

Mt Coot-tha Reserve Mountain Bike Concept Plan



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Brisbane City Council is growing your Brisbane lifestyle by working with the community to create new, sustainable mountain biking opportunities at Mt Coot-tha Reserve.

Due to the growing demand for off-road cycling opportunities in Council parks and bushland reserves, Council developed the Brisbane Off-Road Cycling Strategy to guide planning and delivery of suitable facilities that will help meet this demand and better protect our greenspaces. The Brisbane Off-Road Cycling Strategy balances conservation of the natural environment with opportunities for people of different ages and abilities to enjoy Brisbane's unique parks and natural areas.

A key action in the Brisbane Off-Road Cycling Strategy is to improve mountain bike riding at Mt Coot-tha Reserve including managing demand and protecting the reserve's significant environmental and heritage values through the development of the Mt Coot-tha Mountain Bike Concept Plan.

Mt Coot-tha Reserve

Mt Coot-tha Reserve is a Brisbane icon, forming a green backdrop for the city and is Brisbane City Council's largest bushland reserve. It contains more than 1600 hectares of open eucalypt forest, rainforest pockets and creek lines which are home to approximately 370 wildlife species and 450 native plant species, including a number of rare and threatened species.

Mt Coot-tha Reserve is also a very popular destination for Brisbane residents and visitors to our city to enjoy a variety of outdoor recreation activities. The reserve offers an extensive network of tracks and trails, some of Brisbane's best views and nine picnic areas for visitors to enjoy nature. There are 31 kilometres of shared-use trails, 18.5 kilometres of walking tracks and 24.8 kilometres of mountain bike tracks.

The mountain bike tracks in the reserve have been graded using the International Mountain Bicycling Association difficulty rating system ranging from easy (green), more difficult (blue) and very difficult (black). Within the reserve there are currently three easy (green), eleven more difficult (blue) and two very difficult (black) mountain bike tracks.



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Due to growing demand, at peak times the mountain bike tracks and supporting visitor infrastructure at Mt Coot-tha Reserve exceed the number of users that these facilities were designed to accommodate. To help meet demand, provide sustainable facilities and better protect Mt Coot-tha Reserve's significant values, the Mt Coot-tha Reserve Mountain Bike Concept Plan identifies possible mountain biking facilities that will provide a range of riding experiences supported by low-impact visitor infrastructure.

As part of the planning process Council considered a range of factors including mountain biking demand and trends. Mt Coot-tha Reserve was also benchmarked against other similar mountain biking locations across South East Queensland based on the Australian Mountain Bike Guidelines. Benchmarking is an important element of planning for new recreation tracks and provides insight into what gaps may exist in a track network. Overall, Mt Coot-tha Reserve was found to meet most benchmark requirements, but it was identified that the network could be improved by providing more mountain bike tracks and a broader diversity of tracks, particularly easy (green) mountain bike tracks for beginners.

The large volume of feedback provided during the community consultation period for this project was also a key input to the concept plan. Collectively, this information will guide the establishment of a successful and sustainable mountain bike track network.

While the significant environmental, cultural heritage and Aboriginal cultural values of the reserve are not specifically illustrated in the concept plan, Council will continue to consider these important elements during the next stages of planning, detailed assessment, surveys and design.

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Community Engagement Summary

Between September and October 2022, Council engaged with key stakeholders and the community about the draft Mt Coot-tha Reserve Mountain Bike Concept Plan (draft concept plan).

Council appreciates the large amount of community feedback received which has informed the final Mt Coot-tha Reserve Mountain Bike Concept Plan.

Overview of responses



1073 respondents completed the draft concept plan online survey



46 respondents provided submissions on the draft concept plan

A

81% of respondents support the draft concept plan and what was proposed in Area A - Area for future mountain bike tracks, opportunities and facilities

B

73% of respondents support what was proposed in Area B - Area for walking and shared use tracks

C

65% of respondents preferred mountain biking access to be maintained on existing trails in Area C - Area for walking (Frogmouth mountain bike track to be removed)

Most supported possible future opportunities

- Provide a diversity of mountain bike tracks and opportunities for a range of riding skill levels.
- Provide new mountain bike tracks with features to build mountain bike riding skills.
- Establish links between Gap Creek Picnic Area and Gold Creek Reserve.



