4.0 Recommended Corridor

4.1 Implications on the proposed corridor

After considering the community feedback and further assessing critical issues the following outcomes are recommended for the proposed corridor that was displayed in March 2007;

- That the proposed interchange at Cudgerie Drive/ Cooroy Connection road be retained. Although south facing ramps at Mary River Road are not required from a strategic transport perspective and their spacing to the Cooroy Interchange ramps may be undesirable, the decision does not preclude construction of these ramps if they are warranted in the future and investigations determine that they can provide an adequate level of service in a safe environment.
- That the proposed corridor and interchange between Coles Creek Road and the Woondum Interchange be retained. During detailed planning for the Traveston Crossing Dam the location and arrangement for the interchange is to be reviewed and opportunities investigated to achieve the best overall community benefit.
- That the highway corridor incorporates additional north facing ramps for the industrial areas south of Gympie. These ramps include a northbound on ramp to the new corridor from the Penny Road/ Noosa Road intersection and a southbound off ramp from the new corridor to Flood Road.
- That the proposed interchange at Gympie Connection Road be retained, and an investigation is undertaken, when the project progresses at this location, to determine which local roads and intersections require upgrading to support the interchange.
- That the proposed corridor location be retained in the vicinity of the 'Gympie Pyramid'. The remaining historic features of the 'Gympie Pyramid' are to be documented and that management measures for the construction phase of the project be implemented.
- That the revised alignment through Curra State Forest be adopted as it reduces the number of affected landowners, eliminates the need to realign Old Maryborough Road and it has comparable environmental impacts to the proposed corridor.
- That the proposed highway corridor be subject to further environmental assessment and environmental and planning approvals processes. Targeted field surveys undertaken in 2006 have indicated the potential for the presence of threatened and endangered species listed under State and Federal legislation in certain areas along the proposed highway corridor. The proposed highway corridor also traverses numerous areas mapped as Regional Ecosystems (Not Of Concern, Of Concern, and Endangered), which are protected under the *Vegetation Management Act 1999*. In particular, further liaison with the Department of Natural Resources and Water, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Commonwealth Department of Environment and Water Resources should be undertaken to develop appropriate environmental assessment and management measures as each stage of the design and construction of the highway upgrade is implemented. In addition, cultural heritage survey in accordance with the requirements of the Queensland Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act will also be required at the appropriate stage.

4.2 Advantages of recommended corridor

The recommended corridor was selected for the following key reasons:

- Provides the best overall balance sought by the community between functional, ecological, heritage, social and economic considerations and provides for staging opportunities south of Gympie.
- Best meets the objectives of the Cooroy-Curra Strategic Planning Study.
- Achieves high safety standards.

- Addresses the community concern about greater separation between communities and facilities and services that they rely on.
- Safer roads– separates high speed traffic from local traffic, pedestrians and other non-motorised forms of transport, restricts driveway access, maintains reasonable spacing between interchanges and divides the highway carriageways.
- Efficient and effective transport – limits access to the highway to promote high speed movement of passenger and freight vehicles, provide high level of flood immunity, designed for safe travel dynamics for heavy vehicles and road alignment standards promoting efficient movement of goods and people.
- Is relatively direct, making it attractive to longer distance freight and passenger traffic which provides a good outcome in terms of transport efficiency.
- Provides for greater use of public land and aligns with the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam, and existing infrastructure corridors, of the Bruce Highway, railway line and powerlines, where practical.
- Bypasses east of Gympie in a location that will serve the Gympie community by providing good access to local industry and business, better access to the developing coastal region and reasonable access from the highway through a service road system.
- Minimises proximity of heavy vehicles to populated areas, minimises noise and air quality impacts by not stopping or slowing heavy traffic in urban areas and separates high speed traffic from local traffic, pedestrians and other non motorised forms of transport.
- Allows for future growth areas by conforming with the Cooloola Shire Council planning scheme.
- Provides reasonable physical separation from existing and proposed major residential areas such that acceptable visual and traffic noise outcomes could be achieved with sensitive urban design.
- Minimises environmental impacts, by avoiding environmentally or culturally sensitive areas, minimising or mitigating environmental impacts and adopting best practice during construction and operation of the highway.
- Retains the historic Traveston Homestead, Federal State School, local community halls and other historic sites.
- Retains the existing highway as a local road, to maintain property access and local road connectivity.
- Takes into account, wherever feasible, community views about the corridor location.

