

Minutes

Coomera Connector Stage 1 Community Reference Group

Meeting 2

Date Friday 27 November 2020 **Time** 9am – 12pm

Facilitator Al Mucci

Minute taker Natalie Warren, TMR project team

Attendees

Presence

Trenton Gay	Gold Coast Marina & Shipyard	Present
Kevin Cornor	River Cove, Hope Island	Present
Debbi Parker	River Cove, Hope Island	Present
Mark Hunter	The Shores, Helensvale	Present
John Pincock	The Surrounds, Helensvale	Present
Bradley Read	Seachange, Arundel	Present
Sean Reid	Arundel/Parkwood	Present
Luisa Williams	Molendinar	Present
Glen Thornton	Ashmore (Nerang River precinct)	Present
Yvette Dempsey	Carrara	Present
Karina Waterman	Coomera Conservation Group	Present
Nicole Taylor	Coomera Conservation Group	Present
Lois Levy	Gecko Environment Council	Present
Rose Adams	Gecko Environment Council	Present
Wade Arthur	TMR project team	Present
Kate Taylor	TMR project team	Present
Paul Noonan	TMR Regional Director, South Coast	Present
Julian Butler	TMR Engineering & Technology Branch	Present
Richard Mason	Landscape Architecture team lead, Stage 1 reference design consultants	Present
Amy Kinnane	Foreshore Coomera	Apologies
Paul Hogan	Foreshore Coomera	Apologies
Ann Jones	Monterey Keys, Helensvale	Apologies
Craig Rowston	Gold Coast Suns	Apologies
Tim Carey	Metricon Stadium	Apologies
Stacey Taverna	Arundel Springs estate	Apologies
Roy Bekkeli	The Surrounds, Helensvale	Apologies

Kate Taylor welcomed members and introduced new members of the CRG:

- Glen Thornton – representing Ashmore (Nerang River precinct)
- Rose Adams – Gecko Environment Council, who did not attend first meeting

Kate Taylor introduced additional TMR representatives attending the meeting:

- Paul Noonan – Regional Director, South Coast, TMR
- Julian Butler – Engineering & Technology Branch, TMR
- Richard Mason – Landscape Architecture team lead, Stage 1 reference design consultants

Agenda item 1 Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country

Al Mucci welcomed attendees and provided an Acknowledgement of Country in Yugambah Language of the Gold Coast Region.

Al Mucci reminded CRG members of:

- the group rules, developed to facilitate constructive discussions
- the opportunity provided by TMR for CRG members to review the minutes of the meeting before they are published.

Agenda item 2 Update on questions, issues and opportunities

Wade Arthur reiterated the purpose of the CRG (as outlined on the CRG Terms of Reference) which is to consult with residents who live close to the corridor plus key environmental and business stakeholders about project negotiables such as urban design.

Wade Arthur explained TMR is currently working through the 76 issues, opportunities and questions raised by CRG members in Meeting 1 on 2 September 2020:

- 32 questions
- 27 issues
- 17 opportunities.

TMR is aiming to respond to most items prior to the end of the year or in early 2021. Given the number of items, this will likely be handled out of session with a document distributed to members. Some items will be covered off as part of the agenda items today.

Agenda item 3 Update on recent project developments

Wade Arthur provided an update on recent project developments

- Funding announcements
 - 20 September 2020: Queensland Government commitment of \$755 million.
 - 6 October 2020: Australian Government matched the commitment in the Federal budget.
 - A total of \$1.53 billion is now committed for the planning and delivery of Stage 1 (Coomera to Nerang).
- Reference design and business case status
 - TMR is continuing to develop the reference design and business case for government consideration in mid-2021.

