



# Gold Coast Rapid Transit

## Chapter two – Community consultation

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## Community consultation

As part of a wider program of public transport improvements, the Gold Coast Rapid Transit system will be a key element in achieving the vision of a fully integrated, reliable and efficient public transport network for the Gold Coast.

With the State Government and Gold Coast City Council committed to the project, and with initial planning and funding in place, consultation with the community and key stakeholders enabled the concept design of the Gold Coast Rapid Transit project to then be developed as a best fit for the Gold Coast community.

More than 300,000 households, residents, interested parties and key stakeholders have been engaged by the project team via project newsletters, community information sessions, briefings, static displays, email updates and through the project's website.

The aim of the communication and engagement strategy was to inform the community and stakeholders about the project but also to identify issues to be fed into the concept design process.

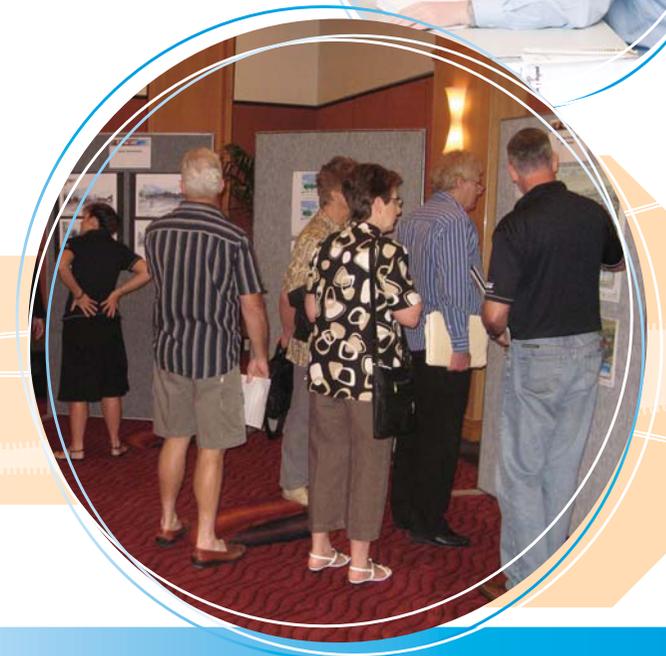
The communication and engagement strategy was implemented on two levels:

- high level, city wide information through newsletters, website, fact sheets and media coverage
- detailed engagement with key stakeholders and impacted residents including individual briefings, provision of detailed property information and community information sessions.

The communication and engagement strategy was ongoing throughout the planning stage of the project and also included 3 separate periods where consultation activity was focused on particular sections of the route. These were:

- March 2007 – month-long community consultation on Section two (Griffith University to Southport)
- October 2007 – month-long community consultation on Section three (Southport to Broadbeach)
- May 2008 – month-long period of community consultation on alignment options for Queen Street (west).

Beginning in October 2008 there was also a 6 week period where the community and stakeholders were able to review the draft Concept Design and impact Management Plan.



## Opportunities for stakeholders and community members to participate in consultation

The Gold Coast Rapid Transit project team provided information and a number of ways for stakeholders and community members to participate in the project. These included:

- fact sheets
- project newsletters
- briefings
- community reference groups
- community information sessions
- static displays
- submissions
- project website
- project email
- 1800 hotline
- media coverage.

