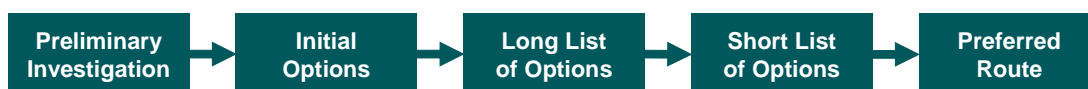


2 Approach to Route Selection

2.1 Planning and Design Process

Route options for the Pacific Highway upgrade were developed through an iterative process involving a range of environmental and urban design, engineering, community, safety and cost considerations structured around the following route option stages:



The framework for the assessment of the Tintenbar to Ewingsdale Pacific Highway Upgrade includes the following key elements:

- Program and project objectives.
- Constraints analysis.
- Long list of options.
- Sieve 1 evaluation criteria.
- Corridor Assessment Workshop.
- Pairwise comparison of evaluation criteria.
- Public display of short list of route options.
- Value management assessment of short list of route options.
- Assessment of community submissions from public display.
- Sieve 2 evaluation criteria and recommendation of preferred route.
- Selection of preferred route.
- Refinement and public display of preferred route.
- Preparation of concept design and Environmental Assessment of the preferred route.

The process for the development and assessment of route options as well as the relationship of project phases to key reports and workshops is shown in **Figure 2.1** and described in **Sections 2.1.1** and **2.1.2**. The process incorporates consultation with the community, government agencies, and other stakeholders to provide input into the process and feedback from studies and investigations. Consultation activities associated with the project to date are described in **Section 2.2**.

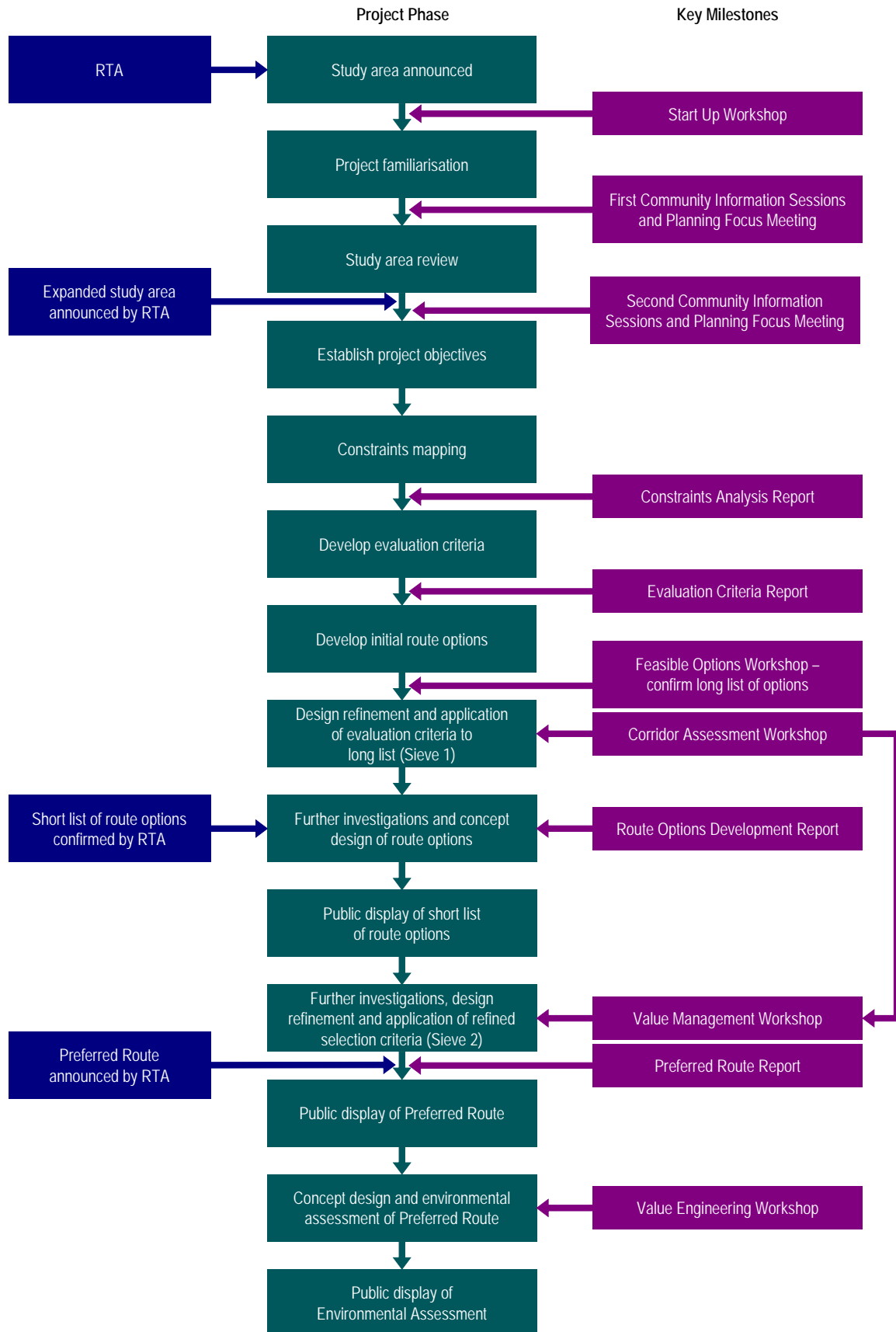
2.1.1 Development of Long List of Route Options

