

**Gold Coast Frequent Network (Early Stages)**

This is a concept sketch for a frequent transit network for the Gold Coast, to be implemented (notionally) between 2012 and 2018 for the commencement of the XXI Commonwealth Games in 2018.

Basic parameters of the system are as follows:

**Light Rail**

Base assumptions are as follows:

1. System length will not extend beyond the current initial stage from Parkwood to Broadbeach being constructed by GoldlinQ and due for commissioning and commencement in mid-2014. Opportunities for extension to Helensvale, Coolangatta or other possible destinations (such as Robina) would depend upon the availability of funding from State or Federal government sources, presumably as determined by Infrastructure Australia and the soon to be implemented Infrastructure Queensland.
2. Service characteristics are initially as per GoldlinQ’s specification, as follows (valid 7 days a week including public holidays except for very few selected dates such as – potentially – Christmas Day):

* 5am-7am – 15 minute headways
* 7am-7pm – 7.5 minute headways
* 7pm-12am – 15 minute headways
* 12am-5am – no service Monday to Friday (30 minute bus service would operate in lieu from Broadbeach to Southport); 30min headways on Saturday, Sunday and selected public holidays
* 5 minute headways during special events such as Gold Coast 600 (or equivalent) and during Commonwealth Games
* Higher frequencies subject to patronage and rollingstock availability.

1. Bombardier Flexity 2 trams (7 section, 45 metre) capable of seating approximately 80-90 and standing balance of 300 total passengers (or equivalent models in future).

**Heavy Rail**

Base assumptions are as follows:

1. Maintenance of existing 30 minute headways with all trains continuing to either Brisbane (Bowen Hills) or Brisbane Airport.
2. Upgrades to peak direction headways between Brisbane and the Gold Coast where possible.
3. Installation of second track from Coomera to Helensvale, additional stabling at Robina and other capacity enhancements between Beenleigh and Brisbane before 2018.
4. Maintain existing potential for 15 minute off-peak headways using a 3-car shuttle terminating and reversing at Coomera for every second service during daylight hours, with all peak direction services continuing to travel to and from Brisbane.
5. Higher intensity of inter-city service throughout the Commonwealth Games with maintenance of Brisbane Airport connection.
6. Ultimately reroute Gold Coast trains to Sunshine Coast via new North-West Transit Corridor (Roma Street to Trouts Road to Strathpine) alignment when possible in distant future – maintain Brisbane Airport connection until that becomes possible.

**Frequent Bus**

Base assumptions are as follows:

**Common to all routes depicted**

1. The network of depicted routes is intended to be the bare minimum of high-frequency routes, designed to provide high-mobility and as “car like” an experience as possible to as many people as possible. A high degree of interchanging with heavy rail, light rail, other frequent bus routes and less frequent “coverage” type bus routes is required to encourage a direct, linear and predictable service, and is facilitated by no-compromise maintenance of high frequency modelled on Brisbane’s BUZ network and the core of the QR suburban network between Darra and Northgate.
2. Service characteristics for high-frequency routes as follows (valid 7 days a week including public holidays except for very few selected dates such as – potentially – Christmas Day):

* 6am-9pm – minimum headway of 15 minutes
* Outside these hours – no or reduced levels of service depending upon requirements of individual services

These are referred to as the “basic parameters” in short-hand form below. Some routes would be capable of sustaining higher minimum frequencies during the 6am-9pm period and those potentialities are noted.

1. Maintenance of TransLink branding and operation by Surfside in order to comply with TTA contracting requirements, with GCCC to provide additional funding and to be given a key stakeholder/sign-off role.

Frequent Route A – Paradise Point to Southport

* Existing Route 706 with the portion between Southport and The Pines deleted. No change to basic parameters required. 24 hour operation could be possible, at least on Saturday/Sunday mornings.

Frequent Route B – Helensvale to Seaworld

* Existing Route 715, virtually unaltered save for any changes required to allow continued through passage through Southport. No change to basic parameters required.

Frequent Route C – Helensvale to Griffith University

* Existing Route 709 with the portion between Griffith University and Broadbeach deleted. This route could sustain frequencies similar to that of the rapid transit system, and follows the preferred alignment for the extension of the system to Helensvale from Parkwood. 24 hour operation could be possible, at least on Saturday/Sunday mornings.

Frequent Route D – Southport to Broadbeach via Nerang

* Merger of the existing Southport to Nerang Station portion of Routes 20/20A with the existing Nerang Station to Broadbeach portion of Route 745, and the deletion of the balance of those routes. No change to basic parameters required.

Frequent Route E – Nerang to Surfers Paradise

* Existing Route 740 with extension to GCCC chambers at Nerang. No change to basic parameters required during weekdays. In the absence of a rapid transit system extension to Helensvale, catching a train to Nerang and transferring to this service would likely continue to be the fastest way to access Surfers Paradise from the north of the Gold Coast, so additional weekend services may be justified to cope with crowds. 24 hour operation on Saturday/Sunday mornings would be preferable.

Frequent Route F – Southport to Robina

* Existing Route 747 with modification to the route to allow Bond University to be serviced, and to amend the route through Robina to provide more direct access to Robina Station. No change to basic parameters required.

Frequent Route G – Broadbeach to Robina

* New route comprising portions of various existing routes with new coverage. This route could sustain frequencies similar to that of the rapid transit system, and follows (in part) a potential alignment for the extension of the system to Robina. 24 hour operation could be possible, at least on Saturday/Sunday mornings.

Frequent Route H – Robina to Elanora

* Existing Route 765 with diversion via Varsity Lakes Station removed to improve speed. No change to basic parameters required.

Frequent Route I – Broadbeach to Tweed Heads

* Existing Route 760 with extension to Jupiters Casino and Broadbeach to remove the need for a forced transfer and single-station tram journey to Broadbeach (one station only). This route could sustain frequencies similar to that of the rapid transit system, and follows (approximately) the preferred alignment for the extension of the system to Tweed Heads. 24-hour operation for this route each day of the week would be preferable as per current Route 700, with extension to Southport after-hours during the week when the rapid transit system is not running.

Frequent Route J – Broadbeach to Airport

* Existing Route 702 with portion of the existing route north of Broadbeach deleted and the same Broadbeach loop as Frequent Route I added. No change to basic parameters required, however operating hours would need to be sufficient to allow connections to first and last scheduled flights to and from the Airport.

Frequent Route K – Robina to Tweed Heads

* Existing Route 761, virtually unaltered except for routing via Scottsdale Drive between Robina and Varsity Lakes instead of via Christine Avenue. No change to basic parameters required.

**Non-Frequent Bus**

Base assumptions are as follows:

1. Most of the bus coverage in the city, for the foreseeable future, will be provided with buses running no more than at 30 minute headways. As a flexible guideline, 30 minute headways from 6am-9pm 7 days per week should be the absolute minimum headway permitted with limited exceptions (low patronage semi-rural services such as the 748 or occasional diversions on otherwise half-hourly routes).
2. As a priority, the “legacy routes” (Routes 3, 4, 5, 10, 14, 15, 16, 18, 18A, 20, 20A and 21) would be revised to improve frequencies, connections, operating hours and directness. Opportunities exist to integrate this process into the implementation of portions of the frequent network (eg Routes 20 and 20A form part of Frequent Route D, Route 21 forms part of Frequent Route E etc).
3. On-demand services should be avoided unless street geometry or width make providing fixed route services with 12.5m buses problematic. (The YourBus service in Pacific Pines is a pertinent example.) Even in instances such as these, preference should be given to a hail’n’ride arrangement initially, to prevent the need for expensive booking and co-ordination systems.
4. Coverage of the frequent network would gradually increase over time through staged upgrades to non-frequent services, to the point where most patronage in the city is covered by the frequent network and most major road corridors and destinations are included.

**General**

1. All services must allow seamless integrated ticketing with TransLink’s go card, and accordingly must be provided by Surfside or some other authorised TransLink operator. Without integrated ticketing or at least an integrated payment mechanism, the benefit of high frequency and interchanging is lost as changing services would incur a financial penalty which is not currently imposed.
2. Buses should continue to be branded with TransLink signage standards and should have legible destination display programming showing a terminus and selected locations en-route (except for short routes).
3. All new buses are to be a minimum of 2-door “full-length rigid” (ie 12.5m length) type, with articulated or double-deck vehicles optional for busier routes. Limited exceptions would be made for YourBus type routes, or for the limited number of conventional services which cannot be operated easily with a full-length rigid (eg Route 767 to Tugun Heights).
4. A concerted effort must be made with TransLink, GoldlinQ, Queensland Rail and Surfside to place appropriate wayfinding signage, network/area/station/interchange maps and other navigational aids throughout the network to make accessing the network – and in particular, transferring between services – easy for visitors or the uninitiated. This includes the provision of real-time passenger information displays (PIDs) at busy locations, all bus stops on frequent bus routes, and on-board all vehicles (bus, train and tram) over time.
5. The City Plan must be updated to acknowledge the frequent network (all modes) as comprising the flagship public transport services for the city, with appropriate allowances in height limits, density, parking allowances, local area plans and structure plans to be made commensurate with the planned service characteristics. Concessions should be extended to developers and land-holders on these routes to locate more intensive uses close to transit to minimise urban sprawl and create a more sustainable built form.
6. Close engagement should be sought with the NSW State Government and Tweed Shire Council over the “re-integration” of the Surfside bus network on both sides of the border. Planning, service provision and ticketing (go card) should be made the responsibility of TransLink, with the NSW State Government (and Tweed Shire Council if possible) providing funding and being partially reimbursed from farebox revenue on a mutually agreeable basis.