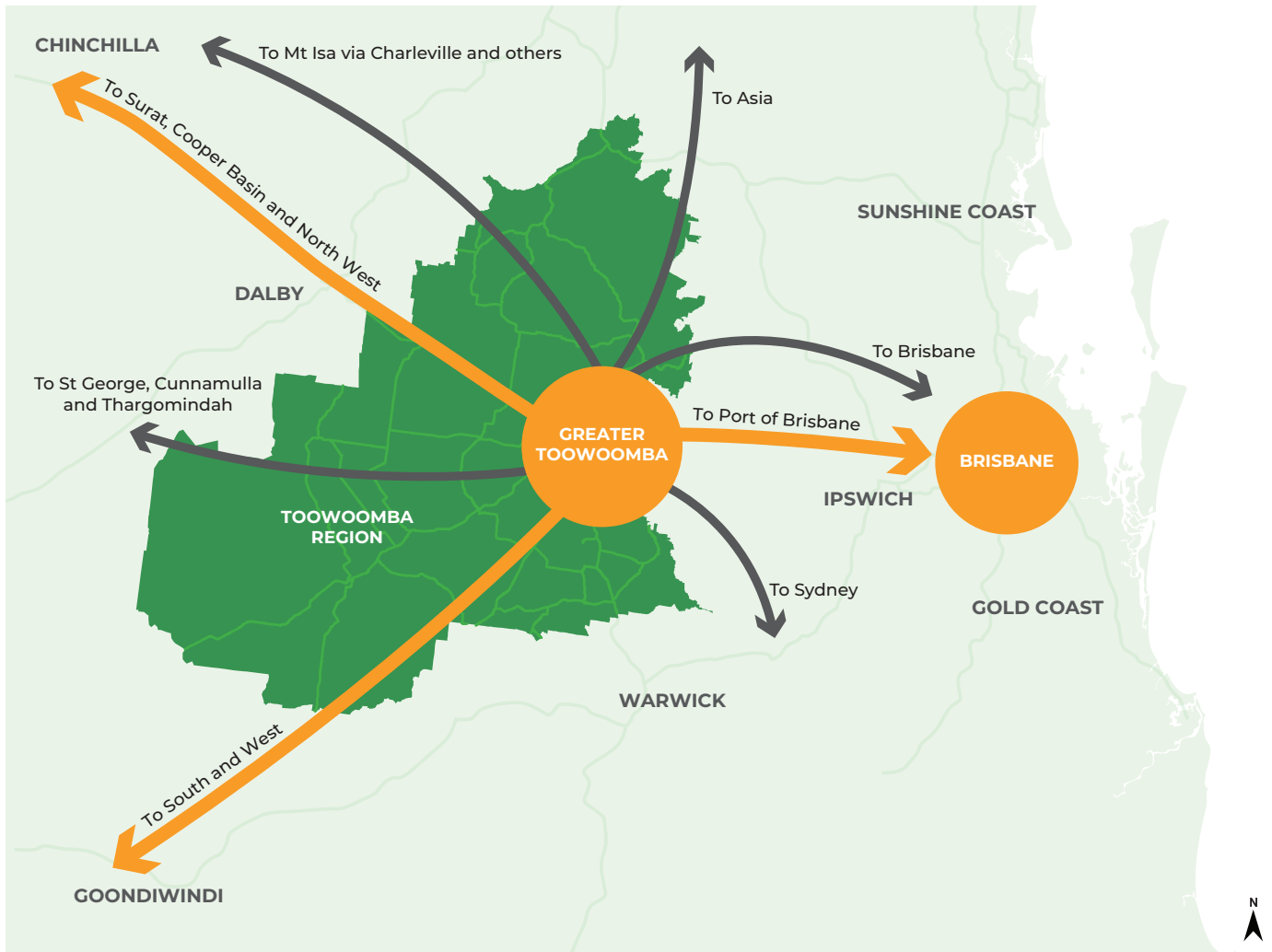
The Toowoomba Region provides a gateway between the rapidly growing South East Queensland Region and the Surat Basin energy resource area to the west. As highlighted in Figure 2-2, Toowoomba City is strategically located at the intersection of three major highways, which means 85% of Australia’s population can be reached within 24 hours². The construction of the Toowoomba Wellcamp Airport has also further opened our region to export markets in South East Asia and beyond.

Strengthening the economic and social relationship with South East Queensland is required to ensure the continued growth and investment within our region. A key opportunity

to improve this relationship is through enhanced passenger rail connection to the major centres in South East Queensland. This is supported by the Council of Mayors SEQ, which have identified the Toowoomba to Brisbane Rail Corridor as the western leg of a Faster Rail network for SEQ³, and is consistent with the Federal Government’s *Faster Rail Plan*⁴. This connection would contribute greatly to the continued efforts to improve tourism mobility in our region.

Access to the export gateways in Brisbane (primarily the Port of Brisbane) have recently been enhanced by the delivery of the Toowoomba Bypass and will be further improved by the proposed Inland Rail project. Future investment is needed to capitalise on these high-quality connections.

Figure 2-2 Connectivity throughout the region



LEGEND

- Major freight movements
- Direct scheduled flights
- Highways

1 Profile ID <https://profile.id.com.au/>.
 2 Invest Toowoomba, 2020. Trade and Investment Queensland.
 3 SEQ People Mass Movement Study | South East Queensland (SEQ) (seqmayors.qld.gov.au) (January, 2019).
 4 Reports | National Faster Rail Agency (NFRA) (March, 2019).