- The reference design provides a basis for an estimate and continues to be refined within the business case.
- Funding announcements can occur separately to the development of the business case. The business case will provide a mechanism to unlock the funding.
- **Community consultation**
 - Consultation occurred from 11 September to 11 October 2020, focusing on the negotiable aspects of the project – the design of noise barriers, retaining walls, shared path and landscaping and planting.
 - Key areas of concern for the community continues to be noise and potential impacts on local wildlife and habitat.
 - Feedback from some CRG members following the CRG Meeting 1 was that wildlife sensitive design should be a negotiable aspect of the project.
 - TMR has been and will continue to engage with conservation professionals and environmental stakeholders about managing impacts to environmental areas.
- **Environmental approvals**
 - A Public Environment Report is being developed as part of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* approval process. The community will be provided with an opportunity to comment on the Public Environment Report.
 - Koala management plan and environmental management plans are also being developed in consultation with relevant environmental stakeholders, with a briefing scheduled for 30 November 2020.
- **Northern end point for Stage 1**
 - Following consultation, the northern end point for Coomera Connector Stage 1 is now confirmed as Shipper Drive, Coomera. This will minimise impacts on Coomera Foreshore estate and Foxwell State Secondary College and improve access to the Gold Coast Marina Precinct.
 - Traffic modelling shows Shipper Drive provides a more direct route to Coomera and Gold Coast Marina precinct, and access back to M1. The analysis undertaken to confirm Shipper Drive as the northern end point for Stage 1 will be included in the business case.
- **Stage 1 delivery strategy**
 - Industry briefing to be held on 1 December 2020 to outline the delivery strategy for Stage 1 – three geographic work packages:
 - Stage 1 North: Shipper Drive, Coomera to Helensvale Road, Helensvale
 - Stage 1 Central: Helensvale Road, Helensvale to Smith Street Motorway, Molendinar
 - Stage 1 South: Smith Street Motorway, Molendinar to Nerang-Broadbeach Road, Nerang.

CRG member questions and comments in relation to Agenda item 3

- Karina Waterman asked if upgrades are planned for Helensvale Road and Shipper Drive? Mark Hunter noted the City of Gold Coast had raised concerns about a Coomera Connector interchange at Helensvale Road.
- Wade Arthur advised TMR is considering the role of local roads in the vicinity of the Coomera Connector including what changes may need to be made to Shipper Drive to accommodate the Coomera Connector interchange. Wade Arthur further advised the City of Gold Coast has planned for future upgrades of Helensvale Road to cater for the anticipated increase in traffic on this council road link.
- Wade Arthur advised TMR is aiming to have Stage 1 completed by the end of 2025, potentially with parts of Stage 1 being progressively opened to traffic earlier during 2024.
- Kevin Cornor asked if TMR is working with Queensland Rail in relation to the planned Helensvale North station at Hope Island?
- Wade Arthur advised TMR is liaising with the Cross River Rail Delivery Authority but that construction timing for the Helensvale North station was not yet known.
- John Pincock asked how construction is planned to commence from mid-2021 when the business case would not be considered or signed off by government until mid-2021?
- Paul Noonan advised there is recognition on a national level for the Coomera Connector and as part of the response to Covid-19, this project is being developed as an example of how processes can be efficiently run in parallel, with construction to start shortly after the business case is considered and approved. The contract for construction will not be awarded until after approval of the business case. Federal funding has been committed, but not yet released.
- Karina Waterman asked that information on wildlife impacts be provided to the CRG as a whole.
- Wade Arthur confirmed an update on TMR's approach to wildlife sensitive design will be an agenda item for a future CRG meeting.
- Luisa Williams asked if the road will be four lanes or six lanes?
- Wade Arthur explained some sections may require six lanes to accommodate predicted traffic volumes and some sections may require fewer lanes. The business case will make recommendations on the number of lanes needed. Paul Noonan added that traffic modelling for 2041 suggests a requirement for six lanes, however in some areas six lanes will not be needed for a number of years and therefore will not necessarily be built from day one.
- Lois Levy asked if modelling had been done recently with more people working from home?
- Paul Noonan explained the increase in people working from home at least part of the week is part of the traffic modelling. Population growth for the Gold Coast suggests demand for an alternative road to the M1 is there, even with working from home. TMR analysed over 100 options and determined there is a need for another transport corridor in addition to upgrades to heavy rail for the fast-growing community.
- Lois Levy asked if the options analysis report could be provided to the group?
- Paul Noonan advised the options analysis formed part of cabinet decision so TMR is unable release it. A summary will be provided to the group.
- Kevin Cornor asked if the Coomera River bridge will be four lanes or six lanes?

