

ORDINARY MEETING 28 FEBRUARY 2018	4
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TRAFFIC CONGESTION ON THE CAPTAIN COOK HIGHWAY FROM THE CAIRNS CBD TO YORKEYS KNOB ROUNDABOUT

B Gardiner | 1/3/21- 20 | #5683929

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council invites the Department of Transport and Main Roads to present to Council on the plans for upgrade of the Captain Cook Highway from the CBD north to Yorkeys Knob roundabout.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The section of the Captain Cook Highway running from the Cairns CBD to the Yorkeys Knob roundabout experiences significant traffic delays every weekday morning and afternoon during the peak traffic periods.

There are a number of upgrades that are required to reduce the traffic congestion, and to ensure safe and smooth traffic flow for Cairns residents and visitors. The State Government is responsible for the planning and funding for these upgrades.

This report provides a summary of issues and desired upgrades, and proposes that Council invites the Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR) to present to Council on their plans for upgrade of the Captain Cook Highway.

BACKGROUND:

The following resolution was passed at Council's Planning & Environment Meeting on 8 November 2017:

'That Council Officers prepare a report on the possible closure of Whitfield Street, Aeroglen.'

A report on Whitfield Street was subsequently prepared and tabled at the Infrastructure Services Committee meeting 21 February 2018. Following discussion at the meeting, the report was deferred and officers were requested to expand the report to include all issues with regard to traffic congestion on the Captain Cook Highway from the CBD to Yorkeys Knob roundabout.

The Captain Cook Highway starts at the corner of Florence Street and Sheridan Street in the Cairns CBD. The first 950m of the Highway provides three traffic lanes in each direction from Florence Street to Grove Street. The road then narrows to two lanes in each direction through the suburbs of North Cairns and Aeroglen and continues generally northwest across the Barron River Delta. There is a 670m long section of three lanes for southbound traffic between Saltwater Creek and Collins Avenue. The

Highway continues with two lanes in each direction until just north of the Kewarra Beach roundabout where it becomes single lane in each direction from this location to Port Douglas.

The Highway provides the main route for residents and visitors travelling to and from the CBD and the northern beach suburbs, although an alternate route is available via the Cairns Western Arterial Road.

Approximately 40,000 vehicles per day travel along the Florence Street to Airport Avenue section of the Highway. This reduces to approximately 32,000 north of Aeroglen Drive.

Significant traffic congestion can be experienced along this section of the Highway during the morning and afternoon peak hours.

COMMENT:

A number of shortcomings have been identified along this section of the Highway that contribute to the traffic congestion. The following improvements are required to improve the ever-increasing traffic congestion on this road. Officers are aware that DTMR have at least some of these matters in their future works program.

1. Grove Street to Airport Avenue - Average daily traffic volume 39,989 vehicles per day.



The section of the Captain Cook Highway from Grove Street to Airport Avenue conveys the majority of the CBD bound traffic to and from the Northern Beach suburbs of Cairns. During peak hour times in particular there is significant traffic congestion along this 2km long corridor. The provision of additional inward and outward-bound traffic lanes will improve the carrying capacity of the road, and reduce congestion and travel time significantly.

2. Mother of Good Counsel School Zone - Average daily traffic volume 40,000 vehicles per day.



The school zone requires traffic to reduce speed to 40 km/hr, which causes traffic congestion and frustration for road users. The Road Traffic Transport Safety Advisory Committee has reviewed this School Zone on several occasions and do not believe that the School Zone is warranted. There is a signalised pedestrian crossing in place on the Highway and Council has undertaken significant works in and around the school in recent times to improve traffic flow and safety for school children. The student drop off zones are not located on the Highway - they are in O'Keefe and Seymour streets that are 40km/hr zones.

Council has also recently written to the DTMR requesting that the School Zone be removed. DTMR have responded stating that they will not remove the School Zone unless the School Parents and Friends Association supported it.

3. Airport Avenue Captain Cook Highway intersection - Average daily traffic volume 40,000 vehicles per day.

This is a significant intersection allowing signalised vehicle access and exit from Airport Avenue via a single traffic lane in each direction to/from the Captain Cook Highway. This intersection causes delays for through traffic. A short-term solution is the creation of a dual lane entry from the Highway and exit from Airport Avenue. This will allow more vehicles to enter or exit in a shorter timeframe and reduce the length of the red signal cycle on the Highway. The long-term solution is an overpass interchange allowing vehicle access to and from Airport Avenue without interruption of Captain Cook Highway traffic flow.

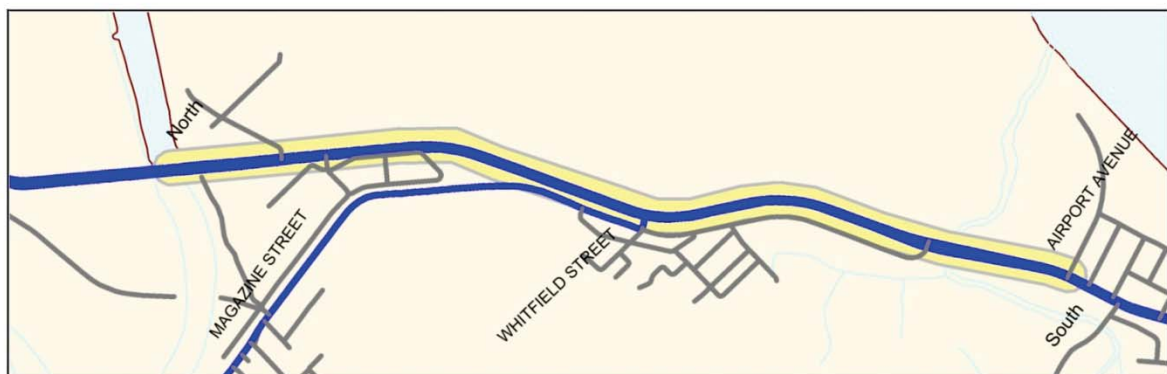
4. Whitfield Street Captain Cook Highway intersection - Average daily traffic volume 32,213 vehicles per day.