Positioned for Future Growth

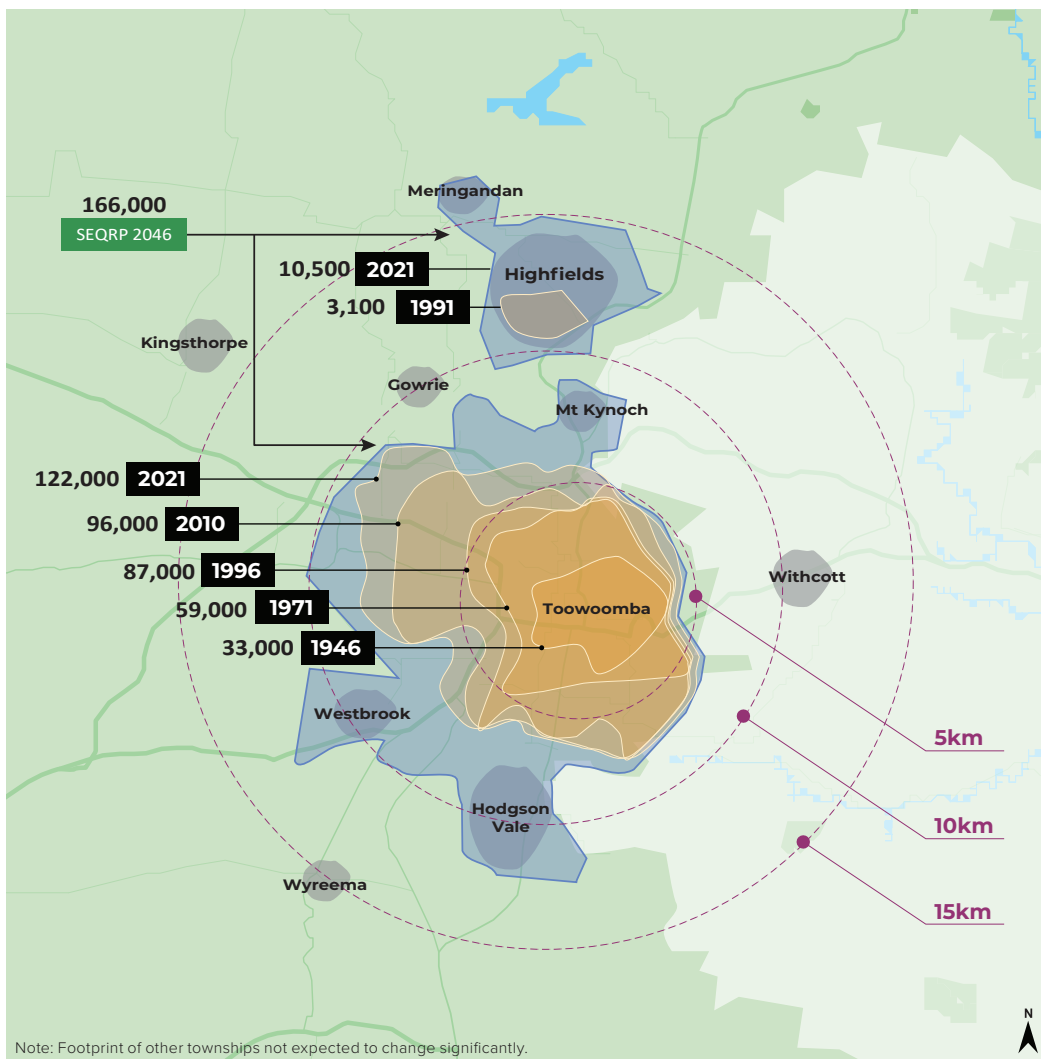
Our region will continue to grow due to its role as an agricultural hub, pivotal freight and logistics centre and evolving knowledge centre. The number of residents in the region has increased by 3.8% from 2016 to 2021, with forecast growth of an additional 33,000 people (20%) by 2041⁵. Much of this growth will be concentrated in Toowoomba City, as illustrated in Figure 2-3. This population growth will be supported by additional jobs in the region with forecasts of up to 30,000 more jobs by 2041 (37% growth).

Growth in population and employment will need to be supported by investment in the transport network, with infrastructure focused on areas that will provide sustainable growth and does not threaten the regions environment and liveability.

With our residents dispersed between Toowoomba City and several smaller centres and rural communities, one of our key challenges is to provide transport infrastructure and services that are equitable, accessible and inclusive because “one size does not fit all”.

As the population grows, it is important to also encourage greater physical activity through targeted investment that will benefit the health of residents, including Green and Open Space and strong active transport networks that connect centres and destinations.

Figure 2-3 Historic and Expected Population Growth around Toowoomba City.



5 Local Government Areas Population projections: Regions | Queensland Government Statistician's Office (qgso.qld.gov.au).

Travel Behaviour Change

There is a very strong reliance on the private motor vehicle within the Toowoomba Region, with Figure 2-4 highlighting the continuing growth in car ownership. This car dependency is a common issue for regions with a dispersed population anchored by a regional centre.

Our increasing car dependency has seen a decline in public transport mode share in the region, as shown in Figure 2-5. On a positive note, there has been growth in mode share for both walking and cycling trips, which is likely due to the increased investment being made in active transport links and use of Green Corridors throughout the region.

Increasing travel choice, that is not dependent on the private vehicle, will enable changes in travel behaviour that are more sustainable in the long term. Continued investment across the public transport and active transport networks will be required so an alternative to the private vehicle can be a real choice.

Alignment between the Toowoomba Region, State and Federal Plans

Developing a one network approach through alignment with recent Federal, State and Toowoomba Region plans and policies is important to ensure the future sustainability of our transport system. There are many competing priorities for each of the three levels of Government with these priorities evolving as the local, national and international context changes. Developing a pipeline of projects that align across each level of government will enable our region to leverage the best outcomes for our community and result in more rapid implementation of projects or policies.

As an example, the State Government released a new Regional Transport Plan for the Darling Downs and SEQ. Actions identified within the Darling Downs Regional Transport Plan have several opportunities that can be advanced through this Strategy, such as advancing investigations into multi-modal access to major freight generators, supporting cycle tourism and improving the walkability and amenity of town centres.

At a local level, alignment with strategies such as our Green Infrastructure Strategy will leverage opportunities for connectivity provided by Open Space and Green Corridors across the region to support an active and healthy lifestyle.

Leveraging Future Mobility and Technology

Future mobility is changing in response to emerging transport technologies. These technologies have the potential to dramatically influence the future of transport in the Toowoomba Region for not only personal transport but also for freight. The challenge will be how to best harness the opportunities created by these emerging technologies and modes, such as:

- Autonomous Vehicles / Connected Autonomous Vehicles – including for freight and courier / delivery vehicles
- Electrification and Hydrogen Fuel Vehicles
- Shared Mobility – including e-scooters / e-bikes, ride share
- Mobility-as-a-Service – combines multiple modes to get you to your destination via your mobile phone
- Demand Responsive Transport – pre-book shared trips
- Intelligent Transport Systems and Networks
- Smart City initiatives and technology improvement enabling trends such as tele-commuting
- New-age transport technologies – drone transport (people and freight), Hyperloop (connecting centres).

Figure 2-4 Car ownership trends in Toowoomba Region

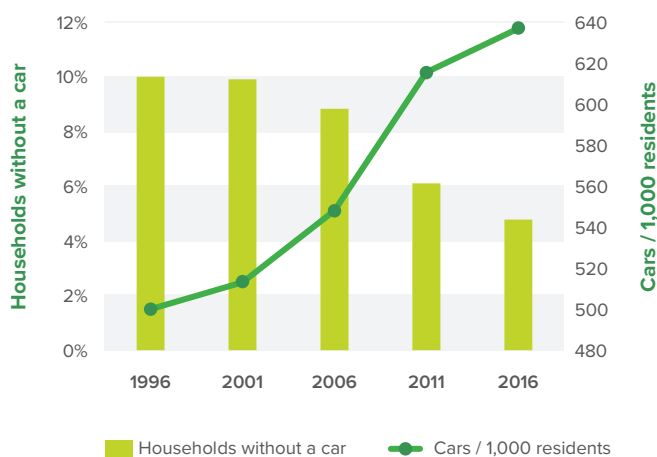
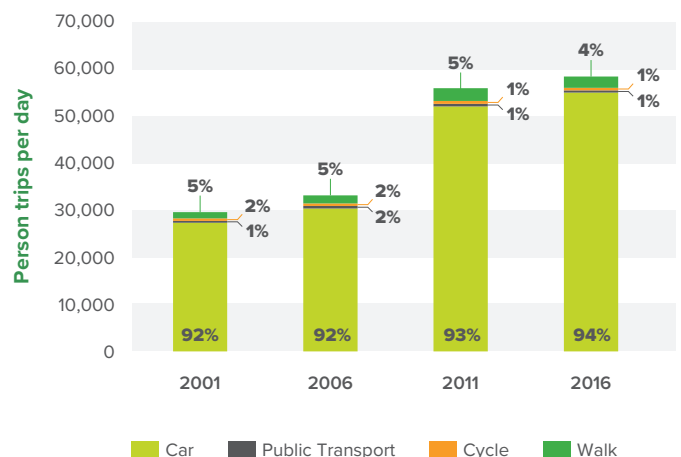


Figure 2-5 Mode share trends in Toowoomba Region



Responsive to Climate Change and Disaster Resilience

The world faces a range of impacts from climate change. We expect to continue to see these impacts through an increase in average temperatures and changes in the frequency and magnitude of weather events. These changes will impact both the natural environment and liveability of the Toowoomba Region.

