



# Fraser Coast Regional Council Fraser Coast Bicycle Users Group Inc



## Mary to Bay Rail Trail - Vision Statement





# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Colton (north of Maryborough) to Urangan rail line played a key role in the early development of Hervey Bay. It was opened on 18 December 1896 as far as Pialba and extended to Urangan in 1913. The rail line was used for passenger services and the cartage of freight e.g. sugar cane and pineapples.

For many decades, major events on this line were the annual Railway Picnics with trains coming from as far away as Kingaroy, Gympie, Bundaberg, Childers and Maryborough. Train movements were complex and thousands of excited passengers would descend on one of Hervey Bay's beaches for memorable picnics. Figure 1.1 shows one of the trains arriving at Scarness Station for the 1938 picnic.

The rail line was closed in 1993 and the line lifted from Takura to Urangan in 1995. Fraser Coast Regional Council continues to develop the northern end at Hervey Bay from Urraween to Urangan as an urban mobility corridor.

There is strong local interest in using the old rail corridor and developing a rail trail to connect Maryborough to Hervey Bay as both a tourist facility and local commuter and recreational route, returning the corridor to its former glory. Fraser Coast Bicycle Users Group Inc has been working with the Fraser Coast Regional Council to plan this facility and this vision statement is the culmination of those efforts.



**Figure 1.1 Scarness Station - 1938 Railway Picnic**

(Source = Australiascreen [www.aso.gov.au/titles/historical/maryborough-railway-picnic/](http://www.aso.gov.au/titles/historical/maryborough-railway-picnic/))



# 2. VISION STATEMENT

## 2.1 Vision Statement

Mary to Bay Rail Trail – A shared path for use by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders and linking the Mary River with Hervey Bay predominantly utilising the old rail corridor from Colton to Urangan.

Key features include:

- Trail head at Queens Park Maryborough, adjacent to the Mary River;
- Trail head at Urangan Pier Hervey Bay;
- Trail heads for horse riders at Aldershot and Stockyard Creek;
- Off street facility built on the old rail corridor from Colton to Urangan whenever possible;
- Typically 3m wide permanently surfaced path;
- Able to be used in all conditions at all times of the year;
- Multi-purpose tourism, recreational and commuter facility;
- Provides trail facilities including toilets, seats, shelters, directional and information signage;
- Showcases the historical development of the Fraser Coast;
- Showcases a number of recreational and tourist facilities along or in close proximity to the rail trail;
- One of a number of regional rail trails to be developed within Queensland.

## 2.2 Support Documentation

This vision statement for the Mary to Bay Rail Trail has been developed after consideration of the following reports:

**Mary to Bay Rail Trail – A Concept and Route Feasibility Report** – November 2009 - Fraser Coast Bicycle Users Group Inc. This technical report includes a detailed assessment of route alignment including constraints;

**Mary to Bay Rail Trail Engineering Feasibility Report** - August 2010 - Cardno. This technical report examines the structural adequacy of the remaining bridges and includes a cost estimate for modification or replacement of bridges to serve the rail trail, and construction of the rail trail along the old rail corridor, but only from Colton to Urraween;

**Mary to Bay Rail Trail – Ecological Constraints Analysis** - June 2010 – Cardno. This is a desktop analysis of the biodiversity conservation values of land to be traversed by the rail trail, and the potential constraints to construction.

**Mary to Bay Rail Trail – Aldershot to Baddow Section Alignment Option Assessments** - February 2011 – Brock and Associates. This includes a comparative feasibility assessment for two alternative alignments for the Aldershot to Baddow section.

**Mary to Bay Rail Trail – Preliminary Assessment of Cost** - February 2011 – Brock and Associates. This includes the preparation of a cost estimate for the full length of the rail trail from Queens Park to Urraween.

The vision statement is the overarching document that outlines the key features of the rail trail and summarises key aspects of the supporting technical reports. Figure 2.1 illustrates the relationship between these documents.

