Shire of West Arthur

Local Bike Plan
2027 - 2037

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Forest to Wheatbelt

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Acknowledgement of Country

The Shire of West Arthur respectfully acknowledges that the land on which we work and live is the traditional land of the Wilman Noongar peoples. We recognise their cultural heritage, beliefs, and continuing relationship with the land. We honour Elders past and present, and we support the principles of a reconciled Australia for all its people.

About the Document

This document was prepared by the Shire of West Arthur.

Disclaimer
All information and content in this material is provided in good faith and is based on sources believed to be reliable and accurate at the time of development. The Shire of West Arthur and its respective officers, employees and consulting agents do not accept legal liability or responsibility for the material or any consequences arising from its use.

Feeback
Any feedback related to this document should be emailed to: shire@westarthur.wa.gov.au

Acknowledgements
The Shire of West Arthur would like to thank the people and organisations who contributed time and expertise to the development of the Shire of West Arthur Local Bike Plan. The Shire of West Arthur acknowledges the Department of Transport as funding provider in supporting the development of this Plan.

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Executive Summary

The Shire of West Arthur is seeking to increase community participation in active transport throughout the Darkan townsite through the development of a Local Bike Plan. This 10-year Plan will guide the direction of upgrades to the existing pathway network, as well as providing priority areas for future development.

While this Plan is a Local Bike Plan, it also includes walking and other forms of micromobility, including mobility assistance devices such as gophers and walkers. By incorporating these into this Plan, the Shire is ensuring that all community members and their mobility issues are taken into consideration. This links the Plan with other strategic documents, including the Strategic Community Plan, the Aged-Friendly Plan, and the Local Health Plan.

The Collie-Darkan Rail Trail, the second-longest rail trail in the state, cuts through the width of the Shire from west to east. This is a major asset to the community, not just for local use, but also for tourism.

Introduction

Vision

To be a safe, friendly, welcoming community with a dynamic and expanding local economy (Shire of West Arthur Strategic Community Plan – Towards 2031).

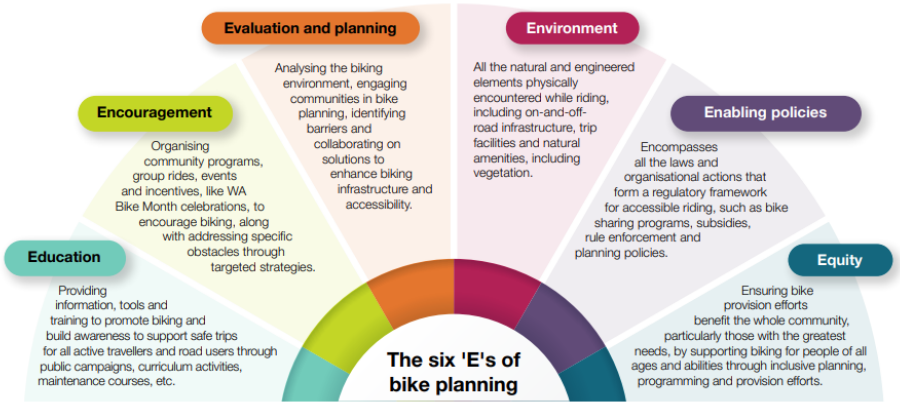
Objectives of the Plan

The Local Bike Plan will:

- Identify and review the existing pathway network within the town's boundaries
- Work with the community to identify key locations, facilities and other areas within the town that need to be connected to the network
- Identify gaps in the existing network
- Provide a network map outlining key pathways and proposed priority areas
- Provide an action plan on a possible implementation strategy for upgrades
- Promote the benefits of active transportation

The socio-ecological model of the six 'E's of bike planning was used, as it aligns with industry best practice for a positive and comprehensive policy approach. It considers both natural and built factors that affect the active transport experience.

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Guiding Principles

The riding and walking network proposed in the Plan has been developed based on the following principles from the Department of Transports' *Planning and Designing for Active Transport in Western Australia – Local Bike Planning Guidance.*

Safe

Everyone should be able to ride safely and confidently to the places they want to go with the appropriate level of protection from traffic provided.

Connected

Like a road network, all bike riding routes should connect to something along the way and at each end (whether that is a destination or another bike riding route).

Widespread

The network should be extensive enough for people to safely assume they can get to their destination without encountering hostile traffic or terrain conditions.

Legible

The network needs to be both intuitive and direct with coherent wayfinding and alignment of major routes parallel to natural land forms, such as rivers and coastlines, or within existing road and rail corridors.