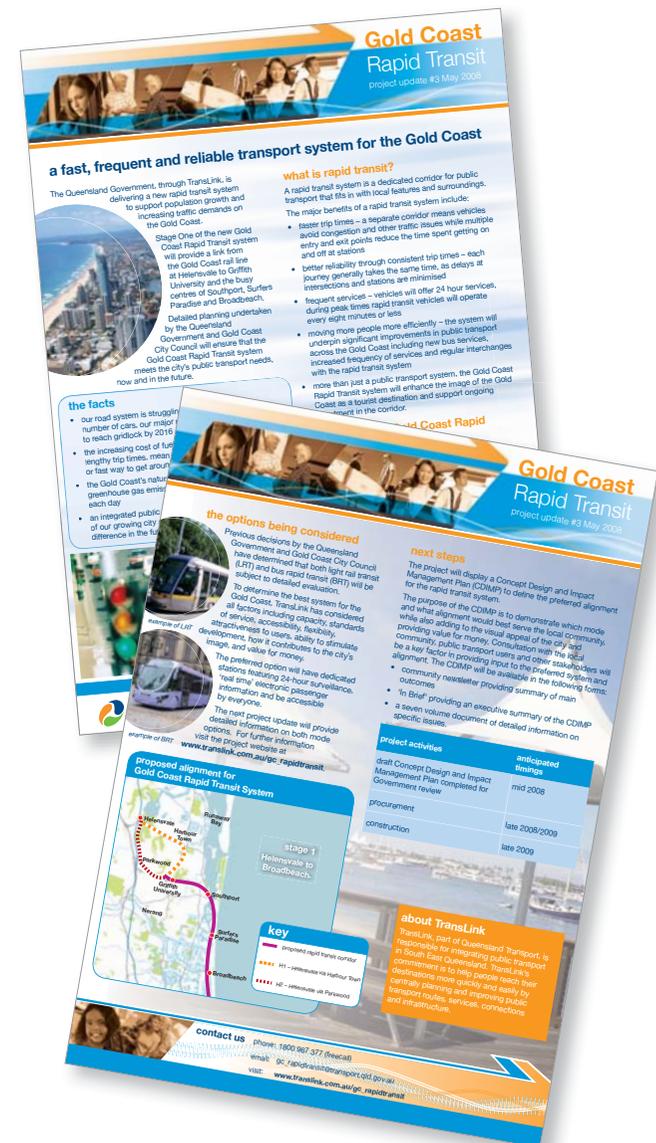
A combination of these methods were used throughout the project to obtain feedback on the route, alignment and impacts of the Gold Coast Rapid Transit system.

All the feedback received was recorded and reviewed by the project team.

## Fact sheets

Four fact sheets containing high level information were produced and distributed throughout the planning phase of the project including:

- Following the confirmation of the partnership arrangement between the State Government and Gold Coast City Council to progress the draft Concept Design and Impact Management Plan, key stakeholders received a letter introducing the project and an initial project fact sheet.
- The wider Gold Coast community was initially informed about the Gold Coast Rapid Transit project through a second fact sheet distributed to around 160,000 households in the Gold Coast Sun in February 2007. The fact sheet introduced the project and contained information about the route and about the two modes of transport that were being considered.
- A third fact sheet was distributed by post in May 2008 to around 230,000 households with a general update on the project and confirmation of the timeline for the Business Case and draft Concept Design and Impact Management Plan.
- Around 160,000 copies of a fourth fact sheet were inserted into the Gold Coast Sun in July 2008 with specific information on the two types of mode being considered for the Gold Coast Rapid Transit project.



## Project newsletter

The project newsletter was a key communication tool for the Gold Coast Rapid Transit project and contained more detail than the fact sheets. Two newsletters were produced during the planning stage of the project and provided project contact details, timeline for the project and a tear off slip to provide feedback to the project team. The newsletters were distributed along the length of the route (from Helensvale to Coolangatta) to homes and businesses within a 1km radius of the Gold Coast Rapid Transit corridor. Copies were also distributed to community groups, shopping centres, schools, local Councillors and local Members of Parliament.

- Newsletter 1 was distributed in March 2007 and focused on Section two of the route, from Griffith University to Southport
- Newsletter 2 was distributed in October 2007 and focused on Section three, the route between Southport and Broadbeach.

790 feedback forms from Newsletter 1 and 465 feedback forms from Newsletter 2 were received and comments fed into the design process where appropriate.

**Gold Coast Rapid Transit**  
newsletter #1 March 2007

**a new rapid transit system for the Gold Coast**

The Gold Coast has transformed from a large provincial centre to a major city, which brings with it problems of traffic and congestion.

As Queensland's second largest city, the population has passed 500,000 and increasing by around 15,000 people each year. By 2026 the resident population is forecast to exceed 740,000. Add to this an additional 50,000 to 60,000 visitors at any one time.

The Gold Coast is a city in need of a premier public transport system consistent with its size and importance.

To manage population growth and increasing traffic demands, the Queensland Government, through TransLink, is delivering a new rapid transit system, that will provide a dedicated public transport corridor.

The Gold Coast Rapid Transit system will be designed to provide a quality journey from doorstep to destination – a transport system that achieves a level of service and reliability so good that people choose to use public transport rather than drive their cars.