The Whitfield Street / Captain Cook Highway intersection provides for controlled movements onto the Highway from Aeroglen Drive via a 30m long section of Whitfield Street on the western side of the Highway. Access by vehicles from Whitfield Street turning South or North onto the Highway, or straight through to the Aviation Precinct, triggers a red-light sequence for vehicles travelling both directions on the Highway. This causes delays for motorists travelling on the Highway. Approximately 446 vehicles use this intersection each day to either access the Highway or the General Aviation area of the Cairns Airport.

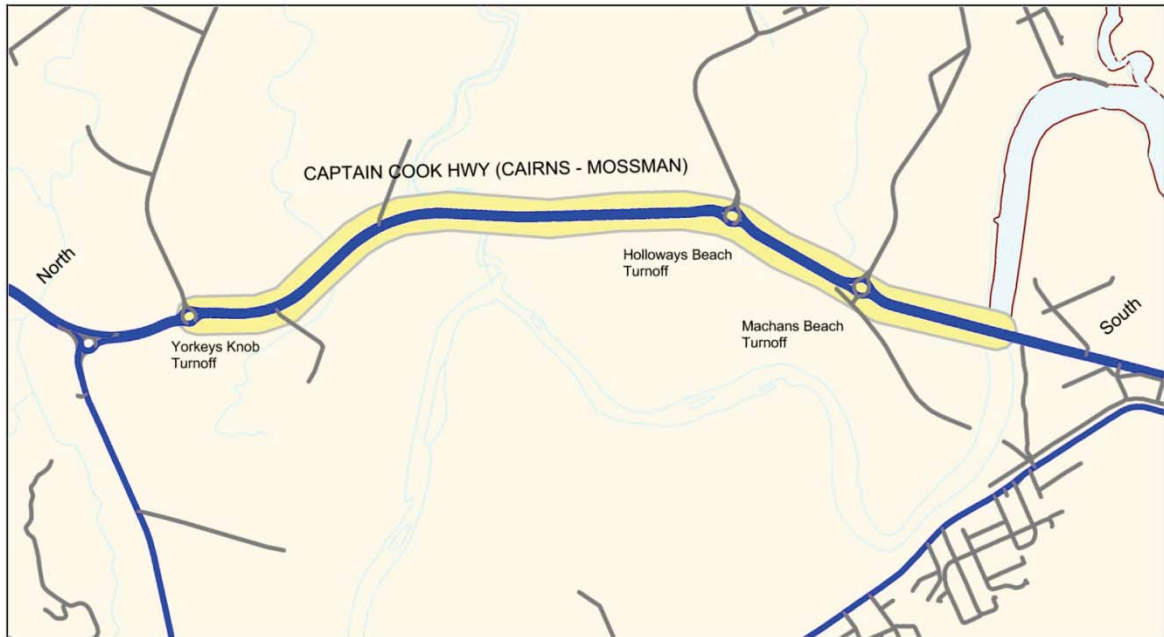
Removal of access to the Highway from Whitfield Street will reduce the traffic delays, partly remove a level rail crossing, and reduce conflict with the Aeroglen bike path. Alternate signalled access to the Highway is available approximately 1.4km north at Arnold Street or 1km south at Aeroglen Drive.

5. Airport Avenue to Barron River Bridge - Average daily traffic volume: 32,213 vehicles per day.



There is significant traffic congestion along this 3.8km long corridor of the Highway during peak hours. The provision of additional inward and outward-bound lanes by widening this section of the Highway will improve the carrying capacity of the road, and reduce congestion and travel time significantly.

6. Barron River Bridge to Yorkeys Knob Roundabout - Average daily traffic volume: 31,000 vehicles per day.



This section of the highway has two lanes in each direction. There are also two roundabouts providing access to Holloways and Machans Beach, which add to traffic congestion. The provision of additional inward and outward-bound lanes by widening this section of the Highway will improve the carrying capacity of the road, and reduce congestion and travel time significantly. Replacing the two roundabouts with a single access to Holloways Beach and Machans Beach would also assist in reducing congestion on the Highway but may affect access from the beach suburbs.

OPTIONS:

Options available to Council include the following:

- Invite the DTMR to present to Council their future plans to address the issues raised in the report.
- Request DTMR accelerates works to address the issues raised in the report.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Statutory:

DTMR are the responsible road authority for managing the Captain Cook Highway. These responsibilities are described under *Section 28 of the Transport Infrastructure Act (1994)*.

Corporate and Operational Plans:

The identified issues relate to Corporate Plan Strategy – Liveability: Improve Transport.

CONSULTATION:

Council frequently receives complaints from the public about traffic congestion on the Captain Cook Highway. DTMR would need to carry out appropriate community consultation as and when the various projects are commenced. Council would be included as a stakeholder during this consultation.



Bruce Gardiner
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