

Some of the initial decisions mentioned above flow into a trail management plan and should be included.

A timetable for reviewing and updating this Plan should be set, with annual reviews and three (or five) year updates recommended. The Plan must outline a professional program of management, designed to ensure that there is no lapse into a belief that trails, once built, will manage themselves.

Further, this plan must clearly define who is responsible for what – it is crucial that everyone knows what their role and responsibility is. Without this, it is all too easy for everyone to sit back expecting someone else to do the work. Trail management plans need to be specific about roles in management and maintenance.

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### 7.3 GENERAL RISK MANAGEMENT

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A risk is the chance of something happening as a result of a hazard or threat that will impact on an activity or planned event. Risk arises out of uncertainty. It is measured in terms of the likelihood of it happening and the consequences if it does happen. Risk therefore, even on trails, needs to be managed. Ignoring the risks that apply to a recreation trail or events planned along a trail could impact on:

- ✚ The health and safety of trail users, staff, volunteers and event participants;
- ✚ The reputation, credibility and status of the trail and its manager (or trail association);
- ✚ Public and customer confidence in the trail manager;
- ✚ The trail manager's financial position; and
- ✚ Plant, equipment and the environment.

A systematic approach to managing risk is now regarded as good management practice. Risk management is a process consisting of well-defined steps which, when taken in sequence, support better decision making by contributing to a greater insight into risks and their impacts. It is as much about identifying opportunities as it is about avoiding losses. By adopting effective risk management techniques, the trail manager can help to improve the safety of trail users, the quality of experience for trail users and business performance of the trail organisation. Sound risk management can prevent injuries from occurring, and help to reduce insurance claims and costs. Risk management is of particular importance to nature based and adventure tourism operations, and requires careful consideration in how it is planned for and dealt with. The courts expect that a business (including local governments) will exercise due diligence in carrying out hazard assessment, risk management planning and emergency response planning. There are many benefits in implementing risk management procedures. Some of these include:

- ✚ More effective strategic planning;
- ✚ Better cost control;
- ✚ Increased knowledge and understanding of exposure to risk;
- ✚ A systematic, well-informed and thorough method of decision making;
- ✚ Increased preparedness for outside review;
- ✚ Minimised disruptions;

- ✚ Better utilisation of resources;
- ✚ Strengthening culture for continued improvement; and
- ✚ Creating a best practice and quality organisation.

Though the rail trail would be located on a reasonably flat grade, and is wide enough to accommodate several user groups, there will be risks associated with use of the trail.

Some of the risks involved are:

- ✚ Encountering motor vehicles at road crossings;
- ✚ Conflict between user groups;
- ✚ Encountering illegal trail users such as cars/4WD and trail bikes;
- ✚ Falling from unprotected bridge crossings (though handrails on all bridges over 1 metre high would be required);
- ✚ Falling from high embankments, where there are no barriers;
- ✚ Being caught in a grass fire;
- ✚ Being caught in a flood; and
- ✚ Being bitten by a snake.

Good design and construction address some of these risk elements. Many trail projects have in place a maintenance plan which sets out clearly the items which require regular inspection, the frequency of that inspection and assessment, the actions to take in response to degraded surface conditions or infrastructure, and remedial action to rectify a problem or fault.

The threat of fires is always present. Though snakes are rarely encountered, it may be prudent for trail promotional material to carry a warning about possible encounters and to provide information about dealing with a snakebite.

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#### 7.4 AN EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

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Major fire events throughout Australia in recent years have put the need for emergency planning and management into sharp focus. Trail managers need to be very conscious of the need to prepare emergency response plans and work out how to deal with emergencies on trails. This is not limited to fires. Flooding can be just as serious an issue.

In other rail trail projects, it has been desirable to set out the parameters of an Emergency Response Plan. Given the urban nature of this trail, such a requirement seems onerous. One matter of relevance is that Table 2 provides for the development of the trail as an emergency access route for residents of Ovid Lane in particular in times of flood. The works item recommends use of a gated system with keys being made available to existing residents of Ovid Lane (and other likely affected properties). Council will need to determine whether such keys are made available when the trail opens (if it proceeds) or simply as the need arises.

## 7.5 A TRAIL MAINTENANCE PLAN

### 7.5.1 INTRODUCTION

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Ongoing trail maintenance is a crucial component of an effective management program – yet it is often neglected until too late. Countless quality trails have literally disappeared because no one planned a maintenance program and no one wanted to fund even essential ongoing repairs. It is therefore essential that funds be set aside in yearly budgets for maintenance of this trail - to ensure user safety and enjoyment, and to minimise liability risks for land managers.

### 7.5.2 THE MAINTENANCE TASK

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Ongoing maintenance can be minimised by building a trail well in the first place. A well-constructed trail surface will last considerably longer than a poorly built trail. Signs, gates, and posts installed in substantial footings stand less risk of being stolen or damaged. Well designed, well built and well installed management access gates and trail user gates (as proposed) will keep motor vehicles and motorised trail bikes off the trail with a consequent lessened need for surface repairs. Trail furniture (such as bench seats, trail directional marker posts and interpretation) should be installed in substantial footings sufficient to withstand high winds and theft. These should require minimal ongoing maintenance. Vehicles moving along a sealed pathway have the capacity to crack the surface if tyres sit on the trail edge. Care needs to be taken by maintenance vehicles.

The presence of trees along some of the trail means that time will be spent removing damaged and fallen trees and branches in the aftermath of a storm.

The most frequent maintenance task will be attending to fallen branches and limbs, repairing trail surfaces, replacing stolen or damaged signs (including road signs), clearing culverts and under bridges and ensuring gates and fences are functioning as intended.

As noted above, building good trails in the first place is the very best way of minimising future problems and costs. As a second line of defence, a clear and concise Management Plan with a regular maintenance program written into it will aid significantly in managing ongoing resource demands.

The goals of a Trail Maintenance Plan are to:

-  Ensure that trail users continue to experience safe and enjoyable conditions;
-  Guard against the deterioration of trail infrastructure, thereby maintaining the investment made on behalf of the community;
-  Minimise the trail manager's exposure to potential public liability claims arising from incidents which may occur along the trail; and
-  Set in place a management process to cover most foreseeable risks.

Erosion (caused by weather and unauthorised users), regrowth of vegetation (including grass and weeds on the trail corridor but not on the trail surface), fallen trees and branches, and damage to signage and fences are likely to be the greatest maintenance activities on the trail. Providing these effects are attended to early, they are largely labour intensive rather than capital expensive. Calamitous events such as fire or major flood will naturally generate

significant rebuilding activity and consequent costs. These events are generally unmanageable, and should simply be accepted as part of the longer-term reality of trail management.

### 7.5.3 PUBLIC LIABILITY AND RISK MANAGEMENT

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It is important that Cootamundra Gundagai Regional Council is aware that – whether or not visitors are actively encouraged to come to the trail – they carry a significant duty of care towards those visitors accessing the trail. The maintenance of a quality trail is therefore critical from this perspective. Liability generally rests with the land managers and hence, every attempt should be made to minimise the risk of accident or injury to trail users (and therefore the risk of legal action).

While public liability is certainly an issue for all land managers, it is not a reason to turn away from providing safe, sustainable and enjoyable resources. It is simply a mechanism by which to recognise the responsibilities inherent in managing natural and built resources. Dealing with a perceived liability threat is not about totally removing that threat – it is about doing all that is manifestly possible to provide safe access opportunities for visitors, thereby minimising the risk of liability claims.

A formal Hazard Inspection process is crucial in the ongoing maintenance plan. Not only will this define maintenance required and/or management decisions to be addressed, it is vital in ensuring safe conditions and therefore in dealing with any liability claim which may arise in the future. Courts are strongly swayed by evidence of a clear and functional program, and a regular series of reports, with follow-up actions, will go a long way to mitigating responsibility for injuries. Further, clearly defined ‘User Responsibility’ statements in brochures, maps, policy documents, plans and public places will assist this process.

### 7.5.4 TRAIL MAINTENANCE

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The following information is provided as general maintenance guidance. An inventory of works and locations needs to be prepared for maintenance purposes – this cannot be prepared until construction is completed. An example of a checklist for a trail is included in Appendix 4. The Council will need to create a specific checklist based on this example once the trail is completed.

Maintenance on the trail should be divided between regular inspections and simple repairs, a one (or two) person job, and quarterly programs undertaking larger jobs such as significant signage repairs or weed / vegetation control. A range of basic machinery, tools and equipment will be required for this work.

At the core of any trail maintenance program is an inspection program. The relevant Australian Standards sets out the basis for frequency of trail inspections. It only covers walking tracks and provides for inspections every 30 days (or less) for Class 1 trails, every 90 days for Class 2 trails, and annually for Class 3-6 trails. This sets the minimum standard for inspections and is a guide only. What the Australian Standards do not include but should include is an inspection of any trail after significant weather events such as storms, fire, floods, and high winds in addition to the regular inspection program. The proposed inspection regime recommends inspections every 90 days.



Clear records of each activity/inspection will be kept by the body with responsibility for maintenance. Pro-formas serve to maximise user safety and minimise liability risks. It will also provide a valuable record of works undertaken and make for efficient use of maintenance resources over time.

In general, Maintenance Plans are based around regular inspections, at which time simple maintenance activities should take place concurrently. More time-consuming maintenance activities should take place every six months, while detailed Hazard Inspections should occur annually. Further, the capacity to respond immediately to random incoming reports of hazards or major infrastructure failures should be built into the Plans. Table 5 gives a suggested schedule for general maintenance activities to achieve acceptable maintenance levels and provides explanatory notes pertaining to each Activity.

**Table 5: General Maintenance Activities**

Activity	Activity Description	Site	Frequency
Undertake full inspection of the trail	<p><b>At trailheads</b></p> <p>The trailhead should be carefully checked to ensure that all signage is present, and that all signs are clearly visible and legible. An inventory needs to be prepared to assist in regular maintenance.</p> <p>Surface of access tracks and parking areas need to be checked and potholes eliminated.</p> <p>Inspect and check trailhead facilities and infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Parking areas and access tracks (check surfaces)</li> <li>○ Wheel stops</li> <li>○ Trailhead (map) panel</li> <li>○ interpretive panel</li> <li>○ Seating/shelter/picnic tables</li> <li>○ Trailhead signage (on road)</li> <li>○ Trail directional marker posts</li> </ul> <p><b>At Road crossings</b></p> <p>Particular attention needs to be given to signs at road crossings or junctions. Each crossing should be carefully checked to ensure that all signage is present, and that all signs are clearly visible.</p> <p>Particular attention must be given to ensuring that "Trail Crossing ahead" signs (on roadside at approach to trail crossing) are not obscured by overhanging vegetation.</p>	Entire trail	Every third month

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Final Report

<p>Replace damaged and/or missing signs.</p> <p>Check management access gates and trail user chicanes for structural stability and function.</p> <p><b>Fencing</b></p> <p>Check and make repairs to side fencing. To be done by arrangement with adjoining landowners.</p>			
<p>Check signage and clean, replace or repair as required esp. road crossing signage and directional markers.</p> <p>All signage should be checked for vandalism and cleaned if necessary. If damage is too great, replacement is essential.</p> <p>An inventory of locations of all signs needs to be prepared to assist in regular maintenance.</p>	<p>Check, repair or replace all trail signage, including interpretive signage, trail distance and directional markers (logo/arrow plates). Replace missing and/or damaged signs.</p>	<p>All locations</p>	<p>Every third month - at each trail inspection</p>
<p>Slashing of trail environs</p>		<p>Various locations</p>	<p>Timing dependent on seasonal growth patterns</p>
<p>Check trail surface and arrange repair as required</p>		<p>Entire trail</p>	<p>Every third month.</p> <p>Arrange repairs immediately if acute, or schedule maintenance for six monthly work sessions if not.</p>

Gundagai Rail Trail Development Plan

Final Report

Maintenance of trail surface	Check condition of trail surface for damage and arrange repairs if necessary; trim off regrowth vegetation.	Entire trail	Every six months
Sweep or rake debris from trail surfaces, especially at road crossing points		Various locations	Every six months
Maintenance of culverts and other drainage measures	<p>Check and clear drains and culverts.</p> <p>Drains need to be checked and cleared once or twice/year and after heavy rainfall events. Regular maintenance especially after heavy rainfall is essential.</p> <p>Most maintenance will involve clearing of material from silted up or blocked drains.</p> <p>Drain blockages should be cleared as urgent priority.</p> <p>Silt traps at culvert discharges or entry points should be cleared regularly.</p> <p>Cess drains in cuttings should be checked to ensure they function effectively.</p>	Entire trail	Every six months
Cut back regrowth, intruding and overhanging vegetation.	<p>Check overhanging or intruding vegetation. Cut back where required. Clear fallen trees and branches.</p> <p>Undergrowth vegetation grows quickly, and over time will continue to intrude into the trail 'corridor'.</p>	Entire trail	Every six months, unless obviously requiring attention at regular inspections.