Feedback themes

Feedback from the community and stakeholders highlighted some consistent themes, including:

- Mt Coot-tha Reserve needs additional access points with linkages to tracks that permit mountain bike riding
- the safety of riders and other track users is important, including good track etiquette and rider code of conduct
- unauthorised track construction and use needs to be addressed and enforced, although some respondents also expressed a preference for some unauthorised tracks to be formalised
- mountain bike tracks and facilities should be located, designed and constructed to protect the reserve's important biodiversity values.

There was mixed feedback on the proposed outcomes in Area C, with many respondents wanting the Frogmouth Trail (mountain bike trail) to remain open and riding on shared use tracks to be maintained, while others were supportive of the area being converted to a 'walking only' space.

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Key outcomes

- Improve rider access within Mt Coot-tha Reserve.
- More mountain bike single tracks for different skill levels.
- Improved mountain bike signage, education and compliance.
- Upgraded mountain bike skills track at Gap Creek Picnic Area.
- A network of authorised tracks.
- New connections to Gold Creek Reserve.
- Retention of tracks designated for walking and horse riding.

Improve rider access within Mt Coot-tha Reserve

Key access points into Mt Coot-tha Reserve and tracks that offer linkages across the reserve will be improved to encourage and support riding to the reserve, rather than driving. This is more sustainable and takes pressure off car parking facilities. Tracks that provide critical linkages will be designated for mountain bike riding. Off-road cycling access will be maintained via the Citriodora Trail through Area C.

More mountain bike single tracks for different skill levels

All mountain bike tracks will be graded to a recognised trail difficulty rating system.

Additional mountain bike tracks will be established in Area A, including new tracks for beginner riders and improved loops and circuits to connect with the existing trail network. Well-designed new tracks and upgrades to existing tracks will be implemented to support adaptive mountain biking access.

Although the concept plan will improve the network of mountain bike tracks and rider experiences, Mt Coot-tha Reserve is not a suitable location for double black diamond or extremely difficult mountain bike tracks and these have not been included in this plan.



Improved mountain bike signage, education and compliance

Improvements will be made to on-ground signage and wayfinding for the off-road cycling network. This will provide better guidance for mountain bikers on how they can enjoy the reserve in a way that matches their skill level and the type of experience they are seeking. Council will also continue to make improvements to the ongoing education and compliance program to promote safe use of the tracks in Mt Coot-tha Reserve and address inappropriate behaviour.

Upgraded mountain bike skills track at Gap Creek Picnic Area

A new mountain bike skills track will be constructed in Gap Creek Picnic Area to provide opportunities for riders to challenge themselves and improve riding skills in a fun space, while also building their riding confidence.

A network of authorised tracks

To help protect Mt Coot-tha Reserve's significant ecological and cultural heritage values and make the reserve a safer and more enjoyable place for all visitors, mountain bike tracks in the reserve must be constructed by Council with appropriate approvals in place. Tracks and features not constructed by Council will be identified and removed, or where appropriate, modified to meet Council standards.

New connections to Gold Creek Reserve

Additional mountain bike tracks and supporting facilities will be constructed to better access tracks in Gold Creek Reserve and improve connectivity to the Gap Creek Picnic Area, providing additional riding experiences. Opportunities to provide low-impact visitor infrastructure in the Gold Creek Reserve area will be further explored.

Retention of tracks designated for walking and horse riding

All existing, authorised walking tracks and shared use tracks will continue to be available to walkers and horse riders, as designated, so that everyone can continue to experience Mt Coot-tha Reserve.

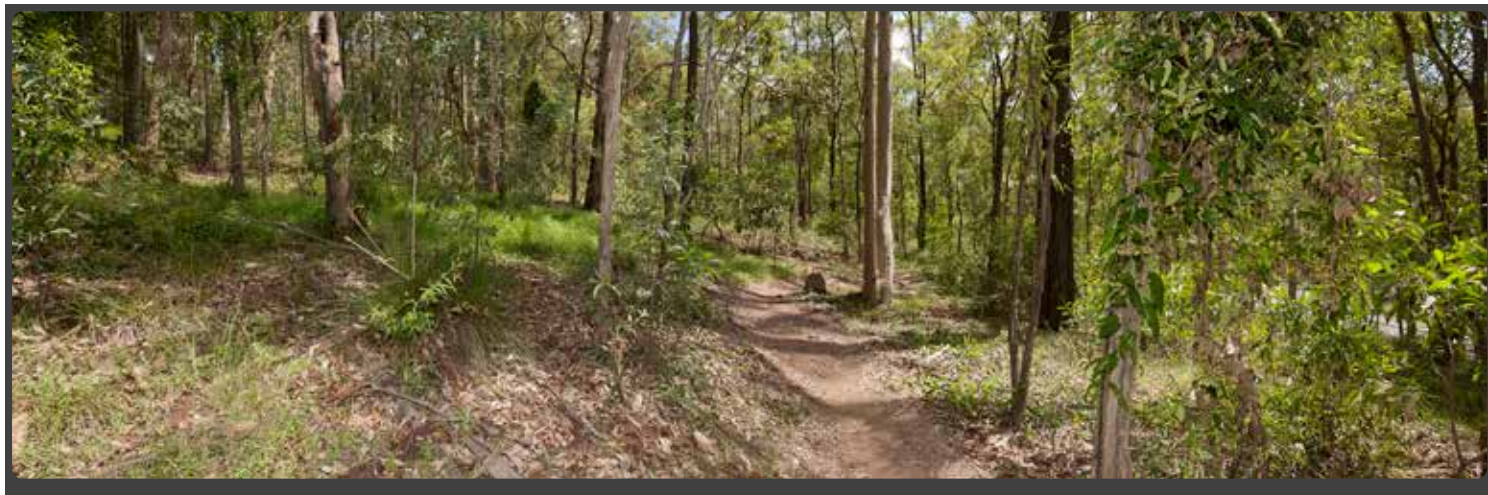


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Conservation of the natural environment and cultural heritage

The protection of Mt Coot-tha Reserve's significant ecological and cultural heritage values remains a key priority of this plan. The proposed future outcomes identified in this plan are subject to further detailed assessment and design, which will include a comprehensive assessment of environmental, cultural heritage, Aboriginal cultural heritage and other site values. Council will establish off-road cycling facilities in low-impact areas wherever possible and all tracks will be designed, constructed and maintained to protect the natural environment, including native plants and animals.



Mt Coot-tha Trail Care Program

The Mt Coot-tha Trail Care program is a community-based program that unites passionate volunteers in monitoring, caring for and maintaining the authorised, single-track mountain bike network in one of Brisbane's iconic natural areas. To find out more and become part of Trail Care, visit brisbane.qld.gov.au

How will the Mt Coot-tha Reserve Mountain Bike Concept Plan be delivered?

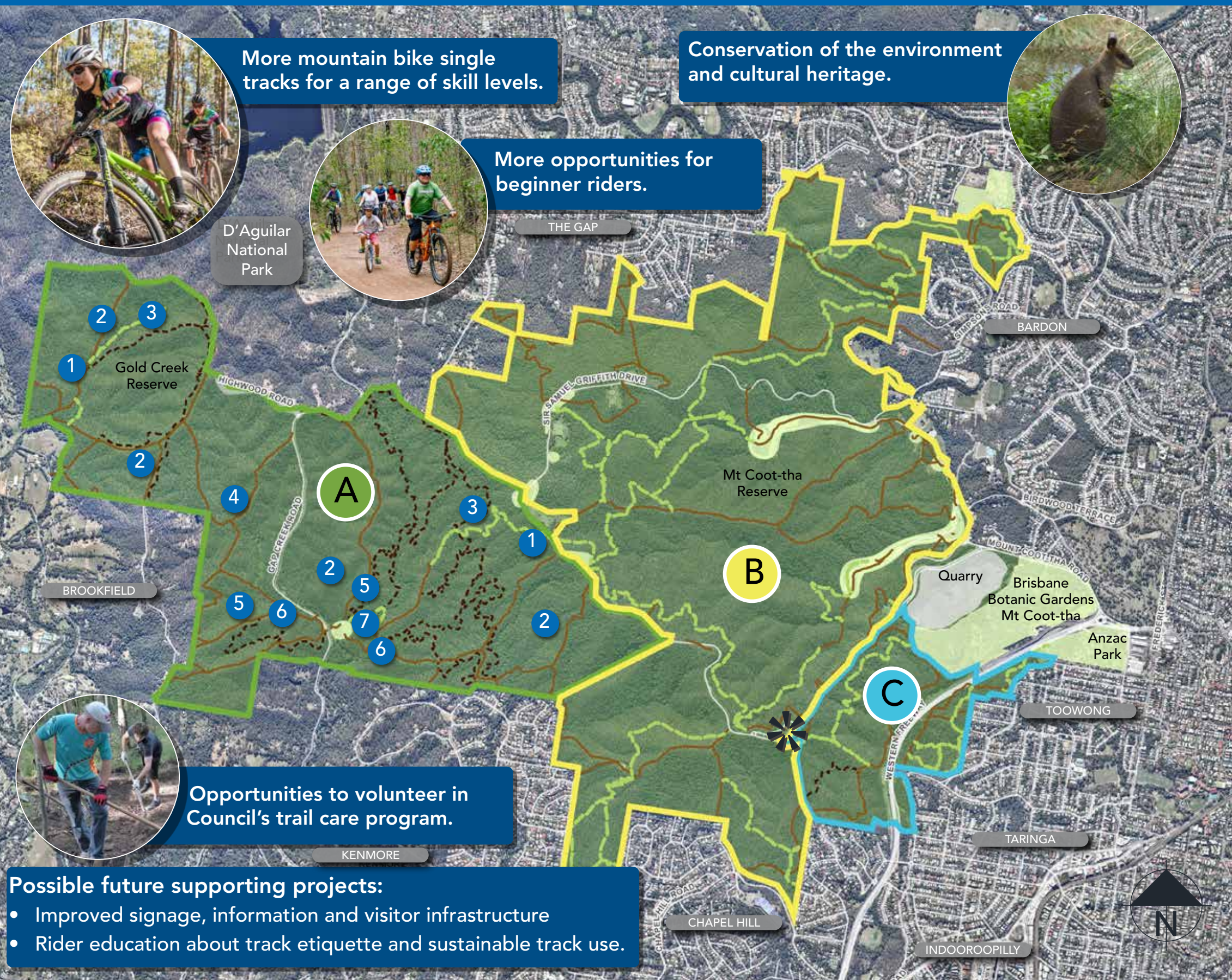
Council will progress the opportunities identified in the plan on an annual rolling program. Delivery of these on-ground projects will be subject to detailed assessment and design to a level appropriate for each project and the annual budget process. Depending on the project, Council may engage key stakeholders and the broader community further.



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LEGEND

- Reserves
- Existing mountain bike tracks
- Existing walking tracks
- Existing shared use tracks
- Mt Coot-tha Summit lookout
- Picnic areas

A Area for future mountain bike tracks, opportunities and facilities

- New mountain bike tracks may partially align with some sections of existing unauthorised tracks not built by Council.
- Any new mountain bike tracks will be built to recognised standards and include an assessment of ecological, cultural heritage and other values.

B Area for walking and shared use tracks

- Mountain bike access trail linkages will be explored.
- Mountain bike tracks not built by Council will be identified and habitat restored.

C Area for walking and mountain bike riding

- Citiodora Trail will remain open to off-road cycling and walking, providing shared use linkages.
- Some shared use tracks will become walking only to improve visitor safety.
- Frogmouth Trail will remain open to mountain biking.
- Mountain bike tracks not built by Council will be closed and habitat restored.

Reserve wide action

Mountain bike access trail linkages will be explored.

Possible future opportunities

- 1 Provide mountain bike tracks and features for adaptive mountain bike riders.
- 2 Provide a diversity of mountain bike tracks and opportunities for a range of riding skill levels.
- 3 Convert selected two-way mountain bike tracks to one-way.
- 4 Establish links between the Gap Creek Picnic Area and Gold Creek Reserve.
- 5 Establish mountain bike tracks for beginner mountain bike riders.
- 6 Provide new mountain bike tracks with features to build mountain bike riding skills.
- 7 Construct a mountain bike skills track within the Gap Creek Picnic Area.

Possible future supporting projects:

- Improved signage, information and visitor infrastructure
- Rider education about track etiquette and sustainable track use.

- See Mt Coot-tha Track Map for existing track details, visit brisbane.qld.gov.au
- All shared use tracks can be used by mountain bikes but check for riding safety.
- All possible future mountain bike facilities are subject to detailed assessment, design and budget.
- Environmental and cultural heritage values will be protected as a priority.

* Locations shown on the concept plan are approximate areas only.

NOTE: Plan not to scale