

3 Development of Strategy

3.1 Overview

The preliminary corridor study undertaken by the RTA in 2001 was based on strategic level road design work by the RTA during mid 2001 using 'Quantm' design software. The corridor study assessed the limitations created by topography and existing land development as the major primary constraints for possible bypass corridors. When the Discussion Paper was released in September 2001, three broad corridors were identified as representing the range of options that could be feasible for a bypass for Coffs Harbour.

The development of strategic route options within the Inner Bypass corridor has been undertaken as a continuation of these previous corridor investigations in parallel with development of a strategy for an ultimate upgrade of the Existing Highway as shown in Figure 3.1. These two corridors were identified in March 2002.

The two schemes are markedly different in their respective concept development. The Inner Bypass options consist of a new dual carriageway constructed to the west of existing urban development, whereas the Existing Highway Upgrade corridor is tightly constrained by existing roads and intersections, major public utility installations, adjacent residential and commercial development, parks and reserves and significantly, the poor geometry of the current highway alignment in several sections.

A brief description of how the strategic options were developed is provided in the following sections, including an appraisal of urban design issues, and the ongoing constraints and opportunities for further option refinements.

3.2 Strategic Access Arrangements

The provision of major junctions along the corridors to cater for both local and through trips is essential to cater for current and future land use in the area within the anticipated planning horizon of the Highway. The Inner Bypass options traverse important east-west road links at North Boambee Road and Coramba Road while the Existing Highway corridor currently functions with 11 key intersections controlled by traffic lights.

A Strategic Highway Access Plan illustrated in Figure 3.2 has been prepared based on the need for a coordinated access strategy that allows major junctions along the route to cater for both local and through trips and also to meet the high standards of safety and travel efficiency required of a new section of State highway. The access plan was developed for the Inner Bypass and the Existing Highway corridors to guide both the location and design of major junctions and to take account of both existing and planned urban areas that would need to rely on the Pacific Highway corridor for routine daily travel.

At this stage of planning for the highway, the access plan recognises the significant functional transport differences that would need to be performed by a bypass concept on the outskirts of the urban area compared to a major highway running through the main urban area of Coffs Harbour. The key junctions where it is envisaged that grade-separated interchanges would be required along the Inner Bypass options are:

- Southern junction with the existing Highway near Englands Road
- North Boambee Road
- Coramba Road
- Mastracolas Road extension
- Northern junction with existing Highway at Korora Hill
- Old Coast Road / James Small Drive North