Our transport system will need to be ready and resilient during and immediately after future weather events and disasters.

A significant contributor to climate change is the rise in greenhouse gas emissions, including those produced by transport. In Australia, transport is the 2nd largest emitter accounting for 18% of emissions⁶. Future planning for the region's transport network will play a key role in achieving the objective set in the Queensland Climate Transition Strategy for Net Zero emissions by 2050 and will be reflected in the Council's climate risk management strategy which is under development.

One way our community can help achieve this objective is by making sustainable travel choices such as choosing to walk or ride a bike for some trips. Choosing an active transport mode will help accelerate the transition to a more sustainable future, even faster than reliance on the use of electric vehicles, with research indicating cycling is ten times more important than electric cars for reaching net-zero emissions⁷.

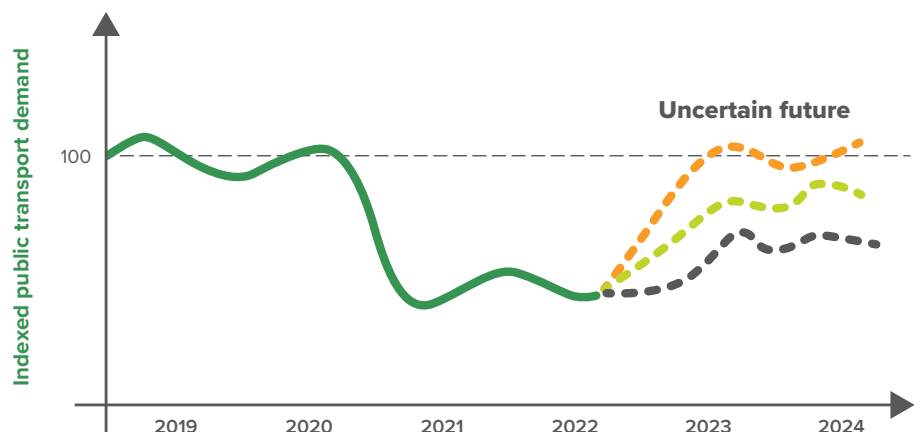
Prepared for Uncertainty

The lockdowns stemming from the coronavirus pandemic over 2020-2022 highlight the uncertain future in which we must plan the transport network. While the long-term impacts of the pandemic are unclear, there are early indications of people moving out of metropolitan centres for the coast and country, as well as an increasing trend of working from home and an increase in digitisation, including telecommuting.

These changes have reduced transport demand. In Australia, it has been found that during the pandemic 30% of the total workforce worked from home, with a third of those workers wishing to remain remote post-COVID⁸. At the same time, public transport patronage in most cities fell to 10–30% of normal levels in the initial lockdown and it is uncertain if patronage will recover to pre-COVID levels (Figure 2-6).

When considered in combination with the continued development of electric and autonomous vehicles, micro-mobility services and variability in the resource and agriculture sectors, there are a range of scenarios that could impact the role and function of our transport infrastructure and policy settings. Our region will need to be ready to adapt to change.

Figure 2-6 Indicative impacts of COVID-19 on public transport patronage



6 What's the deal with transport emissions? | Climate Council (22 December 2016).

7 Brand, C. et al. April 2021. The climate change mitigation effects of daily active travel in cities. Transportation Research Part D: Transport and Environment Volume 93 (2021).

8 Infrastructure beyond COVID-19: A national study on the impacts of the pandemic on Australia, December 2020. Infrastructure Australia.

3

Vision and Objectives

VISION



A sustainable and integrated transport system that supports liveable communities

Our vision has been developed to show the desired transport future for the Toowoomba Region.

To support the vision, we have identified key transport objectives to address the future challenges and leverage the opportunities facing our region.

These objectives have been developed in line with the themes of People, Place and Prosperity from our Corporate Plan and are underpinned by a focus on sustainability and performance.

The objectives have allowed us to develop key strategies to achieve the desired transport future for our region and importantly provides a framework for more detailed actions to be identified as part of an Implementation Plan (Section 5).

OBJECTIVES THAT SUPPORT THE SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT VISION



People

Council supports a safe, healthy and engaged region. We create opportunities for people to connect and belong. We are proud of our unique and diverse communities.

1. Deliver accessible, reliable and inclusive transport options for our community.
2. Deliver and maintain safe, connected and attractive walking and cycling networks and facilities that are useable by a broad range of people to support active and healthy lifestyles.
3. Deliver a safe and functional road network, that addresses the needs of all users and encourages the development of strong centres
4. Manage travel demand and travel behaviour to deliver a sustainable transport system.



Place

Council supports sustainable and innovative practices to conserve our valuable natural assets and rich agricultural land. Our environment is protected for future generations to enjoy.

5. Plan for transport infrastructure and services that support the efficient use of urban land, including the sensitive management of environmental and agricultural resources.
6. Respect the heritage and enhance the amenity of our urban centres.
7. Design and operate the transport system to address the impacts of climate change and minimise the impact to our natural environment.



Prosperity

Our region has a strong and diverse economy. Flourishing businesses and industries attract and retain employment opportunities. Rich traditions and bold ambitions continue to drive our region.

8. Maintain the desirability of the Toowoomba Region as a place for work, business and tourists.
9. Support the continued growth and development of Toowoomba as a major freight hub of national significance.
10. Maximise the use and performance of our existing transport network to improve whole-of-life economic, social and strong centres.



4

Strategies for the Future

Strategies for the Future

We will achieve the desired transport future through the implementation of strategies that focus on three key themes: People, Place and Prosperity.

People

At a glance:



People-first planning

Our residents will have more travel choices

Reduce reliance on the private vehicle

Minimise risk and harm to all network users

Our transport network is central to the safe movement of people. The region's active transport network, road network and public transport facilities and services allows its residents to get where they need to go and are a key part of how the region is experienced. The future planning of the transport system will focus on enhancing this experience, with people at its core.

Accessible and reliable

Transport has a key role to play in the liveability of our region, ensuring residents and visitors have access to essential services, jobs, education and recreational opportunities. We recognise the need to continually plan for and invest in the transport system to increase accessibility for our community and support social inclusion, as highlighted in our *Access and Equity Plan*.

Research shows a clear link between transport, the location of services and social inclusion, with public transport in particular providing all members of our community with the means to get to the jobs, services and social networks they need, including persons with a disability and lower income households. A lack of

public transport can leave some people within our community stranded and cut off from opportunities, with elderly people who are no longer able to drive particularly vulnerable. We will support the provision of public transport that is reliable, flexible and affordable for our residents to connect them to opportunities throughout the region, especially in regional town centres.