The system will provide a link from the Gold Coast rail line at Helensvale to Griffith University and the busy centres of Southport, Surfers Paradise, Broadbeach and the Gold Coast Airport, and ultimately to Coolangatta town centre.

The Gold Coast's image as a modern, attractive city will be boosted by the rapid transit system, which will encourage ongoing economic development. With the right planning and community input, it could become a defining feature of the Gold Coast; something its residents can be proud of and visitors will admire.

The Queensland Government's South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program (SEQIPP) has allocated \$550 million to this project. Additionally, Gold Coast City Council has earmarked up to \$100 million to improve the city's public transport infrastructure over the next 10 years.

**the need for rapid transit**

Cars are a very useful and convenient feature of living in a modern Australian city. But compared to mass transit options, they consume space and on a per person basis emit more pollution and greenhouse gases.

As the city grows, car use will grow, and without the construction of a major freeway system complemented by large scale multi-storey car parking, car trips will take longer and become less reliable.

Although many improvements to roads are proposed and more car parking will be provided, constructing a major freeway system would devastate the unique environment and quality of life that is the Gold Coast.

A more balanced solution is needed involving a world-class public transport system.

The Gold Coast Rapid Transit system will transform the way people experience public transport and move around your city.

**benefit**

- It will ease A trip from complex.
- Services In its early passenger.
- The system won't cost up to \$0k.
- The system one Trans local bus.

**Gold Coast Rapid Transit Project gains momentum**

Welcome to the second newsletter on the Gold Coast Rapid Transit project, the \$600m Queensland Government transport project being delivered by TransLink and the Gold Coast City Council.

The Gold Coast Rapid Transit system is part of the Queensland Government's response to improving public transport across the whole Gold Coast and reducing congestion on the roads. This project will deliver a transport system that is fast, frequent, reliable and integrated with the existing transport network to ensure it meet the needs of the Gold Coast community.

In our first newsletter we explained why the Gold Coast needs a new rapid transport system and gave you some information about the proposed route from Helensvale to Southport and the mode options being considered. The first newsletter can be found at [www.translink.com.au/ge\\_rapidtransit](http://www.translink.com.au/ge_rapidtransit).

**This newsletter gives an update on what's happened so far and more detail on the route between Southport and Broadbeach.**

The Gold Coast Rapid Transit system will ultimately link Helensvale to Coolangatta passing through the busy centres of Southport, Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach. The project is being planned in two stages. Stage 1 will link Helensvale to Broadbeach, stage 2 will complete the link from Broadbeach to Coolangatta.

**what's happened so far?**

To allow for the different geographical challenges over the rapid transit route, Stage 1 was broken down into three sections – Helensvale to Griffith University, Griffith University to Southport and Southport to Broadbeach.

There were two options proposed for section one – H1 via Harbour Town and Olsen Avenue, and H2 via Parkwood and Smith Street. There were also two options proposed for the route through Southport – S1 along Nerang Street then Marine Parade and S2 via Scarborough Street.

A program of consultation was carried out where we asked for feedback and comments on the route options.

We asked for feedback either by returning the newsletter tear off slip, calling us or sending an email. We also held community information sessions in six venues where you could come along and talk to the project team face to face. More than 1200 people gave us their feedback and views on the proposals. See over the page for a summary of what you told us.

**what is a rapid transit system?**

A rapid transit system is a dedicated transport corridor for use by modern, high capacity vehicles (in this case either light rail or bus rapid). It has many benefits – it's fast, reliable and will be able to move large numbers of people quickly and easily around the Gold Coast.

**why does the Gold Coast need a rapid transit system?**

The population of the Gold Coast is growing rapidly and shows no sign of slowing down. By 2026 the resident population of the area is forecast to exceed 740,000. More people mean more cars, and more cars means more pressure on our roads and more congestion. In order to persuade people that they don't always have to use a car for their journey a real alternative to car travel must be found, both responding to our needs now but also looking to the future.

**proposed route for Gold Coast Rapid Transit System**

**stage 1**  
Helensvale to Broadbeach

**stage 2**  
Broadbeach to Coolangatta (expected completion by 2015)

**key**

- proposed rapid transit corridor
- H1 – Helensvale via Harbour Town
- H2 – Helensvale via Parkwood
- existing heavy rail line
- proposed heavy rail line extension (Queensland Rail project)

**see inside for details of the recommended route between Griffith University and Southport**

**how does this project fit with other transport improvements that are being planned?**

The feedback we received from the community highlighted the need to improve and integrate the whole transport network on the Gold Coast. People told us they wanted to use public transport but at the moment it is difficult to access from some areas and any new systems must have easy connections to the bus and heavy rail networks.

