



Transport
Roads & Maritime
Services



Sportsmans Creek new bridge

Community Feedback Report

FEBRUARY 2014

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BACKGROUND

The existing Sportsmans Creek bridge is located at the southern approach to Lawrence, on Bridge Street which connects to the Grafton-Lawrence Road. Due to its geometry and design limitations, the existing bridge is unable to be safely or cost-effectively serviced and upgraded to cater for future requirements of surrounding agricultural industries, local traffic and pedestrian access.

Therefore, as part of the NSW state-wide Roads and Maritime Services (Roads and Maritime) Timber Truss Bridge Conservation Strategy, Sportsmans Creek bridge will be removed and replaced with a new structure.

The new Sportsmans Creek bridge project is part of the 'Bridges for the Bush' initiative – a NSW Government commitment to improve road freight productivity by replacing or upgrading bridges.

The objectives of the project are:

- Construct a new bridge over Sportsmans Creek in Lawrence
- Enhance road safety for motorists, residents, cyclists and pedestrians
- Improve traffic efficiency within Lawrence
- Improve road transport productivity, efficiency, maintainability and reliability
- Support local and regional economic development
- Allow for safe removal of the existing bridge, in support of the Timber Truss Bridge Conservation Strategy
- Minimise the impact on the natural, cultural, social and built environment
- Consider community members' views
- Deliver value for money
- Facilitate handover of the new bridge and associated roadwork to Clarence Valley Council.

In July 2013, Roads and Maritime held two drop-in sessions in Lawrence to discuss options for a new bridge location. Important issues such as enhancing road and pedestrian safety and minimising impacts on the community and local property were raised by community members.

These comments were collated into an Early Feedback Summary Report (August 2013) and considered by the project team alongside the results of technical studies examining traffic, noise, flooding and environment. A wide range of options were then considered and a Recommended Option (Appendix A) was identified and announced in November 2013 for stakeholder and community comment.

Roads and Maritime is committed to informing and consulting all stakeholders to ensure a strategic solution is found that meets the needs of the Lawrence community and local industries.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK REPORT

This report summarises the feedback received from stakeholders and the Lawrence community on the Recommended Option and proposed intersection treatments. The feedback was assembled from:

- Discussions at two community drop-in sessions held on Monday 9 December 2013 (4pm-7pm) and Wednesday 11 December 2013 (11am-2pm) at the Lawrence Public Hall
- Feedback forms that were included in the Community Update (November 2013) for the project and made available on the Roads and Maritime website (submitted by Friday 20 December 2013)
- Meetings with property owners and businesses within the study area and Clarence Valley Council.

Roads and Maritime invited the community to attend the drop-in sessions through the Community Update (November 2013) that was letter dropped to Lawrence residents (carried out by the Lawrence Post Office), newspaper advertisements and a media release published in local newspapers: Daily Examiner, Clarence Valley Review and Coastal View. Personalised letters and copies of the Community Update were also sent to property owners within the study area (see Appendix B) and to all those who had previously expressed an interest in the project and provided their contact details.

Related project information including the Community Update (November 2013) and the Recommended Option Report (November 2013) were made available on the Roads and Maritime website and three locations in and around Lawrence: Lawrence General and Liquor Store, Roads and Maritime regional office (Grafton) and Clarence Valley Council offices (Grafton and Maclean). Feedback forms were welcomed until Friday 20 December 2013 (Appendix D).

Based on feedback received, this report provides information for the finalisation of the Preferred Option and will be included in the Preferred Option Report to be submitted to the Minister for Roads and Ports for a decision.

The community can contact the project team at any time by:

Phone: 1800 035 016 (toll free)

Email: sportsmanscreeknewbridge@kbr.com

Post: Sportsmans Creek new bridge project
Reply Paid 633
Brisbane QLD 4001

The community feedback outlined in this report will be considered prior to selecting the preferred route for the project.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Nineteen community members signed in at the drop-in sessions including residents and business representatives from within and outside the study area. Fifteen attended the session on 9 December and four on 11 December.

Attendees spoke with members of the project team either one-on-one or in small groups to better understand the project, ask questions and give feedback.