Accessibility is not just limited to public transport facilities and services with a holistic, balanced approach required to improve the regions transport systems. This is particularly important because of our unique geography, including a dispersed land use pattern and aging population. Our community needs an efficient and reliable network that serves all residents, including the facilitation of the future automation of transport vehicles (e.g. electric and autonomous vehicles) and investing in the active transport network.

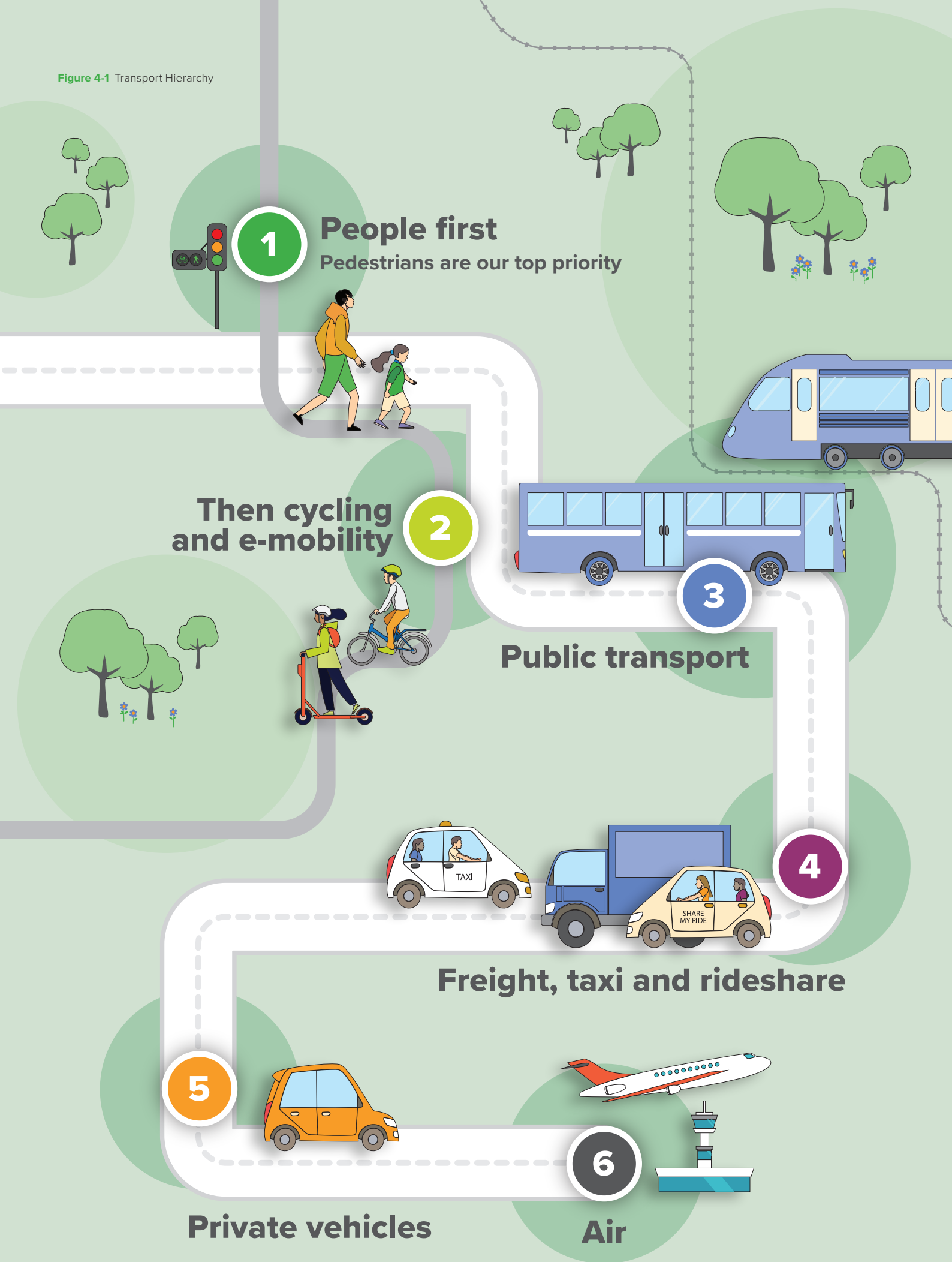
Walking and cycling

Walking and cycling is the most sustainable of all transport choices as shown in Figure 4-1. They can also be more economical for residents and help to promote an active and healthy community lifestyle.

Toowoomba City, known as the Garden City, has embraced its green spines, incorporating active transport corridors alongside the City's waterways and within its parklands to connect key land uses such as residential areas and educational institutions to the CBD.

Our wider region also has several busy urban centres with dedicated walking and cycling infrastructure, including both on-road and off-road facilities. While these facilities are less structured or formalised in the smaller centres, these areas are still pleasant for walking and cycling due to low volumes of traffic and wide reserves.

Figure 4-1 Transport Hierarchy



As a community we need to continue to provide and advocate for the provision of a more connected, safe, functional and attractive network of walking and cycling infrastructure. This includes pathways, bike lanes and trails to encourage and facilitate walking and cycling as the transport of choice for all local trips while also supporting recreation and tourism opportunities. The uptake of e-micro-mobility (e.g. electric scooters and bikes) will also be considered to maximise the positive opportunities from its recent uptake elsewhere and to ensure conflict is effectively managed between different users.

Safe and functional roads

While we continue to encourage both active and public transport use, private vehicles will remain a key mode choice for the residents of our region. We must ensure that our street, road and highway network is both functional – within the movement and place framework – and prioritises the safety of our residents.

Road crashes have a significant human and financial cost on our community, particularly on our regional road network, which has several sections with the highest per capita crash record in Queensland⁹.

In towns and urban areas, safety for pedestrians, cyclists, vehicles and other modes is critical. Our *Road Safety Strategy* outlines our aim to “Minimise Risk and Harm to all road users” and commitment to delivering a road network increasingly free of death and injury.

We must embrace a *Safe Systems Approach* that achieves a safer and more forgiving road environment, encouraging safer road user behaviour. We are continually investigating opportunities to improve our local streets in order to deliver safe and attractive places to live (e.g. Dutch Woonerf / living streets).

The provision of a safe and pleasant walking and cycling environment will be key to getting our residents out of their car, reducing congestion and supporting active transport access to centres and key destinations such as hospitals and educational institutions.



⁹ Darling Downs Regional Transport Plan, 2019. Department of Transport and Main Roads.

Travel choices and behaviours

Travel in the Toowoomba Region is highly reliant on the private motor vehicle, which is a common issue for regions with a dispersed population anchored by a regional centre. The private vehicle as a mode causes congestion which has clear economic, social and environmental costs. With the continued growth of our region, it is increasingly important that we deliver a more sustainable transport system by managing the travel choices and behaviour of our community by providing realistic alternatives to the private vehicle, such as walking and cycling.

Providing reliable and efficient passenger transport options will help to shift the reliance on private vehicles for mobility, particularly with the integration of urban and regional services, advances in technology (such as Mobility-as-a-Service) and improvements in active transport facilities for the first and last kilometre of a journey.

