

Record of Meeting



Purpose of Meeting	Maclean Community Liaison Group Meeting No. 2		
Project	Wells Crossing To Iluka Road - Upgrading the Pacific Highway		
Prepared By	Jenny Bailey	Phone No	1800 557 673
Place of Meeting	Maclean Civic Hall River Street, Maclean	Date	22 February 2005 6-9pm
Present	Pat Battersby (PB) Don Day (DD) Peter Dibella (PB) Rob Donges (RB) Brian Holland (BH) Ivars Katuzans (IK) Mark Kingsley (MK) Harry Lang (HL) Tony McGrath (TM) Austin Sheehan (AS) Chris Sparks (CS) Bob Thompson (BT) Bruce Walsh (BW)	Peter Black (RTA) (PB) Mark Eastwood (RTA) (ME) (first half) Jo Moss (SKM) (JM) Tanyia Tuckey (SKM) (TT) Paul Robilliard (PR) Jenny Bailey (SKM) (JB)	
Apologies	None		
Distribution	All of the above		

The meeting commenced at 6:05 pm.

Agenda

TT welcomed everyone. TT advised that there had been a slight change in the agenda which involved the order of items only and TT distributed a revised agenda for the Community Liaison Group (CLG) Meeting No. 2 as follows:

- Welcome - update from members
- Community communication - CLG members
- Update on consultation activity
- Study area constraints
- Highway design parameters
- Group activity
- Questions and answers
- Close

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Feedback from CLG Members

TT invited CLG members to provide feedback on their community's or organisation's issues or concerns.

- BW indicated that a public meeting was held in Gulmarrad in January and approximately 220 people attended.
- MK reported that he had received 89 emails from 44 different people from the Gulmarrad/James Creek area who were concerned about the project. MK provided a handout summarising the content of the emails. The top 3 issues were impact on native flora and fauna (mentioned in 39 emails), noise pollution (mentioned in 37 emails) and impact on lifestyle (mentioned in 32 emails).
- CS reported that the vintage car clubs would like to reclaim the existing highway as a regional road. The actual route of a deviation is not important. CS is also concerned that the project would take 20 years or so to be completed. From a safety perspective, he considers this to be too long.

Role of CLG Members

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 liaise with the community or organisation they represent through whatever means is most comfortable for the individual, and to provide feedback to the project team.

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 6:30pm start and it was agreed that the Maclean CLG meetings would start at 6:30pm 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.

Question

Do you register and respond to all correspondence?



Answer

TT – Yes, all correspondence is recorded on the study database and each item of correspondence is acknowledged.

Question

What happens if you can't answer a question at this stage of the project?

Answer

TT – We acknowledge that we have received the correspondence and advise the author that we cannot answer their question at this point in time as we are still collecting, analysing and verifying information. The question is recorded in the database and we periodically review the database to identify incomplete items/unanswered questions.

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. She 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. Therefore, future residential areas, such as those around Gulmarrad can be considered during route options identification;
- 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. PR focused on the wetlands around the James Creek / Townsend area;
- 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 noted that the Yaegl Nature Reserve is located at the northern end of the study area. 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

How up to date is the information?

Answer

PR - The zoning information was obtained from Clarence Valley Council at the end of 2004.

Question

How are future residential zones considered?

Answer

JM – Clarence Valley Council has provided information outlining the proposed future urban/residential areas. The project team will maintain its contact with Council to ensure any new information can be incorporated into the GIS.

RD – Due to the amalgamation of Maclean, Grafton, Copmanhurst and Pristine Waters Councils into Clarence Valley Council, it is unlikely that there would be any rezoning in the next 2-3 years, as the LEPs need to be merged to create a new LEP for Clarence Valley. Any proposal to rezone land would be placed on public exhibition.

Question

What type of soil is located to the east of Gulmarrad?

Answer

PR – PR will check the legend upon returning to the office and provide an answer.

Note

The terrain and soil type to the east of Gulmarrad has been classified as CRD (Clarence River Delta), comprising alluvial and estuarine sediments. These soils are likely to present a constraint to route options because they are unstable and are likely to contain acid sulfate soils.

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 and a minimum radius of 1200m;
- 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;
- 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 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.

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. 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.

Question

How effective are noise walls?

Answer

PB - Noise walls can be very effective in reducing noise impacts. All noise mitigation measures must comply with the Department of Environment and Conservation's (DEC) noise criteria.

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.

PB also clarified that 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).