In order to find the best solution to this problem over \$10 billion has been allocated to improve public transport and cycling infrastructure in SE Queensland over the next 20 years as part of the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program. This includes \$600 million to deliver a rapid transit system for the Gold Coast.

When the rapid transit system is completed in 2015 it will link Helensvale to Coolangatta, provide connections to the heavy rail line at both ends and provide better links for east/west travel. Existing Surfside bus services, which are fully funded by TransLink and are part of the TransLink network, will be reconfigured to link most areas of the Coast with either the rapid transit system and the main railway or both.

These service improvements will link smoothly with the new rapid transit system. You will be able to catch convenient public transport across the whole city, not just the corridor immediately served by the rapid transit.

**TRANSLink** Gold Coast City Council Queensland Government Queensland Transport

## Briefings

As a significant infrastructure project for the Gold Coast it was important that key stakeholders supported the Gold Coast Rapid Transit project. Key groups along the corridor, across the city, within government and the business community were engaged.

The aim of engagement was to generate support, understanding and to provide sufficient opportunities for input and feedback into the planning process.

Between November 2006 and June 2008 the project held:

- 113 briefings with 269 stakeholders
- 159 meetings with 358 stakeholders.

### Stakeholders briefed included:

- Various Chambers' of Commerce
- Gold Coast City Council councillors
- Gold Coast City Council's Coordination Committee and Regional Economic Development Advisory Board
- Gold Coast Convention & Exhibition Centre
- GECKO
- Gold Coast Tourism
- Regional Manager's Coordination Network
- Harbour Town Shopping Centre
- Indy 300
- Pacific Fair
- Property Council of Australia
- Queensland Events
- Griffith University
- Queensland Health
- Surfers Paradise Alliance
- Parklands Trust.



## Business taskforce

At the end of 2007, a Business Taskforce lead by Commerce Queensland and the Gold Coast Combined Chambers of Commerce was formed. The original intent of the taskforce was to meet with the project and discuss issues of concern with the route through Surfers Paradise however both the project and the business taskforce saw the value of this group and continued to hold monthly meetings with the project reviewing issues of interest to the business community.

## Community reference groups

To ensure the Gold Coast Rapid Transit project team captured the diverse views of the Gold Coast community, 2 community reference groups were established to reflect the geographical reach of the project: Helensvale to Southport and Southport to Broadbeach. 26 stakeholders and groups representing the community were represented on the community reference groups.

Both groups assisted the project team to identify community concerns and ideas regarding the Gold Coast Rapid Transit system, functioned as a reference body to provide input on route options, benefits and impacts and acted as a conduit to interest groups and the local community.

- The Helensvale – Southport community reference group was established in February 2007. This group met 11 times between February 2007 and July 2008.
- The Southport to Broadbeach community reference group met 8 times between July 2007 and July 2008.

The community reference groups received information about the project and provided input into areas such as route selection, mode, traffic modelling, precinct planning, social impact assessment, 3D animation, network planning, station design, parking and patronage.

## Membership of the community reference groups included representatives from:

- Southport Chamber of Commerce
- Surfers Paradise Chamber of Commerce
- Pacific Fair
- Chevron Island Village Association
- Main Beach Progress Association
- Main Beach Tedder Ave Association
- Friends of MacIntosh Island and Narrowneck
- Paradise Waters Resident Action Group
- Broadbeach Chamber of Commerce
- Helensvale Residents Association
- GECKO
- Regional Disability Council
- Gold Coast Mobility
- Australia Fair.

## Community information sessions

Community information sessions were used to promote and display the features of the rapid transit system. Details of the community information sessions were advertised in the Gold Coast Bulletin and the Gold Coast Sun newspapers.

The sessions were between 2 to 4 hours and were held in various locations along the Gold Coast Rapid Transit route. At these sessions community members had the opportunity to access information about the project and to speak directly with the project's technical, design and property teams.

- 6 information sessions were held in March 2007 and were attended by approximately 230 people
- a further 3 were held in October 2007 and were attended by approximately 200 people.

