



Lord Mayor's Light Rail Summit

Summary of Speaker Presentation

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How the City of Gold Coast is using Light Rail to support growth

- In 1998, Council undertook preparation of a strategic transport plan, which identified the need for a modern mass transport system to support growing population and significant tourism
- Conversations continued between council and state government about what a mass transport system might actually be, including feasibility studies in the early 2000s
- It became apparent that Light Rail would be a very good solution for the coastal area of the Gold Coast, and an partnership between state and local governments then brought the federal government to the project
- All levels of government recognised that this was more than just a transport project, it's a city shaping project. Light rail does an incredibly good job of moving people but it also provides real, tangible benefits to communities in terms of the permanency of the infrastructure on the ground.
- Government investment in light rail brought confidence to private investors.
- Significant stakeholder and community engagement was undertaken, we sought a range views from a community that was divided on this project and a lengthy debate ensued.
- The Gold Coast Hospital relocated to the Griffith University precinct, informed by this area being planned to be the northern end of the light rail stage one, an example of the land use planning linking with the transport planning. Also in key sections of light rail route, like Southport and Broadbeach there has been significant opportunity for urban development.
- In our community we have different type of demographics, including those living in apartments, as well as retirees, who aren't wedded to their car or looking for other ways to get around, and this was seen as a ready market for the convenience of light rail.
- Stage one of 'Glink' light rail opened in July 2014. It has been performing really well, and now the conversation is now can we get more people to more precincts around light rail.
- We learnt from stage 1 to make efforts to minimise disruption to businesses and provide excellent communication to businesses' during construction.
- The story of Glink is one of co-operation between different levels of government, over coming the myriad of barriers, and getting everyone convinced about the business case to get the project funded.
- We are exceeding our patronage forecasts for stage one, and it has changed the way people use public transport, particularly children and families
- We are now continuing planning for stage 2, connecting light rail to the heavy rail network which provides connections to Brisbane and the Gold Coast hinterland.
- A new transport strategy now builds on the light rail and links it to the heavy rail network across a much broader area. The bus network has also been re-designed to tie into the light rail network.
- It can take some time for subsequent land use investment to "get going", so studies are underway to track development impacts and demonstrate the benefits.
- Demonstrable benefits helps to secure further state government funding and support for further expansion.