

13. Social environment

13.1 Introduction

The South East Busway extension from Rochedale to Springwood will play an important role in the development of the local area. It is essential that social impacts are considered during the planning, design and construction phases of the project in order to reduce any negative impact on the community and service providers. A community consultation program was developed to promote the project and engaged the community during key stages of the Concept Design Study. This ensured key issues and opportunities were incorporated in the study. More information on the consultation program and its outcomes are found in Chapter 2 (Community consultation).

The Rochedale South and Springwood communities potentially impacted by this project fall within the Logan City Council boundary. Logan City Council confirmed its strong commitment to developing and regenerating the Springwood town centre through the ongoing development of the Greater Springwood Master Plan. The Department of Transport and Main Roads is working with Logan City Council in integrating busway and busway planning into its master plan.

Predicated national demographic changes such as an increase in population and the number of households by 2026 will create pressure on existing modes of transport used by the Rochedale South and Springwood communities. Car ownership and use in Rochedale South and Springwood is high and the proposed busway will assist in supporting population and business growth in the area, reducing car use and promoting a sustainable environment.

Social impacts need to be addressed and managed from the planning phase to the operation of the busway.

13.2 Methodology

A desktop analysis has been carried out which identifies and describes the existing social environment in the study area surrounding the busway extension. Potential impacts and opportunities are also outlined along with management strategies. Initial studies provide an overview of the existing environment and potential impacts in the future. Planning and design of the busway extension may change over time, along with community views and attitudes towards the project. This study provides background information for ongoing consultation and social impact assessment during future phases of the project.

13.2.1 Previous investigations

Springwood Town Centre Master Plan — Issues and Options Paper

In 2007, Logan City Council released the Springwood Town Centre Master Plan — Issues and Options Paper, and invited feedback from the community on proposed planning in Springwood.

Logan City Council documented challenges and opportunities that will contribute to the next stage of planning. Key challenges and opportunities identified through the study include:

- capitalising on the area's strategic location and the Springwood bus station
- facilitating transit orientated development principles into Springwood
- increasing public transport use, walking and cycling, while balancing the growth of the centre and addressing traffic conflicts
- improving connectivity between the eastern and western sides of the Pacific Motorway.

The Springwood Parking and Traffic Study (Eppell Olsen and Partners 2004) investigated existing traffic issues in and around the study area for input into the Issues and Options Paper. A major challenge identified in the study involved maximising car parking opportunities and improving traffic flow through the area.

Community consultation activities will also provide further detail on important facilities and services in the area, community issues and values and potential impacts that may result from the busway extension construction and operation.

13.2.2 Additional investigations

A desktop assessment analysing 2006 data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics was undertaken to understand the existing demographic profile and social conditions within the study area. Data collected from current demographic statistics will assist in the identification of key changes between the past and present. This information can also be used to predict future demographic trends and public transport requirements. A review of future development planned within the area was also undertaken.

Demographic profile

A community profile of Rochedale South and Springwood was compiled to understand the existing characteristics and environment of the study area.

Previous studies utilised census data that is now outdated. Statistical information from the 2006 census has been used to provide an up-to-date basic community profile, which includes an overview of demographic information and characteristics such as:

- population
- population forecasts
- age profiles
- family structure
- unemployment statistics
- median weekly income details
- workforce details.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 census data for Logan City (Local Government Authority) has been compared to that of Greater Brisbane (Major Statistical Region). This census data is presented in postcodes to ensure statistical information is analysed for the affected area as well as surrounding community who will also be directly impacted as a result of the South East Busway extension from Rochedale to Springwood. The postcodes that form the study area include:

- 4123 (Underwood Road, Rochedale and Rochedale South)
- 4127 (Springwood, Daisy Hill, Priestdale and Slacks Creek).

Existing social conditions

Desktop studies have been conducted to develop a description of existing social conditions. Information has been compiled from previous Logan City Council reports and has been updated where necessary with 2006 census data and information from relevant Government agencies. Social conditions include:

- housing and social infrastructure
- community facilities
- recreational facilities (parks/green space)
- community values
- amenity
- connectivity, community safety and access.

Community consultation for the busway extension was held in August/September 2008 and June/July 2009. A review of community feedback identified existing community values and issues. Key issues and concerns were also detailed and included in the likely social impacts and management strategies for the project. More information on the community consultation process and results can be found in Chapter 2.

13.3 Preliminary analysis

13.3.1 Existing situation

Demographic profile

Key information and statistical trends for the study area, Logan City and Greater Brisbane are presented in Appendix G. The discussions below are a summary analysis of this data.

Population and age structure

The total study area population in 2006 was 37,349 people. Population projections for the area indicate continued population growth in Logan City. Australian Bureau of Statistics data (2006–2007) estimates the resident population of Logan City increased by 1.1% from the previous year. The Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation predict the Logan City population will increase by 34% between 2006 and 2026.