Gundagai Rail Trail Development Plan

Final Report

	Such intruding vegetation needs to be cut back to provide clear and safe passage for trail users. "Blow-downs" - trees or limbs that have fallen across the trail – need to be cleared as/when required. Sight lines must be kept clear either side of road crossings, to ensure that users can clearly see a safe distance either way at road crossings.		
Check structural stability of interpretive signage, and interpretive shelters.  Check structural stability of seating, distance posts. Inspect and replace when needed.	Interpretive panels should be checked for vandalism and cleaned if necessary. If damage is too great, replacement is essential. An inventory of locations needs to be prepared to assist in regular maintenance.  Furniture alongside trails, if installed, needs to be checked regularly for damage to ensure safety and comfort of trail users.	Entire trail	Every six months
Undertake Hazard Inspection and prepare Hazard Inspection Report	This should be done annually. Inclusion of a formal Hazard Inspection process, crucial in addressing risk, is necessary in the ongoing maintenance plan. Not only will this define maintenance required and/or management decisions to be addressed, it is vital in ensuring safe conditions and therefore in dealing with any liability claim which may arise in the future. Courts are strongly swayed by evidence of a clear and functional program, and a regular series of reports, with follow-up actions, will go a long way to mitigating responsibility for injuries.	Entire trail	Annually

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67

Gundagai Rail Trail Development Plan

Final Report

	Further, clearly defined 'User Responsibility' statements in brochures, maps, policy documents, plans and public places will assist this process.		
Check structural integrity of bridges. Inspect and maintain bridges. Check for obstructions and clearing under bridges.	Visual inspection is appropriate though detailed inspection should follow storm and flood events. After floods, bridge should be inspected and damaged components replaced as soon as possible. Handrails and surface decking on bridge should be inspected for damage at regular intervals.		Annually
Major repairs and replacements		Entire trail	Every 5 years
Major repairs and replacements		Entire trail	Every 10 years

*It should be noted that this schedule does not allow for repair works above and beyond 'normal' minor activities. For example, if a section is subject to heavy rain, and erosion control fails, additional repair works will need to be undertaken).*

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68

### 7.5.5 MAINTENANCE COSTS

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Resourcing a maintenance program is crucial, and funds will be required on an ongoing basis to enable this essential maintenance. It would be short sighted to go ahead and build the trail and then baulk at the demands of managing and maintaining it.

Estimating the cost of maintaining a trail is difficult due to the unpredictability of events such as floods, fires, high winds and stormwater runoff, as well as the tenure and management arrangements for the trail. Deliberate and wilful damage and vandalism can also contribute significantly to the need for ongoing maintenance and replacement of infrastructure. Volunteers can be organised (through a coordinated program) to carry out much of the work at a limited cost to the trail manager.

Evidence of actual trail maintenance costs for individual items along a rail trail, or any trail for that matter, are scarce. The Rail to Trails Conservancy in the USA (*Rail-Trail Maintenance and Operation – Ensuring the Future of Your Trails – A Survey of 100 Rail-Trails, July 2005*) provides two general answers for why it is difficult to estimate maintenance costs. First, the trail may be part of a larger budget for a single park or even an entire parks and recreation department. Specific costs for the trail aren't separated out. Second, small trail groups, though run by competent and extremely dedicated volunteers, tend to be 'seat-of-the-pants' operations. Maintenance is done "as needed," funds are raised "as needed," and the people are volunteering because they love the trail, not because they love doing administrative tasks like budgeting.

Maintenance responsibility does appear to significantly affect cost. Approximately 60% of the surveyed trails reporting costs were maintained primarily by a government agency, implying paid staff and/or contractors. The other 40% of trails were primarily maintained by a non-profit or volunteer organisation. Annual costs for government-run trails were just over \$2,000 per mile (\$1,250/km). This is not much more than the overall average of \$1,500/mile (\$940/km), but it nearly triples the average for volunteer-run trails of just under \$700 per mile (\$440/km).

In Victoria, the Murrindindi Shire Council manages and maintains approximately 85% of the (134km) Great Victorian Rail Trail. It spends around \$2,000/km on maintenance activities each year. Anecdotal information indicates that initial construction issues necessitate an increased level of maintenance of the trail surface (and drainage through cuttings). A higher level of (initial) construction quality (i.e. better trail surfacing) would mean less ongoing maintenance.

Volunteers could undertake much of the ongoing maintenance of the trail if a volunteer maintenance program is arranged. It should be ensured that whoever is charged with ongoing responsibility for managing the trails has genuine and specific trail knowledge. It is not sufficient to be a skilled gardener, conservationist or environmental scientist. If training is required to bring staff knowledge levels up to a high standard, this should be seen as a priority to be **undertaken early in the construction process. Trail skills are better learned** over a longer time, with hands-on practice, than in short briefing sessions.

The biggest maintenance costs involved are obviously maintenance of the items that initially cost the most to install – surfacing and bridges (though use of a sealed surface reduces the maintenance load, as will the use of pre-fabricated bridges).

It is difficult estimating the costs involved in maintaining a trail until every last bridge and other infrastructure items have been installed.

The use of volunteers to undertake many of the routine repairs and cleaning tasks can substantially reduce the costs.

Table 6 makes an attempt at estimating an amount that may be required on an annual basis for maintaining the proposed Gundagai Rail Trail.

**Table 6: Estimate of Maintenance Costs (Gundagai Rail Trail – 5.3km)**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Frequency/note</i>	<i>Possible costs</i>
Inspect and check trailhead facilities and infrastructure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- parking areas (check surfaces)</li> <li>- rubber wheel stops</li> <li>- interpretive panel</li> <li>- picnic tables</li> <li>- trailhead signage (on road)</li> <li>- trailhead (map) panel</li> <li>- trail directional marker posts</li> </ul>	1 trailheads at average repairs of \$500 per site	\$500
Trail surface - allowance for incidental repairs to, and upgrading of, trail surface.	Allowance of 2% of replacement cost (i.e. 2% of \$444,940).	\$8,900
Check side vegetation growth and overhead vegetation and cut back where required. Clearing of fallen trees and branches.	Allowance of 3 person days per year (@ \$500/day).	\$1,500
Inspection and routine maintenance of bridges. Check for obstructions and clearing under bridges.		\$500
Check and clear culverts.	Allowance of 10 hours for checking and cleaning	\$1,000
Check road crossings. Replace damaged and/or missing signs and undertake other tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Give Way signs</li> <li>- Road Ahead signs</li> <li>- Trail Crossing warning signs</li> <li>- Road name signs</li> <li>- Regulatory signs</li> <li>- Check sight distances and clear vegetation if necessary</li> </ul>	8 crossings at average repairs of \$300 per crossing	\$2,400



Inspection of and allowance for replacement of trail directional marker logo/arrow plates and trail kilometre posts.	1 replacement per year	\$400
Allowance for repairs to trailside furniture and occasional replacements (when required).	Inspection and minor repairs every 6 months. 1 replacement per year.	\$1,000
Check miscellaneous signs along trail (e.g. Road Ahead, Give Way, trail name, distance signs, "No Trespassing", bridge load signs, etc).	5 replacements per year.	\$1,000
Check management access gates and fences at road crossings. Make repairs where necessary.	Allowance of \$4,000 per year for repairs.	\$4,000
Check interpretation along trail for damage and structural stability.	Allowance for replacement of 1 panel per year.	\$3,000
Inspection of rail trail (3 times/year).	Allowance for 3 inspection trips per year	\$4,500
Preparation of annual Hazard Inspection Report.	1 person days @ \$1000/day.	\$1,000
<b>\$29,700 excl GST (per annum)</b>		

This equates to a rate of approximately \$5,605 per kilometre per annum.

*Note 1: This does not include any costs for maintaining the Gundagai Railway Bridge and Viaduct*

*Note 2: Reporting of routine maintenance requirements by trail users will obviate need for many scheduled inspections.*

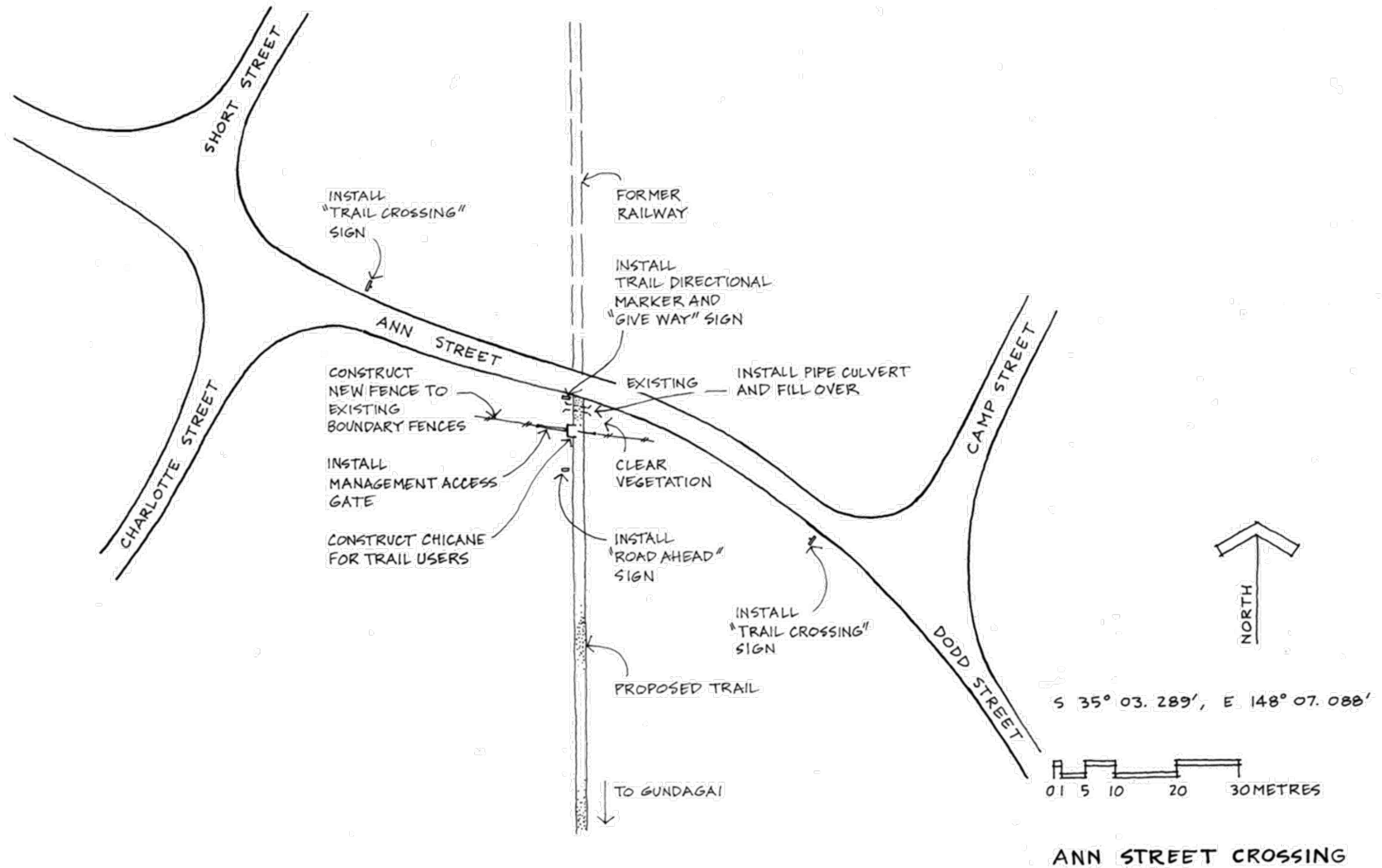
*Note 3: Appointment of a Trail Manager, with responsibility for regular inspections of entire trail, will substantially reduce need for unscheduled and expensive maintenance.*

## APPENDIX 1: ROAD CROSSING DRAWINGS

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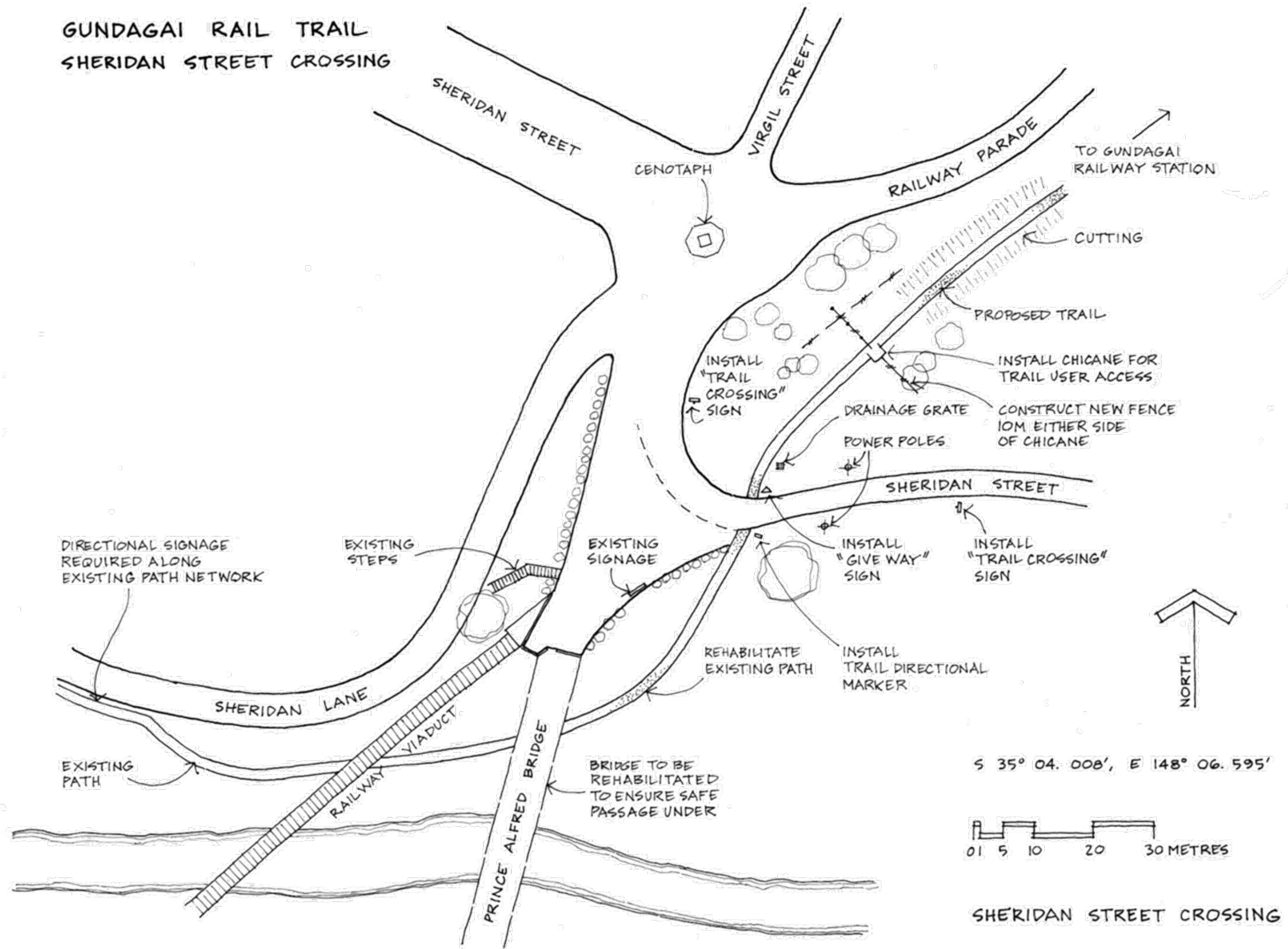


