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Tunnel project to proceed

The Coordinator-General has recommended Airport Link proceed, paving the way for construction of Brisbane's largest underground toll road to begin late next year.

The recommendation followed an extensive evaluation of the Airport Link Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and public submissions received on the EIS late last year.

Airport Link will connect the North-South Bypass Tunnel (NSBT), Inner City Bypass (ICB) and local road network at Bowen Hills to the northern arterials of Gympie Road and Stafford Road at Kedron and Sandgate Road and the East-West Arterial in the city's north-east.

The State Government and Brisbane City Council began work on the Airport Link EIS in November 2005 as part of the detailed feasibility study.

On 11 October 2006, the Coordinator-General invited public submissions on the EIS over a period of eight weeks.

Almost 300 submissions were received from individuals, community groups, businesses, government agencies and other stakeholders, with about one-third being pro-forma submissions, raising the same matters. A summary of some of the key issues is included on page 3.

The project team prepared an EIS Supplementary Report in response to these submissions for the Coordinator-General to consider during his evaluation of the EIS.

The Coordinator-General completed his evaluation of the EIS in late May this year, recommending the project proceed subject to several environmental and community conditions.

The State can now move forward with delivering the new underground toll road, which will allow motorists to bypass 16 sets of traffic lights between Bowen Hills and Kedron and 14 sets of traffic lights between Bowen Hills and Toombul.

Copies of the *Airport Link EIS Supplementary Report* and the Coordinator-General's *Airport Link EIS Evaluation Report* are available at www.infrastructure.qld.gov.au

Airport Link will be a mainly underground toll road between Brisbane's northern suburbs, the airport and the inner city.

Progress to date

- **July/August 2005:** State and Council begin \$21 million detailed feasibility study
- **October 2005:** Preferred corridor announced; Coordinator-General declares Airport Link a "significant project" under the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971*
- **November 2005:** EIS investigations begin; Coordinator-General invites comment on draft Terms of Reference for EIS
- **March 2006:** Preliminary concept design announced; public comment invited
- **June 2006:** Changes to preliminary concept design announced; public comment invited
- **October 2006:** Business case approved; public submissions invited on EIS
- **February 2007:** Private sector invited to submit EOI in Airport Link and Northern Busway (Windsor to Kedron)
- **April 2007:** EOI close; four groups respond

Delivering a revolution in Brisbane transport

The Coordinator-General's endorsement of Airport Link means the State Government can move forward with plans to deliver the project in partnership with the private sector.

It will do this through City North Infrastructure (CNI) – a State Government company established late last year to manage the joint procurement and delivery of Airport Link and part of the Northern Busway, which was investigated in parallel with Airport Link.

In February this year CNI invited the private sector to submit Expressions of Interest (EOI) in the joint delivery of Airport Link and the Windsor to Kedron section of the Northern Busway.

This was in keeping with a key recommendation in the business cases for each project, which were approved in October last year.

Joint delivery will allow the projects to retain their separate functions and identities while maximising their benefits and reducing local impacts and costs.

EOI submissions closed on 11 April 2007 with four groups expressing interest in bidding for the projects. A shortlist of bidders is expected to be announced this month.

Subject to Government approval of the shortlist, CNI is expected to invite consortia to submit tenders on the projects soon after. It is expected that the Request for Proposals will be issued shortly.

The tenderers will be asked to develop solutions to minimise the impact of ventilation outlets and construction on the local community and schools.

