

**MAPLETON AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
AND
MONTVILLE VILLAGE ASSOCIATION
SUBMISSION
ON SUNSHINE COAST ACTIVE TRANSPORT PLAN**

This submission is provided by the Mapleton and District Community Association (MADCA) and the Montville Village Association (MVA) in response to the Council's community engagement process concerning the Sunshine Coast Active Transport Plan.

Both organisations recognise the transformative power of on-demand and active transport options, such as ride-sharing, electric scooters, and bike-sharing. By incorporating these into our urban planning, we could reduce congestion, provide convenient last-mile solutions, and encourage eco-friendly modes of transportation. These options will not only complement traditional public transit but also contribute to a more sustainable and resilient transportation network. Active transport, to be successful in The Hinterland, requires infrastructure including pathways to connect The Range communities.

MADCA and MVA have been advocating for improved pathways connecting the Blackall Range villages for some years and have raised this matter in submissions to the Council and the State Government regarding transport issues on the Sunshine Coast. Both organisations have held community planning activities that have strongly endorsed better provision of pathways across the Blackall Range. As well, Blackall Range Lions have been advocating for a pathway from Montville to Mapleton for some years.

MADCA and MVA are strongly supportive of an improved network of pathways across the Sunshine Coast to facilitate walking, bicycle, and other micro-mobility transport. In particular, we strongly support improved active transport facilities on the Blackall Range with a pathway connecting Mapleton, Flaxton, Montville and Maleny, with connecting pathways to Nambour and Landsborough.

Pathways are vital components of urban and suburban infrastructure, playing a crucial role in promoting physical activity, enhancing public health, and fostering social connectivity. Well-designed pathways encourage a range of physical activities such as walking, running, and cycling, making it easier for residents to incorporate exercise into their daily routines. By providing safe and attractive routes, pathways motivate individuals to opt for walking or biking instead of driving for short trips, contributing to increased daily physical activity.

The health benefits of regular physical activity are well-documented, including a reduced risk of chronic diseases like heart disease, diabetes, and obesity. Moreover, physical activity has significant mental health benefits, helping to alleviate stress and anxiety. Pathways, therefore, are not just about physical movement but are also instrumental in improving overall public health.

Social connectivity is another significant benefit of well-maintained pathways. These pathways create spaces for community interaction, where people can meet, converse, and engage with one another, fostering a sense of community and belonging. They are designed

to be inclusive, accommodating people of all ages and abilities, including those with disabilities, thus ensuring that everyone can participate in community life. By linking The Hinterland villages, the parks, schools, businesses, and other public spaces, pathways make it easier for residents to access essential services and amenities, further enhancing community cohesion.

Environmental benefits also arise from the use of pathways. Encouraging walking and cycling reduces reliance on cars, leading to lower greenhouse gas emissions and improved air quality. Pathways support sustainable transportation options, which help reduce traffic congestion and promote efficient use of urban space.

Economically, pathways offer several advantages. Properties located near well-maintained pathways often see increased values due to their enhanced appeal and accessibility. These pathways also boost local economies by increasing foot traffic to businesses, supporting economic growth and creating vibrant local communities. Furthermore, by promoting healthier lifestyles, pathways can lead to reduced healthcare costs associated with treating chronic diseases and conditions related to inactivity.

The Sunshine Coast Hinterland is a significant tourist destination with its picturesque villages, outstanding landscapes and national parks. The Blackall Range Tourist Drive has outstanding viewpoints along its length. The Blackall Range has an established reputation for active/adventure tourism activities such as mountain biking and bush walking, including the Sunshine Coast Great Walk, and sporting activities such as the Blackall 100 running ultra, which in part utilize existing pathways.

A pathway already exists along parts of the Tourist Drive, but it does not provide a connected route between any of the Blackall Range villages. There are no pathways connecting the Blackall Range hinterland to either Nambour or Landsborough. The proposed pathway would connect the existing pathways on the Range to provide a continuous pathway between Mapleton, Flaxton, Montville and Maleny, and new pathways to Landsborough and Nambour.

A pathway along the entire length of the Blackall Range would benefit local residents who find the existing roads too narrow and dangerous to safely bike on, or walk along. The scenic amenity of the Blackall Range region lends itself to active/adventure tourism that would be considerably enhanced by such a pathway. The pathway would also provide excellent viewing of the Olympic Games road races planned for the area.

This pathway proposal could also become a Biosphere initiative given the close engagement of users with nature. The pathway project would align very closely with some of the objectives of the Biosphere, “celebrating people and nature”, “a community of shared values working together to live, work, and play sustainably and “working towards creating a legacy for future generations”.

It is understood that there is a budget allocation to commence plan a pathway from Mapleton to Kondililla Falls. We ask that this funding be extended to provide for planning of the entire route proposed in this submission, and that a staged implementation be planned

with a first stage providing a connected pathway along the Range villages, followed by second and third stages connecting to Nambour and Landsborough.

To fully realize these benefits, it is essential to invest in the infrastructure necessary for the development and maintenance of pathways. This involves prioritizing funding for pathway projects and involving community members in their planning and design to ensure they meet the needs and preferences of residents. Developing interconnected networks of pathways that link key destinations can ensure seamless and safe travel throughout the community. Implementing safety measures such as lighting, signage, and crossings is also crucial to protect users and encourage more widespread use of these pathways. Promoting and educating residents about the benefits of using pathways can further enhance their usage and support active transportation options.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "m c Standage". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized.

Max Standage, President MADCA

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "W Parcell". The signature is cursive and includes a large, sweeping initial "W".

Wayne Parcell PSM, President MVA

16 June 2024