# GUNDAGAI RAIL TRAIL ANN STREET CROSSING

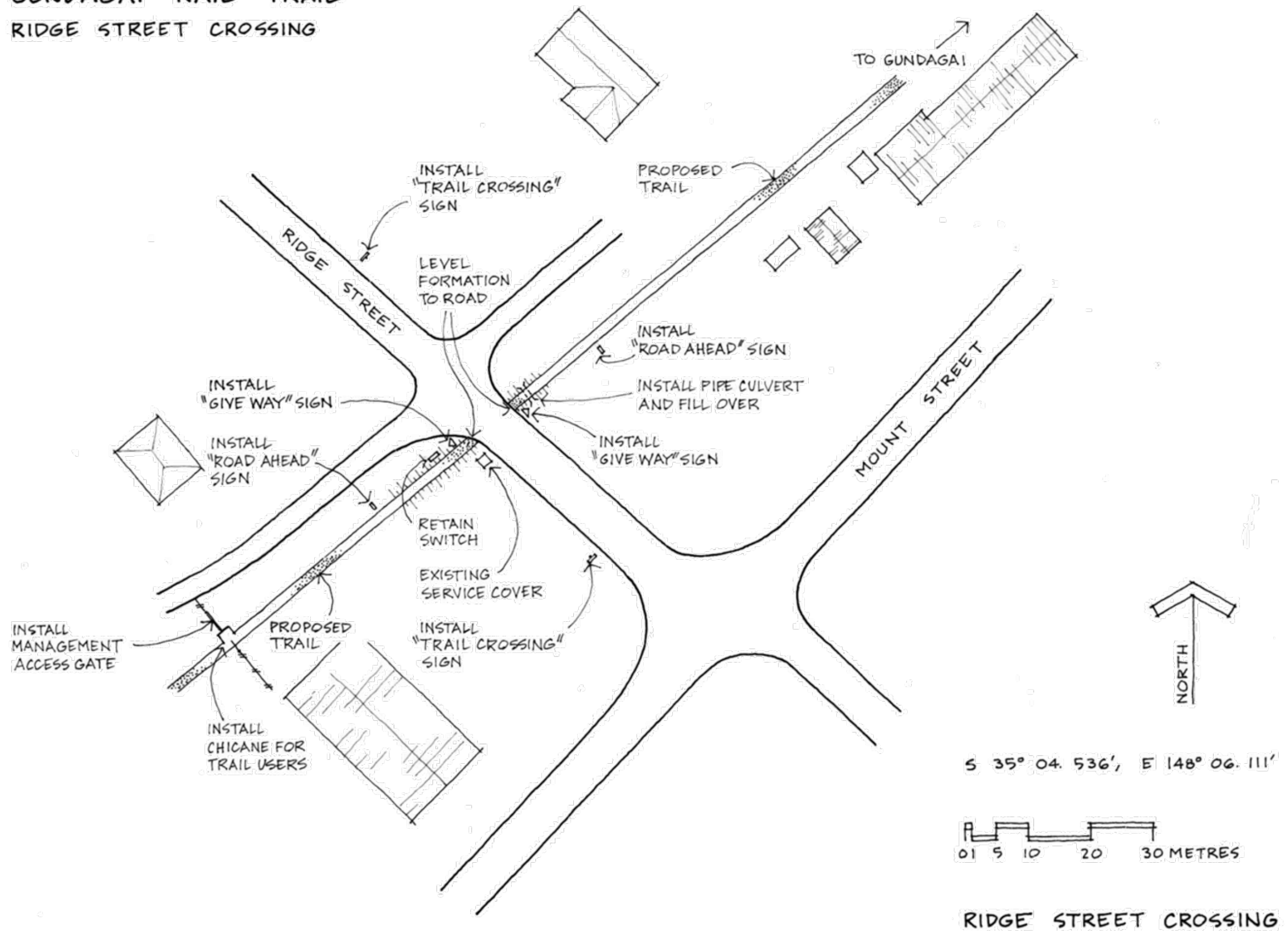




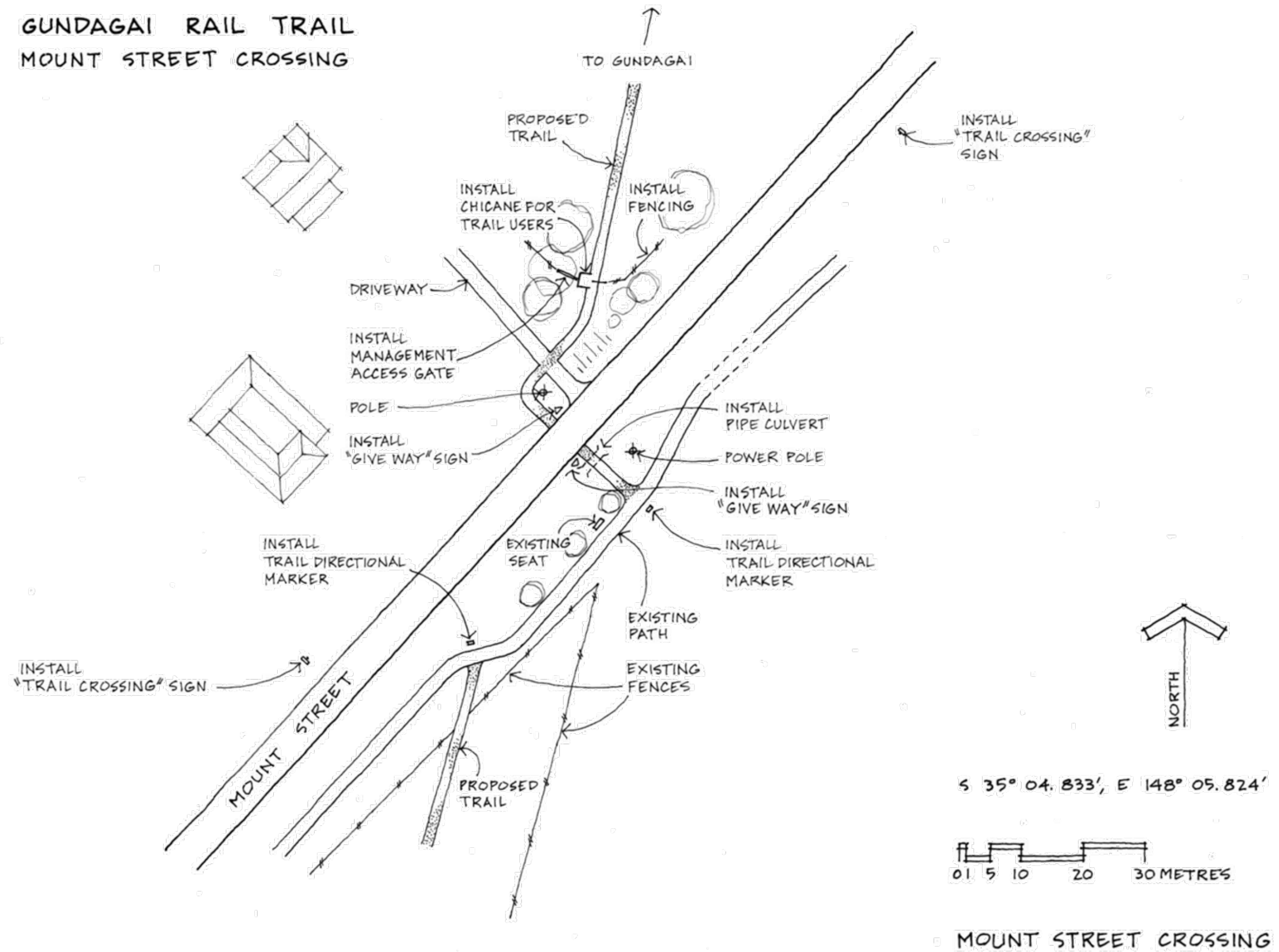
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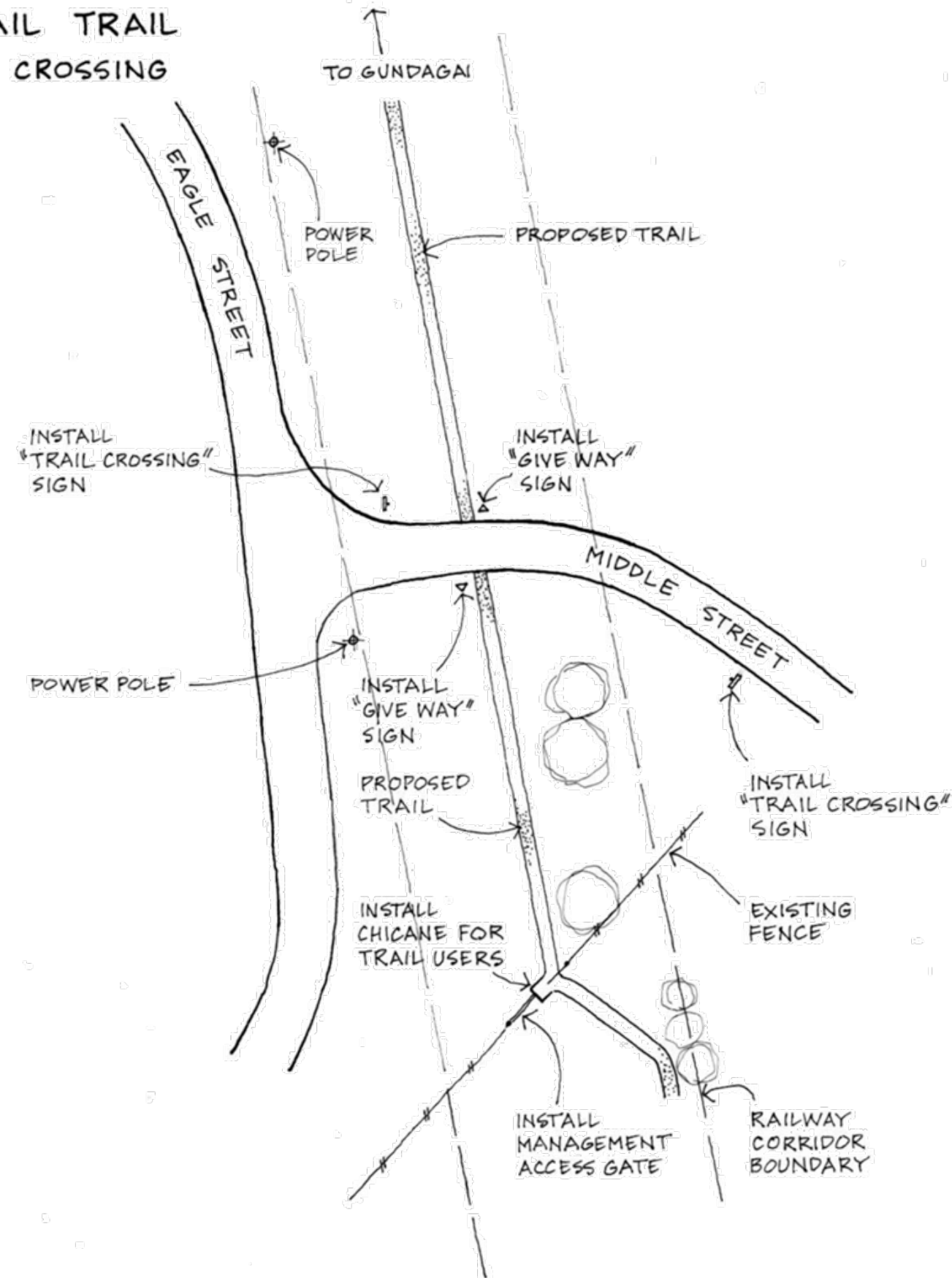
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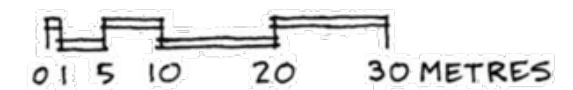
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# GUNDAGAI RAIL TRAIL MIDDLE STREET CROSSING