4.3 Corridor Design Intent

To meet the strategic needs of the highway for the next 30 years and beyond, it is necessary to plan for the new highway corridor to be of rural motorway standard which caters for safe and high speed travel.

To improve safety the highway will be a limited access road. This prevents local roads and fronting properties having direct access to the highway. Access to and from the new highway to major roads will be at regular but widely spaced interchanges. The highway corridor will cater for an initial four-lane divided highway, providing two lanes in each direction with a wide central median.

The existing highway will remain as a local arterial road and maintain connectivity and provide access to most of the local roads and properties that currently have direct access to the existing highway. The connections of existing network and local roads will be maintained by under/overpasses where feasible.

4.4 Recommended Corridor Summary

The recommended corridor duplicates the existing Bruce Highway between the Cooroy Bypass Interchange and Cooroy Connection Road. The duplication is to the western side of the existing carriageway and is generally within the existing highway reserve.

An all movements interchange utilising the existing underpass at Cooroy Connection Road/ Cudgerie Drive provides a northern access to Cooroy in addition to serving the township of

Pomona and rural residential areas of Black Mountain. The existing highway is retained north of this interchange to maintain the local road network.

North of Cooroy Connection Road the corridor aligns to the southern side of the existing highway reserve with significantly improved horizontal and vertical geometry. The recommended corridor crosses the existing highway near the Federal State School. Within the area of the proposed Traveston Crossing dam the recommended corridor follows the dam's eastern buffer area. Should the dam not proceed then the location of the corridor may change to an alignment close to the existing Bruce Highway as originally favoured by the community. The existing highway will be inundated by the proposed dam; however a two lane service road aligning to the eastern side of the recommended corridor will continue to connect the local traffic which would otherwise have used the existing highway.

An all movements interchange on Traveston Road connects the service road around the dam and Traveston Road which link the corridor to the Federal, Coles Creek and Traveston areas. Additionally the interchange connects the area to the west of the proposed dam via Traveston Crossing Road.

North of the Traveston Interchange the corridor aligns to the eastern side of the high voltage powerlines up until Woondum Road, where it crosses back to the western side of the powerlines to provide the directional ramps of the Woondum Interchange. To provide priority and safety for the following major movements, this interchange includes south facing ramps only:

- Northbound from the new corridor into Gympie; and
- Southbound out of Gympie onto the new corridor.

The corridor passes through the Woondum State Forest and then passes the industrial areas near Six Mile Creek (the Eldorado Gold Mine and Nolan's Meatworks) on its way to aligning to the eastern side of the existing North Coast Rail Line.

North facing ramps are provided near the industrial area south of Gympie to provide the movements which were restricted from the Woondum interchange. These ramps include a northbound on ramp to the new corridor from the Penny Road/ Noosa Road intersection and a southbound off ramp from the new corridor to Flood Road. These ramps connect back to the existing Bruce highway via Hall Road.

An all movements interchange on Gympie Connection Road adjacent to the existing North Coast Rail Line provides significant flood immunity for an eastern access into Gympie and improved access to the developing coastal regions.

The corridor continues to align as close as feasible to the eastern side of the North Coast Rail Line until it reaches the Curra State Forest where the corridor moves to the east and aligns to the edge of the state forest. The corridor joins back to the existing highway at Curra approximately 1km north of the existing railway crossing. An all movements interchange links the corridor with the existing highway, Harvey Siding Road and Ashfords Road.

The recommended corridor is shown on the following **maps 1 to 5.**