Age profiles indicate age groups were generally in keeping with proportions found in Logan City and Greater Brisbane in 2006. The largest age group in the study area was 25 to 34 year olds with 14.4% of the population. The age profile also showed a higher proportion of 55 to 64 year olds in the study area compared to Logan City and Greater Brisbane. Averages show this age group made up 13.5% of the population, compared to 10.7% in Logan City and 10.0% in Greater Brisbane.

The median age of residents in the study area was 34.5 years in 2006, compared to a median age of 32 years in Logan City and 35 years in Greater Brisbane.

Household and family composition

In 2006 there were 10,429 families living in the study area. The most prevalent family type found in the study area was couple families with children. This group made up almost half of the family types in the area. Couple families without children made up 35.0% of family types. This proportion was higher than the Logan City average of 30.7%.

Married couples comprised 50.1% of the study area population over the age of 15 years. This is slightly higher than Logan City with 47.3%. The proportions of persons in the study area that have never married, are divorced or separated are also similar to those in Logan City and Greater Brisbane.

The Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation released a paper in 2007 discussing household projections in Queensland local government areas. The publication reports key changes to Queensland households. By 2026, it is estimated the number of households in Queensland will grow significantly; however, the ageing population will contribute to smaller households. By 2011, it is estimated lone-person households will outnumber households with couples and children.

Dwelling characteristics

The largest proportion of dwellings in the study area was separate houses with 83.8%. This was less than Logan City with 85.8% and larger than the Greater Brisbane average of 78.8%.

There were also a lower percentage of flats, units and apartments in the study area (1.8%) compared to Logan City (3.6%) and Greater Brisbane (12.9%). This indicates a preference for low-density residential living in the study area.

Housing tenure statistics indicate a more settled area with 30% of households in the study area being fully owned compared with 22.8% of households being fully owned in Logan City. The proportion of households living in rented accommodation is also low (24.7%) compared to Logan City (31.1%) and Greater Brisbane (30.9%).

Employment and income

The labour force in the study area showed a lower rate of unemployment at 4.0% than Logan City with 5.8%. However, Greater Brisbane's unemployment rate was similar to the study area at 4.4%. Overall labour force statistics in the study area were generally similar to statistics in Logan City and Greater Brisbane.

Clerical and administrative workers, professionals and technicians and trade workers formed the majority of the study area's workforce. Professional workers in the study area (16.2%) outweighed professional workers in Logan City by 5.0%.

Clerical and administrative and technicians and trade workers can be required to commute on a daily basis. This may lead to a reliance on private vehicles.

There were also some disparities in the median weekly individual incomes between the study area (\$527.00), Logan City (\$476.00) and Greater Brisbane (\$516.00).

Vehicles per dwelling and journey to work

The study area had a higher number of dwellings with two or more motor vehicles and three or more vehicles than Logan City and Greater Brisbane. The combined number of dwellings in the study area with two or more vehicles was 58.8% compared with 56% in Logan City and 51.7% in Greater Brisbane. The high percentage of dwellings in the study area with two or more vehicles may compound impacts on local roads and the Pacific Motorway.

Ownership and journey to work patterns from the Australian Bureau of Statistics suggest the community value private vehicle ownership and the mobility it provides. As a consequence, improving car parking and traffic flow through the area is considered important to community wellbeing and mobility.

The dominance of motor vehicles, roads and car parking in the core area of Springwood limits suitable areas to meet and gather. This core area contains the Springwood Hotel site, Arndale Shopping Centre and Centro Springwood Shopping which are all buildings surrounded by large spans of car parking.

Information gathered as part of planning work conducted by Logan City Council and community consultation for the busway extension project demonstrates a potential change in attitudes and growing support for public transport, pedestrian areas and cycleways.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 data reported that of the 80,228 employed persons who resided in Logan City, 32.9% worked in Logan City, 6.5% did not state where they worked and 60.6% or 48,632 of people worked outside of Logan City. Of the 48,632 people who worked outside of Logan City, 69.5% of people worked in Brisbane City Local Government Authority itself. The high proportion of people working outside of Logan City and travelling to Brisbane supports the need for an improved public transport network and busway.

Historical data from the office of Economic and Statistical Research also reported on journey to work patterns (Census 2001 Bulletin No. 9). From a destination perspective, 46% or 20,289 trips were made from Logan City to another local government authority. Journey to work flows between Logan City and Brisbane City were also significant, with 30,610 trips being made on the day of the census. It was also reported that 74.5% of commuters travelling from Logan City made the commute to work by private transport.

Existing social conditions

Logan City Council portrays Logan City as being young and diverse, offering a varied lifestyle and modern and revitalised neighbourhoods. The Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 census data reports significant growth in the Springwood and Rochedale South areas took place during the 1970s and 1980s with the areas experiencing slight population decline in the early 1990s.

