



PRIORS CREEK MASTER PLAN



HJWEL JONES
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

REEL Planning and Hywel Jones Landscape Architects were engaged by Tablelands Regional Council to develop a Master Plan for the Priors Creek Precinct in Atherton.

The area included in the master plan is predominantly vacant. The area of the former railway line forms a linear parkland along Priors Creek, and contains the Atherton Rail Trail, Mountain Bike Technical Skills Park and interpretive facilities. Lot 15 Railway Lane and part of Lot 1 has been developed as a public car park, which is accessed off Railway Lane. Fronting Railway Lane to the north of the Master Plan area, two smaller sites have been developed for St Vincent De Paul, a Business Centre, Landline Consulting and a stationery store. The built form of these buildings adjacent the rail corridor is principally single story former goods sheds. On the opposite side of Railway Lane are the backs of premises fronting Main Street, with land generally used for parking and servicing back of house, with the exception of two drive-thru bottle shops; both of which access off Railway Lane.

The Priors Creek corridor western boundary is heavily vegetated and forms a dense buffer to the residential development behind. The rail trail forms a linear park which extends north and south of the site providing links through to Tolga and the Mountain bike trails. To the east is the Atherton Central Business District, which is centred around and along Main Street. To the south the area adjoins the Silo shopping centre and car park.



1.2 Design Brief

Tablelands Regional Council provided a detailed design brief for the Master Plan which was based on previous public consultation undertaken directly with a number of key stakeholders. Reference is hereby made Council's Officer's Report by Patrick Clifton which outlines and summarises the consultation process undertaken by Council.

A brief summary of some of the outcomes from these working group discussions include:

1. Desired activities that should be incorporated into the Master Plan for Priors Creek include (but are not limited to) a bike shop, café, residential accommodation, recreational activities, retail development, BMX track, public car parking, continued retention of the mountain bike activities, enhanced pedestrian activities, mixed commercial, children's playground, gym, good public toilets.
2. Many believe that Priors Creek provides opportunities for (but not limited to) family recreation, RV parking, outdoor movies and/or markets, potential bus / public transport link, water play park, bbq areas, natural auditorium for public events, adventure playground, and interpretive signage.
3. Many see the success of the Priors Creek Master Plan dependent on the retention and enhancement of the existing trail head facilities, and maintenance of the Rail Trail as a pedestrian thoroughfare. Further, it was determined the creation of a family focussed commercial recreation area (similar to the Cairns Esplanade) with day and night activity would also be important to the success of area. Another key important element would include the retention of the natural creek area and green corridor.
4. It was determined that the type of built form to be developed in the corridor could include multi-story with accommodation above focussing on the rail trail. Structures within the corridor should include open style pergolas with decking fronting the rail trail.
5. When asked about how traffic should be accommodated in the Master Plan, the following comments were provided:
 - One way vehicle loop from Silo Shopping Centre
 - Concern that any increase in vehicle movements could encourage rat running, so would need to be controlled
 - Should be improved pedestrian permeability
6. Interestingly, when asked about how the Master Plan should interact with the rail trail and the conservation park, the responses included the development of a formal commercial node on the rail trail with links to the informal activities on the rail trail as the key feature. It was also noted that interpretive signage identifying the history of the area should also be included.
7. It was determined that a formal square alongside passive informal areas would be appropriate as a civic space / speakers forum. It was also agreed that a pedestrian market square would be an excellent idea.
8. It was determined that the Master Plan should cater for families and the wider community, including tourists. Further, it was agreed that Priors Creek should be developed as a key destination for Atherton.
9. Other comments included
 - concern about impact on the Main Street Traders
 - the potential for Priors Creek to provide retail premises open on the weekends
 - the need for the corridor to be lit at night

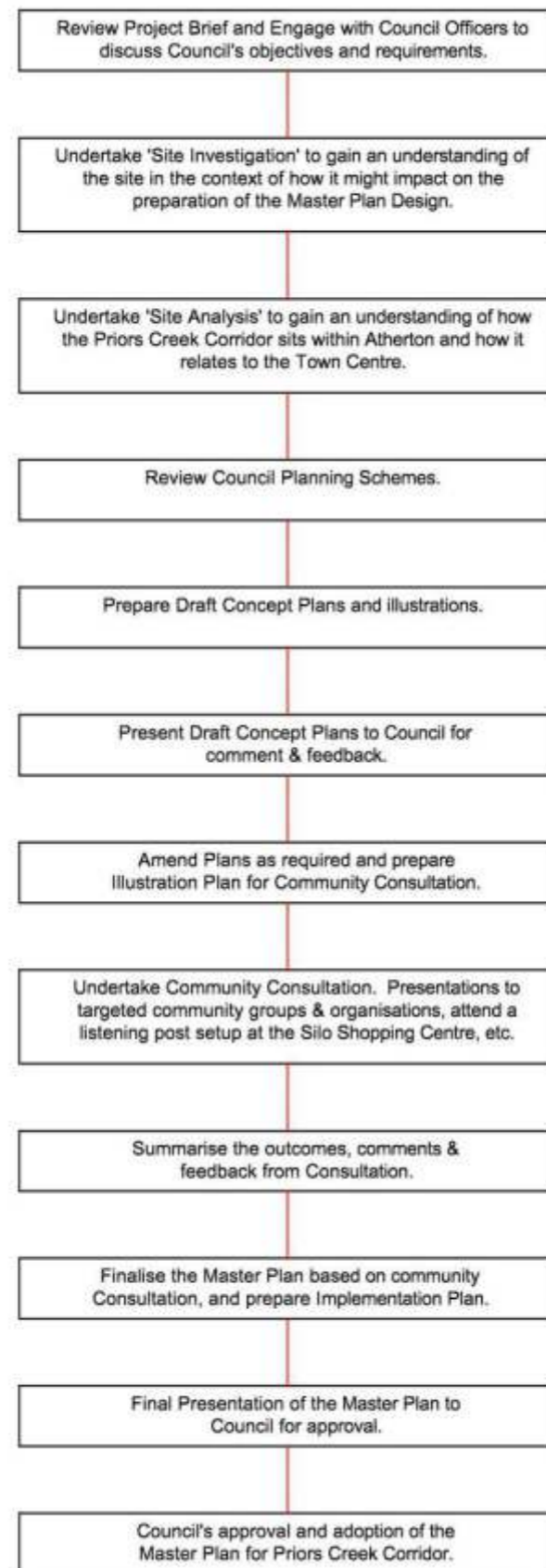


Fig. 1 - Design Process

The stakeholder consultation identified that there are common themes for the development of the area:

- The development of the area as a pedestrian dominated mixed use area comprising recreation, commercial and residential uses that is attractive to both tourists and residents alike.
- The retention and expansion of the established mountain bike activities alongside expanded family recreation facilities and multi-functional public spaces.
- The continued maintenance of Priors Creek as a natural asset and a focus of the area.
- A built form and sense of place, including interpretive signage that reflects the importance of the historic use.

The attached report confirms that Council has adopted the following Vision and Objectives for the site; and that both of which should form the basis for the preparation of a Master Plan for the Priors Creek Precinct.

The agreed **'Vision'** for the Priors Creek Precinct:

"A family oriented mixed use and leisure area, with a unique sense of place that focuses on the rail trail and builds upon the established biking activities whilst establishing the area as a principal destination on the Atherton Tablelands"

The agreed **'Objectives'** for the development of the Priors Creek Precinct include:

- The development of the area as a pedestrian dominated mixed use area comprising recreation, commercial and residential uses, that is attractive to both tourists and residents alike.
- The retention and expansion of the established mountain bike activities alongside expanded family recreation facilities and multi-functional public spaces.
- The continued maintenance of Priors Creek as a natural asset and a focus of the area.
- A multi-storey built form that faces the rail trail and Priors Creek with residential uses on the floors above
- A built form and sense of place, including interpretive signage that reflects the importance of the historic use.

1.3 Design Process

Before commencing the Master Planning exercise, the design team determined a logical and practical process or procedures to follow. The flow diagram presented on this page indicates the various stages of the process that were followed. The outcomes of each step of the process informed the next step and so on. It is important in any Master Planning exercise to implement such a process to ensure all works remain focussed and targeted towards achieving the desired outcome.



Fig. 2 - Extent of Site Investigation



Fig. 3 - Site Break up for Initial Investigations

2.0 THE SITE AND LOCALITY

A key aspect of any Master Planning exercise is getting to know the site and its surrounds. It was important to gain a thorough understanding of the Priors Creek site and its context in terms of how the corridor fits into Atherton with linkages to the Main Street and surrounding areas. To do this, the design team spent a number of days walking the site, marking up plans, and taking hundreds of photographs to record all features and its surrounds. Further, desktop research and investigation was also undertaken into the history of the site to gain an understanding of its background and function over the years.

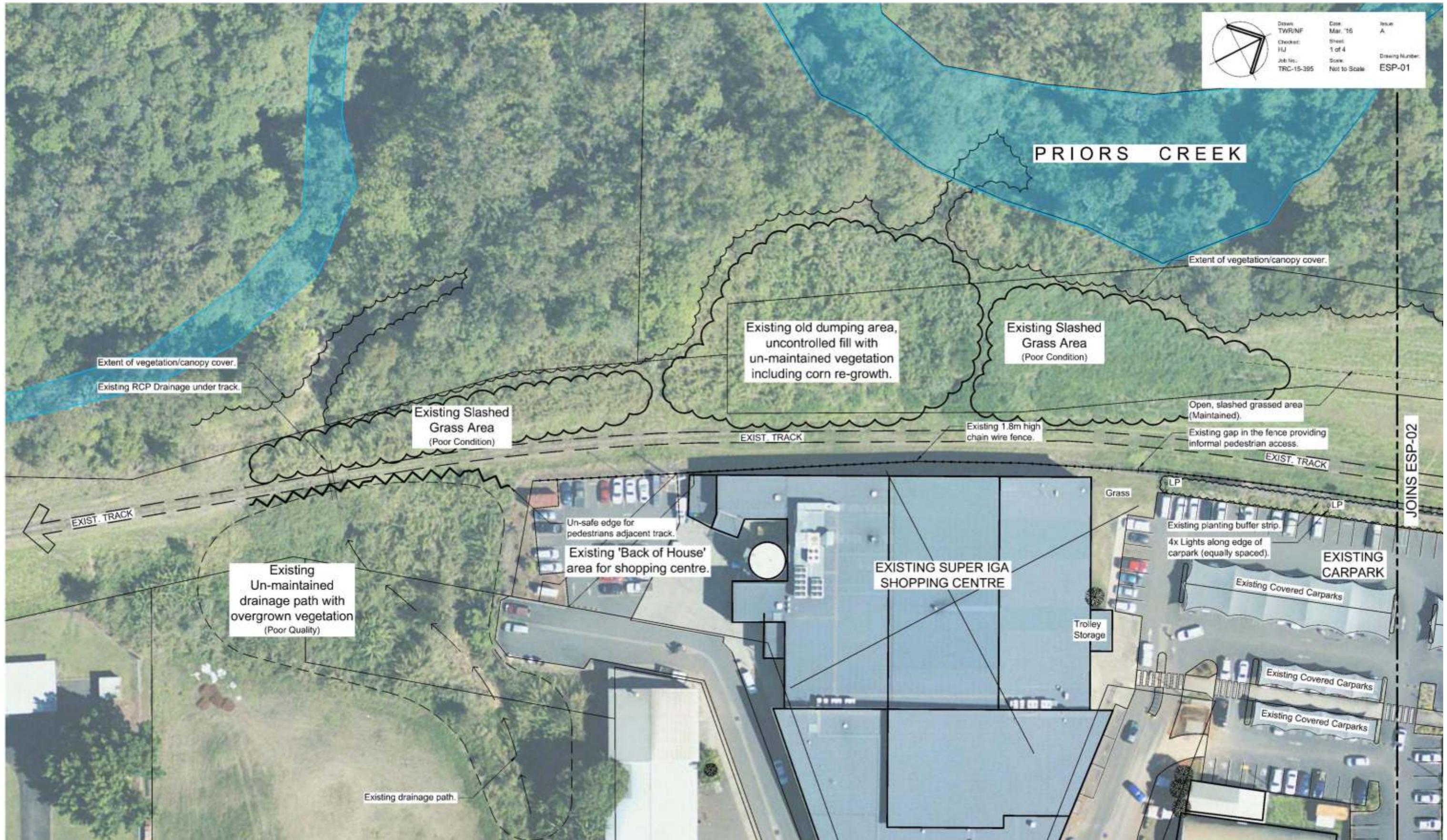
Priors Creek is located to the west of the Main Street on the fringe of the Atherton CBD. It is accessed from Vernon Street, Jack Street, and the northern end of Railway Lane.

The west of the area is bordered by Priors Creek, which contains a significant area of remnant vegetation and forms a backdrop and buffer to the residential land beyond. Centrally within the area is the former railway corridor that has been developed into a rail trail and includes a covered rest area and pump track. This is considered a represent a significant opportunity to enhance the recreation qualities of the rail corridor and provide a gateway back into Atherton Centre. To the South, the site borders the Silo Shopping Centre and associated car park. This Shopping Centre contains the IGA supermarket and other specialty stores. The east of the site contains a public car park and a number of commercial / light industrial tenancies, including the St Vincent De Paul and the Jack Street Business Centre.

The site is located directly adjacent to Priors Creek and as such, may be subject to flooding during peak rain events. As this study is to create a Master Plan for a recreational corridor, no flooding assessments or analysis has been undertaken. It is envisaged that this would be investigated at the detailed design stage as part of the ROL process for lot configuration. Similarly, the site has substantial drainage infrastructure. This has not been investigated in detail at the Master Plan stage. This too would need a thorough review and assessment at detail design in a manner that enables the design outcomes to be delivered. There is also significant erosion and scouring at each of the stormwater outlets that will need mitigation works to enable the safe functional use of the corridor for recreation purposes as well as to reinstate erosion damage along the creek embankments. As these are actions that Council will need to commit too to deliver the design outcomes of the Master Plan, we have not investigated as part of the Master Planning process.

As a record of the site investigations, a series of existing Site Plans have been developed and are presented herein to identify the existing site features in and around the site. These were compiled after undertaking a detailed walk across the site. In addition, 610 photographs were taken of the site and its surrounds. These photographs have proven to be invaluable as they provide an opportunity to review existing site elements and features progressively throughout the master planning process.