Individual meetings outside the community drop-in session times were offered to property owners and businesses within the study area to discuss the Recommended Option and any potential impacts on their properties/businesses.

Forty formal feedback forms were returned, with some submitted on the day of the drop-in sessions and others sent by email or post.

The Roads and Maritime and Clarence Valley Council steering committee continue to meet regularly to discuss the project and ensure ongoing consultation throughout the project.

FEEDBACK

The feedback form attached to the Community Update (November 2013) and available on the Roads and Maritime website for download requested comment on the Recommended Option and the proposed intersection treatments.

Recommended Option

Generally, the Recommended Option announced in November 2013 was well received by those who attended the drop-in sessions and submitted feedback forms. Of the 40 feedback forms received:

- Twenty-three expressly preferred the Recommended Option
- Four preferred other options (namely Option 1 and 3) but were happy with the reasoning behind the selection of the Recommended Option
- Two preferred another option (Option 1 or 3).

Proposed intersection treatments

Those who attended the drop-in sessions and submitted feedback forms were generally supported the proposed Riverbank and Weir roads connection and the southern end of bridge of Bridge Street turning bay. Several suggestions for safety improvements (e.g. signage and traffic calming) were also offered.

For the two intersection treatments proposed for the Grafton/Bridge Street connection:

- Fifteen of the 40 feedback forms returned expressly preferred Option B (through route from Grafton Street to Richmond Street) with suggestions for safety improvements
- Three preferred Option A (t-intersection from Grafton Street to Bridge Street) because of the traffic calming ability, concerns about parking at the Lawrence General Store and Liquor Store and pedestrian safety.

Top topics raised

All comments recorded within the feedback form and during discussions at the drop-in sessions were classified by topic. The top five frequently identified topics were:

- Road safety
- Traffic flow and travel times
- Business/service patronage
- Flooding/drainage
- Community facilities and services.

Figure 2 shows the ten most frequently mentioned topics.