While this modal shift will help manage demand on our roads, we will also seek to influence the travel behaviours of our residents to achieve more sustainable outcomes.

Management of parking availability and restrictions will play an important role, as it can be an effective lever to encourage use of more sustainable transport options. This is reflected in the Toowoomba City Centre Car Parking Strategy.

We will also influence travel choice and behaviours by supporting our people to make informed decisions on where to live to minimise their daily transport requirements, as well as assisting businesses on where to locate their premises to maximise their available customer and labour market.

We are committed to working with industry to encourage more flexible learning and working practices that allows travel outside peak periods and an overall re-assessment of the need to travel or defer the trip to another time

(not during the peak). The coronavirus pandemic forced many employers and educators to implement these working and learning from home arrangements, presenting us with a clear opportunity to improve the digital connectivity that makes these arrangements viable.

Our key strategies to help to deliver better outcomes for the people in our region are summarised in Table 4-1.



Table 4-1 Key strategies to deliver better outcomes for the people in the region

People	
Objective Statement	Strategies
1. Deliver accessible, reliable and inclusive transport options for our community.	1.1 Support public transport infrastructure and service improvements to centres and key destinations to ensure they are accessible by all users
	1.2 Facilitate opportunities for the future automation of transport vehicles in the planning, design and development of the Toowoomba Region's transport networks
	1.3 Develop the active transport network to enable able and non-abled access across the community
	1.4 Promote affordable transport access to essential services for all regional towns, including supporting the first and last kilometre of journeys
	1.5 Support and advocate for flexible public transport services in areas and times of low demand
2. Deliver and maintain safe, connected and attractive walking and cycling networks and facilities that are useable by a broad range of people to support active and healthy lifestyles.	2.1 Deliver walking and cycling routes that mitigate the conflict between different users that is suitable for the uptake of e-micro-mobility
	2.2 Continue to maintain and develop the active transport network in accordance with the TRC Cycling and Walking Network Program
3. Deliver a safe and functional road network, that addresses the needs of all users and encourages the development of strong centres.	3.1 Incorporate walking and cycling infrastructure in new roads and upgrades
	3.2 Develop a transport network that provides a safe and pleasant walking and cycling environment
	3.3 Review and revise the road hierarchy following the movement and place framework
	3.4 Support increased, safer active transport access to centres and key destinations
	3.5 Improve the safety of our rural and regional roads
4. Manage travel demand and travel behaviour to deliver a sustainable transport system.	4.1 Review and amend on-street parking restrictions and off-street parking requirements as per the Toowoomba City Centre Car Parking Strategy 2019
	4.2 Develop a culture that supports active transport in Toowoomba Region
	4.3 Assist and encourage people and businesses to make informed locational choices as to where they live or locate their business to minimise their daily transport requirements
	4.4 Encourage people to make sustainable travel choices, to travel outside peak periods and reconsider their need to travel
	4.5 Improve the digital connectivity to enable working and learning from home, e-commerce, critical communications and reduce the need to travel
	4.6 Support the integration of passenger transport services (including urban and regional services) and other modes physically and through technology (such as Mobility-as-a-Service)

Place

At a glance:



Smart planning for future growth

Streets are places for people

Vibrant activity centres and towns

Leveraging technology to benefit the environment

The success of our cities and regional towns rely on our transport network supporting attractive and healthy places. Urban streets contribute in many ways to our everyday lives and do much more than simply provide the infrastructure for vehicle-based transport systems. They can be important public places and destinations for our residents and work hand in hand with the design of adjoining buildings and spaces to shape the design of our urban areas.

Efficient land use

We recognise the interconnected nature of transport and land use. Regulating the use and development of land through the Toowoomba Planning Scheme will ensure urban land is developed in a coordinated way that maximises our infrastructure and protects our environmental and agricultural resources. Adopting an integrated approach allows us to define and protect future transport corridors for roads, rail and pathways, while shaping activity centres and towns to develop as compact, mixed-use centres that are accessible to our residents.

Our Green Infrastructure Strategy is central to maintaining the scenic landscapes and regional greenspaces that are key to our local character. We need to balance the protection and management of our open spaces with future transport and land use needs. With the expected growth throughout the region, there will be an increasing demand for land for housing, employment and industry. We are intent on delivering this growth in an integrated, socially and economically inclusive and environmentally sustainable way.

Through our planning process we will ensure that future development is permeable and connected, providing active transport options and supporting the efficient integration of public transport services. We are committed to providing well-designed streets for developments that allow for both vehicle access and active transport. This includes utilising existing road, rail and linear open space corridors to connect residential and employment areas with walking and cycling paths in line with the Open Space Strategy.

The efficient use of land extends to kerb space in our centres. We are focussed on managing and accommodating the demands of deliveries, public transport, taxis and ride share services, parking and parklets, while maintaining the commercial viability of our town centre and the amenity for our residents.



Heritage and amenity

Toowoomba City is a thriving compact city characterised by its rural heritage and is connected to a network of attractive and vibrant rural towns. There is a clear opportunity to improve amenity and reduce impacts of traffic on our natural environment through evidence-based planning, design and retrofitting of transport infrastructure.

We are committed to creating liveable urban environments by designing streets for people. This includes connecting parks and other public spaces with avenues of street trees and vegetated creek corridors creating cool and pleasant walking and cycling routes. Continuing to expand the use of tree-lined corridors (for shade) and active transport corridors (for improved comfort) will minimise the heat island effect and bring green open space into our city, suburbs and towns.

Our approach to designing corridors, streets, pathways and public transport will contribute to a sense of place that reflects our unique identity and lifestyle. This extends to the management of parking availability and restrictions, with potential to reallocate underutilised parking spaces to new uses such as end of trip facilities and landscaping.

There are also opportunities to enhance the public realm through improvements on corridors with reduced traffic volumes because of the Toowoomba Bypass, for example at James Street. Investment in more sustainable transport modes along these corridors will ensure the region can capitalise on this major infrastructure project and improve amenity for our residents.

DID YOU KNOW?

Areas of Toowoomba City have seen an 80 per cent decrease in heavy vehicles since the Toowoomba Bypass opened

While the reduction in traffic on local routes is a clear benefit of the Toowoomba Bypass, there are possible adverse impacts from an increase in overall freight traffic on the wider community, particularly when considered alongside other major infrastructure investments in the Toowoomba Wellcamp Airport and the proposed Inland Rail. We will seek to minimise and manage the impact of freight moving from our airport, aerodromes, roads and rail on our residents while also maximising the benefits to the region.

Climate change and natural environment

Our region possesses a rich and diverse natural environment. The Toowoomba Planning Scheme requires that development and infrastructure within the region considers cultural, heritage, environmental biodiversity and water network values, ensuring that areas of ecological significance are avoided. This commitment to natural and open space areas extends to transport corridors, where we seek to minimise and manage the impact on the environment, providing measures such as wildlife crossings and the use of permeable surfaces to minimise water run-off, which is particularly important given the expected increase in extreme rainfall events from climate change.