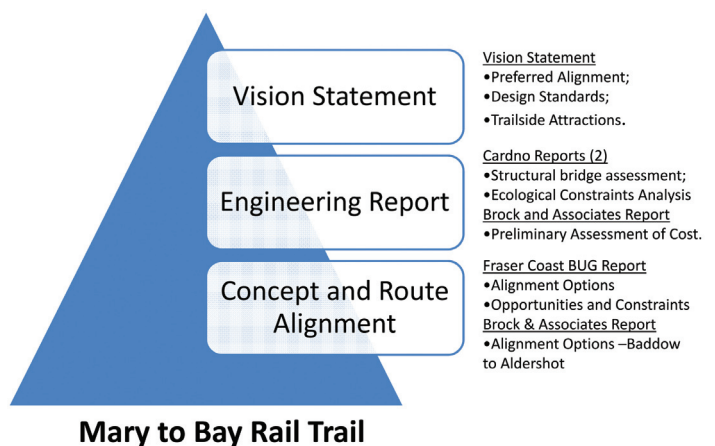


Figure 2.1 Documents defining the Mary to Bay Rail Trail

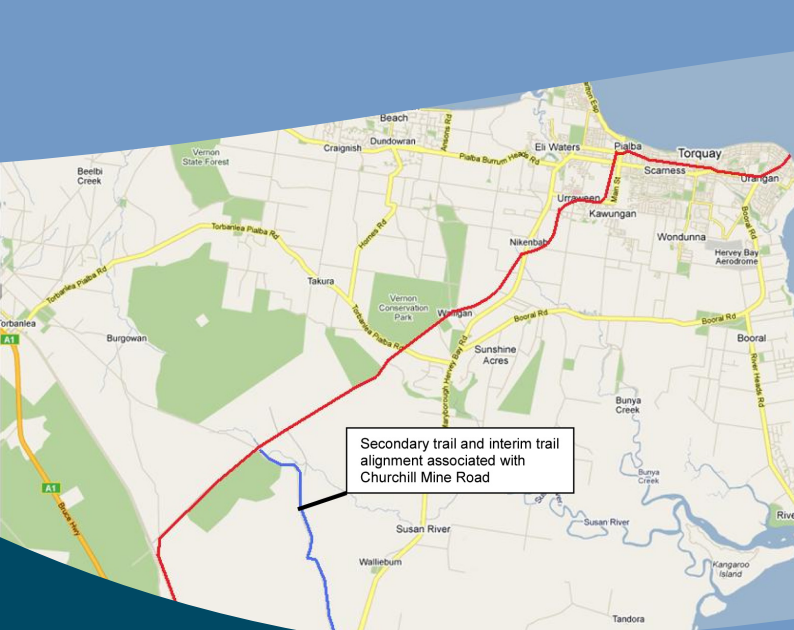


# 3. ALIGNMENT

Investigation of the alignment options has been documented in the Mary to Bay Rail Trail: A Concept and Route Feasibility Report; Fraser Coast Bicycle Users Group Inc, November 2009 with further investigations documented in the Mary to Bay Rail Trail Aldershot to Baddow Section Alignment Options Assessments, Brock and Associates, February 2011. From Maryborough to Colton there is no closed rail corridor available to provide a continuous link, and a number of alignment alternatives have been investigated using existing unformed roads, existing formed roads and streets and short sections of rail corridors either unused or with infrequent use. The rail trail uses the closed rail corridor from Colton to Urrangan and most sections at the northern (Hervey Bay) end from Pialba to Urraween have already been constructed to urban standards.

The preferred route alignment identified in section 10 of the Concept and Route Feasibility Report and section 5 of the Aldershot to Baddow Section Alignment Options Assessments has been confirmed as the preferred rail trail alignment subject to further planning and alignment investigations.

Recent developments associated with re-opening of the Colton Mine has resulted in uncertainty that the alignment via Colton can be developed in the short term given that mine production is expected to occur from the Mine Lease Area directly adjacent to the old rail corridor. Cartage of coal to Gladstone is proposed to occur via rail with a spur being activated along the old rail corridor connecting with the North Coast Railway Line.



**Figure 3.1 Mary to Bay Rail Trail Alignment (1)**  
 (Source for base map = Google Maps)



**Figure 3.2 Mary to Bay Rail Trail Alignment (2)**  
 (Source for base map = Google Maps)



The loading operation and worksite safety issues associated with the mine operation would preclude the safe passage of rail trail users through the site hence consideration has been given to another potential alignment based on a diversion from the old rail corridor onto Churchill Mine Road to Dundathu, and then following the Maryborough-Hervey Bay Road back to Maryborough.