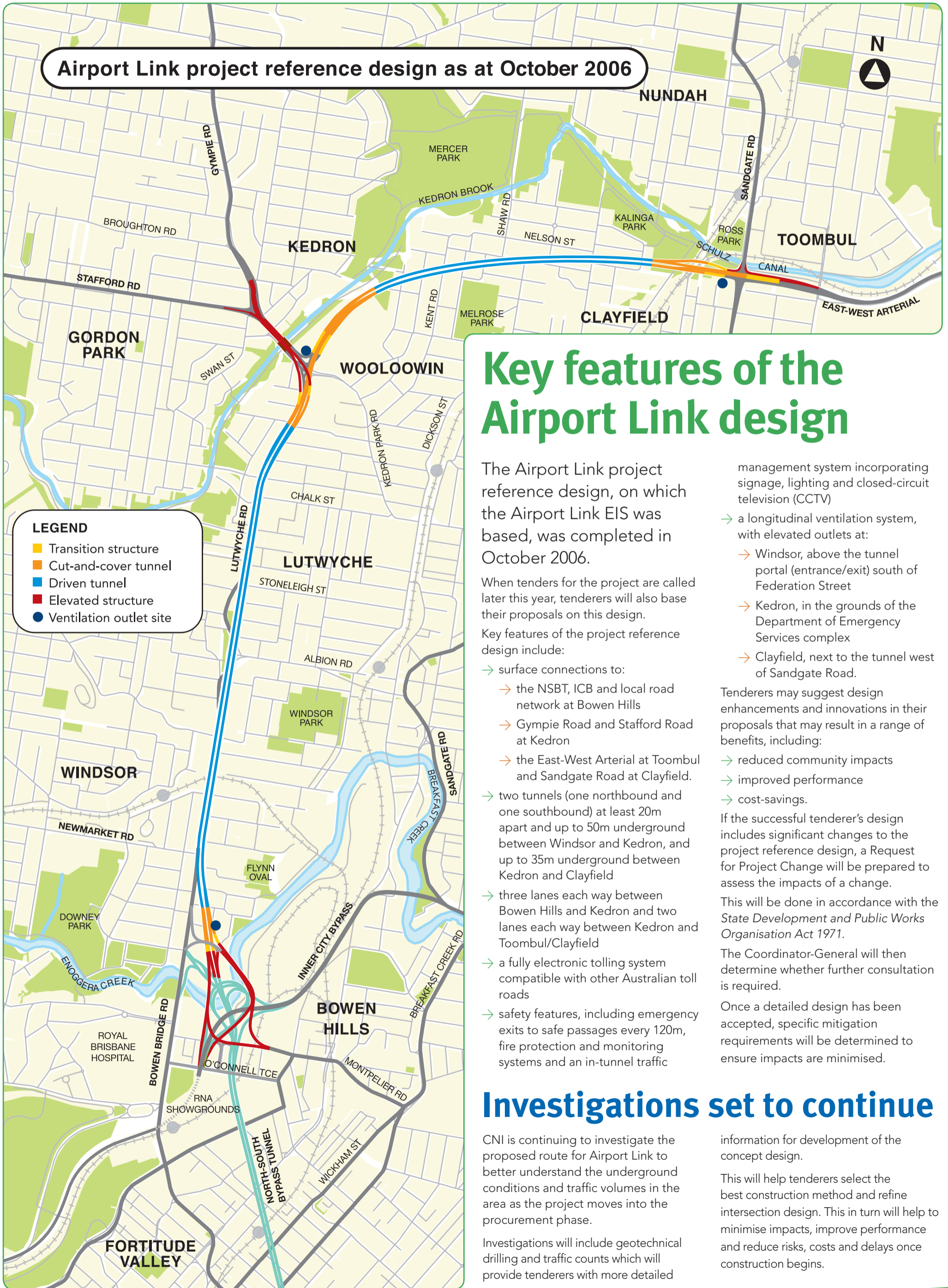
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Airport Link project reference design as at October 2006



LEGEND

- Transition structure
- Cut-and-cover tunnel
- Driven tunnel
- Elevated structure
- Ventilation outlet site

Key features of the Airport Link design

The Airport Link project reference design, on which the Airport Link EIS was based, was completed in October 2006.

When tenders for the project are called later this year, tenderers will also base their proposals on this design.

Key features of the project reference design include:

- surface connections to:
 - the NSBT, ICB and local road network at Bowen Hills
 - Gympie Road and Stafford Road at Kedron
 - the East-West Arterial at Toombul and Sandgate Road at Clayfield.
- two tunnels (one northbound and one southbound) at least 20m apart and up to 50m underground between Windsor and Kedron, and up to 35m underground between Kedron and Clayfield
- three lanes each way between Bowen Hills and Kedron and two lanes each way between Kedron and Toombul/Clayfield
- a fully electronic tolling system compatible with other Australian toll roads
- safety features, including emergency exits to safe passages every 120m, fire protection and monitoring systems and an in-tunnel traffic

management system incorporating signage, lighting and closed-circuit television (CCTV)

- a longitudinal ventilation system, with elevated outlets at:
 - Windsor, above the tunnel portal (entrance/exit) south of Federation Street
 - Kedron, in the grounds of the Department of Emergency Services complex
 - Clayfield, next to the tunnel west of Sandgate Road.

Tenderers may suggest design enhancements and innovations in their proposals that may result in a range of benefits, including:

- reduced community impacts
- improved performance
- cost-savings.

If the successful tenderer's design includes significant changes to the project reference design, a Request for Project Change will be prepared to assess the impacts of a change.

This will be done in accordance with the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971*.

The Coordinator-General will then determine whether further consultation is required.

Once a detailed design has been accepted, specific mitigation requirements will be determined to ensure impacts are minimised.

Investigations set to continue

CNI is continuing to investigate the proposed route for Airport Link to better understand the underground conditions and traffic volumes in the area as the project moves into the procurement phase.

Investigations will include geotechnical drilling and traffic counts which will provide tenderers with more detailed

information for development of the concept design.

This will help tenderers select the best construction method and refine intersection design. This in turn will help to minimise impacts, improve performance and reduce risks, costs and delays once construction begins.

