

BEVERLEY NARROGIN TRANSPORT TRAIL

Volume 1: STRATEGIC PLAN

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PREPARED FOR:



PREPARED BY:



TRANSPAN PTY LTD

Planning and Design

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INTRODUCTION

The Beverley Narrogin Transport Trail is a proposed 105km trail providing a long distance off-road riding and walking experience through natural settings connecting the towns of **Beverley, Brookton, Pingelly, Cuballing and Narrogin.**

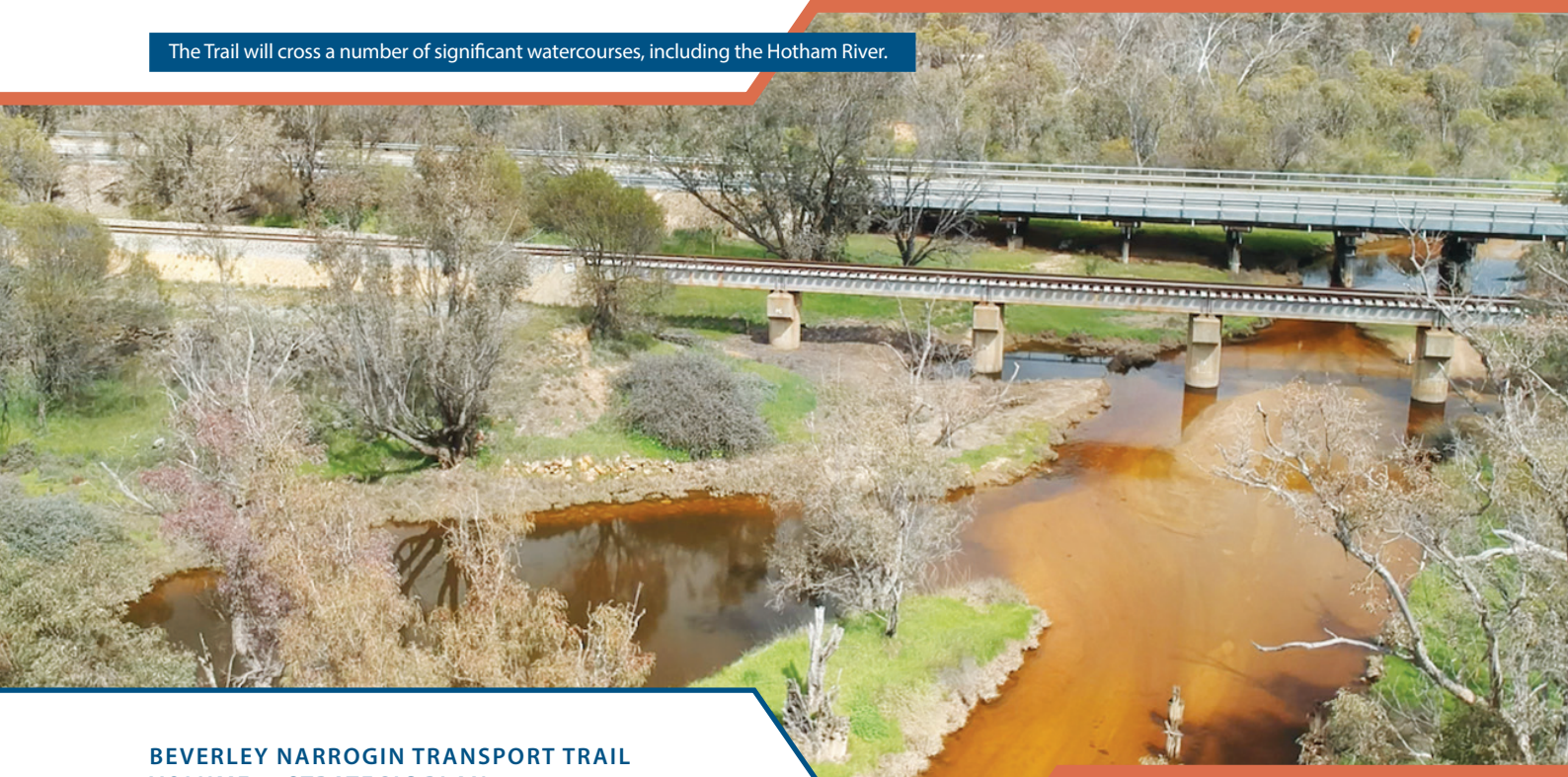
The WA Department of Transport, in its various 2050 Cycling Strategies (such as the *Avon Central Coast 2050 Cycling Strategy*), defines Transport Trails as long-distance, predominantly unsealed trails which are typically used to connect towns. Unlike downhill mountain biking trails, Transport Trails are non-technical in design. While there will be some level of crossover, Transport Trails provide users with a more passive bike riding experience.

Perhaps the greatest advantage of Transport Trails, according to the Department of Transport, is that they can provide long-distance, off-road (predominantly unsealed) riding experiences through natural settings, away from motorised traffic. They often support recreational and tourism trips between towns and regions. Transport Trails provide opportunities for longer tourist rides that can be marketed as inclusive itineraries, individual journeys of discovery or providing connections between smaller locations.

The project partners – the Shires of Beverley, Brookton, Pingelly, Cuballing and Narrogin - were successful in receiving funding from the WA Bicycle Network Grants Program to undertake a Feasibility Study for the trail. The full Feasibility Study has been prepared by Mike Halliburton Associates and Transplan Pty Ltd and is presented as Volume 2.

The Feasibility Study found the project was feasible and should be pursued. This Strategic Plan sets out an overview of the trail concept, the defined route, the trail's costs, benefits and issues and an implementation plan.

The Trail will cross a number of significant watercourses, including the Hotham River.



THE TRAIL CONCEPT

The proposed Beverley Narrogin Transport Trail will be a trail that offers two trail experiences: an on-road cycle touring route and an off-road shared use trail.

The trail will be a 100+ km trail that threads its way through the Wheatbelt region connecting the towns and villages of Beverley, Brookton, Pingelly, Popanyinning, Cuballing and Narrogin. Through a process of fieldwork, community consultation (including an on-line survey), input from the project partners and considerable work on various options, the Beverley Narrogin Transport Trail has been developed as a trail network offering two routes for riders and walkers to explore the sub-region of the Wheatbelt extending from Beverley to Narrogin. The two routes within the trail are an on-road cycle touring route (the “Orange” route) and an off-road shared use trail (the “Green” route). These routes are shown in Plans 1-9 in Appendix 1.

The trail offers a series of circular routes that start and finish in each of the six towns and villages in the sub-region. The trail also offers users the opportunity to ride or walk from the northern end of this sub-region (at Beverley) to the southern end (at Narrogin) and also offers a return journey opportunity on an alternative route (particularly suitable for cyclists). Trail users can do as much or as little of the trail as they want and can choose an on-road cycling route using quiet country roads (generally unsealed) and/or an off-road walking and cycling route that generally runs along the railway line and the Great Southern Highway through this sub-region.

The Orange route particularly offers spectacular views in so many directions. What is on offer from this ride are varied vistas (in both the near and far visual field) offering trail users “up close and personal” interactions with rural activities – canola, sheep, wheat, olives – all the rural experiences the Wheatbelt has to offer. Long views to distant mountains are attainable along sections of the roads, while also on offer is the opportunity to ride through Dryandra Woodland National Park on a constructed road. The Green route (running primarily along the Great Southern Highway and the railway) offers less attractive scenery although there are sections that will be quite attractive. The northern section (Beverley to Brookton) offers riverside walking and riding for much of its route and along quiet country roads into Brookton. Good trail design along other sections may leave a band of trees between the trail and the less aesthetically pleasing aspects of the trail route.

The trail offers the opportunity to connect users to other proposed trails in the north (the proposed County Peak and Ski Lake Transport Trail) and the south (the proposed Narrogin Williams Rail Trail). Plans 1 and 5 show these proposed trails in relation to the Beverley Narrogin Transport Trail.

The Beverley Narrogin Transport Trail will form a strategic link in the regional trails network by:

- Directly connecting the towns of Beverley, Brookton, Pingelly, Popanyinning, Cuballing and Narrogin;
- Connecting the transport trail to planned trails within the Shire of Beverley;
- Eventually linking to York, Northam, Toodyay and the Perth Hills from Beverley;
- Connecting to a planned rail trail from Narrogin to Williams; and

- Linking Dryandra National Park (a planned primary regional trail destination) with secondary/local trail destinations and adjacent primary regional/signature trail destinations of Collie, Dwellingup and York.

The trail will be a regional facility to attract a range of users from across south western WA (and further afield). The proposed trail also has the potential to make connections, and therefore much longer trail experiences, by joining up with proposed trails in the Avon Region, and with the established and proposed trails network in and around Collie.

During the Feasibility Study preparation, the Chief Executive Officer of the Shire of Pingelly undertook media interviews promoting the trail as a trail that could form part of the longest walking and cycling continuous loop trail in Australia.