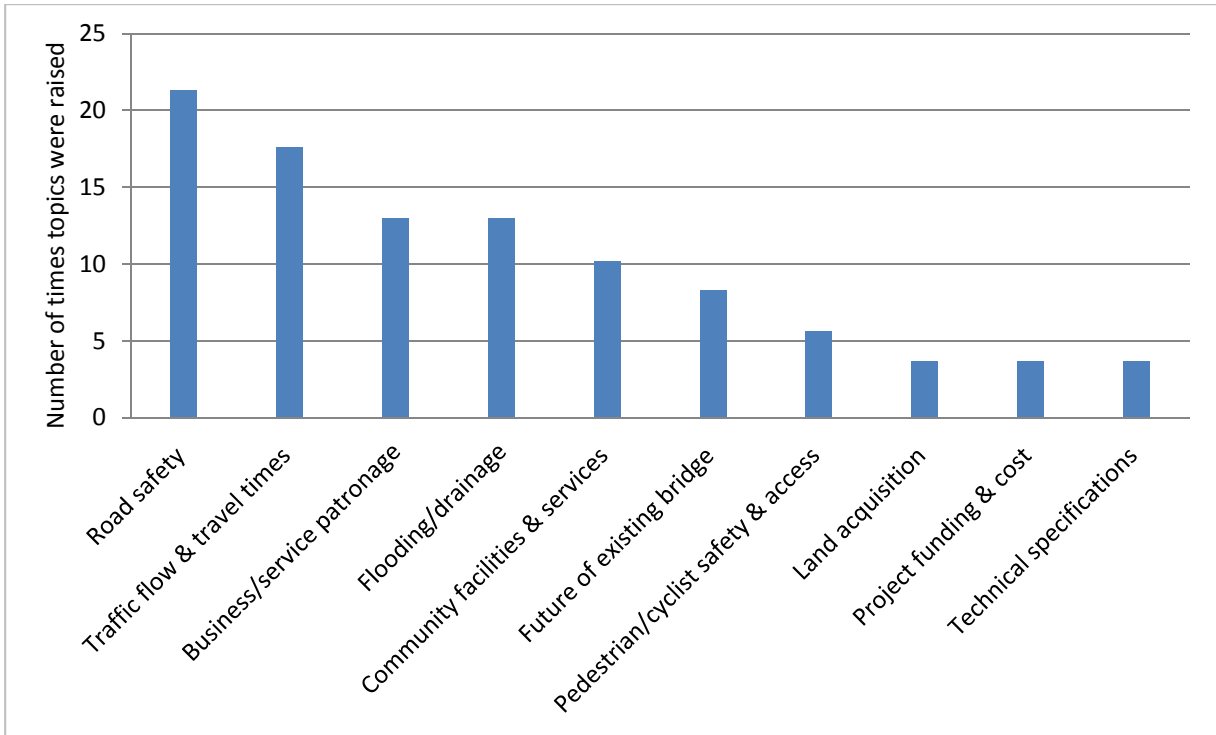


Figure 1: Top ten topics raised in feedback received

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

A summary of the community feedback is summarised below:

Recommended Option

- **Business/services patronage**
 - Lawrence General Store and Liquor Store and Lawrence Tavern will continue to have access to passing trade.
 - The new bridge should be built to allow for the bypass of Lawrence, through traffic doesn't stop anyway.
 - Option 1 would have been 'disastrous' for the Lawrence General Store and Liquor Store and Lawrence Tavern.
- **Community facilities and services**
 - Too much emphasis was placed on maintaining the location of the boat ramp.
 - Happy that the boat ramp is able to remain and that it will now be in front of the new bridge and closer to Clarence River.
 - Building the Recommended Option will require taking park land and the road will be too close to the barbeque facilities.
 - It is a great idea to combine Sportsmans and Flo Clark parks.
- **Agriculture impacts**
 - Option 1 would have interfered with cattle management and movements.
- **Flooding/drainage**
 - Having the road run in front of the shop (rather than behind) will reduce problems during flood events.
 - Build Grafton Street up to the same height as Bridge Street to make it flood-proof.
 - It floods just as much in front of the Lawrence General Store and Liquor Store as it does behind it.
 - Option 1 would have caused too much swamping.
 - Ensure that the new bridge and approaches are above flooding levels.
- **Future of existing bridge**
 - The process has been too long and drawn out – money has been wasted on maintaining the existing Sportsmans Creek bridge.
- **Noise**
 - Noise will be reduced significantly in Bridge Street.
- **Pedestrian/cyclist safety and access**
 - People cross the road from Lawrence Memorial Park to the Lawrence General Store and Liquor Store – the Recommended Option might make this unsafe especially for children.
- **Project funding and cost**
 - The Recommended Option is the best option as it is the most cost effective.
 - Cost should not be a determining factor in how we choose which bridge option – the

Lawrence community has already been through enough.

- **Project timeframes**
 - How soon can this new bridge be built? – ‘just do it already.’
- **Property access**
 - Grafton Street residents (especially at the southern end) need to be able to maintain access to their properties.
- **Road safety**
 - Ensure that the speed limits and zones proposed are safe.
 - How will parking in front of the Lawrence General Store and Liquor Store be managed to ensure that it is safe?
 - Traffic travelling along the ‘Lawrence straight’ will need to be discouraged from speeding across the bridge and along Grafton Street.
- **Technical specifications**
 - Please ensure that the bridge is high enough for boats to pass under.
- **Traffic flow and travel times**
 - The Recommended Option will be the quickest route for commuters.

Proposed intersection treatments

- **Business/services patronage**
 - Grafton/Bridge Street Option A*
 - This option would be better for parking in front of the Lawrence General Store and Liquor Store.
 - Grafton/Bridge Street Option B*
 - The road should swing wider to the east, away from the front of Lawrence General Store and Liquor Store so that vehicles are still able to safely park and turn.
- **Community facilities and services**
 - Grafton/Bridge Street Option B*
 - Will keep traffic away from Lawrence Memorial Park.
 - Will have lesser impact on the park and barbeque area near Lawrence Public Hall.
 - Riverbank Road and Weir Road*
 - An access road will need to be built to the boat ramp from Riverbank Road.
- **Freight and road transport**
 - Southern end of Bridge Street*
 - Ensure that there is enough space for trucks to turn around.
- **Noise**
 - Grafton/Bridge Street Option A*
 - If trucks and larger vehicles have to stop at a T-intersection, their braking and accelerating will be very noisy.

