

Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Group



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Subject File note - discussions with Shoalhaven Business Chamber representatives - Thursday 21 January 2010 – Princes Highway Upgrade South Nowra – Outstanding Issues to lobby RTA

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Purpose of meeting – discuss the respective submissions to RTA by the Shoalhaven Business Chamber, and also by Council, and seek an agreed position with the Shoalhaven Business Chamber for continued lobbying to RTA and State Government in coordination with Council

The meeting was held at Shoalhaven City Council (Committee Rooms 1/2) at 10:30am on Thursday 21 January, 2010

In attendance for Shoalhaven Business Chamber;
David Mitchell, Tony Emery, John Lamont, David Goodman

In attendance for Shoalhaven City Council;
Russ Pigg (General Manager);
Neil Southorn (acting Director Strategic Planning & Infrastructure);
Martin Uptis (Manager Infrastructure & Asset Management);
Scott Wells (Manager Traffic Unit);
Ben Harnwell (Economic Development Officer);
Brett Williams (Transport Engineer)

It was agreed that the respective submissions to RTA by the Shoalhaven Business Chamber, and also by Council, were largely similar.

However it was also acknowledged that where the respective submissions made suggestions of alternative treatments, or were silent on alternative treatments (where the submissions simply opposed what RTA was currently proposing) that it was important that a coordinated position be agreed to ensure that alternative treatments

being proposed individually by Shoalhaven Business Chamber and Council were the same treatment.

Starting north and working south, the meeting discussed and agreed the following items;

Park Road – Object to Proposed Traffic Signals

Both submissions have strongly opposed traffic signals due to the impacts on traffic, particularly in consideration of prevalent grades, and also pedestrian safety concerns due to irregular pattern of use of mid block signals.

It was agreed that a pedestrian over bridge would be the best outcome for pedestrians ensuring pedestrians could cross the busy Highway without conflict with traffic, and that there would be no adverse impacts on traffic with an overpass.

It was agreed that the grades on the western side would be favourable to an overpass, and that the eastern side would require switch back ramps which could be accommodated within the existing road reserve.

Hillcrest Avenue – accept proposed two lane roundabout

Both submissions agree with the proposed two lane roundabout at Princes Highway / Hillcrest Avenue intersection

Flinders Road – Object to there being No resolution of ultimate connection from Flinders Road – Agree should link to Browns

The chambers position supports a deviation of Flinders Road to Browns Road, although it was agreed there was some division from within the chamber (some chamber members considered the deviation to Quinns would be more favourable)

Council's adopted position (in accordance with Nowra Bomaderry Structure Plan preferred road network) also supports a deviation of Flinders Road to Browns Road, although at the recent Council meeting 21 December 2009, Council resolved to consider a further report on the options Browns v Quinns.

The meeting heard from Council Traffic Unit of the detailed South Nowra traffic study (by Cardno Eppell Olsen) that examined 4 options in relation to Flinders Road at the 2016 year based on Nowra Bomaderry Structure Plan projections. This included;

1. Retain existing intersection location and make left in / left out (test RTA original strategy)
2. Test deviation of Flinders 75m to the north and construct two lane roundabout (ie this deviation would effectively provide even spacing between respective intersections ie 215m between Browns-Flinders, and 215m between Flinders-Quinns, where as currently Flinders located only 140m from Quinns).
3. Test deviation of Flinders to Quinns

4. Test deviation of Flinders to Browns

In relation to Option 3 (Test deviation of Flinders to Quinns); whilst the service lane connection adds a significant complication to sustaining service lane access at or in vicinity of Quinns Lane into the future, to ensure “fairness” in comparing the options; the traffic modelling assumed no connection from the service lane, that is the tests were undertaken based on strategic traffic turning movements at each junction, independent of local access points.

The traffic modelling found that;

1. Option 1 (RTA strategy; ie Flinders Road being left in / left out only effected by median on the Highway) was not sustainable in the medium term, in that considerable queuing back on Flinders Road was found which would contribute to on going safety concerns, and deviation of traffic to Albatross Road was also of concern, due to there being no spare capacity to accommodate additional right turn movements at Kalandar Street.
2. Option 2 (Test deviation of Flinders 75m to the north and construct two lane roundabout) would work as an interim and medium term solution if required, however would not have the capacity to accommodate longer term traffic forecasts and was not a desirable intersection spacing.
3. Option 3 (Test deviation of Flinders to Quinns) was found could work, but was not as effective as Option 4. When considering the additional complication of service lane connection at or in vicinity of Quinns, it was considered that Option 3 was not be best option in terms of accommodating service lane traffic into the future and Option 4 provided more options for resolving service road traffic into the future.
4. Option 4 (Test deviation of Flinders to Browns) was found to be the best option in terms of overall network delays and accordingly least cost in transport economic terms. In terms of accommodating service lane traffic into the future; Option 4 also provided more options for resolving service road traffic into the future.