Air quality in the region is also an important factor in maintaining our quality of life, amenity, health and the natural environment. As transport impacts our air quality, we need to plan for a transition of our transport system to a net zero emissions transport system to help combat climate change. We will do our part to reach net zero emissions by 2050 by improving access to more sustainable transport choices (active and public transport), supporting sustainable, low-carbon construction and transport infrastructure and supporting the 20-minute neighbourhood concept¹⁰ to reduce the need for longer trips.

Another key strategy to achieve net zero emissions will be to support and plan for the uptake of low emission vehicles and new technologies, such as plug-in electric, hydrogen fuel-cell (alternative fuel) and autonomous vehicles. The integration of these vehicles in regional and remote Queensland will require investment in infrastructure such as public charging stations. Council will continue to work with the State Government to increase the viability of these vehicle types as a real choice for our residents.

The popularity of new, more sustainable transport services, such as car sharing and shared micro mobility services (for example, e-bike, e-scooters), are also expected to have positive impacts on the natural environment in the region. We will continue to encourage the uptake of these shared mobility options, although acknowledge that Mobility-as-a-Service in particular is not suitable to a one-size fits all approach and will look different across Queensland, based on community needs, availability of transport options and infrastructure.

Table 4-2 summarises our key strategies to help enhance the character and sense of place that reflects our regions unique identity and lifestyle.

¹⁰ People can access services which meet daily needs within a 20-minute trip from home.

Figure 4-2 20-minute neighbourhood



Table 4-2 Key strategies to deliver better places for the Toowoomba region

Place	
Objective Statement	Strategies
5. Plan for transport infrastructure and services that support the efficient use of urban land, including the sensitive management of environmental and agricultural resources.	5.1 Plan activity centres and towns to develop as compact, mixed-use centres that are accessible by public transport and active transport to create liveable and healthy places
	5.2 Plan for the future transport network by defining and protecting future transport corridors
	5.3 Connect residential and employment areas with walking and cycling paths that utilise existing road, rail and linear open space corridors (as identified in the TRC Open Space Strategy)
	5.4 Integrate land use and transport planning to meet future housing, employment and industry needs
	5.5 Ensure new developments are permeable and connected, provide active transport options and allow for the introduction of efficient public transport services
	5.6 Manage kerb space in our centres to accommodate demands for deliveries, public transport, taxis and ride share services, parking and parklets
6. Respect the heritage and enhance the amenity of our urban centres.	6.1 Capture the benefits of the Toowoomba Bypass through public realm improvements on corridors with reduced traffic volumes
	6.2 Create liveable urban environments through the design of streets for people and management of on-street parking in centres
	6.3 Minimise and manage the impact of our airport, aerodromes, road and rail freight on the safety and amenity of surrounding communities
	6.4 Continue to use tree-lined corridors and active transport corridors to minimise the heat island effect and bring green open space into our city, suburbs and towns (as identified in the Green Infrastructure Strategy)
	6.5 Improve amenity and reduce impacts on the regions natural environment in the planning, design and retrofitting of transport infrastructure
	6.6 Design transport corridors, streets, pathways and public transport to contribute to a sense of place that reflects Toowoomba Region's unique identity and lifestyle
7. Design and operate the transport system to address the impacts of climate change and minimise the impact to our natural environment.	7.1 Support initiatives that move the community towards the 20-minute neighbourhood concept to reduce the need for longer trips
	7.2 Minimise the loss of natural and open space areas from transport corridors and minimise their impact on the environment by providing wildlife crossings and the use of permeable surfaces to minimise water run-off
	7.3 Support and encourage the uptake of shared mobility options (such as car sharing and shared micro mobility services)
	7.4 Facilitate transitioning the Toowoomba Region's transport system to a net zero emissions transport system by 2050 by improving access to more sustainable transport choices (active transport and public transport) and enabling new vehicle technologies and infrastructure solutions
	7.5 Support and plan for the uptake of low emission vehicles and new technologies (e.g. electric and autonomous vehicles, alternative fuels)

Prosperity

At a glance:



Toowoomba is a major freight hub

Our network connects producers to markets

Improved regional connectivity

Keep money in local economy through smart usage of our transport network

Our region has been fortunate to have secured unprecedented infrastructure investment that is delivering real lifestyle and employment benefits to our residents. We must continue to shape our transport system to maximise the benefits of these projects and contribute to the long-term prosperity of our region.

A place for work and business

Throughout its history the Toowoomba Region has transformed its agricultural base into a diverse and strong economy, offering a range of business, investment and employment opportunities. Our region continues to be a desirable place for work and business, with the number of businesses increasing by 5.0% from 2016 to 2020¹¹.

Improving access to employment and places where industry can invest and do business is important to keep our forward momentum. Our Economic Development Strategy lists accessibility as a key foundation for our prosperity, as economic productivity will continue to grow as the network moves people and freight more efficiently to job centres. This improved access will also provide firms with access to the right workers, skills and customers and will enable business-to-business transport connectivity that encourages economic growth and reduces demand on the existing network.

We are working in partnership with the State Government to establish frequent public transport corridors to key employment areas (for example Ruthven Street), as well as investigating a Faster Rail connection to Toowoomba City. We will also enhance first and last-kilometre access by encouraging the installation of secure bicycle parking, showers and lockers in existing buildings so that active transport is a convenient choice for travelling to work, education and other trips.

Another key to maintaining the desirability of the Toowoomba Region for work and business is to facilitate industrial development that leverages existing roads (Toowoomba Bypass), future freight routes (Inland Rail) and the Toowoomba Wellcamp Airport. These new road, rail and air connections give our region access to most of the eastern seaboard within 24 hours as well as many overseas markets.

The support of associated freight and warehousing businesses, particularly to maximise the potential of the Toowoomba Wellcamp Airport and aerodromes to attract air related business, will require us to work with the State Government to manage the potential impacts on residential areas to maintain the liveability of the region.

Freight hub of national significance

Freight is an integral part of Queensland's economy, moving goods around the state via road, rail, sea and air, and connecting Queensland with the world. Our region plays a key role in the supply chain as a strategic link in the National Land Transport Network, transporting goods for key industries including agriculture, manufacturing and mining, although there is still more work to be done to improve our connectivity to local, regional, national and international markets.

Investment in the Toowoomba Bypass has bolstered our position as a freight hub, improving freight and cross-region transit with the added benefit of diverting heavy vehicles and through-traffic out of the Toowoomba City centre. We will continue to support the diversion of these freight vehicles from our residential communities to improve liveability, particularly through the establishment of the Charlton Bypass and a western arterial/bypass of Toowoomba City.

While the region's freight network is predominantly based around major roads, we support a shift of freight from road to rail in line with the Queensland Freight Strategy. Maximising rail freight use along strategic corridors can deliver improved economic, social and environmental benefits, particularly for road safety and operations.

We will also ensure that producers, businesses, and freight operators understand the multi-modal freight transport opportunities throughout our region and that there is sufficient support in addressing first and last kilometre challenges such as farm gate access for higher productivity vehicles.

The proposed Inland Rail project will solidify our role of national significance, serving as a major catalyst to achieve freight network efficiencies, supply chain investments and unlock new growth opportunities in our region. We will leverage the potential of Inland Rail by working with the State Government and Inland Rail to provide connectivity to major freight generators such as the Western Trade Gateway and update our land use planning to proactively respond to current and future freight opportunities.