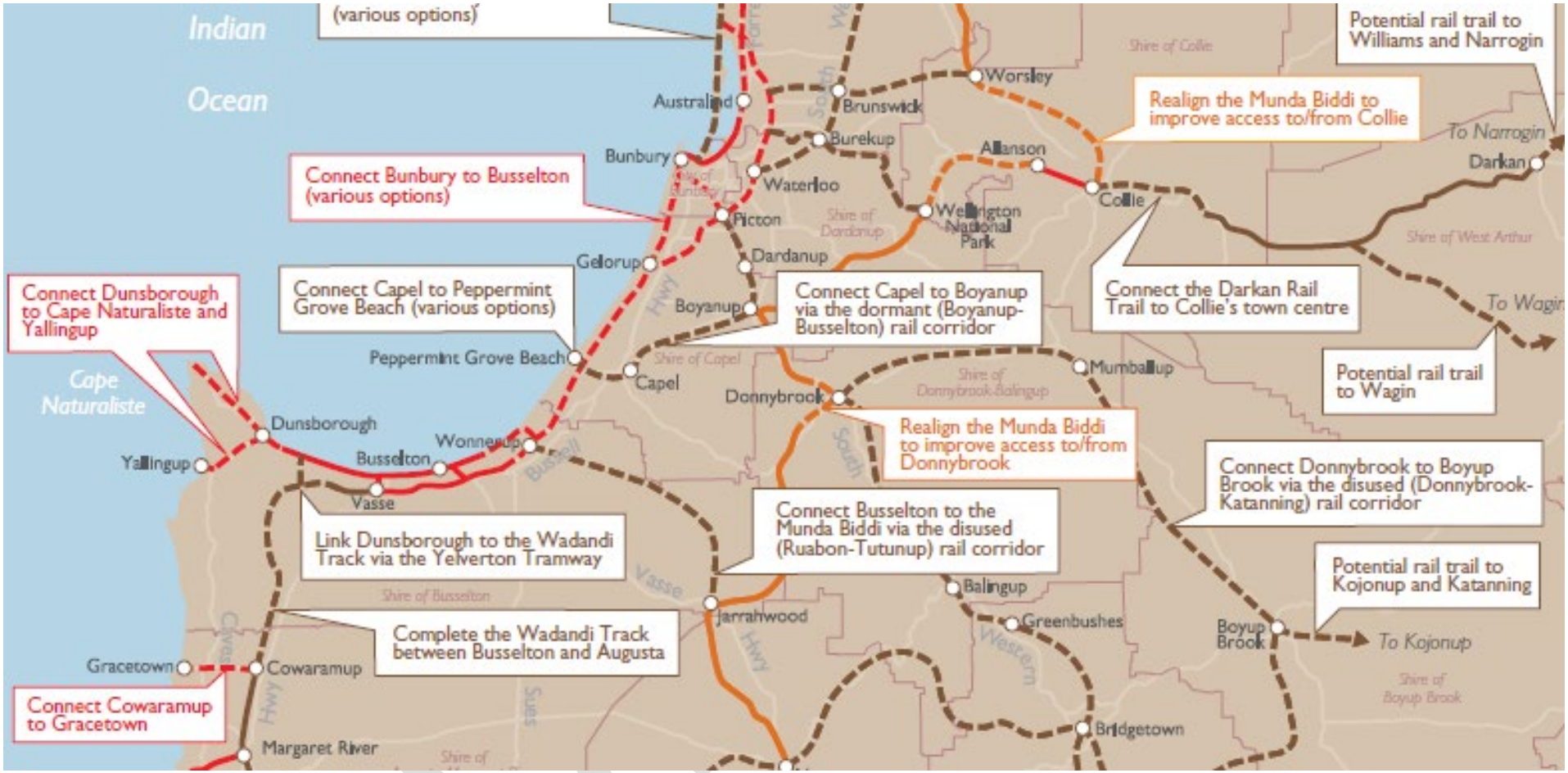
Achievable

Network planning will consider tried-and-tested approaches while also embracing innovation and looking beyond existing levels of service and use towards a future where bike riding is a mainstream transport option.

Aspirational

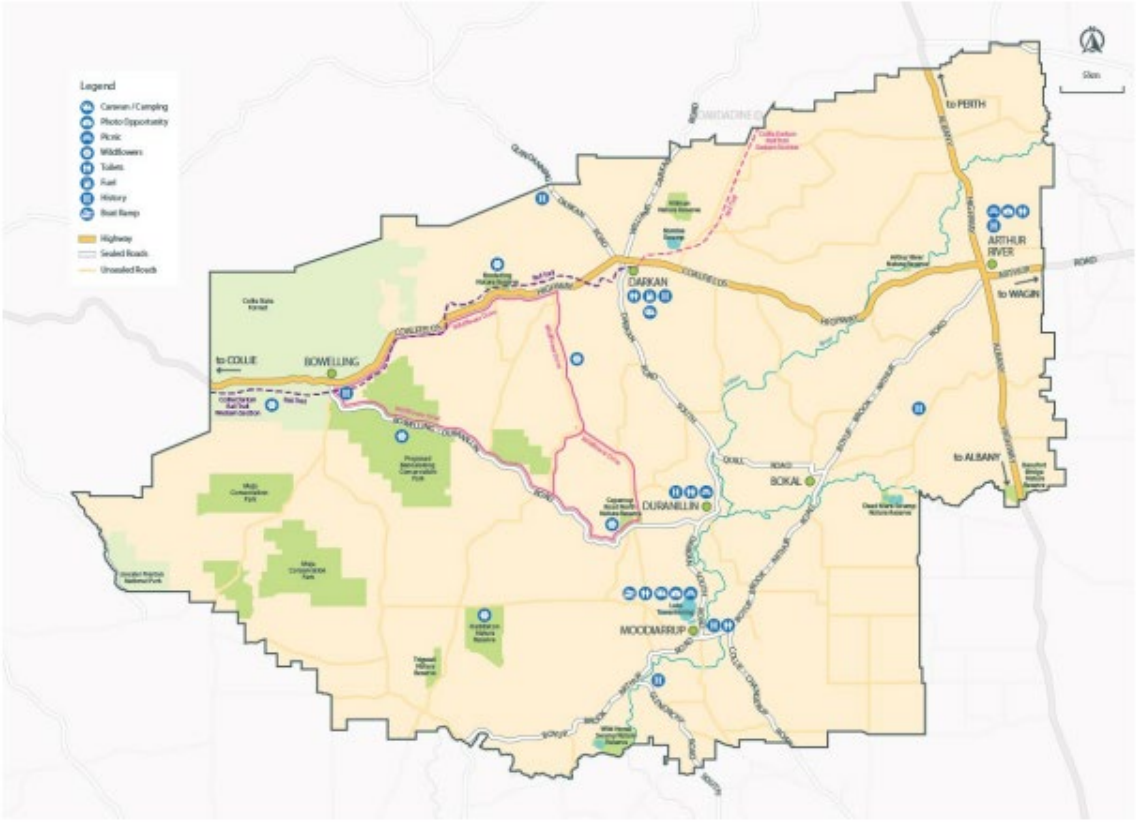
The network proposed will demonstrate a long-term commitment to delivering a WA-wide network that supports bike riding as a viable form of mass transport for people of all ages and abilities.

The Local Bike Plan utilises the WA Cycling Hierarchy to categorise the local routes with a density of 1.5 km x 1.5 km, while also recognising that the Shire contains a major existing tourist trail, along with further tourist trail opportunities as per the *Bunbury-Wellington 2025 Cycling Strategy*.


Indian
Ocean
(various options)
Connect Bunbury to Busselton (various options)
Connect Dunsborough to Cape Naturaliste and Yallingup
Connect Capel to Peppermint Grove Beach (various options)
Cape Naturaliste
Australind
Bunbury
Brunswick
Burekup
Waterloo
Picton
Gelorup
Dardanup
Boyanup
Peppermint Grove Beach
Capel
Dunsborough
Yallingup
Busselton
Wonnerup
Vasse
Worsley
Allanson
Collie
Wellington National Park
Darkan
Potential rail trail to Williams and Narrogin
To Narrogin
Realign the Munda Biddi to improve access to/from Collie
Connect Capel to Boyanup via the dormant (Boyanup-Busselton) rail corridor
Connect the Darkan Rail Trail to Collie's town centre
Shire of West Arthur
To Wagin
Potential rail trail to Wagin
Mumballup
Donnybrook
Realign the Munda Biddi to improve access to/from Donnybrook
Connect Donnybrook to Boyup Brook via the disused (Donnybrook-Katanning) rail corridor
Link Dunsborough to the Wadandi Track via the Yelverton Tramway
Connect Busselton to the Munda Biddi via the disused (Ruabon-Tutunup) rail corridor
Balingup
Jarrahwood
Greenbushes
Boyup Brook
Potential rail trail to Kojonup and Katanning
To Kojonup
Complete the Wadandi Track between Busselton and Augusta
Gracetown
Cowaramup
Connect Cowaramup to Gracetown
Margaret River
Bridgetown

Policy Context

Local Context



Location and History

The Shire of West Arthur is located in the southern wheatbelt region of Western Australia and is nestled between the forests of the southwest and the wheatbelt. It is also part of the broader Gnaala Karla Booja region, including both Wilman and Kaneang peoples. The Shire is situated 204km south of Perth and 115km east of Bunbury. Darkan is the main town and administrative centre with several smaller localities scattered throughout the Shire.

Demographics

Peaking in 1966 at 1427, the population of the Shire of West Arthur has steadily decreased and is currently 773 (2021 Census). The community aim is to maintain the current population level, which requires significant investment in active growth strategies by the community, Shire and stakeholders. The median age of the Darkan population is increasing, with strong growth in the over 55-year-old group, as more people from the rural areas of the Shire retire into the townsite. This requires the Plan to be designed to include access for all ages.

Economy

The Shire of West Arthur is primarily agricultural, mainly grain and sheep; however, there is an increase in timber plantations. Renewable energy is also making a significant investment in Shire, with wind farms and solar farms in development. Tourism is a growing part of the economy, due to

Astrotourism, Lake Towerrinning and the proximity to Collie, a major trails town. The Collie-Darkan Rail Trail is used by bike riders, mainly bike packers, horse riders and hikers during April-September.

