

Safer transport for a safer community – development and implementation of the Gold Coast Road Safety Plan 2015-2020

Matthew Tilly

Executive Coordinator – Strategic Operations, Transport and Traffic Branch, City of Gold Coast

Abstract

The City of Gold manages over 3,000km of local roads and more than 2,000km of footpaths within the City. To ensure the provision of a safe and functional environment for all road users, the Gold Coast Road Safety Plan 2015-2020 (GCRSP) was developed, as foreshadowed in the Gold Coast City Transport Strategy 2031.

A collaborative approach underpinned the Plan's development in an effort to maximise partner capabilities and recognise inclusive, holistic approaches are more efficient and effective.

The GCRSP was adopted by the Council of the City of Gold Coast on 2 April 2015, and seeks to achieve a 30% reduction in the number of serious injuries and fatalities associated with road trauma from 2010 to 2020. The Plan provides a local framework for the City to improve the safety of the transport system it owns and manages along with appropriate support for its road users. It takes into consideration our transport infrastructure, its users and the unique geographical and demographic features of the Gold Coast.

This Plan consolidates existing action, integrates complementary use of resources and identifies innovative approaches to deliver a coordinated, collaborative road safety effort. It essentially represents a "checklist" of concepts tailored to address local road safety challenges, without the need for significant levels of investment.

This paper provides a broad overview of the GCRSP, as well as outlining the evidence-based and collaborative approach to prepare the Plan, focusing on opportunities and challenges experienced throughout the Plan's development.

Overview

The Gold Coast City Transport Strategy 2031 was released by the Council of City of Gold Coast in March 2013. The Strategy broadly recognises the importance of providing a safe and functional environment for all road users (including drivers, passengers, motorcyclists, pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users) and highlights a commitment to establishing a Road Safety Plan for the City.

The development of the Gold Coast Road Safety Plan 2015-2020 (GCRSP) stems from this overarching City Transport Strategy and is part of the City's effort to provide the safest and most efficient transport system possible.

A partnership approach was central to development of the GCRSP, utilising the capabilities of each stakeholder organisation and recognising that a holistic, collaborative approach to road safety has the greatest chance for successful outcomes. The development of the GCRSP involved a number of stakeholder organisations including:

- City of Gold Coast
- Department of Transport and Main Roads
- Queensland Police Service
- Royal Automobile Club of Queensland (RACQ)
- Centre for Accident Research & Road Safety – Queensland (CARRS-Q)

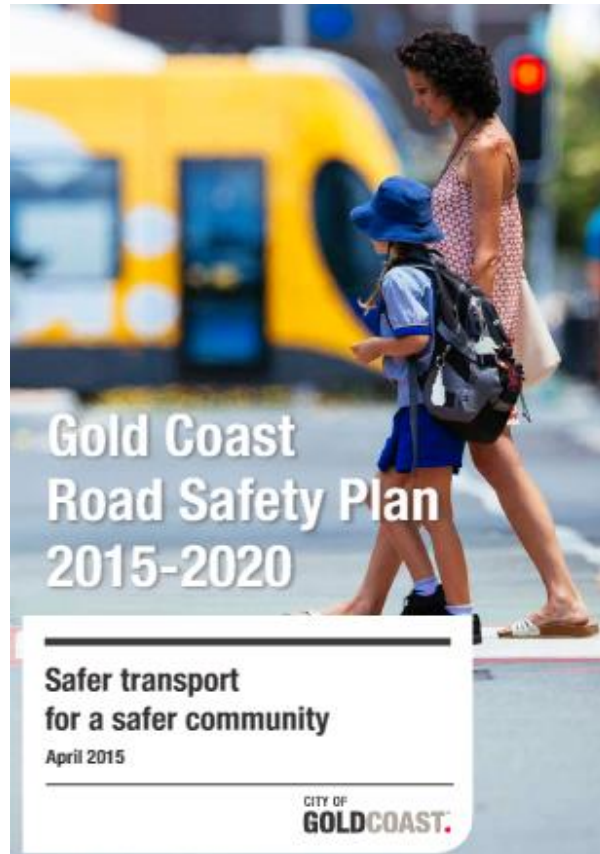


Figure 1. Gold Coast Road Safety Plan Cover Page

To inform the road safety plan development, crash statistics and trends for the ten year period from 2003-2012 were analysed to identify specific categories and sub-categories of causal and contributing factors, demographics, seasonality and geographic influences on crash locations and types. Literature reviews were then undertaken to identify the most effective countermeasures to address the identified issues as well as understand the implications of future changes to the regions transport network and population.

Findings were consolidated into 20 focus areas, which represented a distinct category of local issues and/or trends. A key criterion for issue inclusion was the domain of stakeholders influence to enable a solution at a targeted local level. This helped shape the development of a localised 'Safe System' approach consisting of four themes and aspirations relating to our road safety context; our people, our transport system, our places and our shared responsibility.

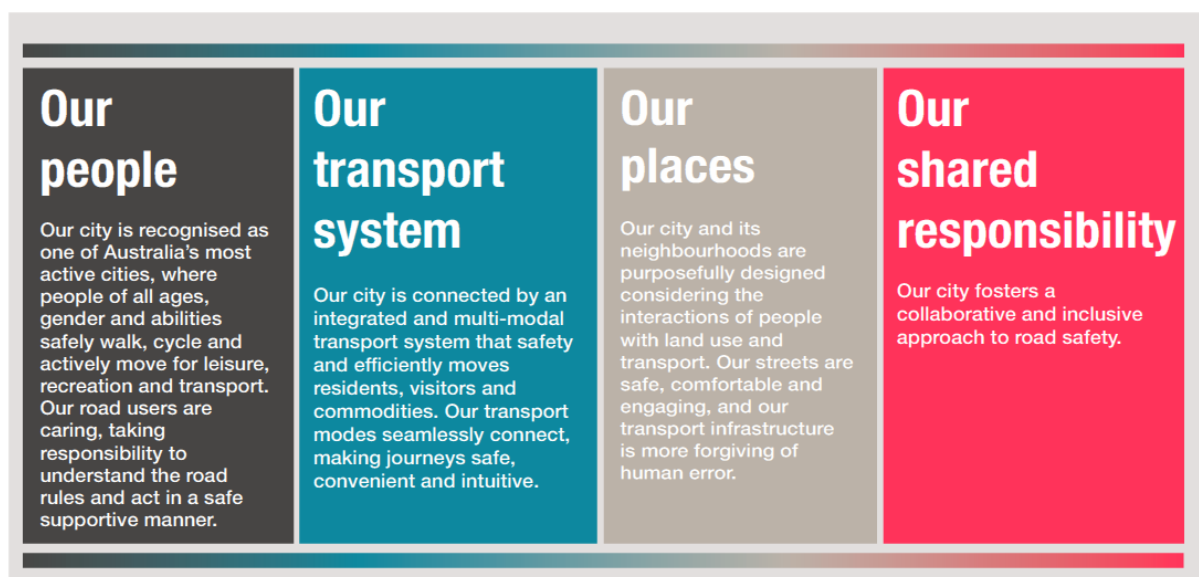


Figure 2. Our 'Safe System' approach

In total, there are 58 actions proposed within the Plan, with lead / support responsibilities identified and broad timeframes for action (short/medium/long). As seen in Table 1 below, each action is presented in clear and concise language, with a target timeframe to undertake the action and organisation responsible for implementation of the action also identified.

Table 1. Example of Actions within the GCRSP

No.	Action	Timeframe	Lead/partners
2.11	<p>Develop a strategic view of speed limits with the priority aim of delivering safer road environments for all users:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> investigate increased implementation of the 50 kilometre per hour urban default speed limit in existing 60 kilometre per hour signed roads investigate and implement lower speed limits (for example, 30 or 40 kilometres per hour) at locations of pedestrian priority and during times of high pedestrian activity. 	Short - medium	<p>City TMR QPS</p>
2.12	Investigate and trial temporary speed zones in beachfront entertainment precincts and other locations with high numbers of pedestrian users (e.g. 40 kilometres per hour in Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach on Friday and Saturday nights between 8pm and 5am).	Short - medium	<p>City TMR QPS</p>

The actions where the City has lead responsibility have been purposely worded to reflect the City's existing responsibilities for improving road safety in a roadmap for success. The role of the Road Safety Plan is to coalesce existing actions with future actions to ensure meaningful outcomes.

A partnership approach augmented the Plan's development in an effort to maximise partner capabilities and recognise that inclusive, holistic approaches are more efficient and effective than efforts in isolation. This approach has tangibly translated into stronger inter-agency

relationships and an effective governance transition from the GCRSP development to action implementation phase.

Planning process

A best practice and transferable methodology was adopted to develop the GCRSP, with four distinct stages:

Stage 1: Initiation

- Defining the purpose and scope underpinned by justification to invest
- Developing the terms of reference and establishing the appropriate governance structure
- Obtaining buy-in to the intended project from respective agency “decision-makers” prior to formal project commencement (via an Executive Steering Committee)

Stage 2: Project planning and implementation

- Developing a collaborative approach with stakeholders through a series of workshops to establish agreement and commitment to tangible project objectives (via a Partnership Advisory Group)
- Identifying a planning framework suitable to the local Gold Coast context
- Establishing an agreed vision for high level targets in the context of State, National and International Road Safety Planning
- Evaluating historic, existing and future road safety data and trends
- Identifying contemporary road safety strategic policies and actions to address key issues
- Communicating an initial draft Road Safety Plan technical document suitable for targeted stakeholder engagement via the established project governance framework

Stage 3: Project delivery

- Translating the RSP technical document into an intended community-facing draft plan for consultation and final refinement with key stakeholders
- Engaging internal and external stakeholders to gain “formal” endorsement and support for the plan
- Formal adoption of the Plan as policy by the Council of the City of Gold Coast

Stage 4: Project closure and evaluation

- Public launch of the plan (officially launched in May 2015)
- Undertaking a post-development review to highlight planning successes and document lessons learned
- Transitioning from development of the GCRSP into implementation and monitoring
- Immediately mobilising with partners to establish “year 1” deliverables to maintain positive momentum achieved via the GCRSP launch

Lessons Learned

Lessons learned throughout the Plan's development focus on opportunities for other local governments in relation to a subject matter (road safety) that is often regarded to be a matter for Federal or State Government to address. Rather than replicating the national and state agenda, a locally-focused technical investigation was undertaken to understand the issues experienced within the unique regional features of the Gold Coast – transport system, economy, geography, demography etc. This allowed actions to be tailored to the local context, whilst contributing to the higher order objectives of the State. For example, this enables the Gold Coast beachfront precincts to utilise a different approach to road safety than those adopted in our hinterland region. Another key local example is the challenge regarding tailoring road safety actions for the large proportion of transient population in the City – visitors, international students etc.

The GCRSP is one of several transport network plans that cascade from the overarching Gold Coast City Transport Strategy released in 2013. Learnings and successful elements of the road safety planning process will be applied and refined when developing subsequent network plans –project management & delivery learnings, as well as technical symbiosis between the multi-modal planning framework.

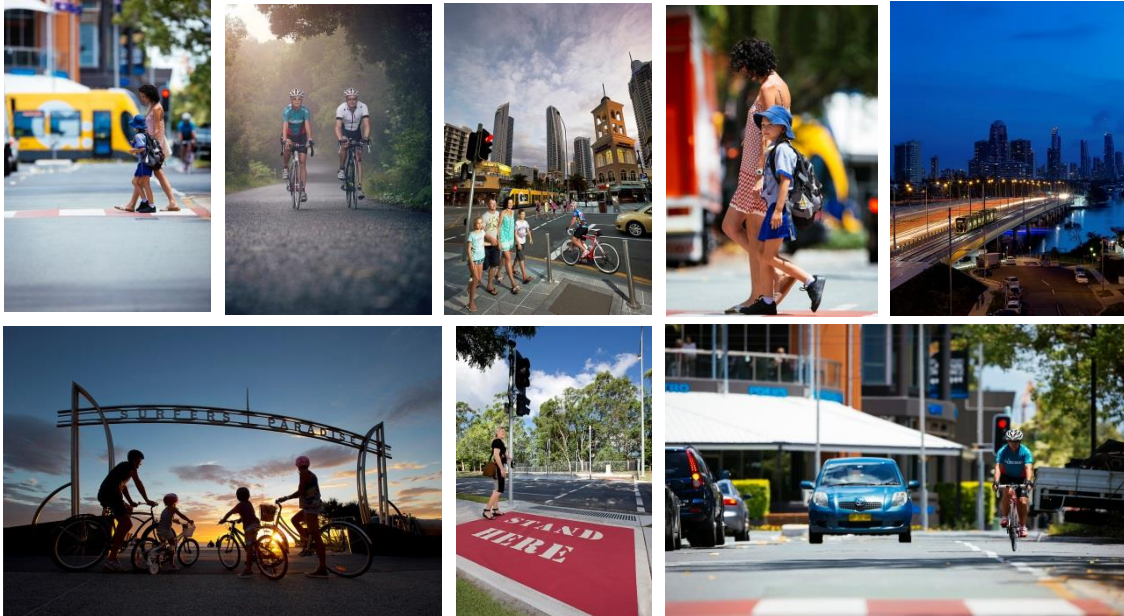
Next Steps: Implementation and Evaluation

The GCRSP sets a clear direction for improved road safety within the City over the next five years. With several short-term actions within the plan currently in the early stages of implementation, the development of the Road Safety Plan significantly increased awareness of the City's role in road safety with key local stakeholders. Following the Plan's endorsement in April 2015, there has been a noticeable increase in public-facing road safety messaging about GCRSP (and partner) initiatives. The Mayor has actively participated in recent Road Safety events such as Fatality Free Friday and is due to launch the City's 'Drive Safe' Community Speed Awareness initiative in early August 2015.

The strong support for the GCRSP from key City stakeholders has provided a clear mandate for the City's Transport & Traffic Branch to immediately implement the intended short-term actions within the Plan. Several initiatives commenced in late 2014/15 allowed the Partnership Advisory Group to provide direction to the respective projects and ensure that the positive momentum from the Plan development phase was immediately transferred into the Plan implementation phase.

The Plan also highlights monitoring and evaluation as a key component of implementation. One of the Plan's actions is to establish fit-for-purpose monitoring and evaluation tools to ensure that Road Safety Plan actions successfully mitigate local road safety issues and emerging trends. An intended (and fit-for-purpose) evaluation methodology is due to be presented to the Gold Coast Road Safety Partnership Advisory Group for endorsement in late 2015.

The ongoing implementation of outcome-focused actions that have the intention of reducing serious road trauma in the City, as presented in the Plan, will result in positive outcomes which are likely to have cumulative community benefits beyond 2020.



A copy of the Gold Coast Road Safety Plan 2015 – 2020 can be viewed and downloaded at <http://www.goldcoast.qld.gov.au/documents/bf/gc-road-safety-plan.pdf>.