The mapping and reporting of environmental and design constraints in the study area was the starting point in the identification of potential corridors for upgrading the highway (see **Chapter 5** for details). Corridor development began with the modelling of possible alignments. Using interactive computer modelling and constraints mapping, it was possible to investigate a large number of possible corridors.

A broad range of corridor options extending across the study area was investigated. Corridors were progressively adjusted to avoid as many constraints as possible while still achieving the design criteria and maintaining project objectives and functionality.

Following this preliminary development and refinement of route corridors, a Project Team Feasible Options Workshop was held and initial route corridors were reviewed to identify the weaker performing options; for example, those with unacceptable impacts that would be very difficult to build or would not conform to design criteria. These lower performing options were removed from further assessment or consideration and the outcome of the workshop was the establishment of a long list of potential route corridors for further investigation. A detailed explanation of the methodology used to develop and assess the long list of options is contained in **Chapter 7**.

Figure 2.1 Route Selection Process



The process adopted to evaluate and rank the long list of route options included a two-step process:

- Step one – assess performance of each section and option against Sieve 1 evaluation criteria performance measures with the Project Team's pairwise weightings used as the base case.
- Step two – apply pairwise weightings from the CLG and government agencies to test sensitivity of project values.

The Sieve 1 evaluation criteria and performance measures are listed in **Appendix A**. The Sieve 1 criteria will be refined after the Display of Route Options is finalised. This refined criteria, referred to as Sieve 2 criteria, will be used to assess the short list of options.

The pairwise process is explained in **Section 7.3**.

2.1.2 Route Options Refinement

Following selection of the short list of options, the next step was a preliminary consideration of environmental impacts of each route option. Information about the short list of route options will be placed on public display in October 2005. The purpose of the display is to obtain feedback (from the community and other stakeholders) to assist in the selection of a preferred route. As a result of this feedback, further engineering and environmental investigations will be undertaken.

2.2 Community and Stakeholder Involvement

2.2.1 Community Involvement

A comprehensive community and stakeholder involvement program has been established for this project. The key objectives of community and stakeholder involvement are to:

- Ensure an open accountable and transparent community involvement process.
- Ensure all potentially affected property owners and interested stakeholders are provided with sufficient information about the project and the likely impacts so that they can provide informed input.
- Ensure appropriate and direct communication with property owners and/or managers in relation to access to and investigations on landholdings within the study area by Project Team members and/or RTA representatives.
- Encourage community support and involvement in the project to facilitate better and more generally accepted outcomes.
- Provide a range of accessible opportunities for stakeholders, interested groups and the wider public to contribute to the project through issues identification, information provision and options evaluation.
- Build an ongoing relationship between the RTA, its contractors, and stakeholders in order to gain long term support for the project, and in particular the Preferred Route.

Community involvement is undertaken during key stages of the project to ensure effective stakeholder involvement. The community involvement process for the project is outlined in **Table 2.1**.