Furthermore, the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 Census of Population and Housing reported that 'Logan City is a growing residential area, with substantial rural, rural residential, commercial and industrial areas'.

Community values

Over 85% of the respondents to the Springwood Town Centre Master Plan — Issues and Options Paper supported the proposed vision for the Springwood town centre as 'a vibrant heart, a place to live and work, a place for shopping, dining and entertainment, cultural and community activities' and 'people and family friendly'.

During the busway extension launch consultation in August 2008, the project team spoke to residents during staffed displays and information sessions. Many identified themselves as long-term residents living in the area since it developed.

The community values the access and connectivity the road-dominated environment provides but raised issues regarding its impacts such as noise and air quality. 'Lessening the number of cars on the road' was seen as a key benefit of providing a busway to Springwood.

A total of 98% of respondents in the first round of consultation were supportive of planning the busway extension.

Lifestyle

Logan's cultural and entertainment atmosphere has developed in recent years and this local lifestyle aspect has added to the social connection and cohesion in the area.

While Logan City Council features more than 600 recreational and environmental parks, community feedback from the Springwood Town Centre Master Plan — Issues and Options Paper suggests a need for improved recreational and retail environments and an increase in trees, green spaces and landscaping to contribute to local lifestyles.

Parks, recreational facilities and sportsgrounds found in the area include:

- Springwood Conservation Park
- Village Park
- Usher Park
- Daisy Hill Forest Reserve
- Tallowood Park
- Meakin Park including Slacks Creek Environmental Park
- Springwood Park.

The majority of these facilities are linked by and include cycleways and pedestrian paths. An improvement of these links would enhance social connectivity and promote a healthy and active lifestyle. Ovals and sporting parks are a key feature of the area that would help to engage community members of different age groups and interests in the local social environment.

The new Logan North Library also offers opportunities for the community to come together.

Community organisation and cohesion

A wide range of activities, facilities and community services are available in Rochedale and Springwood.

The following types of services and facilities operate in the study area:

- childcare including infant to pre prep, primary, high school and after hours school care
- fitness centres and sporting groups
- library services
- aged care and special needs services
- family counselling and support services.

A map of the project area and localities of community facilities and services is shown in Figure 13-1. The busway extension and improved public transport links may enhance connectivity and access to these locations for the community.

Planning

The Rochedale Urban Village has been planned by Brisbane City Council and is just north of the study area. The development of 900 hectares of semi-rural land to house more than 15,000 people will have an impact of the social environment of the study area by providing additional population, community facilities and demand for public transport.

Highlights of the Rochedale Urban Community Local Plan include:

- a range of housing options
- a new town centre
- opportunities for business and clean industry
- a number of new community parks
- large areas of environmental protection.

Managing issues and opportunities

Demographic profile changes

It is anticipated that the construction and operation of the South East Busway extension from Rochedale to Springwood will have a minor impact on the study area's demographic profile. There will be some loss of property owners from the area due to property resumption or lifestyle changes, but this is unlikely to create an overall long-term change in the area.

Providing more transport options, that are easily accessed, may reduce car ownership in the long term.

The South East Queensland Regional Plan 2009–2031 also identified Springwood as the only principal activity centre designated in Logan City. To support the future growth, it is important the area is supported by a well-serviced public transport system.

Enhancing community values

It is likely that the busway extension will add to the community values of the study area. Improved connectivity through public transport and linkages with community facilities and spaces, such as a town square, would ensure community members have the opportunity to gather or participate in local and city-wide events. This will help to strengthen the study area's connection to Logan City and Greater Brisbane.

Encouraging the use of public transport

With the ageing population it is expected the busway extension will provide more options for older community members and increase their mobility now and in the future. An integrated public transport system that provides well-serviced links from residential areas to commercial and community destinations will increase public transport use and would support a reduction in private vehicles.

Community capacity building can be achieved through education and awareness programs that focus on the benefits of using public transport. These programs would also inform the public on how to access information and plan public transport trips, which may further encourage the use of public transport.