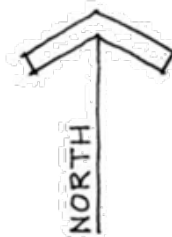
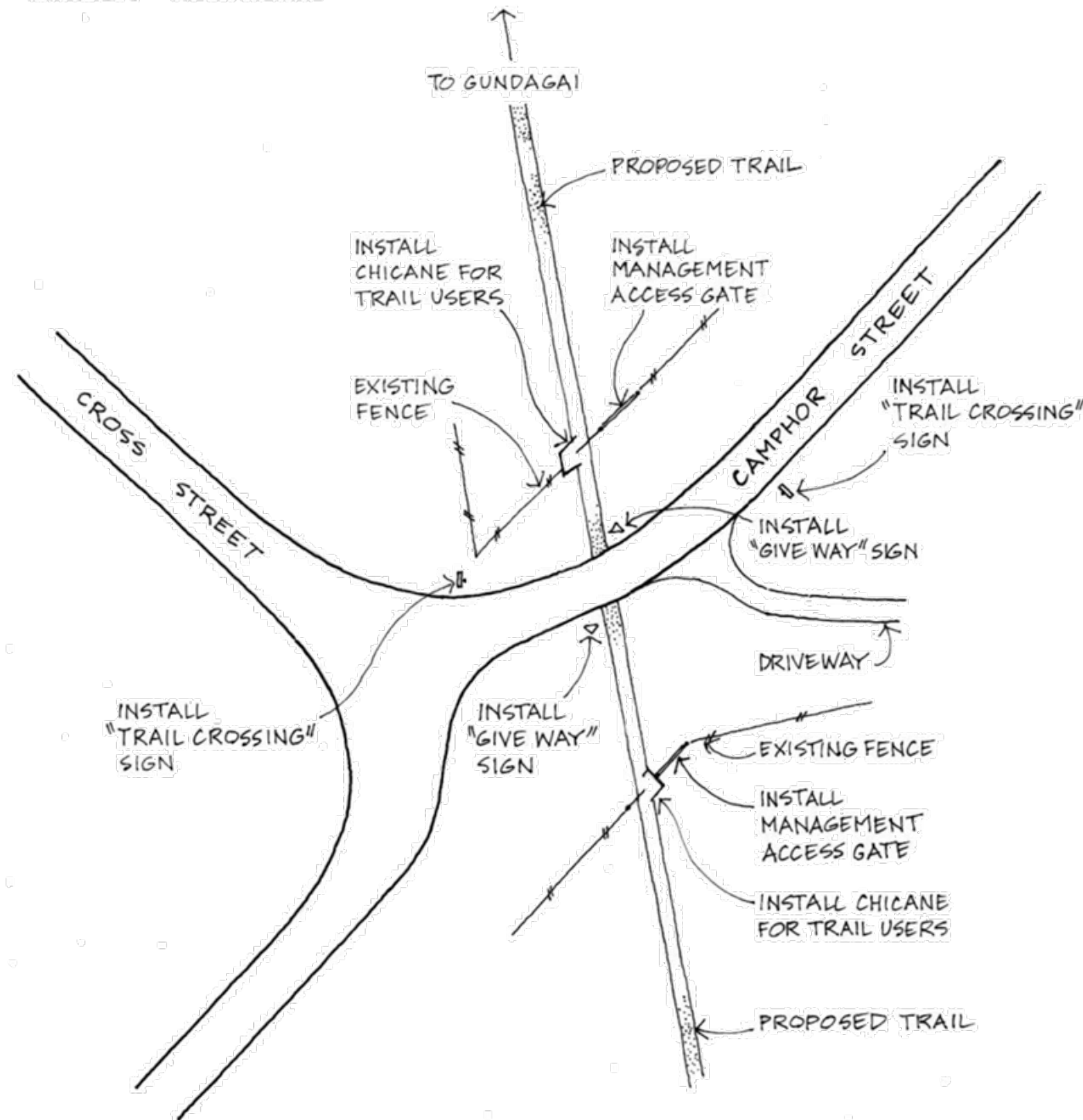
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MIDDLE STREET CROSSING



# GUNDAGAI RAIL TRAIL CAMPHOR STREET CROSSING

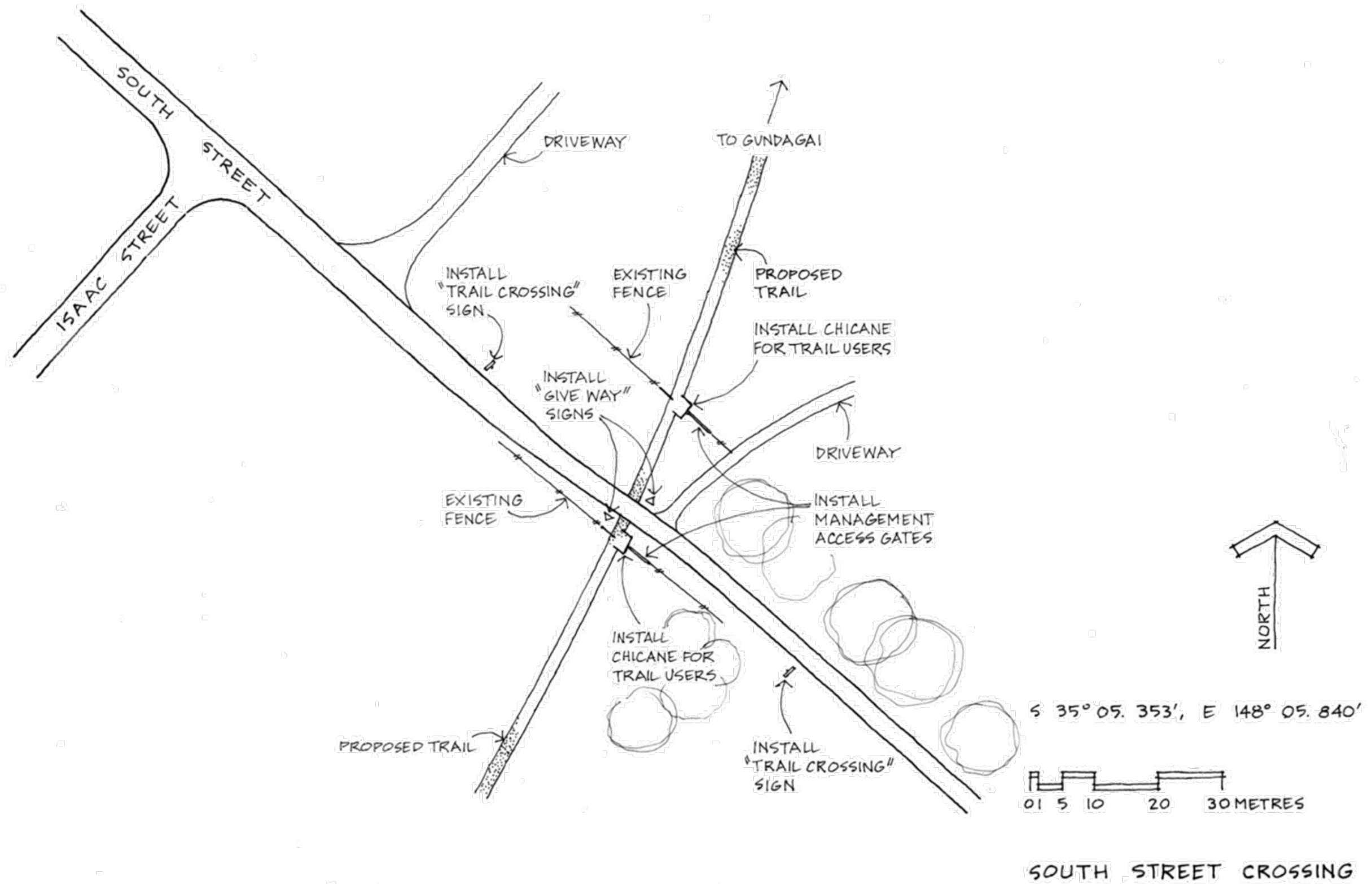


S 35° 05.178', E 148° 05.853'