The community provided a wealth of local knowledge that has been reviewed and considered by the Project Team. Community submissions were received by email, fax and the freecall line, as well as through individual property visits and meetings. These submissions were collected and analysed holistically to achieve an understanding of the impacts facing the local community.

A Community Liaison Group (CLG) was formed with an original group of 30 members, and then re-formed to include members of the community to represent the expanded study area. The CLG was committed to providing input to the route development and selection process. The members attended extra meetings, requested and reviewed additional information on a variety of technical topics, and

subsequently submitted extensive comments on both the overall project objectives as well as constraints and the evaluation criteria. Representatives of the CLG attended the Corridor Assessment Workshop.

In addition, Agricultural Focus Group (AFG) members played a key role in highlighting the issues associated with agriculture and land use, in relation to the identification of constraints, evaluation criteria and the development of corridor options in the study area.

Overall, there has been a high level of community interest and involvement in the project.

Table 2.1 Community and Government Involvement Process

Project Stages	Communication Strategy Components
Project familiarisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Information Sessions. • Freecall number, email, Freepost establishment. • Website development. • Community Update No. 1. • Progress updates in local media. • Project Team attendance at community meetings. • Planning Focus Meeting. • Agency Requirements. • Community Liaison Group and Agricultural Focus Group set-up and initial meetings. • Property owner meetings and direct contact.
Route option assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Update No. 2. • Route Options Display and information sessions. • Freecall number. • Planning Focus Meeting. • Community Liaison Group/Agricultural Focus Group meetings. • Progress updates in local media. • Project Team attendance at community meetings. • Corridor Assessment Workshop. • Property owner interviews and direct contact.
Route selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Update No. 3. • Preferred Route Display. • Community Liaison Group/Agricultural Focus Group meetings. • Property owner interviews and direct contact.

2.2.2 Government and Other Stakeholder Involvement

Information was sought for the project from government agency representatives, regional and local organisations and other stakeholders at project commencement and other key stages of the project.

Planning Focus Meetings were held in November 2004 and February 2005. A Corridor Assessment Workshop was held in August 2005. The following stakeholder groups were invited to attend the meetings and workshop: Ambulance Service of NSW; Australian Heritage Council; Australian Rail Track Corporation; Ballina Shire Council; Bangalow Public School; Bundjalung Elders Council; Burabi Aboriginal Corporation; Byron Shire Council; Byron Tweed Local Aboriginal Land Council; CLG members; Country Energy; Department of Commerce; Department of Education; Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC); Department of Environment and Heritage; Department of

Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR)¹; Department of Primary Industries (DPI); Jali Local Aboriginal Land Council; Kirklands Coaches; National Parks and Wildlife Service (now part of DEC); Newrybar Public School; Northern Rivers Catchment Management Board; Northern Rivers Regional Development Board; NSW Police Force; NSW Rural Fire Service; NSW Sugar Mill Cooperative; Optus; Rail Infrastructure Corporation; Rous Water; Rural Lands Protection Board; State Emergency Service; Telstra; Transgrid; and Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Council. Several of the groups invited did not attend the meetings and/or the workshop.

Additionally, a meeting with Aboriginal stakeholders took place. Aboriginal heritage constraints and establishment of an Aboriginal Focus Group were discussed. Future meetings of the Aboriginal Focus Group are planned to discuss the short list of options.

2.3 Community Values

Feedback from the community has been received via a range of methods, including community information sessions, the Community Liaison Group and briefings and meetings. This feedback has included general community concern, issues for consideration and recommendations for route option development. From this feedback, a number of key values have been identified as being important to the community. These include:

- The high quality of land for horticultural and agricultural use.
- The scenic quality within and surrounding the study area.
- The environmental quality of the area, including vegetation, wildlife and water quality.
- The proximity to major regional economic centres such as Byron Bay and Ballina.
- The spirit and connectedness of the local community.
- The general rural amenity of the area (i.e. quiet, clean, aesthetic) away from the highway.

These values were also identified at the Corridor Assessment Workshop.

¹ Note that DIPNR has recently separated into the Department of Planning (DoP) and the Department of Natural Resources (DoNR).