¹¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Maximise use of existing network

In the current constrained funding environment, we recognise the importance of optimising our existing transport infrastructure through low-cost and non-infrastructure solutions. These solutions can often generate similar outcomes to new infrastructure and allow us to defer large capital expenditure to produce significant savings for the region. Network optimisation solutions will be routinely considered in our planning and investment process, which will allow us to design and deliver a transport network for where it is needed most.

One of our key strategies to optimise our transport infrastructure is by maximising the use of existing road space to move people and goods in less space. This includes the re-allocation of under-utilised road space, demand management initiatives, introduction of bus priority measures on frequent bus corridors to improve the attractiveness of public transport and operating a smart transport network through digital technology that improves traffic flow and efficiency. We will also continue to encourage walking and cycling as it requires much smaller amounts of road space than private motor vehicles to move the same number of people (Figure 4-3).

With our transport system continuing to be impacted by disruptions such as incidents and extreme weather events, it is also important that we safeguard our existing network so that it is more resilient. Improving resilience through design, construction, operation and maintenance will help to reduce the long-term cost of repair, increasing whole-of-life economic, social and environmental benefits.

The key strategies we will implement to contribute to the long-term prosperity of our region are outlined in Table 4-3.

Figure 4-3 Road space comparison

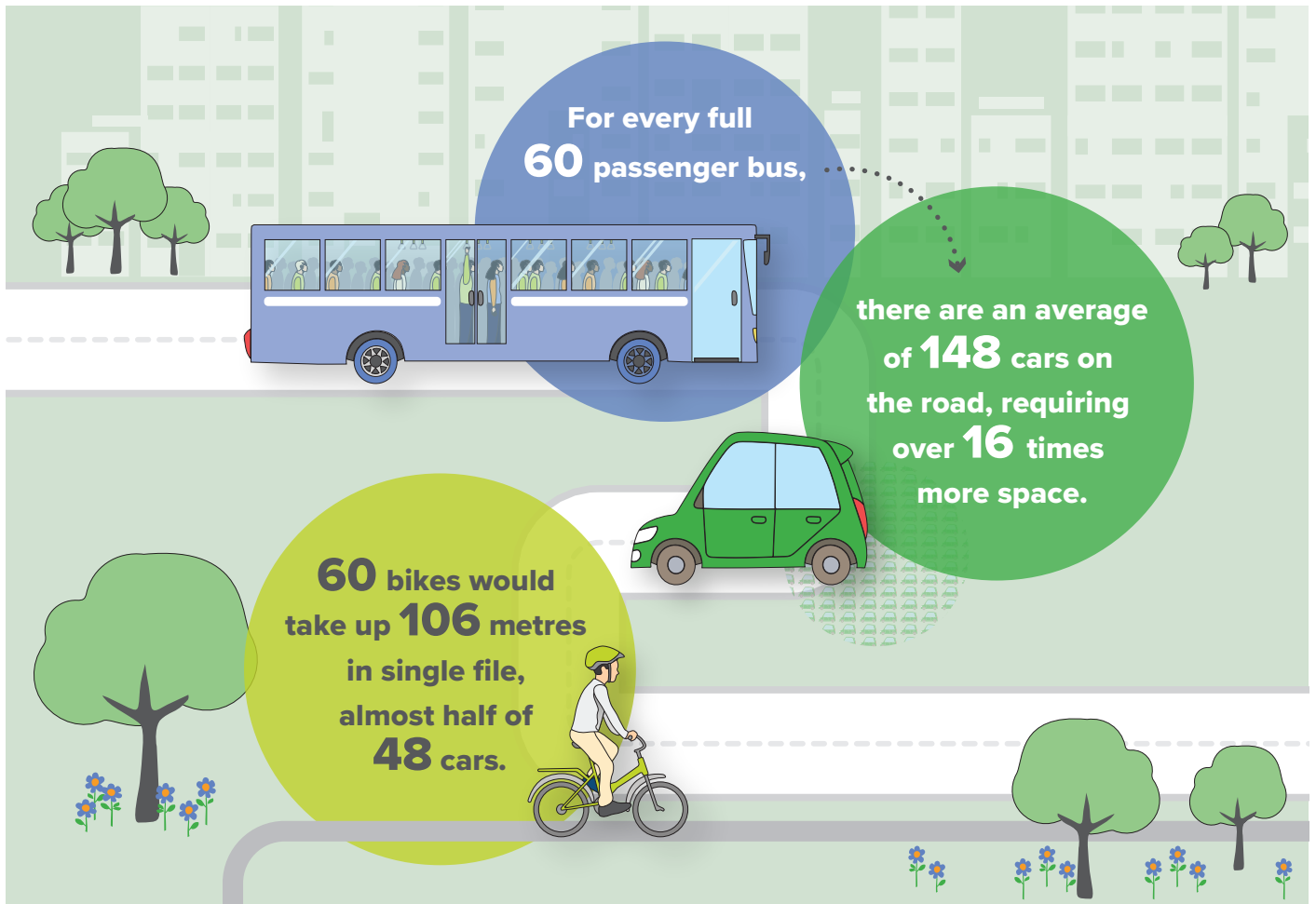


Table 4-3 Key strategies to enable prosperity in the region

Prosperity	
Objective Statement	Strategies
8. Maintain the desirability of Toowoomba as a place for work, business and tourists	8.1 Locate industrial land on freight routes to minimise impacts on residential areas
	8.2 Encourage the retro-fitting of existing buildings with secure bicycle parking, showers and lockers so active transport is a convenient option for travelling to work
	8.3 Support the establishment of a Faster Rail connection to Toowoomba
	8.4 Maximise the potential of our airport and aerodromes and attract air related businesses
	8.5 Work with state to support the establishment of frequent public transport corridors to key employment locations
	8.6 Expanding tourism mobility and promoting Toowoomba Region as an attractive tourist destination
9. Support the continued growth and development of Toowoomba as a major freight hub of national significance.	9.1 Plan and develop Toowoomba Region's strategic freight network to further improve connectivity between local, regional, national and international markets
	9.2 Support a shift of freight from road to rail and improve the impact of rail services on road safety and operations
	9.3 Leverage the potential of Inland Rail by providing connectivity to major freight generators such as the Western Trade Gateway
	9.4 Support the establishment of a western arterial/bypass of Toowoomba and Charlton Bypass
	9.5 Inform producers, business and freight operators of the multi-modal freight transport opportunities
	9.6 Update TRC land use planning that responds to the current and future freight opportunities
10. Maximise the use and performance of our existing transport network to increase whole-of-life economic, social and environmental benefits.	10.1 Support the introduction of bus priority measures on frequent bus corridors to improve the efficiency, reliability and attractiveness of public transport
	10.2 Design, construct, operate and maintain the transport system to be resilient to climate change disruptions including incidents, extreme weather
	10.3 Maximise the use of existing road space to move more people and goods in less space
	10.4 Develop a smart transport network that uses digital technology to make more efficient use of our transport network



5

Implementation, Monitoring and Review

Implementation, Monitoring and Review

We are committed to ensuring the sustainable development of the Toowoomba Region. To achieve our vision and strategy we have steps in place that will allow us to successfully implement, monitor and review its success over time.