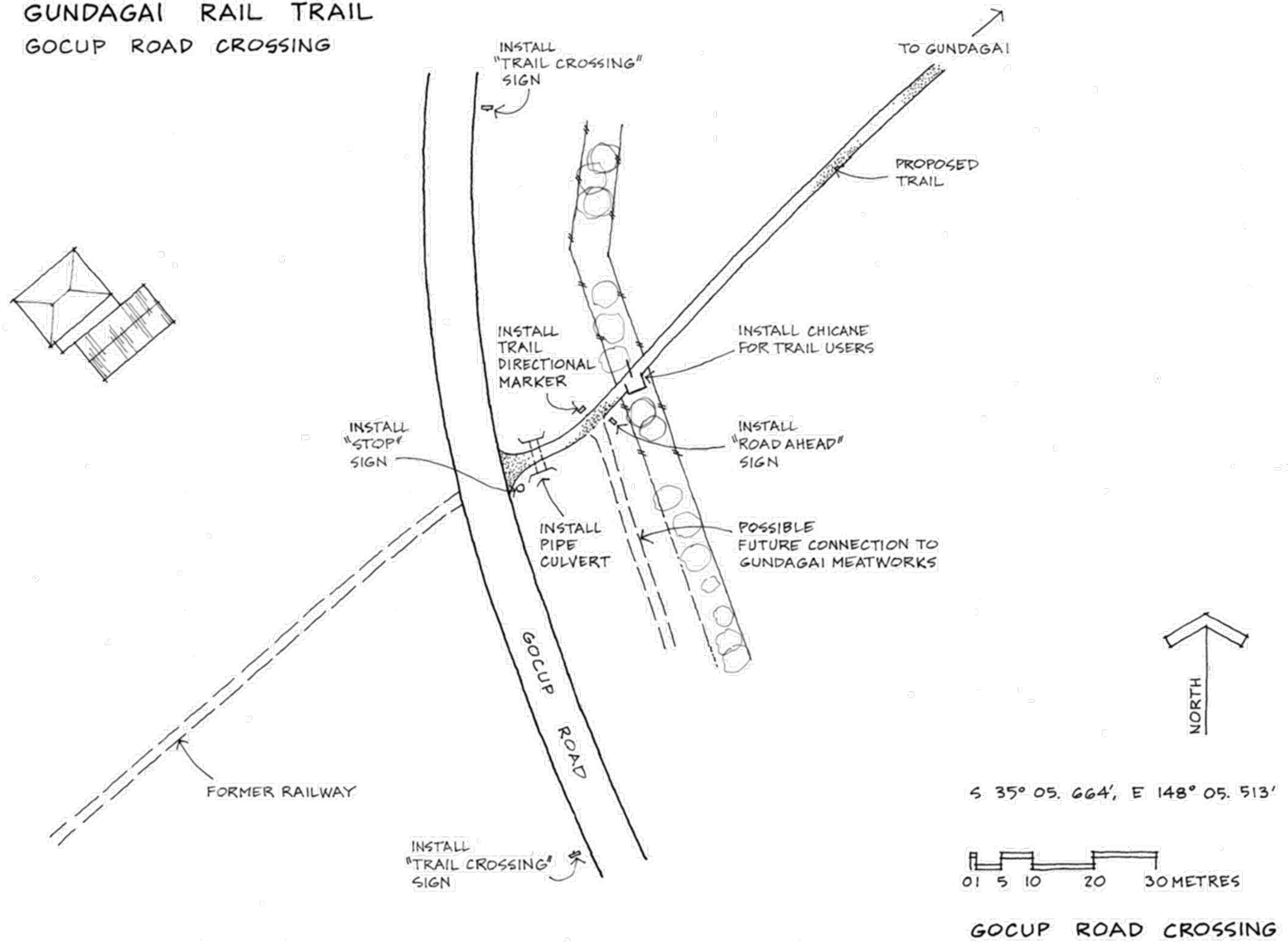


CAMPHOR STREET CROSSING

# GUNDAGAI RAIL TRAIL SOUTH STREET CROSSING



# GUNDAGAI RAIL TRAIL GOCUP ROAD CROSSING

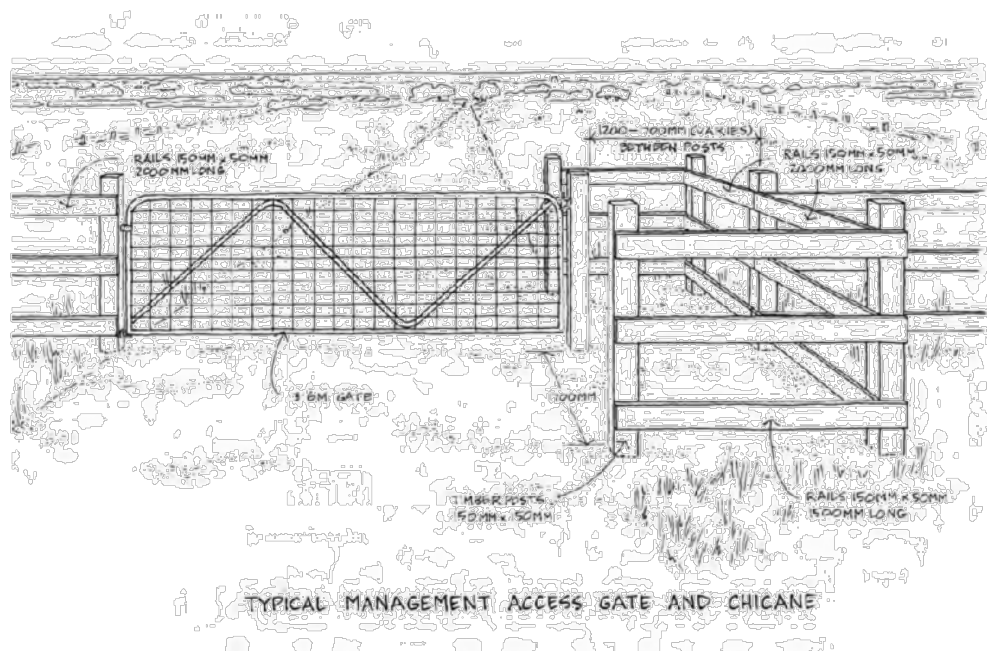


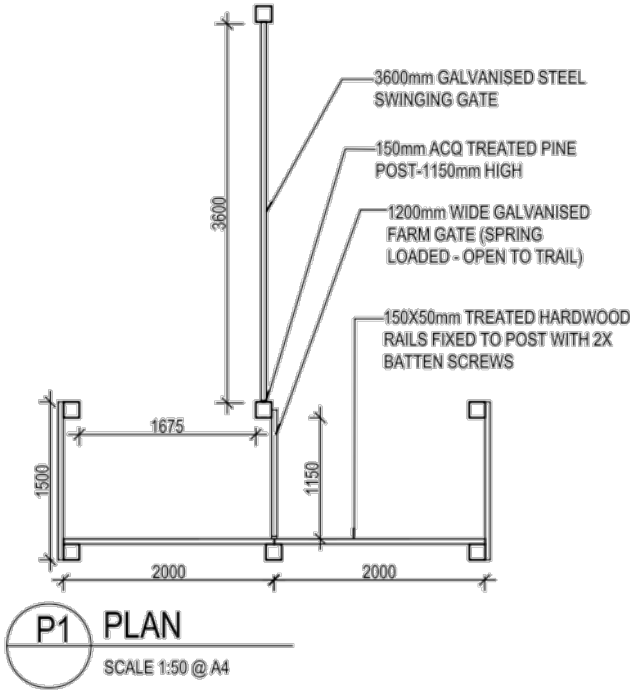
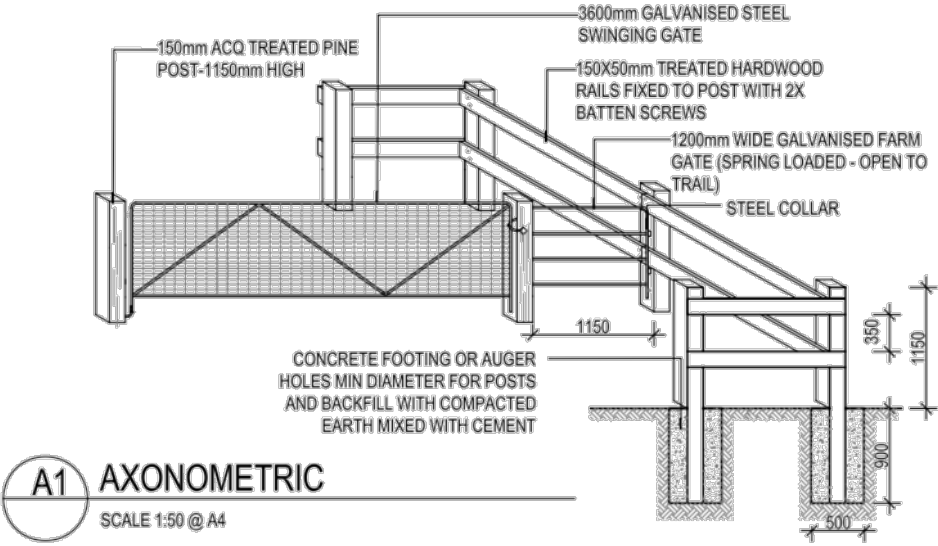
## APPENDIX 2: ROAD CROSSING CHICANE DRAWINGS

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The spring loaded 1200mm gate should only be installed where there is the likelihood of livestock on the trail (a possibility at the southern end of the trail). The gate should open “inwards” – to the trail rather than to the road (to prevent livestock pushing it open). The gate deliberately “stops” on the inside centre post (the gate is wider than the opening) to prevent livestock pushing it open.

Where there is no likelihood of livestock, a gate should be installed only if the trail manager has a need to lock the gate on a regular basis (such as for events). In these cases, a standard gate (with no spring) could be used (the photo from the Lilydale Warburton Rail Trail shows such a gate).



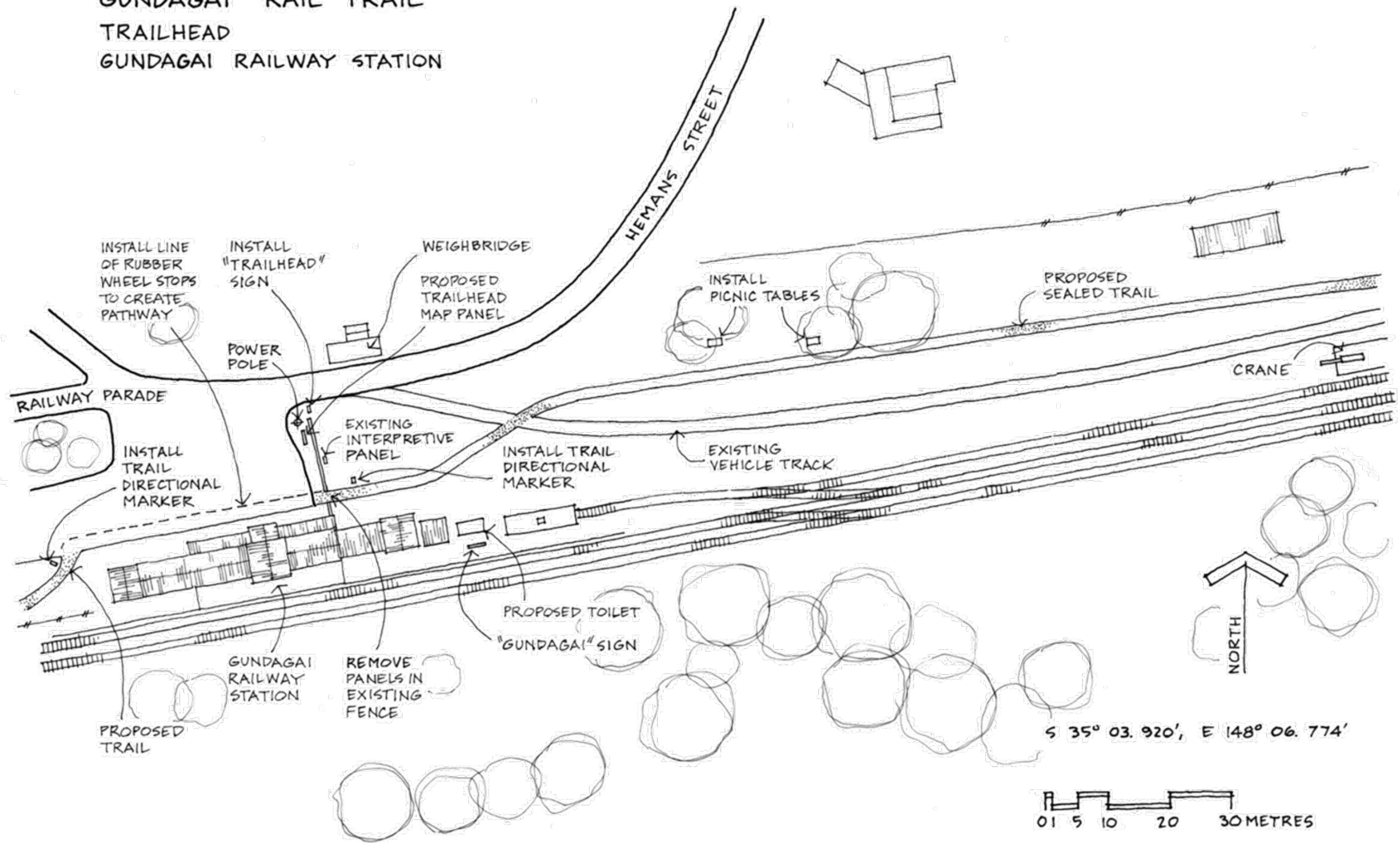




## APPENDIX 3: TRAILHEAD DRAWING

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# GUNDAGAI RAIL TRAIL TRAILHEAD GUNDAGAI RAILWAY STATION



TRAILHEAD  
GUNDAGAI RAILWAY STATION



APPENDIX 4: TRAIL MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST: AN EXAMPLE

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## YABURARA HERITAGE TRAIL MAINTENANCE CHECKLISTS

### Short Loop from Visitor Centre

**Inspection Date (circle a year and tick one box):**

- ☐ Jan 2013/4/5    ☐ Feb 2013/4/5    ☐ Mar. 2013/4/5    ☐ Apr 2013/4/5  
☐ May 2013/4/5    ☐ Jun. 2013/4/5    ☐ Jul. 2013/4/5    ☐ Aug 2013/4/5  
☐ Sep 2013/4/5    ☐ Oct. 2013/4/5    ☐ Nov. 2013/4/5    ☐ Dec 2013/4/5

**Actual Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Person undertaking inspection:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

ACTION ITEMS	ACTION REQUIRED	TICK IF OKAY	ACTION TAKEN (if any)
<b>Trailhead at Visitor Centre:</b>			
1	Check road signage		
2	Check gravel surface of overflow parking area, and access roads		
3	Check trailhead map sign		
4	Check miscellaneous signage at overflow carpark		
5	Check gravel road to water tanks		
6	Check trail directional markers (posts, logos and arrows)		
<b>Water tanks carpark:</b>			
7	Check car park gravel surface		
8	Check trailhead map sign		
9	Check trail directional markers (posts, logos and arrows)		
10	Check miscellaneous signage		
11	Check interpretation		
12	Check lookout shelter		
13	Check trail surface to Salt Shakers Lookout		
14	Check all rock steps		

<b>Salt Shakers Lookout:</b>			
15	Check viewing platform		
16	Check interpretation		
17	Check seating		
18	Check directional dial		
<b>Remainder of trail:</b>			
19	Check all rock steps		
20	Check all rock water bars		
21	Check trail directional markers (posts, logos and arrows)		
22	Check interpretation		
23	Check seating		
24	Check overhanging vegetation and spinifex growth		
25	Check trail surface		
Any additional work required?			
Hazard Inspection	Whole trail - annually		
Annual budget allocation	Discuss with staff		

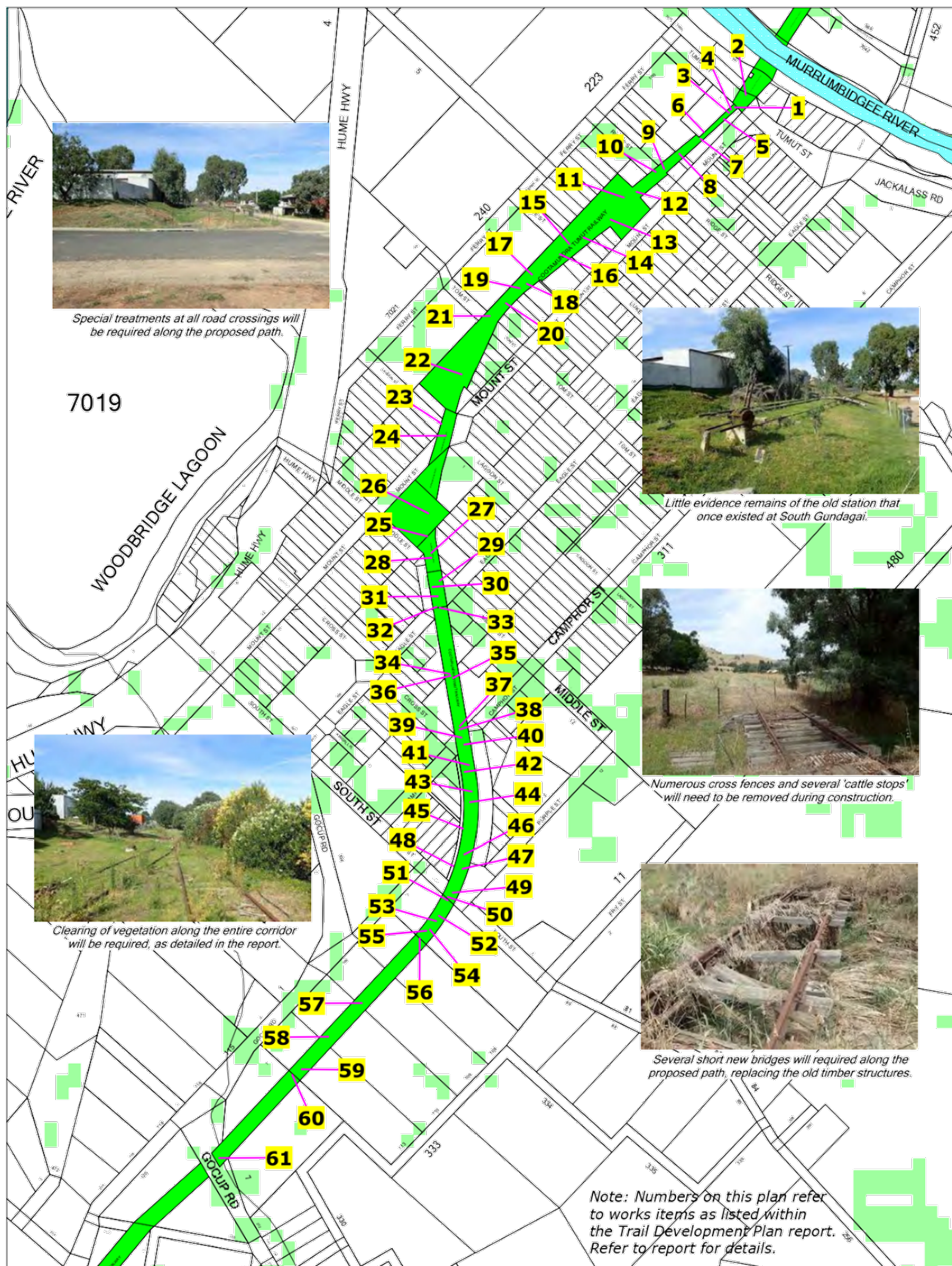


## APPENDIX 5: RAIL TRAIL PLANS 1 – 2

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February 2018

## Gundagai Rail Trail Development Plan

Plan 2  
Gundagai South





# Minutes

## ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS, GUNDAGAI**

**TUESDAY, 22<sup>ND</sup> MAY, 2018**

Administration Centres Ph: 1300 459 689

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# **MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COOTAMUNDRA-GUNDAGAI REGIONAL COUNCIL HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS GUNDAGAI AT 6:00PM ON TUESDAY, 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2018**

## **PRESENT**

Cr Abb McAlister, Mayor, Cr David Graham Cr Gil Kelly, Cr Penny Nicholson, Cr Dennis Palmer (Deputy Mayor), Cr Doug Phillips, Cr Charlie Sheahan, Allen Dwyer (General Manager), Phil McMurray (Director Asset Management), Chris Imrie (Director Development & Community) and Tim Swan (Manager Finance).

