

Meeting Record

Project:	Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy	Reference:	1093.50
Location:	Coffs Harbour Catholic Club, West High Street, Coffs Harbour	Date:	1 May 2002

Present: Apology: Copy: Name:

SOUTHERN CFG			
✓			David Doyle
	✓		Wayne O'Brien
✓			Bob Bunting (proxy)
✓			Trish Welsh
	✓		Murray Williams
✓			Bruce Partridge
✓			Gillian French
		✓	Jenny Oliver (proxy)
			Ron Woodlands (WITHDRAWN)
✓			Gail Latham
	✓		Marlene Jacobs
			Andrew Huggett (WITHDRAWN)
✓			Peter Lubans
		✓	Ernie Armstrong (proxy)
✓			Hugh Saddleton
	✓		Paul Norton
	✓		Ron Smith
✓			David Pike
		✓	Ron Gray (proxy)
✓			Tom Hamilton-Foster
	✓		Peter Jackson

PROJECT TEAM				
✓			Wes Stevenson	RTA
✓			Bob Higgins	RTA
✓			Robert Kook	RTA
	✓		Jill Christy	RTA
	✓		René Burkart	RTA
✓			Tim Paterson	Connell Wagner
✓			Rosemary Russell	Connell Wagner
	✓		Bruce Penman	Connell Wagner
✓			Barry Hancock	Connell Wagner
✓			Peter Winsor	Connell Wagner
✓			Alison Clausen	Connell Wagner
✓			Andrew Smith	Pramax Communications
✓			Bill Wood	Coffs Harbour City Council
✓			Rick Bennell	Coffs Harbour City Council
	✓		George Stulle	Coffs Harbour City Council
	✓		John Finlay	PlanningNSW
✓			Jo Gardner	PlanningNSW
Recorded By: Pramax Communications				Total Pages: 8
Subject: Community Focus Group Meeting No 4 (Southern CFG)				

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1. INTRODUCTION

Meeting started at 5.45pm

- Andrew Smith (Pramax) welcomed the group. There were apologies from Murray Williams, Marlene Jacobs and Ron Smith.
- CFG member asked why the proxy for Marlene Jacobs had been rejected. Andrew indicated that he was unaware of such a request being made.

2. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- At the last meeting Ron Gray should have been noted as being in attendance rather than David Pike.
- The minutes were accepted as an accurate and correct record of the meeting.

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3. MATTERS ARISING

RTA Property Manager

- The RTA Property Manager, Mr Martin Howard, is to address the group at the next meeting (at the same time as Sapphire and Woolgoolga CFGs). At this time questions can be asked and discussion about land acquisition and all the various aspects regarding acquisition. Property Acquisition document to be sent to all CFG members.
- Copies of the RTA's Property Acquisition Policy document were made available at the meeting to allow CFG members to become familiar with the subject before the next meeting. CFG members to look through document before next meeting.

CFG Observers at Steering Committee Meetings

- In response to a request from members of the CFG to attend Steering Committee meetings as observers, the group was informed that this was not appropriate as the Steering Committee was a closed committee and its membership charter did not allow for observers.

Wilson Dale Proposal

- Barry Hancock spoke to the CFG re: Wilson Dale's proposal and invited them to look at a map with the proposed bypass. Connell Wagner had given it serious consideration. They approached it the same way the original corridor options were looked at. The conclusion was that it was very similar to the central corridor options except that it involved substantially more earthworks and would be more costly. The advice given to the Steering Committee by Connell Wagner was that for similar reasons that the central corridor options were rejected, it was not felt that this proposal was worthy of further consideration. This recommendation was accepted by the Steering Committee.
- Discussion took place on how this decision should be made public. It was agreed that the CFG should let the project team take this information to the media and the broader community. It was not necessary to treat it as confidential and if inquiries were made of CFG members regarding this decision then they could inform them that the proposal had been rejected.
- There was concern from some CFG members that the public that were behind this proposal would feel like it had not been given serious consideration and would not understand why it had been rejected. This proposal had been put forward to reduce social issues.
- The project team emphasised that this proposal was almost a clone of the central corridor which was not only rejected because of terrain, topography and engineering but also environmental issues. It would also not take the desired traffic flow off the current highway. Tim Paterson re-stated that there are a lot of other things that the proposal did not deliver and did not even pass the first test to qualify it for further study.
- A request was made that a map was put up with an explanation to the rejection of this proposal.
- Could a fact sheet be printed up?

Letter from Trish Welsh

- In response to an e-mail from Trish Welsh, the following issues were discussed.
- *There are concerns that the costs are underestimated. Have things like environmental costs, acquisition costs been included. Would like an understanding of how it was arrived at these costs.*
- Tim Paterson - The costs are all in the working papers which are available on the web site. A strategic level estimate is done in accordance to Government protocols which have been in place for around two years.

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- *Does it take into consideration North Boambee Valley Release?*
- Council's representative stated that it would be a risk to undertake additional investment in infrastructure to service this area until the issues associated with the existing highway and the inner bypass are resolved.
- *What information has been obtained from the feedback sheets and comment forms?*
- Only just starting to collate this information. At the next session in three weeks we should have a better idea of community feelings
- *What date was the information sheet prepared and printed?*
- It was sent to the printers on the 13th of March and released on the 15th March. Started preparing it in January.
- *If this decision on the inner and outer corridors was only released on the 15th how can it already be printed?*
- This is fairly typical of this type of process. Fundamental information was released to the CFG over the previous weeks regarding the favoured corridor. The CFG got the information the same day as the Steering Committee previous to the release date.
- *Wilson Dale's Proposal* - previously answered.
- *Coffs Harbour Tourist Marketing plan in relation to Bruxner Park, social impact issues, such as impact on tourism has to be considered at some point. At what stage are we going to start looking at these sort of things?*
- Work to date has primarily been budget/cost. Social, tourist and other issues have not been looked at in terms of dollar value. Focus has quite clearly been basic engineering cost and feasibility.
- *When a decision is made in November 2002 for a Western bypass or an upgrade of the existing highway will it be one or the other or is there still an option for both.*
- The RTA stated that currently we need to work out what the options are for both the existing highway and the inner bypass options, what they will look like, the impacts, what is needed in the future and compare the two.
- The CFG stated that residents want to know whether if we upgrade the existing highway will there still be at some time in the future, whether later they will want land for a bypass. Is it one or the other?
- The RTA confirmed that if we say the existing highway is what we are going to be doing we will not then go through the process of reserving land for an inner corridor later. If we choose the bypass option it is important that we need to do work on the existing highway until the bypass is built in 20 years time.
- The CFG stated that at the information night it was felt that people were told different things and came away with different perceptions and wrong information.

Rick Bennell (CHCC) spoke briefly about the Urban Development Plan booklet. He pointed out that growth had been nowhere near expectation. Some release areas had been a lot slower. Now we need to see what happens with the highway to see how we progress. Coffs Harbour has a very elongated urban centre. Coffs Harbour Council want to change their focus to maintain a sustainability as we go through expansion implications in more detail.

4. SCENARIO OPTIONS FOR UPGRADING THE EXISTING HIGHWAY

Tim Paterson recapped from the last meeting the Strategic Option Scenarios.

Barry Hancock introduced Alison Clausen and Peter Winsor who both work for Connell

Overhead attached to last minutes.

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Wagner.

- The existing highway was being looked at from New Englands Road to Korora Hill. It was broken up into six sections.
- Using overheads Barry showed the six sections to be as follows:
 1. New Englands Road to Thompsons Road.
 2. From the Windmill to Park Avenue.
 3. CDB-Park Avenue to traffic lights at Marcia Street
 4. Marcia Street to Bray Street.
 5. Bray Street to West Korora Road.
 6. West Korora Road to Luke Bowen Bridge.
- Travel analysis times were taken on the existing highway. Three runs in each direction over 11kms at 11am to 12pm from New Englands Road to Luke Bowen Bridge. The travel time surveys indicated an average of 12.5 to 14 minutes northbound and 12-13 minutes southbound. with an average total stopping at lights 1.5 to 3 minutes.
- Travel times will be longer during such times as peak hour.
- CFG members had timed travel times it at 3.00pm on the weekend of the school holidays. It took much the same time and it is time spent stopping at traffic lights which is an issue.
- Coffs Harbour has the majority of traffic lights between Brisbane and Sydney.
- Part of the overall strategy is to develop a ring road system for the local traffic which Council are working to complete. A ring road system would take traffic off the highway but it is 10 years plus before all of the ring road system would be completed.
- Chamber of Commerce have been pushing for the ring road to be finished, will continue to do so. They feel the costs should be part of the overall scheme.
- In the planning of the highway it is assumed that the ring road will be finished and so it is an important consideration when looking at the highway's future.

In upgrading the highway the project team are looking at an eight lane configuration for at least some sections of the Highway.

- Barry showed an overhead which showed four lanes for the Pacific Highway and a service road on the side. It is all about separation for through and local traffic.
- This cannot happen for the total length of the highway as there is not enough available room.
- The initial upgrade of the highway will have to happen regardless of whether another bypass is chosen or not.

Barry ran through some ideas the team had come up with for upgrading of the existing highway:

1. New Englands Road – Overpass over existing roundabout.
2. Grade separation at North Boambee Road (Cook Road - under)
3. Would need to look at changing hospital access.
4. Grade separation at Combine and Albany - ramps to south only.
5. Bray Street to Arthur Street. The ring road when finished will take a lot of traffic off Bray Street. Possibly a grade separation with a bridge coming off Bray Street over the highway to Orlando. Around Bray Street the railway reserve is very tight.

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There is not much room.

6. Macauleys Headland area – the major constraint here is on widening as it is heavily populated. An option could be a tunnel through eliminating the loop.
 7. CBD area - Park Avenue to Marcia Street. This is the busiest area and also the most highly constrained. There are various options to consider;
Interchange at Combine Street and Albany. Widening towards Park Avenue could be converted into a four lane highway with a service lane on the side. We may need to consider all CBD roads be left in and left out only.
Consideration only access point to highway is south of Combine Street and north at Coffs Street. Making a city loop around the CBD for local access to business.
It is a big issue on how to take local traffic off this section of highway. Do the streets have the capacity for all the extra traffic as the local streets are used as a loop system?
- Council's representative indicated that Highway upgrading strategies were contrary to current planning for development of the CBD.
 - CFG asked about a viaduct over the highway.
 - Rick Bennell as a town planner has concerns about what a viaduct would look like. Also using the local roads, if this is long term what is the cost to eliminate traffic all the way up to Bray Street maybe along the line of a tunnel.
 - Tim Paterson stated that in the big cities the viaduct is something which is not tolerated - Sydney is moving towards tunnels as are other cities, they are moving down rather than up.
 - CFG member suggested taking the traffic off at Stadium Drive down Hogbin through to the roundabout at the Plaza back onto the highway. Also felt that this way would affect less residents than the inner corridor.
 - Other CFG members felt that this is taking trucks through some of the more scenic part of Coffs.
 - Project Team pointed out that this is contrary to the strategy of dealing with trucks and through traffic that has been implemented for the last ten years. The idea is to make the journey quicker and separate them from local traffic. This does not achieve that. It would also undermine the purpose of the Link Road.
 - There are no costings yet on the upgrading of the existing highway.

The group broke for a break and Barry encouraged the CFG to look at the maps available and mark any ideas or information they may to put forward to the project team about the upgrading of the existing highway.

- CFG member would like the Project Team to seriously consider the Hogbin Drive option.
- Consideration will also be given to an overhead viaduct from Bray Street to Combine Street.

Project team to look at Hogbin Drive option and overhead viaduct from Bray Street to Combine Street.

