



Beyond the Bypass

Bypass Response Plan 2022–2027







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Executive Summary

At \$2.2 Billion, the Coffs Harbour Bypass is the biggest infrastructure project delivered in the Coffs Harbour Local Government Area (LGA). The bypass route will redirect through-traffic from the City Centre which will reduce congestion, improve connectivity and provide opportunities to transform and connect a city that is currently divided by a major freight and transport corridor.

Beyond the Bypass, opportunities include connecting the bypass interchanges to the City Centre through to the harbour and improving walking and cycling networks. The redirection of traffic also presents flow-on opportunities for business and tourism growth; and enhanced environmental and social outcomes.

The Beyond the Bypass Response Plan positions how City of Coffs Harbour can maximise opportunities that complement and respond to the delivery of the Coffs Harbour Bypass.

The Response Plan collates adopted strategies and bypass-related actions, projects and community feedback to guide a program of work to leverage and deliver the best outcomes for the LGA. This is structured around eight themes:

- A revitalised City Centre and improved connections
- An attractive, navigable tourist destination
- Protection and regeneration of important environmental and culturally significant assets
- Site specific infrastructure projects
- Effective advocacy between community sectors and agencies
- Temporary worker housing provided in appropriate locations
- Business and local employment growth
- Planning, collaboration and funding.

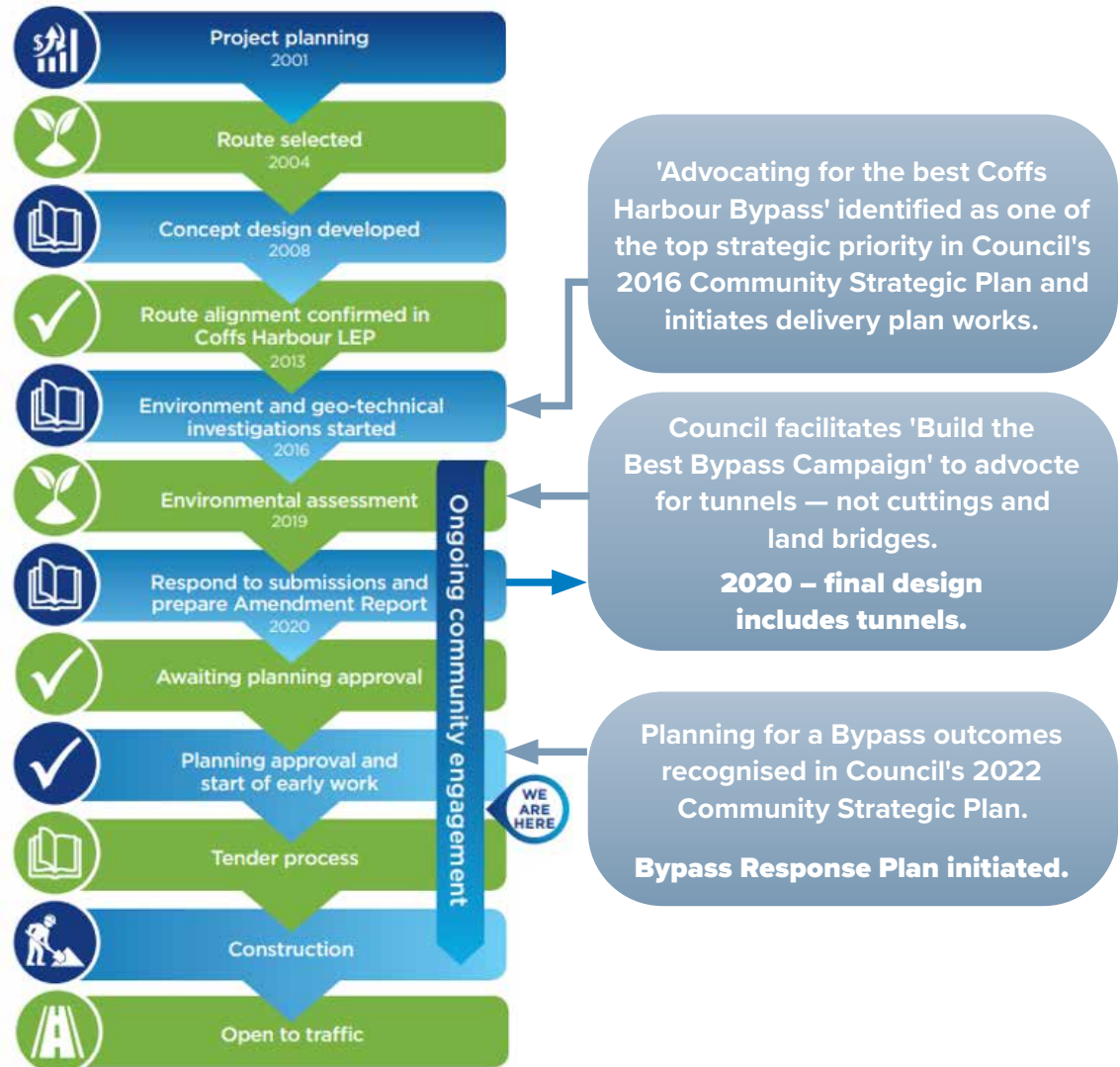
The purpose of this document is to:

- Identify, prioritize and coordinate opportunities associated with the bypass project.
- Guide resourcing, delivery and funding of these opportunities.
- Enhance bypass project communications that impact the Coffs Harbour LGA.

Timeline

The State government has been investigating the bypass of Coffs Harbour since 2001 as part of the Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy

This timeline includes key project milestones and decisions, including Council's role in advocating for positive bypass outcomes on behalf of the community.



Council's Advocacy Role

In 2016 the MyCoffs Community Strategic Plan collected the community's vision and aspirations, with '*advocating for the best Coffs Harbour Bypass*' as the top priority identified.

This priority initiated work through Council's 2017–2022 Delivery Program to address bypass impact assessment, advocacy and stakeholder collaboration; support business preparedness; pacific highway bypass service relocations; and planning and design to rejuvenate the exiting highway corridor.

Throughout 2018–19, Council's advocacy role in *Build the Best Bypass Campaign* assisted in facilitating the State Government's commitment and funding to construct tunnels along the bypass route. The 'tunnels not cuttings' campaign contributed to shaping the design for the bypass and negating impacts to the foothills of the Great Dividing Range, originally proposed as cuttings and land bridges.

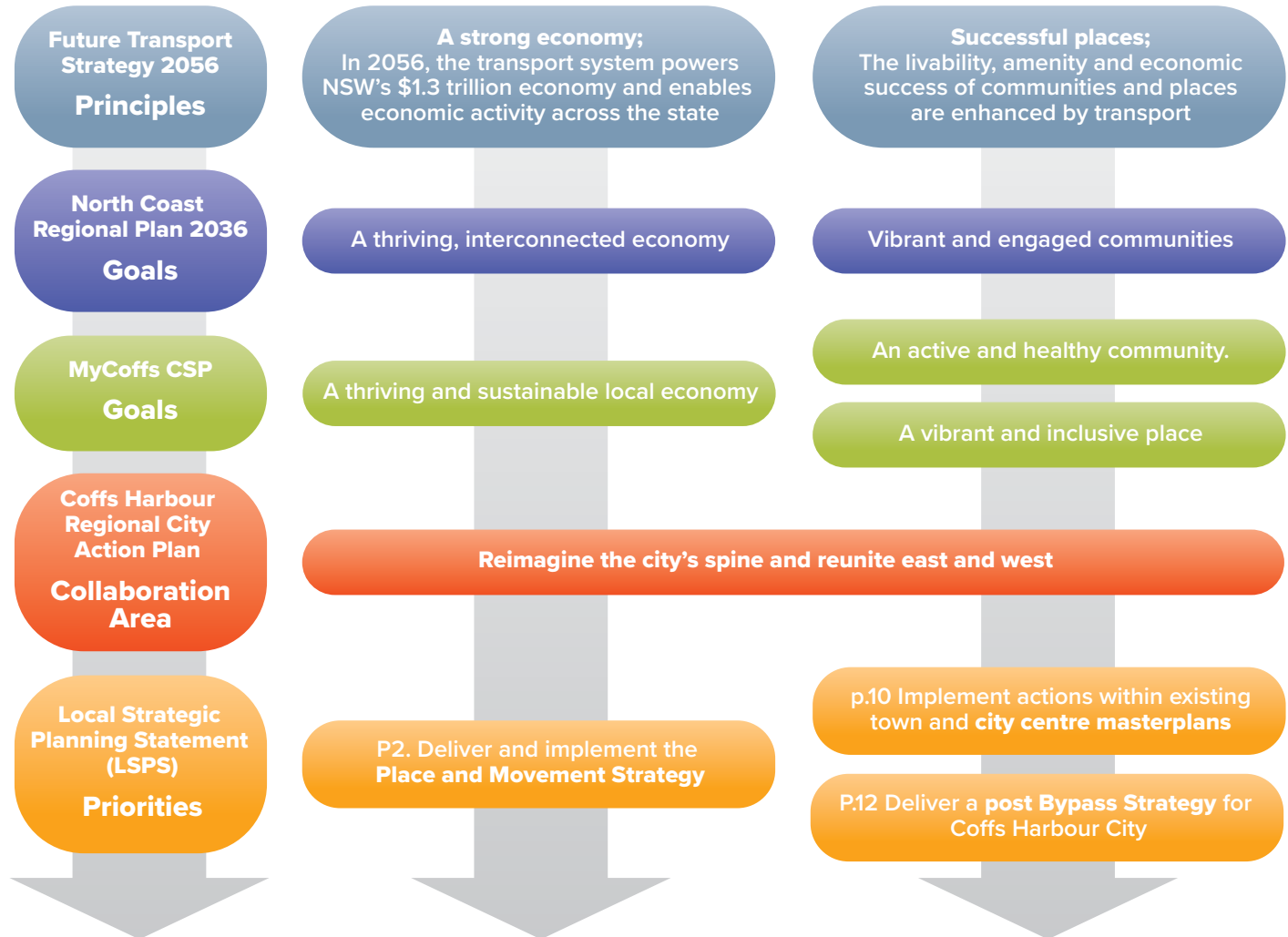
In 2021 an internal Bypass Working Group was formed to establish key directions to improve environmental, economic and social outcomes associated with the Bypass construction.