To complement the general community information sessions, additional information sessions were offered to the business communities of Southport and Broadbeach.

- In conjunction with the Southport Chamber of Commerce, 2 business information sessions were held on 5 November and 7 November, 2007. Of the 300 people invited, 35 attended.

- Another 2 information sessions were planned and offered to the 243 traders of Australia Fair but were cancelled due to lack of interest.
- In conjunction with the Broadbeach Alliance an information session was held on 3 December 2007 for the Broadbeach businesses and traders and was attended by 25 people.
- A second information session was offered on 5 December, 2007 to the residents of Broadbeach and Broadbeach Waters. The project sought the community's views on the proposed bus interchange and on the potential loss of green space at the proposed location. A total of 6,634 letters were delivered to residents in the Broadbeach postcode; however only 3 people attended the information session.



## Static displays

During the periods of community consultation static displays were exhibited in local libraries, shopping centres, Griffith University and at Gold Coast City Council. They displayed information on the project, route options, and details of the community information sessions. Newsletters were available at these display sites. The details of the displays were advertised in the Gold Coast Bulletin and Gold Coast Sun Newspapers.

## Submissions

Community members and stakeholders were encouraged to provide written submissions to the project team with feedback or to highlight concerns. Submissions were received from a range of stakeholders including resident groups, organisations and individuals.

- 8 submissions were received during the consultation on Section two, Griffith University to Southport
- 50 submissions were received during the consultation on Section three, Southport to Broadbeach
- an additional 20 submissions were received outside of these two periods of consultation.

All submissions received individual responses and were considered by the Gold Coast Rapid Transit technical team and incorporated into the design where appropriate.



## Project website

A comprehensive project website was regularly updated to provide interested stakeholders with detailed information about the project.

The project website is located at [www.translink.com.au/gc\\_rapidtransit](http://www.translink.com.au/gc_rapidtransit)

## Project email

Community members were also encouraged to request information or provide feedback via the project email, [gc\\_rapidtransit@transport.qld.gov.au](mailto:gc_rapidtransit@transport.qld.gov.au)

As the project neared the conclusion of the detailed planning stage, regular email updates were sent out to key stakeholders. Emails sent out contained information on issues such as project progress, timelines, patronage and network integration.

## 1800 hotline

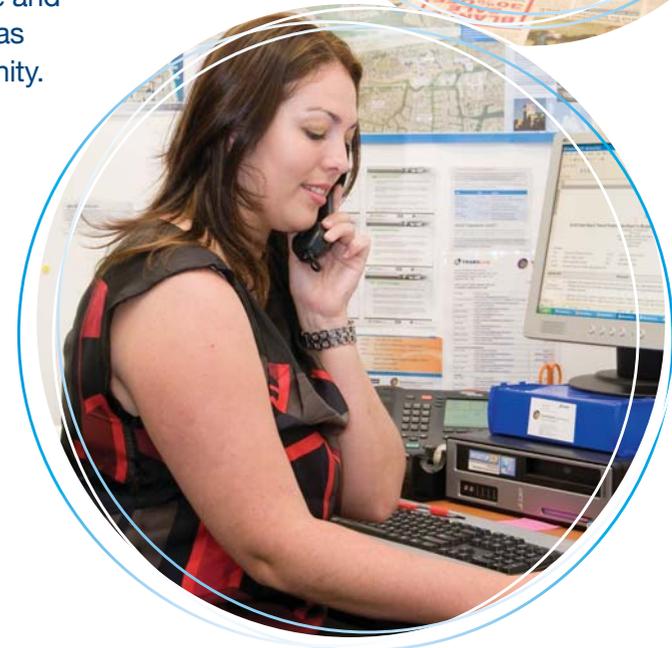
The 1800 hotline was a popular way for the community to make contact with the project team. The bulk of contacts were made during periods of community consultation. The 1800 phone line, staffed by a member of the project team, enabled the project team to provide accurate information and to identify issues and concerns to be incorporated into the design of the project.

## Media coverage

The Gold Coast has 1 local daily paper (Gold Coast Bulletin) and a free weekly paper (Gold Coast Sun), local news via Channel Nine and 5 radio stations.

The media coverage of the project has been varied, with few stories and coverage during the initial stages of the project but significant coverage from late 2007 into 2008.

Media releases were issued to mark key milestones of the project, including signing of the Head of Agreement, launching community consultation and announcements of route and mode. The bulk of the media coverage was reporting on issues raised by the community.



## Community and stakeholder issues and concerns

In addition to informing the community and stakeholders about the Gold Coast Rapid Transit project, one of the key aims of the communication and engagement strategy was to identify areas of concern, potential impacts and to mitigate these impacts through changes to the design.

From the beginning of the project, the issues raised by the community have remained constant and can be broadly summarised as follows:

- support for improved public transport for the city
- desire for minimal impact to the traffic and road network
- desire for minimal property impacts
- concern about lack of park 'n' ride facilities
- concern about city wide integration.

## Summary of issues raised by community and stakeholders

| Issue   | Project response  |
|---|---|
| No benefit to communities not directly serviced by the system | <p>See Chapter 6: Network Integration (from page 167) for a summary of the network integration strategy, which outlines the improved links between the Gold Coast Rapid Transit system, bus services and heavy rail.</p> <p>The key features of the integrated network strategy include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• new routes</li> <li>• improved bus service frequencies</li> <li>• improved heavy rail frequencies</li> <li>• introduction of bus priority and high occupancy vehicle lanes along the coastal strip and servicing east-west corridor.</li> </ul> |
| Gold Coast Rapid Transit will cause disruption to traffic     | <p>See Chapter 8: Traffic and parking impacts (from page 193) for a summary of the impact of the Gold Coast Rapid Transit system on traffic and the mitigation strategies that have been proposed.</p> <p>See also the following pages for changes to traffic movements in key locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Southport, page 122</li> <li>• Surfers Paradise Boulevard, page 141</li> <li>• Broadbeach, page 158.</li> </ul>  |

| Issue   | Project response   |
|---|--|
| Reduction in on-street parking in Southport   | <p>Gold Coast City Council commissioned an independent study of parking in Southport which found that the problem in Southport concerned long term parking spaces rather than short term spaces. A Southport Parking Working Group was also established to assist in the development of strategies to address the loss of parking post the construction of the Gold Coast Rapid Transit.</p> <p>Gold Coast City Council have developed a strategy to address the parking issues in Southport, see page 203.</p>      |
| Lack of park 'n' ride facilities  | <p>The project is guided by the TransLink Transit Authority's Park 'n' Ride policy and strategy. Consistent with this policy, park 'n' ride facilities will not be provided in densely settled sections of the route. Kiss 'n' ride (passenger set down) facilities will be provided in the vicinity of stations where space and access requirements permit.</p> <p>However potential sites that could be considered for future development for park 'n' ride include Carrara Stadium, Parklands and Helensvale.</p> |
| Cost of fares on the system   | <p>Gold Coast Rapid Transit system will be consistent with the TransLink Transit Authority's integrated ticketing and zone fare system.</p>  |
| Preference for other modes of transit including monorail, elevated structure and tunnelling               | <p>Other modes of transit were investigated as part of previous studies including: 2004 Gold Coast Light Rail Feasibility Study and 2005 Evaluation of bus rapid transit and light rail transit options for Southport to Broadbeach and the Preliminary Assessment Report completed in 2006.</p> <p>See page 50 for further detail on why both tunnelling and elevating the Gold Coast Rapid Transit system were not considered.</p>   |
| Concern that community feedback was not listened to   | <p>A multi-criteria evaluation framework was adopted for key decisions associated with the project such as mode of transit and route options.</p> <p>Community and stakeholder support was one of the criteria. Examples of where community and stakeholder feedback has influenced the design can be found on the next page and in the Chapter 9: Property Impacts (from page 207) and Chapter 5: Route (from page 85).</p>   |
| Opportunities to work with developers to improve access to transport services (for example, Pacific Fair) | <p>The Gold Coast Rapid Transit team have been in discussion with Pacific Fair, Australia Fair and some of the major developers on the Gold Coast regarding the design and location of the Gold Coast Rapid Transit stations and bus interchanges.</p> <p>In conjunction with Gold Coast City Council a policy paper on the interaction with developers was produced to guide dealings between parties along the Gold Coast Rapid Transit corridor.</p>  |

