

2. Project Development – Requirements and Methodology

2.1 Project Details

Project:	Woolgoolga to Wells Crossing
RTA Region:	Pacific Highway Office, Motorways Directorate
Road Name:	Pacific Highway
Road Number:	State Highway No. 10
Project Location:	30.0 km to 57.8 km north of Coffs Harbour
Project Length:	27.8 km (along the existing highway and including the Halfway Creek duplication)
Council Areas:	Coffs Harbour and Clarence Valley

2.2 Project Objectives

- ▶ The Pacific Highway Upgrade Program objectives are described in Section 1.1 of this report. The objectives of the Woolgoolga to Wells Crossing project, which are a subset of the program objectives, are to:
- ▶ Develop a dual carriageway road with potential to reduce crash rates to 15 crashes per 100 million vehicle kilometres (MVK) over the project length;
- ▶ Develop a refined design that meets or exceeds B-double requirements, including at intersections, where required;
- ▶ Maximise the use of the existing road reserve, where possible;
- ▶ Integrate input from local communities into development of the project through the implementation of a comprehensive program of community consultation and participation;
- ▶ Satisfy the technical and procedural requirements of the RTA with respect to the design of the project;
- ▶ Provide for transport developments that are complementary with land use;
- ▶ Allow for all connections, modifications and improvements necessary to upgrade the existing highway where it is retained as part of the project;
- ▶ Consider delay management strategies to minimise disruption to local and through traffic and maintain access to affected properties and land during construction;
- ▶ Provide flood immunity on at least one carriageway:
 - Target a 1 in 100 year flood event (1% AEP); and
 - Minimum of at least a 1 in 20 year flood event (5% AEP);
- ▶ Provide intersections designed to achieve at least a level of service C 20 years after opening for the 100th highest hourly volume;

- ▶ Develop solutions that address community expectations for access to the new highway;
- ▶ Retain or replace existing rest areas within the study area;
- ▶ Develop a refined design generally meeting the criteria for a 110 km/h design speed for the vertical alignment and horizontal alignment;
- ▶ Ensure the project outcomes achieve value for money;
- ▶ Provide a strategy for future upgrades to be easily integrated into the project from both engineering and environmental perspectives; and
- ▶ Minimise the need to modify the preferred route option and refined design during subsequent project phases.

2.3 Design Requirements

2.3.1 Design Standards

The relevant standard for the design of this project is the RTA's *Upgrading the Pacific Highway, Upgrading Program beyond 2006: Design Standards March 2005*. In addition to these standards, the RTA's *Road Design Guide* and Austroad's *Guide to Traffic Engineering Practice* will also be used.

General Design and Performance Requirements

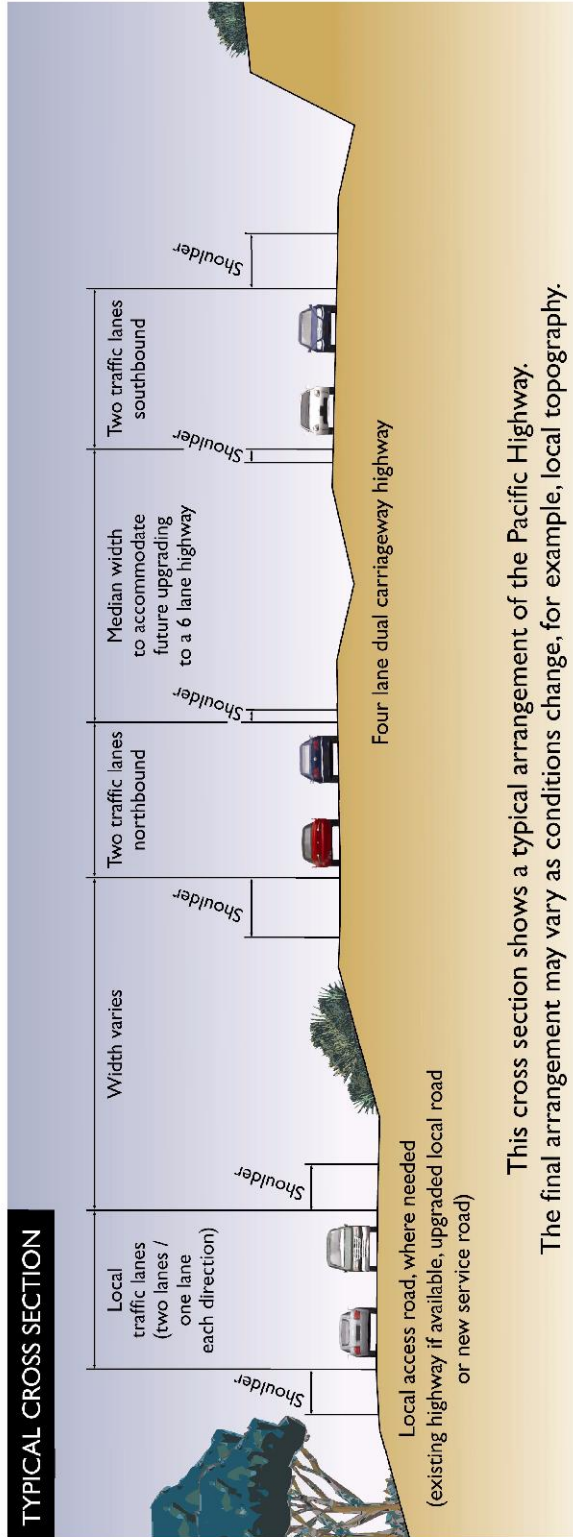
Road geometry:

- ▶ Minimum horizontal design speed – 110 km/h; and
- ▶ Desirable vertical design speed – 110 km/h.

Carriageway Configuration

Table 2.1 summarises the minimum criteria for each carriageway as defined by the RTA's *Upgrading the Pacific Highway, Upgrading Program beyond 2006: Design Standards March 2005*. Figure 2.1 shows the typical cross section to be used in design of the project.

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This cross section shows a typical arrangement of the Pacific Highway.
The final arrangement may vary as conditions change, for example, local topography.

Table 2.1 Minimum Carriageway Configuration

Design Criteria	Value
Number of lanes per direction	2 ⁽¹⁾
Lane width	3.5 metres
Outside shoulder width	2.5 metres – with no barrier 3.0 metres – with barrier
Inside shoulder width	0.5 metres
Median width	12.0 metres (desirable)
Normal crossfall	-3.0% (-4.0% for straight lengths >500 metres)
Superelevation	3.0% (maximum)

Note: (1) Consideration for future six-lane widening to three lanes per carriageway is also required.

Other Design Requirements

- ▶ Traffic Volume Projections to be estimated up to 20 years from anticipated date of opening. 2016 has been adopted as the date for opening of the project. This date is for planning purposes and assessment only.

Upgrade Strategies

- ▶ Class A – four-lane, 100 km/h posted speed, limited access condition roadway with at-grade intersections; and
- ▶ Class M – four or six-lane, 110 km/h posted speed, controlled access condition roadway with grade separated interchange access.

Further information on the upgrade scenarios is provided in Section 4.4.

Interchange locations would depend on the location of the preferred route and the interaction with the adjacent projects – Sapphire to Woolgoolga and Wells Crossing to Iluka Road. Some rationalisation of interchanges may occur with these projects, depending on the timing of construction of the adjacent projects.

2.3.2 Urban Design Principles

The extent of the Pacific Highway Upgrade Program being undertaken by the RTA has resulted in the need for urban and regional design to be consistently and efficiently integrated into the highway planning and design process. The RTA's urban design philosophy and policies are established by its *Beyond the Pavement* series of publications.

The RTA's *Pacific Highway Urban Design Framework* provides the urban design vision, objectives and guidelines for upgrading projects. The objectives are to:

- ▶ Provide a flowing road alignment that is responsive and integrated with the natural landscape;
- ▶ Provide where appropriate well vegetated, natural road reserve;
- ▶ Provide an enjoyable, interesting highway with varied views and vistas of the landscape and pleasant restful places to stop;

- ▶ Respect the communities and towns along the road;
- ▶ Provide consistency-with-variety in road elements; and
- ▶ Provide a simplified and unobtrusive road design.

2.4 Option Development and Assessment Process

The route option identification process includes several steps:

- ▶ Review of existing data – reports, maps and other information available from the RTA and other authorities;
- ▶ Site visits – road and aerial inspections of the study area;
- ▶ Community consultation activities described in Section 2.6;
- ▶ Opportunities and constraints workshops – involving the project team to share the available knowledge;
- ▶ Initial options workshop to evolve possible options – numerous options generated generally in recognition of the Pacific Highway Upgrade Program objectives;
- ▶ Option refinement workshop – refining and eliminating options where major problems or constraints were evident; and
- ▶ Route options development report and display – where we are now.

The route options display would give the community the opportunity to comment on the route options. Following the display, the next steps will be:

- ▶ A value management workshop – to assist in the selection of the preferred route that best meets the Pacific Highway Upgrade Program objectives. Representatives from the Community Liaison Group and other stakeholders would attend the workshop and provide the community's input to the selection process;
- ▶ Community feedback from the route options display would be analysed and considered at the value management workshop and by the project team;
- ▶ Further investigations may be necessary as a result of the community feedback and the value management workshop.
- ▶ The project team would select a preferred route based on the results from the value management workshop, any further investigations and the community feedback.

2.5 Post Selection Processes and Activities

The preferred route display may generate further community feedback that the project team would analyse and refine if necessary. A refined design for the preferred route would then be prepared.

The refined design would consider all major engineering and environmental issues and, amongst other outputs, define the property boundaries necessary to allow the project to be built.

2.6 Community Involvement

Community involvement has been planned for and undertaken from the early stages of the project. The aim of community involvement is to achieve a high level of community awareness of the project, community understanding of operational aspects and benefits, and ensuring community discussions occur.

The term “community” is used to refer to local residents, land owners, road users, business owners, environmental and other interest groups and indigenous people. Government agencies and local councils have also been involved in the planning of the project through the planning focus meeting, Community Liaison Group meetings and meetings with study team representatives.

A Community Involvement Plan was prepared for the project. The plan outlines the involvement activities to be undertaken, with an emphasis on ensuring there are opportunities for the community to receive information as well as provide comment and input to the study team. A range of community involvement activities have been selected to meet the Pacific Highway Upgrade Program objective of developing a route that involves the community and considers their interests.

Community involvement undertaken to date for the project has been focussed on:

- ▶ Informing the community about the project;
- ▶ Involving the community in the project; and
- ▶ Ensuring that community input and concerns are considered in the development of route options.

Activities undertaken are summarised below.

- ▶ Establishing feedback mechanisms via email and the 1800 number (1800 154 724);
- ▶ Community Update No. 1 – issued in November 2004;
- ▶ Progress Update No. 1 – issued April 2005;
- ▶ Advertisements in local newspapers;
- ▶ Information provided on the RTA website;
- ▶ Community information session – held on 29 November 2004;
- ▶ Planning focus meeting – held on 15 December 2004;
- ▶ A Community Liaison Group has been established – meetings were held on 15 December 2004, 2 March 2005 and 20 July 2005;
- ▶ An ecological focus group has been established and a meeting was held on 21 September 2005, and
- ▶ Face-to-face interviews or telephone discussions with agencies and land / business owners.