Pathway Network

There is a relatively large existing network of paths within Darkan, with a combination of concrete, concrete slabs, brick paving, asphalt and gravel. Most of the network is centered around Burrowes St, Coalfields Rd and the residential areas of town and focuses on moving people from their homes to the commercial area of town, including shops, the primary school and some recreational facilities.

Most of the existing paths are in good condition, with the dual use paths in Railway Reserve replaced in 2025. A short section of pathway along Burrowes St west towards the pool and primary school is nearing the end of its useful life.

The pathways around town are focused on one side of the road, which has reduced duplication. There are two new sub-developments, which will require new pathway infrastructure.

Strategic Alignment

Local Government

Local governments in Western Australia are required to comply with the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework, which includes development of a Strategic Community Plan and Corporate Business Plan as well as other Informing Strategies and Plans, such as the Age-Friendly Community Plan and Local Health Plan

In the process of developing this Local Bike Plan, the Shire's Strategic Community Plan, Age-Friendly Plan and Local Health Plan were considered to ensure alignment with the community's priorities. The following strategies were identified:

- Actively support and promote a range of activities for a range of ages and abilities
- Provide services and infrastructure to meet the needs of the community
- Investigate tourism opportunities and support this growing sector
- Maintain and enhance our existing assets to encourage visitation
- Promote the Shire to people outside the area as a fantastic place to live, work, and visit
- Maintain and develop our trails for use by locals and visitors (Collie to Darkan Rail Trail)
- Support community recreation activities and provision of age-appropriate exercise equipment
- Provide safe and accessible public open spaces and walking trails
- Create accessible spaces and encourage disabled participation

The Shire of West Arthur also has an Active West Arthur Policy that outlines how the Shire will encourage and promote physical activity. The scope of the policy is to guide Shire's provisions for the community to be active, improve and maintain their health and participate in structured and unstructured recreation and community sports activities.

State Government

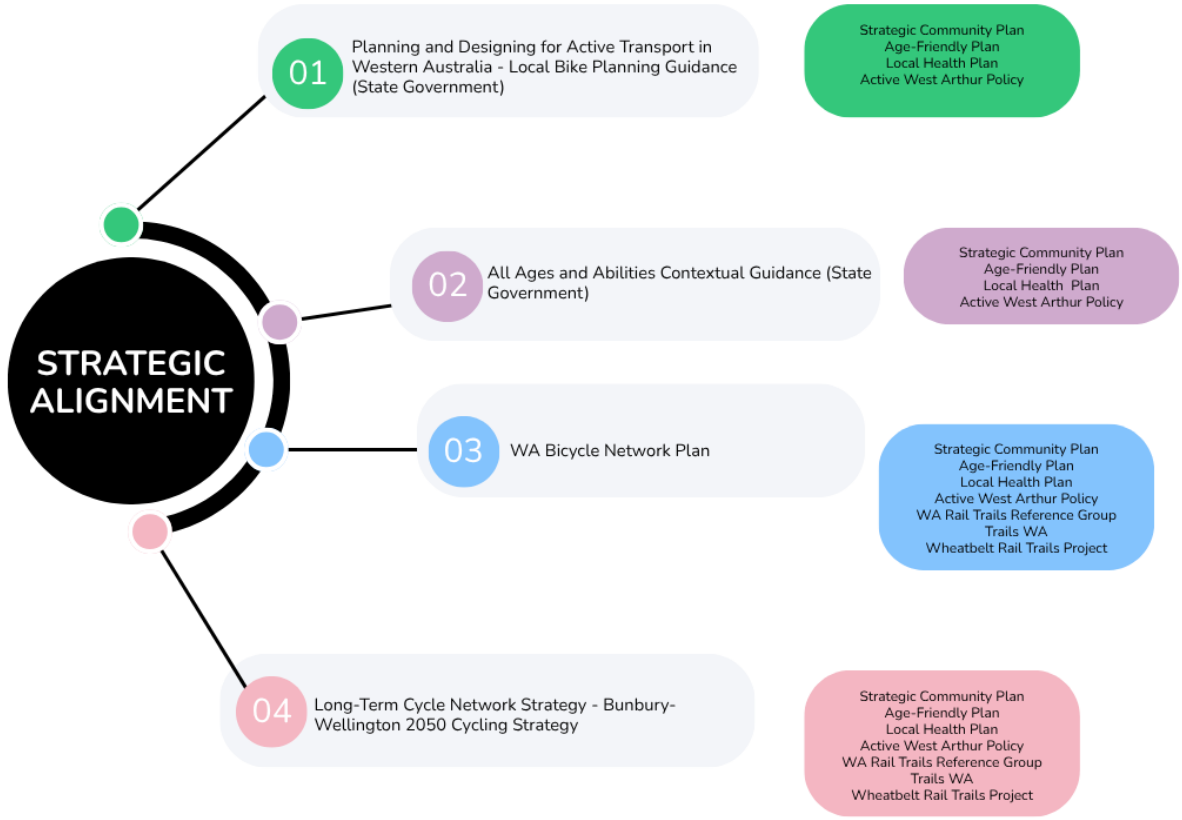
The State Government has the following guidance documents in place:

- All Ages and Abilities Contextual Guidance
- Long-Term Cycle Network Strategy – Bunbury-Wellington 2050 Cycling Strategy

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- Planning and Designing for Active Transport in Western Australia- Local Bike Planning Guidance
- WA Bicycle Network Plan

The Shire of West Arthur's Local Bike Plan will align with these strategic documents where possible.



Community Engagement

Consultation has occurred throughout the development of the Plan, to ensure that there is a sense of ownership by the community, which will lead to long-term success. It is recognised by the Shire that not all bike riders are created equally. Community characteristics and preferences have been factored into the Plan. Details of this engagement are provided in Appendix A. A summary of themes emerged:

- A need for improved infrastructure
- Collie- Darkan Rail Trail a priority
- Access to the sporting complex
- Installation of supporting infrastructure, including bollards, lighting and signage

People identified their preferred type of cycling, with transportation to work and school being rated the highest, closely followed by off-road cycling. This has allowed Shire to identify priority areas of pathway within Darkan, with the aim that these paths are installed or upgraded as soon as possible.

Figure 8: Bike rider types based on level of confidence

Interested but concerned

38% of the WA population

Will include novice bike riders, some accompanied riders and some bike riders with disability, and less confident bike riders who will only feel comfortable riding if high quality facilities are in place. Their common trip types will include learning to ride, riding to work or school on low stress routes, local trips for recreation or to visit family and friends, or riding on holiday in traffic spaces.

Safety and comfort are their primary requirements. These bike riders may trade-off speed for safety and amenity or may not ride at all if conditions are unsafe – or perceived to be unsafe – for bike riders.

Quiet, low speed streets and high quality facilities protected from higher speed bike riders or traffic are essential.

Somewhat confident

29% of the WA population

Will include intermediate and more regular bike riders, accompanied riders, or those returning to riding. They may be riding for recreation or to complete everyday trips, such as shopping, errands, caring and commuting.

While these bike riders generally prefer more separated facilities or quiet streets, they can be willing to ride in higher stress environments for short distances to complete trips or avoid lengthy detours.

Direct, legible routes with protection from traffic are likely to be most effective.

Highly confident

4% of the WA population

Includes those who ride frequently and have a high level of confidence mixing with motor traffic. Common trip purposes will be regular commuting or longer distance training, leisure and cycle tourism trips.

These bike riders typically choose the most direct route despite conditions.

Direct routes designed to be shared with other users, either on or off road, are preferred.



Low stress tolerance **High stress tolerance**

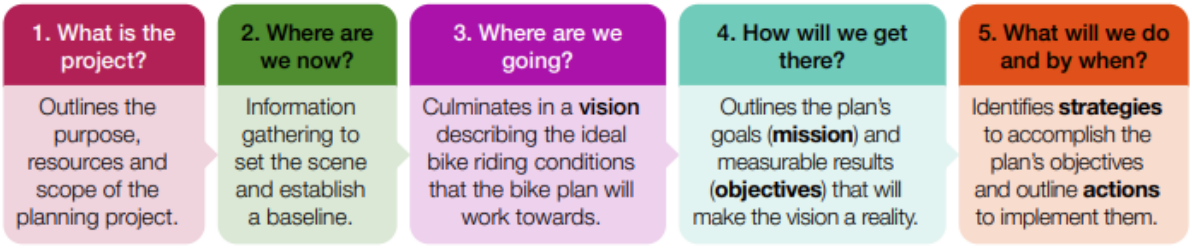
Notes:

- The percentages in Figure 8 reflect only adults who have stated an interest in bike riding and are sourced from the DoT People's Voice Survey May 2023[17].
- 29 per cent of people responded they were unable or unwilling to ride. It is important to note these people may be using the bicycle network for trips by foot, car or wheeled device, and that as the low stress network becomes denser and awareness of it grows, willingness to ride increases as more people begin to see riding as a viable, achievable transport mode rather than an activity done for sport or by people they perceive as highly confident bike riders.

Network Planning

Framework

This Plan follows the five-stage framework as described by the Department of Transport in their Planning and Designing for Active Transport in Western Australia. This includes the VMOSA model of vision, mission, objectives, strategies, and actions.



What is the project?

To develop a plan that will guide the Shire of West Arthur for the next 10 years. This will involve the use of a contractor to survey the existing pathways, and to develop a map of townsite. The Community Development Officer will consult with the community to determine what the plan's objectives are and write the plan.

The scope of the project is to:

- Encourage a healthy and active community by providing a suitable path network around the Darkan townsite and identifying any existing gaps and potential areas of expansion.

The project requires the Shire of West Arthur to work closely with the community, ensuring that community needs are met. Stakeholders include:

- Seniors' groups
- Darkan Primary School
- Darkan P & C
- Friends of the Collie-Darkan Rail Trail
- Tourists
- Local businesses
- Community members

Shire of West Arthur staff will hold the following roles:

- Manager of Works and Services
    - Project Manager
    - Design
- Community Development Officer
    - Community and stakeholder engagement
    - Funding coordinator
- Outside crew
    - Construction
- Contractors
    - Design

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Council will need to allocate funds in the annual budget for the project. Extra funding for the project will be sourced from grant funding.

Where are we now?

While there are good pathway networks within Darkan, especially from southern residential areas to the main business centre of town, there is room for improvement. Most streets have a concrete path on one side, with gravel verges on the other. However, some streets do not have designated paths, with some people being forced to walk on roads. Some paths in residential areas are not wide enough to be classified as dual-use, requiring children to ride their bikes on the road until they reach an area of

The park located in Railway Reserve benefited in 2025 with existing pathways being removed, some realigned, and new red asphalt dual-use pathways installed. These paths are used daily by children, parents, seniors and tourists, and link Burrowes St, the main business centre of town, with Coalfields Rd. However, there is no designated pedestrian crossing on Coalfields Rd, where the fuel station, hotel, Op Shop and some residences are located on the north side of the road. This can be dangerous, as Coalfields Rd is a major transport route, connecting Forrest Hwy and Southwest Hwy with Albany Hwy. It is used by trucks to transport freight, grain, and fertilizer. It is also used by tourists towing caravans. However, as the road is managed and maintained by Main Roads WA, there is little that the Shire can do, except to advocate for a dedicated crossing.

The subdivision in King St has no pathways, nor does the south part of Fisher St. Nangip and Gibbs Streets also do not have paths, and there is no continuation of the path from Hull St eastwards on Arthur St. Horwood St has no pathway.

One new subdivision is currently being developed, with 22 lots. The subdivision is located on the south side of Burrowes St, opposite the Darkan Swimming Pool. Another subdivision, dedicated for senior's housing, will be developed in the next 12 months, with 5 lots. This subdivision is located on the north side of Burrowes St and the corner of Fisher St, on the site of the old Bowling Green.

The Collie-Darkan Rail Trail is a significant benefit to the community, being used by locals and tourists alike. The trail is designated for multi-use, including cycling, walking and horse-riding. However, infrastructure along the trail, including bridges, do need maintenance. Sourcing funding to maintain the trail is proving to be difficult, as the trail is on Public Transport Authority land, and is only leased by the Shire.

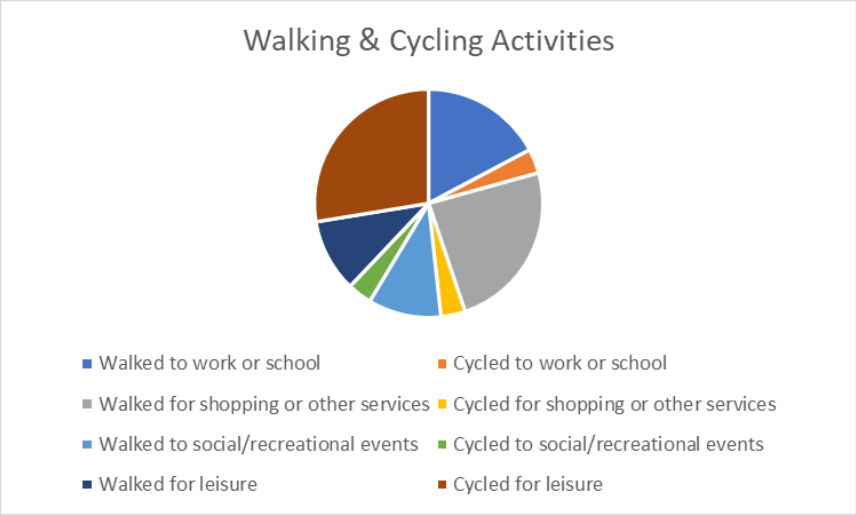
One of the major areas of concern is the pathway on the north side of Burrowes St west, which is used to connect the pool and primary school with the major residential areas of town. This path has been identified as being a priority within the plan, as children currently either ride on the road, or walk to school. It was suggested that with the Collie-Darkan Rail Trail running behind the pool and school, the trail should be utilised as the major cycling route.

Overall, there was identified that while some very good infrastructure was in place, there is limited connectivity across the network, especially for the most vulnerable in the community.

The biggest barriers for the community to using active transport is:

- The lack of suitable footpaths;
- The lack of signage; and
- Missing sections of path network

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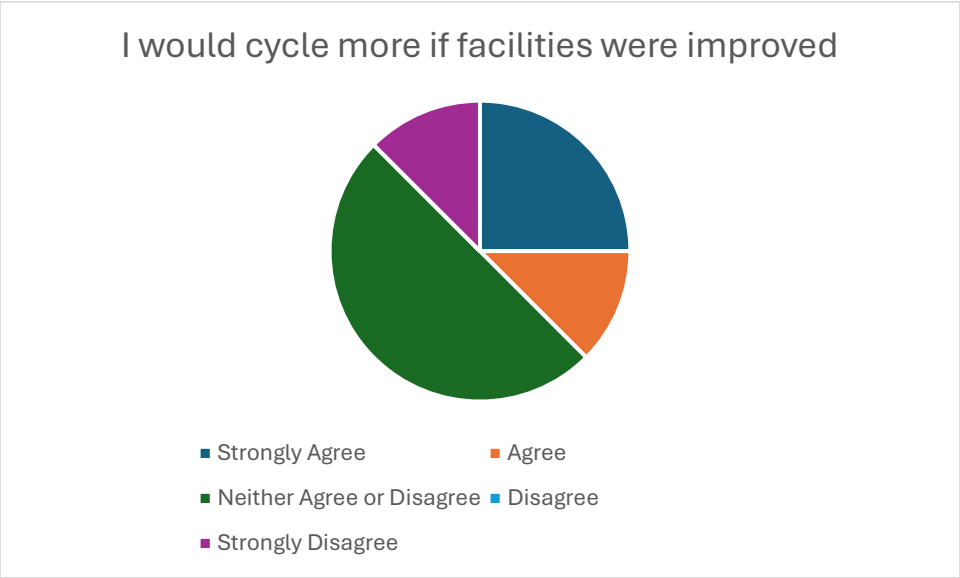
Where are we going?



The community has shown that there is a need to connect existing pathways, while upgrading some of the older pathways. Clear gaps within the network need to be closed, hazards reduced, and the network expanded.

Helping the local school students, along with the elderly, to better access community, education, and sporting facilities is a priority. Tourists will also benefit from improved pathways, enabling them to explore all that the town has to offer.

The local footpaths are a mishmash of different surfaces and widths, with no defined replacement plan



Initially it was looked at expanding dual-use paths along Burrowes Street to Darkan Primary School; however, it has been decided that utilising the Collie-Darkan Rail Trail, which is wider, straighter, and away from vehicular traffic, as a better alternative. The trail runs along the north side of the school and keeps children safe from cars and buses. There is the potential for the installation of bike infrastructure, including racks, in the future.

Utilising the Rail Trail to access major educational, recreational and tourist infrastructure on the west side of Darkan would be beneficial, given that the trail runs parallel to the Darkan Swimming Pool, Darkan Caravan Park and the Darkan and District Recreation Centre.

The Recreation Centre is home to the football oval, basketball courts, bowling greens and tennis courts, as well as the local Childcare Care and Playgroup, with the Caravan Park located just to the north of the centre.



Improved infrastructure to the commercial centre of Darkan, along with improved crossings, is vital, as most of the local seniors live relatively close to the centre, and prefer to walk to collect mail, get groceries, and even meet up with friends for a coffee and chat.

From the local Cottage Homes, it is two blocks, with a mishmash of path surfaces and widths, which is causing concern. Poor surfaces can potentially be trip hazards, and narrow paths can force seniors off of paths and onto gravel.

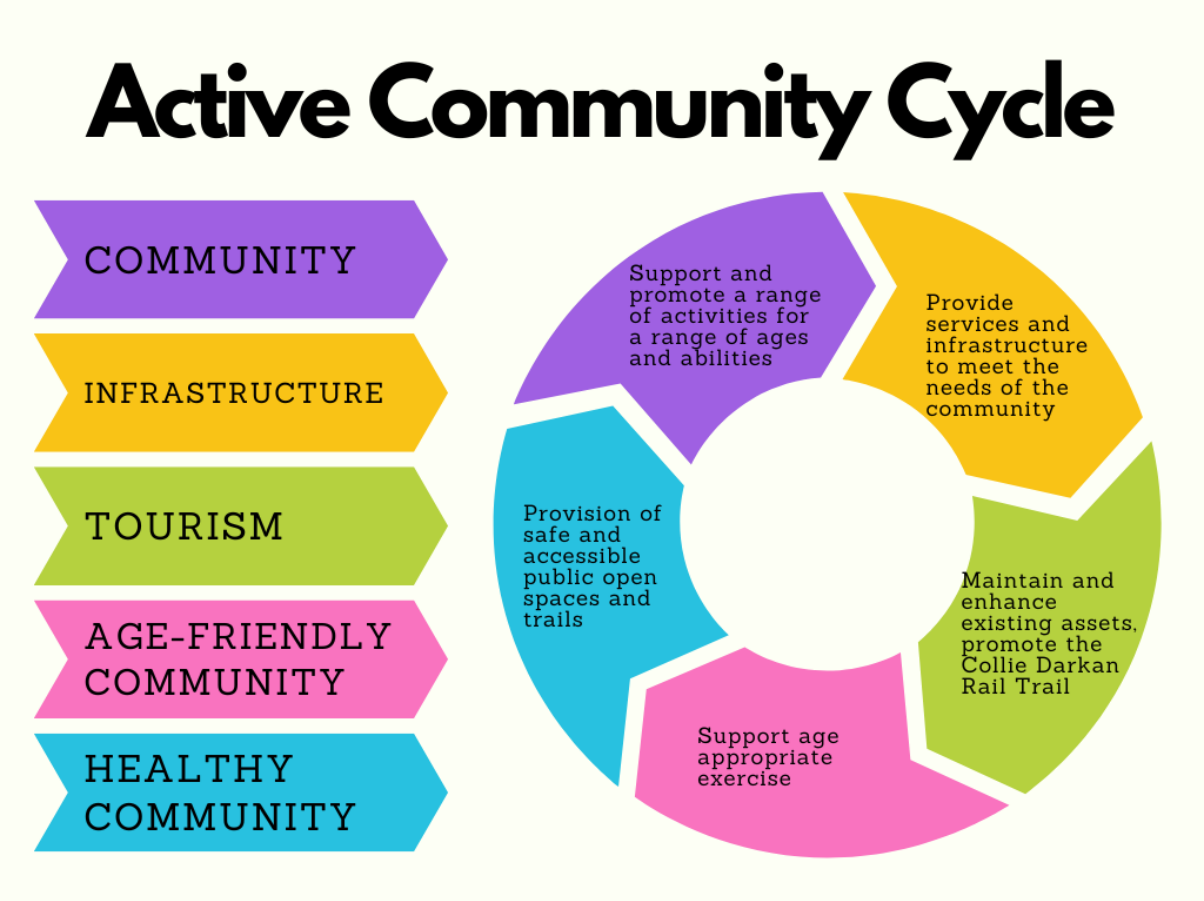
The Bunbury-Wellington 2050 Cycling Strategy shows the potential to expand the existing tourist Collie-Darkan Rail Trail by:

- Connecting the Darkan Rail Trail to Collie's town centre
- Creating a rail trail from Bowelling to Wagin
- Creating the rail trail from Dardadine to Williams and Narrogin.

Part of the old rail line from Bowelling towards Wagin in located in the Shire of West Arthur. While there is the potential to get funding towards a feasibility study, this project, of course, would require significant investment, which is currently beyond the reach of the Shire.

Appendix B shows the existing pathways in Darkan, along with the Collie Darkan Rail Trail maps.

How will we get there?



While Darkan does not face the major barriers by larger communities, such as traffic congestion and no clear connection to public transport, barriers have been identified by the community. These, along with enablers and strategies are listed in the following table.

Theme/Priority	Barriers	Enablers	Strategies
Safer streets	• Lack of safe crossings • Uneven surfaces • Gaps in network	• Minimal traffic	• Improved intersections • Installation of bollards • Annual footpath expansion program
Active use of rail trail to access facilities	• Lack of bike racks at facilities • Lack of signage • Lack of lighting	• Smooth, well-maintained trail	• Community education • Installation of bike racks at facilities • Installation of low-level lighting along trail from Caravan Park to town centre • Regular maintenance of trail
Active travel to school	• Lack of safe road crossings to get to rail trail • Lack of bike racks at school	• Parent and community support	• Bike education • Your Move School program • Upgrade of road crossing • Installation of Children Crossing signage
Expansion of residential pathways	• Lack of funding	• Community support	• Identification of gaps • Improved intersections
Improved access to commercial area of town	• Uneven surfaces • Lack of safe crossings	• Community support	• Improve intersections • Installation of bollards • Regular footpath maintenance
Advocating for maintaining the Collie Darkan Rail Trail	• Lack of funding sources • Changing government policies	• Community support • Membership with the WA Rail Trails Reference Group • Membership with Trails WA	• Signed lease with PTA • Regular trail maintenance • Improvements to trail infrastructure • Promotion of trail

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		• Participation in the proposed Wheatbelt Rail Trails project	• Potential development of annual gravel grinding event
Advocating for pedestrian crossing on Coalfields Road near roadhouse and hotel	• Coalfields Rd is controlled by Main Roads WA	• Community support	• Continue to advocate to Main Roads WA for a dedicated pedestrian crossing



Part of the Darkan Heritage Trail – the walk along Nangip Creek

What will we do and by when?

While the Shire has worked with the community and stakeholders to identify priority areas, other specific factors have also been identified:

- **Safety:** ensuring the safety of pathway users, including the reduction of interaction between cyclists and walkers, with vehicles.
- **Comfort:** ensure that pathways are well-maintained and well-lit.
- **Connectivity:** ensuring that priority is given to linking existing infrastructure.
- **Demand and usage:** target areas with high bike and foot traffic.
- **Public input:** engagement with community members

- **Integration:** improvements that align with other modes of transport and subdivisions (existing and planned).
- **Cost-effectiveness:** budget considerations, integration with other road programs, and ability to source additional funding.

The Shire has a significant budget for road maintenance; however, most of this is spent in maintaining the existing road network of 208km of sealed roads, and 652km of unsealed roads. Increased costs mean that it is difficult to find additional funding within the budget to implement the proposed pathway network, putting a reliance upon sourcing funding through other stakeholders, including state and federal grant programs.

If we are serious about ensuring safe, connected cycle ways, they must be supported by facilities, community engagement and local businesses and stakeholders. This will ensure that people of all ages and abilities can travel by cycle, both by short trips around town, and longer trips along the Collie-Darkan Rail Trail.

Year	Action	Project Type	Objective	Estimated Cost
Ongoing	Routine pathway maintenance, including pruning and ad-hoc repairs	Asset Maintenance	Management and maintenance of public assets	$7,000 pa
Ongoing	Work with Darkan PS to develop initiatives to encourage more children to cycle. These may include lessons at school, as well as formal cycling events such as WA Bike Month, Cycle to School Day	Education and Community Development	Engagement with local children to encourage greater participation in cycling	-
26/27	Refurbishment and relocation of bench seat/s along Burrowes St	Seating/ benches	Provide suitable facilities for pathway users	$1,000
26/27	Construct bike racks at Town Hall high school bus stop	Bike Parking	Provide suitable facilities for pathway users	$1,000
26/27	Installation of low-level solar lighting along Collie-Darkan Rail Trail from Railway Reserve to Caravan Park	Lighting	Provide lighting for people utilising the trail during evening	$70,000
27/28	Construct 115m of 2.5m wide dual use footpath, including pram crossings (Hull St)	Pathway construction	Construction of pathway for connectivity	$81,000
27/28	Construct bike racks at Darkan Swimming Pool and Recreation Centre	Bike Parking	Provide suitable facilities for pathway users	$2,000
28/29	Construct 115m of 2.5m wide dual use footpath, including pram crossings (Fisher St)	Pathway construction	Construction of pathway for connectivity	$81,000
29/30	Construct 164m of 2.5m wide dual use footpath, including pram crossing (Kulbardi Estate)	Pathway construction	Construction of pathway for connectivity	$123,000

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30/31	Construct 220m of 2.5m wide dual use footpath, including pram crossings (Kulbardi Estate)	Pathway construction	Construction of pathway for connectivity	$171,000
31/32	Construct 175m of 2.5m wide dual use footpath, including pram crossings (Kulbardi Estate)	Pathway construction	Construction of pathway for connectivity	$138,000
32/33	Construct 232m of 2.5m wide dual use footpath, including pram crossings (Kulbardi Estate)	Pathway construction	Construction of pathway for connectivity	$180,000
33/34	Construct 195m of 2.5m wide dual use footpath (Kulbardi Estate)	Pathway construction	Construction of pathway for connectivity	$147,000
35/36	Construct 290m of 2.5m wide dual use footpath (Arthur St/ Horwood Rd)	Pathway construction	Construction of pathway for connectivity	$217,500
36/38	Construct 335m of 2.5m wide dual use footpath (Nangip Cres/ Gibbs St)	Pathway construction	Construction of pathway for connectivity	$252,000

Review

While the Shire of West Arthur Local Bike Plan is a ten-year plan, it is acknowledged that the action plan will need to be checked annually prior to budget submissions, so that appropriate funding can be allocated. Funding may not always be available, or other priorities may arise.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Staff will update the plan on an annual basis, to ensure that it remains relevant to community needs, budget constraints and project progression. Where possible, staff will participate in training to ensure that they are up to date with active transport initiatives.

Monitoring and evaluation will be carried out annually, to ensure that the plan can be adapted if needed, goals reviewed and successes celebrated. The following performance measures will be used.

Category	Performance Measures
Education	• Number of participants in safety courses • Campaign awareness • Incorporation of bike-related curriculum activities in schools
Encouragement	• Participation rates in activities and events • Effectiveness of targeted strategies in overcoming specific riding obstacles (usually gathered through before/after surveys)
Evaluation and planning	• Attitudinal surveys – number of people as bike riders, riders' rating of amenity, comfort and safety • Community engagement in bike plan development • Impact assessment of implemented actions on biking environment • Bicycle count data
Environment	• Quantity and quality of bike infrastructure implemented • Availability and usage of trip facilities (amenities, bike parking) • Assessment of natural environments and landscaping impact on biking

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Enabling policies	• Integration of active transport priorities in planning and infrastructure development
Equity	• Accessibility of bike-related efforts and infrastructure to people of all ages and abilities • Evaluation of benefits reaching the entire community

New bridge across Nangip Creek linking Nangip Creek Picnic Area with the Nangip Creek Walk (part of Darkan Heritage Trail).



Appendixes

Appendix A: Community Engagement

Objectives

An engagement strategy was developed to gain maximum input from the local community and stakeholders. The objectives were:

- To disseminate information
- Increase understanding of the bike plan
- Provide updates on the plan
- Collect feedback to inform project development, including
    - identification of existing barriers of uptake of cycling
    - identifying initiatives to encourage cycling
    - prioritizing projects

Engagement Overview

Feedback was gathered via:

- Face-to-face sessions
- Short survey (online and printed)
- Social media
- Website
- Meetings with stakeholders

Summary

Identified objectives from the engagement have been grouped. These are listed in the table below, along with responses that help shape the plan.

Comment	Response
Need to upgrade surfaces of existing paths to reduce hazards, either by compacting existing gravel paths, or replacing broken concrete with asphalt	These areas have been prioritized in the plan
Extend pathway to sporting complex, to allow more people to walk or cycle to sporting and community events	This has been captured in the plan
Improve infrastructure on paths, including bollards, signage, low-level lighting, and level appropriate crossings	These have been captured in the plan
Collie-Darkan Rail Trail was highlighted as being a benefit to the town, including the fact that children could cycle to school and the pool without being on a designated road, therefore reducing traffic interaction. Asphalting the trail up to the caravan park was seen as a major benefit to both tourism and community	Ongoing Rail Trail maintenance has been captured in the plan
Most respondents highlighted the need for better verge maintenance, including the need	Ongoing path maintenance and community education has been captured in the plan

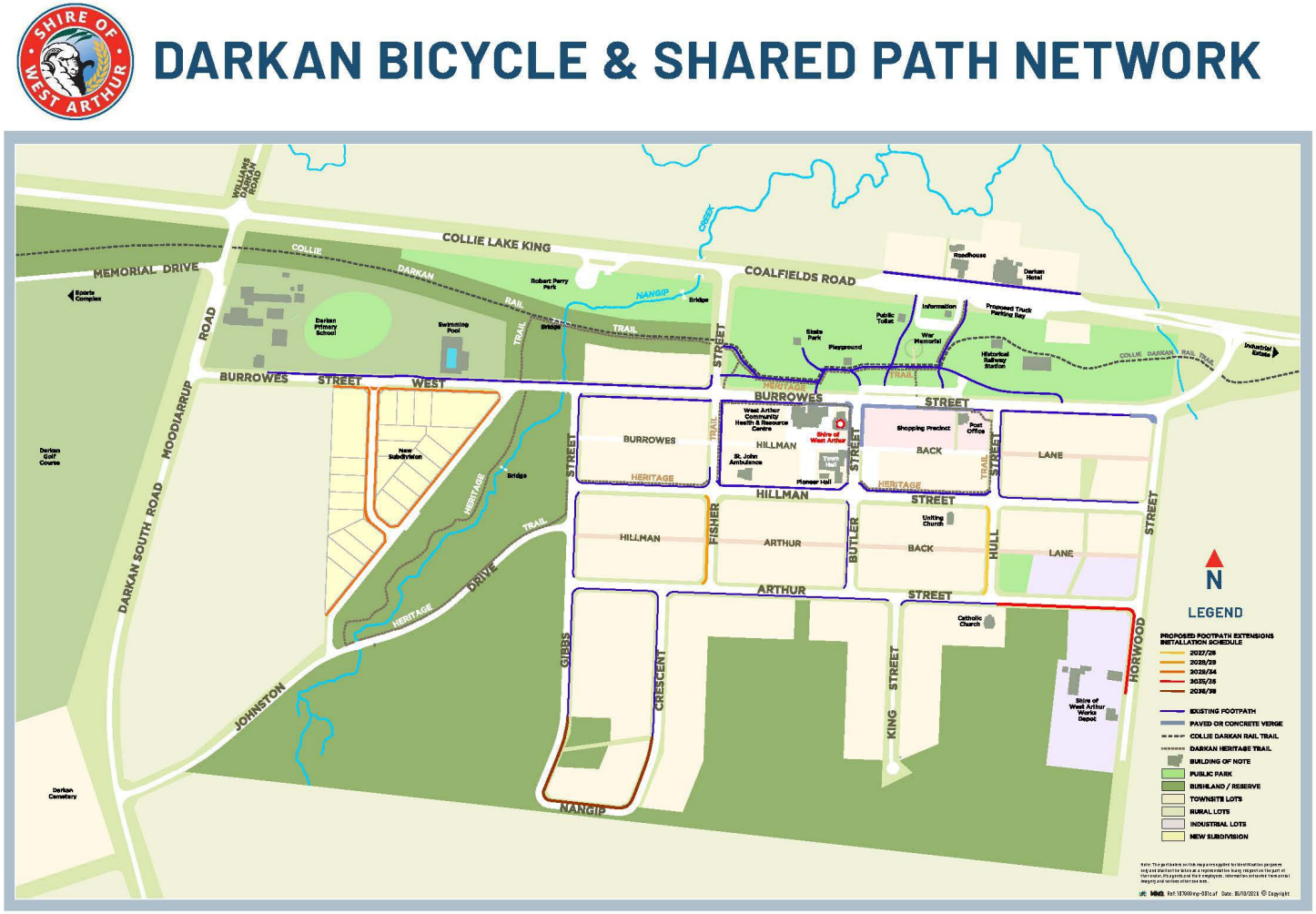
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for community members to ensure that their trees and vegetation were not impacting on pathway users

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Appendix B

Darkan Town Map – existing and proposed network



Wambenger Trails

Collie to Darkan Rail Trail

This multi-use trail is a pleasant one to two day journey suitable for horse and bike riders or longer if you choose to walk.



Where it all began

The Collie to Darkan Rail Trail is on an old railway line that once connected Narrogin and Collie and passed through West Arthur in the southern Wheatbelt. The line was used to transport timber, farm produce, livestock and grain, and also provided a passenger service before cars made the service redundant. The line operated through to 1979, with the railway sleepers removed in the early 1990s.

The Friends of Collie to Darkan Rail Trail Group was formed in 1999 to promote the creation of a multi-use walk/bike/horse trail. Construction of the trail between Buckingham and Darkan began in 2002 and opened in October 2005. It was extended from Darkan to Dardadine in 2017.

Along the trail

The Collie to Darkan Rail Trail passes through bush and picturesque farmlands from Buckingham to Darkan, a distance of 46.5km, then another 15km to Dardadine. Along the way, the trail's relatively gentle gradients feature a series of renovated rail bridges over creeks, rivers and flood plains, as well as the well-preserved historic railway stations at Bowelling and Darkan.

From Buckingham the trail runs mostly parallel to Coalfields Road, diverging south when you reach Cowcher. Just east of Cowcher you'll cross the magnificent Cowcher bridge before continuing across a large floodplain. The trail then returns to the main road, crossing it twice before reaching Bowelling Station which has a display inside of the railway's history.

After Bowelling, the trail continues alongside Coalfields Road to Darkan and features a higher percentage of forested scenery, as well as a series of smaller rail bridges. From Darkan, the trail crosses Coalfields Road and heads north towards Dardadine, stopping just short of Dardadine siding.

Spring and autumn are good times to ride the trail, with moderate temperatures and a good track surface.