The meeting also discussed the RTA's original plans to restrict access at Flinders Road was inconsistent with the adopted Nowra Bomaderry Structure Plan and the development strategies of other State agencies that being for expansion of the Flinders Industrial area as the main employment growth area for the northern Shoalhaven into the future.

The meeting discussed Economic Development projections (generated from land potential as per the adopted Nowra Bomaderry Structure Plan) that meant that better road access will be required in the future into / out of the Flinders Industrial area, not restrictions on access as originally proposed by RTA.

Based on ratios of land and floor area to employment it was considered that the ultimate zoned land availability in the Flinders Industrial area (between Flinders Road and future Western Bypass) will accommodate up to some 25,000 employees (compared with the current 3,000 employees).

When the employee numbers convert to traffic movements it is estimated that the amount of traffic could warrant up to 6 x 4 lane roads in the future (when Flinders is at

ultimate occupancy) assuming good level of service (good intersection conditions in traffic peak periods). The Nowra Bomaderry Structure Plan has made allowance for only 4 road connections (Flinders West, Flinders East, Central Avenue, and Warra Warra Road) which (if these will be the only road access points) will be 4 very busy roads when Flinders Industrial Area reaches ultimate occupancy as envisaged under the Structure Plan.

Accordingly Flinders Road (east and west connections) are integral in providing good road access between the Princes Highway and Flinders Industrial Area in the future, and any plans for upgrading the Highway need to be considerate of the need to maintain access for all traffic movements at Flinders Road, not reduced level of access (as originally proposed by RTA) which is contrary to the Structure Plan and regional economic development strategy.

Flinders Road is also the identified direct link between Princes Highway, MR92, and proposed future Western Bypass, which needs to be sustained for all access to provide simplistic directional connections to enhance general traffic but also tourism and industrial traffic links into the future.

After discussion of the traffic modelling undertaken by Council (South Nowra traffic report), and the complications associated with the Quinns Lane deviation (long term sustainability of access to the western service road) it was agreed that the deviation of Flinders Road to Browns Road would be most favourable.

The meeting discussed the options with respect of deviating Flinders Road to Browns Road. Traffic Unit advised that Council had adopted as part of the Nowra Bomaderry Structure Plan preferred road network a combination of Option 2 (deviation of Flinders 75m to the north) and Option 4 (deviation to Browns) due to the existing Flinders Road bridge having considerable life expectancy remaining.

Following adoption of the Structure Plan, a further option of linking Flinders Road Browns Road has been proposed; that being an interim "S" bend to link the existing bridge to Browns Road; ie it was discussed this would be very similar in length and design to what RTA have proposed for the temporary deviation of BTU Road.

It was agreed that the agreed position would be to support a deviation of Flinders Road to Browns Road via an interim road alignment that would utilise the existing bridge structure, resulting in S bend type alignment similar in length and design to what RTA have proposed for the temporary deviation of BTU Road.

The chamber queried whether the roundabout could remain or whether the Browns Road option would require traffic signals.

Council's Traffic Unit advised that the entire plans for South Nowra was based on interim road safety improvements and was considered an interim strategy because the roundabouts would not have capacity to accommodate traffic growth as envisaged under the Nowra Bomaderry Structure Plan.

Council's Traffic Unit advised that South Nowra would ultimately require 6 lanes and traffic signals with additional separate turn lanes based on traffic growth as envisaged

under the Nowra Bomaderry Structure Plan, and for this reason, the interim strategy would need to be consistent with ultimate plans to further upgrade the Highway.

Council's Traffic Unit advised that Browns Road was originally on RTA list of future traffic signal upgrades, however when Browns Road became a black spot priority, traffic signals could not have been installed at Browns Road in the absence of a roundabout at Hillcrest Avenue (to provide safe turnaround for development access) and funds did not allow both intersections to be upgraded, thus an interim roundabout at Browns was determined to be required by RTA as part of the Interim Road Safety strategy due primarily to timing of requiring the works at each intersection (Browns being higher initial priority than Hillcrest)

It was noted that that the roundabout took up the entire road reserve and as consequence Browns Road traffic was mixed with through traffic on the Highway and this often caused delays to Princes Highway through traffic.

Council Traffic Unit advised that a traffic signals design could include separate right turn and left turn bays to physically separate Browns Road traffic from through traffic, that this alone would enhance capacity at the intersection, and signals would also allow RTA to optimise through flow efficiency on the Highway.