- Paul Noonan advised the intention is to build the ultimate solution for the Coomera River Bridge which will be six lanes.
- Debbi Parker asked if construction for the Coomera Connector would be undertaken in phases like the M1 upgrades?
- Paul Noonan explained TMR programs works as required and based on funding.
- Kevin Cornor noted the corridor had been previously removed from planning documents and that some property owners purchased without knowledge of the transport corridor.
- Paul Noonan acknowledged Kevin Cornor's disappointment about the matter.
- Mark Hunter supported the request to gain more information about the options analysis and noted his sense that the CRG and local community would prefer for the ultimate solution to be built in the first instance.
- Paul Noonan explained there will always be the need to increase capacity on the road network and that where a section of the Coomera Connector is initially built with fewer lanes, future upgrades would involve minimal disruption as the additional lanes would likely be built into the centre median of the road.
- Luisa Williams asked if electric vehicles are being considered in project planning? Lois Levy also supported encouraging the use of electric vehicles.
- Paul Noonan noted TMR is expecting a shift toward electric vehicles, also noting the benefits of reduced noise and pollution.
- Sean Reid asked if future upgrades for the Coomera Connector would involve additional property resumptions?
- Paul Noonan advised future upgrades would likely be built in the centre median which would not involve property resumptions
- When asked if trucks will be allowed on the Coomera Connector, Paul Noonan advised the M1 is part of the National Land Transport Network. Freight vehicles will have no incentive to use the Coomera Connector and are expected to remain on the M1, unless there is a major incident on the M1.
- Glen Thornton noted there are a lot of trucks in the Molendinar area that may use the Coomera Connector.
- Paul Noonan advised the Coomera Connector will primarily cater for local traffic. While trucks won't be precluded from using the road, modelling shows freight will continue to use the M1. TMR will investigate the issues around this.
- Luisa Williams asked if there are intentions to extend Ashmore Road?
- Paul Noonan advised the extension of Ashmore Road is being considered by the City of Gold Coast as a future upgrade.
- Mark Hunter asked if CRG members collectively thought trucks should be restricted from using the Coomera Connector unless a diversion is in place?
- Paul Noonan noted the comments and advised TMR would not be restricting trucks from using the Coomera Connector.

Agenda item 4 Project negotiables: concept drawings

- Wade Arthur presented artist impression concept drawings, developed based on community feedback, showing potential designs for noise barriers, retaining walls, landscaping and planting and the shared path.
- Wade Arthur advised after gaining input from CRG members, the concept drawings will be publicly released in early 2021 following approval to release.
- Wade Arthur noted the following points in relation to the concept drawings:
 - A viewing platform could be incorporated on the shared path over the Coomera River offering pedestrians and bike riders a shaded place to rest and look out over the river. Solar panels on the shade structure could be used to power lighting. Acrylic noise barriers on the bridge could offer views of the Coomera River in addition to noise attenuation.
 - A mix of noise barriers will be used with some acrylic panels included at the top of patterned concrete barriers to facilitate sunlight in near residences, absorptive panels will be used where needed and there will be opportunities for vegetation (such as *Ficus pumila*) to be grown on barriers to soften their appearance in some locations.
 - Julian Butler explained *Ficus pumila* is low maintenance and doesn't require very much space. It tolerates heat and doesn't require very much irrigation or pruning when on a wall.
 - Julian Butler further explained TMR is guided by the requirements of the *TMR Road Traffic Noise Code of Practice* to mitigate road traffic noise. TMR uses noise modelling to determine where different types of barriers will be best placed and how high they need to be to meet the noise criteria levels for a new road as outlined in the Code of Practice.
 - Wildlife exclusion fencing will be included where needed to prevent wildlife from entering the road.
 - Wherever possible, TMR is looking to locate the shared path away from the traffic lanes to improve the amenity and usability of the shared path for pedestrians and bike riders.
 - Where possible, existing vegetation will be retained, and additional planting will be included in the design to screen noise barriers from residences.
- As part of this agenda item, Julian Butler provided an overview of TMR's investigations into the feasibility of the RMIT research proposal into ecological noise barriers and the possibility of the proposal being adopted for the Coomera Connector. The RMIT proposal had been suggested put forward by CRG members in meeting 1.
- Julian Butler advised TMR's Engineering & Technology Branch has undertaken an initial assessment of the RMIT proposal and has identified a range of issues including:
 - potential additional engineering, cost and effectiveness issues associated with curved panel design
 - durability and maintenance issues associated with greens walls and associated irrigation systems
 - increased footprint compared to standard reflective or absorptive panels
 - unknown impacts of noise transformation system

- Paul Noonan further advised TMR considered the RMIT proposal and agreed it looks aesthetically pleasing, however noted there is no data on what effect the noise transformation component of the proposal has on wildlife. A range of issues may affect the practicality of the proposal as it hasn't been implemented yet.