- **Pedestrian/cyclist safety and access**

- Grafton/Bridge Street Option A*

- The T-intersection will ensure that vehicles look both ways and consider pedestrians crossing the road between the Lawrence Memorial Park and the Lawrence General Store and Liquor Store.

- Grafton/Bridge Street Option B*

- Seems to give safer access and egress to Lawrence Memorial Park.
 - Having the road in front of the Lawrence General Store and Liquor Store and Grafton Street residences may put pedestrians and children at risk.

- **Road safety**

- Grafton/Bridge Street Option A*

- The T-intersection will force traffic to slow down.
 - Allows space for proper parking positions in front of the Lawrence General Store and Liquor Store.
 - Keeps traffic away from residences on Grafton Street near the Lawrence General Store and Liquor Store.

- Grafton/Bridge Street Option B*

- Seems to give safer access and egress to Lawrence Memorial Park.
 - Make sure that the speed limits and zones proposed are suitable for road safety – we do not want Grafton Street to become a race circuit.
 - The two fuel pumps in front of Lawrence General Store and Liquor Store may pose a risk to through traffic and should, if possible be relocated.

- Riverbank Road and Weir Road*

- Visibility for Weir Road traffic is unobscured making it a safer intersection.
 - Install a roundabout to ensure ease of access to the two roads and calm traffic.

- Southern end of Bridge Street*

- Ensure that a 'No through road' sign is installed early enough for traffic to ensure they use Grafton Street.
 - Make everybody put their rubbish bins on the left to ensure that vehicles have enough space to turn.

- **Traffic flow and travel times**

- Grafton/Bridge Street Option A*

- A T-intersection with a stop sign will hinder traffic flow and cause blockages back along Grafton Street.
 - A T-intersection would favour minimal traffic.
 - Turning/filter lanes should be installed to ensure free-flowing traffic.

- Grafton/Bridge Street Option B*

- Traffic should be directed along the northern part of Grafton Street and onto Rutland Street rather than around the corner at the Lawrence General Store and Liquor Store.
 - Turning/filter lanes should be installed to ensure free-flowing traffic.

- Riverbank Road and Weir Road*

- Turning/filter lanes should be installed to ensure free-flowing traffic.

Southern end of Bridge Street

- Make sure that there is enough space for trucks to turn around.
- The Lawrence Bus Service should be able to continue to operate as usual – if Bridge Street needs to be driven down, a side road will be used to access Grafton Street and the new bridge.

Other comments

• Community facilities and services

- It would be great if a jetty could be placed in the location of the existing Sportsmans Creek bridge once it is removed.
- The southern end of Bridge Street should be made into a park with local flora, barbeques and seats and tables.
- Please consider improving the existing boat ramp in Flo Clark Park as part of the construction of the new Sportsmans Creek bridge.

• Consultation process

- The community information materials were well put together – the pros and cons for each option considered was very helpful.

• Flooding/drainage

- The existing Sportsmans Creek bridge acts as a blockade to some houses in Bridge Street during flood events – if possible can the abutments to the existing bridge on the southern end of Bridge Street be maintained to ensure this continues?
- Bridge Street is higher than Grafton Street – if Grafton Street is left to be the same height as it is, there may be serious issues if stock need to be moved during floods.

• Future of existing bridge

- It would be great if a jetty could be placed in the location of the existing Sportsmans Creek bridge once it is removed.
- The existing bridge is in terrible condition and despite historical significance needs to be replaced, it does not make sense to keep it.
- The existing Sportsmans Creek bridge abutments protect some houses in Bridge Street during flood events – if possible can the abutments to the existing bridge on the southern end of Bridge Street be maintained to ensure this protection continues?
- The abutment on the southern end of the bridge should be removed and levelled so that the park can be all the same height.
- Make the two ends of the existing bridge into jetties for fishing.

• Noise

- Traffic using the existing Sportsmans Creek bridge can be heard from about 2 km away.

• Project timeframes

- The whole proposal sounds reasonable, 'build it ASAP please.'