Source: <https://pacifichighway.nsw.gov.au/coffsharbourbypass>

Strategic Alignment Matrix

Council’s Community Strategic Plan (CSP), the Coffs Harbour Regional City Action Plan (RCAP) and the Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS), include initiatives that align with State Government goals to leverage opportunities from the bypass project.

These initiatives have potential for environmental, social and economic benefits through the delivery of various initiatives, infrastructure and improved connections.



Community Feedback

The MyCoffs Community Strategic Plan (CSP) is the community’s vision and aspirations for the area for the next 10 years.

In early 2022, the community were invited to take part in a CSP refresh conversation. Relevant community feedback included:

- More and better connected footpaths and cycleways
- Desire for sustainable planning and infrastructure
- Supporting local businesses/ industries to be sustainable and resilient
- More opportunities for skills training, especially trades
- Managing land use conflicts in the future and development respects our environment
- Create incentives for people who visit Coffs Harbour post bypass
- Ongoing collaboration between local, state and federal governments
- A ‘Post-Bypass’ identity for the LGA.

CSP outcome:	Our major areas of focus arising from the CSP are:	Delivery program actions:
Our post Pacific Highway bypass future enhances the connectivity, liveability and economy of Coffs Harbour.	Preparing for post-bypass Coffs Harbour through urban design and planning outcomes, supporting the community and businesses through the transition.	Our post Pacific Highway bypass future enhances the connectivity, liveability and economy of Coffs Harbour (Sustainable Community Leadership).