This route was rejected as a first working preference because the levels of recreation reward were lower than those associated with the preferred alignment via Colton. However if the Colton-based alignment cannot be developed, the Churchill Mine Road option could be implemented as an interim measure and become a secondary trail route. A trail head for horses would need to be developed at Dundathu as part of this option.

A secondary route has also been considered to link the Maryborough Showgrounds and Equestrian Park with the rail trail. The Showgrounds offer established trail head facilities for all trail users. Further investigation of the best route over the Bruce Highway is needed in consideration of the recently constructed pedestrian bridge over the Bruce Highway and shared path along Alice Street.

Figure 3.1 and 3.2 show the primary trail alignment using the old rail corridor to the greatest extent (red), a secondary trail and interim trail alignment associated with Churchill Mine Road (blue) and secondary route associated with the Maryborough Showgrounds and Equestrian Park (purple). An alternative and preferred trail route from Aldershot to Baddow has been identified, however is this is not depicted in these figures.



Figure 3.3 Site of Takura Station



## 4. STANDARD OF FACILITY

Fraser Coast Regional Council has provided a 3.5m wide asphalt path within the urban area of Hervey Bay for most of the trail between Urraween and Urrangan Pier. This is known as the Links Corridor and at time of print, there are only two sections that need to be constructed to complete the link i.e. McLiver Street to Boat Harbour Drive and Elizabeth Street to King Street.

Elsewhere from Queens Park to Urraween Road, the path is proposed to be typically a 3m wide permanently surfaced facility, following the alignment of the old rail corridor whenever possible.

Quarried rock will be placed over the ballast beneath the former rail track, and then compacted and sealed. Outside the old rail corridor topsoil will be removed and quarried rock will be laid directly on the underlying soils. There is a stockpile of quarried rock adjacent to the old rail corridor that may be used to construct the gravel layer, provided the quality and grading of material is adequate. Bitumen will be sprayed on the gravel layer and be overlaid with a 10mm stone chip imbedded with another layer of bitumen and a smaller 7mm stone chip.

An adjacent grassed strip a minimum 2m wide is proposed for use by horse riders. Where bridges or culverts are encountered a corduroy crossing for horse riders is proposed. A corduroy crossing consists of logs or poles laid side by side transversely across the watercourse.

Some sections of the proposed rail trail will be located within Maryborough streets and be constrained by the existing verge width. A minimum 2.5m wide concrete footpath is proposed in these constrained locations.

Along the section of the old rail corridor from Takura to Urraween Road, all the bridges have been uplifted. To provide appropriate flood immunity to the rail trail users, the removed bridges will either need to be replaced or drainage culverts provided. The recommended minimum flood immunity is based on a two year return period. Existing bridges on the Colton to Takura section of the old rail corridor are in various states of disrepair and the Cardno

report has identified what needs replacing and what can be modified for pedestrian and cycle usage e.g. handrails and bearers over the sleepers.

Support facilities will be required for rail trail users and these could include:

1. Water. Ideally human and stock water would be made available at the horse trail head sites at Aldershot and Stockyard Creek. Currently public water supply is not available at these sites.  
  
Whereas tank supply is suitable for horses, human trail users would need to be warned about the lack of water along the trail;
2. Toilets. Toilet facilities could be provided at the horse trail head sites at Aldershot and Stockyard Creek;
3. Facilities for horses at the trail head sites could include hitching rails, shelter sheds and stock float parking and turning areas;
4. Information signage featuring the local history and features should be provided along the trail. Directional, warning and distance signage should also be included, and;
5. Seats and shelter sheds could be located periodically along the trail.





