

5.4 Public Transport

Increasing participation in public transport requires a change in commuting habits and 'mind-sets', as well as the provision of infrastructure. A culture of relying on the motor vehicle with a single driver is not easy to change, but a popular, safe and efficient public transport system is clearly in the long term interests of the University. A number of approaches have been made over the last five years towards improving the University's engagement with the regional public transportation network.

The University contains a relatively new bus interchange, completed in 2009, with a layout and location which effectively serves the centre of the campus, and which allows the efficient circulation of TransLink services from the north and south. There is space within the campus to accommodate a future southward extension to the GreenLink service, as the Palmview development gains momentum.

The TransLink - USC subsidised U-Pass system continues to encourage high bus patronage and is set to continue. Bus services during the AM peak and shoulder periods continue to be effective however services are somewhat less frequent and connected during the PM peak and evening periods, requiring further tailoring of services to best match the needs of students and staff in a way which can be met by TransLink.

The University continues to operate a shuttle service between Noosa Junction and the campus, which continues to receive high patronage.

TransLink Operated Services

Six Translink bus services directly service the USC campus, either stopping or terminating at the USC Bus Interchange located on the campus grounds. Services enter from the south via Scholars Drive and then a short section of dedicated bus-way to reach the bus interchange. From the north the services enter from Sippy Downs Drive via the main entrance and then along the western access road to reach the interchange. Where the interchange intersects with the western access road, general vehicles must stop for buses.

This operation works satisfactorily for buses, and the interchange appears to have sufficient capacity to allow for further increases of services.

In future, services on two alignments of the GreenLink system will need to access the interchange. At this time the operation of the western access road across the bus interchange and south past the Science and Engineering Building may need to be reviewed.

Under the 2012 Campus Master Plan, the areas indicated on *Diagram 5.6.1* would be consolidated into structured parking stations. Providing that access to the remaining adjacent parking areas is maintained, it is recommended that the western access road south of the bus interchange be restricted to bus movements only. General vehicle and service access could be maintained on a narrow vehicular route adjacent.

There are approximately ten bus stops locations within two kilometres walking distance of the USC campus in Sippy Downs, including the USC bus interchange. These stops are minor, and are only serviced when buses are hailed to a stop. A key location for a higher quality, sheltered TransLink bus stop, for example a 'premium' style stop, exists at the main entrance on Sippy Downs Drive, just west of the main entrance. Such a stop could be architecturally integrated with the further built form proposed to 'connect' to the town centre.

U-Pass

The 'Universal Pass' or U-Pass concept requires USC, Council and TransLink to fully subsidise student and staff public transport fares, and has been successful for USC. U-Pass has increased public transport use on bus routes servicing the University. A U-Pass trial was commenced in Semester 1 2011.

The ongoing success of U-Pass will be tempered by inefficiencies in the public transport system. There is the potential for higher uptake provided that in the longer term more direct bus services are introduced to USC to avoid the need to change services at Sunshine Plaza.

Shuttle Bus Services

In addition to the TransLink operated services, USC operates a shuttle bus service between its Sippy Downs campus and the Noosa campus. The service constitutes a single bus transferring commuters between the two campuses through its two return trips each weekday. The service has received reasonably high patronage and at this stage will be continued.

Based on this success, several other shuttle bus routes could be trialled, including Buderim to USC, supplementing the hourly 636 service from Nambour; Caboolture-Beerwah-Landsborough to USC, to supplement the 615 service; and Caloundra to USC, supplementing the hourly 607 service which runs direct from Caloundra to USC. Staff and students would need to be surveyed to establish actual likely demand, routes and times.

Sunshine Coast Light Rail

At the time of writing, Council has commenced long range planning into the feasibility and alignment of a light rail system for the Sunshine Coast. Council is also convening a taskforce to progress its investigation and draft its terms of reference. A light rail system for the Sunshine Coast is not yet formally recognised in state government planning but its progression through Council should be monitored by USC.

One of two fundamental design philosophies will be considered; either a higher speed system on a linear alignment with stations serviced by feeder buses (with parallels to a Singapore MRT), or a lower speed system with a less direct alignment which could track inland to the University on the GreenLink corridor. The Gold Coast Light Rail project favours the latter approach with an on-grade system servicing Griffith University and its new hospital, Southport CBD, Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach, with priority through signalised intersections rather than grade separation.

Depending on the outcomes of the planning, the light rail may service the University and Sippy Downs Town Centre via Sippy Downs Drive, with an at-grade station adjacent the Town Centre. Key elements of the system, such as its alignment relative to CAMCOS, Nicklin Way/Brisbane Road and the location of its stabling yard, remain to be developed.