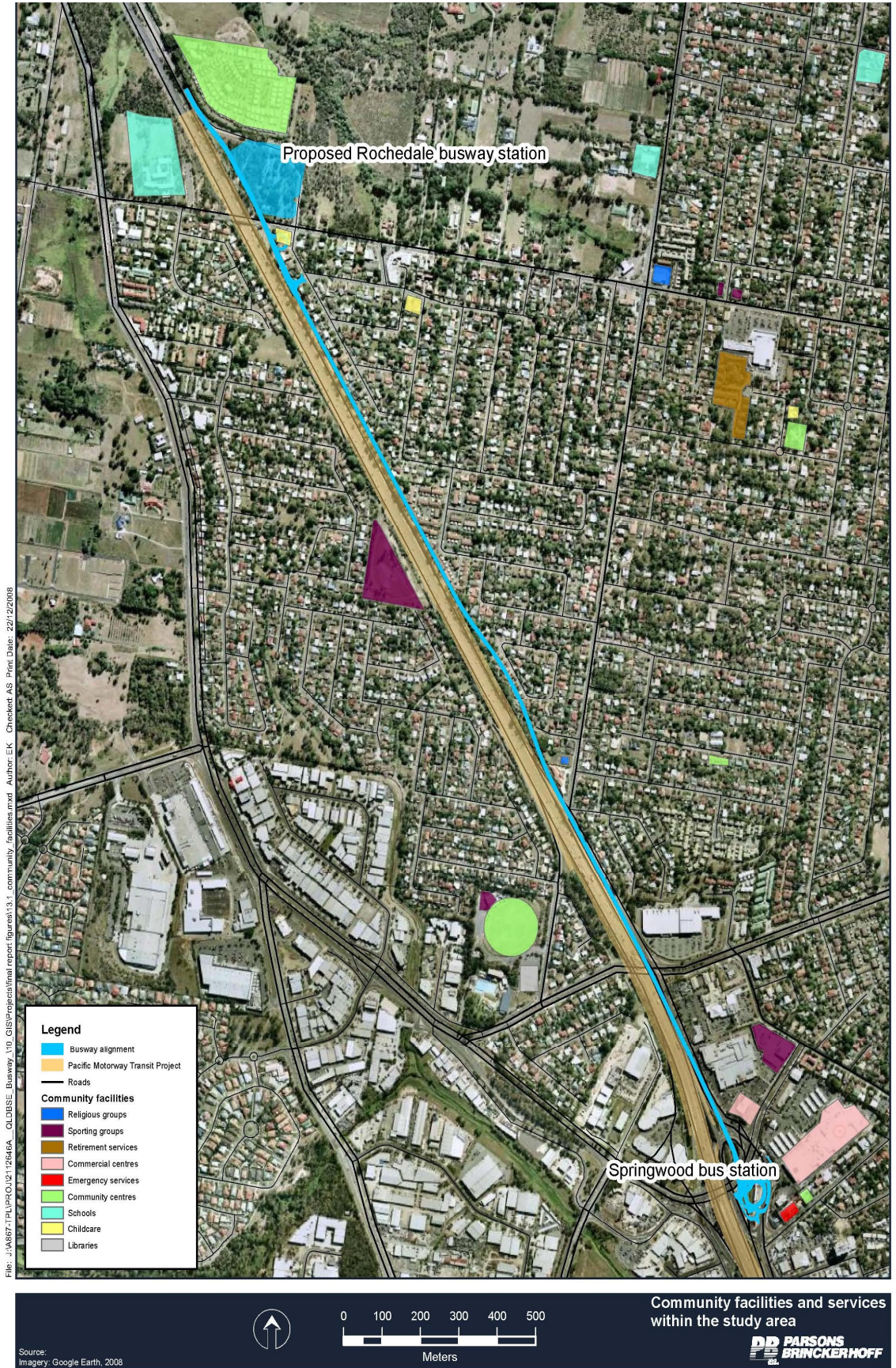


Figure 13-1: Community facilities and services within the study area

Encouraging public ownership of the busway

A consultation program has been undertaken to incorporate community interests into the planning for the busway. Consultation with stakeholders and the community was undertaken to ensure that potential project issues were gathered and opportunities to maximise community benefits were identified. Involving the community in planning decisions also fosters greater public ownership of the busway, which may result in higher patronage numbers and better use of facilities.

The public consultation and community engagement process assisted in planning a busway that can be best suited to the area. The community consultation process aimed to:

- ensure early identification of potential stakeholder issues and management strategies
- increase community awareness and understanding of the project
- facilitate public consultation and community involvement that balances the community's need for information with opportunities to provide input.

Potential disruption during construction

During construction of the busway extension there may be some impacts which affect the liveability of the area, such as visual impacts, traffic congestion, noise and reduced air quality. It is anticipated that as the project moves into impact management planning these issues will be addressed in consultation with the local community.

Potential property impacts

Impacts on indirectly and directly affected property owners has been considered in planning the busway extension and the project team engaged with property owners throughout the development of the Concept Design Study. Property owners with potential land requirements will continue to be a key stakeholder group as the project progresses

It is important that information about construction timing and impacts are communicated to the study area and broader community during future project phases.

13.4 Future investigations

It is important to conduct further investigations into the social environment closer to the time of construction as the social environment will change before the busway extension is constructed. The potential for demographic change is highlighted through the potential development of the Rochedale Urban Village and as Springwood grows into a principal activity centre. Demographics and what the community values will need to be understood to enable the identification of impacts and benefits closer to construction.

13.5 References

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