PB explained that the project team has identified a 'spaghetti' of options within the study area based on the constraints. It is evident that severance of the local communities of Gulmarrad and Townsend is a high constraint and a route between these two communities is not likely to meet the project objectives such as minimising road traffic noise, severance and intrusion.

Question

How feasible is it to extend the study area to the east?



Answer

PB – 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 social, environmental, economic and engineering criteria.

Question

Has the Gulmarrad / Townsend area been eliminated from the study area?

Answer

PB - No, the study area has not been eliminated in the Gulmarrad / Townsend area which is still subject to investigations for feasible route options, however, the major constraints of the Townsend / Gulmarrad communities are acknowledged.

Question

Are route alignments to the east of the Pine Brush State Forest being considered?

Answer

PB – The project team is investigating the moving of the study area to the east at Pine Brush State Forest to provide an opportunity to avoid this constraint.

Question

It seems that a lot of weighting is being given to State Forests. Wouldn't it be more appropriate to traverse public land than private land?

Answer

PB – State Forests are protected under legislation, however, route alignments through State Forests would still be considered. State Forests have been given a fairly high weighting in the constraints analysis but other constraints such as residential areas, flooding and social impacts have also been ranked highly.

Question

Residential development is scattered throughout the study area. How will this be factored into the constraints analysis?

Answer

PB – Direct impact of residential areas would be avoided where possible, taking into consideration the surrounding constraints.

Question

What will happen to the Harwood Bridge?

Answer

PB – It is proposed that the Harwood Bridge would be duplicated.

Question

If the Harwood Bridge is duplicated, the existing traffic problems associated with opening and closing the bridge will still be an issue. Wouldn't a new four lane bridge be much more desirable?

Answer

ME – At this stage, the strategy is to duplicate the existing bridge but in the future if there is sufficient traffic demand, another two lane bridge may be constructed.



Question

Is the study area between Harwood Bridge and Iluka Road fixed?

Answer

PB – Yes, the existing highway would be duplicated along this section.

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

Will the project take 20 years?

Answer

PB – The first stage of the Pacific Highway Upgrading Program commenced in 1996. By the end of 2006, concept design of all sections of the highway will be completed. Between 2006 and 2016, the projects would be prioritised and construction would commence. Over the following ten year period, the remaining projects would be constructed. At this stage, we don't know where this project is prioritised and therefore, do not know when it will be constructed.

Question

Who will fund the project?

Answer

PB - The State and Federal Governments have provided funding for the project. At this stage, there is no mention of the highway becoming a toll road.

Question

Why have the large communications signs been placed on the highway near Grafton?

Answer

PB – this is part of normal safety and traffic management for the highway. Notwithstanding this study, the RTA must carry out normal management and maintenance of the highway.

Question

Can we keep upgrading small sections of the Highway rather than upgrade the whole section between Wells Crossing and Iluka Road?

Answer

PB - The whole section of highway needs to be considered in the upgrade and meet the program and project objectives.

Question

Is there someone in the RTA who knows where the road is going?



Answer

PB – No, there is no preferred route at this stage. The project team has only identified a 'spaghetti' of options in the study area.

Question

Can the project team identify land that is not likely to be affected by the proposal? If so, this information should be conveyed to the community to alleviate their concerns.

Answer

PB – No, at this stage the project team is only in a position to acknowledge areas of high constraint. Before any areas can be eliminated, the project team needs to verify the information we have received via field work. When the route options are announced, the study area will be narrowed down to the short listed corridors.

Question

How do you determine whether noise abatement barriers are required? Is the decision based upon noise predictions or actual measurements?

Answer

JM – At the next CLG, we will discuss how noise is measured, the types of noise mitigation measures and how we determine when noise mitigation measures are required. PB also commented that the EIS would specify the noise predictions for the day of opening and for 10 years after opening. When the road becomes operational, the modelling is validated to determine whether additional measures are needed.

Question

How useful are trees as a noise barrier?

Answer

JM – Not very useful. The vegetation needs to be very dense to provide any effective noise mitigation.

Question

Where will service centres be located?

Answer

PB - The project team will identify opportunities for service centres during the design process and these would be considered in the overall strategy for service centres on the Pacific Highway between Hexham and the NSW border.

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

Meeting closed at 8:45pm

Information Requests

- BH requested PB provide statistics on the number of accidents along the highway.
- BT requested the project team provide a copy of the hillshade map that was displayed at CLG 2. He would like the map to be stamped and dated.



Attachments

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