| Issue   | Project response   |
|---|--|
| Lack of understanding of the mode options (bus rapid transit and light rail transit)                        | <p>In July 2008 a information campaign took place to inform the community and stakeholders about the 2 different mode options.</p> <p>The campaign included briefings, 3D animation, a fact sheet (circulated in the Gold Coast Sun) press releases, static displays and media articles.</p>   |
| Concern that decisions on the project had already been made and that community consultation was not genuine | <p>Community feedback influenced the design of the system and provided improved outcomes in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baratta Street (see page 104)</li> <li>• Queen Street west (from page 105)</li> <li>• Relocation of bus interchange in Southport (see page 121)</li> <li>• Nerang Street (see page 121)</li> <li>• Atlantis East (see page 133)</li> <li>• Surfers Paradise Boulevard (see page 135)</li> <li>• Broadbeach (south) interchange (see page 163)</li> <li>• The draft Concept Design and Impact Management Plan fully investigated both bus rapid and light rail as options for the Gold Coast Rapid Transit project, see Chapter 3: Mode (from page 43) for more details.</li> </ul> |
| Concern about restrictions to loading bays, disabled parking and service vehicle access                     | <p>Loading bays, disabled parking bays and access for service vehicles has been included in the design of the Gold Coast Rapid Transit system.</p> <p>Although there has been some changes to arrangements there will be no net loss of loading bays, disabled parking bays or access for service vehicles due to the Gold Coast Rapid Transit system.</p>   |
| Secrecy or lack of information given to the community   | <p>A project of this scale takes time. The volume of reports involved in the preparation of the draft Concept Design and Impact Management Plan meant that information became available, and was released, in waves. Once information was available it was made public through newsletters, fact sheets, media releases and the project website.</p> <p>The draft Concept Design and Impact Management Plan is a full and detailed report of the project and was available for public review in October 2008. See page 24 for details of how you can access this report.</p>   |

| Issue  | Project response  |
|--|---|
| Potential impact on 2 threatened frog species near Loders Creek/ Griffith University                               | Following discussions with the Loders Creek Catchment Association the alignment was refined to avoid any impact on the frog habitat. See page 104 for further details.  |
| Concern about impact on the environment through levels of emission produced by the Gold Coast Rapid Transit system | <p>Light rail vehicles will be highly energy efficient and powered by electricity drawn from overhead contact lines with no local emissions. Bus rapid vehicles would have been powered by the cleanest available energy source.</p> <p>Emissions from either vehicles will not exceed the stringent levels set by the Queensland Environmental Protection Agency and the National Environmental Protection Council of Australia.</p>   |
| Influence of the Indy event on the route option  | <p>In early 2008, Indy confirmed a new contract to remain on the Gold Coast.</p> <p>Meetings and negotiations with Indy took place to create a design that achieved a good public transport solution but also minimised the impact on the race circuit. Agreement is now being finalised on the the Gold Coast Rapid Transit projects preferred option of shortening the track to avoid significant property impacts in Surfers Paradise Boulevard.</p>   |
| Alignment in Queen Street (west)   | The Gold Coast Rapid Transit alignment in Queen Street (west) presented challenges due to the narrow width of the road. A number of options for the Gold Coast Rapid Transit alignment in Queen Street (west) were developed and taken to the community for comment. The options involved either impacting the cemetery, impacting homes or changing the traffic arrangements in this area. See Chapter 5: Route from page 85, for full details. The feedback received indicated that there was broad support for the change in traffic arrangements. As a result the Gold Coast Rapid Transit project team proceeded to refinin g plans for this area. |

Community or stakeholder concerns that were specific to a certain location have been addressed in Chapter 5: Route which begins on page 85. Consultation with owners about impacts on properties is discussed in Chapter 9: Property Impacts (from page 207).

Consultation has been an integral part of the planning stage of the Gold Coast Rapid Transit project and has influenced the design and outcomes in numerous ways. However, although the project has completed the draft Concept Design and Impact Management Plan, this does not mean that consultation with the community and stakeholders has come to an end. The Gold Coast Rapid Transit project has established a number of working groups, such as the Business

Taskforce and Southport Parking Working Group, that will continue to input into the detailed design through to construction. The wider community will also be kept up to date with progress in the project and a specific communications plan will be developed for the construction phase to ensure that any impacts or changes to traffic arrangements are clearly communicated in a timely and effective manner.

For more information refer to the following chapter in the draft Concept Design and Impact Management Plan:

- Volume 2, Chapter 22 – Community Consultation.

See page 24 for details of how you can view the full draft Concept Design and Impact Management Plan.

