

ADDITIONAL CROSSING OF THE CLARENCE RIVER AT GRAFTON

The first community workshops on the preliminary route options for an additional crossing over the Clarence River at Grafton were held on Thursday 11 March 2010 at the Grafton Community Centre, Duke Street Grafton. Two sessions were held, one in the morning and one in the evening. Rob Van Iersel from GeoLink facilitated the workshops. RTA Senior Project Manager, Damien Sartori and Project Manager, Stephen Williamson made brief presentations on the 'study area' and the updated traffic studies including an animated video on traffic predictions for options A/B and C/D, before the commencement of the workshop activities.

Participants sat at tables of eight with each table including an RTA or GeoLink representative. The first workshop activity involved participants writing 3 issues/values that are important to them regarding the current preliminary options, on sticky notes. The sticky notes were collected and categorised into common themes. The issues raised during this activity will be considered during the next phase of the planning process and will help to refine options within the study area.

The second activity involved examining the preliminary options within the study area and listing the advantages, disadvantages and constraints of each option. Following this, participants identified combinations and other options within the study area by drawing on the plan provided.

In the morning session, each table nominated a representative to present a summary of their findings from the second activity, however in the evening session participants preferred to have an open forum.

Below is a summary of the comments from the open forum that took place after the evening workshop activities.

OPEN FORUM:

Question / Comment	Response
What happens to vehicles once they get across the bridge? Suggested that traffic studies need to explore movements at, around and through Grafton. Need to explore the origin – destination of traffic. The RTA should look at a ring road.	
Where will traffic want to go years from now? The future needs and growth areas of Grafton and the CBD need to be considered.	
Can't believe Villiers St is the future destination. Can a working committee meet with the Minister?	Write to the Minister and he'll respond and will meet with you provided a sufficient time can be arranged.

Question / Comment	Response
Once the RTA announces its decision on the preferred route can property owners apply for land acquisition or do owners need to wait?	The RTA only purchases property once it is needed for construction. However under legislation, owners can apply to the RTA under hardship grounds. A fact sheet on property acquisition with more detail is available.
Will there be further information sessions and when?	The RTA will undertake further consultation later in the year once the submissions from this consultation phase have been considered and preliminary environmental investigation have been undertaken. Concept options will be put on display for community comment later in the year.
Can other options be investigated? Other options outside of the study area should be discussed and investigated. This is feeling for vast majority.	Other options within the study area will be investigated as part of the next phase of the project. Options outside of the study area will not be considered.
Is there an option not to have bridge in current study area?	No, the current study area best meets project objectives.
The community want to have input into selecting the best option. Can RTA consider forming a focus group?	At this stage the RTA is not looking to form a community focus group, however at this stage there is no definitive answer.
Planning seems to be centred in a small area of Grafton and does not seem to consider the future diversion of traffic onto the Summerland Way. Rather than be narrowly focused on funnelling traffic into Grafton CBD, this future diversion should be considered in the development of the options.	
Is the person who is able to make decisions on whether the studies into a second crossing over the Clarence River in Grafton can be expanded to look at options outside of the current study area here? Who is this person?	The best location is within the study area and this is substantiated by previous studies undertaken to 2005 as well as the recent traffic analysis. The RTA is moving forward with the previous studies which narrowed down the options to one locality. The RTA is not going through a new process. The person who makes the ultimate decision is Minister for Transport and Roads.
The RTA should consider the impact the Summerland Way may have on traffic in the future. An initiative by the Australian Government on its website which is the Trans-Regional Amalgamated Infrastructure Network (TRAIN) which is a well represented group from Government, business and community to investigate a by pass of Grafton along the Summerland Way and a second crossing of the Clarence River at Grafton. If 2% of traffic is currently through traffic, numbers of through traffic is only set to increase as they endeavour to use the Summerland Way. Take a second crossing out of town – not in town. Put a restriction on buses / heavy traffic.	

Question / Comment	Response
<p>Traffic Study Report 2009 includes an objective to maintain vitality of the CBD, commercial and retail areas; by putting all the traffic into the heart of the CBD does the RTA believe the options provided here meet this goal?</p>	<p>Yes – The traffic modelling & study has identified that the majority traffic wants to travel to Grafton CBD.</p>
<p>Best time to traverse bridge is outside school hours. Suggest more schools in South Grafton to Grafton.</p>	
<p>Information delivered at the information sessions on Wednesday 3 March is still not uploaded on the website. Can there be a notice on the website to inform community members when the information will be available on the website?</p> <p>The community has no confidence in the rushed process with no communication as it was understood that option B was the preferred option, the majority of attendees at the workshop feel that the process is rushed.</p>	<p>An email will be sent to those who provided one on the registration forms when information has been updated on the website. Apologies for the delay with getting updated information on the website, there have been technical difficulties with the RTA's internet site.</p>
<p>One table identified option D with some adjustments as possibly a better option within the study area but is concerned that all traffic is still being directed toward the CBD. An alternative option to option D could be to go along the rail corridor once it crosses the river into Grafton (north) which could impact on less houses. It is acknowledged the shaded area is the constraint.</p>	

CONTACT INFORMATION / DETAILS

Community phone number for the project is **1800 633 332**.

Information is also available on the RTA website - follow the links to regional projects/northcoast

<http://rta.nsw.gov.au/constructionmaintenance/majorconstructionprojectsregional/northcoast/graftonbridge.html>