

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

This report provides the outcomes of the route options development phase of the Oxley Highway to Kempsey Upgrade Project. The report:

- ▶ Outlines the project scope, objectives and planning methodology;
- ▶ Describes the characteristics of the study area, including a summary of the main features of the existing environment and the key issues and constraints;
- ▶ Provides an overview of the context for the project, including the statutory planning and traffic and transport context, and need for the project; and
- ▶ Describes the four options developed and the process used to develop them.

Where to From Here?

The four options presented include duplication of the existing alignment; deviation from the existing alignment and use of the existing highway as a local access road; and the combination of the two. The preferred route may include a mix of sections from more than one option.

In addition, two upgrade strategies have been presented. Class A would provide a four-lane, 100 km/h posted speed, limited access roadway with at-grade intersections, while Class M would provide four-lane (ultimately six lanes possible), 110 km/h posted speed, controlled access roadway with grade separated interchange accesses. It is envisaged that the highway would initially be upgraded to Class A, with subsequent upgrading to Class M. However, the initial upgrade may include a combination of the Class A and Class M upgrade scenarios. This may be necessary to provide an increased level of safety or operation within certain sections of the project.

The next steps in the project will be to:

1. Place the four route options on public display;
2. Seek community feedback;
3. Analyse the feedback received;
4. Consider the project objectives and selection criteria;
5. Hold a value management workshop;
6. Select the preferred route;
7. Place the preferred route on public display;
8. Refine the preferred route if necessary;
9. Prepare a refined design of the preferred route; and
10. Environmental assessment and determination of preferred route.

The study team recommends that the four options proposed by this report be assessed and evaluated, with the aim of identifying a preferred option that balances the project objectives, design requirements, project costs, community needs and environmental impacts.

Document Review

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Document Status

Revision	Date	Description
8	13/10/2005	Final issue to RTA.

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GHD Document No. 22/12057/04/66851