The trail will attract the cycle touring market (particularly the Orange route) and can deliver on some of the outcomes being sought by the various relevant strategies such as the *Avon Central Coast 2050 Cycling Strategy*, the *Concentric Circles: Guidance for Trails Tourism Close to Perth* Report (2024) and the *Wheatbelt Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2033*. The Orange route delivers adventure riding and specifically offers the chance to provide a signposted developed cycle link to the Dryandra Woodland National Park. The Green route also goes some way to addressing the outcomes being sought in the above strategies. An on-line survey (which garnered 375 responses, the vast majority of 69% from the Perth Metropolitan area) conducted for the project showed that 95% of respondents said they would enjoy the opportunity to travel between Beverley and Narrogin on a trail off the Great Southern Highway. 65% of respondents said they would use both trails. When asked how they would use the proposed trail, 41% of respondents said they would use the Green and Orange routes as a loop returning to the point of departure; 18% said they would ride end to end and then return - out on one route and back on the other; 16% would ride or walk short sections e.g. out of a town and back again on the same route; 13% said they would use the trail end to end without a return. 66% of respondents said they would use the trail a few times/year, while 11% said they would use it once/month. The Beverley Narrogin Transport Trail will respond to a user demand.

An opportunity exists for several towns of the Wheatbelt to develop as trail destinations. Beverley, Pingelly and Narrogin for example are well positioned to emulate the progress being made in other trail towns. Though they do not have the Bibbulmun Track or the Munda Biddi passing through their town centres, what the towns between Beverley and Narrogin do have is a unique opportunity to develop a long distance transport trail of approximately 100+ km (the Green route) and over 200 kilometres (the Orange route) connecting the 5 towns, and to capitalise on the existence of existing and proposed trails in the towns and in the region. Promoting the trail as a small part of a much longer trail (which the Shire of Pingelly CEO has done) makes the Wheatbelt a more attractive destination and this trail more attractive as part of a longer, more appealing walk and ride.

THE TRAIL ROUTE

The Orange Route – the cycle touring route

The on-road trail utilises scenic country roads and caters to the needs of cycle tourists. The route connects the towns and villages in a scenic way and represents the essence of cycle touring. It gets users “up close and personal” with rural activities – canola, sheep, wheat, olives – all the rural experiences the Wheatbelt has to offer and accesses other attractions e.g. old school sites; old town sites e.g. Moorumbine. The Wild Gravel Trail, centred out of Gnowangerup, is an example of a successful cycle touring route using predominantly quiet, gravel, backroads through interesting wheatbelt scenery. Long views to distant mountains and a journey through Dryandra Woodland National Park are also on offer.

The indicative alignment shows a trail of approximately 213.3kms for the Orange route. The approximate distance between the towns and villages is as follows:

| | |
|----------------------------|---------|
| ■ Beverley – Brookton | 52.4kms |
| ■ Brookton – Pingelly | 55.3kms |
| ■ Pingelly – Popanyinning | 31.5kms |
| ■ Popanyinning – Cuballing | 37.7kms |
| ■ Cuballing – Narrogin | 36.4kms |



An on-road cycling route between Beverley and Narrogin using scenic backroads has been recommended.

The Green Route – the shared use off-road route

The off-road trail will be an unsealed 1,200mm – 1,500mm minimum wide shared use trail offering users the opportunity to ride or walk side by side and is in keeping with the desire of the Department of Transport to provide a trail that is to be wide enough to allow two people to ride comfortably side-by-side.

The Green route offers direct connection between towns and is safer thus providing better opportunities for family groups and those staying in caravan parks who may not be experienced or competent cyclists but like to go for a leisurely short ride (or walk). It caters for walkers as well as cyclists. A key market for the Green route is the 'cruiser market'. This market, as defined in the *Pingelly Mountain Bike and Cycling Strategy 2022-2026*, consists of families on holidays who incorporate cycling as part of that holiday. This market is typically made up of families with school-age children with a casual interest in cycling who tend to take shorter holidays (less than a week) in familiar places. Three-quarters are 'cyclists while on holidays'. For this group, cycling experiences should be easy, unchallenging, casual, low-risk, inclusive, covering short distances and involve sightseeing. On a traditional mountain bike trail, single track trails tend to wind around obstacles such as trees, large rocks, and vegetation. The narrow and frequently rough nature of single track demands constant focus and a slow to moderate speed. On trails where bushwalkers share with mountain bikes, a trail width of 1,200mm - 1,500mm is appropriate allowing two mountain bikes to pass comfortably, allowing side by side riding and walking, and facilitating passing in both directions. Extensive wayfinding signage will be used to direct users to, from and along the route.

The indicative alignment shows a trail of approximately 101.1kms for the Green route (plus the distance between Beverley Trailhead and Caudle Road). The approximate distance between the towns and villages is as follows:

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| ■ Beverley-Brookton | 31kms + distance between Beverley trailhead and Caudle Road (to be calculated under a separate project) |
| ■ Brookton – Pingelly | 20kms |
| ■ Pingelly – Popanyinning | 16.4kms |
| ■ Popanyinning – Cuballing | 17.3kms |
| ■ Cuballing – Narrogin | 16.4kms |

Trailheads to serve both routes will be developed at:

- Beverley - Apex Park;
- Brookton - Pioneer Park;
- Pingelly – Pioneer Park;
- Cuballing – Youth and Community Park; and
- Narrogin – Visitor Information Centre.

THE TRAIL ROUTE DETERMINATION PROCESS

There are some key overall guiding elements that have informed the route selection process:

- There is no ideal or perfect route for either of the two trail routes (the Green and the Orange). **The routes chosen are designed to deliver a trail that is being sought by the brief and the project partners.**
- The best achievable routes have been chosen through towns despite – in some cases – not being particularly attractive. A good example is the use of Earl Street North in Narrogin (for both routes). This route takes users past an industrial area – not the most scenic introduction to Narrogin. The Green route into Brookton from the north takes users through rural residential development.

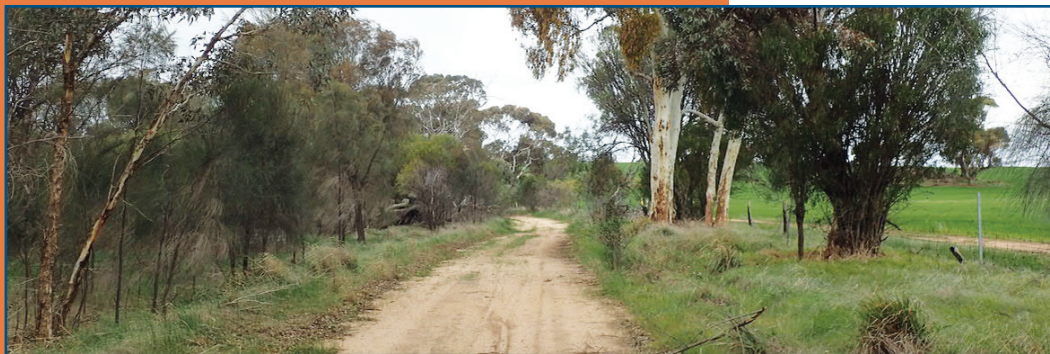
WITH RESPECT TO THE GREEN ROUTE:

- If ARC Infrastructure would agree to using the existing maintenance track within the railway reserve, and all the road reserves alongside the railway reserve and highway were continuous, a better Green route could be delivered. **This is not the case.** Much of what was originally proposed for the Green route (a railway maintenance track) is in railway reserve and cannot be used. Advice from the Public Transport Authority was that for safety reasons (and this is a relatively active line), Arc Infrastructure's (the rail corridor manager) maintenance /access tracks are not available for shared use by recreational users.
- New trail will need to be constructed for over 81kms of the proposed Green route as a consequence of the existing land tenure arrangement with Arc Infrastructure. **A new trail cannot utilise the railway maintenance track where it is within railway reserve.**
- Use of the maintenance track where it is within an adjoining road reserve has been included within the route mapping. These are the only locations where the maintenance track can be used.
- Where road reserves are adjoining (continuous) - and accessible - they have been utilised.
- The Green route will be built primarily alongside the railway reserve and within close proximity to the Great Southern Highway.
- In some instances, the lack of parallel road reserves necessitates the use of the Great Southern Highway verge.
- The road reserves are discontinuous and not always accessible creating the need to cross the Great Southern Highway numerous times – an unavoidable feature of the Green route. The limited number of existing (controlled) railway crossings also prevent the trail crossing over the railway/highway to more attractive road reserves in some locations. Whilst some road reserves may be more attractive than ones chosen, it is impossible to access them due to railway reserves between the Great Southern Highway (and other roads) and the road reserve. It is believed approval for new crossing points will be very difficult – if not impossible - to obtain.

- It may be possible in certain locations to avoid some road crossings by negotiating easements with adjoining landholders to provide more direct or parallel routes or minimise crossings. This has not been explored in any detail but each of the project partners should be open to the possibility of altering the Green route by use of easement if this addresses any of the issues around railway and road crossings (whilst not compromising other sections of the route which have been carefully planned).
- Clearing for the trail and tree lopping is unavoidable, particularly along narrow roadside verges.
- There are a large number of water crossings along the Green route – rivers, creeks and drain lines that need to be crossed adding significant expense to the project. In addition, due to the low-lying nature of the land, there is ongoing potential for sections of trail to become “boggy” after rain – again these will need to be dealt with. Lengthy sections of boardwalk will be unavoidable due to seasonal inundation. Fieldwork looked to maximise “high and dry” routes; this was not always possible. No handrails will be needed as the fall to ground will be less than 1 metre.