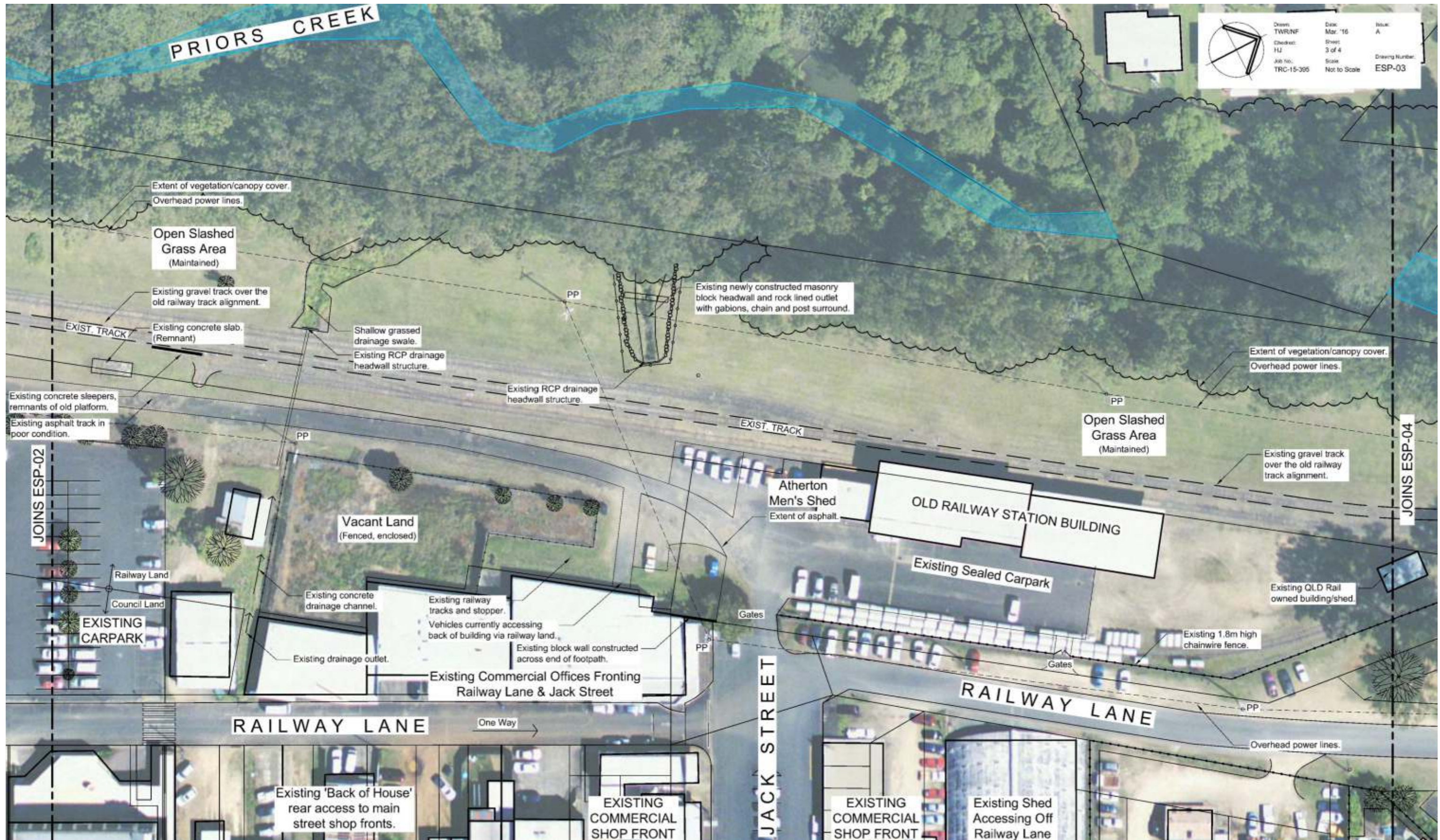
For convenience in terms of presenting the existing Site Plans, the site has been divided into four (4) areas as identified on the adjacent plan, and as described over the following pages.

















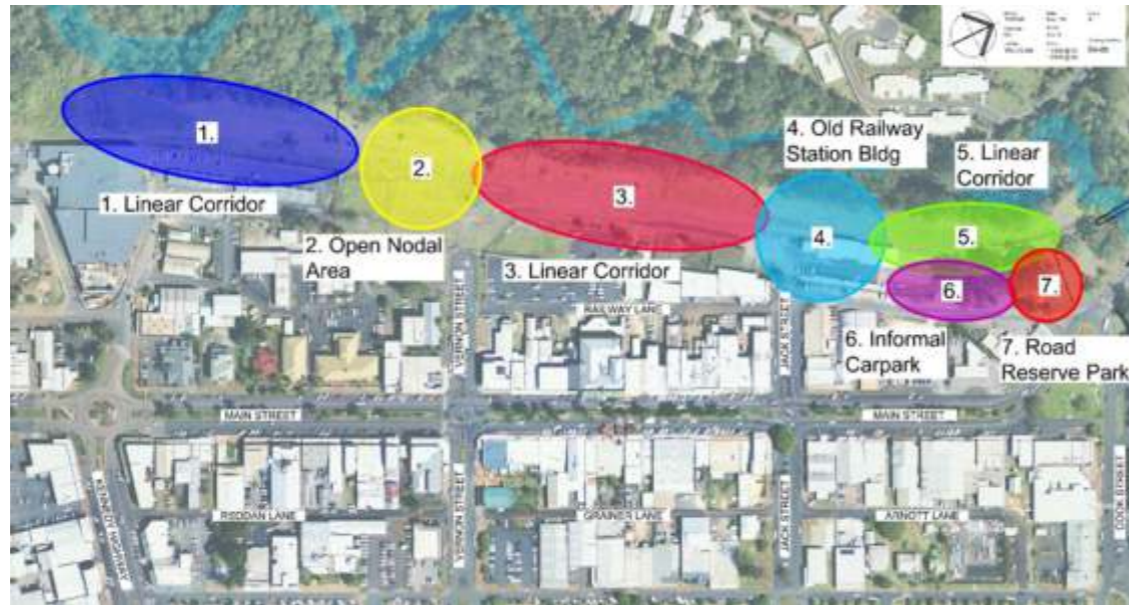


Fig. 4 - Existing Site Uses



Fig. 5 - Interface with adjacent sites

3.0 SITE ANALYSIS

This phase involved undertaking an investigation and analysis of the site to gain an understanding and appreciation of issues that may affect the Master Plan Design outcomes of the corridor. A more detailed investigation into all constraints including flooding and drainage will need to be undertaken before commencing the next phase of detail design development and documentation of works to be constructed. At this early stage, it was determined that flooding and drainage would not impact the design of the corridor. It is highly critical however that these items be assessed for mitigation works at the detail design phase to determine how the Master Plan can be delivered.

The site analysis for the purpose of the Master Plan included:

- identifying all physical characteristics including any built form and hard infrastructure, as well as any public realm / open space features and elements;
- identifying all Cultural characteristics including social fabric, zoning and policy settings; and
- identifying all Commercial opportunities including land ownership and land use opportunities

In addition to the site analysis, we also undertook an Urban Design and Legibility Analysis of the site and its surrounds to better understand how the site functions from an urban design perspective and to identify any opportunities for improvement in terms of movement, circulation, and Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED). The following plans represent the outcomes of this analysis.

3.1 Existing Site Uses

The site was analysed and divided into separate areas of current use. Refer to the 'Existing Site Uses' Plan. Generally, the site is an under-utilised and under developed component of the Atherton Open Space Network. Aside from the Mountain Bike usage, the site is used informally for walking and informal kick about space. The Existing Site Uses plan illustrates the site in terms of existing form and function, and is described as follows:

1. **Linear Corridor**
 Located directly opposite the Silo Shopping Centre Carpark; this area has a strong sense of enclosure, and is bordered by the Priors Creek vegetation to the West, and the shopping centre carpark to the east. There are some views to this area but only from the shopping centre carpark. This portion of land is open ended with the extension of the corridor to the South which becomes narrower, and the mountain bike area directly to its North.
2. **Open Nodal Area**
 This area located off the end of Vernon Street forms the main entrance into the Priors Creek Corridor from the Town Centre. The main feature of this area is the existing Trail Head Facilities and Mountain Bike training tracks. It is quite open in nature, however; there are some surveillance issues associated with the signage panels on the trail head building which should be addressed to open views and to maximise visual surveillance of any activities.
3. **Linear Corridor**
 Similar to area 1, this portion of corridor is slightly more open in nature. It is also bordered to the West with the vegetation of Priors Creek, but it also has an interface with the rear of the existing Council carpark and back of house of the existing buildings along Railway Lane. Access to this area is from either Vernon Street or Jack Street.
4. **Existing Old Railway Station Building**
 The old railway station building and carpark currently accommodates the Atherton Men's Shed. This is a community organisation and is recognised as one of Australia's largest male based Community Development organisations. Opportunities exist however for the possible re-use of this building as a key community shared facility to help 'energise' the railway corridor as a greater community destination.



Fig. 6 - Existing Land Uses



Fig. 7 - Existing Land Tenure

6. Existing Informal Carpark Under the Trees
Located within the road reserve along the northern end of Railway Lane, this informal section of parkland accommodates informal Caravan, RV, and trailer parking. It is the only informal carpark located near Priors Creek and the Town Centre that does accommodate limited but informal parking for larger vehicles.
7. Road Reserve Park
This small pocket park is located at the northern end of the site directly adjacent to the Main Street & Cook Street roundabout. The park is green and well maintained and is highly visible from the adjacent roads and roundabout, however; there are no facilities for use.

3.2 Interface with Adjacent Sites

The site was analysed in terms of how well the adjacent lands and properties front or address the rail trail corridor. Aside from access to the site from either end of the corridor, the only other formal access to the site is from the ends of Vernon Street and Jack Street. This is represented on the 'Interface with Adjacent Sites' plan. Essentially, the town centre area of Atherton turns its back on the rail trail corridor with very little direct access to it.

To improve the corridor, it has been determined that a key outcome should be to increase pedestrian permeability and to focus on maximising access to the rail trail corridor for use and recreation. The adjacent land uses should provide better frontage with direct physical and visual access to the corridor for greater exposure.

3.3 Existing Land Use

As identified on the 'Land Use Plan', the key feature of Atherton is the Main Street. It is one of the most successful main streets in terms of focus and sustainability. Here, all business and shop fronts address the Main Street, and the Main Street is the central hub of activity and community focus. Secondary to this are shop fronts and commercial/retail shops that front and address the side streets and streets located behind the main street. This plan also identifies the Shopping Centre precinct as well as the Government and Services precinct.

3.4 Land Tenure

Most of the rail trail corridor is divided into either Land Lease land or Freehold land. Council currently has a license for the rail trail land from the Department of Transport and Main Roads. A lease has been prepared and agreed to and should now be actioned by State Government.

The lease permits the use of the land for the purpose of multipurpose recreational transport use and any other use of land consented to by the Chief Executive administering the Transport Infrastructure Act. Subject to express consent the Council are also permitted to install structures, etc.; associated with the overall permitted use. The principal use of the land must remain as a transport corridor. Other community and commercial uses are likely to be permitted where they do not impact on the land for that purpose.

It is understood that the lease, subject to agreement from the Chief Executive and as long as it does not affect the principal transport use of the corridor, permits the use of the land for a range of purposes. This could include community markets and events and limited commercial use.

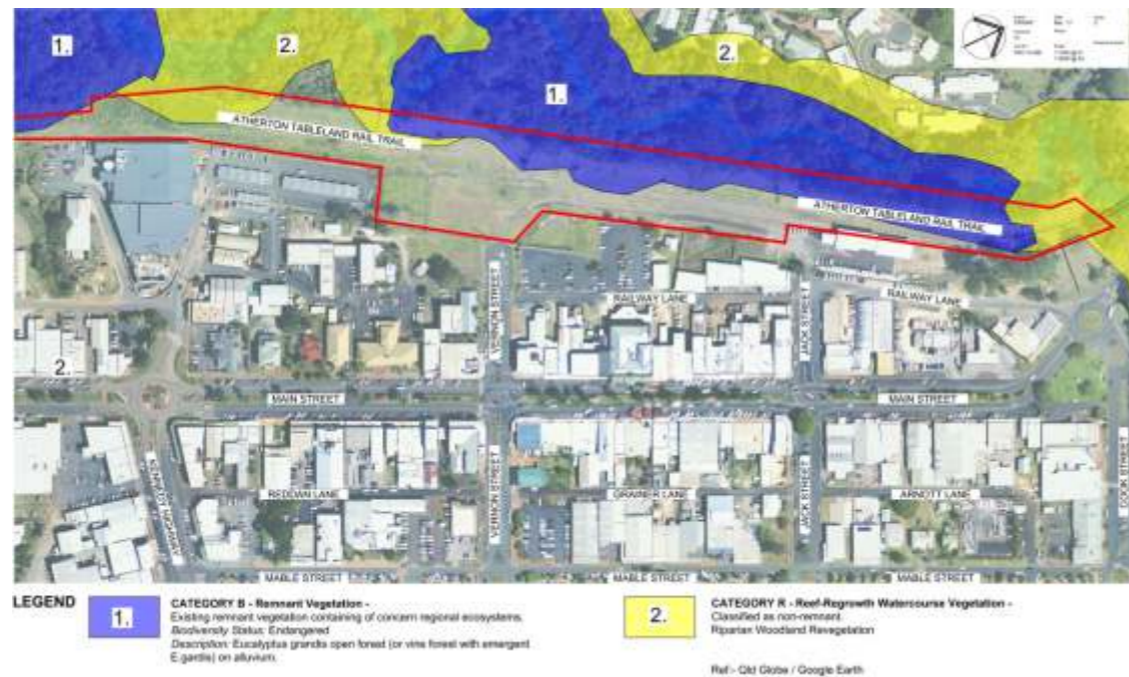


Fig. 8 - Vegetation Mapping

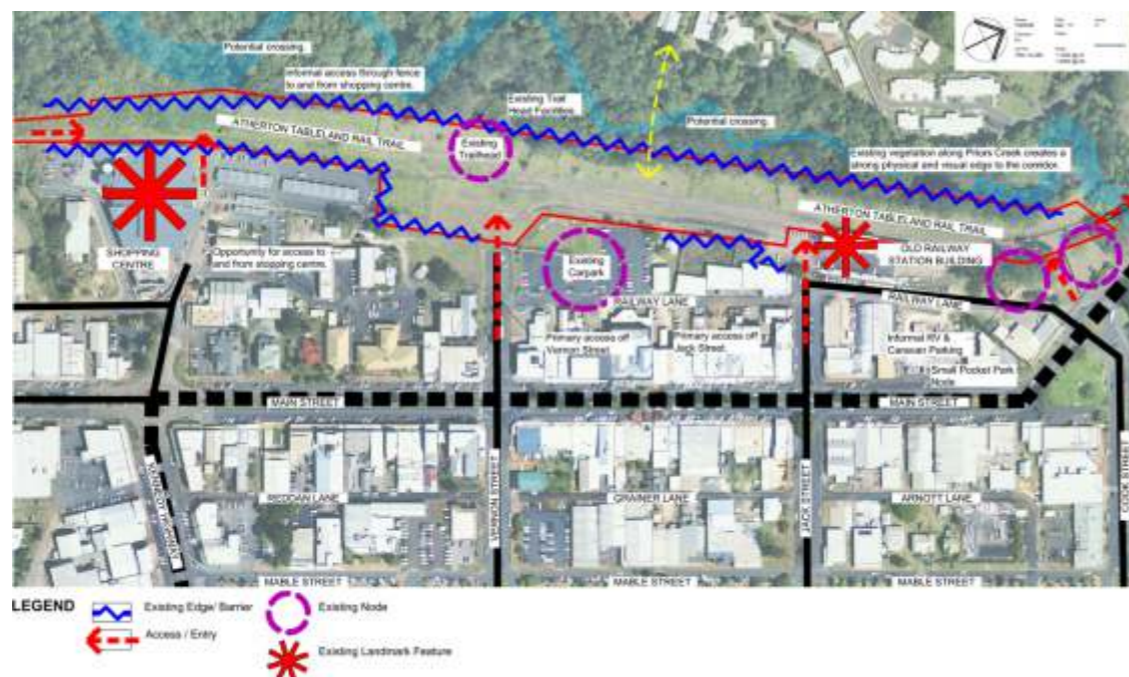


Fig. 9 - Existing Legibility Analysis

3.5 Vegetation Mapping

The Queensland Globe website 'Existing Vegetation Mapping' plan identifies the existing vegetation of Priors Creek as either Category B – Remnant Vegetation or Category R – Reef-Regrowth Watercourse Vegetation.

'Category B – Remnant Vegetation' is classified as existing remnant vegetation containing 'of concern regional ecosystems'. It has an 'endangered' biodiversity status, and is described as 'Eucalyptus grandis open forest (or vine forest with emergent E.grandis) on alluvium soils.

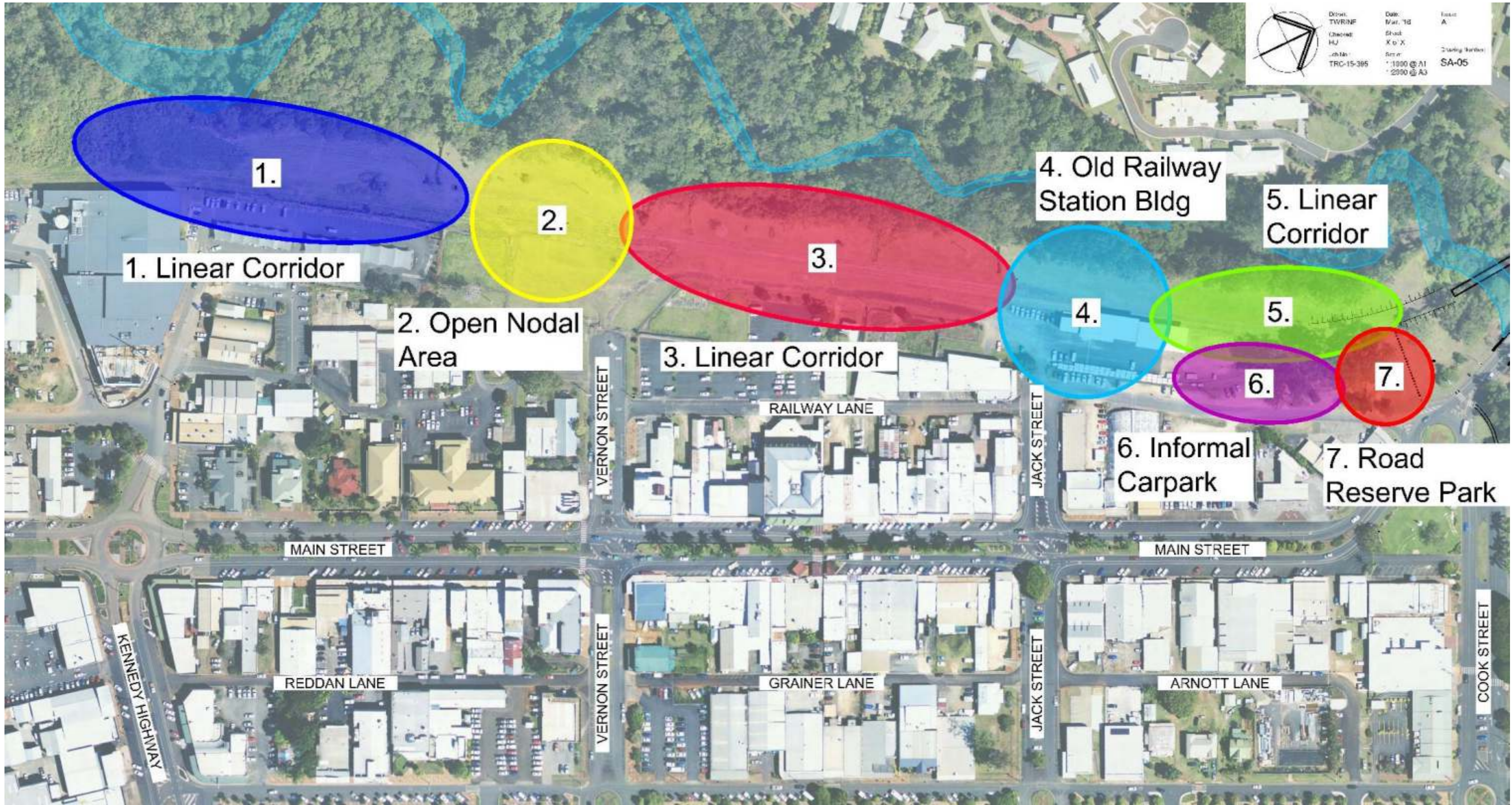
'Category R – Reef Regrowth' is simply classified as non-remnant. Much of this area has been revegetated using local native species over a number of years.

Much of the vegetation along the Priors Creek Corridor is a result of previous revegetation works from community groups. The Priors Creek corridor vegetation is of a good healthy condition with very little weed infestation. Any new plantings along the rail trail corridor should be undertaken in recognition of this, with suitable and appropriate species selection to be carefully thought out before planting. An opportunity exists to highlight and celebrate this vegetation through the incorporation of walking tracks and informative signage.

3.6 Legibility Analysis

The site has been assessed in terms of site entry and access, edges and barriers, nodes, and landmarks. The existing site is broadly separated into three (3) separate areas being the shopping centre precinct, railway lane central precinct, and the railway lane northern precinct. The site has three (3) distinct landmark elements including the existing Silo Shopping Centre; the existing trail head shed facility, and the existing old railway station building. Three (3) nodes have been identified that include the existing mountain bike area, the existing Council carpark, and the existing road reserve park node at the northern end of the site. The main feature of the site is the existing gravel bike track located along the old railway line alignment. This is significant feature of the site.



Despite running almost parallel to the side of the corridor and in a continuous alignment, the track is significant as it represents the old railway track alignment. This provides an opportunity to celebrate the history of the site and recognise its important link to the railway line, as well as also celebrating its importance in terms of the rail trail bike track. Interpretive signage and custom designed outdoor furniture should be a key feature of the new works to define the unique sense of place for the Atherton Rail Trail Corridor.





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Job No.: TRC-15-305		

LEGEND

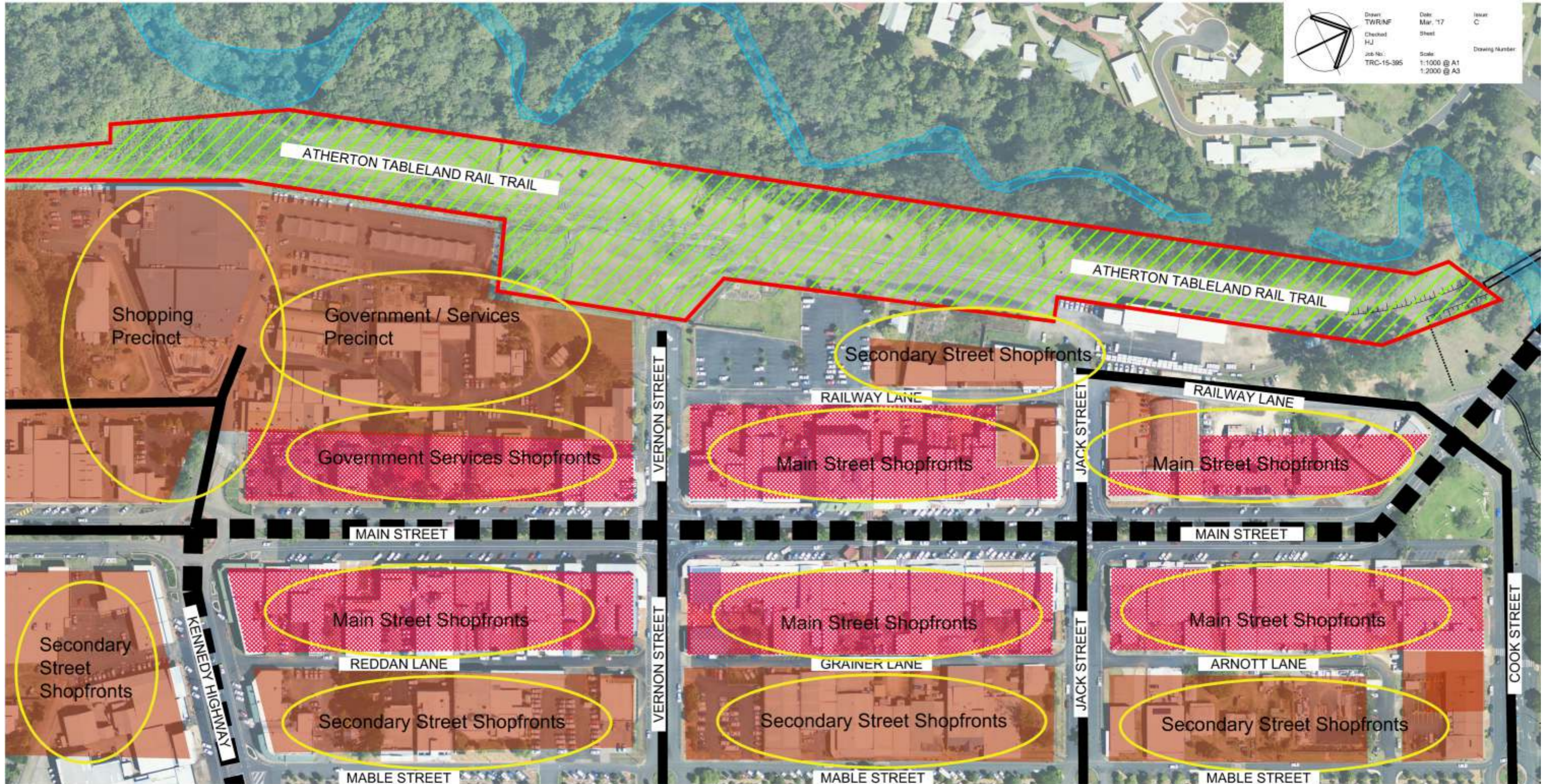
	Strong edge/ interface where buildings/ development addresses and directly 'fronts' footpaths and adjacent areas.		Weak edge/ interface where buildings/ development do NOT address and DO NOT 'front' footpaths and adjacent areas.
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Existing Interface with Adjacent Sites Plan

PRIORS CREEK MASTER PLAN



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 Job No.: TRC-15-395
 Date: Mar. '17
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LEGEND

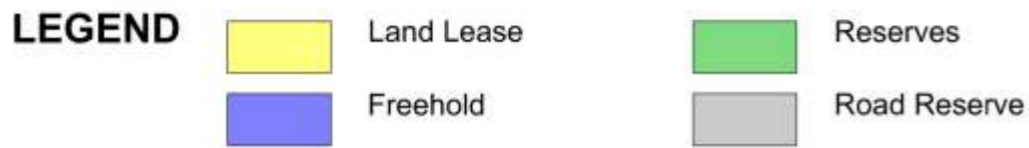
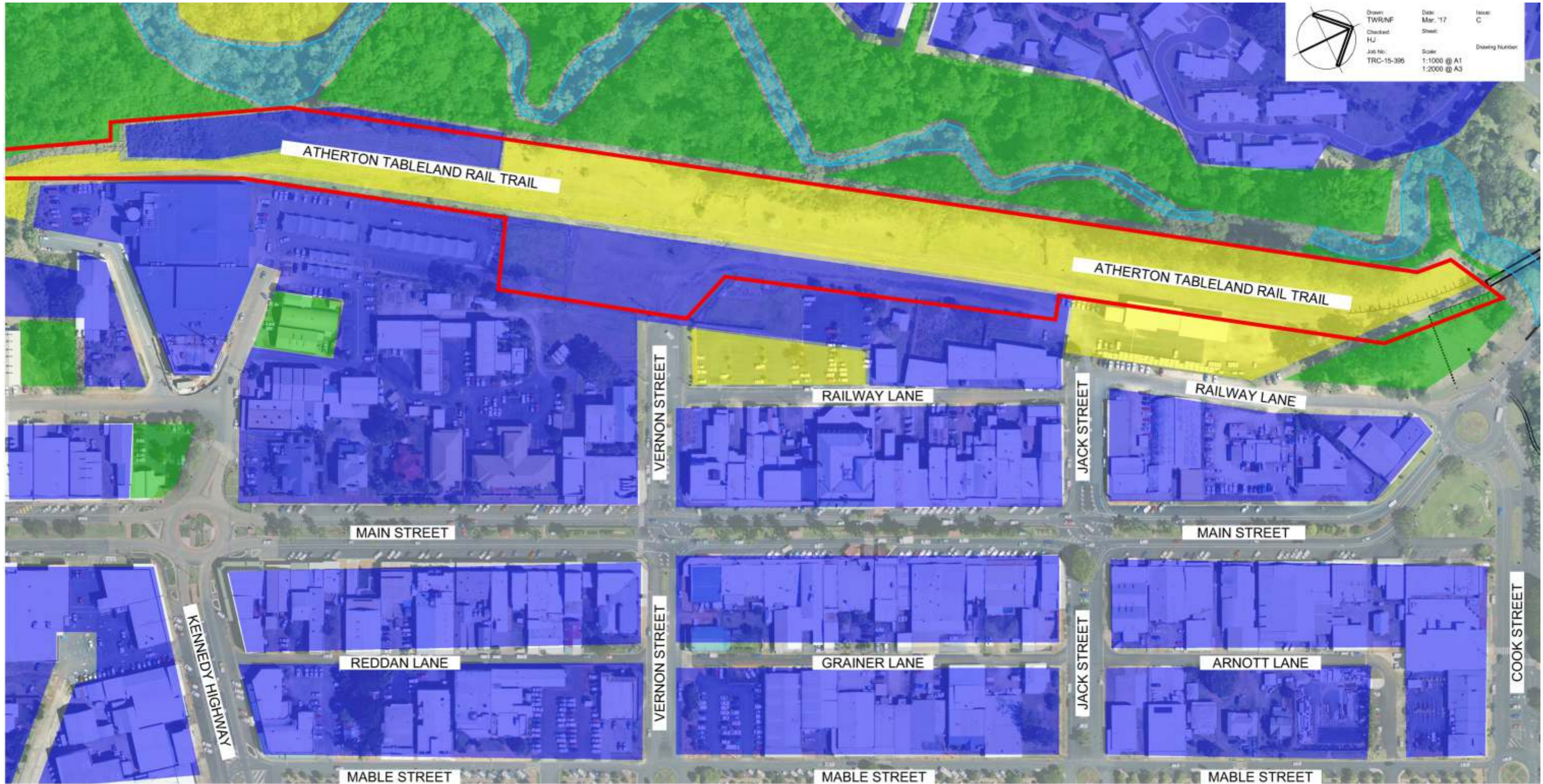
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	Secondary Streets		Main Street Shop Fronts
			Secondary Street Shop Fronts

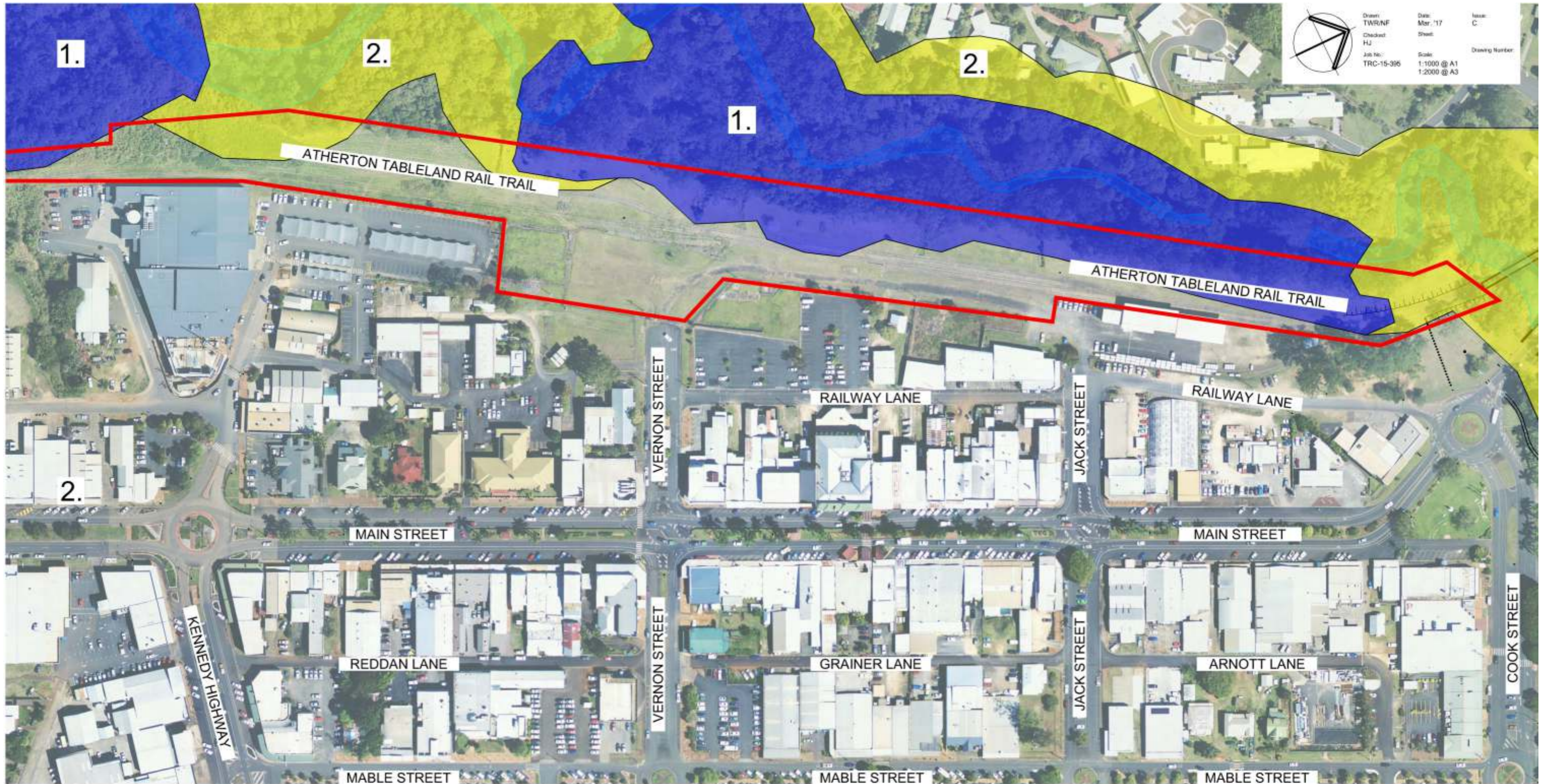


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Existing Land Use Plan

PRIORS CREEK MASTER PLAN





LEGEND

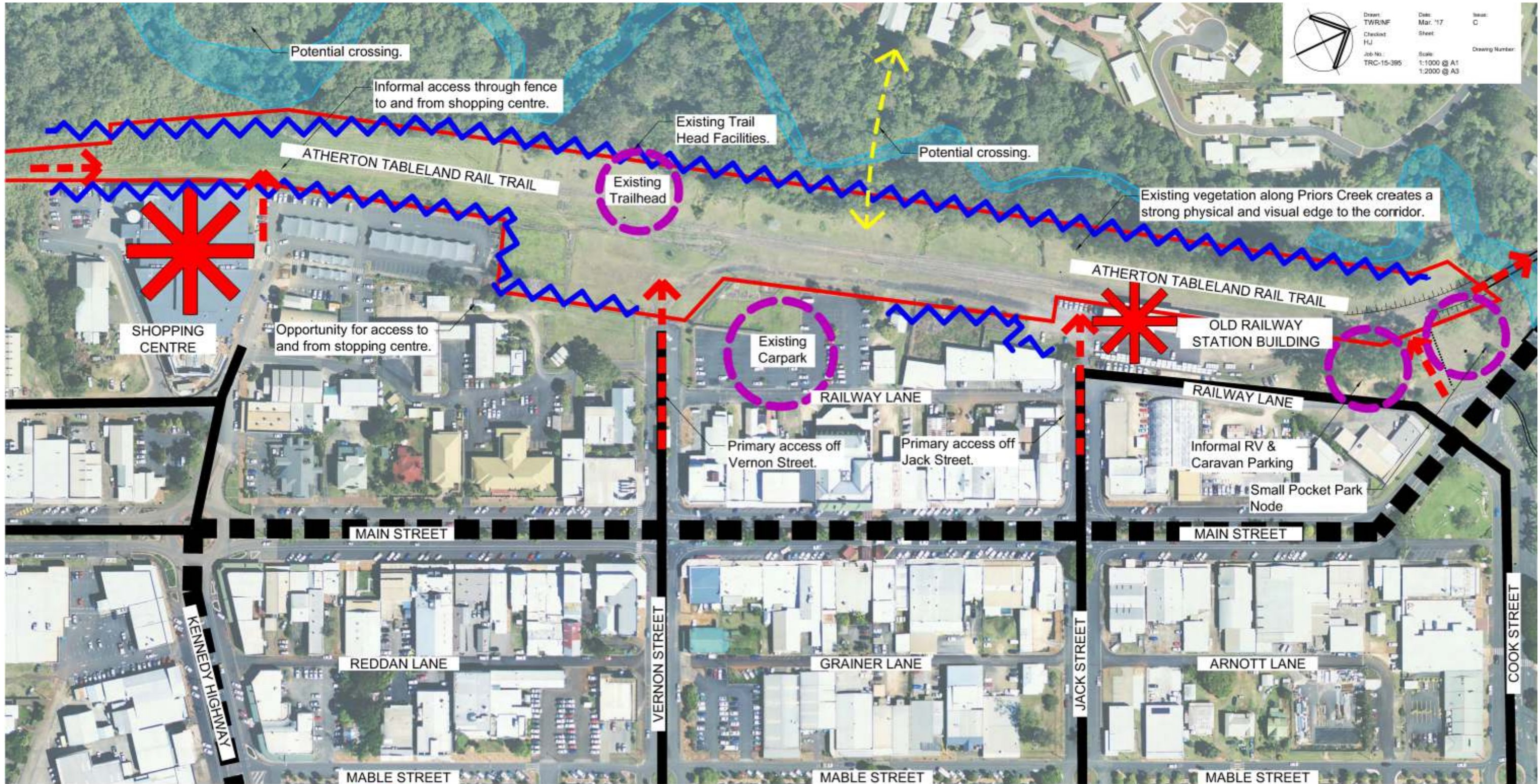


CATEGORY B - Remnant Vegetation -
 Existing remnant vegetation containing of concern regional ecosystems.
Biodiversity Status: Endangered
Description: Eucalyptus grandis open forest (or vine forest with emergent E.gardis) on alluvium.



CATEGORY R - Reef-Regrowth Watercourse Vegetation -
 Classified as non-remnant.
 Riparian Woodland Revegetation

Ref:- Qld Globe / Google Earth



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LEGEND

- Existing Edge/ Barrier
- Access / Entry
- Existing Node
- Existing Landmark Feature



Existing Legibility Analysis Plan

PRIORS CREEK MASTER PLAN



3.7 Discussions with Bike Linx

As a major and existing end user of the Rail Trail Corridor, it was important to gain an understanding and appreciation of the activities and desires of the biking groups. As such, discussions were held with Leasia Felderhof of 'Bike Linx' during the site investigation and analysis stage. A summary of those discussions are presented as follows:

- Reference was made to a 1992 'Landcare Plan' prepared by Siteplan Consultants in Cairns. This plan identified strategies for revegetation of the Priors Creek corridor which was coordinated and undertaken by the biking groups as major users of the corridor.
- Discussion were held on the existing native fauna that lives within the corridor including tree kangaroos and platypus,
- Leasia advised that Tablelands Cycle Sports Inc (TCS) contributes to maintenance along Priors Creek by providing guidance and supervision to a QITE labour force. TCS also actively maintains the Trail head facility,
- The Trail Head Facilities were constructed as the official access point to the greater trail network in the Atherton Forest Mountain Bike Park (AFMBP),
- 5-6 MTB events are held each year in Atherton, with many visitors staying in local accommodation. It is believed that up to 250 competitors compete in the events, with up to an additional 750 visitors to Atherton annually for biking events.
- Existing facilities include a Pump Track, Skills Track, and shelter shed. Funding for a 'Bushskills Track' was secured, with construction completed in 2016,
- Long Term Goals include Kids Learning Track, Outdoor Gym / Fitness area, etc.

4.0 REVIEW OF COUNCIL PLANNING SCHEMES

4.1 Atherton Shire Council Planning Scheme 2002

In the adopted Atherton Shire Planning Scheme 2002, the master plan area is identified as being within a mix of planning areas. The rail corridor and the land with frontage to the rail corridor is identified as being within the public purposes planning area, land fronting Railway Lane is identified within the Business Centre Core and land fronting Vernon Street is identified within the Frame (Mixed Use) Planning Area. Part of the area is also identified as being Key Site 3 – Business Centre Core Expansion Area.

The scheme supports the development of the master plan area for the purpose of a range of commercial town centre uses including but not limited to Commercial premises, food establishments, medical centres, service trades, shops and showrooms. It further envisages that this area would be developed as an extension to the Atherton CBD.

4.2 Draft Tablelands Regional Council Planning Scheme 2015

The draft planning scheme, which is yet to be adopted will replace the 2002 Atherton Shire Council Planning Scheme and will become the planning scheme that guides development in the master plan area. In the draft planning scheme the area is identified wholly within the Town Centre Core. It also encourages the continued use of the rail corridor as a pedestrian thoroughfare. Along the rail corridor the draft scheme envisages that development would have orientation towards the Priors Creek and Public Open Space.

The draft planning scheme supports the development of the master plan area for the purpose of active non-residential uses supported by a high standard of built form. Uses are expected to complement that of the hub of commercial, retail, and community uses within the main hub focused on Main Street.

5.0 THE MASTER PLAN

Primarily, the Master Plan is presented as a series of Design Outcomes and individual Landscape Precincts. Each Design Outcome and Precinct is presented separately with narration, inset plans, and typical images. The Design Outcomes and Landscape Precincts are then summarised over two (2) plans: - Proposed Design Outcomes, and Landscape Precincts.

The Master Plan is further illustrated in a graphical format with key features highlighted for marketing purposes and to convey the possible graphical outcome for the Master Plan area when developed.

The Master Plan and associated plans attached -

- Provide an overview of the proposed future development of the rail trail and its integration with the surrounding areas
- Addresses such issues as land uses, new development, infill regeneration, movement networks for vehicles, car parking, bicycle and pedestrians, landscape improvement measures including footpaths, shade tree planting, outdoor furniture elements, playgrounds, landscape settings, civil spaces, opportunities for public art, etc.
- Addresses issues raised by the community through a detailed community consultation process.

The following Design Outcomes are Important Key Strategies for the Priors Creek Master Plan. Each outcome is discussed separately with narration, inset plans, and typical images. The Design Outcomes have evolved not only through the design process, but also represent the key outcomes resulting from an intense and detailed community consultation process.

The Priors Creek Master Plan area has been divided into seven (7) separate precincts. Each precinct has been designed for a specific purpose or function; however, it is important that each precinct is designed to maximise flexibility of use. Each precinct is discussed separately with narration, inset plans, and typical images.

With the key design outcomes and landscape precincts now defined, the Master Plan has been further illustrated into a graphical format to better convey the plans for the community and for marketing purposes. Whilst the plan indicates line work and the various design elements in a true to scale graphical sketch design plan format, this remains a Master Plan for the study area. The attached plan represents the preferred 'Concept' for the corridor and illustrates in graphical format how the corridor could be developed. In reality, the next phase of the process is to investigate how the Concept for the corridor can be implemented. This will need to be undertaken over a number of steps before any works can commence on site. The next sections discuss this in more detail.

Design Outcome 1

Link Silo Shopping Centre carpark to Vernon Street to help improve vehicle and pedestrian circulation along the Priors Creek Precinct.



The creation of a two-way vehicle link between the shopping centre car park and Vernon Street is seen as an important design element to improve vehicle movements generally and to help improve vehicle congestion and conflicts on Silo Road.

One of the key principles for improving pedestrian and vehicle permeability as well as improving passive surveillance to an area is to maximise access and exposure to passers-by. At present, entry into the Silo Shopping Centre carpark is via Silo Road. This is a one way in – one way out system. Silo Road has many issues resulting in poor performance and increased congestion. This is exasperated by the driveway entry into McDonalds near the Main Street roundabout which often has vehicles backed up to the roundabout waiting to turn right off Silo Road. Caravans and RV's also have a tendency to drive into the carpark via Silo Rd only to find they have to turn around and drive back out of the carpark.

Vehicle access at present to the corridor is only via the ends of Vernon St and Jack St. By opening up access between the carpark and Vernon Street will greatly improve vehicle and pedestrian connectivity in a north-south direction along the corridor. By default, it should also assist the easing of congestion on Silo Road by allowing vehicle to enter and leave the carpark via Vernon Street. Vehicle entering and leaving the carpark will also be able to visually survey activity occurring along the corridor for increased surveillance. Increased visual surveillance is a key factor in helping to lower undesirable activities and possible vandalism from public spaces.

There is a series of existing overhead power lines which extends from Vernon Street almost to the north-east end of the Silo Shopping Centre Carpark through Council owned land. This provides logical alignment for a future driveway connection between the carpark and Vernon Street.

It is proposed that this access be delivered as road reserve with a width of 14m, and a pavement width of 6m for access in both directions; and a minimum path width for pedestrians at 2m wide.



Design Outcome 2

The creation of a 'Shared Road' to link the end of Vernon Street to the end of Jack Street to provide greater 'activation' of and 'access' to the Priors Creek Corridor, as well as improve vehicle circulation generally.

This significant design outcome forms a major change to the existing road network. Vernon Street has been identified as the primary cross street linking Main Street and the town centre generally to the Priors Creek Corridor. It also forms a key pedestrian and vehicle access link, with a significant view line down to the Priors Creek Rail Trail Corridor. The same can be said of Jack Street, however; Vernon Street has a greater opportunity for linkages to surrounding land uses and key attractors. It also links directly to the existing Trailhead facility which is a major existing drawcard for the rail trail corridor.

It is critical that this link road not be developed as a road in the true sense of the word; instead, it should be designed and delivered as a 'Shared Road' using a variety of textured surface finishes to maintain a safe environment whilst reducing traffic speeds. By creating the link road as a "Shared Road" with alternative road pavement surfacing, speed limiting devices, bollards, shade tree planting, and reduced carriageway widths would provide a safe, low speed environment.

"A Shared Road or Shared Space is an urban design approach which seeks to minimise the segregation of pedestrians and vehicles. This is done by removing features such as kerbs, road surface markings, traffic signs, and traffic lights. It has been suggested that, by creating a greater sense of uncertainty and making it unclear who has priority, drivers will reduce their speed. This is conducive to a safer environment for both pedestrians and vehicles. Shared space schemes are often motivated by a desire to reduce the dominance of vehicles, vehicle speeds, and road casualty rates". – Wikipedia.

The proposal to link the two ends of Vernon Street and Jack Street not only provides greater opportunity for development to 'front' the railway corridor, it better delivers pedestrians and vehicles right to the rail trail corridor for greater physical and visual exposure to the new recreational facilities which are to be developed.

It is also possible that this Shared Road could be controlled at either end by removable bollards to restrict or limit access at certain times. As a result, the shared road could be closed off to cater for outdoor public events such as weekend markets and the like. Providing adequate turnaround space is provided at each end at Vernon Street and Jack Street, this could be easily facilitated with limited impact on traffic movements.

Another advantage of linking Vernon Street and Jack Street with a 2 way shared road would enable vehicle movement in a northerly and southerly direction; something which is not possible at this present time. New traffic movements will be far easier and legible with continuous flows of traffic in a south to north, and north to south direction through the linking of Vernon Street and Jack Street.

It is suggested that once detail design development is undertaken on the final design of the shared road, that opportunities for short term car parking especially for tourists and visitors be investigated and considered for incorporation in the final design.

It is proposed that the shared road be delivered as road reserve with a width of 12m, and a pavement width of 6m for access in both directions, and a verge width of 3m adjacent to the new commercial lots.





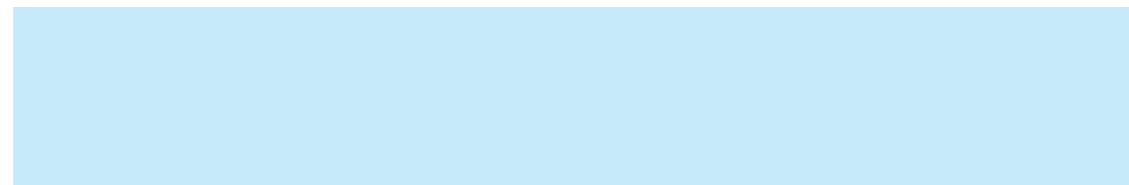
Design Outcome 3

Create a new “Urban Plaza” at the end of Vernon Street as a key activity node for outdoor markets and gatherings as an entrance forecourt into the Priors Creek Corridor.

The Master Plan proposes a vehicle turn-around area at the end of Vernon Street adjacent the Shared Road. As well as providing sufficient space for vehicle to turnaround (minimum radius of 14m), this also creates a location for drop off and pick up for residents, buses and taxis. Directly adjacent to this turn around space, it is proposed that the new urban plaza / activity node will form a key entry point for pedestrian access into the rail trail corridor separated from the turaround with bollards at 1.5m centres. This will provide the opportunity to function as a key activity node for outdoor markets and public gatherings. In addition, a smaller secondary nodal area is also proposed at the end of Jack Street. Finally, an additional defined pedestrian access node is proposed mid-block along the new proposed link road.

The plaza would be designed as an open hard stand area with patterned paving treatments and tree planting for shade. Access would be controlled via bollards which could be removed for controlled access for outdoor markets and events. Key features of the plaza would include decorative pavement treatments, tree planting, bollards, seating, and public art. The new plaza should also provide opportunities for signage to reinforce Priors Creek as a major recreational destination for Atherton. Outdoor public events could include outdoor markets, farmer's markets and the like. Other facilities would include seating, rubbish bins, and drinking fountains.

It is intended that the new plaza would form the major new focus for the Priors Creek Corridor and would become the key destination for all new public events and activities. As such, it would be important to incorporate suitable and appropriate public art elements and features at this location. Key elements could include a 'You are Here' sign, and/or a 'What's On' notice board identifying key dates for upcoming public events and outdoor markets.





Details of the proposed lots as follows:

- Lot #1 - 1,256sq.m
- Lot #2 - 467sq.m
- Lot #3 - 772sq.m
- Lot #4 - 629sq.m
- Lot #5 - 1,224sq.m
- Lot #6 - 1,004sq.m

Design Outcome 4

Create new lots with a defined list of preferred uses that can be sold to developers to help activate the Priors Creek corridor and to help fund the capital works needed to deliver the Master Plan.

One of the outcomes of Council's previous consultation (before design) determined the support for possible new multiple storey development with commercial opportunities and either residential or accommodation above that could front the corridor. The proposed Master Plan identifies a series of new lots along Vernon Street and along the new shared road which could be sold to help fund Capital Works needed to deliver the Master Plan. Additional 2-3 storey development along Vernon Street would also help reinforce it as the main cross town street with greater linkage to the Priors Creek Corridor. It would also help draw the town centre down to the rail trail corridor and vice versa.

The Retail Analysis Report commissioned by Holmes Dyer in 2016 identifies the need for a possible entertainment hub to be located between the Town Centre and Priors Creek Corridor. The creation of these new lots could provide an opportunity to help reinforce this as a key activity area. The incorporation of the new link road, and new vehicle and pedestrian access links to the adjacent shopping centre would also help support this by creating greater permeability, access, and linkage generally.

Before these lots could be tendered for sale, Council should consider developing a building covenant or preferred list of outcomes to encourage a preferred pattern of development (i.e. Preferred list of suitable uses). Other items such as minimum and maximum heights, car parking requirements, etc. would be controlled by Council's Planning Scheme.

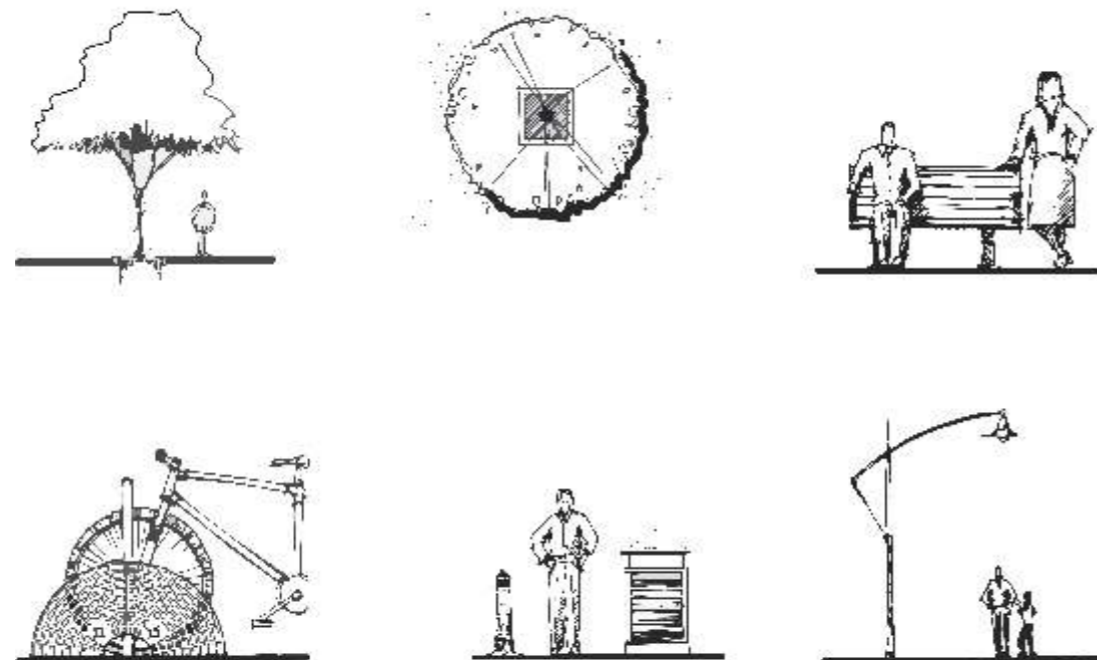
Design Outcome 5

Undertake Streetscape improvement measures along Vernon Street, Jack Street, and Railway Lane for greater functionality, pedestrian access and improved visual amenity to better link Main Street and the Priors Creek Corridor.

To improve linkage and connectivity, it is important that the street linking Main Street and Priors Creek and vice versa undergo a series of improvements to improve visual amenity and functionality. It has been determined that the existing toilet block within the middle of Vernon Street be removed and be relocated.

Improvement measures should include new street tree planting, footpath replacement / upgrade program, new street furniture including bench seats, rubbish bins, flag poles, shade structures, and defined crossing points for greater safety.

It is proposed that railway lane remain as an existing laneway, however; strategies should be adopted to improve its functionality and visual amenity. Improvement measures could include re-surfacing, re-line marking, footpath treatments, street trees, street lights and banner poles, etc. Incentives could be considered for adjacent property owners to tidy up the back of their properties for greater visual amenity and more formalised parking opportunities. Council should also support the potential for suitable new infill development along the lanes such as boutique coffee shops, art galleries, etc. Streetscape furnishings could also be accommodated to help improve the aesthetics of the lane, including alternative road pavement finishes, street tree planting, balustrades, planting beds, etc.





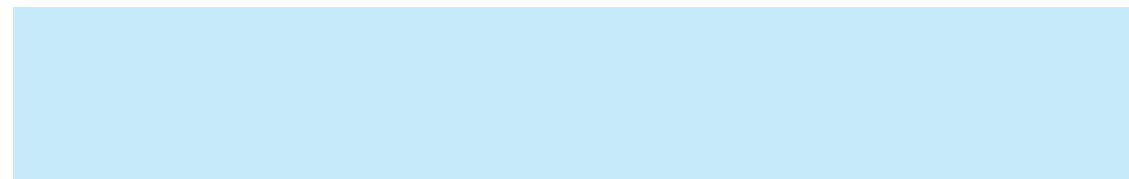
Design Outcome 6

Consider relocating the existing bus stop from Main Street to Vernon Street.

A recurring item that was raised throughout all the consultation was the request to consider relocating the existing bus stop from Main Street to Vernon Street. There was an overwhelming response to this as a requirement. Initially not part of the original design brief for the development of the Master Plan; it soon became apparent that this was seen as a major requirement from the community.

To incorporate this into the Master Plan, the turnaround space at the bottom of Vernon Street would need to be designed to a sufficient size to enable the safe manoeuvring and turning of buses. It would be preferable for buses to not continue along the new shared road, but to turn around and continue back up along Vernon Street.

A suggestion would be to investigate the feasibility of combining the bus set-down and Visitor Information Centre at the corner of Vernon Street and Railway Lane. Through the development of preferred design guidelines, this new building could be an important key focal element of Vernon Street and form one of the first impressions visitors would have of the Priors Creek Precinct in general.



Design Outcome 7

Consider relocating the Visitor Information Centre from Main Street to Vernon Street.

Throughout all the consultation undertaken for this project, a recurring point of discussion is the possible relocation of the Visitor Information Centre (VIC). It is recognised that there are some significant issues with its current location and lack of parking facilities for tourists and visitors with caravans and RV's. The possible relocation of the VIC to Priors Creek with associated parking facilities and new associated signage elements could help the viability of the information centre. This could also be seen as a great catalyst for breathing life into the Priors Creek Corridor precinct generally by drawing visitors to Priors Creek and providing opportunities for parking and maybe staying a while longer in town. If this outcome were to be progressed, associated facilities such as temporary visitor parking and amenities would also need to be included as preferred outcomes for the design and development of the new Visitor Information Centre. The proposed Master Plan supports this and identifies a possible location for the VIC and associated parking opportunities.



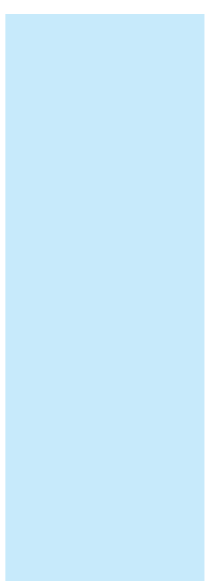
Design Outcome 8

Improve Pedestrian access and permeability between Priors Creek, Main Street, and the Silo Shopping Centre.



The plan identifies a series of new pedestrian access corridors linking the Priors Creek Corridor, potential new lots and the existing shopping centre. One such pathway is indicated adjacent to the proposed vehicle link between the Silo Shopping Centre carpark and Vernon Street, providing north-south connectivity. The other potential pathway is through the existing Government owned precinct. This access is currently controlled with a boom gate, however; there is a great potential for this to be opened for informal access linking the back of the performing arts complex via the rear of the courthouse and police station right through to Vernon Street; if not for vehicles, for pedestrians and cyclists. This could also be enhanced for greater pedestrian use and comfort through dedicated walking tracks and the incorporation of shade tree planting.

In addition to the longitudinal north-south access routes, the Master Plan also identifies an existing pedestrian link that could be extended linking the rail trail corridor, through to Main Street. At present, there is an informal pedestrian link between Main Street and Railway Lane through the side of the Barron Valley Hotel. An opportunity exists for this to be extended from Railway Lane right through to the Priors Creek Corridor. A further opportunity exists to extend and reinforce this as a major cross pedestrian link linking the Main Street through to the Rail Trail Corridor, and even further across Priors Creek to Crisp Close on the other side via a suspension bridge or similar. This would form a major pedestrian and bicycle link in an east-west alignment. It is understood that interest has already been acknowledged by the local Lions Club to help support this initiative. As an urban design outcome, this would provide greater pedestrian and cycle linkage between the Main Street, the Priors Creek Corridor, and the existing housing adjacent to Crisp Close on the opposite side of Priors Creek. This would be a positive outcome and one that would encourage walking, biking, and access generally (including mobility scooters) to and from the town centre area. The location of the proposed creek crossing has not been surveyed or ground trothed. It is a design intent that will need to be properly investigated to determine the best possible location for the creek crossing and how this can be tied into the proposed path network.



Design Outcome 9

Improve parking opportunities generally for visitors and tourists with RV's, Caravans, and Trailers by incorporating both short term and long term facilities close to amenities.

A major recurring item that was raised throughout the consultation process was concern over the lack of parking opportunities for RV's, caravans, and trailers in Atherton. It is obvious that this is a major concern and is perceived as a potential loss of business for Atherton generally. An early draft of the Master Plan highlighted the potential for parallel parking to be incorporated along Weaver Street to the south of the study areas and along Railway Lane at the northern end of the study area. Whilst these areas would adequately cater for trailer parking associated with biking events within the Priors Creek Corridor, concern was raised over the practicality of these for tourists and visitors wanting to stop close to amenities within the town centre area generally. Parking for visitors needs to be closer to the town centre.

The existing Council owned carpark is located off Railway Lane. Council advises that this carpark is often underutilised and may be only used on a permanent basis by staff who work within the Main Street. Either way, it is evident that an opportunity exists for some of this carpark to be easily reconfigured through line marking to accommodate larger vehicles including RV's, Caravans, and trailers. The possibility of short term parking along the shared road has already been discussed. The incorporation of longer term parking along the northern section of Railway lane should definitely be investigated. Parking bays may be able to be easily incorporated along the western side of Railway Lane adjacent the old railway station building (current Men's Shed).

The Master Plan indicates a possible 9 parking bays for caravans, motorhomes, and trailers directly behind the proposed location for the information centre. Further, the plans indicate a possible further 10 bays along Railway Lane (North) and within the new proposed carpark at the northern end of Railway Lane.



Design Outcome 10

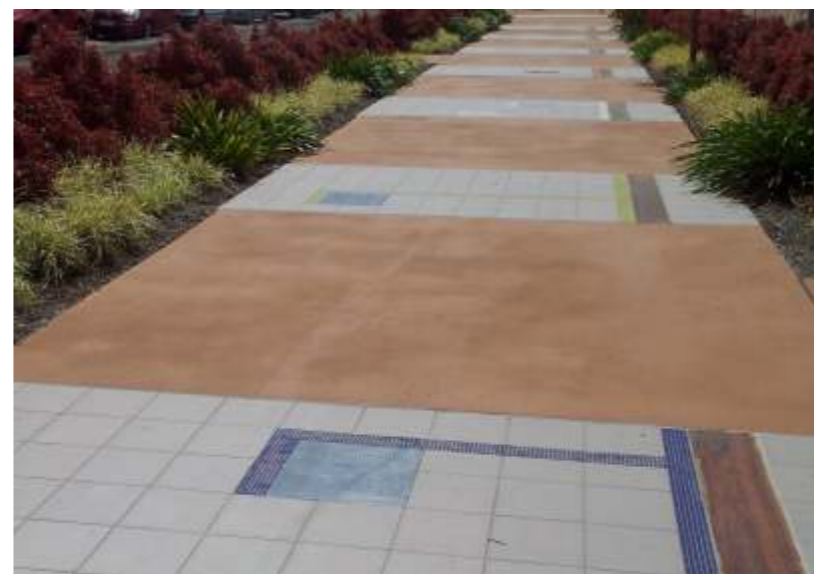
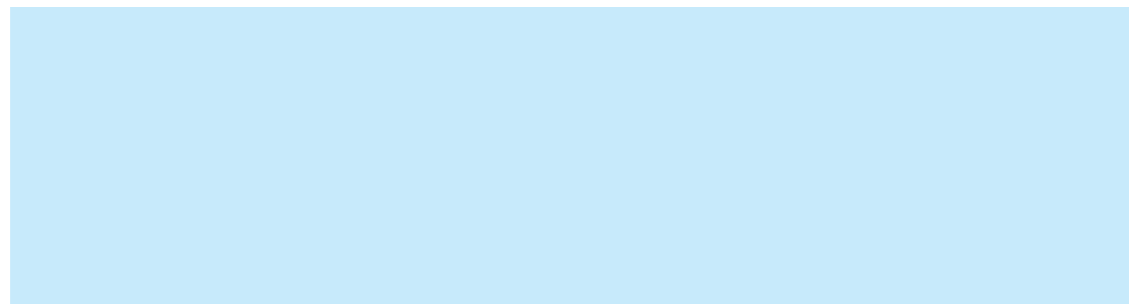
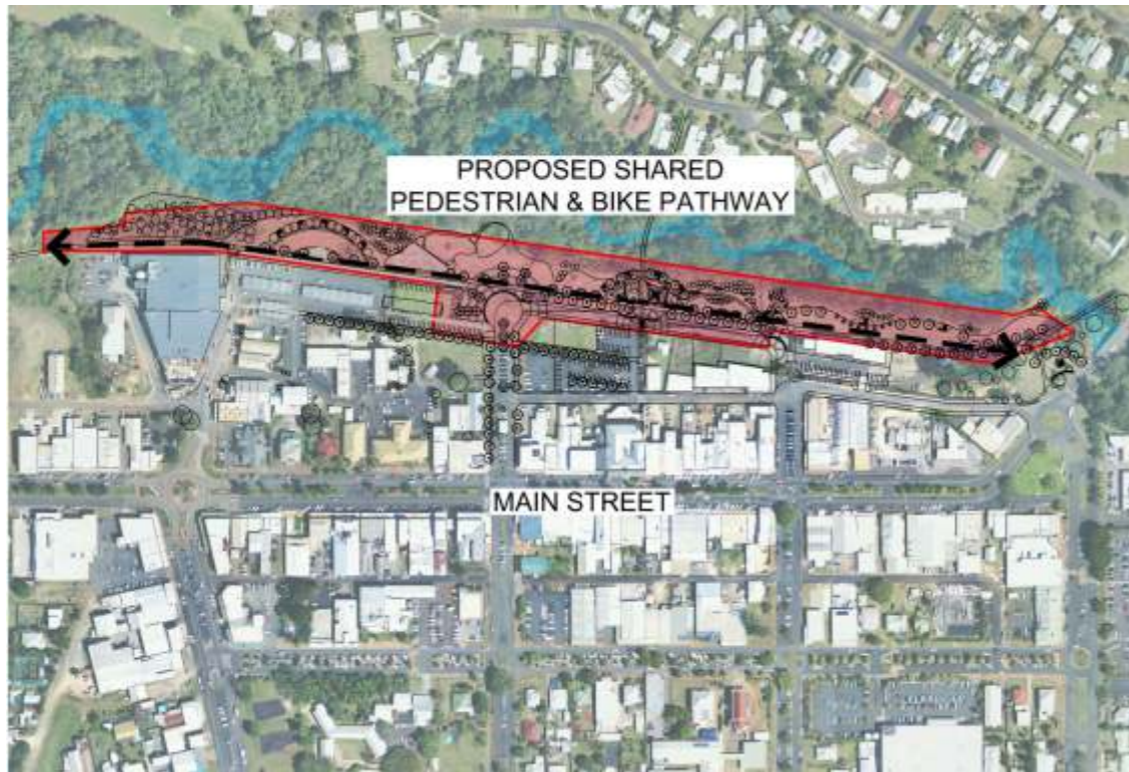
Create a new 'Priors Creek Promenade', shared pedestrian and cycle walkway along the old railway track alignment.

For the length of the study area (from the Southern end of the Silo Shopping Centre to the road bridge over Priors Creek at the northern end of the old railway corridor), the Master Plan proposes the construction of a shared pedestrian and cycle promenade pathway. The promenade pathway should be designed with a minimum width of 3.5m to provide the safe passage of pedestrians and cyclists. The Department of Transport and Main Roads through its Technical Note 133 provides guidance on the widths of shared pathways and separated bicycle paths. The document contains various configurations and suggested path widths.

In addition to the new urban plaza, this spine would become the centre of activity and focus for the Priors Creek Corridor. Shaded by large shade trees and lined with street lights and banner/flag poles, this new promenade walkway would feature bench seating, public art, and interpretive signage at regular intervals reflecting the history and previous use of the corridor.

The promenade would be located directly over the top of the old railway track alignment, and would designate where pedestrians can walk and bicycles can ride to avoid conflict. In doing so, the promenade should be designed in a way that retains a connection with the strong railway heritage of this site. This can be achieved through the incorporation of public art elements, interpretive signage, and possible sections of faux railway tracks incorporated within the walkway. At particular crossing points along the promenade, feature elements such as faux boom gates, faux signal lights, and etc. could be incorporated for relevance as well as visual interest.

The images indicated here are taken along the ceremonial railway avenue located along Flinders Street West in Townsville. The railway line was relocated some years ago, however; Qld Rail invested in the creation of a public walkway along the old railway alignment with public art and interpretive signage located along the corridor. It is a great example of how the Priors Creek Promenade could be developed as a key feature of the Priors Creek Corridor.



Design Outcome 11

Undertake further enhancement and revegetation of Priors Creek as well as incorporate defined walking tracks with interpretive and informative signage on the environmental attributes of the corridor including native flora and fauna.

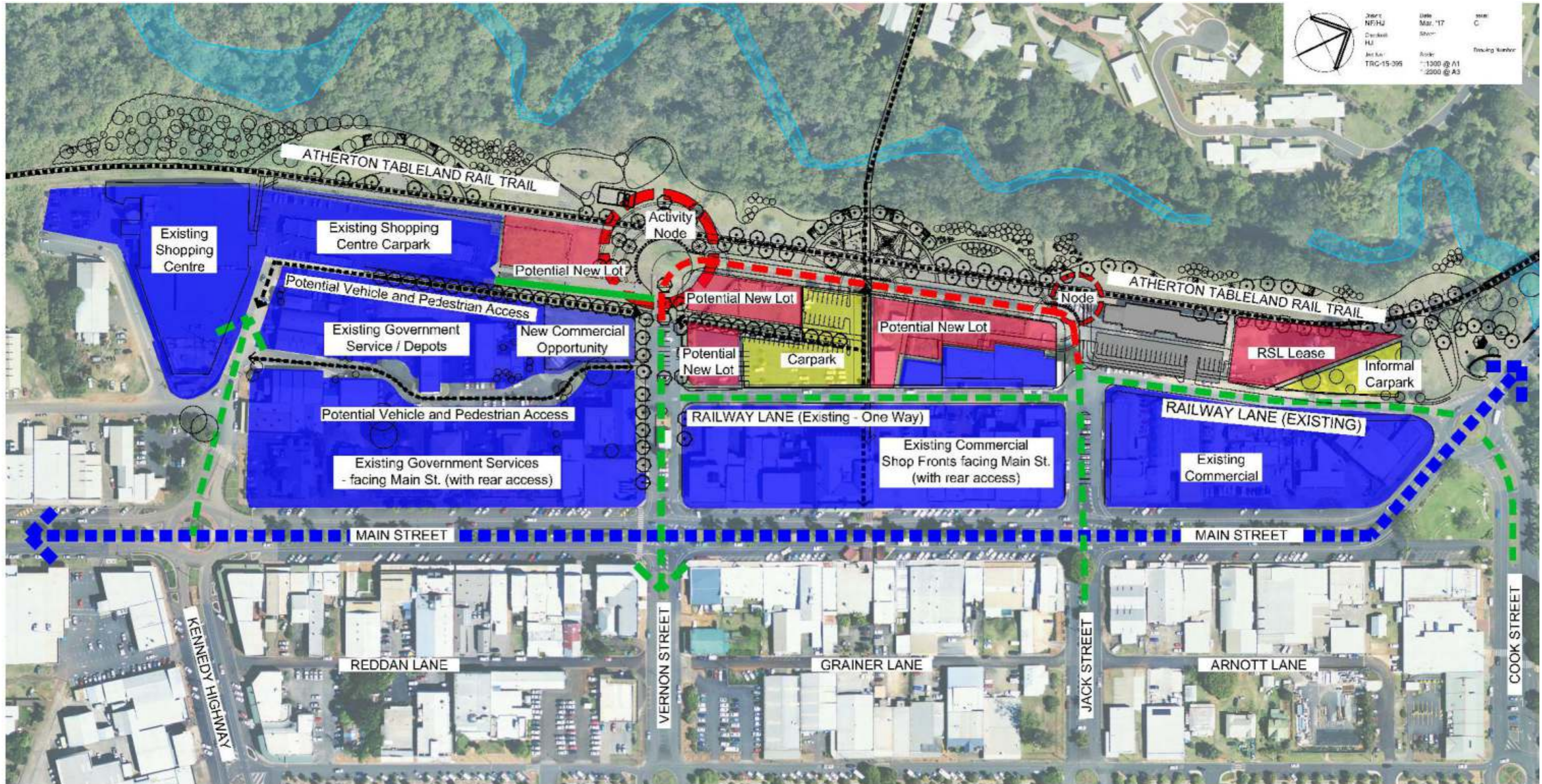
Whilst the development of Priors Creek Corridor as a major destination and recreation precinct for Atherton is commendable and would be seen as a major asset for the community, it would be amiss of any Master Plan to ignore the significance and importance of Priors Creek which runs alongside the entire length of the corridor. As outlined in the site analysis phase of the Master Plan, much of the vegetation along Priors Creek is classified as Remnant vegetation with recognised important ecosystems. It has an endangered biodiversity status, and is described as *Eucalyptus grandis* open forest on alluvium soils. The revegetation programs that have been implemented over the years have now become established and provide a continuous habitat corridor rich in diversity which is now home to many birds and mammals.

Alluvium refers to loose soil or sediments that have been eroded and reshaped by moving water and moved to another area. A downside of this however; is that the corridor is prone to erosion due to heavy flows of stormwater. There are significant areas of erosion evident throughout the corridor especially at the many stormwater outlets which carry stormwater from the adjacent town centre area. Most of these outlets stop short of the corridor and allow water to flow through channels to the top of the bank. For the Priors Creek master Plan to be properly implemented, these outlets need to be treatment in a way that maximises useable space whilst minimising future erosion of the embankments.

With the recent construction of the Bushskills Track by Tablelands Cycle Sports, there are now defined tracks that allow bushwalking access into the corridor and down to the bottom of the embankment. These tracks provide the opportunity to experience first-hand the feeling of wonder for the Priors Creek Corridor. The sounds of the many birds that call the corridor home is overwhelming. The environmental benefits of Priors Creek as a hidden gem and asset for Atherton is tremendous; and one that is currently undervalued by the community.

Through the proper design and incorporation of additional walking tracks, handrails, and informative signage, this natural asset can be accessed by the community, schools, as well as by tourists and visitors to Atherton. Information signs should include images, photos, and narration on the local flora and fauna that can be witnessed throughout Priors Creek.





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LEGEND

Existing Lots	Proposed New Lots	Existing Railway Building & Carpark
Major Vehicular Access	Minor Vehicular Access	New Vehicular Access
New Pedestrian / Cycle Path Network	Proposed New Vehicle Access	



HJ
HJUEL JONES
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

Proposed Design Outcomes
Plan

PRIORS CREEK MASTER PLAN

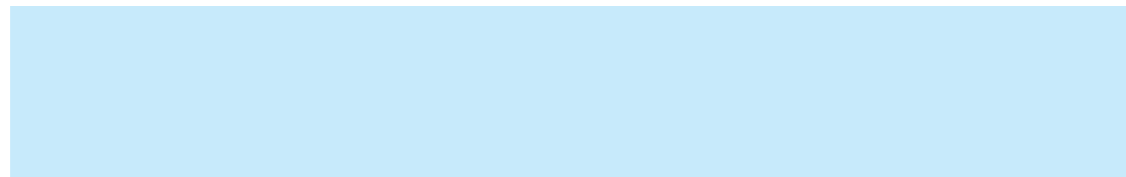
Precinct A

Existing Rail Trail Corridor

The Priors Creek Study area forms only one part of the overall Rail Trail Corridor. Located centrally directly adjacent to the town centre, the main focus of the Master Plan is on the development of the Recreational Precinct. The remainder of the corridor however still forms an important linear link used and known primarily as the Atherton Rail Trail. The rail trail extends south along Weaver Street to Atherton Herberton Road adjacent Platypus Park, and north heading towards Tolga. To the south, the generally 30m wide corridor runs parallel to Priors Creek and consists basically of a 2.5m wide decomposed granite pathway along the old railway track alignment. The track is used by riders as part of the rail trail as well as local residents for walking.

The opportunities for enhancement of this corridor are endless and would depend heavily on Council's future budget requirements. However; as a lead in to the Priors Creek Master Plan area, it is recommended that some enhancement treatment be incorporated as a transition from a corridor with no treatment to study area. Equally, it is also suggested that enhancement treatments be extended to the northern end of the corridor as budgets permit.

Proposed enhancement treatments include edging to define the edges of the existing deco track, shade tree planting on both sides of the existing gravel track, the incorporation of additional directional signage with information on distances and timing of the various tracks. The incorporation of shaded seating areas along the corridor would also encourage use of the corridor by the community for passive recreation as well as provide areas for viewing biking events that occur along the corridor.



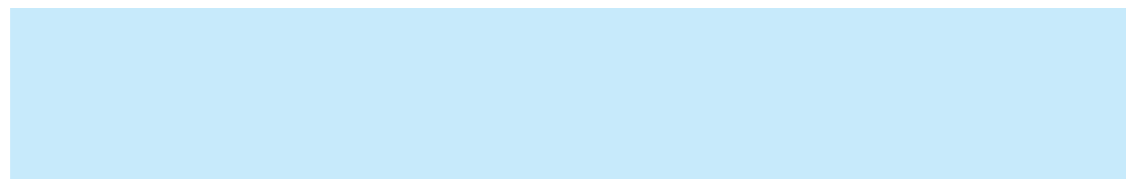
Precinct B

Outdoor Picnic, Barbeque, and Amphitheatre Area

Whilst the inclusion of picnic and barbeque facilities is to be included along the entire length of the corridor for use by the community, this precinct located directly behind the Silo Shopping Centre lends itself to a communal area for families, gatherings and social events. Facilities as indicated on the plans include numerous shade structures with picnic tables, electric public barbeques for outdoor dining, etc. With easy access to the Silo Shopping Centre for parking and amenities, the adjacent carpark also provides good passive surveillance and access. Lighting would be important to allow for evening use and to allow surveillance for any undesirable activities.

The levels at this location also lend themselves to developing an amphitheatre with stage area for public outdoor events and possible performing arts activities. It also provides an area for award ceremonies associated with the various cycling events that occur throughout the year. Further activities that could occur within this location include birthday parties and other social events such as educational talks from environmental groups, or as a destination for outdoor teaching for school groups.

The amphitheatre seating area should be constructed as a series of stepped grassed platforms, and be well maintained for maximum flexibility and use. Access and pathways would need to be properly designed to cater for all ages and abilities. Shade structures could be custom designed, however; it is recommended that prefabricated shelters be investigated from companies such as 'Landmark' for greater efficiencies in design, construction, and ongoing maintenance and better value for money overall. Outdoor furniture items should be coordinated throughout the Priors Creek Corridor, and should include barbeques, picnic settings, bench seats, rubbish bins, drinking fountains, etc. These can be supplied by numerous suppliers within Australia depending on individual style, preferred materials, and warranty benefits.



Precinct C

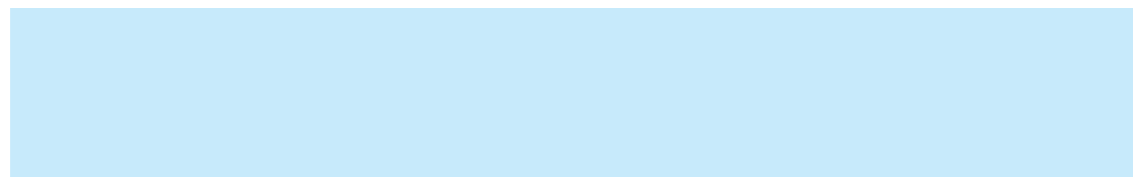
Existing Trailhead Facilities Area

The Atherton Cycle Club have done a tremendous job in developing and managing the existing Trailhead Facilities at Priors Creek. We believe the impact these activities have on the corridor as well as that in relation to Atherton in general is currently somewhat unrecognised and possibly undervalued by the community. As a major end user of the corridor, it is important that any enhancement of these facilities and activities be considered and recognised as part of the Master Plan outcomes.

Existing features include a large shade structure with picnic settings, informative signage on the greater Atherton Mountain Bike Tracks, a Pump track, Skills track, and the recently constructed Bushskills track which provides access down into the Priors Creek proper. The Master Plan not only recognises all these facilities as key elements for the Priors Creek corridor, it also proposes that these be further enhanced and developed wherever possible for use by the greater community. One particular feature could be the design and construction of a new 'Learn to Ride' facility as expressed by the club. Aimed primarily at children, the benefits of this as key area where children can learn to ride a bike in a safe environment would surely be seen as a positive outcome. Further, this facility could be designed a small road network with tee intersections, crossings, etc. so that children can also learn about road rules.

Other enhancements should include lighting for evening use, shade trees for greater comfort during daylight hours, instructional signage, drinking fountains, rubbish bins, bench seats, and possible low fencing to contain activities and reduce the risk of conflict with other users of the corridor in general.

Other facilities to be included within this general area include possible fitness equipment for use not only by the cycle club members, but for the community in general. It is important that any fitness equipment to be used are strong and robust, safe and compliant, and easy to use by various people with various abilities. Often, these types of facilities are used by novices as well as experts, and should cater for all to use. The inclusion of information signage and 'How to Use' signage should also be an important consideration.



Precinct D

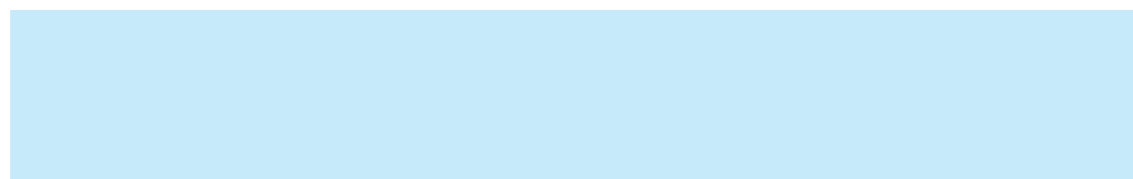
Major Destination Playground Area

One of the objectives that came out of Council's previous consultation was to create Priors Creek as a real destination. To achieve this, the Master Plan looks to maximise facilities and opportunities for greater use and interaction from the community. One such feature that will only add to the creation of a destination space is the creation of a major destination playground. However, this must be a significant play area with significant play value to make a definite statement and attract use if it is to equal the water play park on the Strand in Townsville, or to equal the water park on the Esplanade in Cairns. Successful playgrounds often demand significant investments from Councils, however; the ongoing benefits to the community often far outweigh the upfront expenditure.

To create a successful and inviting playground that will inspire children and families, one needs to provide the opportunity for an out-of-the-ordinary experience, and develop something truly unique. It is important that the playground design ultimately turns the space into a destination that will draw in children of all abilities and families from near and far. Playgrounds and play experiences in general help kids learn how to interact with others, learning about themselves and those around them, shaping their future and who they will become. They learn physically and emotionally and establish behaviours that will carry throughout their lives. Play is one of the most organic ways children learn – and Council has the opportunity to be part of that through the creation of a major destination playground within Priors Creek Corridor.

Located centrally between Vernon Street and Jack Street, the playground should become an iconic element and visual feature of the corridor, so the inclusion of a significant play element is preferable. There are many new significant pieces of play equipment available through a range of various suppliers, all of different price ranges and levels of impact for play value as well as their ability to create a level of presence through height, and by creating a landmark feature element within the park. All of these should be explored to deliver the best possible outcome for the community.

Additional facilities should include shade shelters, picnic tables, and barbeques to cater for children's birthday parties and/or weekend social and family gatherings. Equally important is the inclusion of shade; whether it be from additional tree planting or from shade sails and shade structures.





Precinct E

Botanical Plantings Area

Whilst all planting throughout the Priors Creek Corridor should be well coordinated and be sympathetic to the natural surrounds and that of Priors Creek in general; an opportunity exists to treat an existing recently constructed stormwater outlet through appropriate landscape design. Done properly, this piece of civil infrastructure opposite the end of Jack Street and the men's Shed could be transformed into a real showpiece through the incorporation of rock boulders, appropriate soft landscaping plantings, and other simple landscape materials and elements. This exercise would provide the additional opportunity of creating a pocket of botanical plantings that can be designed as an extension of the Priors Creek corridor, and extended both north and south of the outlet. The focus here should be on creating an appropriate landscape outcome where the community can come to learn and experience revegetation and enhancement of natural corridors through suitable and appropriate plantings. The creation of intimate landscape settings with seating and sculptural elements within the landscaped area could also be incorporated to create decorative pockets for passive recreation, quiet seating, and for possible photographic opportunities. Further, the development of this precinct provides the perfect opportunity to highlight a controlled access and walking track into Priors Creek. Combined with interpretive signage and informative signage on the environmental attributes of the Priors Creek area in general, this could provide educational benefits for the community as well as a key attractor for visitors to the Priors Creek corridor in general.



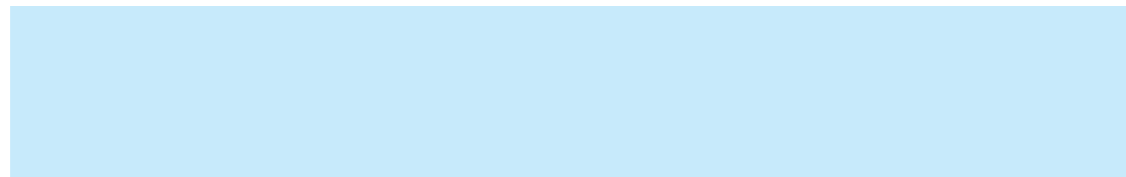
Precinct F

Outdoor Functions Area

The precinct located at the northern end of the rail trail corridor adjacent the men's Shed and future RSL lease area provides an opportunity for the creation of a dedicated space for formalised outdoor public events, functions, and weddings. Through the maintenance of an open grassed area between the pathway promenade and the vegetation of Priors Creek, sufficient space can easily be provided for marquees, or as a venue for open air events. Combined with the backdrop of the Priors Creek vegetation behind, a series of wedding photographic opportunities could also be easily created. With the existing established vegetation along the western edge means this area is also well shaded in the late afternoon leading into the evening which makes it ideal for outdoor events and functions. By creating a dedicated outdoor wedding venue with associated facilities, this could provide a well sought after outdoor venue for Atherton to cater for such events.

In time, if redevelopment of the old railway station building could be possible, opportunities could also exist to support a range of outdoor functions and events within the corridor through the possible shared use of kitchen facilities and amenities. In fact, other possible uses for the old railway station building could include a boutique coffee shop, restaurant or similar; all of which would work hand in hand with an outdoor events area.

Appropriate facilities to be provided should include power and lighting for evening use. A simple timber deck or gazebo type structure could also be incorporated as a focal element for organised events and functions, as well as for photographic opportunities.



Precinct G

Priors Creek Park

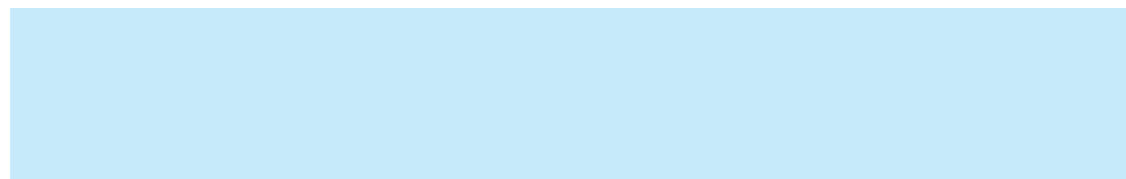
This portion of land is located at the northern end of the Priors Creek Corridor directly adjacent to the Main Street / Kennedy Highway Road to Tolga roundabout and Vehicle Bridge over Priors Creek. This Council owned land is classified as open space reserve.

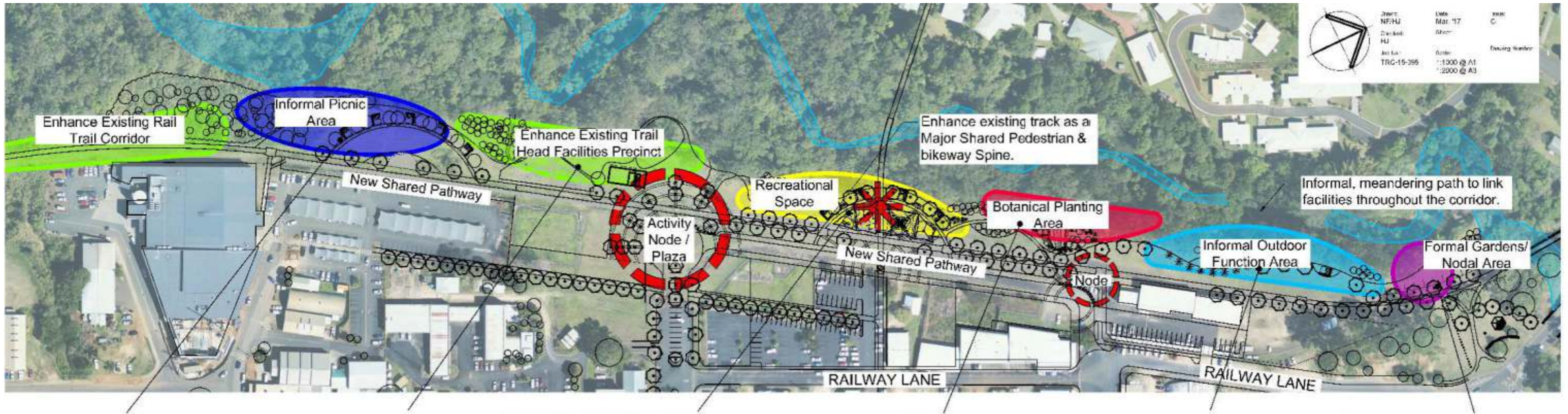
This portion of land is already divided into two halves by a row of bollards. The first half located directly adjacent the roundabout is already treated as a simple park area albeit with no facilities or landscape elements. The second half just to the south is shaded by a number of existing Eucalypt trees and appears to function as a temporary and informal carpark area.

An opportunity exists to create a welcoming entry statement to Atherton, and formal entrance park to the start of the Priors Creek Master Plan area. The concept is to create strong recognisable feature park which may also form an iconic spot for tourists and visitors for photographic opportunities. Located directly opposite the existing Anzac Memorial Park, the design of the two areas could be linked with the same common theme.

Given the requested need for parking facilities for visitors including for RV's, Caravans, and trailers, the existing informal parking area could be formalised to better cater for this need. The plans already identify the possible inclusion of parallel parking for RV's and Caravans, etc. along the northern end of Railway lane, however; this area could provide a shaded carpark area with facilities such as rubbish bins, picnic settings, and drinking fountains; all of which may be more desirable to visitors.

The continuation of the Priors Creek pathway should be investigated to provide a safe crossing over the main road to the north heading towards Tolga. At present, the walking track is located directly over the top of the old railway line. However, the old railway bridge over Priors Creek is fenced off. Council should approach Queensland Rail and investigate upgrade treatments to the bridge to enable it to be used by pedestrians and cyclists.





Picnic Shelters with BBQ facilities.



Improve existing Mountain Bike Facilities and provide additional facilities to teach children how to ride as well as learn about road rules and road safety generally.



Introduce play equipment with height for maximum play value as well as to provide highly visual focal elements to attract use and interaction. Also, incorporate fitness equipment along the corridor generally.



Improve existing stormwater infrastructure with extended landscape plantings to create a botanical theme to highlight the significance of Priors Creek Vegetation with informative signage and defined walking tracks.



Create a defined outdoor space with facilities to cater for formalised public and private events, functions (marquees), weddings, etc.



Incorporate a bandstand or rotunda as a key visual and focal element adjacent to the roundabout, with signage promoting Priors Creek as a key destination.





Drawn: TWR/NFHJ	Date: Apr. '17	Issue: A
Checked: HJ	Sheet: 1 of 2	Drawing Number: LMP-01
Job No.:	Scale: 1:1000 @ A1 1:2000 @ A3	
TRC-15-395		



Proposed Master Plan
1 of 2

PRIORS CREEK MASTER PLAN





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6.0 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

An important step in the process of developing any Master Plan is to undertake consultation with the key stakeholders. Without their input and involvement; the Master Plan could remain a Concept that may not proceed due to lack of support. The approved Master Plan for Priors Creek Corridor must be relevant and accurately represent the needs and desires of the community. The following summarises the consultation process undertaken and the outcomes for the Priors Creek Master Plan. A more detailed summary of the process as well as copies of written submissions and minutes from the consultation meetings are included the Officer's Report to Council prepared by Patrick Clifton.

6.1 Initial Stakeholder Consultation

Before engaging Reel Planning and HJLA to prepare the Master Plan, Council had already undertaken an initial consultation process with a number of targeted groups to gain an understanding of what the community's perception was for the future development of the Priors Creek Corridor. The outcome of this process was discussed earlier in this report, and concluded in the development of the key vision and objectives to be adopted in the preparation of the Master Plan. Subsequently, REEL Planning and HJLA were engaged in December 2015 to take the initial consultation through to Master Planning.

6.2 Presentation of Draft Master Plan to Council

In May 2016, the Draft Master Plan was presented to Council. The presentation and discussion followed another presentation by Helen Dyer and Stephen Holmes of Holmes Dyer on the Retail Analysis undertaken for the Tablelands Region. Support for the Master Plan from the Councillors was overwhelming. Concern was however expressed on the cost of implementing such a plan for Priors Creek. Whilst no initial estimates had been prepared at that time, it was discussed that the plan would likely be staged over a number of years. It was also discussed that it could be feasible that stage 1 could be delivered within this current term of Council provided adequate funding could be sourced.

A number of items resulting from the presentation of the Draft Master Plan were discussed and are summarised as follows.

- Generally, it was considered that all of the Design outcomes proposed by the Draft Master Plan have merit and was received positively by Council.
- The new proposed link road between Vernon Street and Jack Street was supported with the request that it be reconsidered more as a shared zone with the number of parking bays limited to reduce the risk of it becoming too great a physical and visual barrier to the corridor.
- More detailed information and discussion to be undertaken on the environmental values of Priors Creek and any potential opportunities to be gained in emphasising this as a significant feature of the Master Plan.
- Further discussions and investigations to be undertaken on the potential for the Visitor Information Centre to be relocated from Main Street to this precinct with associated RV parking to be provided nearby. This was seen as a possible positive outcome not only for the benefit of the information centre, but also for inviting visitors to stop and to spend time in the Main Street and utilise other nearby facilities.
- An alternative alignment for the proposed bridge crossing over the creek was presented in the feedback received after the presentation. An existing informal track opposite the Silo Shopping Centre was identified as a possible outcome for consideration.





6.3 Public Consultation

On 27 October 2016, Tablelands Regional Council endorsed the draft Priors Creek Master Plan for public consultation. The consultation period during which a submission could be made commenced on Tuesday 24 January, and concluded on Friday 3 March 2017.

The Public consultation involved written correspondence with state agencies, direct consultation with key stakeholders at workshops, public consultation in the form of public exhibitions in the Council libraries and customer service centres and a three day 'listening post' manned shopfront and the Silo Shopping Centre.

During the consultation period, the draft Priors Creek Master Plan was made available for inspection at Council's Customer Service Centres and Libraries. The draft Master Plan was also made available for download from Council's website. In addition to the download, Council also setup an online survey using the popular online Monkey Survey facility. In addition, during the public consultation period, presentations were made to a number of targeted community groups including:

- Economic Development and Investment Groups, including some Main Street Traders
- Active Users Groups, including Friends of Atherton Rail Trail
- Various Groups outside of Atherton, including Ravenshoe Chamber of Commerce, Malanda Chamber of Commerce, and Tolga Historic Society
- Adjacent Landholders and Active Interests, including Tablelands Investment, Atherton Performing Arts, Atherton Lions Club, Barron catchment Care, Rotary Atherton.

A detailed summary of the consultation process including notes from all workshops, copies of correspondence received from Stage Agencies, written submissions from the community, as well as copies of all online submissions are included in Council's Officers Report to Council (refer appendix #).

6.4 Consultation Outcomes

Generally, support exists for the development of Priors Creek as a recreational destination for Atherton. There were however; some areas of concern over specific items; all of which can easily be addressed either through the Master Plan, or through detail design and documentation of the proposed works before construction. There was also concern raised over the implementation, timing, and costs of the project as well as utilising and maintaining the Rail Trail as a Council asset. Key issues that were raised and common to all consultations include (not in any particular order):

- The need for more car parking for caravans and RV's
- Replacement of the toilet building within Vernon Street
- Implementation costs and timing (concern over potential rates increase)
- Ensure appropriate new commercial opportunities
- Enhancement and protection of the creek embankments and vegetation
- Provision for shaded and covered areas
- Use of native vegetation to protect existing vegetation
- Ongoing maintenance of the corridor
- Design and functionality of the Link Road between Vernon Street and Jack Street
- Disability access
- Concern over the management of stormwater runoff and flooding
- Flexibility of use of space to facilitate outdoor markets
- Vandalism and security

Positive Elements that came out of the consultation included:

- Shopping Centre Link to Vernon Street
- Plaza Vehicle Turnaround
- Space for outdoor markets
- Bus Stop and Transit Area
- Possible new location for the Visitor Information Centre
- Support for kids play equipment, and barbeque areas
- Pedestrian paths and links to surrounding areas
- Support for the Amphitheatre for public events

Negative Elements that came out of the discussions included:

- Sale of land to the shopping centre
- It may not happen
- Concerns regarding Funding / use of money / rates increase
- No off-leash dog area provided
- Not enough parking areas for caravans and RV's
- Prefer separate paths for bikes and pedestrians
- No overnight / long Stay caravan / RV parking

The Barron River Catchment Group expressed their concern over the apparent disregard for flood modelling and investigations into site drainage. As discussed at one of the consultation meetings, flood modelling and stormwater drainage management plans would be investigated at the detail design phase of the project. The outcomes of these investigations would need to be incorporated into the plans moving forward. The aim however will be to focus on delivering the vision and design intent of the Master Plan and how best to deliver the design outcomes whilst managing these as site constraints.

In their submission to Council, the Atherton Lions Club included plans for an alternative Concept for the Priors Creek corridor. Their Concept ignores the previous consultation undertaken by Council and places greater emphasis on the creation of a Botanical Gardens. Whilst it is obvious that this alternative plan has been prepared based strong desires and passion for creating a botanical gardens theme, It is fairly limited in its proposed benefits for the community. The main concerns over this proposal are that it limits the use and functionality of the corridor as a multi-use recreational and destination place.

In addition to the targeted groups presentations and discussions, a listening post was setup at the Silo Shopping Centre. Graphical presentations of the draft Master Plan were on display as well as copies of the draft Master Plan Report. The listening post was held over 3 days from 1st February to Friday 3rd February. Over the 3 days, a total of 528 people with engaged. 393 of who were actively engaged by asking questions and providing their opinions. Generally, most people were supportive of the draft Master Plan. There were only a handful of negative comments including:

- Any new development will compete with the Main Street
- Probably won't happen
- It's not important
- There should be vehicle access across the creek to reduce congestion at the intersection of Golf Links Rd and Kennedy Hwy / Tolga Road.
- There is no off-leash dog area
- It's a waste of money and there are better things to spend money on
- Should be better cleaning the existing toilets than spending money on this
- There are too many planners at the Council
- There is no footpath past the vets to the curry shop

6.5 Amendments to the Master Plan

As a result of the Consultation process, the following amendments were made to the Master Plan. Many of the amendments were in respect to providing additional detail and consideration of specific details. Some of the amendments however, resulted in significant changes to the plans.

- Removal of the toilet block from the centre of Vernon Street.
- Careful detailing of the shared road linking Vernon Street and Jack Street to prevent it being used as a main thoroughfare and to ensure limited vehicle speeds at all times. Provide greater focus on creating a shared zone for safe pedestrian use.
- The inclusion of removable bollards to close the link road off to traffic for public events and outdoor markets.
- Careful detailing of the link road between the shopping centre carpark and Vernon Street as a 2 way driveway access to allow access and linkage without promoting it as a main thoroughfare.
- Greater focus and attention on protecting, enhancing, and promoting the environmental qualities and attributes of Priors Creek and its vegetation as a significant habitat corridor.
- Careful detailing of the Priors Creek Promenade Pathway as a safe, shared pedestrian and bike corridor with limited conflicts to users; i.e. defined separation of pedestrians from cyclists.
- Reconsideration of how to better include parking for motorhomes, Caravans, and RV's close to Priors Creek and the Main Street to better encourage visitors and tourists to stop for a while in Atherton.
- Identify the possible relocation of the Visitor Information Centre with adjacent parking opportunities for Motorhomes, Caravans, and RV's.
- Identify the possible relocation of the bus stop from the Main Street to Vernon Street to better service the need for a dedicated bus transit area.
- Ensure shelters with barbeque facilities are scattered throughout the corridor.
- Ensure the overall design of Priors Creek is realistic, practical, and relevant so it can be delivered as efficiently as possible without exceeding community expectation in terms of spend.

7.0 IMPLEMENTATION

To achieve the vision and objectives of the Master Plan Council will need to consider a coordinated approach to the implementation of the proposed outcomes.

Implementation may be undertaken both by the delivery of specific projects or stages at points in time and/or, by the targeted delivery of aspects of the plan e.g. infrastructure / drainage outlet extensions and upgrades. Delivery of project stages is going to typically require greater funding, however; delivering specific projects will likely have the biggest short term impact for the community. Staging will likely consist mainly of hard civil elements and infrastructure, whilst specific projects would likely deliver landscape / embellishment elements which can be designed and implemented progressively as funding becomes available.

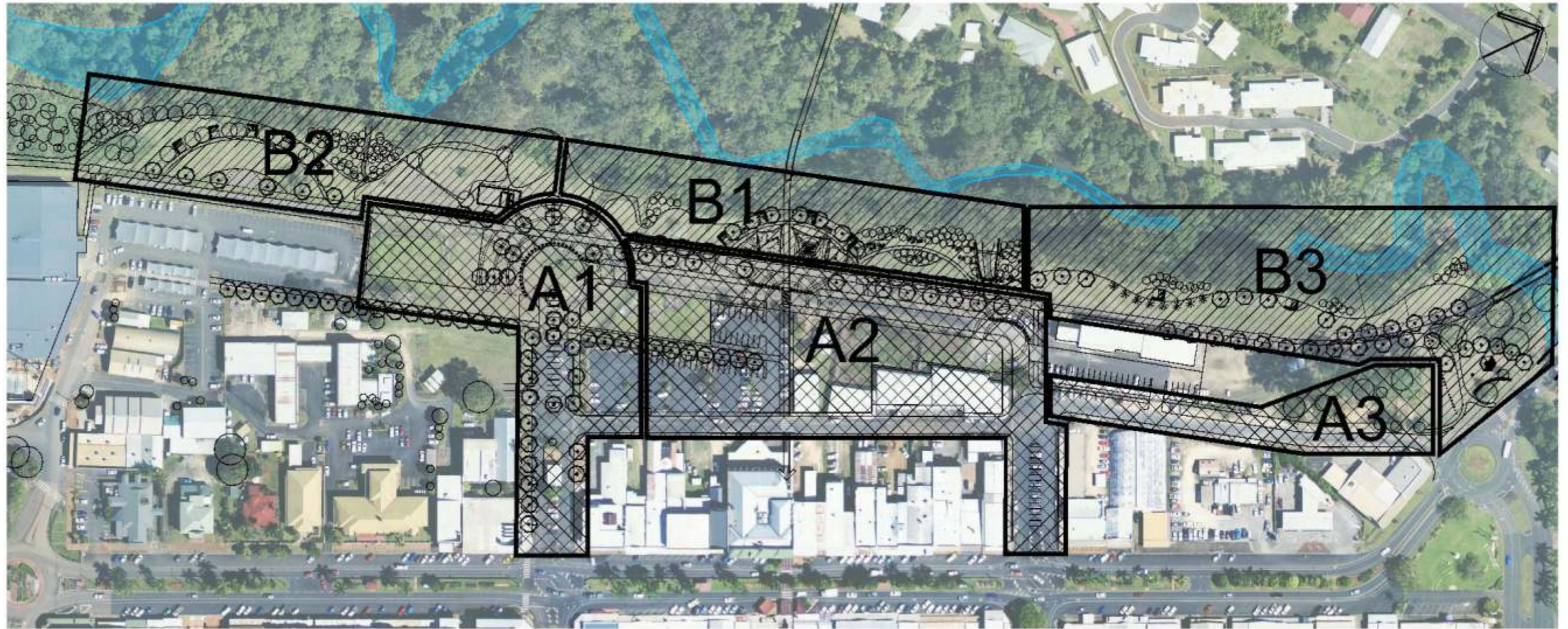
However, before design consultants are engaged, Council should consider undertaking an ROL process (Registration of Lots) so that all the approvals from a town planning perspective have been implemented. This process will resolve the amalgamation of various lots, formalise agreements for use of the various land parcels, define the creation of all new lots, and will also create the road reserve extension of Vernon Street, as well as for the link road connecting Vernon Street and Jack Street. While amalgamation of land titles is exempt development under the Sustainable Planning Act, the rearrangement of boundaries, the creation of new lots, road reserve and easements will require a formal code assessable development application to be prepared and approved by Council. This process will involve a detailed site survey, survey plan preparation, civil engineering reports for stormwater management, drainage, and investigation of services requirements, and external town planning input to prepare the necessary development application. It is also recommended that assessment of the application is undertaken external to the Council, with an allowance of between 4 to 6 weeks for processing after completion and lodgement.

Once the ROL process has been undertaken, detail design and documentation can then be undertaken with the majority of issues already clearly identified and addressed. It is recommended that detail design and documentation be undertaken on a stage by stage basis. The following section identifies a logical break up of the works into achievable stages of development.

7.1 Proposed Staging

Staging of the works has been undertaken in consideration of both the major infrastructure requirements as well as the general improvements and embellishments of the corridor. It would be pointless undertaking site improvements and embellishments works within the corridor without extending the adjacent streets and infrastructure. As such, the Master Plan identifies six (6) stages in total. Refer to the Proposed Staging Plan. Three of those stages relate to extending the adjacent streets, linking the shopping centre carpark to Vernon Street, new link road between Vernon Street and Jack Street, upgrade of Railway Lane, and the construction of the new lots. The other three stages relate specifically to the site improvement / embellishment works within the actual corridor reserve.

A description of works for each stage is summarised over the following pages.





STAGE A1

General description of works:

- Upgrade Vernon Street Streetscape (road pavement, line marking, kerb & channel replacement, footpath treatments, street lighting, street trees, etc.)
- Removal of the existing toilet block from Vernon Street
- Extension of Vernon Street – vehicle turnaround
- Link from shopping centre carpark to Vernon Street
- Creation of 3 new lots
- Construction of Plaza / Forecourt area
- Part construction of the Priors Creek Promenade Pathway
- Street and landscape lighting
- Trees, Landscape, & Irrigation
- New signage elements
- Public Art elements

STAGE A2

General description of works:

- Upgrade Railway Lane
- Reconfigure existing carpark for caravans and RV's
- Creation of 3 new lots
- Construction of new Link Road between Vernon & Jack Streets
- Part construction of Priors Creek Promenade Pathway
- Street and landscape lighting
- Trees, Landscape, & irrigation
- New signage elements
- Public Art elements

STAGE A3

General description of works:

- Upgrade Railway Lane (North)
- Construction of concrete paths
- Footpath Upgrade works
- Construction of new carpark at northern end of Railway Lane
- Street and landscape lighting
- Trees, Landscape, & irrigation

STAGE B1

General description of works:

- New concrete paths
- Irrigated turfed areas
- Destination playground area
- New park shelters & picnic settings
- New electric barbeques
- Seating areas
- Fitness stations
- Landscape lighting



- Trees, Landscape, & irrigation
- Environmental paths, handrails, and educational signage
- Suspension bridge crossing over Priors Creek
- Public Art elements

STAGE B2

General description of works:

- Extension of Priors Creek Promenade Pathway
- New concrete paths
- New Learn to Ride facility
- Irrigated turfed areas
- New park shelters & picnic settings
- New electric barbeques
- Seating areas
- Amphitheatre and Stage area
- Landscape lighting
- Trees, Landscape, & irrigation
- Environmental paths, handrails, and educational signage
- Public Art elements

STAGE B3

General description of works:

- Extension of Priors Creek Promenade Pathway
- New concrete paths
- Irrigated turfed areas
- New feature bandstand / Gazebo structure
- New park shelters & picnic settings
- New electric barbeques
- Seating areas
- Landscape lighting
- Trees, Landscape, & irrigation
- Environmental paths, handrails, and educational signage
- Public Art elements

7.2 Proposed Consultants

To ensure the implementation of works is undertaken in accordance with the Master Plan, it is recommended that Council engage a Landscape Architect as the lead design consultant and Project Manager to coordinate the delivery of all stages of work on behalf of Council in conjunction with civil engineers. Whilst Stages A1, A2, and A3 have a significant civil engineering component, it is important to maintain a 'design' focus on the works, so it would be crucial to the outcome of the works that the project civil engineer and landscape architect work closely to ensure landscape embellishment works and hard engineering works are well coordinated during the design stage. Conversely, stages B1, B2, and B3 have a significant landscape architectural component. Other consultants would include electrical engineers and an irrigation design consultant.