It was agreed that the Browns Road option would require traffic signals desirably part of the interim connection of Flinders Road to Browns Road. It was also agreed that Browns Road would require at least two approach lanes.

Summary Flinders Road issue:

- It was agreed Flinders should be linked to Browns in accordance with Nowra Bomaderry Structure Plan preferred road network
- It was agreed this could include an interim "S bend" type road alignment similar to what is being proposed at BTU Road, to utilise the existing bridge on Flinders Road
- It was agreed that the Browns Road option would require traffic signals

Central Avenue – have not shown east leg – connection to eastern service road

It was agreed that the designs should have accommodated an east leg to the Central Avenue Roundabout (as previously agreed with RTA would be an allowable future connection to the east service road network)

Nowra Hill Road – object to No Left Turn Slip Lane – agree relocate further to the south

It was agreed that RTA should have provided a left turn slip lane into Nowra Hill Road as part of the modification works to Nowra Hill Road access.

It was noted that RTA propose to relocate the intersection further to the south (approx 60m) however it was agreed that RTA could relocate the intersection further to the south to ensure optimum residual land potential, and optimise ability to resolve internal traffic conflicts on Nowra Hill Road if required in future.

Warra Warra Road – have not shown west leg – need additional lane capacity east and west legs

It was agreed that the designs should have accommodated a future west leg to the Warra Warra Road Roundabout in accordance with Nowra Bomaderry Structure Plan.

It was also agreed that the roundabout must be designed to accommodate additional lane capacity on both east and west legs, as will be required in future

BTU Road and Forest Road – must ensure interim works are consistent and do not jeopardise long term strategy – provide rest area and associated facilities

Council Traffic Unit advised of the long term realignment of Forest Road to BTU Road (as adopted as part of Nowra Bomaderry Structure Plan), but noted that because priority is to maintain the 100kph speed limit, this realignment would be long term (apart of future grade separated treatment) the intent being to minimise the number of grade separated treatments required along the Highway.

The chamber agreed in principle, however advised that a deviation could be achieved at the far western end of Forest Road, similar to the proposed deviation of BTU Road, and it was suggested this option would not impact on State Forest lands proposed to be gazetted as Nation Park.

Irrespective of how the ultimate deviation was achieved, it was agreed that the RTA proposal to take BTU Road further away from Forest Road, was not consistent with the long term intent to realign the two roads, and as such would be considered interim safety works only, however the main issue being to ensure that any interim works did not jeopardise the ability to revert back to the existing BTU Road alignment as part of the long term realignment of Forest Road.

It was agreed this included placement of facilities such as truck inspection bay, rest area facilities etc, with intent to ensure these facilities are located where could be accessed via a future grade separated junction incorporating BTU and Forest Roads into a single junction.

It was agreed that the area would be appropriate for rest area facilities including toilets and that this should be considered in the design layout.

It was agreed that the area would be appropriate for commercial zoning to attract private sector development.

The Shoalhaven Business Chamber were keen to see more permanent rest area and toilet facilities and wanted to make sure this site incorporated these facilities, or if not at this site, further to the south.

It was discussed that Council would be likely to support the Chambers in its calls for more rest area and toilet facilities along the Highway, and was likely to agree this was an appropriate site.

It was advised that as part of Nowra Bomaderry Structure Plan investigations sites immediately to the north and south of the Western Bypass were considered as potential sites for 24hour rest area facilities complimented by commercial zoning to allow service station and fast food retail etc, and that the subject site was in an area previously discussed with RTA to be considered for such uses.

Where to from Here

It was agreed that Council Traffic Unit staff would type up minutes of today's discussions and distribute to the chamber for their acceptance as accurate record of the discussion and items agreed.

It was noted that a report will be going to Council meeting, if possible in February, in particular on the matter of Flinders Road deviation (Browns v Quinns) as requested by Council at their meeting 21 December 2009; however it was agreed that the other items as discussed and agreed at the meeting could also be included in the Council report to obtain Council's resolution of those additional matters.

It was agreed that Council Traffic Unit staff would forward to the Chamber an electronic record of Council's December 21 2009 resolution and electronic copy of Council's submission

It was agreed that Council Traffic Unit staff could forward to the Chamber the minutes of tomorrows meeting with RTA.

Mr Neil Southorn (acting Director Strategic Planning & Infrastructure) advised that to simplify the report to Council, if the minutes were sufficiently detailed it would be intent that the minutes of both meetings could be attached as appendix to the Council report.

Scott Wells
Traffic & Transport Manager

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