



- Highway design parameters
- Group activity
- Questions and answers
- Close

Feedback from CLG Members

TT invited CLG members to provide feedback on their community's or organisation's issues or concerns. Questions raised during this session were answered during the question and answer session at the end of the meeting.

- RW reported the community would like the study area extended to the east (as discussed at the Community Information Sessions and the first CLG);
- HB also reported that the community would like the study area extended to the east. HB, ST and SD would like there to be a public meeting in Tucabia to keep the community informed and to dispel rumours which are circulating. A possible venue is the Fire Brigade Hall;
- MP is concerned about emergency vehicle access, particularly with respect to the Ulmarra Fire Brigade;
- DS is concerned about the positioning of on/off ramps and positioning and content of signage along the highway;
- IM is concerned about land valuation, fencing of the highway to protect wildlife and water runoff from the highway affecting catchments;
- DP commented that PB stated at the first CLG that an alignment through State Forest would be a last resort. DP questioned why the Coast Range Road is not an option. DP reported that the Pine Brush State Forest is classified as a high conservation area;
- IR asked why the Coast Road hasn't been considered. IR also sought clarification as to the positioning of on/off ramps, particularly with respect to the Wooli, Minnie Water area;
- BB is concerned about emergency vehicle access;
- ST re-emphasised the community's desire to have the study area extended to the east. ST is concerned about the rumours and misinformation which have been circulating throughout the community, particularly with respect to the RTA's land acquisition policy. ST also reported that the community has always been lead to believe that a new highway alignment would follow the Coast Range Road and this needs to be addressed. She also asked TT to clarify the role of CLG members and to clarify exactly who they represented as CLG members were not elected by the community, but rather were chosen by SKM on the merits of their nomination form.

Role of CLG Members

TT explained that some CLG members were nominated by an organisation to represent that organisation whereas other CLG members were invited to join the CLG as individuals who could liase with their local communities. It is noted that CLG members were not elected, however, they may still convey issues of concern to the project team on behalf of other residents in their area.

TT clarified the obligations of CLG members and emphasised that informal communication / discussions are just as valuable as formal communication. CLG members are not expected to hold public meetings or produce newsletters. The role of CLG members is to liase with the community or organisation they represent through whatever means is most comfortable for the individual, and to provide feedback to the project team.

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TT emphasised that any communication between CLG members and the community must be accurate. SKM is developing a Frequently Asked Questions section on the project website which will provide a source of accurate information.

Comment

Many people in the Tucabia / Pillar Valley area do not have access to the internet. It is not sufficient to refer people to the website all the time.

Response

TT – The project team can provide hard copies of key project information such as the list of Frequently Asked Questions, which can be mailed to people or left at central locations such as the Tucabia General Store.

TT reported that an anonymous newsletter called “Friends of Yuraygir” had been distributed to residents in the area. The newsletter claimed to represent the Tucabia CLG.

Publication of CLG Member’s Details

TT advised that the project team has received requests from community members and the media for the contact details of CLG members. Unless CLG members contact the project team within the next 2 weeks to request that their details remain confidential, the names of all CLG members, the organisation or community they represent and their phone numbers will be published on the web-site as an attachment to these minutes (refer to Attachment A).

TT advised the CLG members that they may receive phone calls from the media if their details are published. TT requested that CLG members who choose to talk to the media clarify who they represent (whether that be an individual, a group of individuals or their organisation). CLG members should not indicate they represent the CLG unless they are unanimously supported by the entire CLG.

Meeting Times

TT indicated that some CLG members had requested an earlier start to the meetings and requested a “show of hands” to ascertain the most suitable time for everyone. The majority of CLG members were happy with a 6pm start and it was agreed that the Tucabia CLG meetings would start at 6pm in the future.

Update on Consultation Activity

TT summarised the correspondence the project team has received to date. There have been 175 phone calls, 116 emails, 26 letters and 24 faxes. TT indicated that the majority of correspondence was from the northern end of the study area, around Gulmarrad.

TT outlined the top 10 issues that have been recorded to date. TT explained that the top 10 issues are likely to change as the project progresses. For example, the top issue to date being “CLG nomination” is likely to drop off the top 10 list. TT noted that two of the issues in the top 10 (“noise” and “flora and fauna impacts”) were also raised at the Community Information Sessions.

Study Process and Progress

JM referred to the study process that was discussed at CLG No.1 and identified where the study is up to. JM indicated that studies have commenced and that field work will commence shortly.