WITH RESPECT TO THE ORANGE ROUTE:

- Consideration has been given to the best roads to use to avoid heavy agricultural machinery particularly at harvest and seeding times. No alternative route to the use of Bremner Road taking users south from Beverley has been found (community consultation indicated some concern with this route). However, that particular section has been highlighted as a possible transport trail in the *Avon Central Coast 2050 Cycling Strategy*.



Some short sections of public road reserves are used as the maintenance track for the railway.



PROJECT COSTS

Capital and maintenance costs are a major consideration in any public infrastructure project. These need to be offset against a range of benefits – both economic and non-economic. Broad cost estimates are a part of this project. Accurate costs can only be determined, firstly, by the compilation of more detailed works lists accomplished through detailed planning work for the proposed trail(s) and, secondly, via a tendering process.

The Feasibility Study set out in detail likely costs of development for the trails, and these are shown below.

Table 1: Total costs by town connections - Orange Route

| Section | Cost |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| Beverley - Brookton | \$65,050 |
| Brookton - Pingelly | \$62,590 |
| Pingelly - Cuballing | \$65,785 |
| Cuballing - Narrogin | \$59,230 |
| TOTAL (Excluding GST) | \$252,655 |

Table 2: Total costs by town connections - Green Route

| Section | Cost |
|---|--------------------|
| Beverley - Brookton (excl. Apex Park - Caudle Road, Beverley) | \$3,223,005 |
| Brookton - Pingelly | \$1,990,310 |
| Pingelly - Cuballing | \$3,048,560 |
| Cuballing - Narrogin | \$603,340 |
| TOTAL (Excluding GST) | \$8,865,215 |

Table 3: Total costs by local government - Orange Route

| Section | Cost |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| Shire of Beverley | \$34,180 |
| Shire of Brookton | \$53,530 |
| Shire of Pingelly | \$55,615 |
| Shire of Cuballing | \$76,010 |
| Shire of Narrogin | \$33,320 |
| TOTAL (Excluding GST) | \$252,655 |

Table 4: Total costs by local government - Green Route

| Section | Cost |
|---|--------------------|
| Shire of Beverley (Excluding Apex Park - Caudle Road) | \$1,165,340 |
| Shire of Brookton | \$3,013,025 |
| Shire of Pingelly | \$1,772,910 |
| Shire of Cuballing | \$2,778,060 |
| Shire of Narrogin | \$135,880 |
| TOTAL (Excluding GST) | \$8,865,215 |

Ongoing trail maintenance is a crucial component of an effective management program – yet it is often neglected until too late. 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.

TRAIL BENEFITS AND IMPACTS

Forecast trail use and visitation

The economic impact of any proposed trail is primarily dependent on the extent to which the trail is marketed and promoted. The survey conducted for this Feasibility Study indicated that 177 people (69% of respondents) were from the Perth metropolitan area and indicated they would use the trail a few times/year, while a further 29 people said they would use it monthly. Both these responses indicate that repeat visits may be a critical factor in any trail's success.

A trail will bring additional tourists and keep them longer in the area. Other possible benefits from developing the trails include:

- Improvements to community connectivity;
- Increasing recreational opportunities for local people; and
- Creating opportunities to build on existing industries and enterprises of the area.

A trail such as the proposed Beverley Narrogin Transport Trail will have attraction to visitors. However, it will also add to the stock of existing trails for local people – people who live in towns and villages within easy reach of the trail. Some of these people will use the trail for exercise – these 'back gate' users may not be significant in terms of expenditure, but they are significant in terms of numbers as they would use the trail many times each year. The survey responses indicated that the most frequent use for residents of the Wheatbelt specifically would be a few times/year. 23 respondents from the Wheatbelt said they would use the trail a few times/yr (38% of respondents from the Wheatbelt) while 10 (17%) said they would use it monthly and 6 said they would use it weekly (from a total of 60 respondents from the Wheatbelt).

With good marketing, the trail will attract local users and visitors. Under a relatively conservative scenario, the following outcomes are achievable.

- Local use – 7,285 local users/year is a reasonable expectation based on the survey results. This will result in an economic injection of \$19,450/year.
- If 3,000 visitors stay an extra day to use the trail (or part of the trail), an additional \$762,600/year would be injected into the regional economy.
- If 2,000 new visitors come to the region solely (or primarily) to do the trail, an additional \$1,016,800/year would be injected into the regional economy.

The total injection of dollars into the local economies from local, day trip and overnight visitors may be of the order of **\$1,798,850/ year** (under a range of conservative scenarios) from **12,645 users**.

Trails can improve community connectivity and provide increasing recreational options for local people thus contributing to both physical and mental health of communities through which they pass. There are a range of non-economic benefits accruing to local and wider communities from trail construction and use. The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries' *More People More Active Outdoors* (2019) identified five key pillars supporting the benefits of outdoor recreation (cited in *WA Mountain Bike Strategy 2022-2032*). These were:

- Personal development, challenge and enjoyment;
- Improved health and well-being;
- Outdoor learning;
- Connection to nature; and
- Economic development.



Attractive tree-lined gravel roads are a feature of the recommended "Orange" route.



TRAIL OPPORTUNITIES

The Beverley Narrogin Transport Trail will provide several notable opportunities. There are a number of specific elements within the area encompassed by the proposed trail route that provide opportunities and reasons for why a trail should be built.

■ **Satisfying an existing demand.** The trail will satisfy an existing demand for cycling trails (as well as walk trails to a lesser extent). In the three years to 2018, 29% of Australians had a holiday that involved a cycling experience. Of these, 28% were categorised as destination cycle tourists while 72% were categorised as cyclists while on holiday (*WA Strategic Trails Blueprint 2022-2027*). For the Beverley Narrogin Transport Trail, the two key markets are “gravel grinding” and bike packing/back country touring (as defined in the *Concentric Circles* report).

■ **Gravel grinding:** encompasses a fairly broad sweep of riding activity but pertains mainly to long distance day rides, most often 100km+, that seek out back country, dirt and fire track roads with little to no traffic.

■ **Bike packing / back country touring:** is about exploring remote places via single track trails, gravel and abandoned dirt roads. Daily distances tend to be shorter for backcountry rides (40-50km) and with stops to admire vistas and eat at the country bakery. Bike packing is all about slow travel exploration. Bike packers often stay at B&B's, hotels, motels and caravan parks and eat out at cafés and restaurants.

The trail offers a product that does not fall neatly into either of these two types of adventure cycling; rather it offers elements appealing to both groups. The trail will partially appeal to these groups though the Orange route is more likely to appeal to dedicated cyclists.

The trail may satisfy an existing demand for walk trails to a lesser extent. There is an existing general demand for bushwalking trails in Australia (for domestic and international visitors). **Between 2016/17 and 2020/21, bushwalking saw a 66% increase from 1.252 million people/year on a bushwalk to 2.077 million/year** (*WA Strategic Trails Blueprint 2022-2027*). It is not reasonable to assume that a walk trail between Beverley and Narrogin primarily along the highway and road system will have the same appeal as the iconic long distance trails mentioned above. However, the survey indicates some demand (more for sections or loop trails out of each town).

■ **Opportunities to provide more local trails.** The Beverley Narrogin Transport Trail will have the added benefit of providing a local trail for local people. A trail constructed alongside the railway reserve would provide a local trail to be used by local people on a regular basis.