## 1 OPEN FORUM

### List of Speakers

1. Pip McAlister expressed concern that Gundagai South Public School nominated to have a street stall in November 2017 for 2018 and did not receive a response until April, 2018 and requested more timely responses be provided.

Mrs McAlister offered her congratulations to those who planted pansies at the Council Administration Centre in Gundagai.

She again expressed concern in relation to an application made by Gundagai South Public School for the use of sports grounds for an athletics carnival which was made in March and no response has been received by the school to date. Confirmation of the booking was requested.

2. Keith Turner spoke in relation agenda item 7.2.2.3 Signage at Dog on the Tuckerbox and suggested a notice board be provided for information at the site. He also volunteered to lead the project, in conjunction with the Gundagai Tourism Action Group which he estimated would cost approximately \$10,000. He also expressed disappointment at the current state of the Dog on the Tuckerbox site.
3. Bill Wright expressed concern at the loss of green space at Carberry Park with the establishment of the adventure playground and supported the Gundagai Youth Council's preferred location of Yarri Park for the proposed site of the playground. He also expressed concern in relation to a proposal to sell the Dog on the Tuckerbox site to developers, stating that the site should be retained by the community. He compared the Dog on the Tuckerbox site to that of the Captains 'Walk, in Cootamundra, as a site which should remain non-commercial.

## 2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Chairperson acknowledged the Wiradjuri people who are the Traditional Custodians of the Land at which the meeting was held and paid his respects to Elders, both past and present, of the Wiradjuri Nation and extended that respect to other Aboriginal people who were present.



### 3 APOLOGIES

An apology was received on behalf of Councillor Leigh Bowden as she is on annual leave.

An apology was received on behalf of Councillor Craig Stewart.

**100/2018      RESOLVED – Moved: Cr Palmer Seconded: Cr Kelly**

**The apologies be accepted and leave of absence granted.**

### 4 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest

### 5 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

**101/2018      RESOLVED – Moved: Cr Palmer      Seconded: Cr Kelly**

**The Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2018 be confirmed as a true and correct record of the meeting.**

### 6 MAYORAL MINUTES

Note: Councillors Graham and Sheahan proposed that Council fully support the recommendation of the full duplication of the Barton Highway as stated in correspondence received by Councillor Matthew Stadtmiller of Hilltops Council

**102/2018      RESOLVED – Moved: Cr Sheahan      Seconded: Cr Graham**

**1. The Mayoral Minutes be received and noted with the following amendments:**

**Councillor Palmer attended the ANZAC commemoration ceremony at Cootamundra where he laid a wreath on behalf of Council, and not Wallendbeen as recorded in the Mayoral Minutes.**

**The Showground Users Group meeting was cancelled after the production of the business paper and as such Councillor Sheahan was not in attendance at the scheduled meeting as reported.**

**2. Council fully supports the duplication of the Barton Highway and demands that both the State and Federal Governments both in power and those who are in opposition, declare that they will duplicate and fully and properly fund the Barton Highway duplication for the betterment of the lives of those who live in the country.**

## 7 GENERAL MANAGERS REPORT

### 7.1 DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION

#### 7.1.1 DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING

##### 7.1.1.1 DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS APPROVED APRIL, 2018

102/2018      **RESOLVED – Moved: Cr Kelly    Seconded: Cr Sheahan**

The information on Development Applications approved in April, 2018 be noted.

VOTING RECORD	
FOR RESOLUTION	AGAINST RESOLUTION
Cr Graham Cr Kelly Cr McAlister (Mayor) Cr Nicholson Cr Palmer Cr Phillips Cr Sheahan	Nil
ABSENT	DECLARED INTEREST
Cr Bowden Cr Stewart	Nil

##### 7.1.1.2 PROPOSED COOTAMUNDRA LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN 2013 AMENDMENT 7

103/2018      **RESOLVED – Moved: Cr Kelly    Seconded: Cr Sheahan**

1. Cootamundra Local Environmental Plan 2013 Amendment 7 be endorsed and sent to the Department of Planning and Environment for Gateway Determination.
2. Amendment 7 be placed on exhibition upon receipt of delegated approval from the Department of Planning and Environment.

VOTING RECORD	
FOR RESOLUTION	AGAINST RESOLUTION
Cr Graham Cr Kelly Cr McAlister (Mayor) Cr Nicholson Cr Palmer Cr Phillips	Nil

These are the Minutes of the Ordinary meeting of Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council  
held on 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2018  
Page 4

Cr Sheahan	
<b>ABSENT</b>	<b>DECLARED INTEREST</b>
Cr Bowden Cr Stewart	Nil

**7.1.1.3 ADOPTION OF SECTION 7.12 FIXED DEVELOPMENT CONSENT LEVY CONTRIBUTIONS PLAN 2018**

**104/2018      **RESOLVED – Moved: Cr Palmer      Seconded: Cr Phillips****

The Section 7.12 Fixed Development Consent Levy Contributions Plan 2018 be adopted, commencing from 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2018.

<b>VOTING RECORD</b>	
<b>FOR RESOLUTION</b>	<b>AGAINST RESOLUTION</b>
Cr Graham Cr Kelly Cr McAlister (Mayor) Cr Nicholson Cr Palmer Cr Phillips Cr Sheahan	Nil
<b>ABSENT</b>	<b>DECLARED INTEREST</b>
Cr Bowden Cr Stewart	Nil

**7.2 CORPORATE SERVICES DIVISION**

**7.2.1 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

**7.2.1.1 MARCH QUARTERLY BUDGET REVIEW**

**105/2018      **RESOLVED – Moved: Cr Graham      Seconded: Cr Nicholson****

1. The March, 2018 Quarterly Budget Review /statement be accepted, and
2. The recommended budget changes listed in the attached report be adopted.

#### **7.2.1.2 INVESTMENT REPORT**

**106/2018**      **RESOLVED – Moved: Cr Palmer**      **Seconded: Cr Phillips**

The Investment Report as at 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2018 be received and noted.

### **7.2.2 GOVERNANCE AND BUSINESS SYSTEMS**

#### **7.2.2.1 DRAFT 2018/19 OPERATIONAL PLAN AND 2018/19-2020/21 DELIVERY PROGRAM**

**107/2018**      **RESOLVED – Moved: Cr Palmer**      **Seconded: Cr Kelly**

The draft 2018/19 Operational Plan (incorporating Revenue Policy, Fees and Charges and budget) and draft 2018/19-2020/21 Delivery Program and Long Term Financial Plan be placed on public exhibition in accordance with the Community Engagement Strategy (Draft 2018/19 Operational Plan and Draft 2018/19-2020/21 Delivery Program) until 5pm 19 June, 2018.

#### **7.2.2.2 DRAFT RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURE POLICY**

**108/2018**      **RESOLVED – Moved: Cr Sheahan**      **Seconded: Cr Palmer**

The Draft Related Party Disclosures Policy attached to the report be adopted.

#### **7.2.2.3 SIGNAGE AT DOG ON THE TUCKERBOX**

**109/2018**      **RESOLVED – Moved: Cr Graham**      **Seconded: Cr Nicholson**

Council refer the request for the funding of new signage to the July Workshop in relation to development options for the Dog on the Tuckerbox.

### **7.3 OPERATIONS DIVISION**

#### **7.3.1 OPERATIONS**

##### **7.3.1.1 OPERATIONS UPDATE REPORT**

**110/2018**      **RESOLVED – Moved: Cr Palmer**      **Seconded: Cr Sheahan**

The May Operations Update report be received

**Note: Cr Graham thanked Kevin Britt and his team for their work on Threeways Bridge.**

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These are the Minutes of the Ordinary meeting of Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council  
held on 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2018  
Page 6

## 7.4 ASSET MANAGEMENT DIVISION

### 7.4.1 ASSET MANAGEMENT

#### 7.4.1.1 SOFTWOODS WORKING GROUP

111/2018      **RESOLVED – Moved: Cr Palmer**      **Seconded: Cr Kelly**

The information on the Softwoods Working Group be received and noted

#### 7.4.1.2 COOTAMUNDRA-GUNDAGAI LOCAL AREA TRAFFIC COMMITTEE MEETING

112/2018      **RESOLVED – Moved: Cr Palmer**      **Seconded: Cr Phillips**

1. The Minutes of the Local Area Traffic Committee Meeting of 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2018 be received and noted; and
2. The recommendations within the Minutes of the meeting be adopted respectively as follows:

**1.1      *SUBJECT: Request for reduction of Speed zone limit of Muttama Road (MR87).***

Moved: Cr Palmer      Seconded: Cr Kelly

**1.2      *SUBJECT: Proposed parking design – Adams Street Cootamundra between Hay and Murray Streets***

Moved: Cr Palmer      Seconded: Cr Kelly

**1.3 *Pedestrian Crossing/s – Wallendoon Street (outside Post Office) and Cooper Street (at Wallendoon Street intersection).***

Moved: Cr Palmer      Seconded: Cr Phillips

**1.4      *SUBJECT: Speeding concerns – Landon Street Gundagai***

Moved: Cr Nicholson      Seconded: Cr Palmer

#### **7.4.2 WATER AND SEWER**

##### **7.4.2.1 GUNDAGAI SEWER TREATMENT PLANT REPLACEMENT – ENERGY SCHEME**

**113/2018**      **RESOLVED – Moved: Cr Nicholson**      **Seconded: Cr Kelly**

Councillors note the initial discussions had with Gundagai Meat Processors (GMP) and that further details will be brought back to Council for any subsequent involvement if a successful business model can be derived.

#### **7.3.1 MAJOR PROJECTS**

##### **7.4.3.1 PROGRESS REPORT ON THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT AT GUNDAGAI**

**114/2018**      **RESOLVED – Moved: Cr Phillips**      **Seconded: Cr Nicholson**

The Progress Report of the reconstruction of the Sewage Treatment Plant be received and noted.

#### **8 MOTIONS OF WHICH NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN (NOTICES OF MOTION)**

##### **8.1 RENAMING OF MEETING SPACE COOTAMUNDRA**

**115/2018**      **RESOLVED – Moved: Cr Kelly**      **Seconded: Cr Sheahan**

1. Consultation be undertaken with the Schultz family to agree on the name of the new meeting space in Cootamundra to honour Mr Schultz.
2. A report to be prepared following 1 above and submitted to the next Ordinary Meeting of Council scheduled for Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> June, 2018

##### **8.2 COOTAMUNDRA-GUNDAGAI REGIONAL COUNCIL FACEBOOK**

**116/2018**      **RESOLVED – Moved: Cr McAlister (Mayor)**      **Seconded: Cr Nicholson**

A draft policy on Social Media be developed and submitted with a report to the next Ordinary Meeting of Council scheduled for Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> June, 2018.



## 9 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE

It was moved by Councillor Phillips and Seconded by Councillor Kelly:

An independent audit be undertaken to assess the procurement process in relation to the current Cootamundra Administration Centre refurbishment.

On being put to the meeting the motion was lost.

117/2018      **RESOLVED – Moved: Cr Palmer Seconded: Cr Kelly**

The questions with notice from Councillors and responses from officers be noted.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:10pm.

These Minutes were confirmed by resolution of Council at the Council Meeting held on Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> June, 2018 and endorsed by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIRPERSON

\_\_\_\_\_  
GENERAL MANAGER

**From:** Tim Coen  
**To:** [Mail](#)  
**Cc:** [John Moore](#); [mason.crane](#)  
**Subject:** Submission re the development plan for the urban section of the Gundagai Rail Trail  
**Date:** Sunday, 29 April 2018 8:38:48 PM

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To: Mr Allen Dwyer, General Manager, Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council

Dear Sir,

Rail Trails for NSW is writing in support of the draft plan of the Gundagai Rail Trail – Trail Development Plan.

Rail Trail developments in Australia and overseas have repeatedly demonstrated their capacity to generate significant benefits for their local communities and regions. There are numerous examples in Australia and New Zealand. For a comprehensive list of studies and information, please see the appendix at the end of this submission.

In supporting this submission, we wish to emphasise several points, being;

We concur with the statement in Recommendations at page 5 of this report;

“... any necessary demolition is done with utmost care to ensure that the corridor and railway formation is left in a good condition for trail construction.”

***It is the quality of the trail experience that will generate repeat visits.*** The combined experience of many members of Rail Trails for NSW (who have ridden many trails both in Australia and overseas) is that trails develop reputations and those noted for their quality are the ones that people are happy to plan to travel considerable distances to visit again and again. Constructing a quality trail is more easily achieved when the pathway is on the formation, giving all users the benefits of the engineering that once facilitated train travel. In particular, the gentle gradients making it quite easy to travel surprisingly longer distances, sweeping curves, excellent visibility ahead and behind and of course, no steps to impede any user whether on foot, pushing a pram or wheelchair, on a scooter or a bicycle.

Other sound reasons to support this rail trail are;

***The spectacular wooden train viaduct,*** having been noted in ‘Background’ on page 7 of the report;

“...The viaduct in particular is listed on the Register of the National Estate (registered in 1989). The listing notes that:

“The rail approaches at Gundagai remain as one of the greatest timber structures ever built in Australia.”