• Road safety

- Grafton Street is currently in poor condition, it will need to be improved considerably.

NEXT STEPS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

The community feedback outlined in this report will be considered prior to selecting the preferred route for the project.

A process flow-chart for the project can be found in Appendix C.

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Appendix A

RECOMMENDED OPTION

Recommended Option

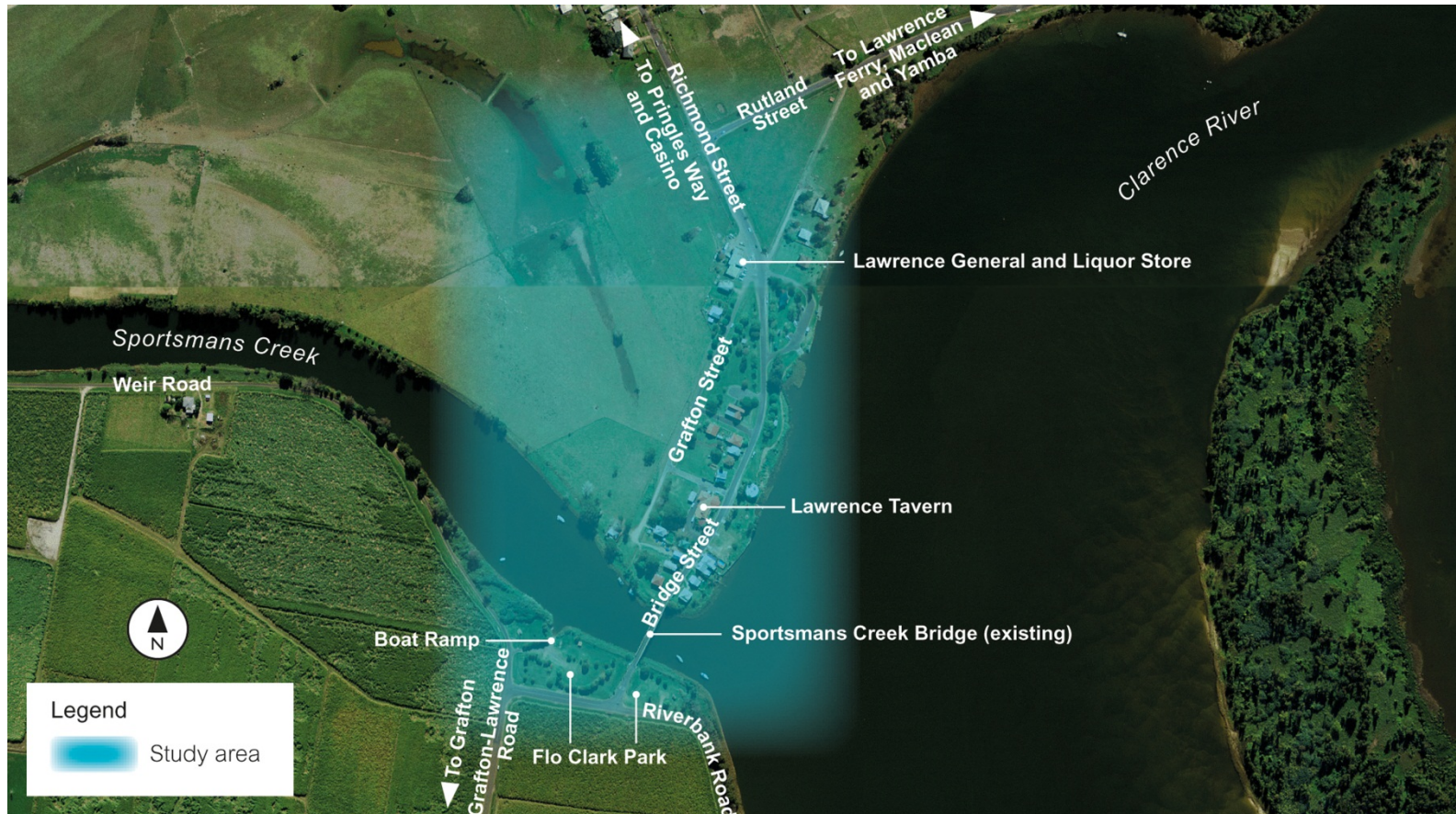


Appendix B

STUDY AREA

Appendix B

Study Area

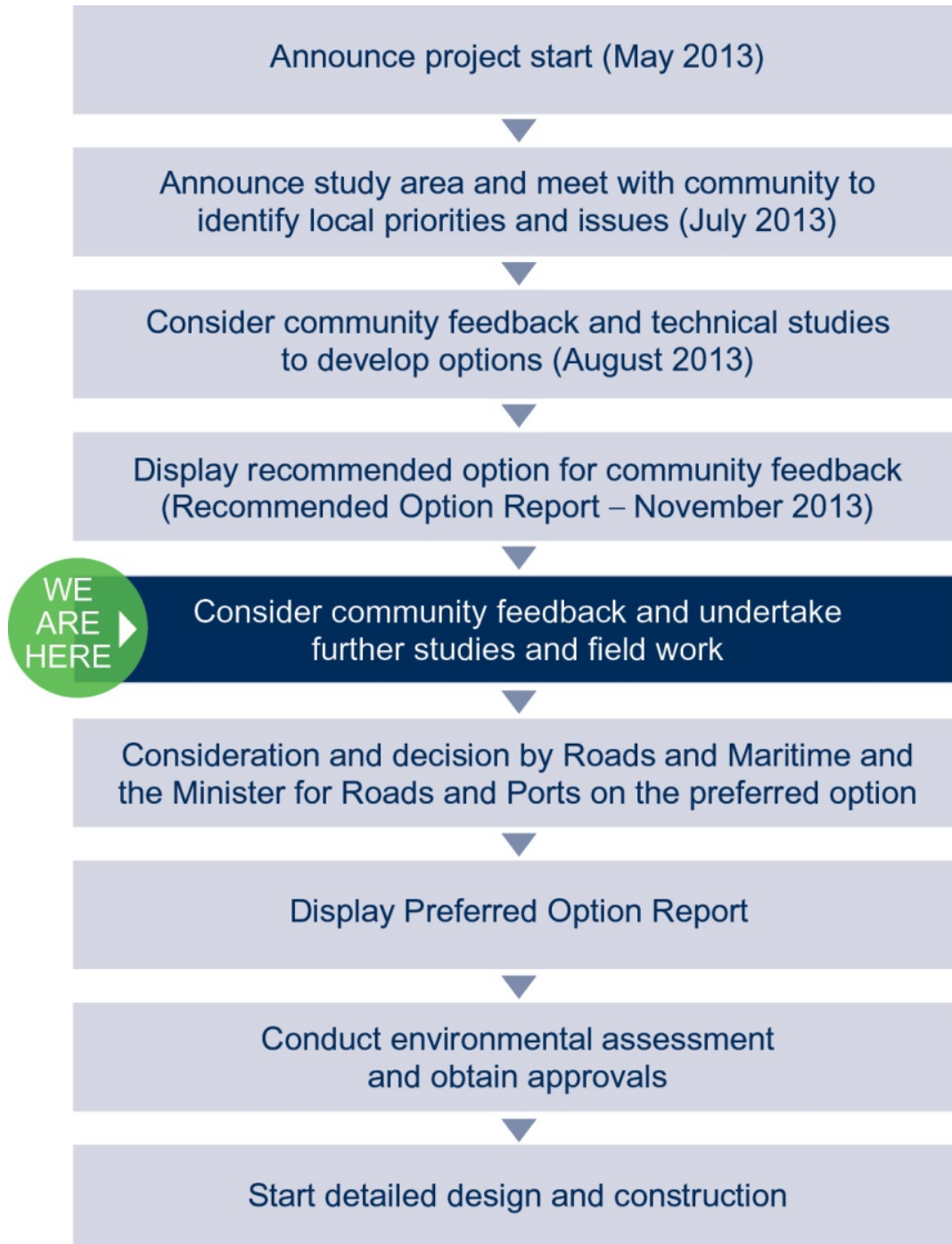


Appendix C

FLOW CHART

Appendix C

Flow Chart



Appendix D

FEEDBACK FORM