Key issues raised in the EIS submissions

The Airport Link project team conducted four community information sessions and four staffed library displays during the eight-week statutory EIS display.

Consultation activities focussed on helping people understand the EIS findings and how to make a submission on the EIS to the Coordinator-General.

Most concerns raised in the written submissions related to:

- the effects of traffic on the existing road network
- construction impacts on local schools and neighbourhoods
- changes to pedestrian and cycle access
- air quality and public health impacts.

The following table summarises some of the key issues raised in the submissions and the project team's response to each.

Mitigation requirements set out in the EIS and the Supplementary Report include strategies and specific

performance criteria that must be met to ensure any adverse construction or operational impacts are avoided or mitigated and managed at the source.

This will ensure the health and safety of the local community and allow people to go about their normal activities during construction and operation of the project.



The effects of traffic on the existing road network were key community concerns. While Airport Link would increase traffic on some roads, like Stafford Road and the East-West Arterial, it would reduce traffic on others like Lutwyche Road and Sandgate Road.

Issue	Response	Recommendation
Construction impacts on local residents and schools, including air, dust and noise pollution and pedestrian and cycle access/safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The EIS investigated a broad range of construction impacts on communities near the work sites including local residents, businesses and community facilities such as schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → An environmental management plan to address issues such as hours of work, use of temporary noise walls and acoustic enclosures, and traffic management measures. → Ongoing monitoring to ensure construction activities meet noise and air quality goals. → Traffic management measures to safeguard pedestrian and cycle access near work sites.
Project effects on the regional road network, particularly Stafford Road, Gympie Road and the East-West Arterial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Airport Link will reduce traffic on a range of inner northern roads, including key arterials such as Lutwyche Road and Sandgate Road. → Forecast increases on Stafford Road, Gympie Road and the East-West Arterial are within the capacity of these roads. → The airport roundabout needs attention regardless of Airport Link being built. Traffic signals are planned and the Department of Main Roads is investigating other options. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → A range of measures is required to ensure the smooth flow of vehicles on roads in the vicinity of the Airport Link surface connections. → Measures should include synchronised traffic signals to avoid undue delays. → Upgrade existing roads near surface connections to accommodate traffic increases as required.
Impact of the Clayfield ventilation outlet on ambient air quality and the local streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The Clayfield site was chosen as it offered the best performance against a range of criteria including functionality, air quality outcomes, flooding and construction constraints, visual impacts, and construction and operational costs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The ventilation station and outlet are to be designed to reduce visual impacts on the local streetscape while meeting performance requirements. → Establishment of a monitoring station in Kalinga Park to monitor ambient air quality in the vicinity of the ventilation outlet.
Impacts on Kedron State High School and Wooloowin Primary School, including noise, visual and health impacts, pedestrian access and student safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The EIS health risk assessment found Airport Link would not cause any appreciable change in community health. → Safe access to schools for pedestrians and cyclists would be maintained during construction in and around work sites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Traffic noise goals at Kedron State High School and Wooloowin State School are to be achieved through project design and mitigation measures. → Further design work is required to minimise the potential visual impact of surface infrastructure. → Source-based mitigation measures to minimise visual, noise and air pollution impacts on local schools. → Construction traffic management to maintain safe access. → Ongoing communication and consultation with the local community during construction.
Importance of pedestrian and cycle links in the vicinity of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Pedestrian and cycle access will be maintained during construction and operation of Airport Link. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Construction traffic measures to safeguard pedestrians and cyclists on routes near the work sites, particularly at Windsor, Lutwyche/Kedron and Clayfield. → Improved pedestrian/cycle access including where the tunnel surfaces at Sandgate Road.

Northern Busway CDIMP approved

The State Government has approved the Concept Design and Impact Management Plan (CDIMP) for the Northern Busway (Royal Children's Hospital to Kedron), moving the project to the delivery phase.

The CDIMP was approved after the draft document was modified to address issues raised in more than 160 public submissions and the results of subsequent engineering studies.

The Northern Busway will connect the Inner Northern Busway at Herston to Bracken Ridge via Windsor, Lutwyche, Kedron, Chermside and Aspley.

It will be built in stages with the highest-priority sections – in Herston, Lutwyche and Kedron – to be delivered first, with an interim solution through Windsor to include bus lanes and bus priority measures.

As recommended in the business case and CDIMP, the RCH to Windsor section will be delivered in an alliance between the State Government and the private sector. Construction of this section is expected to start in early 2008 and be completed in late 2009.

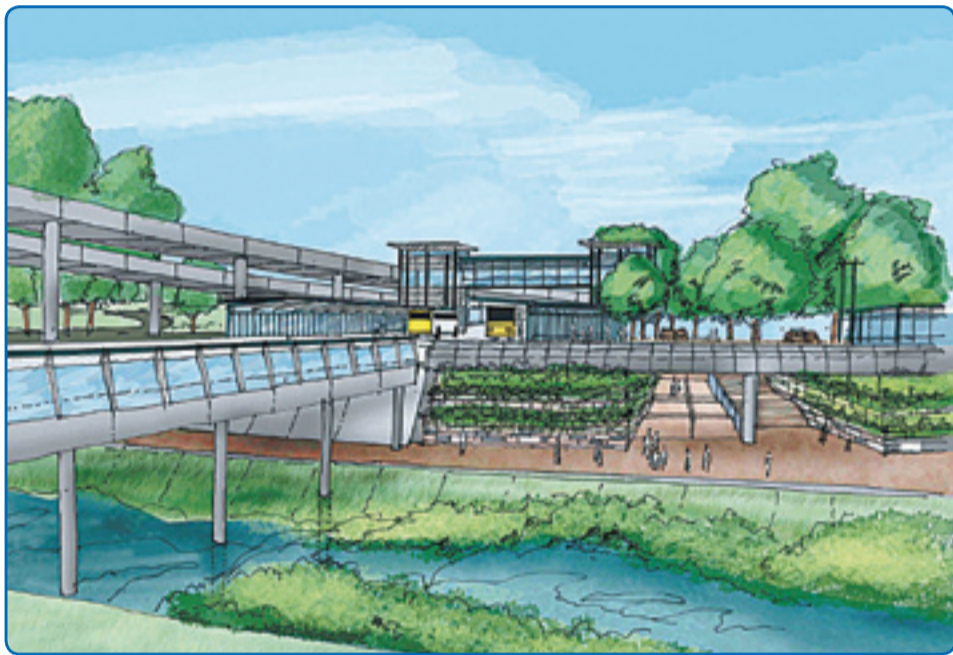
The Windsor to Kedron section will be delivered at the same time as Airport Link.

The bus priority measures through Windsor will provide benefits for bus passengers until a dedicated busway is required in about 2020.

Preliminary planning for the section between Kedron and Bracken Ridge is continuing with a corridor of interest, generally following Gympie Road north from Kedron, being assessed as part of a prefeasibility study.

The busway is a priority of State transport planning and represents a \$728 million State Government commitment (in 2006) to improving public transport in Brisbane.

For more information about the Northern Busway phone 1800 289 210 (freecall) or visit www.translink.com.au/northernbusway



An artist's impression of the Kedron Brook busway station.

Find out more about the EIS evaluation

The *Airport Link EIS Supplementary Report* and the *Coordinator-General's Airport Link EIS Evaluation Report* can be viewed at the following locations:

- Brisbane City Council Customer Service Centre, Brisbane Square, cnr George and Adelaide streets, Brisbane
- Chermside Library, 375 Hamilton Road, Chermside
- Nundah Library, 1 Bage Street, Nundah
- Grange Library, 79 Evelyn Street, Grange
- Hamilton Ward Office, 42 Racecourse Road, Ascot
- Queensland Transport Customer Service Centre, 477 Boundary Street, Spring Hill.

The documents may also be viewed online at:

- www.infrastructure.qld.gov.au
- www.airportlinkeis.com
- www.brisbaneairportlink.com.au



For more information

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Partnering with the private sector

Airport Link will be delivered as a State-led Public-Private Partnership, with significant support from Brisbane City Council.

In late June, City North Infrastructure (CNI) will ask private sector consortia short-listed through the EOI process to

submit proposals for the opportunity to finance, design, construct, commission, operate and maintain Airport Link over a 45-year term.

The consortia will also be asked to include in their bids the design, construction and commissioning of the Northern Busway between Windsor and Kedron.

Operation and maintenance of the busway would remain the responsibility of the State Government.

Consortia will be encouraged to propose innovations in their proposals to enhance the effectiveness of each project. The tenderers will be asked to develop solutions to minimise the impact of ventilation outlets and construction on the local community and schools.

The Request for Proposals will mark the start of the tender phase, which together with the evaluation process, is expected to take about 15 months to complete.

Once the bids have been evaluated the CNI Board, which includes representatives from the Department of Infrastructure, Queensland Transport, Main Roads, Queensland Treasury and Brisbane City Council, will recommend a preferred tenderer to the State Government.

It is likely that the contract will be awarded in mid-to-late 2008, allowing construction of Airport Link and the Windsor to Kedron section of the Northern Busway to begin soon after. It is expected that both projects will be completed in 2012.

The BOOT-style contract (Build, Own, Operate and Transfer) for Airport Link will be based on recent Australian toll road projects such as the NSBT, which is currently being built to link Bowen Hills to Woolloongabba and Kangaroo Point.

Airport Link timeline