Study Area Constraints

JM explained that the information the project team has collected from government agencies, Council, and other sources has been used to identify constraints and opportunities within the study area. JM described the process of options identification. To illustrate this JM showed a graphical representation of an ideal situation where all significant constraints could be avoided. She explained that, in reality, constraints will overlap and it is not always possible to avoid all constraints.

The project team has collected a great deal of data and information about the study area and this will be enhanced as the study progresses. One of the important tools that is used to record, analyse and evaluate the data and information is a Geographic Information System (GIS). The next step in the process is to verify the data and to update it as necessary.

JM introduced PR, SKM's Deputy Project Manager and Environmental Team Leader, who demonstrated the capabilities of the GIS. The constraints layers in the GIS will be updated as new information becomes available.

PR explained that the GIS allows the project team to view and analyse the physical components of the study area. PR then selected a few layers to demonstrate how the information is represented. The information included layers for:

- Zoning information based on Local Environmental Plans (LEPs) that has been obtained from Clarence Valley Council. The zoning information shows existing and proposed future land use within the study area;
- Soil classification data, such as areas with soft soils. PR explained that soft soils affect the design and cost of a road due to settlement issues;
- Contour information (up to 500m) around residential development which is used to show areas sensitive for noise;
- Wetlands designated under SEPP 14 (State Environmental Planning Policy No. 14) Coastal Wetlands;
- Species that are listed as threatened under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act*, that have been previously recorded in the study area, and vegetation communities that may be listed as endangered ecological communities under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act*;
- National Park estate areas and State Forests. PR explained that within the State Forests layer, there are several sub-layers which show the different classification zones within State Forests. For example, areas of productive land and areas of high conservation value can be identified.

Question

Is the State Forest zoning information up to date? The whole of the Pine Brush State Forest should be shown as an area of high conservation.

Answer

PR – The information was obtained from Forests NSW late in 2004. The project team will seek clarification from State Forests on the zoning and we will maintain communication with all government agencies and authorities to ensure we have the latest information.

Note

PR contacted Forests NSW following the meeting and was advised that the information recorded on the GIS is correct and is the current zoning. The Pine Brush State Forest



includes substantial areas of Forest Management Zone 4 which would be available for harvesting at some stage.

Question

What's the difference between areas of high conservation value within State Forests and National Parks, and are State Forests zoned as Proposed National Parks?

Answer

PR – There are different zones for State Forests, National Parks and proposed National Parks under Clarence Valley Local Environmental Plan. Different legislation governs State Forests and National Parks. Similar approval processes apply to acquisition of land within National Parks and land zoned by NSW Forests for conservation purposes within State Forests.

Question

Would it be more appropriate to choose the safest, most practical route and then assess the environmental impacts of the route, rather than including environmental factors in the route selection process?

Answer

JM – The project team must comply with legislation and therefore, the potential environmental impacts of the route are an integral part of the development and assessment of options and the route selection process. The preferred route would be selected on the basis that it meets on balance, the project criteria and legislative requirements.

Question

Why are cane farms considered a constraint?

Answer

PB – Cane farms present a double constraint in that they are agricultural land and therefore, have economic value, and cane farms are typically located in flood-prone areas.

PR explained that the different layers recorded in the GIS can be overlaid to create a composite constraints layer.

Highway Design Parameters

PB explained the aspects of highway design that are key considerations from the project, using a series of photos from other Pacific Highway projects. These included:

- A typical alignment which satisfies the project objectives in achieving a minimum horizontal alignment of 110 km/h, a minimum vertical alignment of 100 km/h, a minimum radius of 1200m and a maximum grade of 6%;
- An example illustrating how local access can be maintained in highway design;
- An example of a typical interchange which provides safe access onto and off the highway. The interchange would cater for B-double turning requirements. PB explained that the positioning of interchanges would be dependent on traffic volumes and demand. A typical interchange would cost approximately \$10-\$15 million. The project team is also planning for future traffic demand and land which may be needed for possible future interchanges;
- An example of an upgraded highway where access to properties is still provided, by allowing access with left turns into properties from the highway, and left turns out from the

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properties to the highway. PB explained how a future interchange could be accommodated in this situation. He also explained that upgrading an existing section of the highway would mean that the width of the existing highway would need to be substantially increased to accommodate the additional carriageways, medians, shoulders and possible service road. An upgrade of the existing highway would have significant property and noise impacts.

Question

Who is responsible for the maintenance of local roads that provide access to and from interchanges?