The viaduct could easily become the epicentre of attention for visitors. Community events such as fun runs or charity wheelchair ‘pushes’ or even paper plane throwing competitions from it to the plain below will soon have it generating new activity and drawing new visitors to the region.

***The easy access to the trail from the Hume Highway.*** It is an easy distance from Newcastle, Sydney, Wollongong and Canberra, and most importantly, is well situated to attract the many holiday makers heading to Victoria to ride their well established and well known rail trails. A trail accessible from Gundagai will attract those users. A long trail (ideally from Cootamundra through Gundagai and if possible, on to Tumut then Batlow) will attract even more users, including overseas visitors. People will travel considerable distances for multi day rides or walks.

Lastly, ***the climate and other activities.*** Gundagai, Cootamundra and districts are well placed to attract users during the spectacular spring and autumn seasons. The milder climate at these times and the cool of winter are attractive for walking and cycling long distances. The opportunity of a warming real fireplace is a treat many city folk do not normally enjoy. Add to that the opportunities to go fishing, horse-riding, visit the wonderfully preserved Gundagai Railway Station precinct, see the restored viaduct and enjoy clean country air are all catalysts that together with a rail trail serve to generate more visits to your wonderful Shire.

We commend the creation of a rail trail to the Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council. The establishment of a rail trail at Tumbarumba and at any other nearby locations will only serve to attract more users to all of the trails, as occurs in any marketplace. The marketplace for outdoor experiences has been and is continuing to grow steadily. Many city dwellers no longer have country cousins to visit for a taste of the bush. Rail trails can provide that experience with the chance for anyone to move safely through the countryside without interfering with farming activities and away from roads, free of vehicle noise and road debris, to listen to birds, see wildlife, hear leaves rustle in the breeze, smell the earth and the bush.

New Zealand, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Western Australia (the home of the first rail trail in Australia some 23 years ago) and the Northern Territory have them and many are creating more. Importantly rail trails have remained largely unknown in NSW because we have almost none (largely due to legislative impediments) and we don't hear of others interstate and overseas because once they are established they are all almost completely uncontroversial.

Rail trails are just shared use footpaths that reuse an otherwise dormant public asset. These routes can still provide the service to the local community they were intended for, to facilitate trade, travel and communication from town to village to locality, albeit using a different form of locomotion. The trail will preserve the route in public ownership for generations to come. It will generate social, health and economic benefits that will steadily grow as the trail becomes better known and is integrated into the life of the community.

We look forward to visiting the trail and bringing family and friends.

Sincerely

**Tim Coen**

**Deputy Chair**

0408 691 541

[tim.railtrailsnsw@gmail.com](mailto:tim.railtrailsnsw@gmail.com)



Patron: The Hon. Tim Fischer AC

[railtrailsnsw.com.au](http://railtrailsnsw.com.au)

[facebook.com/railtrailsnsw](https://facebook.com/railtrailsnsw)

#### Appendix:

(Our thanks to Northern Rivers Rail Trail Inc. for this listing. See <http://www.northernriversrailtrail.org.au/>)

For Economic Case studies see...

<http://www.northernriversrailtrail.org.au/rail-trails-work/economic-benefits/case-study-1-new-zealand-cycle-trails/>

<http://www.northernriversrailtrail.org.au/rail-trails-work/economic-benefits/case-study-2-australian-rail-trails/>

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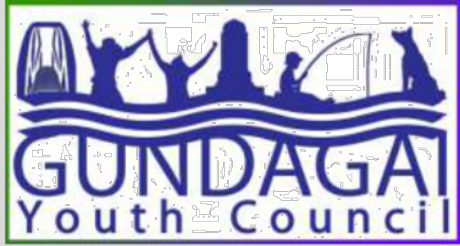
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Gundagai Youth Council  
C/o Mirrabooka  
245 Sheridan St  
Gundagai NSW 2722  
0269 440 290

[gundagaiyouthcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:gundagaiyouthcouncil@gmail.com)

4 June 2018

Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council  
Mr Allen Dwyer  
255 Sheridan St  
GUNDAGAI 2722

Dear Mr Dwyer,

Please allow us to you to give feedback in regard to the Gundagai Rail Trail trail development plan.

We had had a presentation and information some time ago in regard to the Rail Trail from Mason Crane who was then a Councillor. Two of our members, who have since moved on, travelled to Victoria to experience a rail trail. They were impressed and enjoyed the experience very much. The youth council unanimously voted to support the rail trail after they reported back to the committee with the benefits they had seen and how well the communities with the rail trail were going. We are pleased now to be given the opportunity to give that support to the rail trail project.

We are convinced that the rail trail is feasible and beneficial to our town and the surrounding region and we are absolutely convinced that the restoration of the railway bridge as an accessible bridge for walkers and cyclers will transform our region into the pinnacle of tourist destinations in New South Wales. The bridge itself is unique, just imagine traversing this magnificent structure, visitors coming from all over the world to walk or ride across its considerably impressive span. We all know how many people pull up each day just to photograph the bridge, imagine that a hundred fold as this amazing experience now includes walking and taking photographs from atop of the grand structure.

The rail trail will open up the communities of Coolac and Tumblong. Families can easily walk, ride bikes, horses, scoot, and skate to either village on a Saturday or Sunday for lunch, brunch or afternoon tea. This connectedness will allow people to stop and stay, take a few days to explore and appreciate our beautiful landscape, people and hospitality.

We believe that this transformation will bring enormous economic, social and environmental benefits to Gundagai and the surrounding regions and as such wish to wholeheartedly support the plan.

Yours Sincerely

Samantha Gradon  
Chairperson  
Gundagai Youth Council

**From:** Phillip Barton  
**To:** [Mail](#)  
**Subject:** Gundagai Rail Trail  
**Date:** Friday, 27 April 2018 8:38:10 AM

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To the General Manager,

Re Gundagai Rail Trail Development "Trail Development Plan. I wish to personally offer my support for the draft plan, I have studied every page of the document and believe it is a great plan of significance for the people of Gundagai.

My wife and I are keen rail trail cyclist and am intimately involved in rail trail development in our region. I also believe the Gundagai development will draw cyclists and walkers from around the world, some of which will come just to experience walking the famous rail viaduct.

My congratulations to your council for leading the way with rail trail development in this southern region of the state.

Regards,

Phil Barton  
Chairperson  
Tumut-Batlow Rail Trail Project  
8 Coolamine Circuit Tumut NSW 2720

Phone 0428474199  
Email [philb@bigpond.net.au](mailto:philb@bigpond.net.au)  
Facebook Page Tumut-Batlow Rail Trail.

PS, Congratulations on the magnificent redevelopment of Sheridan Street, I plan to be at the opening later today.

Sent from my iPad



11 June 2018

The General Manager  
Mr Allen Dwyer  
Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council  
PO Box 420  
Cootamundra NSW 2590

[mail@cgrc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mail@cgrc.nsw.gov.au)

Rail Trails Australia Inc.

ABN 94 479 743 616

PO Box 2127  
Oak Park, Vic 3046

Phone: 03 9306 4846

Email: [admin@railtrails.org.au](mailto:admin@railtrails.org.au)

### Support for Gundagai Rail Trail Development Plan

Dear Mr Dwyer

Rail Trails Australia strongly supports the Gundagai Rail Trail – Trail Development Plan.

Rail Trails Australia (RTA) is the national organisation promoting the use and development of rail trails throughout Australia. All over Australia and internationally, former rail lines have been converted into multi-use trails by councils for walking, cycling and horse riding, providing a safe, health-promoting corridor between communities for locals and visitors alike. Please refer to our website for more information.

Having experience with over 100 rail trails, RTA's anecdotal evidence (with some user survey evidence) is that the biggest users of rail trails by far are local residents riding or walking. This includes people getting to work or school or out for a hard run or more commonly out walking the dog or young families with prams. If a trail is constructed to a suitable standard it can also be popular with people requiring mobility aids, encouraging their participation in activity.

RTA believe the Gundagai Rail Trail will be a very popular asset for the town providing a safe, health-promoting transport corridor as noted above, at a cost-effective price. RTA supports council's desire that this rail trail should be constructed to a commuter type standard to allow all of the community to use it.

The report appears to provide a practical and realistic plan to make good use of this valuable public corridor through Gundagai.

RTA make some further comments on the report, particularly Section 3.8 Bridges:

- RTA has also long agreed that using the amazing timber rail bridge across the flood plain is not realistic nor desirable. However when viewed from the ground it is very impressive and a real attraction and every effort should be made to keep it intact and safe.
- While use of the timber bridge across the flood plain is not realistic, RTA also agrees that council should investigate using the equally impressive steel rail bridge across the Murrumbidgee River itself as part of the rail trail. This would remove the concern over sharing the road bridge across the river and we believe a significant attraction. There would obviously be cost in providing decking and a ramp up to the bridge on the flood plains side, but potentially worth it.



RailtrailsAustralia = rail trails connecting communities

- The plan makes the Gundagai station a trail head and feature of the rail trail, including retention of all rail tracks. RTA strongly supports making former railway stations a focal point of community life again and appropriate retention of historical items. The forthcoming edition of our Rail Trail Connections magazine highlights actual and potential conversions of station precincts that may be inspiration for future plans.

As per the original feasibility study carried out in 2009, RTA see that in the future the Gundagai Rail Trail could become part of a Murrumbidgee Valley Rail Trail attracting a larger range of visitors to the town. And with the Riverina Highlands Rail Trail now finally starting to become a reality, this whole area could be home to a very popular network of rail trails attracting even more visitors, similar to what is occurring in north east Victoria.

RTA congratulates the council on getting the Trail Development Plan prepared and urge the recommendations to be adopted. RTA also urges council to get costings for inclusion of the steel bridge across the Murrumbidgee River in the plan as this would be a significant attraction of the rail trail.

RTA is willing to support where the rail trail where it can, and looking forward to publicising the rail trail when it is open.

Yours sincerely



Damian McCrohan  
President

0407 547 016

[dmccrohan@railtrails.org.au](mailto:dmccrohan@railtrails.org.au)



Gundagai Historic Bridges Inc.  
PO Box 79  
Gundagai 2722  
0427770594 [masoncrane@yahoo.com](mailto:masoncrane@yahoo.com)



Cootamundra Gundagai  
Regional Council  
Document Received

26 APR 2018

File No. ....

Initials .....

20/04/2018

Allen Dwyer  
General Manager  
Cootamundra Gundagai Regional Council  
PO Box 420  
Cootamundra 2590

**RE: Submission for the Draft Gundagai Rail Trail Trial Development Plan**

Dear Allen Dwyer,

Gundagai Historic Bridges Inc. (GHBI) and its subsidiary committee Gundagai Heritage Railway fully supports the proposed Gundagai Rail Trail and have since the idea was first raised by the Council in 2008. We believe this would be a great asset to our community economically and for lifestyle. For decades GHBI have leased the Gundagai Railway Precinct. After saving it from demolition the group has work tirelessly to transform this once derelict station to one of the best preserved heritage Railway Stations in Australia. Our goal has been to develop this area into an asset for the whole community that at the same time conserves the railway heritage of the town and region. We believe the Rail Trail not only compliments our mission but advances it greatly. GHBI also lease the goods shed at Coolac and believe if the whole Rail Trail proposal (Coolac to Tumblong) is realized it will provide an opportunity to develop this site as well.

Gundagai Historic Bridges Inc. also holds an interest in the Gundagai Railway Bridge. We believe the only way this nationally/internationally important wooden structure is to be conserve, going forward, is via repurposing it for pedestrian and cycling activity. This again would greatly complement our work at the Railway Precinct.



As for the **Draft Gundagai Rail Trail Trial Development Plan** GHBI would like to express our support for the project. WE believe this is a great first step and are keen to see it quickly extended to the Coolac and beyond when possible. While GHBI was consulted in the development of the draft, we again ask to be consulted in the construction planning phase as we have some specific requirement to ensure the heritage of the site is maintained.

For further discussion please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,



Mason Crane

President

Gundagai Historic Bridges Inc.

0427770594



Gundagai Medical Centre  
95-97 Sheridan Street  
Gundagai, 2722

19<sup>th</sup> of April, 2018

Dear Mr Dwyer,

Having read the most recent plans for the Gundagai Rail Trail I would like to state my support for this proposal. As one of the local general practitioners I think that this proposal has the potential to significantly benefit the health of the local community.

I foresee two potential benefits to this project. It would offer a safe opportunity for exercise that would improve physical health. The second benefit I envision is that by attracting tourists to the area, the trail also has the potential to increase the financial security of the community. Improved financial security will enhance overall mental health within the community.

I strongly support this proposal,

Kind regards,

Dr. Barbara Cameron

Cootamundra Gundagai  
Regional Council  
Document Received

27 APR 2018

File No.

Initials

The General Manager  
P. O. Box 420  
Cootamundra

Topic: Gundagai Rail Trail  
Trail Development Plan: Draft Report

I commend the authors for their draft report.  
All major issues appear to have been addressed.

On page 3, paragraph 4, I do not understand  
the following: "The ownership of the track and  
responsibility for removal (and any sale proceeds)  
is yet to be resolved and is part of the  
Tumbarumba - Rosewood Rail Trail pilot project."

I think this is an error.

Also there is a "typo" at the bottom of  
page 10, "which is not what rail trail users  
want" is how it should read.

I am a strong supporter of the rail trail.  
The urban sections of the trail outlined  
in this draft are fine. But the real  
success of this trail will depend on  
saving the former railway bridge across  
the Murrumbidgee flood plain, which I know  
is outside the brief of this Draft Report.

The other issue not mentioned in the report is that there are a group of rail enthusiasts who want the disused rail line restored for use by old train rolling stock. I do not want this.

These rail enthusiasts are mostly not from Gundagai.

Most of the town wants a rail trail.