5. ROUTE OPTIONS FOR INNER BYPASS

- Connell Wagner presented two possible alignments for the Inner Bypass which had been developed based on the results of the Quantm model and refined in response to the issues raised by the CFG at the last meeting and the results of other investigations.

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- Maps were presented to the CFG which showed each alignment and a vertical profile of the road.
- The further out you went the higher the cuts. The issue of tunnels then comes into play.
- The project team looked at the information the CFG had given them at the previous meeting and tried to adjust the alignments to include this information.

The group gathered to look at the maps with Barry and discuss.

- Stage One of Boambee Valley has been rezoned. However, Stage 1 relies on Stages Two and Three and the planning for the area would need to be rethought in the event that a Bypass were proposed through this area.
- Korora rural residential - zoning of this area has been submitted to the Department of Planning for consideration.
- Council's representative indicated that a Bypass would present an opportunity to create a western barrier to future expansion of the urban area. Council is looking at urban consolidation as part of its strategy to meet future growth needs, as it is economically and environmentally smarter.
- Council's representative indicated that the option chosen will not affect Coffs Harbour growth potential. Coffs Harbour has an adequate supply of zoned residential land without doing anything. This includes Stage One of Boambee and rural residential areas.

Discussion regarding the inner corridor alignments.

- Significant banana losses. Not just the immediate area but the cutting of the ridges lets the winds through and this will affect a huge area of banana growers.
- If there are to be tunnels through certain sections then the issues change.
- These are just lines at the moment and a lot more work needs to be done yet - visual, noise, heritage, geotechnical, acquisition costs, detailed fauna and flora.
- CFG member pointed out that along the inner corridor is a rain forest and is subject frequently to very low cloud coverage - heavy fogs.
- A comparison was made to current travel time on the highway to what it would be on the bypass. There was a difference saving of 4 - 8 minutes.
- The comment was made by CFG that it only took 12% of the traffic off the highway to save 4 - 8 minutes and for this they were looking at destroying people's homes.
- The project team pointed out that although this seemed trivial when multiplied by thousands of cars a day and savings made over other parts of the highway it added up to significant amount saved in time, fuel and road costs.
- Barry moved onto the photos which had been taken of the areas that would be affected. He showed where the ridges would be cut and explained that they would be able to overlay these photographs later with a picture of what the highway may look like if it went along this path.
- The CFG queried how many properties would have to be acquired? The RTA advised that the issue of what acquisition of land is needed will be part of the next stage of work.
- Key activities that need to progress is how to connect the Bypass options back onto the highway.
- There will be evidence of investigations such a geotechnical as it includes rigs and drilling equipment. These investigations are fundamental to further development. If

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- an inner bypass is chosen it is no use reserving land that is not suitable.
- If people are taken off the highway it will have an impact on tourism and business in Coffs Harbour.
- The CFG queried if there has been any further consideration to Korora Bus interchange? Connell Wagner advised that they were aware of this issue and would examine it in the next stages of the study.
- CFG – Concerns about the noise if a bypass was to go so close to the residential estates.
- Project team agreed that there was no real way to measure the impact of noise. They do have an acoustics expert from Wilkinson Murray on the team who will look at how this needs to be managed. He would come to a future CFG meeting where questions could be asked and he can respond to them.
- CFG felt that no matter how high and thick the noise barriers you will still significantly hear the highway.
- It is definitely a matter of personal tolerance to noise. There is no question a bypass/highway changes the noise profile
- There will be a definite number of opportunities for interchanges on the bypass - the project team are already working on this.
- Final package target date for looking at these two options is July this year. At this time we will go back to the broader community with what we think are two realistic options.
- The project team reiterated that the other options had been thrown out not only because of costs but they did not attract sufficient traffic. There were also huge environmental constraints.
- It is too early in the day for costings. The amounts mentioned at this stage are only so the group realises that these are major structural costs.

6. NEXT CFG MEETING

RTA Property Manager, Mr Martin Howard, will address the next meeting of the Community Focus Group.

7. CLOSE OF MEETING

Meeting closed at 8.45pm

Next Meeting: Thursday, 23 May 2002