## 5. TRAILSIDE ATTRACTIONS

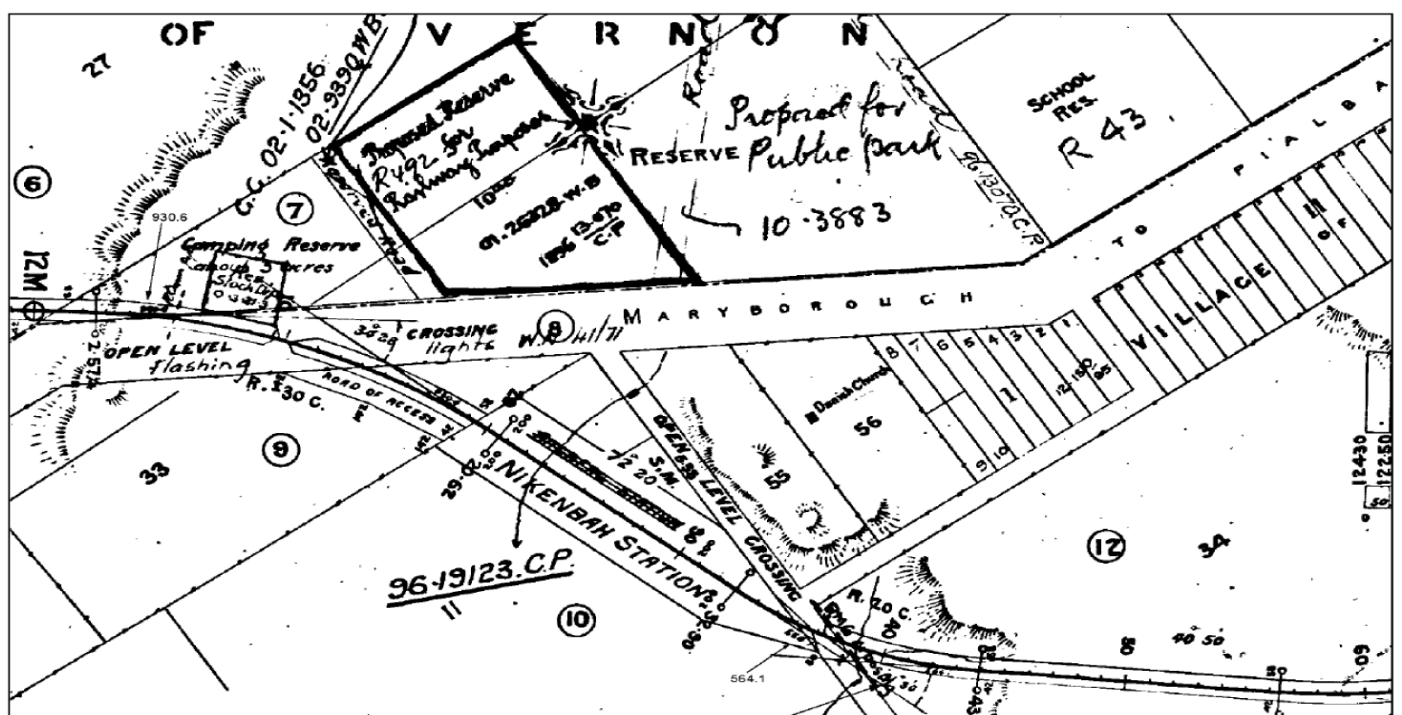
There are a number of features along the trail that could be promoted as an integral part of the rail trail. These include:

1. Stockyard Creek that includes a water hole and public reserve providing an opportunity to develop a trail head for horses. Historically the reserve was used for grazing purposes by the adjoining landholder and when the lease was reviewed Council took the opportunity to take back the lease. The reserve is part of a local corridor that includes koala movement and some revegetation has occurred with more proposed. The north eastern corner could be retained for community purposes;
2. Former station sites – The history of the Colton to Urangan rail line could be depicted at these locations. Figure 5.1 shows an extract from the original construction plans for the rail line that could be included in information boards, and;
3. The historic and cultural development at Aalborg (Nikenbah) utilising items retained from the rail corridor for this purpose such as milepost markers and sections of the rail line complete with manufacturer and date stamp.

In close proximity to the rail trail are a number of

attractions that could be marketed in conjunction with the facility. These include:

1. Wongi State Forest and in particular the water holes – a good ride for cyclists with mountain bikes but at this stage can only be accessed via the Bruce Highway;
2. Howard and Torbanlea within short cycling distance using Churchill Mine Road and Torbanlea-Pialba Road. Refreshments are available here and the coal mining heritage of these towns could be promoted;
3. The coastal villages of Toogoom and Burrum Heads – a longer cycling distance and accessed via Churchill Mine Road and Old Toogoom Road. These villages are part of a frequently used local cycling route;
4. Dundowran Equestrian Park located on Lower Mountain Road;
5. Maryborough Showgrounds and Equestrian Park – provides camping and equestrian facilities, and
6. The Bicentennial National Trail (BNT) which traverses through the Fraser Coast region.