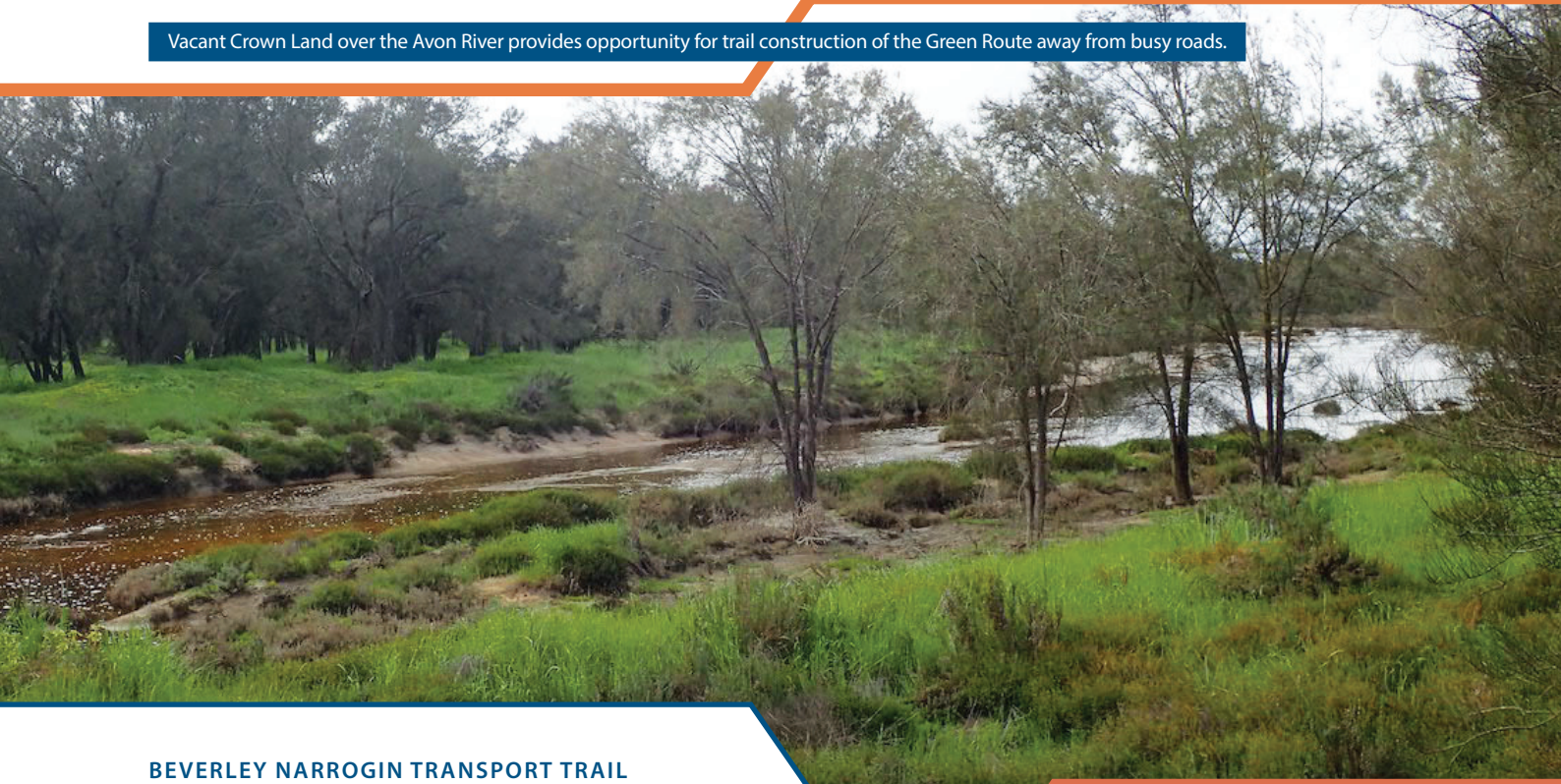
■ **Opportunities to provide trails for existing and new visitors.** The *Pingelly Mountain Bike and Cycling Strategy 2022-2026* identifies a series of actions which the Shire believes will position Pingelly as the Trails Centre for the region by delivering a series of trails aimed at the ‘cruiser market’ – families on holidays who incorporate cycling as part of that holiday. The strategy notes that outlying trails (which the Beverley Narrogin Transport Trail would be) are essential to attract visitors (as opposed to short in-town trails).



Examples of promotional material for various gravel riding events in WA. The Orange Route in particular offers the opportunity to host such events.

- Business development.** There are a range of business opportunities for private sector investors arising from the potential development of a trail. Providing accommodation, food and beverages, supported and guided tours and equipment, are some of the businesses that have arisen along other trails.
- Attracting new visitors and encouraging existing visitors to stay longer.** A trail has some potential to assist in keeping existing visitors longer in the area and potentially attract new visitors. Australians are increasingly looking for passive, non-organised recreation opportunities, often in natural or near-natural settings. Demand for this type of opportunity will only increase as the population ages. While walking remains the most popular of these activities (and is likely to remain so as the population ages), off-road cycling shows a growing and often unmet demand within the trails market. The advent of e-bikes will only accelerate the popularity of cycling on trails. Electric and power assisted bikes (e-bikes) represent one of the fastest growing segments of the bike industry, as they allow riders to extend their cycling distances. Australian e-bike sales have just recorded their fourth consecutive year of rapid growth. For the 2019–20 financial year sales were 48,000 units, up almost 50% from 32,500 units sold in 2018–19.

Vacant Crown Land over the Avon River provides opportunity for trail construction of the Green Route away from busy roads.



TRAIL IMPLEMENTATION

The Feasibility Study is one of the initial steps in the development of the proposed Beverley Narrogin Transport Trail. The fieldwork and other investigations carried out in the study have revealed a number of tasks that will need to be undertaken to progress the proposed trail through to fruition.

The Shire of Pingelly appears to have been the primary driver of this phase of work in partnership with the Shires of Beverley, Brookton, Cuballing and Narrogin (with funding provided by WA Department of Transport). The next primary tasks are to ensure all Councils formally agree to the trail proposal and then actively seek funds for future development of the trail. Other key tasks will be seeking funding for trail construction (and detailed planning as needed), and negotiating, leading and facilitating the formation of an appropriate management structure. These primary tasks are critical to the project's eventual success and will require human resources. In addition, should the trail proceed, there are a number of approvals and processes that will need to be followed.

It is therefore recommended that the Councils' alliance continue to take the lead role in the next phase of the project. The alliance will have developed a more detailed understanding of many of the issues and opportunities and are ideally placed to continue to facilitate future stages. Negotiations with Arc Infrastructure are also likely to be a key feature of the next stages of the project.

There are three key phases that the project needs to go through:

PHASE 1

Planning and development - from the decision to proceed to the opening of Section 1 of the trail.

PHASE 2

Establishment and operations - from the opening of Section 1 of the trail through completion of all stages to a period of 5 years full operation.

PHASE 3

Trail maturity - from 5 years after the opening of the complete trail.

Each phase will have a range of tasks and key stakeholders will have different roles in these different stages.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

The trail, if built, will run through five Local Governments with varying interests and capacity. It would seem a Memorandum of Understanding between the five Councils may be the most appropriate method to manage the trail in the future. It is understood that in WA Memoranda of Understanding between Councils have been used in the past to manage cross-border issues. A typical MoU would cover:

- Statement of Purpose;
- Vision and Objectives;
- Principles;

- Scope of the MoU;
 - Resources
 - Issues to be addressed
 - Strategies to be adopted;
 - Implementation;
- Management structure and process;
- Dispute Resolution Processes;

Detailed Trail Design (Trail Development Plan)

Although this Feasibility Study provides more detail than simply indicative costs and possible solutions, there are sections of the proposed Green route where detailed trail development planning that seeks out solutions to all specific issues has not been undertaken (notably in the north). The Orange route does not present the same level of complexity or need for further planning.

Sourcing Funding

Once the decision is taken to proceed with the implementation of the proposed trail, it will be prudent to start the process of finding construction funding. All funding sources available at that time will need to be identified and funding applications prepared as soon as possible. Funding programs often change and are subject to review.

The project costs shown above include a 5% allowance for project management and 2.5% allowance for approvals and further design. Successful funding applications will need to include this element to ensure the project can be undertaken in an efficient and co-ordinated way.

Staging of Investment

Development of trails can often be staged so that parts of trails are developed in line with available funding sources. It is often not possible to open the full length (i.e. all stages) of a trail simultaneously as significant physical, financial, community and institutional work needs to be undertaken. This is the case in many recreational trails around Australia. Opening a new trail in stages also allows those who are opposed or undecided about a project to see a clear demonstration of its use and lack of issues (almost inevitably, problems identified by concerned people do not arise).

A staged approach to planning and development is often the best approach as it better suits the capacity of the entity charged with delivering the project.

Trail construction stages are determined by a number of factors:

- Trail sections anchored in trailheads (preferably near to major population centres).
- Trail sections enabling local people to use the facility for local walks and rides.
- Construct cheaper sections earlier than expensive ones (affordability). The cheapest section of the Green route (in terms of town to town) is from Popanyinning to Cuballing and the most expensive section is from Beverley to Brookton (even without considering necessary construction from Apex Park trailhead at Beverley to Caudle Road). The second cheapest is from Narrogin to Cuballing – adding

some weight to the argument below that building this section first can capitalise on the Narrogin Williams Rail Trail if it is built.

- Construct most attractive sections first.
- Probable economic impacts.
- Finished product logic.
- Ease of access for users.
- Ease of trailhead development.
- Capacity of the relevant local governments to deliver the trail section.

The consideration of staging is complicated by another two factors. The first factor is that – with one exception - each logical section covers two local governments. Beverley to Brookton is in two local governments; Brookton to Pingelly is in two local governments; Pingelly to Popanyinning is in two local governments; Cuballing to Narrogin is in two local governments. Popanyinning to Cuballing is the only logical section contained within one local government. The second complicating factor is the ongoing work at the northern end of the route between Beverley and Caudle Road. No detail has been provided for that section of the Green route because it is part of another process being undertaken by the Shire of Beverley.

The Orange trail is a relatively low cost trail at \$252,655. The two local governments at either end (Beverley and Narrogin) have the lowest costs (each around \$34,000) while the three local governments in the middle have similar costs though the Shire of Cuballing has the greatest cost at \$76,000 (commensurate with the trail covering the longest distance in that local government area). Creating the Orange trail first delivers a “quick win”. If the Orange trail route is to be developed in stages, the stages should be discrete and run from town to town rather than from town to the Local Government boundary. While the infrastructure would still exist if one local government did not develop the trail, it would be an unusual experience for a user to reach a local government boundary and find that trail directional markers suddenly stopped. However, the capacity to deliver this trail may be limited by the capacity of each individual local government so this undesirable situation may arise.

If funding is available and the trail manager believes they have the capacity to construct the entire trail in one stage (either or both routes), this can be done. Under this scenario, project management will be a very significant and major task. Care needs to be taken if this is the approach – short cuts in construction will manifest themselves in expensive repairs and refurbishment very quickly as has been the experiences on other trails.

However, construction of the Green trail route by section is likely to be required – it is an expensive project. Construction of the Green and Orange trails will eventually create a series of loop trails out of each town; this may be a factor to consider in the timing of stages.

Developing the connection from Narrogin to Cuballing as the first step in the Green route development would build on the Narrogin Williams Rail Trail if it was to be developed in the near future, thus extending the reach of the rail trail should it come to fruition.

Any timing of implementation will depend primarily on the individual council’s capacity to raise funds (though it could be raised through one grant). While there are a large number of unknown factors such as how it is to be funded and the capacity and willingness of each Council to contribute to construction, Table 5 sets out a suggested delivery schedule for the trail with some reasons put forward. Connecting to other potential trails such as the Narrogin Williams Rail Trail (and any trails that may be developed north of Beverley) has merit in considering stages.

Table 5: Suggested schedule

| Stage | Section | Distance | Cost |
|-------|---|----------|-------------|
| 1 | <p>Construct complete Orange route. A relatively low cost option that can deliver benefits.</p> <p>Green Trail – detailed design and approvals as needed. N.B. provisions for design and approvals not included in cost listed in column 4.</p> | 213.3kms | \$252,655 |
| 2 | <p>Green trail – Construct Narrogin-Cuballing section. Why? Shortest and cheapest section and builds on existing trails infrastructure within the Shire of Narrogin. However, negotiations with Arc Infrastructure about the maintenance track on public road reserve will take time.</p> <p>Possible constraint – the capacity of the Shire of Cuballing. Also depends on capacity of Shire of Narrogin if it is also developing Narrogin Williams Rail Trail.</p> | 16.4kms | \$603,430 |
| 3 | <p>Green trail – Construct Cuballing-Pingelly section. Why? Next logical section though it is the longest section and builds on the drive of the Shire of Pingelly.</p> <p>Construction over 2 (or more) years. Pingelly-Popanyinning section could be the first section constructed though this would leave a “gap” but recognises the limitations of partners.</p> <p>Possible constraint – the capacity of the Shire of Cuballing.</p> | 33.7kms | \$3,048,560 |
| 4 | <p>Green trail – Construct Pingelly-Brookton section. Why? Next logical section.</p> | 20kms | \$1,990,310 |
| 5 | <p>Green trail – Construct Brookton-Beverley section. Why? Most expensive section. Also placed at end of construction timetable in recognition of other work Shire of Beverley may do relating to The Commonage Trail.</p> <p>This stage could also include design and approvals for the Green Trail at the Beverley end (from Caudle Road to Kokeby East Road) as it is more complex than design work further south. However, this work could be brought forward if other trails to the north of Beverley are constructed in the preceding years.</p> | 31kms | \$3,223,005 |

An option that may be worth considering...

... given that the project partners want to appeal to local users and the cruiser market – is to proceed with the Orange route in the short term and develop short trail sections (up to 5kms) of the Green route on either or both sides of the 6 towns (including Popanyinning). This will significantly reduce the construction cost while offering a ride and walk opportunity for those identified groups. This work could take place progressively over time; some efficiencies in trail construction will however be lost (and this option is not reflected in the suggested schedule).

There has also been some discussion in the Project Working Group of building the trail slowly in terms of “trail finish” – the Green route could start out as a single track then be further developed as funding becomes available as a (recommended) 1,200mm – 1,500mm trail for shared use.

However, developing the trail as a single track may not meet funding criteria for Transport Trails (this is yet to be answered as there is no funding program specifically for Transport Trail projects). It may be possible to build the trail as wider sections for shared use some distance (say 5kms) north and south of each town then build it as single track in between in recognition of the ‘cruiser market’; this has some merit but may not be eligible for construction funds for Transport Trails and may not save significant funds.

Whilst much of the Munda Biddi Trail is built as a single track, the appeal of this trail needs to be different (given it does not travel through the same scenically attractive landscapes as the Munda Biddi Trail or the Bibbulmun Track) and a shared use facility offers that point of difference. In addition, it cannot be assumed that building a single track would halve the trail clearing and construction costs compared with a shared use trail.

TRAIL FEASIBILITY STATEMENT

The proposed Beverley Narrogin Transport Trail is technically feasible. There are a number of issues that can be overcome with good design.

In order to establish whether the proposed trail is a feasible proposition, this Feasibility Study sought to answer several questions:

Is there a viable trail route?

Yes. The Orange route will use a network of scenic country roads – a combination of gravel (mostly) and sealed roads. The roads currently exist and the only work required is the placement of directional signs at intersections. The Green trail as proposed will need to be constructed primarily on land that is currently road reserve under the control of Local Governments. In some (limited) sections, the existing railway maintenance track may be able to be used as it has been developed on road reserve – this will require discussions with Arc Infrastructure. Using land within the Great Southern Highway road reserve will also be required in some locations. Consequently, new trail will need to be constructed for over 81kms of the proposed Green trail's route.

Will the trail provide a quality user experience? (Terrain/landscape/history)

Yes - though the quality of landscapes on offer will differ. The Orange route offers varied vistas (in both the near and far visual field) offering trail users "up close and personal" interactions with rural activities – canola, sheep, wheat, olives – all the rural experiences the Wheatbelt has to offer. Long views to distant hills are attainable along sections of the roads, while also on offer is the opportunity to ride through Dryandra Woodland National Park on a constructed road. The Green route (running primarily along the Great Southern Highway and the railway) offers less attractive scenery although there are sections that will be quite attractive. The northern section (Beverley to Brookton) offers riverside walking and riding for much of its route and along scenic country roads into Brookton. Good trail design along other sections may leave a band of trees between the trail and the less aesthetically pleasing aspects of the trail route

Is there a market for the proposed trail?

Yes. The existing visitor market primarily consists of overnight trips. The survey indicated a level of demand for the trail from residents of the Wheatbelt (who would primarily use the Green route in sections or loops). Visitors from the Perth metropolitan area will either also use the trail in sections or as loops (it is expected that these users will be drawn primarily from the 'cruiser' market) or undertake the trail from end to end (and return in many case) using a combination of the Orange and Green routes.

Will the trail create any unmanageable or unmitigated impacts on adjoining landholders' farming practices and lifestyles?

No. The Orange route is on existing public roads. Despite claims made during the consultation process, the use of this route does not create new issues (it is acknowledged that it may increase some existing issues given the promotion and use of the route). The Orange route has been amended from that promoted

during consultation to take into account expressed concerns about heavy vehicle traffic on some sections – there is however no on-road alternative to Bremner Road south from Beverley (in time, the Green route from Beverley trailhead to Kokeby East Road may become the preferred route for all cyclists). On the Green route, the section between Beverley and Kokeby East Road is the only major section of the trail passing adjacent to farmland that is not adjacent to a public road. There are also relatively short sections of the trail (immediately north of Brookton and immediately north of Cuballing) where the trail is recommended to be built on road reserve which passes through private property. Landholders may raise issues (this route was not canvassed in the Open Houses or during the on-line survey period) but the issues and concerns likely to be raised by adjoining landholders have been satisfactorily addressed in the other trails around Australia. Evidence shows no long-term negative impacts on farming practices and lifestyles. In consultation, adjoining landholders raised some concerns. It is believed that these issues can be satisfactorily addressed, managed or mitigated if the trail proceeds. It is important to recognise landholder concerns and, if the trail proceeds, to work closely with them to address individual concerns and arrive at mutually agreed solutions. In some other sections, landholders have been cropping the road reserve. Trail development will necessitate the re-calibration of the existing road boundaries – these landholders may be required to forego using the road reserve.

Is the local government and key stakeholders supportive of the concept?

The five Local Governments contributed to the study (and the study process through the Project Working Group). Councillors who attended the Open Houses (held during August 2025) expressed support for the project – this is only informal support. The completion of the Feasibility Study will provide a milestone which will allow the Councils to more fully understand the project and formally support it if that is their position.

Are there supportive/strong advocates in the community?

No strong advocate or advocate groups came forward during the consultation. Cycling groups in Narrogin did express support in consultations.

Is there a supportive community?

Yes. The survey showed strong support for the project across the respondees. All those who attended the five Open Houses expressed support for the project. One formal submission opposing elements of the project was received during consultation (and there were some negative comments that returned with the survey).

Would the trail be value for money?

This cannot be answered definitively. Trails repeatedly demonstrate that there are numerous benefits to be gained through their construction: economic benefits to the towns where they start and finish – a boost to businesses associated with the trail; social and physical health benefits; and a range of environmental and cultural benefits. This proposed trail is a relatively high cost trail (primarily due to the distance and some of the difficult issues encountered). Use scenarios and possible numbers of users means that, for an investment of just over \$9 million, there will be an opportunity for users to traverse a trail offering two routes and loops around each of the main towns and villages of the region. In summary, it can be reliably anticipated that development of the proposed trail will result in increased annual visitor numbers of 5,000 who will inject \$1.779 million/year into the region's economy. Local use rates of 7,285 people/year will see the injection of \$19,450 into the region's economy. There will also be several non-quantifiable benefits also arising to members of the communities around the trail as well as further afield.

Is there a commitment to maintenance? (“friends of ...” group or support network)

This has not been explored. The experience of other trails indicates that individuals and community groups (such as Landcare groups, school groups, service clubs, etc.) will help to maintain sections of the trail, or areas through which the trail would pass.

Will the trail provide a unique experience?

Yes. There are limited long distance trails in the Wheatbelt and limited cycle touring routes. Some of the towns through which the trail passes offer (and propose) shorter walk and cycle trails. However, it should be borne in mind by the proponents that this trail is not a Bibbulmun Track or Munda Biddi Trail offering a long distance trail through areas of magnificent scenery. Building it as a “Transport Trail” allowing side by side riding (similar to a rail trail) will offer some differentiation to other trails. If – as the Chief Executive Officer of the Shire of Pingelly is advocating – the trail becomes part of a much longer trail connecting Perth to Bunbury, this section will be a small (but important) part of that long distance trail.

Is there a demonstrated benefit to trail users and, especially, the host communities?

Yes. This question has been answered partially in answers to other questions posed. The demonstrated benefits come in the form of economic and non-economic benefits that will accrue to both users and host communities (with the creation of a range of economic opportunities arising from the development of the trail).

REFERENCES

- Shire of Pingelly *Pingelly Mountain Bike and Cycling Strategy 2022-2026*
- TRC (2024) *Concentric Circles Guidance for Trails Tourism Close to Perth*
- WA Department of Transport (2023) *Avon Central Coast 2050 Cycling Strategy*
- WA Trails Reference Group *WA Strategic Trails Blueprint 2022-2027*
- West Cycle Incorporated *WA Mountain Bike Strategy: Mountain Biking and Off-road Cycling in WA 2022-2032*
- Wheatbelt Development Commission (2023) *Wheatbelt Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2033*

APPENDIX 1

Plans for the Proposed Beverley Narrogin Transport Trail

Proposed Beverley to York Transport Trail (ref. Avon Central Coast 2050 Cycling Strategy)

Proposed Beverley to Avondale Farm Transport Trail (ref. Avon Central Coast 2050 Cycling Strategy)

Beverley

Shire of Beverley

Trail should use the proposed Commonage Trail when developed (detailed route planning and detailed cost estimates by others)

Proposed river crossing on Commonage Trail

Connection along public road reserve to proposed Commonage Trail will create a loop trail

Beverley Westdale Rd

Green route uses Vacant Crown Land (and other categories of reserves) along Avon River between Caudle Rd and Kokeby East Rd

Proposed County Peak and Ski Lake Transport Trail (ref. Avon Central Coast 2050 Cycling Strategy)

See plan in report for details of proposed trail route through VCL and other reserves along Avon River south of Beverley

Road crossing of Kokeby East Rd

Proposed County Peak and Ski Lake Transport Trail (ref. Avon Central Coast 2050 Cycling Strategy)

Kokeby

Trail construction required along eastern verge of Great Southern Hwy (approx. 3,000m)

Dale Kokeby Rd

Road crossing of Yenyening Lakes Rd

Road crossing of Southern Branch Rd

Road crossing of Great Southern Hwy

Trail construction required along western verge of Great Southern Hwy (approx. 1,800m)

Trail construction required along road reserve (west side of railway - 4,300m)

Location of existing road crossing of railway on Youraling Rd

Trail construction required along western verge of Youraling Rd (where possible - approx 3,100m)

Dale Corberding Rd

Roses Rd

Road crossing of Youraling road, McGrath Rd and railway (on existing crossing)

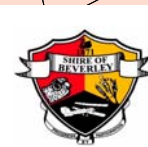
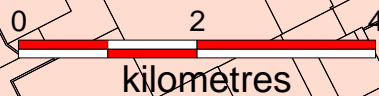
Trail construction required along road reserve (east side of railway - approx. 5,400m)

Some of road reserve being cropped

Shire of Brookton

Plan only shows locations of major works. See full report for details of these and all other recommended works.

Plan prepared in colour and at A3. Best viewed at A3 and printed at A3 and in colour.



Beverley to Narrogin Transport Trail

Plan 1 - Shire of Beverley



November 2025



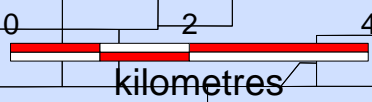


See plan in report for recommended route into and through Brookton.

Plan only shows locations of major works. See full report for details of these and all other recommended works.

Plan prepared in colour and at A3. Best viewed at A3 and printed at A3 and in colour.

Shire of Pingelly



Shire of Brookton
Growing the Future



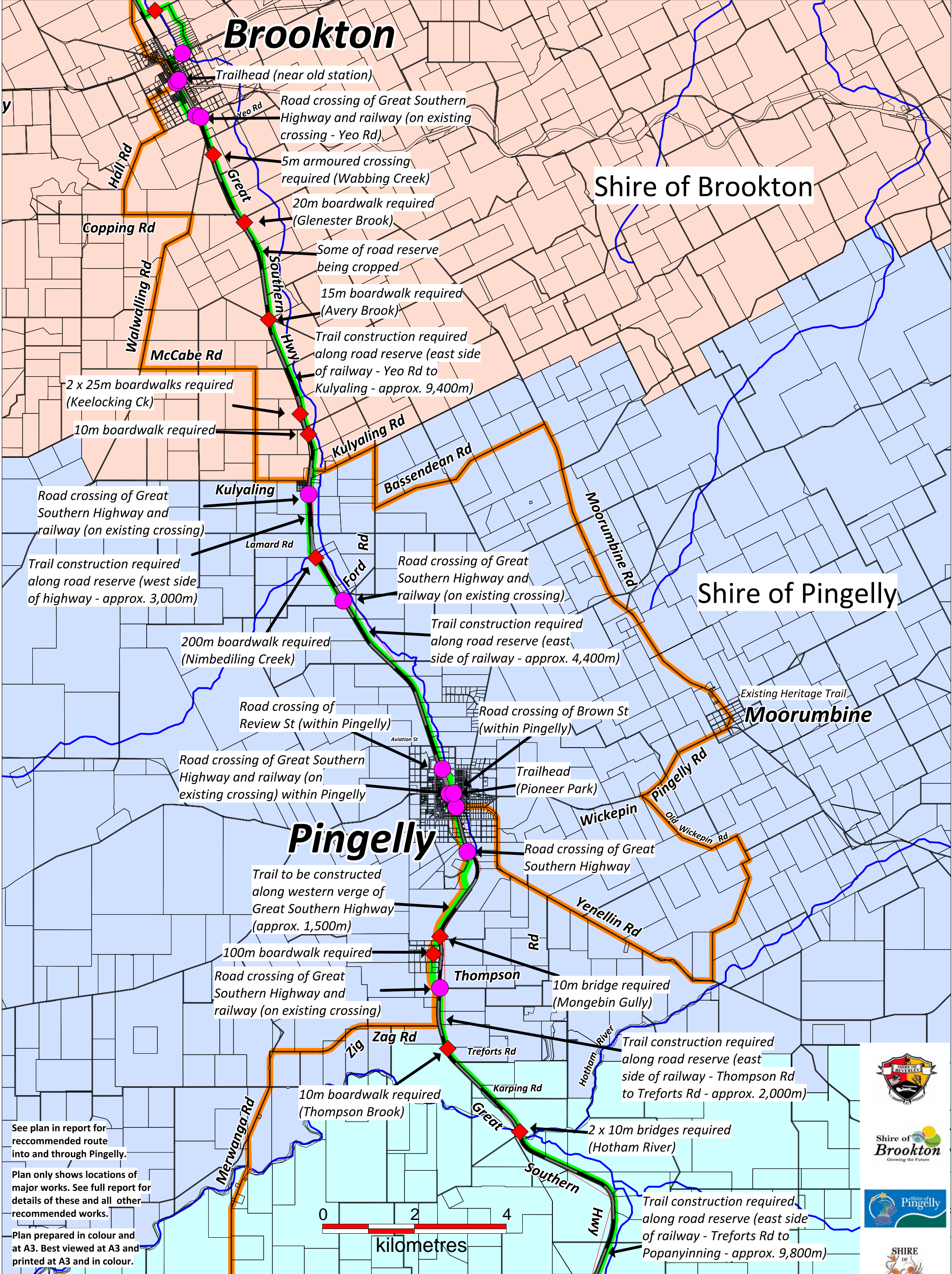
Beverley to Narrogin Transport Trail

Plan 2 - Shire of Brookton

November 2025



Brookton



Shire of Brookton

Shire of Pingelly

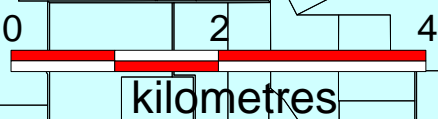
Moorumbine

Pingelly

See plan in report for recommended route into and through Pingelly.

Plan only shows locations of major works. See full report for details of these and all other recommended works.

Plan prepared in colour and at A3. Best viewed at A3 and printed at A3 and in colour.

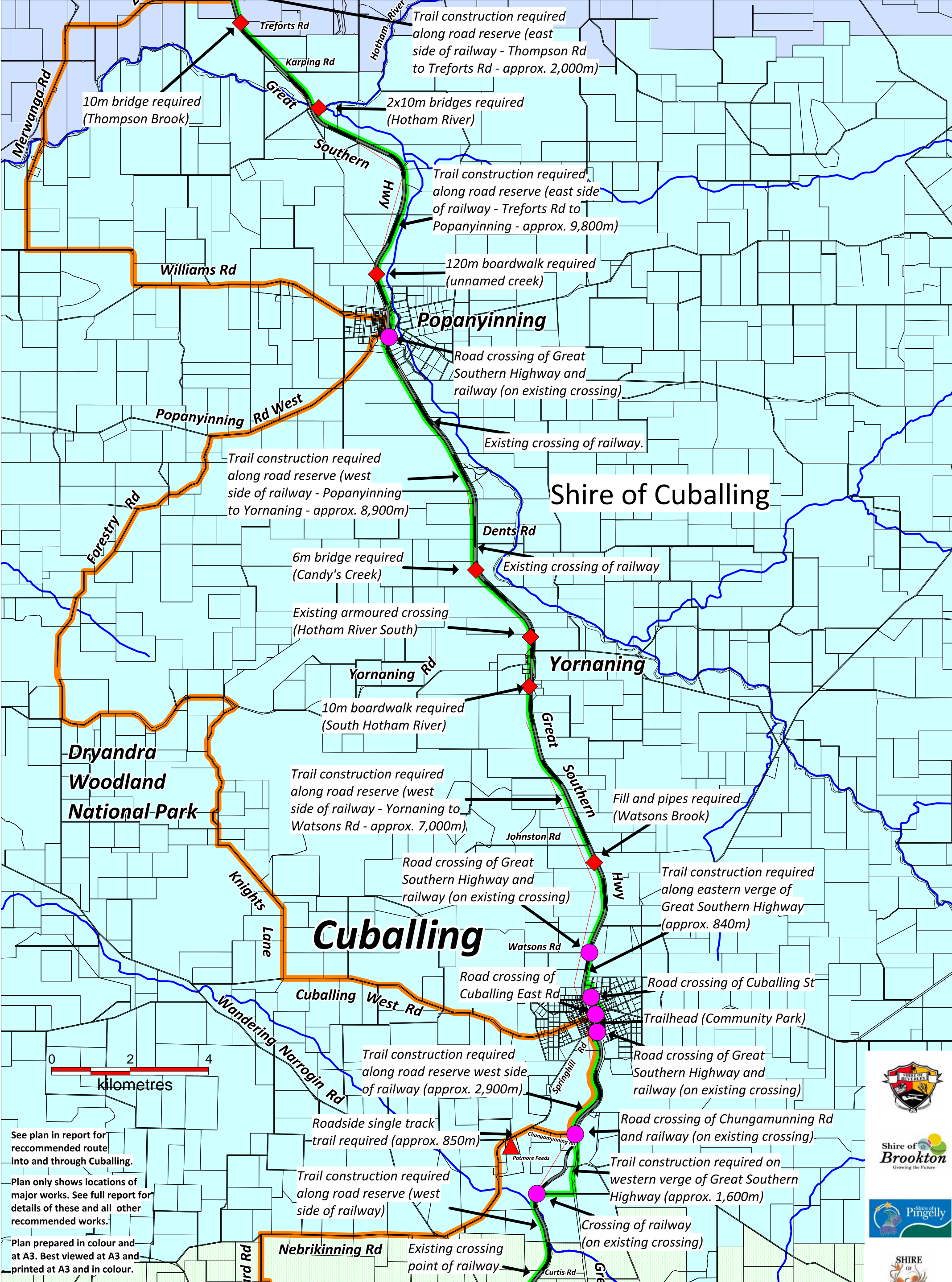


Beverley to Narrogin Transport Trail

Plan 3 - Shire of Pingelly

November 2025





See plan in report for recommended route into and through Cuballing.

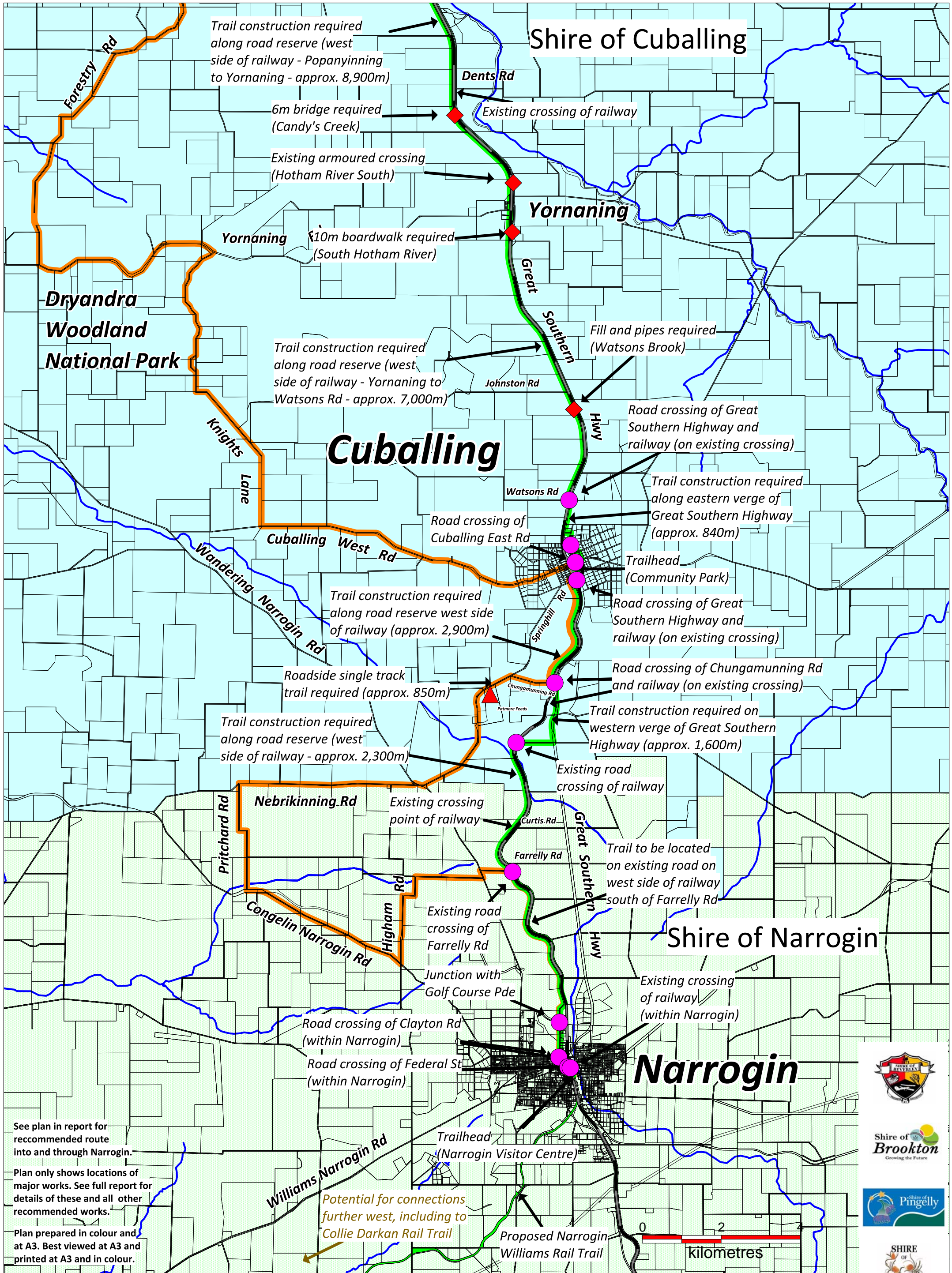
Plan only shows locations of major works. See full report for details of these and all other recommended works.

Plan prepared in colour and at A3. Best viewed at A3 and printed at A3 and in colour.

Beverley to Narrogin Transport Trail

Plan 4 - Shire of Cuballing





See plan in report for recommended route into and through Narrogin.
 Plan only shows locations of major works. See full report for details of these and all other recommended works.
 Plan prepared in colour and at A3. Best viewed at A3 and printed at A3 and in colour.



Brookton

Bridge required over Avon River

Road crossing (Great Southern Highway)

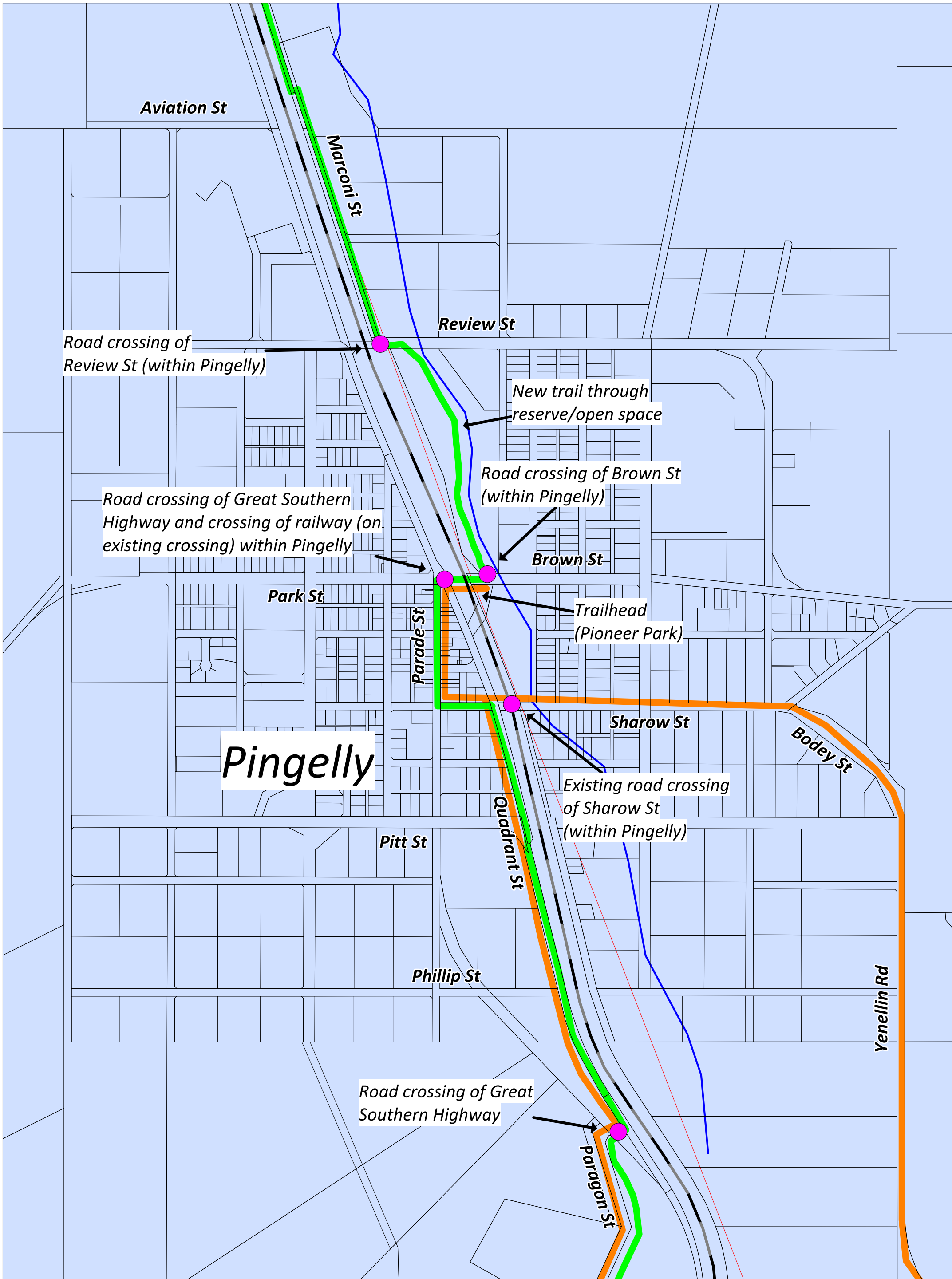
Proposed trailhead (near old station)

Crossing of railway (on existing crossing within Brookton - Robinson Rd)

Road crossing (Great Southern Highway)

Road crossing (Great Southern Highway)

Crossing of railway (on existing crossing within Brookton - Yeo Rd)



Pingelly

**Beverley to Narrogin Transport Trail
Plan 7 - Route through Pingelly**



November 2025

Watsons Rd

Road crossing of Great Southern Highway and crossing of railway (on existing crossing)

Trail construction required along eastern verge of Great Southern Highway (approx. 840m)

Unconstructed road reserve

Road crossing of Cuballing St

Road crossing of Cuballing East Rd

Trailhead (Community Park)

Trail follows existing paths along east side of Great Southern Highway

Road crossing of Great Southern Highway and crossing of railway (on existing crossing)

Campbell St

Darcy St

Alton St

Cuballing East St

Derby St

Cuballing St

Corrie St

Carton St

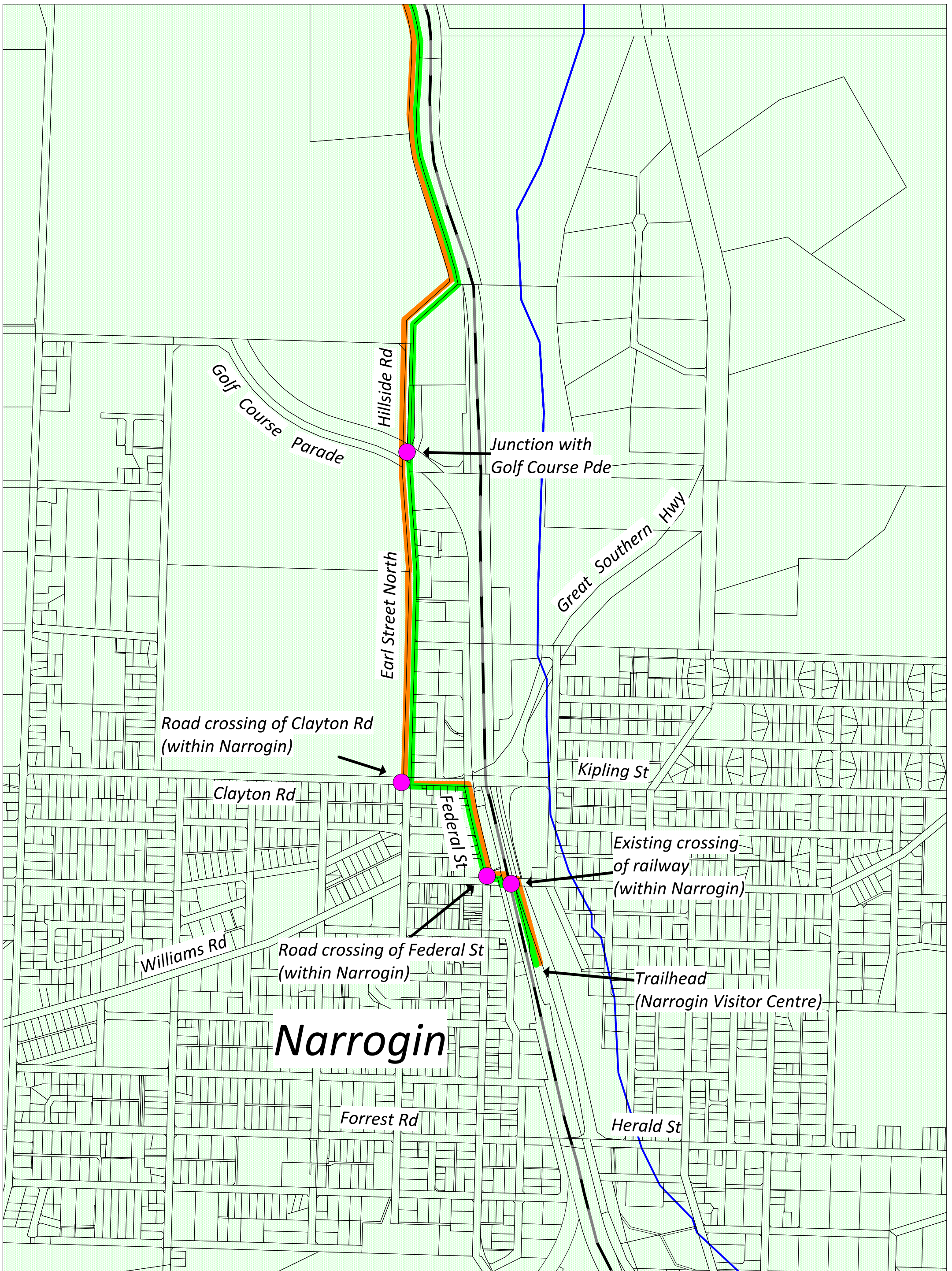
Springhill Rd

Beverley to Narrogin Transport Trail Plan 8 - Route through Cuballing



November 2025





Narrogin

Beverley to Narrogin Transport Trail Plan 9 - Route through Narrogin



November 2025