

### What is the planning study about?

In October 2008, the Department of Transport and Main Roads commissioned a planning study to develop options for reducing flooding closures on the Bruce Highway between Ingham and the southern foothills of the Cardwell Range. The study is anticipated to take up to three years to complete, and is the first step towards improving the performance of the highway during the annual wet season.

The primary aim of the study is to find the best option to improve the flood immunity of the Bruce Highway without significantly increasing flooding problems on nearby land. The department is not attempting to "flood proof" the highway, but rather reduce the frequency and duration of road closures caused by flooding.

The study will also look at improving the safety and level of service of the Bruce Highway to accommodate current and future traffic needs. The department will plan for a four lane highway corridor, so an additional two lanes can be built in the future when traffic volumes increase. Initially, only two lanes will be required.

Upon completion of the study, the department will be able to apply for funding to construct the preferred option. Once funding is secured, a construction date will be announced. There is no funding for the construction at this stage.

### Progress to date

The Department of Transport and Main Roads has been refining the study area into two "zones of interest" to the west of the existing highway route. Each zone covers a broad area that will be further investigated to come up with alignment options for the future highway.

These zones of interest are the outcome of preliminary engineering, flooding, environmental and cultural heritage analysis. Community engagement consultant, EBC, has also met with landowners next to the existing highway, to gather local knowledge about the existing highway route north of Ingham.

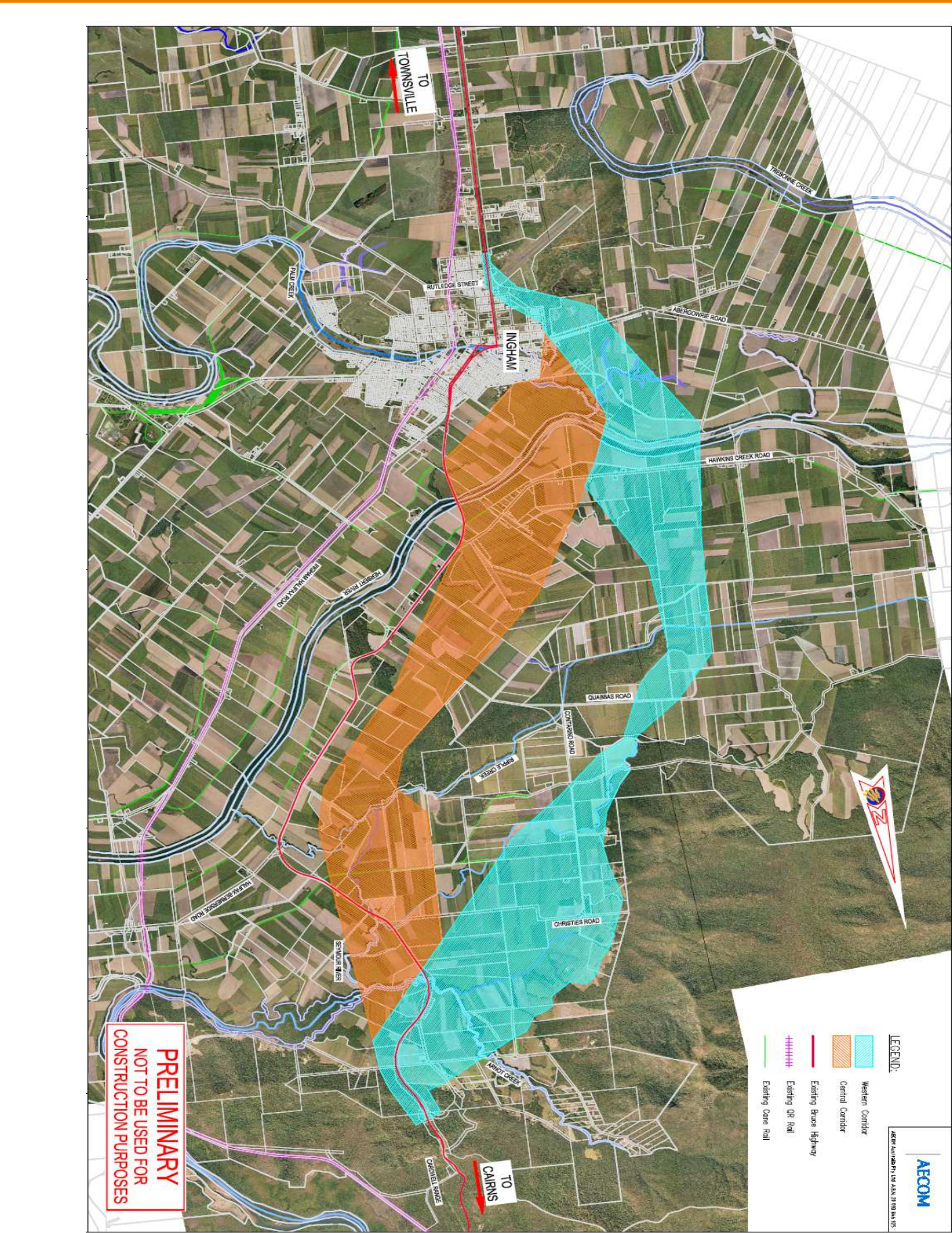
In addition to this, the Planning Study team has:

- conducted interviews with all retail businesses fronting Townsville Road, Lannercost Street and Herbert Street to gain input and gather data for an Economic Impact Assessment (EIA). The EIA will assess the potential economic impacts of realigning the Bruce Highway
- updated the website at [www.ebc.net.au/ingham](http://www.ebc.net.au/ingham) to include details about the zones of interest
- commenced consultation with all property owners within the zones of interest to gather their input on potential alignments and gather vital local knowledge about water flow patterns, flood heights, flora and fauna, land surface, soil conditions and property access, and
- held the third Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting. At this meeting, local community members provided advice on how best to communicate the zones of interest and get the community involved in the development of route options.



*Looking south down the Bruce Highway towards Hawkins Creek Road*







## Why won't the highway remain through the centre of Ingham?

As part of its preliminary investigations, the department looked at options to upgrade the existing highway route, as well as options to build on an alternative alignment. The feasibility of upgrading Lannercost and Herbert Street to improve traffic access during the wet season was investigated, but found not to be a viable option. In order to improve the flood immunity through town, the main road would need to be raised significantly. This would increase flooding on nearby properties upstream and create significant connectivity and safety issues as the highway would need to connect to local roads and property accesses at different heights. Attempting to upgrade the existing highway under traffic would also greatly increase construction costs and time, and impact on existing infrastructure such as Rotary Park and on-street parking.

The department is also aiming to improve safety and traffic flow for current and future traffic volumes. Leaving the highway through town would not improve traffic flow or address the safety issues generated by the current mix of local traffic, pedestrians and through traffic, in particular heavy vehicles.



(L) Aerial view of highway over Cardwell Range with Mt Cudmore Road under water to the right during the 2009 floods. (R) Rotary Park during the 2009 floods.

## Were options to move the highway to the east of Ingham considered?

Options for alignments to the east of Ingham, were carefully considered, however, these were also identified as not viable for a number of reasons:

- Any eastern option would require a much longer route because it would need to start further south of Ingham to avoid existing infrastructure.
- The additional length means that any eastern option would be at least double the cost of the two preferred zones to the west, as substantially more drainage work and land acquisitions would be required.
- An eastern option would have to overpass the Queensland Rail network twice.
- During initial consultation, Ingham businesses expressed the need to keep the highway as close to town as possible. The central and western zones of interest are closer to the town. Alignments in these zones would encourage travellers to the beach communities to pass through Ingham. Any eastern option would potentially dissuade travellers from passing through Ingham by providing direct access to beaches.

## What will happen next?

Community engagement consultant, EBC, will continue to carry out extensive consultation with the community.

This will include:

- meetings with all property owners identified within the zones of interest to get their input on potential alignments and gather vital local knowledge about water flow patterns, flood heights, flora and fauna, land surface, soil conditions and property access
- working closely with Hinchinbrook Shire Council, businesses, industry, and local organisations to develop a plan for the future highway
- information workshops with landowners identified within the zones of interest.
- workshops with the business community to discuss the results of the economic impact assessment and mitigation strategies for managing impacts of the realignment of the highway, and
- public displays to communicate the zones of interest and gain feedback from the broader community.

At the same time, the study team will be undertaking a more detailed investigation of the zones of interest to further refine them into possible road alignments within the zones. This will include:

- engineering and traffic investigations to examine traffic patterns, volumes, safety issues and construction feasibility
- flooding analysis, which includes using a detailed flood model to assess highway options and their potential impacts on nearby land. Local data collected from community is being used to validate the model.
- environmental assessments, including flora and fauna surveys and water and soil analysis, to mitigate impacts on areas of environmental significance, and
- cultural heritage assessments to identify and manage issues relating to Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultural heritage resources and culturally significant areas.

All property owners within the zones of interest should have received a letter from the Department of Transport and Main Roads, outlining the details of the planning study and advising that community consultation consultants will be in contact with them shortly. If you believe you may have a property within one of the zones of interest and did not receive a letter from Department of Transport and Main Roads, please contact EBC—contact details are on listed below.

## Want more information?

If you would like more information about the study or how to get involved you can contact the study team:

**Phone:** 1300 139 824 (recorded message)

**Fax:** (07) 4772 6335

**Email:** [ingham@ebc.net.au](mailto:ingham@ebc.net.au)

**Website:** [www.ebc.net.au/ingham](http://www.ebc.net.au/ingham)

**Post:** PO Box 458, Townsville QLD 4810

Background information on the study is also available at [www.mainroads.qld.gov.au](http://www.mainroads.qld.gov.au)

*Preferisci leggere in Italiano l'informazione sullo studio della pianificazione urbanistica da Rutledge Street a Cardwell Range? Per una traduzione in lingua Italiana degli ultimi aggiornamenti per la comunità, contatta il Team-Studio ai numeri sopra indicati.*