**Figure 5.1 Rail Line Plans#**

(Source = Colton to Pialba Rail Line Design Plans)





The development of the rail trail will provide a number of local tourism opportunities. Bicycle hire, accommodation and cafes are an integral part of rail trails developed in other parts of Australia and New Zealand. There is also the opportunity to align with other Queensland rail trails including the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail which is currently being developed, the Kingaroy to Theebine and Rockhampton to Yeppoon rail trails currently under consideration.

There is the potential for rail passenger services on the North Coast Rail Line to be used to transport tourists between the rail trail sites.

The potential for tourism opportunities is best illustrated in Figure 5.2. This shows the Clyde terminal of one of the bicycle hire operators on the Otago Rail Trail. This business employs 30 people on a full time and part time basis and there are some 400 bikes available from this company.



**Figure 5.2 Otago Rail Trail Cycle Hire**  
(Source = Brian Jessett January 2010)



## 6. COSTS AND STAGING

A preliminary assessment of cost prepared by Brock and Associates has confirmed a budget of approximately \$11M will be required to construct the Mary to Bay Rail Trail based on the standard of facility discussed above. The project is included in the Fraser Coast Walk and Cycle Strategy as a major walk and cycle link, and could be subject to walk and cycle infrastructure charges paid upon land development. The project could also be subsidised under a number of state, federal and community funding programs. Community groups could also work with Council and help develop some of the trailside facilities.

The cost estimate is summarised in Table 6.1. Potential development associated with the Colton

Road and Maryborough-Hervey Bay Road as an interim facility and secondary trail option as second priority.

3. Aldershot to Queens Park as third priority and with two sub stages:
  - Aldershot Park to AJ Zemek Bridge, and;
  - AJ Zemek Bridge to Queens Park.

**Table 6.1**

**Cost Estimate Summary**

Section	From	To	Length (km)	Cost Estimate
1	Queens Park	Aldershot Park	10.73	\$4,980,000
2	Aldershot Park	Churchill Mine Road	10.70	\$2,520,000
3	Churchill Mine Road	Takura <sup>#</sup>	7.20	\$1,210,000
4	Takura <sup>#</sup>	Urraween Road <sup>##</sup>	10.85	\$2,620,000
<b>Total (excl GST)</b>			<b>39.48</b>	<b>\$11,330,000</b>

# - Torbanlea-Pialba Road intersection

## - Near Main Street and the Links Corridor

Mine is likely to preclude construction of the facility from Queens Park to Urraween Road as a single project.

Obvious staging points include:

1. Urraween Road to Takura as first priority and with two sub stages:
  - Urraween Road to Nikenbah, and;
  - Nikenbah to Takura ;
2. Takura to Aldershot as second priority and with two sub stages:
  - Takura to Churchill Mines Road, and;
  - Churchill Mines Road to Aldershot or Churchill Mine Road to Maryborough via Churchill Mine





## 7. OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

It is intended that the Mary to Bay Rail Trail will become a public asset owned and maintained by Fraser Coast Regional Council in partnership with the Fraser Coast community. The project could be included in the Councils Community Environment Program in terms of planting, maintenance and beautification work. Vegetation control to reduce the risk of fire is an important aspect of the maintenance operation.

The rail bridges will be limited to a width of 2.5m once handrails are included. The Cardno report does not recommend vehicles be allowed to use the bridges due to the width and loading constraints. However, it is recommended that bridges should be able to carry the weight of a 4WD ambulance vehicle

(4 t) and possibly in some instances the weight of a rural fire appliance (13 t), dependent on where the major fire zones are. If this recommendation is applied, maintenance vehicles will also have access to the trail.

Access for emergency vehicles will need careful consideration and an emergency response plan prepared. Issues such as location of trail access points, turnaround and passing opportunities for vehicles, weight loading of bridges, locking system on management gates, the provision of appropriate signage and the provision of adequate information for emergency service communications centres will all need to be addressed.





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