Answer

PB – The actual interchange and the portion of the local road that passes through the interchange would be the responsibility of the RTA. The remainder of the road would be the responsibility of Council.

PB presented a typical cross-section of the highway. The highway would comprise dual carriageways of 3.5m lane width, separated by a nominal median of 12m. The centre median would provide sufficient width for a potential third lane in each direction. The outside road shoulder would have a width of 2.5m. The rounding between the shoulder and median would provide additional width for vehicles which pull off the road. A single carriageway local access road would be considered adjacent to the highway to service local traffic. The total width of the road corridor would be approximately 100m.

PB explained that there had been a change in the terminology presented at the last CLG. The previously referred to Type A highway in which access is restricted to dedicated interchanges is now called a Type M (Motorway) highway. The previously referred to Type B highway in which access is limited is now referred to as a Type A highway.

Comment

Please clarify the objectives of the project with respect to flooding.

Response

PB – At least one carriageway on the highway would have a minimum flood immunity of the 1 in 20 year event (known as a 5% Annual Exceedance Probability) and a desirable flood immunity of the 1 in 100 year event (known as a 1% Annual Exceedance Probability).

Comment

The project team needs to consider how flooding impacts are affected by locality. For example, a 2m flood depth in one area might drain significantly faster than a 2m flood depth in another area.

Response

PB – The design team will investigate flooding impacts.

PB explained that the project team has identified a 'spaghetti' of options within the study area based on the constraints. The project team has determined that routes to the south-east of the study area would require significantly greater earthworks than routes within the study area due to the mountainous terrain of the Coastal Range. Therefore, it is unlikely that the study area would be extended to the south-east.

Question

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The community is not likely to be satisfied with that answer. How will the decision not to extend the study area boundary to the east be documented or conveyed to the community?

Answer

The study area boundary would only be extended if the project team can identify opportunities which exceed the opportunities available within the study area. The project team needs to consider the attractiveness of the option in terms of its social, environmental and engineering criteria.

Due to the terrain and the need to provide a flowing vertical and horizontal alignment in accordance with the project's objectives, the alignment would have a large footprint. In response to the community's request to extend the study area boundary, the project team has investigated this area over the past 2-3 months, and considered suggestions from the community for options that are to the east and south-east. Earthwork volumes were calculated from 1:25,000 topographic maps. Aerial photography and the constraints identified in the GIS were also used in the assessment of these eastern route alignments.

The earthworks required for alignments to the south-east of the study area would be at least 50% greater compared with earthworks required for alignments within the study area. The transportation of the large earthwork volumes would also increase the cost of this option. The Yuraygir National Park to the east of the study area is also a significant constraint and an Act of Parliament would be required to modify the National Park boundary. It is also an objective of the project to minimise impacts on National Parks and native vegetation. Therefore, alignments to the south-east of the study area would not satisfy the project objectives.

If community members would like further information about this issue, please ask them to contact the project team.

PB reported that the project team is investigating potential opportunities such as the opportunity to combine a upgrade of a section of the existing highway with a deviation, and the opportunity to move the eastern study area boundary such that Pine Brush State Forest is avoided.

Question

Is there an accepted or nominal buffer distance between State Forests and National Parks?

Answer

PR – No, however, an area of land may be specifically zoned a buffer zone.

PB emphasis that there are many considerations in the route options identification process and the straight line approach is not always the best.

Question

Won't an alignment to the east of the study area have a big economic impact on Grafton?

Answer

PB – Potentially it could have an impact on Grafton. The project team will soon be asking the Chamber of Commerce to provide input into the project and to raise issues of



concern. The project team also recognises that an eastern alignment would be less attractive for local traffic travelling between Grafton and Maclean and this may have an impact on the economic viability of the route.

Question

Who will maintain the existing highway?

Answer

PB – The existing highway would become a local or regional road and it would be maintained by Clarence Valley Council.

Question

Are quarries shown in the GIS?

Answer

PR – Yes, quarries are shown in the multi-attribute layer.

Question

If the preferred route is located in the east of the study area, will this have an impact on Grafton Bridge traffic?

Answer

PB – No, over 95% of the traffic which uses the Grafton Bridge is locally generated.

Question

Is the Summerland Way an option?

Answer

PB – No, Summerland Way is not an attractive route for through traffic. Traffic movements along the Summerland Way have only increased by 50 vehicles per day in the last 20 years. The highway needs to cater for the through traffic which is heading to coastal areas such as Ballina and Tweed Heads.

Question

Could the project team provide accident rates for the existing highway?

Answer

PB – Yes, the accident rate along the existing highway is about 24-26 crashes per 100 million vehicle kilometres.

Question

Shouldn't the southern-most interchange be located north of Wells Crossing to avoid National Parks, State Forests and the Wells Crossing Nature Reserve, which houses an endangered tree and rare parrot species? It would seem more appropriate to position an interchange between Glenugie and Bom Bom.

Answer

PB – At the first CLG there were no route options and the interchange locations mentioned (Wells Crossing and Harwood) were only indicative of potential interchange locations. The project team is now in a position to investigate opportunities to deviate from the existing highway north of Wells Crossing. Interchange locations will be determined by traffic demand and an interchange would be provided at the point where the alignment deviates from the existing highway.



Comment

If the straight line approach between Wells Crossing and Harwood was adopted, some members of the community would like an interchange to be provided at Pillar Valley. The distance between Pillar Valley and Grafton is 26km and the distance between Wells Crossing and Grafton along the existing highway is 27km. Therefore, there would be no advantage for vehicles to exit the highway at Pillar Valley to gain access to Grafton. Furthermore, the existing highway already caters for B-double traffic. An interchange at Pillar Valley and the construction of a new access road between Grafton and Pillar Valley would be a waste of money.

Response

PB – Due to the considerable cost associated with interchanges (approximately \$10-\$15 million), interchanges would only be constructed where this is sufficient traffic demand.

Group Activity

As a means of becoming more familiar with the process of identifying feasible options, TT invited the CLG members to draw their ideas about possible route options on laminated copies of aerial photos, taking into consideration the constraints information that has been presented. The lines drawn by the CLG members were erased at the end of the session.

Questions and Answers

Question

How will emergency vehicles get access from Ulmarra to the coastal townships and to the highway?

Answer

PB – The project team will look at opportunities to provide access now and in the future. It is a project objective that local access be maintained and therefore, provision would be made for vehicles to cross the highway via overpasses or underpasses. Interchanges would be positioned where appropriate, according to traffic demand, to maximise the economic viability of the highway.

Question

Will seasonal traffic fluctuations associated with large influxes of visitors to coastal areas over the Christmas period and during school holidays be considered?

Answer

PB – Yes, peak times would be considered.

Question

What type of signage will be provided along the highway?

Answer

PB – Directional signage such as to Grafton, Brooms Head, Minnie Water and informational signage such as tourist centres would be provided along the highway. Signs would be positioned to ensure motorists have the opportunity to exit the highway.

Question

Will Ulmarra be advertised as a heritage village?

Answer



PB – An informational sign indicating that Ulmarra is a heritage village would be considered prior to the relevant exit.

Question

How is land acquired?

Answer

PB – Land for the road corridor would be acquired in accordance with the *Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation Act)*. An RTA valuer and an independent valuer negotiate the market value for the property on the basis that it is not affected by the highway. The RTA would also negotiate compensation costs eg. for loss of productive land.

Question

How will wildlife be protected?

Answer

PB – Fencing would be considered along the length of the highway as possible mitigation measures to prevent wildlife entering the road corridor. Fauna underpasses or overpasses would be considered.

Question

How is stormwater runoff managed? Is the runoff harvested?

Answer

PB – During construction, mitigation measures such as silt fences would be required to ensure sediments and other materials are not transported via surface runoff into local waterways. Water collected in cuttings would be directed into a sedimentation pond where the sediment drops out, prior to its release into a nearby waterbody. The opportunity to harvest runoff could be investigated.

Comment

The amount of correspondence that has been received by the project team appears to be very low.

Response

TT – The amount of correspondence is fairly typical at this stage of a project. It should also be noted that some of the correspondence was signed by several people.

JM - We expect the amount of correspondence to increase when the route options are put on display as then the community has something tangible to consider.

Question

Why not simply put one option on display to generate a community response?

Answer

PB – The project team is required to investigate feasible options under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act*. These feasible options will be put on display for public comment in the middle of 2005.

Question

How will local roads be affected during construction?



Answer

PB – Existing access would be maintained during construction. Trucks that require travel along designated routes would need an agreement to be reached with Council as to the maintenance requirements of the truck routes.

TT thanked everyone for coming and indicated that the next CLG meeting would probably be held in April.

Meeting closed at 9:05pm

Attachments

- Attachment A – CLG Members' Contact Details
- Attachment B – Powerpoint presentation delivered at the Tucabia CLG meeting