Implementation Plan

A robust implementation plan is essential to effectively coordinate, execute and evaluate future transport planning and investment priorities. We will therefore develop an Implementation Plan (separate to this Strategy) to provide a clear link between the high-level strategies for each theme objective to actionable plans with deliverable programs, projects and services. The overarching Strategy, which informs the Implementation Plan, is illustrated in Figure 5-1.

The role of the Implementation Plan is to align the strategic themes of this Strategy with actions to achieve its purpose, building on our existing planning such as the Road Safety Strategy and City Centre Car Parking Strategy.

The Plan will include a high-level investment framework (evaluation framework) for prioritising projects to help inform the region's investment priorities through our Capital Works Program, the Planning Scheme and Local Government Infrastructure Plan.

The Implementation Plan will be the responsibility of our Transport and Drainage Planning team, with implementation actions involving many areas of the Council, external partners and our community.

The Implementation Plan will be regularly reviewed, perhaps every two to three years, to monitor progress on the delivery of actions, measure achievements and adapt to emerging issues and opportunities.

Figure 5-1 Implementation Plan



Investment Framework

An investment framework informed by this Strategy will provide a transparent process against which projects and policies can be considered as part of the one network approach. The purpose of an investment framework is to:

- Guide the identification, assessment and prioritisation of projects.
- Allow outcomes-based prioritisation and assessment of projects and policies.
- Test projects and policies beyond the Implementation Plan as they develop or proposals are made (projects or policies).
- Provide a transparent framework to develop a pipeline of projects and prioritise considering funding opportunities and constraints.
- Help arrive at an agreement when stakeholders may find some projects that meet the Strategy objectives difficult to agree on.
- Move forward where there is agreement on the challenge but differing views on the solution.

The strategic fit is the key element in the investment framework that links directly to the vision and objectives of the Strategy.

The Investment Framework will be supported by an integrated, multi-modal approach to network planning in line with the Australian Transport Assessment and Planning guidelines. These guidelines recommend a holistic approach to transport planning by considering the current and future transport requirements of areas, links and corridors, and how targeted investment in different modes will achieve specific objectives.

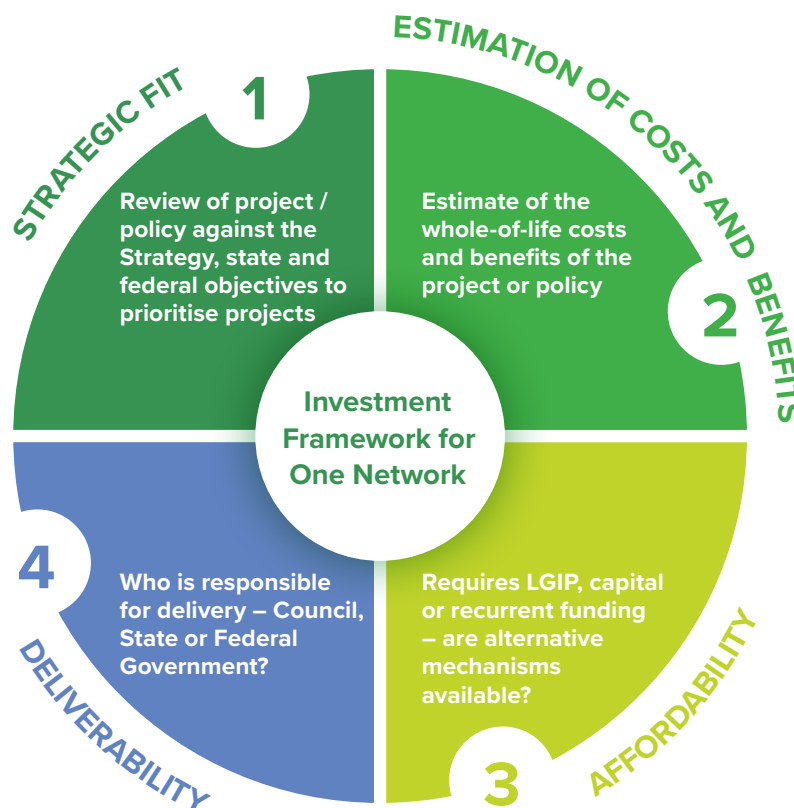
The strategic fit of a project or policy position needs to be reviewed against the Strategy objectives and can be influenced by both State and Federal Governments and their plans and priorities.

For example, a proposed road upgrade which is on a state-controlled road but interfaces with our road network would require collaboration between us and the State Government for successful delivery, including a funding agreement. This one network approach may also require TRC to engage in both the State and Federal Governments project assurance processes, which typically consist of a series of stage gates that lead to the progressive development of a Business Case seeking funding to progress each project.

The other elements that will be considered are the potential project costs and benefits, deliverability and affordability, for example:

- Whole-of-life project costs and benefits – includes consideration of the capital and operating costs and the high-level benefits.
- Deliverability – can it be achieved and who will drive the project forward and be responsible for delivery.
- Affordability – is it able to be funded and will it lead to a sustainable long-term financial outcome.

Figure 5-2 Investment Framework



Measuring Success

Performance indicators will be used to measure our progress towards delivering the objectives outlined in this Strategy. We already have a comprehensive program of monitoring and reporting, using sources such as the national census, crash reports, public transport patronage and customer satisfaction surveys, and we will utilise many of these existing sources to minimise costs. Using applicable measures from existing reporting processes will ensure our objectives are regularly assessed for relevancy and managed as part of an ongoing performance monitoring system.

A list of performance indicators will be developed as part of the Implementation Plan. These performance measures could be included as part of an annual Evaluation Report (“Report Card”) to monitor performance on implementation of the Strategy.

This list will be reviewed on an on-going basis, with this Strategy expected to be reviewed in five years to ensure relevance and account for new challenges and opportunities in the region. Like the Implementation Plan it may also be reviewed earlier than this if the trends and pressures change significantly over time.

Partnerships and Engagement

Investment in the transport system is needed by all levels of government and the private sector to achieve the vision of this strategy. This investment will be critical to achieving sustainable outcomes for our community and we are committed to the delivery of this strategy with our key partners.

Delivery on this Strategy will require on-going collaboration and engagement with the State Government and Federal Government, industry representatives and our community to ensure the outcomes and objectives are understood, accepted and adopted.

Delivering the Strategy

Investment and commitment from Council and other key partners will be key for the delivery of this Strategy. Our current transport system is heavily car dependent and needs intervention if we are to move to a sustainable transport system and meet the aspirations of the Strategy. There are clear economic, social and environmental benefits in delivering this Strategy and we are committed to doing our part in the planning, design, operation, and maintenance of our future transport network.

We are prepared to invest money and resources to meet these aspirations and will seek to deliver this Strategy in collaboration with other key stakeholders and partners as shown in Figure 5-3. We support the exploration of new revenue options with our partners that may assist in securing the transport infrastructure and investment needed for the region. This may include potential joint venture opportunities and models between Council, the State Government, Federal Government and the private sector or levies to help deliver the desired outcomes of the Strategy.

Figure 5-3 Partnership Responsibility