Beyond the Bypass Outcomes



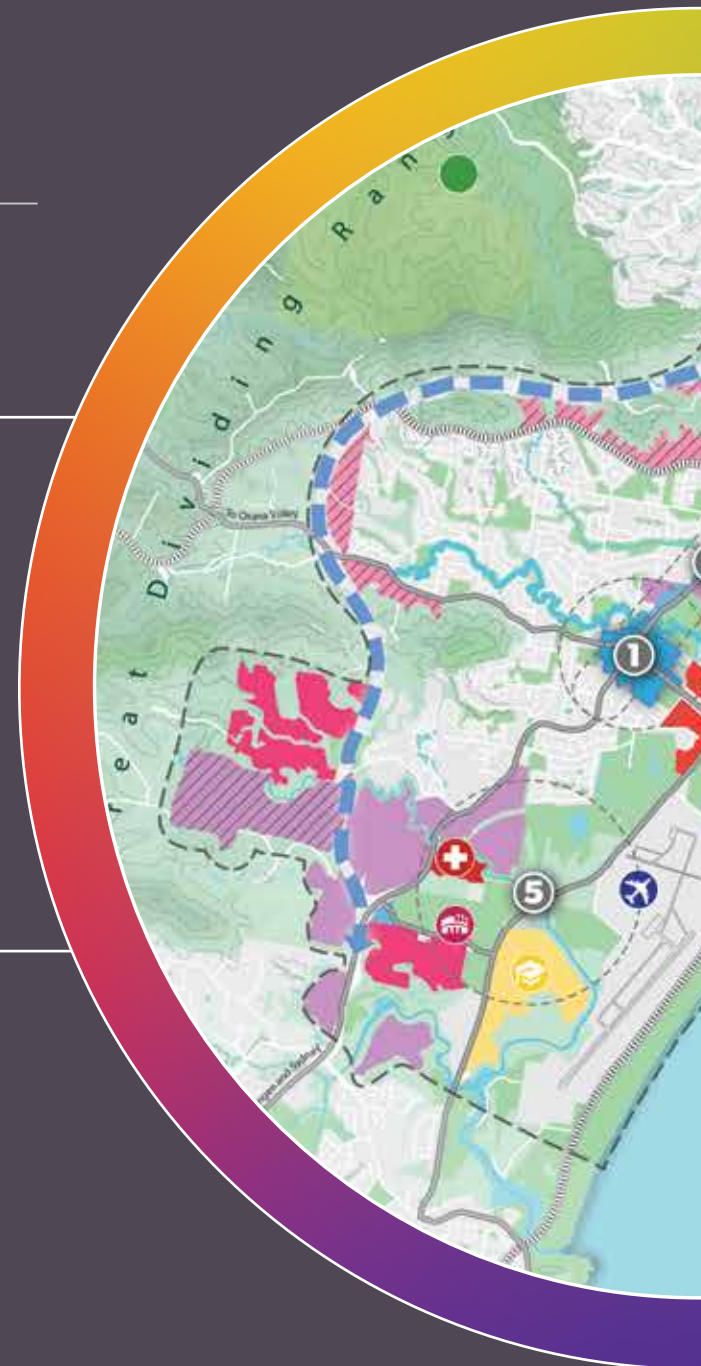
Community

- ✓ Safer and attractive City Centre area.
- ✓ Improved shared pathways, intersections and connections.
- ✓ The city's east and west is reunited.



Environment

- ✓ Showcase new species at the North Coast Regional Botanic Gardens.
- ✓ Regeneration opportunities.
- ✓ Linear corridor potential along the Bypass corridor.





Business

- ✓ Decreased congestion, improved amenity and better access for customers.
- ✓ Potential for businesses on highway to upgrade and reinvigorate the day and night-time economy.
- ✓ Skilled staff and future career pathways.



Visitor

- ✓ An appealing tourist destination with drawcard attractions.
- ✓ Signage directing to attractions and services.
- ✓ Positive visitor experiences with good tourism information referral.



beyond the bypass focus areas

The following section details the key issues and opportunities associated with the bypass project, outlining the social, environmental and economic outcomes we want to achieve and the actions to get there.







Governance, Planning, Funding

Coordinating responsibilities, planning, funding and resourcing for Bypass related initiatives, including communications.

Issues:

- Keeping state government accountable to project delivery milestones. The Bypass Working Group is one part of this connection.
- Shortfall in funding for precinct planning, design work and delivery, such as the City Spine Renewal Strategy.
- Managing media and communications during construction (i.e. negative impacts on local businesses).
- Defining Council's role (advocate or partner).
- Definition between Transport for New South Wales (TfNSW) project boundaries Council projects (i.e. North Boambee Valley Detention Basin).

Opportunities:

- Funding partnerships (State and Federal).
- Defining Council's role in communicating major milestones, issues and areas of advocacy that relate to the bypass project and related projects.
- Developing an internal bypass response strategy project to prioritise planning, funding allocation and renewal projects.

Outcomes

- A Bypass Response Plan integrated with business planning in order to prioritise project funding and delivery.
- Council led communications targeted to the community that enhances bypass project milestones, impacts, opportunities and related initiatives.
- Establish a collaborative working group between CHCC and TfNSW for Beyond the Bypass.

Actions	Council's role	Timeframe
Finalise Bypass Response Plan	Own	Pre-construction

Strategic Alignment

- My Coffs Community Plan
- Local Strategic Planning Statement
- Regional City Action Plan

Opportunity





Housing

Addressing housing pressure, affordability and worker housing options during the bypass construction period.

Issues:

- Short term pressure on existing housing stock with worker numbers to peak around 600 during 2023-24.
- Impact on local population trends (i.e. landowners selling for higher rates and moving away).
- Impacts on rising house and rental prices (leveraging off higher demand).
- Availability of housing options to serve local temporary accommodation needs (i.e. homeless support sector).
- Worker preference for houses over manufactured homes or caravans over the longer term.

Opportunities:

- Potential range of temporary worker accommodation options within the LGA, including private, tourist and vacant sites.
- Potential options in adjoining LGAs (Nambucca, Kempsey, Bellingen and Clarence) for housing options outside the Coffs Harbour LGA.

Outcomes

- Temporary worker housing is provided in appropriate locations within or outside the LGA during the bypass construction period, with minimal impact to the LGA's existing community and essential workers.

Actions	Council's role	Timeframe
Work with TfNSW to explore, advocate and broker temporary worker accommodation options within the LGA (including private, tourist and vacant sites)	Advocate	Pre-construction
Work with TfNSW to explore potential options in adjoining LGAs (Nambucca, Kempsey, Bellingen and Clarence) for housing options outside the Coffs Harbour LGA.	Advocate	Pre-construction

Strategic Alignment

- 🔗 My Coffs Community Plan
- 🔗 Local Strategic Planning Statement

Opportunity





Employment Retention and Skills Development

Addressing skill retention, impacts on local employment and training.

Issues:

- Potential loss of Council staff with local bypass employment targets and competitive wages.
- Local contractors will be in demand, increased demand drives increased costs, with potential impacts on higher operational capital expenditure costs.
- Economic contraction as the bypass project concludes, with skilled workers leaving the area.

Opportunities:

- Work with relevant agencies to support skill retention programs.
- Advocate for youth training programs and work opportunities with local contractors.
- Plan for Council skill retention, including skill and process improvements within Project Management and Construction Sections.

Outcomes

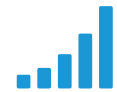
- Training opportunities are matched with skill needs across relevant and future industries.
- Council maintains and retains an engaged, skilled workforce.

Actions	Council's role	Timeframe
Develop relationships to understand future needs for industries and advocate for career pathway opportunities of skilled staff.	Supports	During construction
Address skill and process improvement and staff recruitment in Council's Workforce Management Strategy.	Provides	Pre and Post Construction

Strategic Alignment

- CHCC Workforce Management Strategy
- Coffs Harbour Economic Development Strategy

Opportunity





City Centre Revitalisation and Improved Connections

Revitalise the City Centre and former highway, including improved connections from the bypass interchanges.

Issues:

- The current highway is a freight and transport link that divides the City Centre.
- Long-term vacant city centre properties and poor amenity.
- Funding future precinct plan design and delivery.

Opportunities:

- City Centre revitalisation: street greening, permeability, walkability and place.
- Linking active transport connections from the north and south interchanges and between the City Centre and Park Beach.
- Streetscape improvements from the Coramba interchange and along Harbour Drive.
- Road improvement opportunities associated with reduced traffic volumes on Hogbin Drive

Outcomes

- Better connections between the north to south, east to west, with an extension to the Jetty
- Beautification, public art and street-scaping
- Easier crossings for pedestrians at Harbour Drive, Moonee, Vernon and Elbow streets
- Additional street trees
- Protected bike lanes
- Wider footpaths for gathering and commercial opportunities for business
- Dangerous goods vehicle movements along the former highway are resolved.

Actions	Council's role	Timeframe
Work with TfNSW and DPIE stakeholders to design, fund and deliver a 'City Spine Renewal Strategy'.	Collaborate	During and post construction
Work with TfNSW to seek changes in federal legislation to resolve dangerous goods vehicle movements along the former highway.	Collaborate	During construction

Strategic Alignment

- Local Growth Management Strategy
- Regional City Action Plan
- Place and Movement Strategy (Draft)

Opportunity





Destination and Tourism Opportunities

Addressing visitor experiences relating to marketing, tourist accommodation, infrastructure and destination signage.

Issues:

- Visitor and business experiences impacted by highway construction.
- Impacts to the local tourism economy if caravan parks and other visitor accommodation provided for worker temporary accommodation.
- Lost opportunity to entice people into the region by chance (along former highway).

Opportunities:

- Business preparedness and improved communications.
- Destination creation (visual viewpoints, features and attractions) and increased need for wayfinding to serve access and transport needs of tourists.
- Tourism and destination marketing plans updated, including a 'post bypass' Coffs identity.
- Potential for businesses on the former highway to upgrade and reinvigorate.

Outcomes

- Delivery of regular and timely communications so businesses understand bypass activities.
- Destination signage is clear and identifiable so that visitors can easily explore the region and find all on offer, stay longer and spend more.
- Effective messaging and marketing to emphasise the Coffs region is not just a 'pass through' - but a 'stay'.

Actions	Council's role	Timeframe
Timely and regular business communications.	Provide	During construction
Destination signage within and around the City Centre and key attractions.	Provide	Post construction
Tourist marketing and enhancement of the Coffs Coast Champions program.	Provide	Post construction

Strategic Alignment

- Community Strategic Plan
- Regional City Action Plan
- Tourism Strategic Plan

Opportunity





Community and Social Impacts

Impacts on the social and welfare sector, community safety, health education and council facilities during the bypass construction and beyond.

Issues:

- Social pressures on various lower socio-economic communities, resulting from higher rents leading to a greater reliance on support by NGOs and local charities.
- Potential for anti-social behaviour due to 'gender-related impacts' with additional workers.
- Police report that other local major roadworks projects have led to increased theft, recreational drug and alcohol usage, reports of violence both family and domestic alongside personal violence (resulting from many workers living in intensive conditions) and property damage such as graffiti.
- Availability of health services (in particular GPs).
- Access to services to address the serious health concerns for Coffs Harbour regarding mental health issues and drug and alcohol misuse.
- Increased demand for Council facilities and services such as such as libraries, cultural facilities, sporting and recreational facilities and lifeguard services.
- Impact on local schools (at capacity) to accept additional students without resourcing.
- Impact of changing population with potential loss of community members if skilled workers move away.

Opportunities:

- Upgrades to Coffs Harbour Health Campus may provide additional health services.
- Population growth may increase the diversity of the community profile.
- Increased economic benefits to local businesses.
- Improved road safety for local trips. Renewal Strategy (including scope, design, funding and delivery).

Outcomes

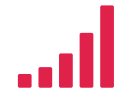
- Effective advocacy between sectors / agencies and levels of government to address social impact actions.
- Actions link to Community Strategic Plan delivery and operational plan outcomes.

Actions	Council's role	Timeframe
Embed bypass issues in community sector and community focussed action plans.	Advocate	During construction
Maintain bypass issues as a standing agenda item on key sector working groups.	Advocate	During construction

Strategic Alignment

👉 Community Strategic Plan

Opportunity





Site Specific Opportunities

Specific sites or projects that present economic, social or environmental location opportunities.

- Appropriate relocation or re-use opportunity for Luke Bowen Bridge.
- Land buy-back of surplus sites along the bypass corridor (refer to TfNSW property acquisition map).
- Use of Council's facilities during constructions (i.e. the laboratory for environmental testing and various meetings spaces for TfNSW functions, meeting and offsite office base).
- Linking active transport and improved connectivity from the bypass interchanges. This includes the Korora and South Coffs interchanges, and an east-west gateway into the City Centre through to the harbour from the Coramba interchange.

Actions	Council's role	Timeframe
Decision regarding appropriate future use or location for Luke Bowen Footbridge.	Provide	Pre-construction
Use of Council's facilities for various TfNSW purposes.	Support	During construction
Korora Interchange - cycleway development to address missing cycle link / include pedestrian access across Pacific Hwy.	Collaborate	Pre, during and post construction
South Coffs Interchange - active transport, improved connections and intersection.	Collaborate	Pre, during and post construction
Develop an east-west gateway strategy into the City Centre and through to the harbour from the Coramba interchange.	Collaborate	Pre, during and post construction
Monitor land buyback opportunities along the bypass corridor and negotiate with TfNSW accordingly.	Advocate	Post construction

Strategic Alignment

- Local Strategic Planning Statement
- Place and Movement Strategy (Draft)

Opportunity





Leveraging Environmental Opportunities

Protect, regenerate and maintain important environmental assets.

Issues:

- Loss of agricultural land and economic impact on long term farmers.
- Environmental impacts (West Coffs, North Boambee Valley West).
- Loss of koala habitat and linkages.
- Loss of rare remnant rainforest pocket (Mackays Road) that Council uses for seed harvesting.

Opportunities:

- TfNSW could donate surplus resumed land to Council with a funding stream for maintenance and management (i.e. a linear corridor along the bypass with some land to be rehabilitated).
- Partner with the contractor and TfNSW to target some regeneration sites in accordance with consent condition E13.
- As a condition of consent E17(a), root balls are to be collected for use in erosion rehabilitation works. An appropriate storage location is required.
- North Coast Regional Botanic Gardens (NCRBG) to benefit from species translocation and showcase new species, in accordance with consent condition E14 and E17(b).¹
- Fill site opportunities for Council generated fill (sell or dump at no cost) as required.

Outcomes

- Regeneration of identified sites.
- Showcase of new vegetation species found in the Bypass corridor to the NCRBG.
- Surplus land developed as a linear corridor alongside the Bypass corridor (with TfNSW funding agreement in perpetuity for maintenance and management).

Actions	Council's role	Timeframe
Showcase new species at NCRBG.	Collaborate	Pre-construction
Identification and commencement of regeneration opportunities.	Provide	During construction
Procurement of an appropriate storage location for 'root balls' resulting from clearing of vegetation for use in erosion rehabilitation works.	Provide	During construction
Negotiation with TfNSW regarding surplus land for future use and development as a linear corridor alongside the Bypass corridor.	Collaborate	Post construction

Strategic Alignment

- 👉 Local Growth Management Strategy

Opportunity



¹ Instrument of Approval (Determination), Department of Planning, Industry and Environment Coffs Harbour Bypass SSI 7666

Action Summary

Priority	Actions	Council's role	Timeframe	Resource
Critical	Work with TfNSW and DPIE stakeholders to design, fund and deliver a 'City Spine Renewal Strategy'.	Collaborate	During and post construction	Funding required
Essential	Korora Interchange - cycleway development to address missing link and pedestrian access across the Pacific Highway.	Collaborate	During and post construction	Funding required
	South Coffs Interchange - active transport, improved connections and intersection upgrades.	Collaborate	During and post construction	Funding required
	Develop an east-west gateway strategy into the City Centre and through to the harbour from the Coramba interchange.	Collaborate	During and post construction	Funding required
	Tourist marketing and enhancement of the Coffs Coast Champions program.	Provide	Post construction	Funding required
	Destination signage within and around the City Centre / key attractions.	Provide	Post construction	Funding required
	Procurement of an appropriate storage location for 'root balls' resulting from clearing of vegetation for use in erosion rehabilitation works.	Provide	During construction	Funding required
	Timely and regular business communications.	Provide	During construction	BAU
	Work with TfNSW to provide appropriate temporary worker accommodation options within and outside the LGA.	Advocate	Pre-construction	BAU

Priority	Actions	Council's role	Timeframe	Resource
Desirable	Monitor land buyback opportunities along the bypass corridor and negotiate with TfNSW accordingly.	Advocate	Post construction	BAU
	Work with TfNSW to seek changes in federal legislation to resolve dangerous goods vehicle movements along the former highway.	Collaborate	During construction	BAU
	Decision regarding appropriate future use or location for Luke Bowen Footbridge.	Provide	Pre-construction	BAU
	Showcase new species at NCRBG.	Collaborate	Pre-construction	BAU
	Identification and commencement of regeneration opportunities.	Advocate	During construction	BAU
	Negotiation with TfNSW regarding surplus land for future use and development as a linear corridor alongside the Bypass corridor.	Collaborate	Post construction	BAU
	Use of Council's facilities for various TfNSW purposes.	Support	During construction	BAU
	Embed bypass issues in community sector and community focussed action plans.	Advocate	During construction	BAU
	Maintain bypass issues as a standing agenda item on key sector working groups.	Advocate	During construction	BAU
	Develop relationships to understand future needs for industries and advocate for career pathway opportunities of skilled staff.	Support	During construction	BAU
	Address skill and process improvement and staff recruitment in Council's Workforce Management Strategy.	Provide	Post Construction	BAU