CRG member questions and comments in relation to Agenda item 4

- Kevin Cornor asked what will be done to stop people throwing things from the shared path on the Coomera River bridge into nearby residences?
- Paul Noonan advised this will be investigated and where there is a risk, throw screens are typically installed.
- Debbi Parker expressed concern the proposed viewing platform on the Coomera River shared path (depicted in the concept drawings) will be very close to the River Cove Marina.
- Trenton Gay commented that he knows the Coomera River very well and that there is plenty of room between the proposed viewing platform and the River Cove Marina, noting the perspective of the image makes it appear close to the southern side of the river.
- Mark Hunter asked if the road could go under the river?
- Paul Noonan explained the cost of tunnelling under the river would be substantial and noted tunnelling would not be possible with the marina precinct to the north of the river.
- Karina Waterman asked about the level of access to the shared path: will there be other access points other than just at interchanges?
- Wade Arthur advised there will be multiple access points to the shared path, not just at interchanges. Paul Noonan further advised the active path is a fundamental aspect of the project designed to link communities and promote opportunities for active transport. TMR wants to make it as useable and attractive and possible.
- Kevin Cornor asked what height the barriers will be?
- Wade Arthur advised the noise barrier plan is still being developed, but the expected heights would range between 4 and 6 metres – different heights may be needed in different locations.
- Glen Thornton asked if noise barriers could be moved to the other side (western side) of the railway?
- Wade Arthur explained noise barriers are most effective when placed close to the source of the noise.
- Mark Hunter noted acrylic panels on barriers on the motorway near Bangalow in New South Wales appear to be damaged by the sun and expressed concern this may happen on the Coomera Connector.
- Brad Read asked if proposed noise barriers are the best form of noise abatement for the Coomera Connector? He had heard noise barriers may not work for residents who live further away. Other CRG members had heard this as well. Brad Read suggested an above-ground tunnel with solar panels and vegetation on top looks like a good idea and would be better for environment and it should at least be trialled.
- Brad Read suggested TMR look at Melbourne near Tullamarine for examples, noting he understood there would be cost issues but that it may be worth looking at for a greenfield site.
- Paul Noonan explained all aspects of road design undertaken by TMR including noise attenuation measures are based on relevant specifications.
- Karina Waterman asked if there will there be an underpass for wildlife near The Shores?
- Wade Arthur advised an underpass is not expected to be provided in this location, however exclusion fencing is likely to be provided in this location and fauna would be redirected to a safer location to cross the corridor.

- Brad Read noted the distance from Seachange to the Coomera Connector is approximately 330 metres and in his opinion the noise barriers won't prevent noise going over barriers. Brad Read noted Seachange residents would like an above ground tunnel style barrier.
- Wade Arthur advised noise barriers will be placed as close to the source of noise as possible to maximise effectiveness. To address noise, TMR is also considering lower noise pavement surfaces.
- Debbi Parker asked if TMR has undertaken research on how many people will be impacted by noise from the Coomera Connector?
- Wade Arthur explained TMR is currently undertaking a noise assessment and noise modelling as part of the business case to determine expected noise impacts and noise mitigation strategy for the project.
- CRG members noted greenery or vegetation on noise barriers to absorb pollution and noise would be considered favourably by local residents.
- Nicole Taylor asked if the acrylic panels on the concept images on some noise barriers would be clear?
- Richard Mason confirmed acrylic panels would be clear, however will be specifically designed to limit bird strikes.
- Lois Levy asked if there will be noise barriers near on and off ramps?
- Wade Arthur advised noise barriers will typically be required where there are residents nearby, including at on and off ramps.
- Mark Hunter asked if acrylic panels cause light pollution from headlights?
- Wade Arthur advised acrylic panels are proposed to be included in noise barriers above the level of vehicle headlights.
- Lois Levy noted noise can carry over creeks and rivers and noise barriers should be included over the river crossings.
- John Pincock asked if there will there be any scope for different sound barriers in the future?
- Mark Hunter noted he would like to see consideration of latest research for noise attenuation.
- Julian Butler advised TMR's Engineering & Technology Branch is continually researching and reviewing available noise barrier technology.
- Lois Levy asked what the road surface will be for the Coomera Connector?
- Paul Noonan advised open-graded asphalt is likely to be used, which is very effective in minimising noise and the lowest noise pavement type used on the Queensland state-controlled road network. TMR considers whole-of-life costs of pavement surfaces. Mark Hunter asked if the CRG can receive a paper to consider the different road surface options?
- Wade Arthur advised the types of road surfaces are documented in the TMR Noise Code of Practice which is publicly available on the TMR website.
- Debbi Parker asked if TMR uses new and innovative technologies?
- Julian Butler advised TMR's Engineering and Technology Branch continues to consider the use of new technology which has been tested and proven.

Agenda item 5 Planning for construction: Coomera River Bridge

With construction of the Coomera Connector to commence in the northern part of the corridor between Coomera and Helensvale, CRG members Kevin Cornor and Debbi Parker (River Cove) requested to add construction management as an agenda item for the meeting.

Wade Arthur provided an overview of the construction management process:

- Once appointed, construction contractors will be required to prepare a construction management plan which will be approved by TMR before construction commences.
- Construction management plans cover matters such as hours of work and how construction impacts such as noise and dust will be managed.
- Dilapidation surveys will be undertaken before and after construction.
- Brad Read noted dust is an issue which needs to be managed properly.
- Kevin and Debbi confirmed they were happy to take the more site-specific questions offline to be addressed with TMR directly.
- Kate Taylor welcomed CRG members to provide TMR with a list of any construction related issues they are concerned about so this information can be provided to construction contractors to consider in the development of construction management plans.
- Debbi Parker asked if there will be a person they can contact during construction?
- Kate Taylor advised a Community Liaison Officer will be available to contact 24 hours a day.
- Karina Waterman asked if access to the construction site at the northern end of the Stage 1 North contract will be from Shipper Drive? Karina is concerned about construction machinery being moved during peak times which could cause delays.
- Wade Arthur advised that site access points will form part of construction contract, but this type of activity will occur outside of peak times.

Agenda item 6 Other business

- Mark Hunter advised CRG members he proposed a list of motions for TMR to send the CRG members on his behalf, but TMR advised this was not part of the Terms of Reference for the group to act as a committee and to provide group positions in relation to project non-negotiables.
- Mark Hunter noted he wants to understand how TMR is responding to issues raised by the CRG and requested more detailed minutes.
- Wade Arthur reminded CRG Members the purpose of the CRG as per the Terms of Reference is to gain input from CRG members on the project negotiables. The CRG is not a committee.
- Luisa Williams asked if there are plans to extend Ashmore Road and if TMR is working with the City of Gold Coast on this?
- Wade Arthur advised the City of Gold Coast has long term plans to extend Ashmore Road, however this is not part of the Coomera Connector project.
- Paul Noonan further advised the City of Gold Coast has informed TMR of a number of projects they would like TMR to deliver as part of the Coomera Connector, however the City of Gold Coast is responsible for upgrades to the local road network.
- Lois Levy asked if there is a joint TMR/City of Gold Coast study on traffic/roads?
- Paul Noonan advised TMR contributes to the City of Gold Coast's Transport Strategy, which is regularly reviewed and updated. TMR is also part of the City of Gold Coast Transport Strategy 2041 Steering Committee which has a framework and blueprint of joint priorities.
- Mark Hunter noted he was open to attending an additional CRG meeting if need be.

- Mark Hunter requested it be noted that the project negotiable concept drawings were discussed by the CRG prior to them being finalised and publicly released.
- Mark Hunter asked about the plans for Stage 2 of the Coomera Connector?
- Wade Arthur confirmed the northern section of the Coomera Connector corridor between Loganholme and Coomera are considered future stages, with no funding committed at this stage as the focus is currently on Stage 1.
- Mark Hunter expressed his opinion that noise pollution would be reduced if the Coomera Connector was a lower speed road. Mark noted his opinion that the speed of the road should be a negotiable.
- Kate Taylor advised that the speed of the road had already been discussed with the CRG as being non-negotiable.
- Karina Waterman noted the perception that the speed limit of 100km/h is effectively a second M1, not an alternative route for local traffic as the Coomera Connector has been described.
- Brad Read requested light pollution be added as an agenda item for the next CRG meeting.
- Sean Reid noted Smith Street Motorway was 100km/h and was then reduced to 80km/h. Sean asked if it was possible this could happen with the Coomera Connector?
- Wade Arthur explained speed limits are determined by engineering requirements, the geometry of the road, and what provides the best transport solution.
- Paul Noonan explained the Smith Street speed change occurred due to safety issues associated with queuing at a crest in road and was dropped to 80 km/h accordingly. This is unlikely to be an issue for the Coomera Connector.
- Mark Hunter suggested CRG members vote with a show of hands if the speed limit for the Coomera Connector should be negotiable. Paul Noonan noted the speed limit for the Coomera Connector was not a negotiable aspect of the project. Less than half of CRG members raised their hands.
- Al Mucci reiterated Wade Arthur's comments about the purpose and Terms of Reference for the CRG, which is to gain community input on the negotiable aspects of the project.
- Karina Waterman requested information for CRG members on how the speed limit of 100km/h was decided upon to provide to community members. Karina noted her interest in the rationale behind the decisions.

Date of next meeting

To be confirmed.

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