Cootamundra Gundagai  
Regional Council  
Document Received

The General Manager  
PO Box 420  
Cootamundra NSW

7 6 APR 2018

File No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Initials \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Sir,

My wife Judy and I have lived at our residence for over 50 years plus, in this time we have lived a quite lifetime raised a family and are now enjoying our retirement years.

We are disappointed in regards to the possible development of an Urban Rail Trail which if developed will be right at our back door step.


I am sure and certain that this trail will bring nothing but problems the bike riders wont be the only ones accessing this 24/7 path, which is a real concern for elderly people who reside along the railway, whom will monitor this trail? The rubbish - yes they say they will have a committee to clean up, but whom, volunteers come and go or will it be a paid council staff?

I see there are provisions to place color bond fencing who will erect these and is that what I have look forward too now walking out to my back yard looking at fence when for last 50 years I have enjoyed looking at the railway which I once worked on.

This is an obscene amount of money to spend on a proposed trail, which I believe the costs to our community will be ongoing. Pro trail have visited here and suggests our community need to get fit, this is not a good enough reason we can all get fit by using the existing walkways and ride on the pathways we already have including the trail to the Dog on the Tuckerbox that no one ever seems to use without spending money or put the money into the Dog and surrounds which is historical to out town not a bike path.

To my knowledge the Act from parliament to lift our railway sleepers has not been passed so how can this even go ahead?

Disappointed Ratepayers.

C.P. Bee  


**From:** [Miriam Crane](#)  
**To:** [Allen Dwyer](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Gundagai Rail Trail Draft Report - March 2018  
**Date:** Tuesday, 24 April 2018 10:25:40 AM

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FYI

-----Original Message-----

**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, April 13, 2018 5:04 PM  
**To:** Mail <[mail@cgrc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mail@cgrc.nsw.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** Gundagai Rail Trail Draft Report - March 2018

To whom it may concern,

We are writing to express our support for the recently released Gundagai Rail Trail Draft Report. We believe it will be an important addition to the economy of Gundagai and surrounding villages. The Government funds that are being made available to assist with such projects are an opportunity that should not, and cannot be missed. It is an incredible opportunity to make use of an otherwise unused and rapidly deteriorating public asset that is currently costing many taxpayers dollars annually for no benefit or return when it could be contributing much needed economic, social, and health benefits to our shire and beyond.

Rail Trails are not a new idea and have proven themselves in many other countries as well as in other Australian States. The real and perceived issues of some opposed to the Rail Trail have been similar to issues raised when Rail Trails were proposed in areas where they now exist. The issues have been able to be resolved in the past and can be in this case as well.

There are a number of further points we could make regarding the benefits of the Draft Report, however in this instance, we are submitting this letter as a brief indication of our strong support for this proposal.

Thank you for your time,

Regards,

Punch Street  
Gundagai NSW 2722.

**From:**  
**To:** [Mail](#)  
**Subject:** Gundagai Rail Trail - Development Plan  
**Date:** Monday, 23 April 2018 6:02:01 PM

---

General Manager

We support the Gundagai Rail Trail Development Plan.

The Plan provides an integral link in the Rail Trail; one that will better link the community because of improved pedestrian and cycle access from south to north Gundagai.

Regards

Otway St  
Gundagai NSW 2722



**From:**  
**To:** [Mail](#)  
**Subject:** Gundagai rail trail development plan consultation  
**Date:** Wednesday, 2 May 2018 12:07:30 PM

---

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to offer my full support to the development of the rail trail. as a recent resident to Gundagai & a keen cyclists, there is an obvious lack of facilities for cyclists on our doorstep. It is unfortunate that to pursue this hobby, as an environmentalist, that you have to get in a car and drive to such facilities further afield.

The creation of the rail trail will benefit the locals through additional tourism opportunities and economic boosts for local businesses as well as providing free, healthy and safe cycling options for all residents. As a child I cycled everywhere & continued this throughout my adulthood by commuting to work, wherever possible. The trail will also help to address the problems associated nowadays with child fitness and rising population obesity statistics. The opportunity to be able to cycle to Cootamundra & Tumut etc will be amazing and enable folk to enjoy fresh air and the countryside at the same time. I have cycled on the Murray to the Mountains around Bright and Yarra Valley Rail trails with friends and their children and it was immense fun; especially when you can cycle to the wineries & local restaurants/pubs.

I sincerely hope this project gets off the ground and look forward to cycling on the trail in the future.

Yours Faithfully

**Marianne McInerney**

---

**From:** Miriam Crane  
**Sent:** Monday, 7 May 2018 9:12 AM  
**To:** Allen Dwyer  
**Subject:** FW: Gundagai Rail Trail

Just FYI

Regards,

Miriam Crane  
Interim Manager Social & Community  
Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council



**P:** 1300 459 689  
**M:** -  
**E:** Miriam.Crane@cgrc.nsw.gov.au  
**W:** www.cgrc.nsw.gov.au

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Monday, April 30, 2018 7:58 AM  
**To:** Mail  
**Subject:** Gundagai Rail Trail

Hello

Just a quick note on the proposal for a rail trail in the township of Gundagai.

A number of times I have driven to Victoria to ride the rail trails. I stop in either Gundagai or Holbrook. Nothing would please me more than to ride 6 kms around your town and railway heritage during my overnight stay.

Author of [Www.biketrail.info](http://www.biketrail.info)

**Marianne McInerney**

---

**From:** Roderick Chalmers <roderick.chalmers@bigpond.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, 18 May 2018 2:30 PM  
**To:** Mail  
**Subject:** Gundagai Railway Viaduct Feasibility Report  
**Categories:** Orange Category

The General Manager  
Cootamundra Gundagai Regional Council  
Wallandoon St  
COOTAMUNDRA, NSW 2590  
18th May 2018

Dear Alan,

**re: Gundagai Railway Viaduct Feasibility Report**

I would like to pass comment on a few matters associated with this feasibility report.

1. The projected cost of \$19,613,441 is an estimate only and we are all well aware these sort of projects have a tendency to go well over budget. Just imagine what improvements we could make to our LGA if this sort of finance was available to repair our roads or develop a useful piece of infrastructure rather than repairing an ancient half demolished old bridge of no significant value.
2. Due to the vast amount of funds needed to embark on this fantasy, the State Government would have to grant the money, and once constructed it would then be the responsibility of the Council or local community to find the funds for the ongoing upkeep and repair work that would certainly be needed to keep such an old structure safe.
3. It seems that the reason for this venture is to provide a cycle path of about 900 metres across the Gundagai flood plain, and to save a decrepit ancient old wooden structure that should have been pulled down years ago. It needs to be demolished sooner rather than later before it falls down, possibly injuring some innocent bystanders or dozing swagman and creating a serious legal issue for the Council.
4. Significant public money has already been spent for the production of this Feasibility Report and the conclusions in this report should convince any ratepayer with a modicum of common sense that no more public funds should be expended on fanciful pipe dreams such as this.

As you have probably deduced I am not in favour of this project in any form other than the demolition of this dangerous eyesore to be expedited as soon as possible.

Yours Sincerely

Roderick Chalmers

**From:**  
**To:** [Mail](#)  
**Subject:** Gundagai Railway Viaduct Feasibility Report  
**Date:** Thursday, 7 June 2018 12:20:08 PM

---

Dear General Manager, Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council,

We wish to state our strong support for the recent Gundagai Railway Viaduct Feasibility Report. We believe the restoration of the Viaduct has become an urgent case of “now or never”, and something needs to be done quickly before it becomes unsalvageable like has occurred with the historic Prince Alfred Bridge.

The Viaduct has been a significant and highly visible part of Gundagai’s history and it continues to be a major part of our towns’ heritage and identity, providing a real and very valuable point of uniqueness that sets Gundagai apart from other regional towns. Unfortunately, as the report shows, the current state of the viaduct indicates that if restoration is not undertaken as a matter of urgency, it will, without doubt, not be a part of Gundagai’s, or Australia’s future for much longer. The structure is of local, national, and even international significance and as such, its preservation and restoration is crucial if Australians want to safeguard this irreplaceable part of their heritage.

The inclusion of a rail trail on the viaduct providing access to pedestrians, mobility scooters, and cyclists etc, would provide locals and visitors alike, with a new and exciting opportunity to interact with this significant part of Gundagai’s and Australia’s history. It will bring significant social and economic benefits to our region enabling an economic return on the Government investment required for the restoration and repurposing. Rail Trails have a proven history both in Australia and internationally of attracting visitors to rural and regional areas that otherwise often miss out on the tourist dollar – the flow on effect of which will benefit not only our Shire, but also surrounding and nearby Shires and the towns and villages within.

We genuinely believe this is Gundagai’s last opportunity to preserve one of its most well-known and invaluable heritage and tourist attractions that, in conjunction with the Rail Trail project, will provide a real draw card to our town, opening up many and varied, (and much needed), new avenues of growth opportunities for our Shire and beyond.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our letter.

Regards,

Punch Street Gundagai 2722

## **GUNDAGAI HISTORIC RAIL BRIDGE AND VIADUCT**

On 26 June 2018, representatives of Cootamundra – Gundagai Regional Council, Gundagai Historic Bridges Trust Inc and Engineers Australia – Engineering Heritage Sydney Committee met to discuss the future of the Gundagai historic road and rail bridges. From discussions at this meeting, it is evident that, while there are actions underway to deal with the road bridge, the future of the rail bridge is much less certain and your support is sought to help preserve and promote this outstanding part of NSW community, transport and engineering history.

The Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council and Gundagai Historic Bridges Inc have been pressing for some time to have the rail viaduct preserved, after the Cootamundra to Tumut Line was closed to rail traffic in 1985. Since that time, there have been studies on the reopening of the Tumut Line but this now not considered a possibility. The idea of converting the line to a rail trail has been put forward and this is a much more practicable use for the line.

The Gundagai Historic Bridges Inc asked the Engineering Heritage Sydney Committee (EHS) to meet with them and Council, to explore what advice and/or assistance EHS could provide. The outcome of this meeting was that all three parties committed to supporting the full retention of the rail bridge / viaduct and its conversion to a rail trail.

It is recognised by all concerned at this meeting that preserving the rail bridge and continuing to maintain it would not be an easy task and will incur significant expenditure, as it is a very substantial structure. While it is in reasonable condition for its age, some timber spans at the southern end have deteriorated badly.

However, it was also agreed by all at the meeting that there is a very strong case for preservation of this historic bridge, and for its treatment as a NSW state asset rather than just a local asset.

The Rail Bridge's merits for recognition and preservation would include:

- Its location in Gundagai, perhaps the most well-known Australian “bush” town, being long and widely celebrated in song, verse and literature.
- The bridge crosses the Murrumbidgee River, another key part of NSW geography and cultural history. Perhaps not these days but certainly in times past the story of Hume and Hovell crossing the Murrumbidgee River at Gundagai in 1824 would have been learnt by every primary school student.
- The important role that the rail bridge played for over 80 years in helping develop the Gundagai – Tumut area, and onto the Snowy Mountains.
- The rail viaduct is the longest timber rail bridge in NSW at 1,010m, including the iron spans over the Murrumbidgee River. Timber rail (and road) bridges were a critical part of the development of NSW, as part of the need for economical rail construction and the use of local materials.
- It is a highly visible landmark in the Gundagai community, connecting the north to south parts of the town and adjacent to the old road (formerly the Hume Highway).



- The adjacent Prince Alfred Road Bridge is now in a serious state of disrepair and it is well beyond preservation (a “managed ruin”, in fact). This adds weight to the need to preserve the rail bridge, as the remaining example of timber bridges across the Murrumbidgee River.
- The rail bridge has been recognised as a heritage structure by Engineers Australia in 1998 (then the Institution of Engineers, Australia) and it is on the NSW State Heritage Inventory.

As noted above, the rail bridge has significance in its own right as a key example of a railway timber truss bridge, of which there are only 15 examples across NSW. While Roads and Maritime Services has a strategy in place for the preservation of significant road timber truss bridges, there does not seem to be a similar strategy for rail timber truss bridges. However, none of the other rail timber truss bridges has the historical significance or local prominence of the Gundagai Bridge. On this basis, Gundagai Rail Bridge should be the prime candidate for preservation as an example of this part of NSW’s rail, engineering and social history.

A further positive for the preservation of the Gundagai Rail Bridge is its proposed use. One of the key initiatives in heritage engineering of today is to look at adaptive re-use and this bridge would be a prime example of this strategy. The Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council and the Gundagai Historic Bridges Inc support the concept of the Cootamundra to Tumut Rail Trail and the Gundagai Rail Bridge is a critical part of this initiative.

The Rail Trail concept has been extensively taken up in other states, such as Victoria, but has not yet achieved this success in NSW. Former rail lines are imminently suited to use as walking and bike tracks, due to their relatively gentler gradients and alignments. For these reasons, they have become very popular and have encouraged tourism in regional areas, which are often suffering today’s economic conditions. Gundagai – Tumut would certainly benefit from an increase in tourist numbers.

The proposal for the rail trail has been carefully considered and the Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council commissioned a report by independent consulting engineers in May 2018. This study considered the feasibility and cost of preserving the rail bridge and converting it to a rail trail. In addition, the Council is looking at means of making the ongoing maintenance of the bridge self-supporting.

Since our meeting, we have been advised that Transport for NSW has provided funding to the rail bridge maintainers, John Holland Rail (JHR), to develop a specific management plan, including an associated action plan, for the Gundagai bridge. As part of this, JHR will undertake community consultation over the coming 12 months.

While this is welcome news, Cootamundra – Gundagai Regional Council, Gundagai Historic Bridges Trust Inc and Engineers Australia – Engineering Heritage Sydney Committee consider that the preservation and continued use of the Gundagai Rail Bridge will not be assured without strong community and political support and involvement.

We would therefore request you to give your support to the: