

# ALBURY MOUNTAIN BIKE STRATEGY

May 2021





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Prepared by Common Ground Trails Pty Ltd for AlburyCity council

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors of the Albury MTB Strategy respectfully acknowledge that the project area is Wiradjuri Country, and that the Wiradjuri people are the traditional custodians who have a rich social, spiritual and historical connection to this country, which is as strong today, as it was in the past.

Common Ground Trails wishes to acknowledge the significant contribution of the project steering committee as well as the valuable input from, stakeholders, organisation representatives, users and individuals.

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Cover image: Riding the trails on Nail Can Hill. Image credit: Visit Albury Wodonga

This page: View from Nail Can Hill. Image credit: Visit Albury Wodonga

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Albury landscape is diverse and offers potential for a variety of accessible experiences for mountain biking. AlburyCity has identified that mountain biking is a growing sport locally and are looking to ensure trail and facility development is undertaken in a sustainable way. The ranges that surround AlburyCity offer significant opportunity for development of a unique mountain biking experience that builds on what the locals already love and has potential to attract riders to visit and live in the City.

The key objective for this project is to ensure sustainable development of trails in the region which meets the identified demand. The strategy will be an important tool for land managers, will help provide management guidance for sensitive landscapes and will inform sustainable trail development. Nail Can Hill is the primary destination for mountain bikers currently and the reserve, which is Albury's premier bushland reserve with significant environmental and cultural heritage values, is seeing increasing pressure and impacts from unsanctioned trail building and traffic volumes.

The focus of this strategy has been to understand:

- The characteristics of a sustainable mountain bike development
- Local and broader trends in mountain bike trail and facility provision
- The local rider profile and desires in terms of trail styles
- The potential within the Albury landscape to provide sustainable and engaging mountain bike experiences with the intention of taking pressure off Nail Can Hill trails.

### CREATING A SUSTAINABLE MOUNTAIN BIKE DEVELOPMENT

To create successful and sustainable mountain bike development the following key characteristics are required:

- It provides **benefits** to individuals, the community and the region;
- It is **suited to the market** and user cohorts;
- It is a **suitable scale** of development for the intended significance;
- Has an **effective governance** model;
- Is made up of **suitable trail types** for the users and terrain;
- Follows **sustainable** trail design and construction principles;
- **Minimises impacts** to cultural heritage and environmental values
- Is supported by other **facilities**, including facilities for skills progression;
- Is **up to date** with current and emerging trends.

### ALBURY REGION POTENTIAL

Albury has an established community of riders who ride locally and further afield regularly. Nail Can Hill and Hunchback Hill (in Wodonga) are the key trail networks locally which are complimented by a range of smaller mountain bike facilities including pump tracks and skills tracks. A broad assessment of the Albury landscape highlighted significant potential for development of a suite of mountain bike trails and facilities which provide for a diversity of trails, riding styles and abilities. The Albury landscape also contains significant ecological and cultural heritage values which have been factored into assessment of opportunities. With strategic development of mountain bike trails and facilities ecological and cultural values can be both protected and enhanced.

### GAP ANALYSIS

Engagement with key stakeholders, riders and the broader community highlighted a range of gaps in the current situation including:

- Limited opportunities for rider entry into mountain biking and progression
- Quantity of trail and facilities insufficient, placing increased pressure on what is available
- Lack of diversity in trail styles and facilities
- Insufficient support infrastructure such as car parking, event spaces, signage.
- A need for refined and strategic approach to governance and planning
- Missed opportunities to tap into the growing cycle tourism market



## VISION

Albury will be a vibrant hub of mountain biking activity and a must ride destination for locals and visitors alike. The region's unique attributes will provide a diverse suite of sustainable riding opportunities while recognising and respecting ecological and cultural values.

It is recommended that Albury focus on getting the mountain bike offer right for locals first including provision of the right mix of trails and facilities and nurturing further development of a vibrant and welcoming riding community. This community combined with quality trail developments will quickly establish Albury as a must visit destination for riders enabling capitalisation on tourism potential.

A focus on ensuring the protection and enhancement of environmental and cultural heritage values should also be a priority.

## OBJECTIVES

In achieving this vision four key objectives have been defined to help focus priorities:

### PROTECTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL VALUES

Ensure trail development minimises impacts and where possible improves existing values.

### QUALITY TRAILS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

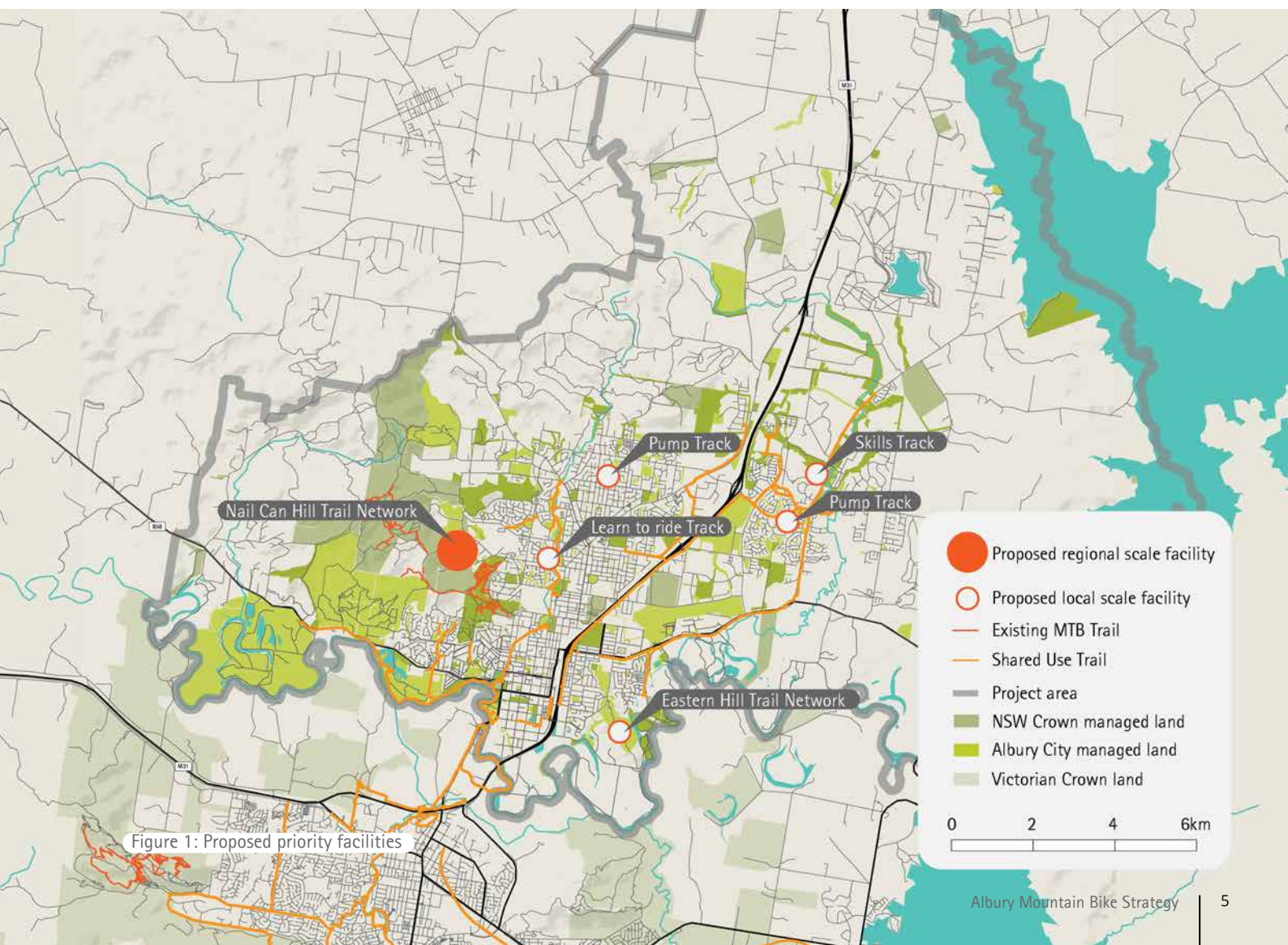
Develop a suite of sustainable mountain bike experiences which respond to identified demand and current trends.

### COLLABORATION & COMMUNITY

Strengthen the mountain biking community and foster strong connections between key stakeholders

### PLANNING & MANAGEMENT

Establish sustainable governance and management models



## OBJECTIVE 1 – PROTECTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL VALUES

The first objective is aimed at ensuring trail development wherever possible avoids and minimises impacts to cultural and environmental values. Where possible trail development should aim to improve existing values through targeted restoration and rehabilitation programs.

As part of all trail development projects assessment of existing environmental and cultural heritage values should be undertaken as a first step. Assessment for environmental significance allows identified areas to either be avoided or addressed through trail design and construction strategies that minimise environmental impact.

Maintaining heritage values and places is a vital part of the community's sense of place, cultural identity and wellbeing. Trail planning should seek to protect heritage, which may mean avoiding sites, interpreting sites or planning trails with the least disturbance.

Once trails and facilities are established it is critical that ongoing maintenance and management continues to address protection and enhancement of environmental and cultural values through appropriate regular maintenance of trails and restoration and rehabilitation.

## OBJECTIVE 2 – QUALITY TRAILS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Four key opportunities have been identified as priorities for mountain bike trail and facility development in Albury. These key developments will provide a core suite of diverse riding experiences which will engage local riders and entice visitors. Refer to Figure 1 for location of proposed facilities.

The implementation plan at the end of this strategy outlines next steps and provides indicative costs for each priority project.

### NAIL CAN HILL TRAIL NETWORK

**Style/type of trails:** All Mountain, Down Hill, Cross Country

**Rationale:** The terrain on offer within Nail Can Hill Reserve presents the most exciting opportunity within Albury for the development of trail styles which will meet the identified rider demand.

### EASTERN HILL TRAIL NETWORK

**Style/type of trails:** Flow, cross country

**Rationale:** Eastern Hill provides opportunity for a small scale trail network that complements the offer at Nail Can Hill with different trail styles. This will not only provide a local opportunity for East Albury residents, but also reduce pressure on the Nail Can Hill Network

### LOCAL SCALE FACILITIES

**Style/type of trails:** Local scale facilities

**Rationale:** The scale of AlburyCity LGA means small local scale facilities which provide for local catchments are required to ensure equitable access for residents across the region. These facilities also offer opportunities to create a diverse suite of facilities across the City, each with a different focus.

### COMMUNITY MANAGED JUMPS PARK

**Style/type of trails:** Jump Track

**Rationale:** Further diversifying the mountain biking offer jump parks provide opportunity for expression and creativity. There is also opportunity for riding community involvement in the design, construction and maintenance of the facility.



### OBJECTIVE 3 – COLLABORATION & COMMUNITY

Achieving the vision will require strengthening of key partnerships in particular between AlburyCity and Wodonga City (Two Cities One Community). Promoting the Albury Wodonga mountain biking offer as a whole and ensuring a consistent approach to planning, and management will fast track the success of the region as a mountain bike destination.

Fostering a vibrant riding community will involve maximising opportunities for education and training including skill development (trail maintenance and riding competency) and supporting local trail related businesses. Education should also have a focus on highlighting for the riding community the impacts of illegal trail building and the need to support appropriate trail development processes. Encouraging collaboration between community groups such as Friends of Nail Can Hill and the Albury Wodonga MTB Club will help to engage and educate locals in trail culture and environmental stewardship.

### OBJECTIVE 4 – PLANNING & MANAGEMENT

Successful mountain biking development requires effective and efficient governance and management structures. It is recommended that a range of different management models be investigated especially for proposed development which occur across multiple tenures/land managers. Equally as critical is ensuring a thorough and consistent planning and design approach which will help ensure ecological and cultural heritage values are protected and enhanced.

### ECONOMIC IMPACT

Mountain biking offers communities significant social and economic benefits. With successful delivery of the recommendations outlined in this strategy Albury is well placed to see these benefits realised. The estimated potential direct economic impact for the Albury Wodonga Region should the priority projects be fully realised is \$7.4 million annually.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Strategy has identified 37 actions aligned against the four objectives, these actions outline how each objective will be achieved and assigns a priority for implementation. Short term actions have a focus on providing trails and facilities that meet the identified demand and ensuring governance and management approach are effective and sustainable. Through providing facilities that respond to identified demand and current trends and implementing appropriate management structures to ensure effective ongoing management of those facilities, there will be less incentive for locals to continue building unsanctioned trails. Consideration of environmental and cultural heritage values throughout the trail planning design and construction process will ensure that impacts are minimised.

### IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation plan identifies the next steps required to progress the identified priority trail infrastructure recommendations and outlines agency/group responsible for implementation. In addition indicative costs have been provided against trail development phases outlined in the Australian Mountain Bike Management Guidelines.



Nail Can Hill Image source: <https://www.singletracks.com/>

## INTRODUCTION

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Albury landscape is diverse and offers potential for a variety of accessible experiences for mountain biking. AlburyCity has identified that mountain biking is a growing sport locally and are looking to ensure trail and facility development is undertaken in a sustainable way. The aim of this project is to establish a vision and strategy for the provision of mountain bike trails and facilities throughout the City. Refer to Figure 2 for project area.

### KEY OBJECTIVES

The key objective for this project is to ensure sustainable development of trails in the region which meets the identified demand. The strategy will be an important tool for land managers, will help provide management guidance for sensitive landscapes and will inform sustainable trail development.

The mountain bike strategy for AlburyCity will provide recommendations that:

- Consider the social and community values associated with mountain bike riding in the area;
- Are environmentally sensitive and sustainable;
- Provides best practice and cost-effective construction/maintenance recommendations;
- Considers land tenure complexity, and streamlines assessments and statutory approvals;
- Explores opportunities for economic benefit associated with mountain bike tourism;
- Provides community benefit and engagement; and,
- Clearly defines deliverables/actions that can be included in future works programs.

### METHODOLOGY

To establish mountain biking as a sustainable activity in Albury the following methodology was engaged:

#### PROJECT DEFINITION

In consultation with AlburyCity establish the project's key objectives, goals and aspirations. Relevant trends and facility development nationally and internationally were benchmarked for their characteristics and relevant literature reviewed.

#### STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Consultation was an integral component of the Strategy preparation. Stakeholder and Community input assisted in identifying and determining AlburyCity's long-term vision for mountain biking.

#### TRAILS AUDIT AND DETAILED GAP ANALYSIS

On the ground audit of existing trails and facilities locally and regionally including assessment of associated infrastructure and marketing to establish the current situation. Review current trail supply against demand and relevant trends and rider markets.

#### CONSTRAINT DEFINITION AND OPPORTUNITY PLANNING

Identified and reviewed AlburyCity's opportunities and constraints including potential facilities, existing trails and social, cultural, environmental and physical constraints.

#### STRATEGY PREPARATION

Documentation of recommendations and implementation plan.



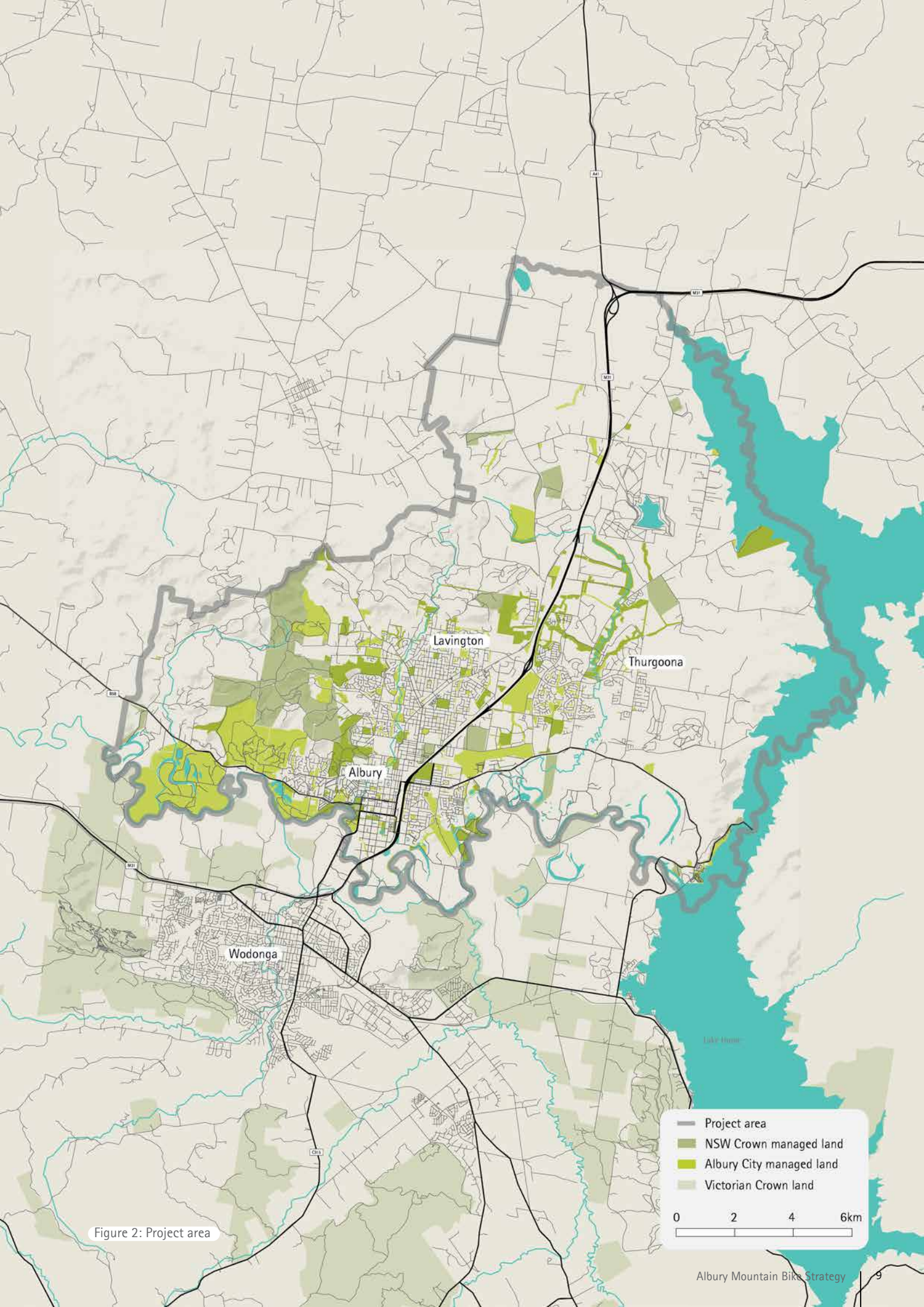


Figure 2: Project area

## MOUNTAIN BIKING INDUSTRY

Mountain Biking is an activity with increasing participation rates worldwide. Mountain biking encompasses a broad spectrum of activities ranging from Olympic and Commonwealth Games level cross-country racing, competition downhill and extreme events, to school sport programs and recreational trail riding at levels from novice to experienced. Mountain biking is a diverse activity that can be performed almost anywhere from a backyard to a gravel road but is essentially about riding specialised bikes on purpose-built trails.

### BENEFITS OF MOUNTAIN BIKING

It is widely recognised that participation in activities in the outdoors is beneficial for general wellbeing. There are recognised physical, social and emotional benefits in participation in mountain biking. It is a fun, cheap (after initial outlay costs) and has minimal impacts on the environment. Once mastered, mountain biking is an easy activity to participate in and can be as intense a workout, or challenge, as is desired. Individual, community and regional benefits are outlined below.

#### INDIVIDUAL BENEFITS

Mountain biking is an accessible, unbiased and inclusive activity that appeals to a range of diverse demographics and backgrounds. Mountain biking facilities prompt kids, youth and adults to get outside and engage with open spaces and gain many known mental and physical health benefits including:

- Providing stress relief and mental health benefits
- Full body workout, burning calories and improving agility and flexibility
- Improve balance and coordination
- Encourage kids and youth to learn patience, practice, persistence and self-motivation
- Promote fun forms of self-expression that helps to generate creativity and freedom
- Teach precision, skill and courage.
- Encourage self-determination and the value of risk for reward.
- Provide a sense of achievement from working toward a goal by learning or perfecting a new technique
- Unlike a team sport you can participate on your own, set your own goals and measure your individual progression.
- Generally within MTB communities there is an inclusive and supportive culture of natural teaching where youth can build social skills, learning etiquette and respect from older riders.

#### COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Mountain biking can provide action, performance, creativity and culture in a community. MTB Facilities have economic benefits and can activate space.

- MTB facilities attract people to public spaces, which helps to make them safer through increasing natural and passive surveillance throughout the day and night.
- MTB facilities such as pump tracks and learn to ride tracks are complimentary to other community infrastructure such as skate parks, playgrounds and basketball courts for example
- MTB facility development can also have positive sustainable impacts on the environment by improving ecosystems through revegetation and water sensitive urban design (WSUD).
- Urban MTB facilities can be less expensive to construct, easier to maintain and take up less space than more structured sports facilities such as football, soccer, tennis or basketball. They also typically see high volumes of use throughout the day and night.
- MTB race events provide a chance for community members not wanting to ride, to get involved through volunteering opportunities.

#### REGIONAL BENEFITS

Mountain biking can increase tourism and provide social and economic benefits on a regional scale.

- Well-designed facilities can build a reputation and entice visitors from outside the region. These spaces can enable connection between the broader MTB community
- Competitions and events can bring competitors and spectators to the region together with the associated economic benefits in terms of accommodation, food and ancillary experiences.



## MOUNTAIN BIKING MARKET OVERVIEW

Mountain bikers come from a variety of backgrounds and can generally be categorised according to whether riding was their primary motivation for travel or as an incidental activity. There are three distinct mountain bike markets that include locals, 'destination trail users' and 'trail users while on holiday'.

### LOCAL USER MARKET

Trails are key attractions for international and domestic visitors looking for quality nature-based experiences. Equally important are the local users, many of whom have worked hard to drive the development of trails so others may enjoy them and without whose efforts many trails would not exist. The local trail user market includes trail users who reside in or near Albury. This market is spread across the Albury Wodonga region. There is potential for sustainable growth in participation within the local trail user markets through ensuring appropriate and sufficient trails are provided and community volunteer sporting and trail care groups are encouraged and supported.

### DESTINATION TRAIL USER MARKET

The destination trail user market includes experienced trail users who regularly travel with the trails as a primary motivator. They have likely visited other Australian or international mountain bike destinations. They seek high quality trails with good supporting infrastructure in scenic / natural locations. These users are usually found in trails destinations and seek good terrain. Locations that combine desirable terrain with tourist activities and infrastructure have the best market appeal for destination trail users. This group also includes event participants who travel to a destination specifically for the event, typically spending additional time pre or post event to explore the area.

Successfully targeting the destination trail users market involves careful consideration and investment/delivery in the following key areas;

- High quality trails that respond to the local terrain
- Unique and iconic environments and experiences
- Significant quantity of trail
- A good proportion of intermediate to advanced classified trails
- Access to a variety of other appealing non-riding activities
- Access to a good range of accommodation and food and beverage opportunities.

### TRAIL USERS WHILE ON HOLIDAYS MARKET

The trail users while on holidays market includes typically less experienced riders, whose primary motivator for travel is not the trails. They generally comprise the leisure market and represent the largest market potential. This market view mountain biking as a secondary motivation for their visit and will participate in mountain biking incidentally. They will likely hire equipment as required. They may place less emphasis on the trail and more on accessibility of the facility, the setting and nearby attractions and amenities. These users are usually found in 'holiday' destinations and are seeking a unique holiday experience, relating to either culture, nature, cities, comfort, leisure, cafes/restaurants etc. Locations that combine these tourist attractions with trail opportunities have the best market appeal for this market segment.

Successfully targeting the trail user while on holiday market involves careful consideration and investment/delivery in the following key areas;

- High-quality beginner-friendly trails
- A structured and natural progression in difficulty through trail types
- Provision of smoother flow style trails which suit a wider variety of MTB cohorts
- Access to high-quality hire bikes
- Comprehensive wayfinding strategy including readily accessible trail information and easily interpreted trail signage

## MOUNTAIN BIKING MARKET MOTIVATORS

The needs of the various markets are different and need to be considered when developing a location. Depending on the type, different motivators and experiences will be placed as the primary decisions for engaging in mountain biking. Different rider types are driven by varying motivators, depending on whether they are undertaking travel or riding for recreation. Generally, known primary motivators that are controllable factors which influence a riders destination choice include:

**Diversity** – A large quantity and variety of trail types and classifications located in varied terrain and topography.

**Uniqueness** – Iconic, memorable and fun experiences in a unique setting. Typically in a natural landscape, with high visual and emotional value and often connected to an attraction.

**Quality** – A range of high-quality experiences, predominantly on purpose designed track. Also relates to the provision of quality information, services and infrastructure.

**Accessibility** – Trails located within close proximity of residences and short stay accommodation. Also relates to the provision of cohesive, well signed, mapped and promoted trails. Connectivity to other trails, transport, services and infrastructure increase accessibility from the trails. Visitor services to improve accessibility for less experienced users.

**Community** – An established user group community offering market credibility, a sense of belonging and camaraderie through events, volunteer support and social engagement.

## TRAIL SIGNIFICANCE

Mountain biking developments can be categorised according to their significance. Typically significance is outlined as national, regional or local.

### NATIONAL

A mountain bike facility designed for a large population centre and/or a tourism resource that caters for at least a week of unique riding opportunities. Nationally significant locations capture the tourism market for at least a week of unique riding and can provide a large recreation resource for a major population centre. They are developed to cater for international, interstate and intrastate tourism as a priority and facilities fall within a 20- 25km zone. Trail development is focused around a primary trail town model and can include trail centres, networks or individual trails as part of the hub. Excluding long distance trails, locations should contain over 80km of trail with the majority being singletrack, forming at least four major loops. Locations of national significance should develop all trail types and classifications where appropriate. These locations will experience very high demand and should provide a high level of services and infrastructure to riders, and also have the ability to cater for major international and national events.

### REGIONAL

A mountain bike facility for a small population centre or large community and/or a tourism resource that caters for short breaks or weekend trips. Regionally significant locations cater for small population centres or large communities and/or tourism resources that cater for short breaks or weekend trips. Facilities should be developed within a 15-20km zone and be focused around a primary trail centre or trail town model. They provide a minimum level of service and infrastructure and can host national and regional events. Excluding long distance trails, regionally significant locations contain at least 20km of trail with the majority being singletrack, forming at least two major loops. Locations of regional significance should encompass broad trail types and classifications. Regional locations will see demand for trails from surrounding nationally significant locations.

### LOCAL

A mountain bike facility for a small community and/or a tourism resource that caters for day trips. Locally significant locations cater for community-based trail use with tourism demand limited to day visits. Facilities are developed within a 10- 15km zone from population centres unless servicing existing recreation and camp sites, or significant population centres where alternate opportunities do not exist. Locally significant locations can develop around the trail town and trail centre models but can also be standalone individual and networked trail systems. They contain limited services and infrastructure but can still host events. Excluding long distance trails, up to 20km of trail may be developed with the majority being singletrack forming at least two loops. Locations of local significance may develop limited trail types and classifications and can expect demand from surrounding regionally and nationally significant locations.



## TRAIL NETWORK PLANNING AND GOVERNANCE

Ensuring sustainable trails both from a management and trail experience perspective requires a thorough development process. Working within a standardised methodology is especially important in high conservation areas and building rigor into the development process ensures high quality outcomes on the ground. The recommended development process involves 8 stages and involves a constant evaluation, review and improvement process as trails are extended or revised. The diagram in Figure 3 below provides a summary of the trail development process outlined in the Australian Mountain Bike Development Guidelines 2020<sup>1</sup>. Land owner consent for trail development is required from the outset and ongoing direct consultation with land owner is essential.

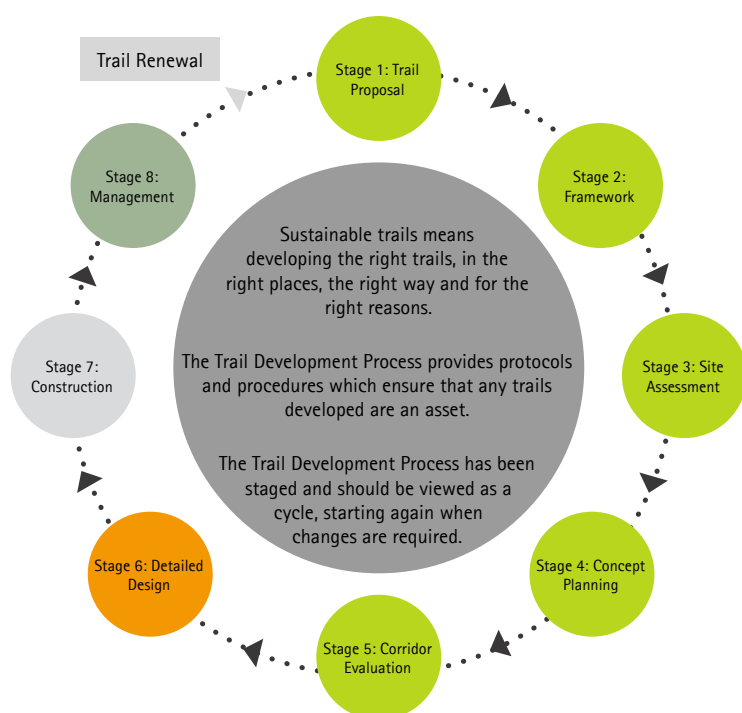


Figure 3: Recommended trail development process

Key to the sustainability and longevity of any trail development is an effective and efficient governance and management structure. Given the range of stakeholders with an interest in trails, it is important to ensure management arrangements have broad representation and a willingness by all parties to accept some level of responsibility. To ensure these roles and responsibilities are understood and carried out to a high standard, a governance hierarchy should be formally adopted by all relevant stakeholders.

Characteristics of effective governance models include<sup>2</sup>:

- Structure and accountability which is clear and simple to implement in the long term
- Clearly defined and allocated responsibilities and authority for each stakeholder in the model
- A focus on ensuring quality visitor experience, product development and marketing
- Robust range of funding sources with revenue raising avenues established to ensure cash flow and enable self generated investment into maintaining and enhancing trails, facilities and services.
- Risk management protocols and processes are considered and implemented to reduce risks to staff, volunteers and trail users.
- Direct liaison and involvement of user and community groups to build support within the local community.

In Australia a variety of arrangements have been implemented for governance and management of mountain bike trails. In general, these arrangements fall into three broad categories:

- Sole agency management
- Variety of public/private partnership structures
- Private arrangements.

These broad governance structures and their advantages and disadvantages are described in Table 1.

In practice there is no set governance model that is best suited to a particular trail type, the sustainable management of a trail and its success as a community, tourism and economic resource also depends on<sup>2</sup>:

- The context of the specific trail – such as land tenure, trail development history, management issues and the agencies, landholders and stakeholders involved
- The way local governance and business structures and associated personnel operate in practice
- Operating environment – such as state and local government legislation, policies, planning frameworks and institutional arrangements; community and tourism industry engagement and support; sources of funding and expertise; marketing and promotion arrangements.

A variety of development and management models need to be given further consideration to ensure sustainable growth of the Albury Region as a mountain bike destination. See Table 1 for a comparison of possible management models. Consistent with the experience of successful trail models worldwide, the following revenue models could also be investigated during the planning stages to ensure sustainable management is achievable:

- Vehicle parking fees
- Shuttle uplift user fees
- Lease of space to commercial operators
- Café, retail and/or rental income

Note at this stage charging is not considered feasible or practical for AlburyCity managed facilities.

Table 1: Management model comparison

	PUBLIC	PARTNERSHIPS	PRIVATE
DESCRIPTION	<p>Government agency (Federal/ State/ local) has sole management responsibility of the trail facility.</p> <p>Ultimate responsibility lies with the governing agency.</p> <p>Commercial and event operators may contribute financially to the management of trails through license arrangements.</p> <p>Volunteers may contribute to the management of trails.</p>	<p>Multiple stakeholders share management responsibility of the trail facility.</p> <p>Partners could include non-government incorporated agencies, such as peak bodies, state government bodies, private bodies, foundations or trusts, and volunteer mountain bike bodies.</p> <p>Volunteers may contribute to the management of trails.</p>	<p>Private land owner has sole management responsibility of the trail facility on their land</p>
ADVANTAGES	<p>Clarity on roles, responsibilities</p> <p>Enables possibility of quick clear decision making</p> <p>Operational budgets and staff resources</p> <p>Consistent approach to development processes and standards.</p>	<p>Leverage a broad support base for maintenance, development, funding, events and promotion.</p> <p>Multiple funding contributors.</p> <p>Risk can be shared.</p> <p>Funding can come from a range of partners.</p> <p>Single management entity to take responsibility on behalf of stakeholders.</p>	<p>No political interference with decision making.</p> <p>Can be flexible and responsive to market preferences and trends.</p> <p>Can provide a specific and unique experience to fill a gap without consideration of broader priorities.</p>
DISADVANTAGES	<p>Maintaining the status quo will mean limitations on resourcing.</p> <p>Ability to leverage investment and community support may be limited.</p> <p>Political pressures and agency wide priorities lead to uncoordinated priorities.</p> <p>Grants not always available to government bodies.</p>	<p>Effectiveness depends on the operation of the partnership and access to resources.</p> <p>Potential for political pressures to influence decision-making.</p> <p>Roles and responsibilities need to be clearly defined</p>	<p>Decisions can be made, such as trail closures, with no public consultation.</p> <p>Caters to a limited market.</p>



## TRAIL NETWORK USER COHORTS

Trail type defines the style of trail and its typical attributes, different trail types suit different styles of riding and typically each trail type will have a specific kind of mountain bike designed to suit. Different cohorts use different types of trails and all trail types can have varying classifications. Trail types include Cross Country, All Mountain, Downhill, Freeride, Park and Touring.

Understanding the various trail users and trail cohorts needs, expectations and requirements is essential in ensuring the long term sustainability of trails. Mountain bikers are generally divided into the cohorts outlined in Table 2 each with differing trail requirements and expectations. Each cohort has differing trail type requirements, however there are also numerous overlaps between some segments. Different cohorts also have different barriers to entry and require different levels of trail user friendliness.

Table 2: Mountain bike user cohort descriptions

USER COHORT	DESCRIPTION	MARKET POTENTIAL
Leisure/ General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General cyclists of all ages and abilities</li> <li>Limited skills</li> <li>Seeking highly accessible routes with accessible facilities and services (i.e. bike hire, cafes and toilets)</li> </ul>	Large
Enthusiast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Predominantly recreational riders</li> <li>Aged between 29–60 and form the existing market majority</li> <li>Moderate skills and ride weekly</li> <li>Most likely to travel for cycling as a primary purpose</li> </ul>	Large
Sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Competitive cyclists participating in events for formal, structured activity such as group touring</li> <li>Usually members of a cycling club</li> <li>Highly skilled and looking for skill development trails and networks</li> </ul>	Small (but influential)
Independent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Travel as a solo rider to undertake a range of riding experiences</li> <li>Likely to engage in end-to-end trail experiences/adventure trails</li> <li>May interact with local riding clubs, more so as a means of finding out about trails rather than seeking group riding experiences</li> </ul>	Moderate
Gravity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highly skilled technical riders who seek very challenging trails</li> <li>Typically ride at least once a week and are often members of clubs</li> <li>They represent a small market that requires purpose-built trails, which are repeatedly used in a concentrated manner</li> <li>Gravity riders seek specific trails with the highest classifications</li> </ul>	Small

## TRAIL TYPES

There are a range of trail types which cater to the range of user cohorts identified above. Trails come in a variety of types and configurations as defined below and are defined by their model, system, use, direction and classification. Trail systems define a trail's connectivity and its relationship to other trails. Trails can be linear, looped or networked together. Lastly, trails can be developed to accommodate multiple trail user groups or exclusively for a single user group.

### CROSS COUNTRY

Primarily singletrack, with a combination of climbing and descending trails and natural trail features of varying technicality. They appeal to the majority market and are suitable for timed competitive events. Cross country trails can include cyclocross tracks.

### ALL MOUNTAIN

Similar to cross country, primarily singletrack with greater emphasis on technical descents and non-technical climbs. All mountain trails are suitable for timed competitive events.

### DOWNHILL OR GRAVITY

Descent only trails with an emphasis on speed and technical challenge. They appeal to more experienced riders; however lower-classification trails are emerging to cater for all experience levels. Downhill trails usually require shuttle uplift to the trailhead via chairlift or vehicle shuttle. These trails are suitable for timed competitive racing.

### FREERIDE

Descent focused trails with an emphasis on technical challenge and skill development. Trails feature both built and natural technical features with a focus on drops and jumps. Appeals to more experienced riders and caters for competitions judging manoeuvres and skills.

### ACCESSIBILITY & ADAPTIVE TRAILS

Mountain biking has become more and more inclusive over recent years with an expansion in adaptive bikes. These adaptive bikes include trike bikes, hand bikes and wheelchair bikes for differently abled riders. They do however require a certain type of trail to be ridden. Steering will vary depending on the type of equipment but is typically achieved through standard handlebars or hand cranks that manoeuvre the front wheels.

At a national level, Break the Boundary, advocates for accessibility and inclusion of people with physical and neurological disabilities in Mountain Biking and provides information on adaptive trails in Australia.












Trail type precedent images



## TRAIL CLASSIFICATION

The Australian Mountain Bike Development Guidelines 2020<sup>1</sup> outline the following Trail Difficulty Rating System which should be applied to trail developments.

Difficulty rating	Short description
 <b>Very Easy</b> White Circle	Wide trail with a gentle gradient smooth surface and no obstacles Suitable for beginner cyclists with basic bike skills, and most bikes.
 <b>Easy</b> Green Circle	Wide trail with a gentle gradient smooth surface Some obstacles such as roots, logs and rocks Suitable for beginner cyclists with basic mountain bike skills, and off-road bikes
 <b>Easy/Intermediate</b> Green/Blue Circle	Likely to be single track with a moderate gradient, variable surface and some obstacles Some obstacles such as roots, logs and rocks Suitable for mountain bikers with mountain bikes
 <b>Intermediate</b> Blue Square	Single trail with moderate gradients, variable surface and obstacles May include steep sections Suitable for skilled mountain bikers with mountain bikes
 <b>Intermediate/Difficult</b> Blue/Black Square	Suitable for competent mountain bikers, used to physically demanding routes Expect large and unavoidable obstacles and features Challenging and variable with some steep climbs or descents and loose surfaces
 <b>Difficult</b> Black Diamond	Suitable for experienced mountain bikers, used to physically demanding routes Navigation and personal survival skills are highly desirable Expect large, dangerous and unavoidable obstacles and features Challenging and variable with long steep climbs or descents and loose surfaces Some sections will be easier to walk
 <b>Extreme</b> Double Black Diamond	Suitable for highly experienced mountain bikers, used to physically demanding routes Navigation and personal survival skills are highly desirable Severe constructed trails and/ or natural features, all sections are challenging Includes extreme levels of exposure and / or risk Expect large and unavoidable obstacles and features Some sections will be easier to walk



## TRAIL NETWORK SUSTAINABILITY

The following trail design principles which are informed by international best practice mountain bike trail design should inform development of mountain bike trail networks in Albury:

- The trail network should be designed to avoid areas of high environmental and cultural significance. The largest environmental impact of any trail occurs when it is constructed, in the clearing of vegetation and displacement of habitat. Therefore, it is a general design principle that trails should be located away from areas of high environmental significance. Engaging qualified ecologists and heritage consultants early in the site assessment process ensures trails are located appropriately.
- Trail network design and facility provision should respond to the needs of identified rider cohorts expected in the area both local and visiting.
- The trail network design should make the most of the inherent features of the local terrain and topography. Trails should be sympathetic to the landscape, connecting trail users to the environment.
- The trail network design should consider other trail users in planning phases, dual use trails are appropriate in some cases however for the most part purpose designed single use trails are preferred as they provide for a higher quality trail experience for all trail users.
- Trails should be classified according to the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) Trail Difficulty Rating System
- The easiest trails should be located near the trailhead, with increasingly harder trails located further from the trailhead.
- Most trails should be designed to be ridden in one-direction only, with multi direction trails where appropriate. This principle ensures a good visitor experience and helps to manage risk. Multi direction trails require good sightlines and space for passing.
- The trail network should be easy to navigate and intuitive, supported by signage and maps.
- The trail network should maximise the use of any existing trails (if they provide the right experience and are sustainable).
- All trails should be designed and built to modern best-practice standards for sustainable trails. While there are no standards defining best practice, the work of the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) is generally accepted as best practice for sustainable trail construction. Sustainable trails have minimal ongoing environmental impacts and require minimal maintenance.

Broadly sustainable mountain biking development can provide the following environmental benefits:

- Well planned and managed trails increase access to natural areas for recreation whilst protecting environmental values.
- Trails increase community ownership and connection with natural areas, creating stewards for long term conservation outcomes.
- Strategic planning of mountain biking facilities to cater for the full spectrum of opportunities can prevent the development of user built unsanctioned trails in unsuitable environments.
- Passive surveillance provided by trail users can reduce antisocial behaviour and illegal dumping of waste in natural areas.

Growing populations are increasing pressure on land and biodiversity, impacting on air quality, water quality and significant environmental values. Creating opportunities in cities and urban areas for everyday interactions with nature provides an unparalleled opportunity to reconnect people with biodiversity. As tools for conservation, trails preserve important natural landscapes, provide needed links between fragmented habitats and offer opportunities for protecting plant and animal species.

The provision of well planned and managed mountain bike trails in natural areas, particularly in areas currently and forecast to experience high population growth and expansion, has the potential to positively contribute to conservation efforts and preservation of natural areas by minimising the building of illegal and unsanctioned trails.

## OTHER MOUNTAIN BIKE FACILITIES

Other mountain bike related facilities include pump tracks, jump tracks, skills tracks and learn to ride tracks these facilities appeal to a wide market including youth and typically have an emphasis on manoeuvres, skills and progression.

### PUMP TRACK

A pump track is a scaled down, 1–3 metre wide track that can be used for bicycle, skateboard, in-line skates and scooter riders to practice skills on a series of features, such as berms and rollers placed in quick succession. Simplistically they are scaled down BMX tracks which do not require pedalling.

'Pump' refers to the action made by riders pushing down with their arms and legs to manoeuvre the bike or board over features to maintain momentum without pedalling or pushing off the ground. Typically, tracks can be ridden continuously, and different combinations of features can be linked to provide a varied challenge.

Bike handling skills can be translated to other mountain bike tracks. Well-designed pump tracks cater for all abilities, with all features being rollable for beginners, and allowing for progression to pumping, and even jumping for more advanced riders.

Riding a pump track is easy and children are typically comfortable using them within 10–20 minutes. A well-designed pump track provides enough challenges to stay attractive for years, because the rollers and berms can be combined and transitioned in different directions, creating opportunity for skilled riders to do jumps and manoeuvres.

Pump tracks can be made from natural soil, hardened surfaces, wood, fibreglass, concrete or asphalt. Historically pump tracks were constructed from natural soil blends and required significant ongoing maintenance. More recently, world's best practice is tending toward lower maintenance surfacing techniques and materials, such as asphalt, which are inclusive for a larger user base of wheeled-sports including skateboarding, scooters, in-line skates and non off-road bikes.

### JUMP TRACK

Provision of jumps tracks is an inclusion allowing for progression for young people through to adults who seek an alternate and often more challenging experience than a pump track. Jumps are developed so that they allow for progression while always keeping safety in mind.

Featuring all types of jumps, including tabletops, gaps, step-ups, step-downs and hips, the aim is to link features so riders flow immediately from one to the next. Ideally, a rider will not have to brake between jumps.

Well-designed jump tracks offer a wide variety of challenges, from easy rollers to big jumps. A diversity of lines will allow riders to build their skills gradually and will create a park that is fun for all abilities. Typically, jump lines are arranged side by side in increasing difficulty, all starting at a common roll-in hill and travelling in the same direction.

Jump tracks are primarily constructed of soil, however, increasingly jump take offs and entire jump lines are being made from hardened surfaces, such as wood, concrete and asphalt. This significantly reduces ongoing maintenance and improves rideability.





## SKILLS TRACK

Skills tracks feature man made technical trail features that test the skills of a rider and allow them to try features that they may encounter on trails in the region. Typical features may include log rollovers, log rides, balance planks, rock drops and other technical features. They can also incorporate street features such as rails and wall rides, or freeride stunts like ladder bridges, skinnys, teeters and drops.

Importantly all features are built with progression allowing users to start small and build their confidence up to larger features. Successfully executed skills park areas feature a diverse range of materials and can look like well landscaped areas or 'nature play' areas with natural features such as timber, logs and rocks.

## LEARN TO RIDE / SAFETY TRACK

Learn to ride, also known as safety tracks, make learning road rules fun for young people on bikes and scooters.

A safety track features a miniature road network giving real life experiences while learning essential safety skills. Safety tracks are designed to enable reading traffic signals, crossing railways and school crossings, negotiating roundabouts and gutters, recognising traffic signs and line marking, and cycling on roads or footpaths.

Safety tracks are typically constructed using materials and features as they would be encountered in the real-world including asphalt and concrete combined with various line marking and road safety signage. To improve the enjoyment of these tracks, features like fuel stations and parking areas can be included for diversity.



## SUPPORTING FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Mountain biking trail networks and pump tracks need additional facilities to make them successful and to support the needs of the users of the trail/facility.

### TRAILHEADS

Trailheads typically fulfill a number of important functions:

- Is visible and provides a safe place to leave a car,
- Provides for needs of trail users – water, toilets, bins, information and car parking
- Encourages social interaction as the primary meeting place and entry/exit point for trail users
- Promotes positive use of the site through additional infrastructure such as seating, shelters, landscaping
- Is easily accessible and promoted to suit visitors of all mobility
- Provides all of the necessary trail information to plan an adventure suited to a range of abilities and desires

Trail heads require a range of infrastructure to meet these functions. Inclusions range from essential through to desirable or not essential and provision is dependent on budget and location. Trailheads are typically located at the access points to trail networks and there may be a need for a suite of different scale trailheads with the primary trailhead providing the bulk of services and sub trailheads facilitating alternate access points.

INFRASTRUCTURE	TRAILHEAD	SUB TRAILHEAD
Signage	●	●
Parking	●	●
Toilets	●	●
Seating and picnic tables	●	●
Shelter	●	●
Drinking Water	●	○
BBQ	●	○
Changerooms	●	○
Café/shop	●	○
Bike racks	○	○
Bike maintenance facilities	○	○

- Essential
- Desirable
- Not essential

In addition to trailhead facilities, to support a mountain biking club and build a mountain biking community, additional facilities such as clubrooms and event centres can help support running mountain biking events.

## TRENDS IN MOUNTAIN BIKING

### MOUNTAIN BIKE TECHNOLOGY

The primary influencing factor in defining the type of riding experience and desires of riders has been advancements in mountain bike technology. The current mountain bike market is dominated by longer travel, dual suspension mountain bikes, broadly referred to as all mountain, trail or enduro bicycles. This style of bike has allowed riders to explore more challenging, steeper and rockier terrain.

The rapid emergence of the E-bike recently is likely to have a significant impact on the sport moving forward. Terrain is becoming less of a barrier and the leisure cyclist can explore over longer distances with greater ease. With increased technology and affordability e-bikes are improving accessibility for all ages, particularly ensuring older age groups can remain active more often. Bike shops now include e-bikes in the bike hire range, most popular with holiday travellers, offering an option for them to trial the bikes before they purchase them.

### TRENDS IN INFRASTRUCTURE – TRAIL NETWORKS

Over the last ten years, trail networks and trail network design has been becoming more sophisticated. Trails that had previously grown over time with volunteers hand building trails, have begun to be built by councils, landowners and professional trail building companies. This has allowed more gravity flow trails to be built, as these trails are typically machine built.

Trail networks are also beginning to be built according to the IMBA standard, which ensures that drainage, gradient and erosion are considered in the design and build stages of the project, leading to more sustainable trail networks.

### TRENDS IN INFRASTRUCTURE – PUMP TRACKS

Pump track design and construction has also come a long way in the past few years. The main trend in pump track design is that larger scale facilities are being built, to accommodate a growth in demand for the sport. Additionally asphalt pump tracks are becoming more popular than natural surface. While a higher capital cost asphalt is a lower maintenance surface long term and can also be ridden in all weather and by multiple vehicle types including scooters.

### TRENDS OBSERVED AS A RESULT OF COVID-19

Several trends in mountain biking were observed as a result of Covid-19 restrictions and lockdown periods.

Workplaces, team sports, gyms and other sporting facilities, schools and traditional 'hang out' spaces including theatres and art centres closed. In addition, one of the few things people were able to do was to spend time outside with members of their household. Bike riding was suddenly in high demand. Mountain biking in particular saw a notable increase over this period of time.

More people sought time in nature to care for their physical and mental health. Time spent in nature provides proven mental health benefits, and mountain biking provides an opportunity to spend time in and connect to natural reserves. During Covid-19 there was an increase in people seeking ways to look after their physical and mental health by spending time in nature and local parklands.

Local reserves within lockdown zones saw increased pressure particularly those close to population centres. Where people may have typically driven to a mountain biking park on a weekend, they could no longer drive to these places, and so instead more people were exercising in natural spaces close to home.



## ALBURYCITY & CONTEXT

### ALBURYCITY DEMOGRAPHICS AND VISITATION

The AlburyCity Local Government Area has a population of 54,353 (2019) and is expected to grow to 67,427 by 2036<sup>3</sup>. The median age is 39 years with just over 60% of the population aged under 49 years.

Figure 4 below shows the predicted areas of population growth in the City over the next 15 years. Thurgoona is predicted to see significant growth increases (60-85%) for the overall population. While mountain biking is a sport loved by range of age groups the 5-17 age group is considered a key demographic in terms of provision of local facilities that facilitate entry into the sport and provide engaging spaces for youth to gather, play and learn. Figure 4 below shows the predicted change in population of 5-17 year old over the next 15 years. Thurgoona is predicted to see significant youth population growth (+1385) with Hamilton Valley and Glenroy also showing notable increases (+179 and +159 respectively). South Albury and East Albury are predicted to see a decline in youth population.

Albury Wodonga is marketed as 'an escape that's a world away from 'everyday life'. Given the current international travel restrictions the following look at the domestic tourism trends from 2019 provide a baseline for potential tourism statistics over the coming years. Visitor economy trends in 2019 indicated<sup>4</sup>:

- 830,000 overnight domestic visitors which was an increase of 30.7% from 2018.
- The primary purpose for domestic day visitors to Albury Wodonga was holiday or leisure for those staying overnight the primary purpose was visiting friends or relatives.
- Tourism attributed over \$1 billion to the local economy
- Overnight visitors stayed an average of 2.4 nights
- Season of visit for domestic overnight travellers was evenly spread over the four seasons, with slightly less in Summer and Winter.
- A third of visitors came from Melbourne
- Over the four years 2016 to 2019 44% of overnight visitor were aged between 15 and 44 years
- 14% of visitors noted nature, the outdoors and sports as their top activity while in the region

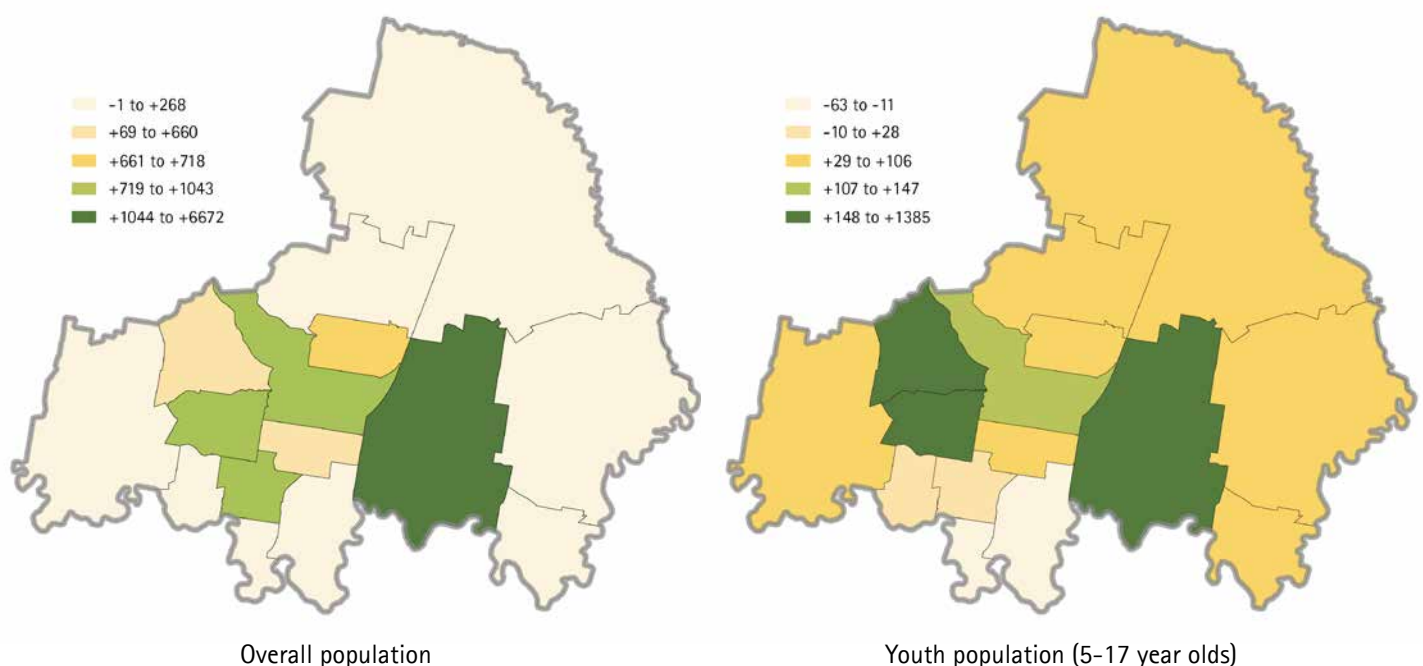


Figure 4: Predicted population growth to 2036 by number of persons<sup>3</sup>

## ALBURY ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES

Albury is located on the Murray River in the lower foothills of the Great Dividing Range. The City landscape is defined by distinct hills and ridge lines in the west which give way to the lower floodplains of the Murray River. A high proportion of remnant native vegetation occurs in locally managed reserves with significant planning over the years ensuring these reserves can provide suitable protection for the remaining biodiversity in the LGA.

Three broad vegetation types have been identified within the Albury LGA<sup>5</sup>: River Red Gum Forest, Box-Gum Grassy Woodland, and Box Gum Open Forest with the former two both classed as Threatened Ecological Communities (TEC) due to the historic clearing across the landscape. A landscape scale analysis of native vegetation condition (noting condition is dynamic and changes over time with climate, management and threats) within the City suggests a significant proportion of these communities are in high condition meaning these areas generally contain a rich understory of orchids (including the Crimson Spider Orchid which only occurs in a few locations across NSW and Victoria), forbs, grasses and shrubs which is rare in the south-west slopes region of NSW, and provides habitat for a number of native plants and animals. Figure 5 provides an overview of remnant vegetation types and condition.

The region supports a range of listed threatened fauna species including the endangered Sloane's Forglet which can be found on the floodplains of the Murray River, iconic local species such as the Squirrel Glider, Grey-headed Flying-fox and numerous woodland birds like the Turquoise Parrot, Speckled Warbler, Flame and Scarlet Robin and the critically endangered Swift Parrot and Regent Honeyeater. The ranges within Albury also provide for a rich diversity of reptile species including the threatened Pink-tailed Worm Lizard and Lace Monitor.

The reserve network in Albury is of critical importance in the protection of the environment and threatened species. Key locations include Nail Can Hill, Eastern Hill, the Environmental Lands Network (predominantly located in Thurgoona), the Murray River and floodplain, travelling stock reserves, roadsides and private land managed for conservation. The Murray River and local creek lines are an important link between the hills and the lowlands providing a critical landscape corridor providing linkages and habitat in urban and rural landscapes. Other landscape corridors evident in the City include roadsides, smaller waterways and the reserve network.

Prior to any recreational development in these reserves there needs to be a thorough process of desktop and on ground assessment of biodiversity and cultural values. This would include consultation with local experts, Aboriginal representatives, community groups and the wider community to ensure wherever possible the trail planning and design process avoids and minimised impacts on Albury's important biodiversity and cultural heritage.

Alongside the enhancement and development of mountain bike trail networks there is opportunity to implement a program of revegetation and restoration works, to rehabilitate areas of environmental damage caused by unsanctioned trail creation as well as enhancing reserve environments and improving the visitor experience for all users. A collaborative and coordinated approach between the AlburyCity, NSW Crown, Albury Wodonga Parklands and volunteers is recommended.

## ALBURY CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUES

Albury is Wiradjuri Country, the largest Aboriginal language group in NSW. Wiradjuri means 'people of the three rivers', these rivers being the Macquarie, Lachlan and Murrumbidgee. For the Wiradjuri people, the three rivers were their livelihood and supplied a variety of consistent and abundant food provisions. The Wiradjuri People lived a semi-nomadic lifestyle moving around in small family groups, using the river flats, open land and waterways<sup>6</sup>.

In Albury there are several places to engage with the history and culture of the Wiradjuri people and learn about the Traditional Custodians of the land.

The Albury LibraryMuseum contains a permanent exhibition – Wiradjuri Talkback. The exhibition explores the history of Wiradjuri Country and what it means to be Aboriginal in Albury Wodonga today. Exhibits include original artefacts, a preserved canoe scar tree, Riverina bark painting, hand tools and the stunning possum skin cloak worn at the 2008 National Apology.

Mungabareena Aboriginal Place is an important meeting place for contemporary Aboriginal people. The word 'Mungabareena' means meeting place. Near the Mungabareena Aboriginal Place many different groups of Aboriginal people gathered before travelling on to Mount Bogong to collect Bogong moths, which was an important food source. A Master Plan is being developed to sensitively activate the area guided by a management group.

The Wagirra Trail follows the Murray River and when completed, it will commence at the Wonga Wetlands and finish at the Mungabareena Aboriginal Place. Along the trail are important cultural sites. One such site includes the Yindyamarra Sculpture Walk, which features a series of contemporary Aboriginal sculptures that depict stories from the area.

Burraja Cultural Centre opened in 2002 and is located on Gateway Island in Wodonga. The premises is a cultural and information centre that is an essential part of the local community and is an expression of culture, arts, enterprise, training and community inclusion. Located in a prime tourism precinct, Burraja Cultural Centre provides a space where locals and visitors alike can learn more about the cultural heritage of Albury/Wodonga and the traditional custodians.



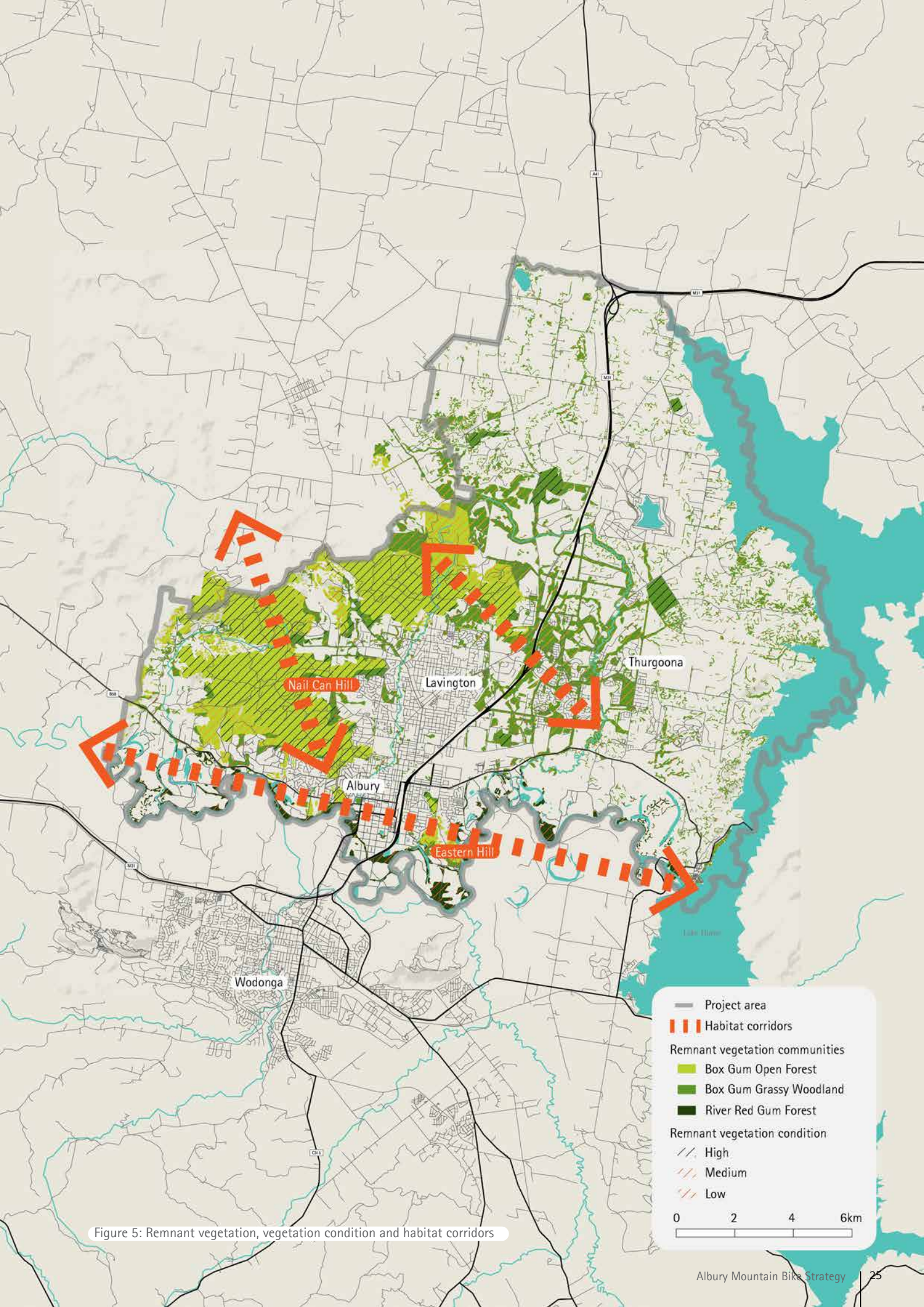


Figure 5: Remnant vegetation, vegetation condition and habitat corridors



## ALBURY MTB CLUBS AND COMMUNITY

### MOUNTAIN BIKING CLUB - THE ALBURY WODONGA MOUNTAIN BIKERS (AWMTB)

Albury/Wodonga has a very active and engaged membership base of approximately 200 members.

The club runs events at Nail Can Hill and will typically see between 200-300 participants for a race event. Gravity enduro events are the most popular events. Participants travel from as far away as Melbourne to take part in the events. The club also promotes diversity in the sport and runs several women-only bike riding rides and events.

The club organises maintenance days at trail networks (especially Nail Can Hill) and members of the club are keen to look after and maintain the trails. Maintenance of trails improves the sustainability of trails, encourages people to stick to sanctioned routes. In addition, AWMTB supports and promotes environmental values, responsible riding and trail maintenance. The club has been respectful of a recent hold on the maintenance of trails while the environmental and cultural heritage studies were conducted at Nail Can Hill.

AWMTB have also promoted 'Rules of the trail' on the Nail Can Hill entry on Trailforks (a popular Mountain Biking navigation app). The 'rules of the trail' help to educate a growing group of mountain bikers and promote a shared set of values to the broader MTB community.

The club actively discourages riding on private property and recent posts on their website reminds riders of where the private property is on Nail Can Hill and encourages riders to stick to the approved trail network. Posts on their Facebook page remind riders to wear protective equipment when riding.

In addition, the club's Facebook page keeps riders updated on trail conditions, seasonal information and hazards (e.g. snakes and bushfire hazards) and reminds people to look out for changes in trail condition and to ride safely.

The Albury Wodonga Mountain Bike Club currently hold a Section 34A Crown Lands Licence for bike trails within within a number of land parcels on Nail Can Hill (10ha site). The Licence allows the AWMTB to undertake track maintenance and hold events.

### BORDER BMX CLUB

There is a large BMX track in Wodonga. This track is run and managed by the Border BMX club. The club runs regular events, maintenance days and keeps members up to date via their Facebook page. BMX riding is often a pathway to mountain biking as well as being a competitive sport in its own right. Since 2008 BMX has been recognised as an Olympic sport.

### BIKE SHOPS IN ALBURY

Within AlburyCity there are three bicycle stores: Comet Cycles, Cycle Station and The Full Cycle of Albury. In Wodonga there is one bike shop, Washington Cyclisme bicycle store.

In addition to selling and servicing bikes, clothing and other accessories, bike shops can be a vital part of creating a mountain biking community. Many bike shops have weekly 'shop rides' where people from the store and members of the community go for a ride together in the evening.

Bike hire is also a service offered by bike shops and can be a good activity for tourists when they come to town. Cycle Station offers bike hire close to the train station and visitor's centre.

Bike shops are also vital in sponsoring mountain biking events. In November 2020 Comet Cycles supported a Micro Gravity Enduro event in partnership with the Albury Wodonga Mountain Bikers (AWMTB) club.

All three bike stores in Albury stock mountain bikes. Over the 2020 Covid-19 outbreak, the stores in Albury saw a rise in bicycle sales in line with a trend noticed world-wide. Mountain bikes were among the most sought after bike during this period, and the Albury stores sold out of this category of bike completely.

The increase in bike shop sales indicates that the Albury MTB community grew over the 2020 Covid-19 period. This was confirmed during our stakeholder conversations with bike shops. A lot of this growth was among teenagers who all began to ride mountain bikes as an alternative to organised sport. Adults also began to engage with mountain biking over this time, as gyms and other forms of indoor recreation were closed.

Anecdotally it was stated, during community consultation with bike shop owners, that parents who would have originally paid less than \$1000 for a standard commuter bike, were now purchasing top of the range dual suspension mountain bikes for \$5000+. This indicated that more teenagers are engaging with mountain biking (as opposed to road and commuter cycling) and families are beginning to invest significant resources to get into the sport.



## MOUNTAIN BIKING COURSES AND COACHES

The Fast Line Bikademy offers coaching and skills courses in Albury Wodonga. They provide avenues for people to learn about the sport. They also donate to Kangaloola wildlife shelter. The Fast Line Bikademy provides courses both in Albury/Wodonga and in the surrounding high-country towns, Bright and Falls Creek.

## ONLINE INFLUENCERS

In Albury there are several riders who post videos of their rides online. These riders tell other people where to ride and share information about specific tracks and what it is like to ride on the trails. They may also share videos of themselves in a race and talk about their experiences of mountain biking.

It is popular to follow these influencers, and younger people in particular look to them for cues on how to engage with the sport. There may be an opportunity to engage with these influencers to promote mountain biking infrastructure projects and environmental values.

## NAVIGATION APPS

Maps and navigation apps can also be an important communication tool with the Mountain Biking community. Trailforks is a popular app used to find out where to ride, and navigate the trails. The trail network data is uploaded by users of the app. Users can also upload details of a tree that has fallen down and other maintenance issues.

## COVID-19 IMPACTS ON RIDING IN ALBURY

Albury, like many places around the world, saw an increase in residents seeking time outdoors and an increased interest in cycling with bike riding one of the few recreation activities allowed throughout restrictions.

All three bike stores within AlburyCity saw a massive increase in bike sales with bikes out of stock for long periods.

The border between Victoria and NSW closed. AlburyCity has 9 mountain biking parks on its doorstep. However, the majority of these parks (6 of them) are on the Victorian side of the border. The majority of pump track facilities are on the Victorian side of the border as well. A regional scale pump track in Wangaratta is a notable example. When Covid-19 happened and the border closed, Albury locals no longer had access to the mountain bike parks and facilities on the Victorian side of the border.

Two of the parks on the NSW side of the border, Stromlo and Thredbo are both more than 3 hours drive from Albury. Thredbo is a seasonal park, where riders must purchase a day pass in order to ride. Stromlo is in the ACT, which at times has also been inaccessible to NSW residents. This meant that instead of having 9 mountain bike parks to choose from, Albury residents had one regular place to ride, Nail Can Hill.

The combination of a large influx of new riders to the sport and a decreased opportunity to ride away from home, meant that Nail Can Hill saw a significant increase in rider numbers.

A significant increase in the number of people in the City with a mountain bike, and a decrease in trail access, meant that demand for trails greatly outstripped supply. In addition, it is likely that among the new riders, many of them have not had an opportunity to engage with a local MTB club or community to be taught about sustainable trail use and riding principles. Riders began looking for an opportunity to 'fill the gap' in number of trails or create particular trail features such as jumps and built these features and trails for themselves over this time.

## REGIONAL TRAIL AUDIT

### LOCAL

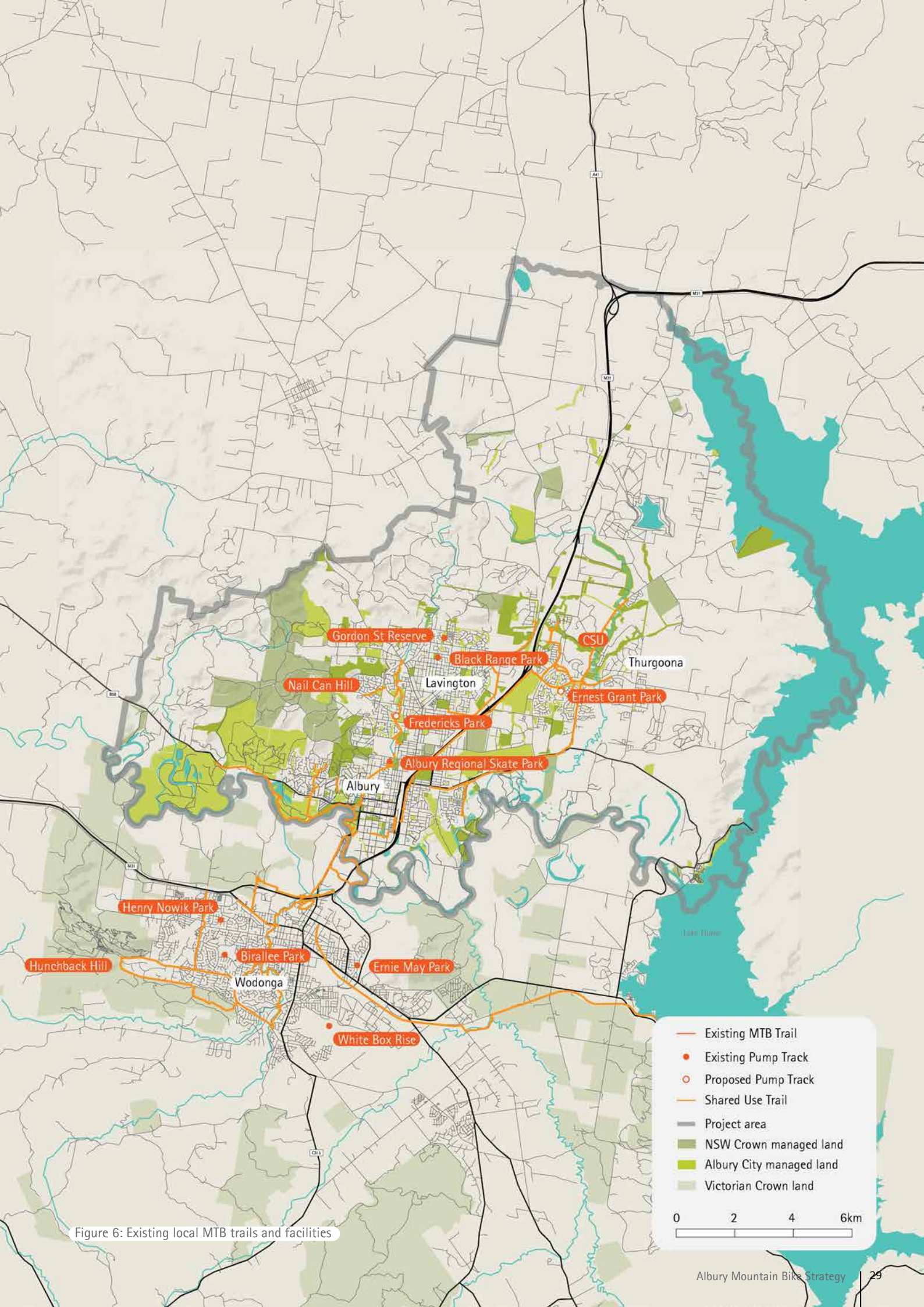
Albury has a range of existing mountain bike trail networks locally including Nail Can Hill, Charles Sturt University (CSU) and Hunchback Hill (located in Wodonga).

In addition, there are a range of different scale and styles of pump tracks including 3 in Albury and 4 in Wodonga. There are also two proposed local scale pump tracks in Albury detailed in master plans recently completed for Fredericks Park and Ernest Grant Park. These existing facilities are summarised in the table below and located in Figure 6 opposite. For detailed information regarding each facility refer to Appendix A – Existing Trails Status Report.

### EXISTING FACILITIES

FACILITY	STYLE	SCALE	TENURE	TRAIL MANAGER
Nail Can Hill	Cross Country Trail Network	29km (70 individual trails)	Crown (NSW Crown / AlburyCity)	NSW Crown / AlburyCity / AWMTB Club
Charles Sturt University (CSU) Skills Track	Cross Country Skills Loop	1.8km	Freehold (CSU)	CSU
Gordon Street Reserve	Natural surface pump track	Approx 600m2 riding surface	Crown (AlburyCity)	AlburyCity
Black Range Park	Natural surface pump track	Approx 800m2 riding surface	Crown (AlburyCity)	AlburyCity
Albury Regional Skate Park	Asphalt surface pump track	Approx 350m2 riding surface	Crown (AlburyCity)	AlburyCity
Hunchback Hill	Cross Country / Flow Trail Network	19km	Crown (DELWP/ Wodonga City)	Wodonga City / Parklands Albury Wodonga
Biralee Park pump track	Asphalt surface pump track	Approx 400m2 riding surface (Stage 1)	Crown (Wodonga City)	Wodonga City
Biralee Park BMX track	Natural surface BMX race track	Approx 400m2 riding surface	Crown (Wodonga City)	Wodonga City
Henry Nowick Park	Concrete surface pump track	Approx 80m2 riding surface	Crown (Wodonga City)	Wodonga City
Ernie May Park	Concrete surface pump track	Approx 50m2 riding surface	Crown (Wodonga City)	Wodonga City
White Box Rise	Asphalt surface pump track	Approx 80m2 riding surface	Freehold	White Box Rise Real Estate Developer







## BROADER CONTEXT

There are several destinations within comfortable driving distance of Albury which offer local riders a diverse mix of riding opportunities. There is also opportunity for Albury to become a gateway destination for travelling riders accessing these and other networks in the Victorian High Country.

Riding destinations within driving distance of Albury have been outlined in Figure 7 and located in context of Albury in Figure 8. For detailed information regarding each facility refer to Appendix A – Existing Trails Status Report.

Bright and nearby Falls Creek are mountain biking destinations that attract a number of tourists each year. Albury is reasonably well placed to attract people driving from Sydney to these destinations.

There is also an opportunity for Albury to add to the mountain biking offering and attract seasoned riders who may be looking for a new mountain biking experience. Nail Can Hill trails are rocky and technical in nature, and so riders looking for this type of challenge may look to test their skills in Albury.

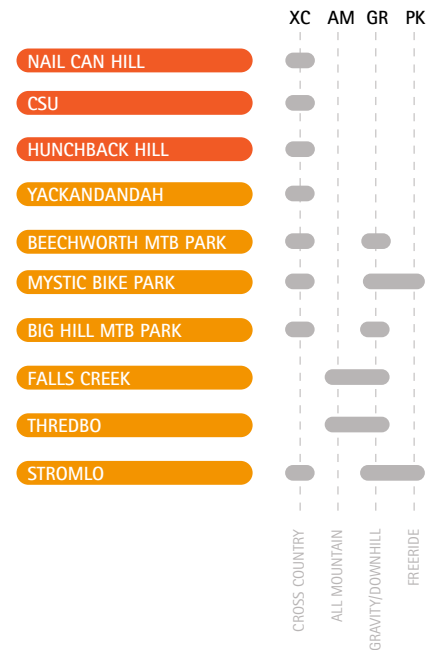


Figure 7: Summary of nearby MTB destinations trail style

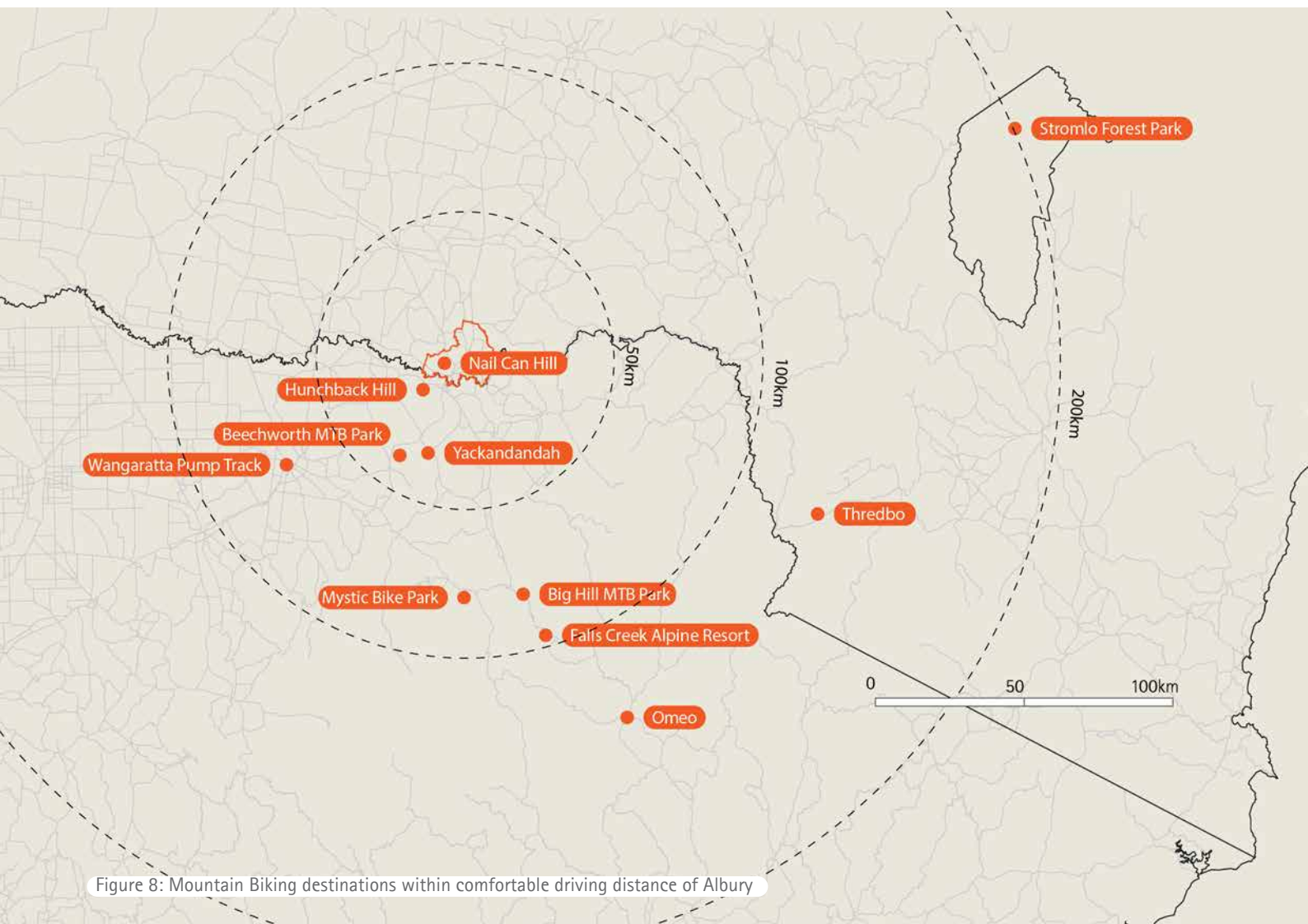


Figure 8: Mountain Biking destinations within comfortable driving distance of Albury

## UNSANCTIONED TRAILS

There are currently significant amounts of trail in the Albury area that are unsanctioned or informal. These comprise informal user-created trails and features such as jumps and berms. These trails have not been formally planned or designed nor has their construction necessarily been in accordance with best practice. In preparation of this strategy none of the unsanctioned trails have been formally assessed for their sustainability or suitability for use.

While it can be argued that the continued construction and use of unsanctioned trails is reflective of the demand in the community, it must be acknowledged that the continued construction and use of unsanctioned trails leads to further degradation and in some cases irreversible impacts on the environment.

This strategy provides the opportunity to investigate locations for potential trail development, which would include a formal assessment of some or all unsanctioned trails within the designated project area. The outcome of the assessment could be the closure and rehabilitation, replacement or improvement of unsanctioned trails as part of a high quality, sustainable trail network.

In terms of discouraging further creation of unsanctioned trails it is critical that AlburyCity understands the local rider profile and invests in offering a connected network of trails and facilities which respond to demand and current trends in design and trail style. It is also recommended that the riding and broader community be engaged in opportunities to learn about the values of their local reserves, the impacts of unsanctioned trail building and where possible invited to be involved in sustainable trail building and maintenance activities. Providing a facility where trails and features can be built by the riding community in a managed and contained setting can also help to alleviate the desire to build trails elsewhere.

From a land managers perspective, unsanctioned trails present many issues including:

- They can have an adverse effect on the site due to lack of planning and/or poor construction or maintenance. Where unsanctioned trails breach environmental legislation, for example through damage to sensitive habitats or designated wildlife and archaeological/cultural sites, they may constitute criminal offences for which the offenders or land managers may be held liable
- They can breach planning legislation, leading to enforcement action
- They can cause disruption to routine land management practices such as mowing and hazard reduction works
- They can lead to conflict between user groups
- They can pose risks to those building or using unsanctioned trails and features if they are not properly designed, constructed and maintained.
- Unsanctioned trails can also lead to weed invasion, erosion and soil displacement issues and impacts on rare flora species

There are a few options for managing unsanctioned trails, in all instances clear, transparent and effective communication between the land manager and unsanctioned trail builder/s is required to ensure effective implementation. At one end of the scale the land manager might choose to close the trail and remove any unsafe features, at the other end there may be opportunities for trail user groups/clubs to have full responsibility for trail design, building and maintenance. Some models for management are outlined below.

**Removal of unsanctioned trails** – The land manager is entitled to remove unsanctioned trails.

**Adoption of trails by land manager** – This approach may be appropriate where the land manager is prepared to take full responsibility for the trail. This is unlikely unless the trail could be incorporated into a planned trail, and only when appropriate checks and approvals have been completed.

**Volunteering agreements** – An agreement is developed following discussion between a land manager and trail user group/club about options for volunteer maintenance of trails. The agreement needs to be clear on where responsibilities lie and trails may need to be improved to meet standards for classification.

**Agreements with formal user groups/clubs** – A land manager enters into an agreement with a formal trail user group/club that has a governance structure, training provision and insurance for trail work. The agreement could take a variety of forms depending on the aims and objectives of both parties and could include responsibilities for building trails, risk assessments, trail inspections, repair and decommissioning. The agreement should also set out points of contact and set out processes for any joint decision making.



## COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder and community input assisted in identifying and determining the region's sustainable long-term vision for provision of mountain bike facilities. In order to ensure the success and longevity of facilities developed it is essential to engage with both the users and managers of the facilities. Through a combination of meetings, workshops and surveys the consultation process aimed to empower the local community to take stewardship and pride in their public spaces. For detailed information regarding consultation results refer to Appendix B – Consultation Report.

### METHODOLOGY

#### STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Project stakeholders and partners have a vested interest in ensuring that the outcomes of the MTB Strategy support their organisations strategic direction and management plans. It is intended that this Strategy becomes a planning tool for AlburyCity Council and other relevant land managers in the region with partnerships encouraged to progress trails development in the region.

Identified stakeholders and partners include:

- Wodonga City Council
- NSW Crown Land
- Albury Wodonga Mountain Bike Club
- Albury Local Aboriginal Lands Council
- Local bike shops
- AlburyCity Youth Council
- AlburyCity Sustainability Advisory Committee
- Friends of Nail Can Hill
- Border Bushwalking Club
- Murray Valley Bushwalkers
- Parklands Albury Wodonga
- Private land owners adjacent Nail Can Hill

Stakeholders were engaged through various means including a project introduction email, online survey, meetings and phone calls.

#### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Broader consultation with the community was undertaken via a drop in session and social pin point survey/interactive map. The Social Pin Point web page included a survey targeted at riders and an interactive map which enabled pins to be placed identifying specific trail and infrastructure opportunities and issues.

The intention of the Social Pin Point was to:

- Develop an understanding of the local rider demographics
- Understand user skill level and frequency of usage.
- Understand local park usage and user location preferences to understand user needs and requirements based on their current habits.

The survey and interactive map were available for input for a period of 4 weeks from 2nd November to the 27th November and was promoted via the AlburyCity website and social media.

The MTB Strategy Facebook campaign reached just over 31,000 people, with 428 link clicks back to the City Have Your Say page. There were 134 reactions, 19 comments and 26 shares. One post to Instagram saw a reach of 401 with 6 clicks back to the Have Your Say webpage, 33 reactions and 1 comment. There were a total of 1,854 page views to the Have Your Say webpage, with majority of traffic coming via Facebook referrals (44%) followed by direct and organic traffic.

A total of 376 survey responses were submitted and 147 comments dropped on the interactive map.

The community drop in session was held on the 27/11/20 from 4–7pm in the Robert Brown Room at AlburyCity Council office. The session was advertised on the AlburyCity Have your say website and invitations sent to stakeholders and their contact lists. A total of 14 people dropped in to have a chat with Common Ground Trails and AlburyCity Staff. Discussions reiterated findings from the survey and provided further insights into potential trail development opportunities across the City.

## ENGAGEMENT RESULTS



## RIDER PROFILE

From the survey and drop in session discussions the typical local rider profile has been determined with the following key attributes:

- Most likely to be youth or middle aged (35-40) males
- Predominately recreational riders however a significant proportion are interested in more technical and challenging trail styles.
- Are mostly intermediate or advanced level of riding ability (note however a survey bias towards those already established in the sport).
- A majority are looking for an all mountain trail experience with technical descents and non-technical climbs
- Riders typically prefer to ride with one other person or in a small group (<6 people)
- Riders will spend up to 4hrs per ride
- Most riders ride locally weekly and will travel further afield on a monthly basis
- Physical challenge, fitness and socialising are the main reasons people like to ride.

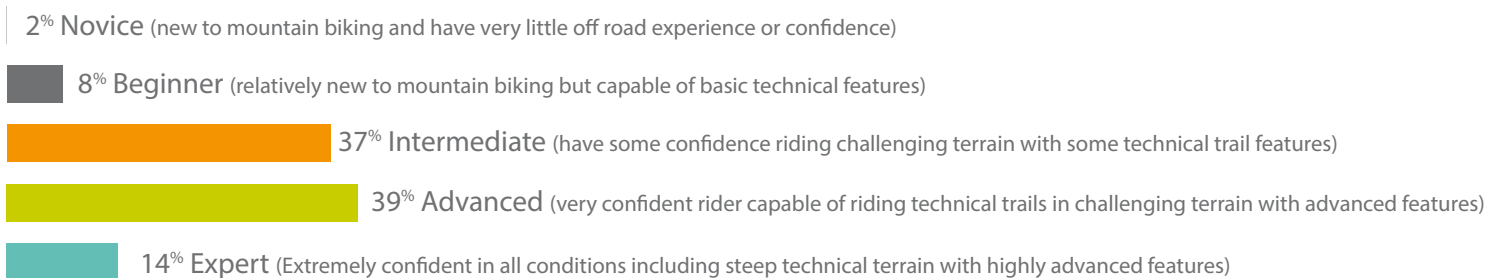
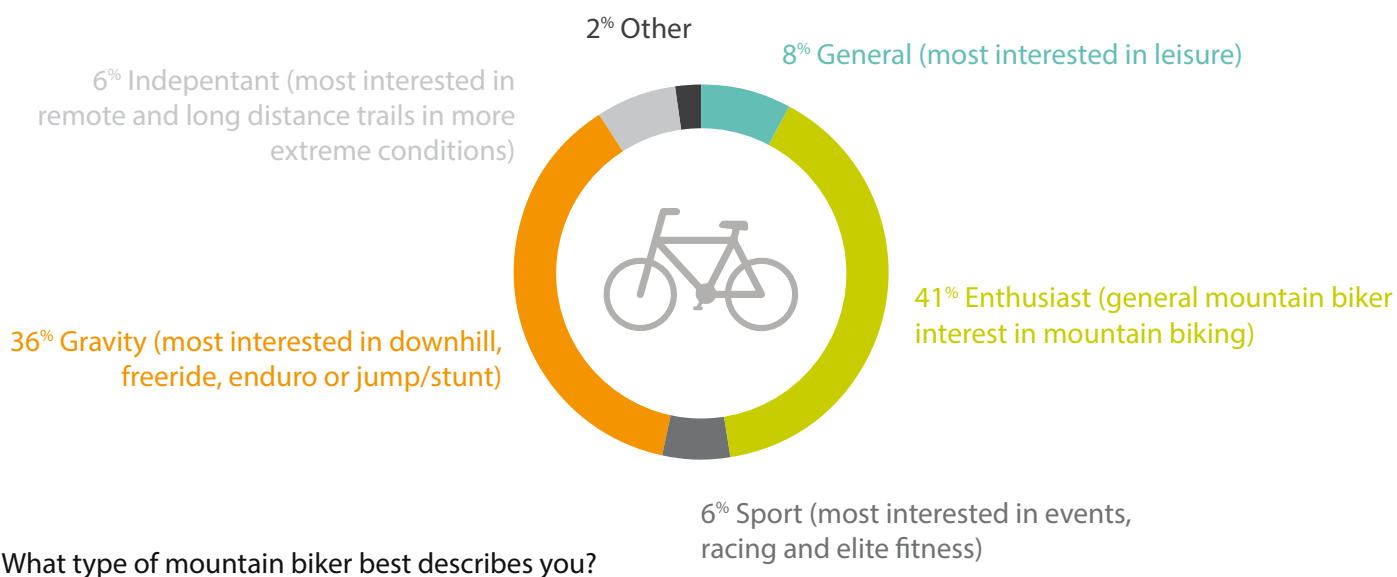
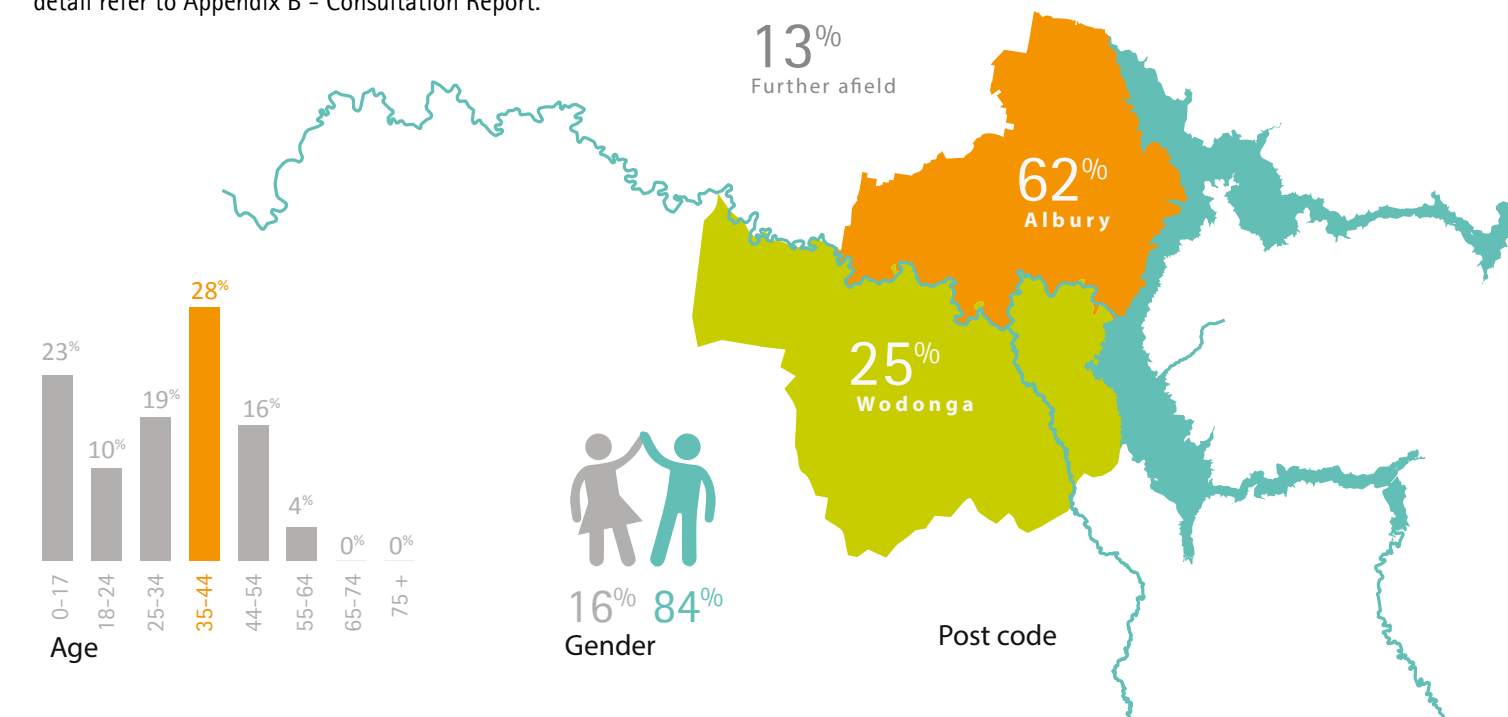
## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Conversations with the identified key stakeholders are ongoing, key outcomes from discussions to date are outlined below.

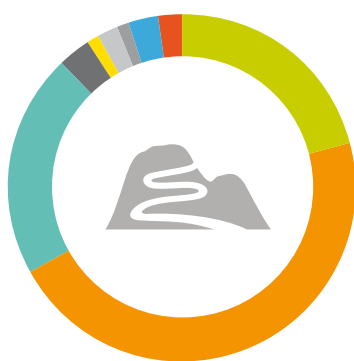
- Mountain bike trail and facility development opportunities occur on a range of tenures across the City, a coordinated approach is required and partnerships between agencies/land managers will be integral to successful delivery and ongoing maintenance
- Mountain biking is one of many popular recreational activities in the City and any trail and facility development will need to consider other users
- There are significant environmental and cultural values throughout the City. Conservation of these values needs to be considered highest priority
- Thurgoona, Lavington and North Albury in particular are predicted to see significant population growth in the coming years, access to facilities for these growing communities will be important
- The Albury terrain has potential to be attracting visitors for mountain biking specifically, proposals for trail development should consider local and national trends in trail style
- There needs to be a focus on taking pressure off Nail Can Hill
- Covid lockdowns have seen increasing number of users at Nail Can Hill especially, on bikes and walking/running.
- Unsanctioned trail building is occurring across the City, including in areas containing significant flora and fauna.
- Events are a significant part of the Albury Wodonga MTB Club with enduro racing being the most popular at the moment especially with younger riders. There is potential to grow the event scene with development of appropriate supporting infrastructure and suitable trail development.

## SURVEY RESULTS

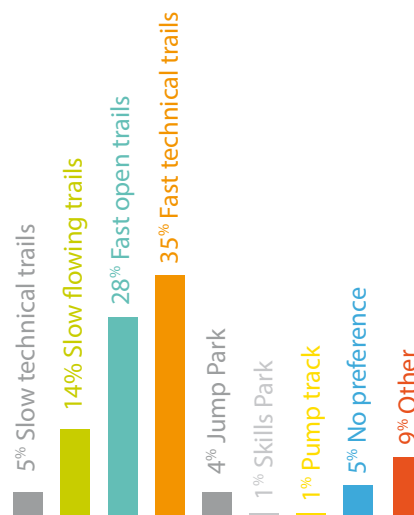
A snapshot of survey results is provided here, for further detail refer to Appendix B – Consultation Report.





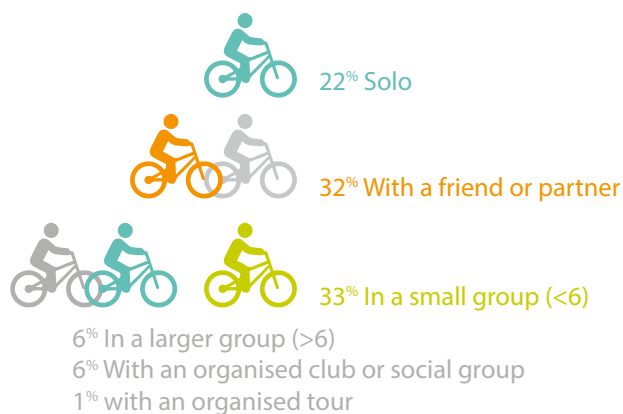


21% Cross Country  
 45% All Mountain  
 21% Downhill / Gravity  
 3% Freeride  
 1% Jump/dirt park  
 1% Pump Track  
 1% Touring  
 0% Trials  
 3% No Preference  
 3% Other



Which style of mountain bike riding do you prefer?

Which type of mountain bike trails do you prefer to ride?



Who do you usually ride with?



How do you find out about trails?

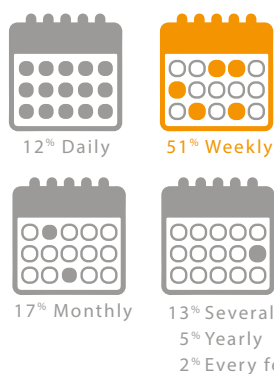


30% < 2 hours

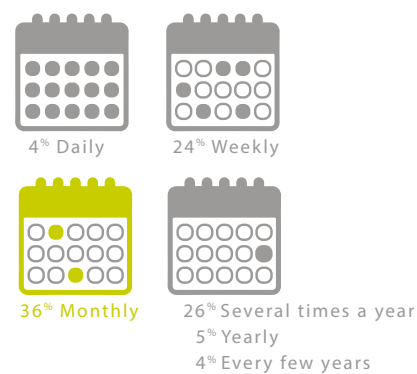
11% full day (> 4hours)

2% overnight / multiday

How much time do you spend on the trail each visit?



How often do you ride locally?



How often do you ride further afield?

0 -10km 11%  
 11-20km 11%  
 21-50km 17%  
 over 50km 16%  
 over 100km 45%



How far would you travel to access a trail facility?

PHYSICAL  
 CHALLENGE  
 FITNESS  
 SOCIALISING

Why do you ride?

## SITE ASSESSMENTS

While there is potential for significant community and social benefit through the development of MTB facilities, there are also risks associated with inappropriate development. The cornerstone of successful development is appropriate site selection. The following characteristics must be considered when identifying and assessing a site;

- Ecological and cultural values
- Proximity to supporting recreation activities
- Existing facilities onsite such as car parking and toilets
- Accessibility for users
- Connectivity to related activities
- Topography, terrain and geology of site
- Hydrology and drainage
- Tenure and deliverability
- Competing site uses
- Impact on surrounding land use
- Scale of site

Sites to be investigated were identified through the consultation process with stakeholders and community and a desktop analysis of terrain. Figure 9 and Table 3 provide an overview of sites assessed. In order to establish if the identified sites present an appropriate location for a MTB facility, a site assessment was undertaken including a preliminary analysis followed by on-ground confirmation of findings. A number of sites were ruled out during the preliminary analysis phase due to critical flaws in one or more key considerations, these are noted in Table 3.

Refer to Appendix C - Site Assessments for detailed assessment of each site identified for further assessment.

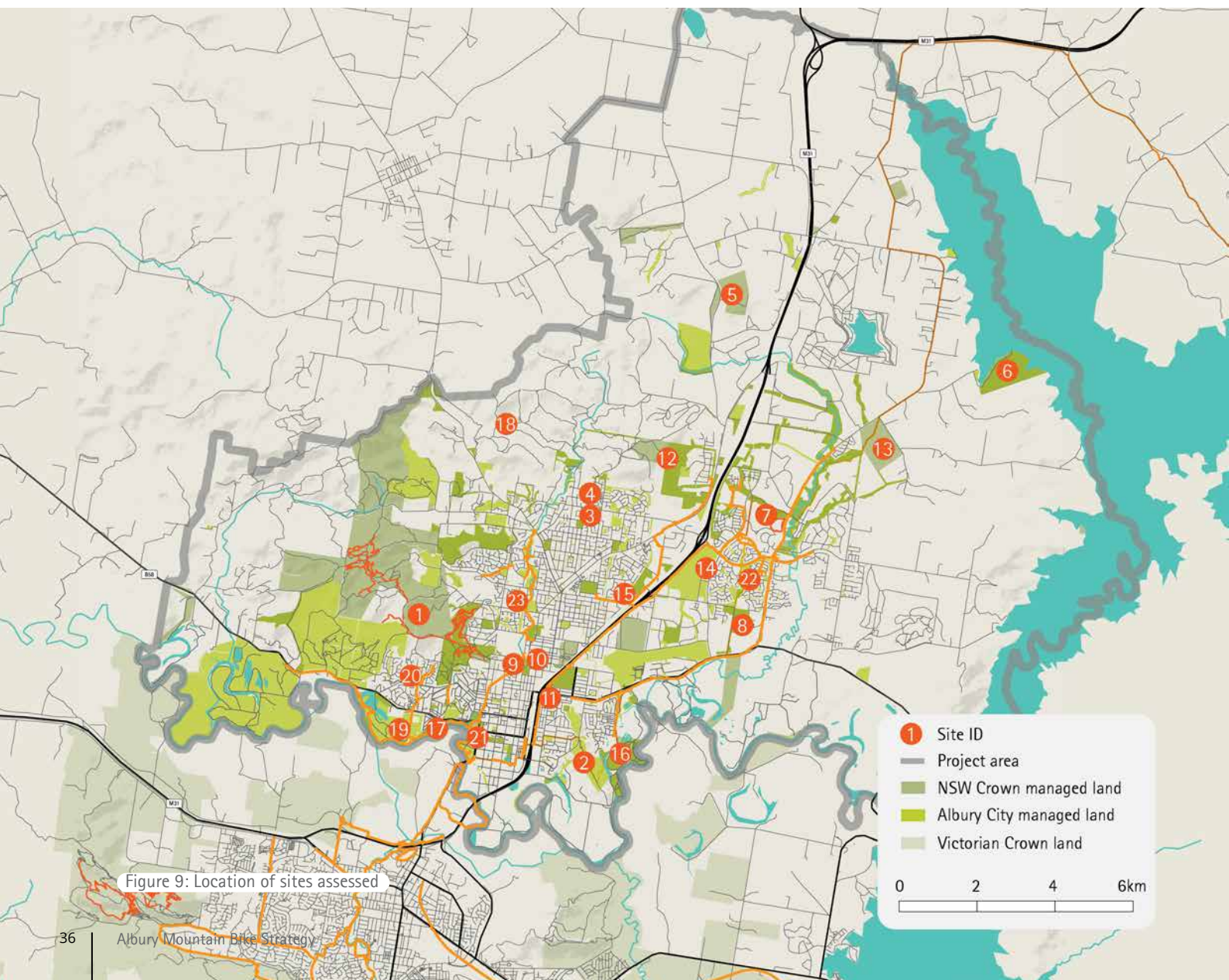


Table 3: Sites assessed (see figure 9 for site location)

SITE ID	SITE	IDENTIFIED OPPORTUNITY	PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT
1	Nail Can Hill	Upgrade Mountain Bike Trail Network	Investigate further
2	Eastern Hill	Mountain Bike Trail Network DH/Freeride	Investigate further
3	Black Range Park	Pump Track	Investigate further
4	Gordon St Reserve	Pump Track	Investigate further
5	9 Mile Hill Travelling Stock Reserve	Family friendly MTB network	Ruled out due to ecological values and undesirable terrain
6	Bowna Reserve	XC loop	Investigate further
7	CSU Trail	Upgrade existing track	Investigate further
8	Corry's Wood	XC trails	Ruled out due to ecological values and scale of site
9	Albury Regional Skate Park	Larger pump Track	Ruled out due to competing site uses and proposed development, retain pump track currently being constructed
10	Billson Park	Skills / learn to ride	Ruled out due to proposed Bicycle Education Track at Fredericks Park
11	Alexandra Park	Pump Track	Ruled out due to scale of site and proximity to Albury Regional Skate Park
12	One Tree Hill	AM, DH and XC Trails	Investigate further
13	Bells Travelling Stock Reserve	XC Trails	Ruled out due to ecological values
14	Albury Wodonga Equestrian Centre	Pump Track / Skills	Ruled out due to competing site uses and undesirable terrain
15	Powerline Easement	Pump Track	Ruled out due to scale of site.
16	Mungabareena Reserve	Walk/cycle tracks	Investigate further through a master planning process for the site
17	Padman Park	Pump Track	Ruled out to scale of site and ecological values
18	Private Property north of Urana Rd	XC Trails	Ruled out due to tenure
19	West Albury Reserve (Kremur Street)	Pump Track / Skills	Investigate further
20	Bonnie Doon Park	Pump Track / Skills	Investigate further
21	Hovell Tree Park	Pump Track / Skills	Ruled out due to competing proposals for the site
22	Ernest Grant Park	Pump Track	Included in master plan for site
23	Fredericks Park	Learn to ride / Pump Track	Included in master plan for site



## MULTI CRITERIA ANALYSIS

Following review of sites a basic multi criteria analysis was undertaken to enable comparison and prioritisation of opportunities, results are presented in Table 4 below. Scores out of 5 have been applied with a higher score indicating a positive state for each criteria, for example for Flora/fauna/cultural constraints a score of 5 indicates no constraints whereas 1 indicates significant constraints.

Results suggest that short term priority should be placed on investigating mountain bike trail network opportunities at Nail Can Hill, Eastern Hill and CSU. Pump, jump and learn to ride opportunities should be prioritised for investigation at Bonnie Doon Park, Ernest Grant Park, and West Albury Reserve.

Table 4: Multi criteria analysis of sites assessed (note sites are grouped and compared according to identified opportunity)

	MTB Trail Network						Pump/Jump/learn to ride					
	Eastern Hill	CSU Trail	Nail Can Hill	Mungabareena Reserve	Bowna Reserve	One Tree Hill	Bonnie Doon Park	West Albury Reserve	Black Range Park	Gordon St Reserve	Ernest Grant Park	Fredericks Park
Criteria (rated out of 5)												
Physical site condition and technical considerations												
Appropriate terrain/geology/hydrology	5	3	5	2	1	5	4	5	5	5	5	4
Scale of site	5	5	5	3	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	5
Tenure and deliverability	5	2	4	2	5	3	4	3	5	5	5	5
Flora/fauna/cultural constraints	4	5	2	1	3	2	5	3	5	5	5	4
Access/transport												
Is there access to public transport close to trailhead/facility	2	5	3	2	1	1	5	3	3	4	5	4
Are there pedestrian/footpath connections from transport nodes	3	3	5	3	1	1	5	5	5	5	5	5
Is it in proximity to the shared use path network	2	5	3	3	1	3	5	5	3	3	5	5
Is there a safe drop off area or adequate parking	5	5	3	5	5	1	5	3	5	1	5	5
Passive surveillance, security and safety												
Is the site visually prominent with good passive surveillance from other park users	5	3	5	4	4	5	4	5	5	3	5	5
Can the site provide easy emergency vehicle access	4	4	3	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5
Does the location enable safe entry to and from the site and allow for adequate setbacks from busy roads	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4
Supporting amenities (water, toilets, shade, food and drink)												
Are associated amenities such as public toilets, water, shelter and shade, existing and available or cost effective to install at the site?	5	5	4	3	4	3	5	5	5	2	5	4
Impact on existing facilities, adjoining uses and users												
Is the site located sufficient distance from nearby incompatible uses, activities or services	5	5	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Is the site located such that noise and visual impacts for surrounding residents could be minimised	4	4	5	5	5	5	4	5	2	2	5	4
Context												
Is the site located in proximity to other similar existing or proposed MTB facilities	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	4	3	5	3
TOTAL (max possible score is 75)	64	64	61	51	55	51	69	66	65	56	73	66
	85%	85%	81%	71%	73%	68%	92%	88%	87%	75%	97%	88%

## SITE ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Following detailed site assessment (refer to Appendix C – Site Assessments) and review of multi criteria analysis the following table outlines sites with potential to host a mountain bike trail network/facility. Note not all sites will necessarily be developed in the short term or at all, refer to recommendations section for final recommendations and current priorities.

Table 5: Site assessment summary

SITE	IDENTIFIED OPPORTUNITY	SITE ASSESSMENT SUMMARY
Nail Can Hill	Upgrade Mountain Bike Trail Network	<p>Nail Can Hill has the most desirable terrain in the area for development of MTB trails that meet the identified preferred trail style of local riders (All Mountain). The reserve is also ideally located close to residential areas and in proximity to the CBD with multiple access points.</p> <p>Significant environmental and cultural values will need to be thoroughly assessed and considered in planning, design and construction of any trail development in the reserve. The reserve is also loved by other trail users including walkers and trail runners who will also need to be considered in trail planning.</p> <p>Revegetation/weed programs could also form apart of trail development works, with unsanctioned trails being closed as part of considered trail network development.</p> <p>The significant network of fire management roads throughout Nail Can Reserve also have potential to form apart of the trail offer for both mountain bike and walking.</p>
Eastern Hill	Mountain Bike Trail Network DH/Freeride	<p>Eastern Hill offers opportunity for higher impact flow trails with a larger footprint due to the degraded landscape with sparse tree cover. A considered revegetation program as part of trail development will see significant improvements to the environment and protection of the values that are present.</p> <p>Existing access and facilities at the Eastern Hill Lookout provide a logical entry for a trail network, however it is recommended that a trailhead at the base of the hill within Mungabareena Reserve be investigated. The facilities at Eastern Hill are at the end of their useful life and require upgrading/replacing to meet current standards. The site infrastructure deficiencies will be addressed through the Eastern Hill Activation Plan.</p>
Black Range Park	Pump Track	Site has competing uses and priorities, existing pump track could be upgraded as a natural surface pump track to add variety to the suite of facilities available.
Gordon St Reserve	Pump Track	Site is in close proximity to Black Range Park and has little existing support facilities, not considered a priority for further development.
Bowna Reserve	XC loop	Bowna Reserve contains relatively flat terrain that would require significant investment to attract the bulk of the MTB market. At present the site is remote and isolated from current residential areas however as Thurgoona grows north the site is becoming more attractive for visitation. The design of mountain bike infrastructure should be investigated further and included into any master planning process for the site.
CSU Trail	Upgrade existing track	A basic facility that serves purpose as opportunity to enter the sport and progress skills. The facility is an important facility in the overall picture of MTB in Albury and it is recommended that CSU continue to maintain or enter into agreement with AWMTB to maintain and upgrade with additional features.
One Tree Hill	AM, DH and XC Trails	The One Tree Hill site contains desirable terrain for MTB trail development however the small scale of the site, significant environmental values and lack of accessibility mean that this site isn't considered a priority for development at this stage.

Table 5 Site assessment summary continued

Mungabareena Reserve	Walk/cycle tracks	Significant environmental and cultural values make this site unsuitable for intense trail development however has a potential to host a trailhead for the Eastern Hill Trail network, making use of existing and proposed passive recreation sites within the reserve to compliment the trail development at Eastern Hill.
West Albury Reserve (Kremur Street)	Pump Track / Skills	Site identified as having potential to host a local scale pump track facility, the location has good connectivity being directly adjacent the shared use path and is in proximity to Albury CBD.
Bonnie Doon Park	Pump Track / Skills	Site identified as having potential to host a pump track facility, with support infrastructure such as car parking and toilets existing. This park also has potential to be linked into Nail Can Hill. Proximity to West Albury Reserve (Kremur Street) is a consideration with a facility recommended at either of these sites.
Ernest Grant Park	Pump Track	Site identified as having significant potential to host a local scale pump track facility, catering for Thurgoona residents. The site is well connected, accessible and contains support infrastructure. A pump track has been included in the master plan for this site.
Fredericks Park	Learn to ride / Pump Track	Site identified as having significant potential to host a mountain bike facility, with existing infrastructure within the park and good connectivity with the shared use path adjacent, Current master planning has identified a learn to ride facility.





## GAP & OPPORTUNITIES ANALYSIS

### GAP ANALYSIS

The following tables outline identified gaps in the current Albury mountain biking offer.

#### MOUNTAIN BIKING NETWORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

GAP IDENTIFIED	CONSEQUENCE OF GAP	DESIRED IMPROVEMENTS
Current under-investment in mountain biking in Albury.	<p>The increase in demand from a growing community of mountain bikers, means that the existing facilities in Albury are overused.</p> <p>Lack of maintenance means that the riding experience of the facilities is not up to standard and erosion is occurring. Safety of riders is compromised as trails marked 'blue' are really 'black'.</p>	<p>Opportunity to invest in a series of targeted programs and infrastructure projects to grow the mountain biking community and better support riders of all abilities.</p> <p>Opportunity to enhance Albury's tourism offering by tying in these projects with other forms of investment.</p>
Limited opportunities for a rider to progress their skills from beginner to advanced.	<p>New and beginner riders are forced to either drive outside the city to ride, or attempt trails at Nail Can Hill outside their skillset.</p> <p>This decreases rider safety, and increases trail degradation as new riders get off and walk around challenging obstacles instead of riding over them as intended.</p>	Opportunity to create a suite of experiences within AlburyCity for riders to practice and develop their skills.
There is only one main place to ride in the city at Nail Can Hill.	<p>Degradation of Nail Can Hill trails, impacts on environmental and cultural values.</p> <p>Riders creating their own trails.</p>	Develop another trail network in AlburyCity to complement the offering at Nail Can Hill and reduce pressure on the reserve.
Nail Can Hill network has grown informally over time, and increased users at the reserve means there is some conflict between user groups.	<p>Network has critical missing links, leading to trespassing on private property.</p> <p>Walkers use mountain biking trails which is a safety concern for both user groups.</p>	A consolidated and functional network of trails catering for riders and walkers that is intuitive to navigate and responds to identified desired trail style
Albury does not have pump track which offers features in line with current riding trends.	Missed opportunity to create a destination pump track to engage the family tourist market in Albury, and provide a recreation space for community mountain bikers, especially young people.	<p>Opportunity to build a pump track that is specific to AlburyCity and considers the site and context of where it is built.</p> <p>Opportunity to place pump track in a location that is easily accessible by bike.</p>
Albury does not have a jumps park	People are building unsanctioned jumps on Nail Can Hill to fill this gap in demand.	Opportunity to engage with the riding community and create a site where people can build jumps legally in an area that is not environmentally or culturally significant.

## FACILITY PROVISION

GAP IDENTIFIED	CONSEQUENCE OF GAP	DESIRED IMPROVEMENTS
Limited facilities at existing mountain bike sites.	<p>Reduced rider safety due to lack of drinking water facilities.</p> <p>Reduced ability for women to engage with the sport due to lack of public toilets.</p> <p>Potential for increased rubbish at site if no rubbish bins provided.</p>	Opportunity to assess requirements and provide appropriate facilities at all mountain biking locations in Albury.
Car Parking at the Nail Can Hill trail heads is below capacity for number of reserve users.	Lack of adequate car parking leads to informal parking around access points creating safety concerns and impacting on neighbouring residents.	Opportunity to better plan the trail head and facilities at Nail Can Hill to cater for increased community use of the reserve and encourage safer traffic flow and entry and exit from the car park.

## SUSTAINABLE TRAILS AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

GAP IDENTIFIED	CONSEQUENCE OF GAP	DESIRED IMPROVEMENTS
The current mountain biking offering does not cater well for gravity/flow trails, beginner/intermediate riders or people who like to session jump features.	Unsanctioned trails are being built to accommodate for the increase in demand for mountain biking infrastructure.	<p>Opportunity to improve the MTB offering in Albury to reduce the need for Mountain Bikers to build their own trails and jumps.</p> <p>Provide lines and routes for beginner/intermediate riders to reduce shortcuts around technical features of a trail.</p>
Huge increase in mountain biking market, especially during Covid-19 period has put pressure on existing trail network.	More pressure has been put on the natural reserves in Albury by an increase in the number of people mountain biking. Nail Can Hill was most notably affected.	Opportunity to look at building additional riding experiences across the city to spread the demand.
Rapid increase in mountain bikers has meant that some new riders are not aware of the 'rules of the trail'	People new to the sport may not be aware of the consequences of building unsanctioned trails or the environmental and cultural values of the spaces they ride in.	Opportunity to engage with mountain bikers in a variety of ways to promote environmental values, and sustainable trail building and maintenance concepts.
Some survey respondents believed that mountain bikers damage the environment they are in.	<p>This negative perception can lead to abuse towards mountain bikers, it can also lead to mountain biking projects being more difficult to implement.</p> <p>Unsanctioned trail building adds to this perception.</p>	<p>Opportunity for Mountain Bikers to actively improve and revegetate the environment they play in.</p> <p>Combine trail maintenance with revegetation/weeding days. Combine infrastructure projects with tree planting and revegetation.</p>

## CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUES

GAP IDENTIFIED	CONSEQUENCE OF GAP	DESIRED IMPROVEMENTS
It is not yet common practice in Australia to actively promote aboriginal cultural heritage and stories at mountain biking parks and facilities.	There is a missed opportunity to educate riders about the land they play on and to further connect them to the heritage and values of the land.	Albury has an opportunity to promote the values of the Traditional Owners and the Aboriginal Cultural heritage of the land.
	There is a missed opportunity to build a deeper respect for Aboriginal Culture in the mountain biking community.	There is an opportunity to engage with Traditional Owners and the Albury Aboriginal Lands Council to enhance any mountain biking projects through collaboration.
	There is a missed opportunity to engage indigenous riders in mountain biking due to the lack of inclusivity of their culture in the sport.	There is an opportunity for the club to work with Burrinja Cultural Centre in Wodonga to further educate and connect the communities together.

## MOUNTAIN BIKING TOURISM

GAP IDENTIFIED	CONSEQUENCE OF GAP	DESIRED IMPROVEMENTS
Lower investment in Mountain Biking when compared with surrounding towns. There is some of Australia's best mountain biking on Albury's doorstep.	Tourism dollars that could have been spent in Albury are 'driving through' to be spent in surrounding towns.	Instead of simply trying to compete, Albury/Wodonga should Capitalise on MTB investment in surrounding regions.
Albury is a place people 'drive through on their way to mountain biking destinations'		There is an opportunity to package and promote a 1 - 2 week 'MTB road trip' that includes Albury and links Albury to some of the best MTB in Australia.
There is a lack of cohesive promotion of Mountain Biking and Trails in Albury Wodonga.		There is an opportunity to package together Albury/Wodonga riding and leverage the uniqueness of these cities as a riding destination
Albury has a reputation as an outdoor adventure/family holiday location, however mountain biking as tourism activity has largely been left out of this narrative.	As mountain biking becomes more of a family activity, Albury risks losing a portion of its 'family' tourist market share.  Destination trail users may be unaware of what's on offer within Albury.	Opportunity to promote mountain biking as a family friendly activity and create experiences to suit families.  Opportunity to make Albury more navigable on a bike and connect tourist routes to cycle paths within the city.



## ENGAGEMENT WITH THE MOUNTAIN BIKING COMMUNITY

GAP IDENTIFIED	CONSEQUENCE OF GAP	DESIRED IMPROVEMENTS
There appears to be missing a clear set of guidelines/ governance structure for maintenance at Nail Can Hill.	Without clear guidelines and lines of communication, the quality of mountain biking facilities degrades over time, and volunteer enthusiasm is lost. Frustration in the community increases.  Unsanctioned trail building increases, as members of the community are not clear on what is sanctioned and unsanctioned.	Opportunity to engage club members and land managers to create a set of maintenance guidelines and allowed practices.
Lack of actively facilitated mixing between different community groups.	Groups who do not know each other can easily 'other' each other and fail to see that they are united by shared values.	There is an opportunity to actively encourage and formalise connections between different user groups of Nail Can Hill and other spaces in Albury.  This can include environmental groups, mountain bikers, walkers, Aboriginal Land Council, and AlburyCity Council to foster and build respect and positive relationships among the groups. To build shared values among the groups.

## CITY PLANNING

GAP IDENTIFIED	CONSEQUENCE OF GAP	DESIRED IMPROVEMENTS
There is a lack of east-west shared user path connections across the City	It is more difficult for families to go for a casual ride, as they need to ride a long way along a path before crossing the highway.	Opportunity to better link together MTB experiences within Albury using cycle paths and safe cycling routes.  Communicate map of cycle paths with MTB facilities overlaid so people know where to ride and how to get between facilities safely.
Existing mountain biking parks and facilities in Albury are not connected to businesses and infrastructure that could benefit from patronage.	Businesses are not seeing profit from people stopping at a café after a ride.  Mountain bikers have few places to hang out after a ride and build community.	Opportunity to consider ways to draw riders either into town or create local business at a trail head.

## OPPORTUNITIES

Four key opportunities have been identified as priorities for mountain bike trail and facility development in Albury:

### NAIL CAN HILL TRAIL NETWORK

**Style/type of trails:** All Mountain, Down Hill, Cross Country

**Rationale:** The terrain on offer within Nail Can Hill Reserve presents the most exciting opportunity within Albury for the development of trail styles which will meet the identified rider demand.

### EASTERN HILL TRAIL NETWORK

**Style/type of trails:** Flow, cross country

**Rationale:** Eastern Hill provides opportunity for a small scale trail network that complements the offer at Nail Can Hill with different trail styles. This will not only provide a local opportunity for East Albury residents, but also reduce pressure on the Nail Can Hill Network

### LOCAL SCALE FACILITIES

**Style/type of trails:** Local scale facilities

**Rationale:** The scale of AlburyCity LGA means small local scale facilities which provide for local catchments are required to ensure equitable access for residents across the region. These facilities also offer opportunities to create a diverse suite of facilities across the City, each with a different focus.

### COMMUNITY MANAGED JUMPS PARK

**Style/type of trails:** Jump Track

**Rationale:** Further diversifying the mountain biking offer jump parks provide opportunity for expression and creativity. There is also opportunity for riding community involvement in the design, construction and maintenance of the facility.

## PRIORITY 1 NAIL CAN HILL

Nail Can Hill Reserve presents the best opportunity within Albury for the development of trail styles which will meet the identified rider demand. The terrain and elevation range on offer will enable a network of all mountain, down hill and cross country style trails which engage riders of all abilities. The existing network of mountain bike trails presents a good base from which a consolidated and updated network which responds to current trends in trail styles should be developed.

Nail Can Hill Reserve is a significant part of the Albury landscape both in terms of environmental value, cultural value and recreational/social value. The highly accessible location, bush setting and scenic vistas make it a valued place for recreation for all Albury residents, whether they are on bikes or foot.

Nail Can Hill is zoned E2 Environmental Conservation and E3 Environmental Management, the upgraded trail network should have a focus on ensuring environmental and cultural values are minimally impacted. This can be achieved through a careful and considered planning and design approach which includes detailed surveys locating areas of high value and identifying areas where trails are appropriate. Trails should be designed according to best practice principles ensuring sustainable alignments and trail styles which are appropriate to the terrain they traverse.

Nail Can Hill currently has a range of access points it is recommended that Range Road be developed as the primary Trailhead with investigations into locating AWMTB club facilities in this location. Secondary trailheads should be established at Pemberton Street, Bonnie Doon Park, Centaur Road and Gap Road. There is also potential in the future to establish an access point on the western boundary of the reserve from Waterview. Further details regarding trailhead locations and facilities provided should be determined in master planning phase with an understanding of proposed trail network function and layout.

### Opportunity summary:

LOCATION	Within Nail Can Hill Reserve south of Centaur Road. A concentration of significant threatened species is known to occur within the reserve north of Centaur Road for this reason recreation activity in this area should be restricted to existing fire roads.
STYLE/TYPE OF TRAILS	All mountain, downhill, cross country. Potential for longer adventure style routes to be considered/ promoted incorporating the fire and management road network
TRAIL QUANTITY	Up to 40km of purpose designed MTB trail and 10km of purpose designed walk trail
POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANCE	Regional
SUMMARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unique existing character of the network should be retained</li> <li>• Existing 29km MTB trail network to be consolidated and incorporated into the revised MTB trail network where appropriate</li> <li>• Strategic access points and links to be appropriately considered ensuring appropriate buffers from private property</li> <li>• Network to be designed considering ecological and cultural heritage values</li> <li>• Network to be master planned considering walk and MTB trails concurrently as a cohesive network.</li> <li>• Enhanced network will enable opportunity to host state and national MTB events</li> <li>• Trail network construction and management to consider opportunities for revegetation and weed management wherever possible</li> </ul>
INFRASTRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trail heads and access points to be determined in master planning. Primary Trailhead to be located in prominent location such as Range Road and contain at minimum the essential facilities outlined in this strategy.</li> <li>• Investigate locating an event center ideally at the primary trailhead.</li> </ul>
MANAGEMENT	Management model to be determined, discussions required between AlburyCity, NSW Crown and the AWMTB Club.



## BENCHMARK CASE STUDY – EASTERN ESCARPMENT CONSERVATION AREA

Eastern Escarpment Conservation Area (EECA) is a mountain bike facility in the local government area of Redland City, forms part of the Greater Brisbane catchment.

The reserve's ecosystem is valued for its biodiversity and endangered species. On a local scale, it includes many species represented by fewer than 10 specimens, or in only 1 or 2 conservation areas in Redland City.

The northern area of the 186 hectare site was originally used by Council as a quarry while the southern area was destined for residential development. A network of unauthorised mountain bike trails including timber features also existed on the site.

In 2007, after a Development Approval for a residential development at the northern end of Eastern Escarpment lapsed, Redland City Council acquired the land via its Environmental Levy designating the site as a Conservation Area.

Over the next few years the EECA was rehabilitated, fenced to prohibit access by motorbikes and 4WD's and rubbish removed. In 2018 Council commissioned the Eastern Escarpment Conservation Area Plan: Connecting with Recreation to guide future use of the EECA and staged development.

In addition to consultation with the local community the EECA Advisory Group was established to represent various users and interest groups, – mountain biking, bushcare, trail running, bushwalking, horse riding. An ecological assessment and cultural heritage report were prepared and an audit of the existing seven kilometres of trails completed. A number of trail upgrades, new trails and capital improvements were identified for the EECA, increasing the total network from seven kilometres to 17km.

The collaborative approach between various stakeholders throughout the planning process has led to supported outcomes and a functional trail network that caters for all users. Thorough assessments of ecological and cultural heritage values as well as existing unsanctioned trails in the early planning phases enabled the design of the network to be responsive and avoid and minimise impacts to conservation values.

While a smaller scale than Nail Can Hill, this project demonstrates that with a thorough planning process and collaboration between key stakeholders a sustainable trail network within high conservation value areas is achievable.



Eastern Escarpment Conservation Area. Image source: <https://www.visitbrisbane.com.au/>

## PRIORITY 2 EASTERN HILL TRAIL NETWORK

Eastern Hill provides opportunity for a small scale trail network that complements the offer at Nail Can Hill with a different trail style. Mountain bike trail development at Eastern Hill will help to take some pressure of Nail Can Hill and provides a trail network that is more accessible for the growing Thurgoona community.

Eastern Hill is zoned as E2 – Environmental Conservation and trail development should aim to restore natural values including enhancing threatened species habitat, and the key wildlife corridor from the Murray River. Design of trails needs to take into consideration existing values (large remnant trees) and also bushland areas on the western edge of the reserve. Targeted revegetation and weed management programs should be developed as part of the trail planning and design process to ensure a considered and consistent approach.

### Opportunity summary:

LOCATION	Eastern Hill Reserve, between the Eastern Hill lookout and Mungabareena Reserve. The smaller pockets of bushland that are apart of Eastern Hill Reserve and contain unsanctioned trails will be excluded from the network with existing trails closed and revegetated.
STYLE/TYPE OF TRAILS	Flow, cross country
TRAIL QUANTITY	Up to 10km of purpose designed MTB trail
POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANCE	Local
SUMMARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Proposed trail heads to be established at Eastern Hill Lookout and in Mungabareena Reserve. Size and extent of the trailheads to be identified through master planning process for each site.</li><li>• Descent focused network with 1 or 2 climbs</li><li>• Range of classifications to enable rider progression</li><li>• Hume and Hovell Track alignment refined and incorporated into the network design to minimise user conflict.</li><li>• Revegetation program incorporated into the trail development to improve both ecological value and visitor experience.</li></ul>
INFRASTRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Primary trail head to be located within Mungabareena Reserve, making use of proposed improvements to car parking and picnic facilities in the current master planning for Mungabareena Reserve.</li><li>• Secondary trailhead at existing Eastern Hill lookout, potentially in need of refining vehicle access and car park layout.</li></ul>
MANAGEMENT	AlburyCity



## BENCHMARK CASE STUDY - THE HILL GEELONG

In 2016 Dirt Art built a mountain biking park in Geelong. This is an example of where a mountain biking development has been combined with a revegetation project in a very successful way. In the short space of five years, the site has been transformed from a disused, unvegetated site, to a thriving mountain biking play space with mature trees. Screening trees have been planted around the perimeter of the site which completely obscures the park from view of the road and gives riders the experience of being in nature. The park features a trail head, shelter and picnic tables, and car parking facilities. There is a blue flow trail that traverses the perimeter of the site, as well as skills features, jumps and a free-form natural surface pump track space.





### PRIORITY 3 LOCAL SCALE FACILITIES

The scale of AlburyCity means small local scale facilities which provide for local catchments are required to ensure equitable access for residents across the region. These facilities also offer opportunity to create a diverse suite of facilities across the City, each with a different focus. A variety of facilities with different surface types and feature inclusions will expand opportunities for riders to progress skills. Smaller scale facilities located throughout AlburyCity will also allow for equitable access for all residents with a facility likely to be located close to home.

Opportunity summary:

LOCATION	Various – sites assessed with potential include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black Range Park – Upgraded natural surface pump track</li> <li>• Fredericks Park – Learn to Ride Track</li> <li>• Ernest Grant Park – Pump track</li> <li>• West Albury – Pump Track</li> <li>• CSU Skills Track – Upgrade, with additional features added</li> <li>• New reserves throughout housing developments in Thurgoona – Asphalt pump tracks</li> </ul>
STYLE/TYPE OF TRAILS	Pump track, skills track, learn to ride track
TRAIL QUANTITY	Varies – approx. 200–300sqm riding surface
POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANCE	Local
SUMMARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local scale facilities each with a different focus either in terms of facility type, surface material or features included</li> <li>• Locating facilities to consider projected growth in population in particular youth population</li> </ul>
INFRASTRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ideally located in a park setting with associated amenities</li> </ul>
MANAGEMENT	AlburyCity

## BENCHMARK CASE STUDY - OMEO PUMP TRACK

Omeo pump track was designed and built in 2020 by Common Ground. It is a recently constructed pump track in the Victorian town of Omeo. This pump track is a regionally significant pump track, both in scale and design.

This pump track is unique as it has been designed specific to the location and the town's name is spelled out in the track features. The skills park at one end of the track has been designed to feature parts of the history of Omeo and the mining heritage of the site.



Omeo Pump Track . Image source: Common Ground Trails



Omeo Skills Park . Image source: Common Ground Trails



Omeo Pump Track and Skills Park . Image source: Common Ground Trails

#### PRIORITY 4 COMMUNITY MANAGED JUMP TRACK

Further diversifying the mountain biking offer a jump park will provide opportunity for expression and creativity both in track design and construction and in riding style. There is opportunity to engage the riding community who enjoy creating their own trails in a formal managed setting.

Ideally the facility would be located close to a youth population near where unsanctioned jumps are being built to encourage jumps building to occur in a sanctioned framework. The jumps park must be accessible without a car as users are likely to be teenagers and other young people.

Establishment of this style of facility will help reduce the occurrence of rampant unsanctioned trail building by providing opportunity within a contained and managed setting. It is recommended that the facility be professionally designed in a collaborative manner with the AWMTB club and interested members of the riding community. Construction would then ideally be a mix of professional and volunteer with the base shapes and spacing established by professionals and finishing by volunteers.

Opportunity summary:

LOCATION	To be determined, recommended location to be determined, recommend investigation of a suitable location adjacent to Nail Can Hill Reserve. An additional location is recommended in the Thurgoona growth area
STYLE/TYPE OF TRAILS	Natural surface jumps track facility
TRAIL QUANTITY	2-5 jump lines of varying difficulty
POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANCE	Local
SUMMARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Jumps facility professionally designed with community input</li><li>• Multiple lines with varying difficulty/scale of features to enable rider progression and skill development</li><li>• Management model to be investigated with potential to engage the riding community in design and ongoing maintenance</li></ul>
INFRASTRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Site will need ready access to water for maintenance of the track</li><li>• Pending management model, potential need for a shed to house tools on site</li></ul>
MANAGEMENT	To be determined, recommended partnership between AWMTB club and AlburyCity



## BENCHMARK CASE STUDY – CITY BIKE PARK

City Bike Park is located in Adelaide's CBD. Hand built and maintained by a dedicated crew of volunteers, the park is one of the best known dirt jump trail spots in Australia. This facility is a good example of how the riding community can be effectively engaged to activate and enhance public space.

Originally built in 2004, the park has been through a number of phases of redesign, coming from a competition based facility to more of an all-inclusive recreation facility with jumps to suit beginners, intermediate and advanced riders. The park has been designed, built and managed by a dedicated group of volunteers, until 2017 when the Adelaide City Council raised some concerns regarding insurance.

Negotiations resulted in the volunteer crew being retained and a third party trail building company engaged for safety assessment/auditing and an operational framework put in place. Adelaide City Council provide ongoing support in the form of tools and supplies. Management of the jumps also involves watering before use, covering and chaining when not in use and restricting and monitoring use after rainfall events all tasks which are undertaken by volunteers.

The success of City Bike Park is primarily due to the enthusiasm, and dedication of a few individuals within the community and also the support from the City of Adelaide. For further information on the history of City Bike Park refer to [www.citydirtcrew.com](http://www.citydirtcrew.com)

While the level of community interest in a cycle facility in Albury would suggest that a similar community led jumps line could be feasible, ongoing commitment to maintain is unknown.



## ECONOMIC BENEFITS ANALYSIS

With a strategic focus on developing mountain biking in the Albury region alongside the environmental and social benefits there are a range of potential economic benefits for both the City and the region.

It is recommended that Albury's strategy in regard to mountain bike tourism be to focus on trail development which meets the needs of locals and fosters further development of a vibrant and welcoming riding community. This community combined with quality trail developments will quickly establish Albury as a must visit destination for riders. The survey undertaken as part of this strategy suggests there is already a strong and engaged community of mountain bikers locally. A strong local mountain bike community can have a positive impact on the local economy through bike sales, equipment purchases, repairs at local bike shops and frequenting cafes/bars/restaurants as part of regular social riding. Additionally, the physical and mental health benefits of being on a bike more often has positive flow on effects to the local economy. As importantly is the marketing potential that a passionate local riding fraternity presents. Word of mouth is by far the most effective form of marketing and local riders can become Albury's greatest advocate amongst trail riding enthusiasts.

Cycle tourism is a growing niche tourism market. The market is dominated by cyclists who are motivated to travel to destinations primarily or solely because of the routes, trails and the riding experience. Events are also a key driver of travel motivation, and destination and facility awareness. The market also includes a much larger segment of cyclists who will ride while on holiday in a destination, although bike riding is not their primary reason for the holiday. 416,000 domestic overnight visitors to Victoria went cycling on their trip in 2013-14 (increasing 66% from corresponding results in 2007-08)<sup>7</sup> this has only continued to grow.

The travel restrictions caused by 2020 have added to the growing popularity of mountain biking. Anecdotal evidence indicates that mountain bike sales have never been stronger (and are only constrained by a lack of stock), with ebikes being the fastest growing sales sector in mountain bikes. Consumer spending has been constrained more than ever. International and often interstate travel has been off the cards, as has discretionary spending on sporting events and festivals and concerts. As such there is much less competition for consumer time and money. This has been matched with an uptake in government spending on trails in a move to get the economy kick-started. There is no better time to capitalise on this growing popularity for mountain biking amongst the Australian population as a way to stimulate regional destination rejuvenation.

The cycle tourist is considered to be a high yielding visitor with above average day and overnight spend. The average daily spend for a domestic overnight cycle tourist is slightly lower than the general visitor but they tend to stay longer so their overall trip spend is higher. Cycle tourists also have a higher propensity to travel to regional areas and tend to enjoy going out to restaurants and engaging in other outdoor activities. They also have a tendency to become repeat visitors to a region.

The total estimated expenditure for the year ending December 2010 by domestic overnight, daytrip and international overnight visitors that participated in cycling in Victoria is \$362 million<sup>7</sup>. Being on the doorstep of North East Victoria's High Country, which is fast becoming one of Australia's premier cycling destinations, presents considerable opportunity for Albury Wodonga to capitalise on the existing tourism market, with a key point of difference being all the other activities on offer in Albury Wodonga for non-riding members of traveling groups and families. There is an opportunity to package and promote a 1 - 2 week 'MTB road trip' that includes Albury and links Albury to some of the best mountain bike destinations in Australia.

In the year ending June 2018, Victoria's High Country received over 3.6 million visitors, spending over \$1.1 billion. The region currently receives 103,000 cycle tourists per year, spending \$50 million when in the region – more than any other regional destination. Cycle tourism visitor growth is forecast to continue, with the mid-growth scenario projecting 255,000 visitors participating in cycling in Victoria's High Country by 2025.<sup>8</sup>

Events also have potential to bring significant economic benefit to Albury. Mountain Bike Australia indicates the following average economic impacts for the host region of key events:

- \$570,000 for MTBA round events;
- \$1.98 million for National Championships.

The economic modelling presented in Table 6 and 7 has been developed to explore the current and potential economic impact of developing mountain biking in Albury. While no accurate trail usage based on visitor type is available, Common Ground have made assumptions based on best available data.

Table 6: Estimated current economic impact

USER TYPE	TOTAL VISITORS/ RESIDENTS	TOTAL MOUNTAIN BIKERS	AVERAGE DAILY SPEND	AVERAGE OVERNIGHT STAY	VALUE PER VISITOR <sup>1</sup>	TOTAL VALUE
Local Rider	1402.3074 <sup>2</sup>	1402	\$20 <sup>3</sup>	-	-	\$1,121,845.92 <sup>4</sup>
Domestic Day Visitor	983,000 <sup>5</sup>	983 <sup>6</sup>	\$171	-	-	\$168,093.00
Domestic Overnight Visitor	2,007,000 <sup>5</sup>	2,007 <sup>6</sup>	\$174	2.4	\$417.60	\$349,218.00 <sup>7</sup>
Direct Impact						\$1,639,156.92
Direct & indirect impact						\$3,130,789.72

The proposed new suite of mountain bike trails and facilities would establish Albury Wodonga as a Regionally significant mountain bike trail destination. This change when combined with effective marketing and promotion, could deliver significant visitation from outside the local and regional area.

Table 7: Estimated potential economic impact

USER TYPE	TOTAL VISITORS/ RESIDENTS	TOTAL MOUNTAIN BIKERS	AVERAGE DAILY SPEND	AVERAGE OVERNIGHT STAY	VALUE PER VISITOR <sup>1</sup>	TOTAL VALUE
Local Rider	1739.6166 <sup>7</sup>	1739	\$20 <sup>3</sup>	-	-	\$1,391,693.28 <sup>4</sup>
Domestic Day Visitor	983,000 <sup>5</sup>	5,898 <sup>9</sup>	\$171	-	-	\$1,008,558.00
Domestic Overnight Visitor	2,007,000 <sup>5</sup>	12,042 <sup>9</sup>	\$174	2.4	\$417.60	\$5,028,739.20 <sup>10</sup>
Direct Impact						\$7,428,990.48
Direct & indirect impact						\$14,189,371.82

Assumptions:

1. Total visitors x av spend x av nights / total visitors.
2. 54,353 (pop. of Albury) x 12.9% (National Cycling Participation Survey no. of NSW residents who rode a bike in a week) x 20% (DVS Growing Cycling Tourism in Australia av. use of off-road trails).
3. 20% of national daytrip average spend of \$107. Instead of day trip spend, this is weekly spend. Day visitors are those who travel for a round trip distance of at least 50 kilometres, are away from home for at least four hours and do not spend a night away from home.
4. x 40 weeks of the year.
5. Domestic day visitors and overnight visitor numbers are sourced from 2019 Visit Albury Wodonga statistics.
6. Assumed that only 0.1% of numbers would actually participate in mountain biking.
7. Not multiplied by number of nights as it's assumed visitors would only ride 1 day of their visit.
8. 67,427 (projected pop. of Albury 2036) x 12.9% (National Cycling Participation Survey no. of NSW resident who rode a bike in a week) \* 20% (DVS Growing Cycling Tourism in Australia av. use of off-road trails).
9. Assumed increase to 0.6% of numbers would now participate in mountain biking with improved experience.
10. Now multiplied by number of nights as there is enough projected trail to keep them riding the entirety of their stay.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### VISION

Albury will be a vibrant hub of mountain biking activity and a must ride destination for locals and visitors alike. The region's unique attributes will provide a diverse suite of sustainable riding opportunities while recognising and respecting ecological and cultural values.

### OBJECTIVES

This vision will be delivered through a focus on the following objectives:

#### PROTECTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL VALUES

Ensure trail development minimises impacts and where possible improves existing values.

#### COLLABORATION & COMMUNITY

Strengthen the mountain biking community and foster strong connections between key stakeholders.

#### QUALITY TRAILS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Develop a suite of sustainable mountain bike experiences which respond to identified demand and current trends.

#### PLANNING & MANAGEMENT

Establish sustainable governance and management models.



Nail Can Hill Image Credit: Visit Albury Wodonga

## ACTIONS

For each objective a series of actions have been outlined and assigned a priority as follows

Short Term – within 2 years, Medium Term – 2-5 years, Long Term – 5 years+, Ongoing

### OBJECTIVE 1 – PROTECTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL VALUES

The first objective is aimed at ensuring trail development minimises impacts to cultural heritage and environmental values and where possible improves existing values through targeted revegetation and weed control programs.

AREA		ACTION		PRIORITY
1.1	Trail development and delivery	1.1.1	Reduce pressure on natural reserves such as Nail Can Hill by creating more opportunities for people to ride in different locations across the City. This Strategy proposes a suite of different facilities across the City (including pump and jump tracks) to achieve this.	Short term
		1.1.2	As part of formal trail development close and rehabilitate unsanctioned trails that are deemed unsustainable or do not meet identified trail style preferences.	Short term
1.2	Planning	1.2.1	Ensure appropriate environmental and cultural heritage surveys and consultation occurs early in the planning and design process for all trail developments. These surveys should inform concept and detailed design phases.	Ongoing
1.3	Management	1.3.1	Develop and implement a program of conservation works specifically designed to identify, protect and enhance habitat for threatened species and communities known, or likely, to occur within areas identified for trail development.	Ongoing
1.4	Education and training	1.4.1	Develop education programs for all trail users that outlines the importance of the local environment and the potential impacts of illegal trail building.	Ongoing

## OBJECTIVE 2 – QUALITY TRAILS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Develop a suite of sustainable, interconnected mountain bike experiences which respond to identified demand and current trends.

AREA	ACTION		PRIORITY
2.1	Trail development and delivery	2.1.1 Undertake master planning for Nail Can Hill which aims to develop and maintain Nail Can Hill as a regionally significant trail network.  The master plan process should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include assessment of environmental and cultural values to determine areas of high value and where trail development is appropriate</li> <li>• Consider the existing trail network and suitability for retention with any trails considered unsuitable to be rehabilitated</li> <li>• Consider all users of the reserve including walkers, runners and riders</li> <li>• Identify required infrastructure at trailhead locations</li> </ul>	Short term
		2.1.2 Include additional operating funding to ensure mountain bike trails are managed and maintained to an appropriate standard.	Short term
		2.1.3 Establish a locally significant trail network at Eastern Hill.	Short term
		2.1.4 Design and construct a learn to ride track at Fredericks Park.	Short term
		2.1.5 Design and construct a pump track at Ernest Grant Park.	Short term
		2.1.6 Upgrade the natural surface pump track at Black Range Park.	Short term
		2.1.7 Investigate the feasibility of establishing a community managed jump track facility adjacent or in close proximity to Nail Can Hill Reserve and an additional site in Thurgoona.	Short term
		2.1.8 Review the long term status of the CSU skills track with the plan to maintain and upgrade with the addition of new features.	Short term
		2.1.9 Develop a signage plan in collaboration with Wodonga City to help deliver a regionally consistent approach to signage, covering the full hierarchy of signage from trailhead to wayfinding and interpretation.	Short term
		2.1.10 Establish a suitable site for development of an event centre to facilitate hosting of local, regional and state scale MTB events.	Short term
		2.1.11 Incorporate the development of pump tracks into youth facility provision within new housing developments in growth areas wherever possible/ appropriate.	Ongoing
		2.1.12 Prioritise missing links in off road shared use path network to ensure mountain bike facilities are connected.	Ongoing



### OBJECTIVE 3 – COLLABORATION AND COMMUNITY

Strengthen the mountain biking community and foster strong connections between key stakeholders.

AREA		ACTION		PRIORITY
3.1	Partnerships	3.1.1	Establish a partnership with Wodonga City to ensure a cohesive approach to provision of mountain bike facilities, infrastructure, promotion and management.	Ongoing
		3.1.2	Establish a partnership with the Albury and District Local Aboriginal Land Council to engage with the local Indigenous community and promote opportunities for engagement through skills workshops or trail maintenance days etc.	Ongoing
		3.1.3	Investigate establishment of a partnership with local schools to establish a Trails Construction School, promoting career pathways and engagement in sustainable trail development.	Medium term
3.2	Community	3.2.1	Investigate local community programs which engage and educate locals in trail culture and environmental stewardship, for example group rides, skill sessions, trail maintenance days, conservation surveys, monitoring, revegetation and weed control works.	Ongoing
		3.2.2	Work with the AWMTB Club to develop the MTB events calendar.	Ongoing
3.3	Education and training	3.3.1	Support the development of trail related businesses (bike hire, tours), and invest in training for trail guides.	Ongoing
		3.3.2	Support development of skills training days for volunteers (trail maintenance) and riders (riding competency).	Ongoing

## OBJECTIVE 4 – PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Establish sustainable governance and management models

AREA		ACTION		PRIORITY
4.1	Governance	4.1.1	Establish the preferred / most suitable governance model for proposals that cross multiple tenures.	Short term
		4.1.2	Develop written MOU's between land managers and user groups to facilitate ongoing trail maintenance and management.	Short term
		4.1.3	Negotiate with private land holders to include trails traversing private property into the public trail network.	Short term
		4.1.4	Negotiate with NSW Crown Land and private landholders regarding consolidation of long term land tenure and management.	Short term
4.2	Planning	4.2.1	Implement a thorough and consistent planning approach in development of sustainable trails (reference MTBA Trail Development guidelines).	Ongoing
4.3	Management	4.3.1	Install standard research tools and data collection devices at all existing and new locations to create a database to aid in management and future planning.	Short term
		4.3.2	Build upon the volunteer program to assist with ongoing management of trails across tenures, involving the AWMTB Club and other local groups. Formalise roles and responsibilities and ensure the program is accessible, well promoted, coordinated and adequately resourced.	Short term
		4.3.3	Develop a maintenance plan for trail networks and facilities as part of trail development.	Ongoing
		4.3.4	Develop appropriate maintenance management guidelines (including inspection regimes) to ensure trail networks are kept to suitable standard.	Ongoing
4.4	Revenue	4.4.1	Investigate implementation of a diverse range of revenue raising pathways to ensure ongoing source of funds for trail maintenance.	Ongoing
4.5	Tourism	4.5.1	Package the MTB offering in Albury/Wodonga and leverage the uniqueness as a riding destination.	Medium term
		4.5.2	Market and promote a 1 – 2 week road trip loop that links Albury/ Wodonga to some of the best MTB in Australia. Tumut – Tumbarumba – Tabingo – Albury/Wodonga – Beechworth – Yackandandah – Bright – Mt Beauty – Falls Creek – Omeo – Thredbo.	Long term
		4.5.3	Promote the longer distance trails and touring in the region – Murray River Adventure Trail, Hume and Hovell Track, High Country Rail Trail.	Ongoing

## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Priority trail and infrastructure recommendations have been outlined below with next steps and responsible agency/group indicated.

ACTION	NEXT STEPS	RESPONSIBILITY
2.1.1 Nail Can Hill Trail Network	<p>Immediate trail maintenance of existing trails to address trail degradation issues. Implement recommendations contained within 2020 Trail Audit.</p> <p>Master plan with the intention of consolidating existing trails and creating a functional trail network (for walkers, runners and riders) at Nail Can Hill. Master planning to include environmental and cultural heritage assessments to determine areas suitable for trail development.</p> <p>Establish Range Road as the primary trailhead with investigations into locating AWMTB club facilities in this location. Secondary trailheads should be established at Pemberton Street, Boonie Doon Park, Centaur Road and Gap Road. Further details regarding trailhead locations and facilities provided should be determined in master planning phase with an understanding of proposed trail network function and layout.</p> <p>Work with NSW Crown and AWMTB Club to establish agreed management model and maintenance program.</p>	AlburyCity NSW Crown
2.1.3 Eastern Hill Trail Network	<p>Undertake detailed design for a trail network at Eastern Hill.</p> <p>Hume and Hovell Track alignment refined and incorporated into the network design to minimise user conflict.</p> <p>Revegetation program incorporated into the trail development to improve both ecological value and visitor experience.</p>	AlburyCity
2.1.4 Fredericks Park Learn to Ride Track	Incorporate learn to ride track into Fredericks Park redevelopment as per the master plan for site.	AlburyCity
2.1.5 Ernest Grant Park	Incorporate pump track into Ernest Grant Park redevelopment as per the master plan for site.	AlburyCity
2.1.6 Black Range Park pump track	<p>Rejuvenate existing natural surface pump track, reduce rideable area to 400sqm.</p> <p>Undertake design works to reconsider layout and feature inclusion appropriate to local scale facility.</p>	AlburyCity
2.1.7 Jump track	<p>Investigate the feasibility of establishing a community managed jump track facility adjacent or in close proximity to Nail Can Hill.</p> <p>Establish community/AWMTB Club desire to be involved in management of the facility</p>	AlburyCity AWMTB Club
2.1.8 CSU Skills Track	Liaise with Charles Sturt University and AWMTB Club to upgrade the CSU skills track with addition of new features.	Charles Sturt University/ AWMTB club



## INDICATIVE COSTS

The table below outlines costs associated with the priority trail and infrastructure recommendations. Costing has been determined based on previous Common Ground Trails design and construction contracts, and industry knowledge. It should be noted that these costs are indicative and subject to large changes based on scope, materials, additional site furniture, re-location of overhead or underground services, de-contamination of land, upgrades to existing parking, toilets and roads, and many other influencing factors.

ACTION	OPC CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT	OPC DETAILED DESIGN	OPC CONSTRUCTION	MAINTENANCE (PER ANNUM)
2.1.1 Nail Can Hill Trail Network (40km of MTB trail and 10km of walk/run trail)	\$40,000-50,000 (note requirement for comprehensive master planning)	\$150,000	\$2,250,000 (\$45/m)	\$112,500 (5% of construction)
2.1.3 Eastern Hill Trail Network (20km of trail)	Completed as part of Strategy preparation	\$60,000	\$900,000 (\$45/m)	\$45,000 (5% of construction)
2.1.5 Local scale pump track	\$20,000	\$40,000	\$600,000 - \$700,000	\$35,000
2.1.7 Jump track	\$10,000	\$20,000	\$100,000-\$200,000	\$5,000
2.1.6 Black Range Park pump track (400sqm rejuvenation of existing natural surface pump track)	Not required	\$15,000.00	\$200,000	\$5,000
2.1.8 CSU Skills Track	Not required	\$5,000	\$40,000	\$5,000

## CONCLUSION

Mountain biking is a growing sport locally and nationally and has a range of social and economic benefits for the individual, the community and regions. This strategy has identified that the Albury landscape is diverse and offers potential for a variety of accessible experiences for mountain biking.

The stakeholder and community engagement process identified that there is a strong local community of riders that are primarily seeking an all mountain trail experience featuring technical descents and non-technical climbs. It was also identified that currently there is a lack of opportunity for rider progression.

While there is potential for significant community and social benefit through the development of MTB facilities, there are also risks associated with inappropriate development. The cornerstone of successful development is appropriate site selection. With an understanding of the local rider profile a number of sites across AlburyCity were assessed for their suitability to host a trail network or mountain bike facility. This assessment outlined that Nail Can Hill and Eastern Hill provide the highest potential for hosting a trail network, with desirable terrain and good access. A number of smaller parks were also identified as having potential to host other mountain bike facilities such as pump tracks. These smaller facilities would cater for skill progression and give people a chance to practice skills within riding distance of home.

The strategy also recognises the significant environmental and cultural heritage values present within Albury. Unsanctioned trail building and inappropriate trail development can and has had detrimental impacts on these values in locations around the City including at Nail Can Hill. It is recommended that a considered approach to trail development be applied as per the process outlined in the Australian Mountain Bike Management Guidelines. This eight stage process includes a thorough assessment of environmental and cultural heritage values in the early planning phases to determine areas of high value and where trail development is appropriate at a particular site. Through providing facilities that respond to identified demand and current trends and implementing appropriate management structures to ensure effective ongoing management of those facilities, there will be less incentive for locals to continue building unsanctioned trails.

Short term actions identified in the strategy have a focus on providing trails and facilities that meet the identified demand and ensuring governance and management approach are effective and sustainable. These actions will be bolstered with implementation of actions identified around partnerships, community and education. With implementation of the recommendations outlined in the strategy Albury has potential to become a vibrant hub of mountain biking activity that ensures minimal impacts to environmental and cultural values while also seeking to improve those values.

## REFERENCES

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