In springtime, the area is carpeted in wildflowers including the striking blue leschenaultia, bright red kangaroo paws, many orchid varieties, and shrubs such as hakeas and grevilleas. The Collie Visitor Centre provides information on wildflowers in the area.

Choose the right trail for you and your horse

Being an old railway line, the Rail Trail is a relatively flat walk, cycle or horse ride.

Please consider and plan for the long distances.

Walking: Class 2
Recommended for most walkers. Gentle gradients and firm surfaces.

Cycling: Easy
Recommended for beginner riders with basic mountain bike skills.

Adaptive Cycling: 3.5
These trails have been rated under the Australian Adaptive Mountain Biking Guidelines.

Horse Riding: Easy
Recommended for riders and horses with basic skills and fitness.

Distances and approximate times

		Walk	Cycle	Horse
Buckingham to Bowelling	18km	6hrs	1.5hrs	3hrs
Bowelling to Darkan	28.5km	9.5hrs	2.4hrs	5hrs
Darkan to Dardadine	15km	5hrs	1.3hrs	2.5hrs



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Collie to Darkan Rail Trail

Be prepared

- Take enough supplies, equipment and first aid. Check your gear.
- Supplies and treated water are only available at Collie and Darkan.
- Carry plenty of water with you and remember to drink regularly.
- Avoid walking or riding in hot weather.
- Wear sturdy footwear, weatherproof clothing and sun protection.
- Travel with a buddy and tell someone your plans.
- Do not rely on your mobile phone. Coverage in the area is limited.

Trail code

- This is a shared-use path. Please be considerate of other trail-users.
- Cyclists must give way to walkers and horses. If there is not enough room to pass safely, pull over and wait.
- Take extra care when crossing roads.
- Leave no trace. Stay on the trail and take all rubbish with you.
- Please close gates when passing through private property.

Horse riders

- Rainwater may be available for horses at Bowelling Station but must be treated before use. During winter horses can drink safely from creeks and streams.
- Horse riders must set up their own yards at Bowelling Station stopover.
- Please clean up after your horse at overnight stops. Use chaff bags and non-weed feed.
- Horse manure can be left on the trail.

DANGER

Baiting occurs on a regular basis within areas of State Forest. Part of the Rail Trail passes through this area. 1080 Baits are poisonous and will kill cats and dogs. Do not take your pets into areas baited with 1080.

Where to start

The trail starts at **Buckingham**, 18km east of Collie. The trailhead is located on the corner of Coalfields Road and Shotts River Road. For cyclists and walkers starting the trail from Collie, contact the Collie Visitor Centre for information on parking and local businesses that provide transfers from Collie.

You can also start your journey from the eastern end of the trail at either Darkan or Dardadine. The **Darkan** trailhead is located at the public toilets opposite the Darkan Hotel on Coalfields Road. Parking is available at the toilets and next to this is a gravel area suitable for horse floats.

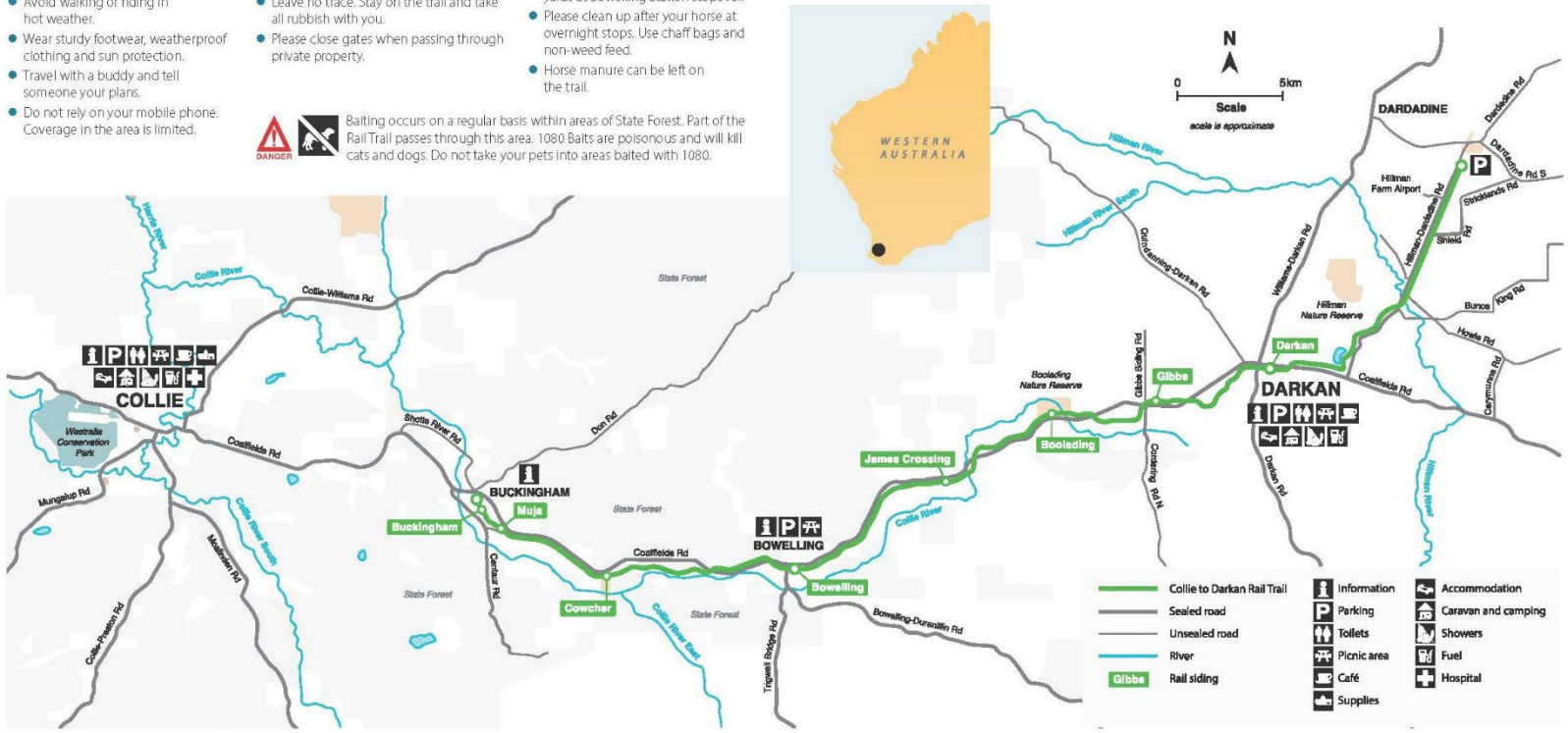
To start at **Dardadine**, travel north from Coalfields Road along Hillman–Dardadine Road for 11.4 km where you will find a gravel turn-off to the east and a sign on the rail trail titled 'End of the Rail Trail.'

Overnight stops

Bowelling Station is the main overnight stop on the trail but rail siding sites may be used if required. Rainwater is seasonally available but not guaranteed, and must be treated before use. Water can be treated by vigorous boiling for at least one minute, mechanical filtration or chemical treatment.

Trail-users can also camp overnight at the disused Pony Club Grounds in **Darkan**. For a small fee you can use the shower and toilets in the caravan park located next door. You must contact the Shire of West Arthur prior to camping or using the caravan park facilities.

It is recommended that you do not leave your vehicle unattended overnight in any public parking areas.



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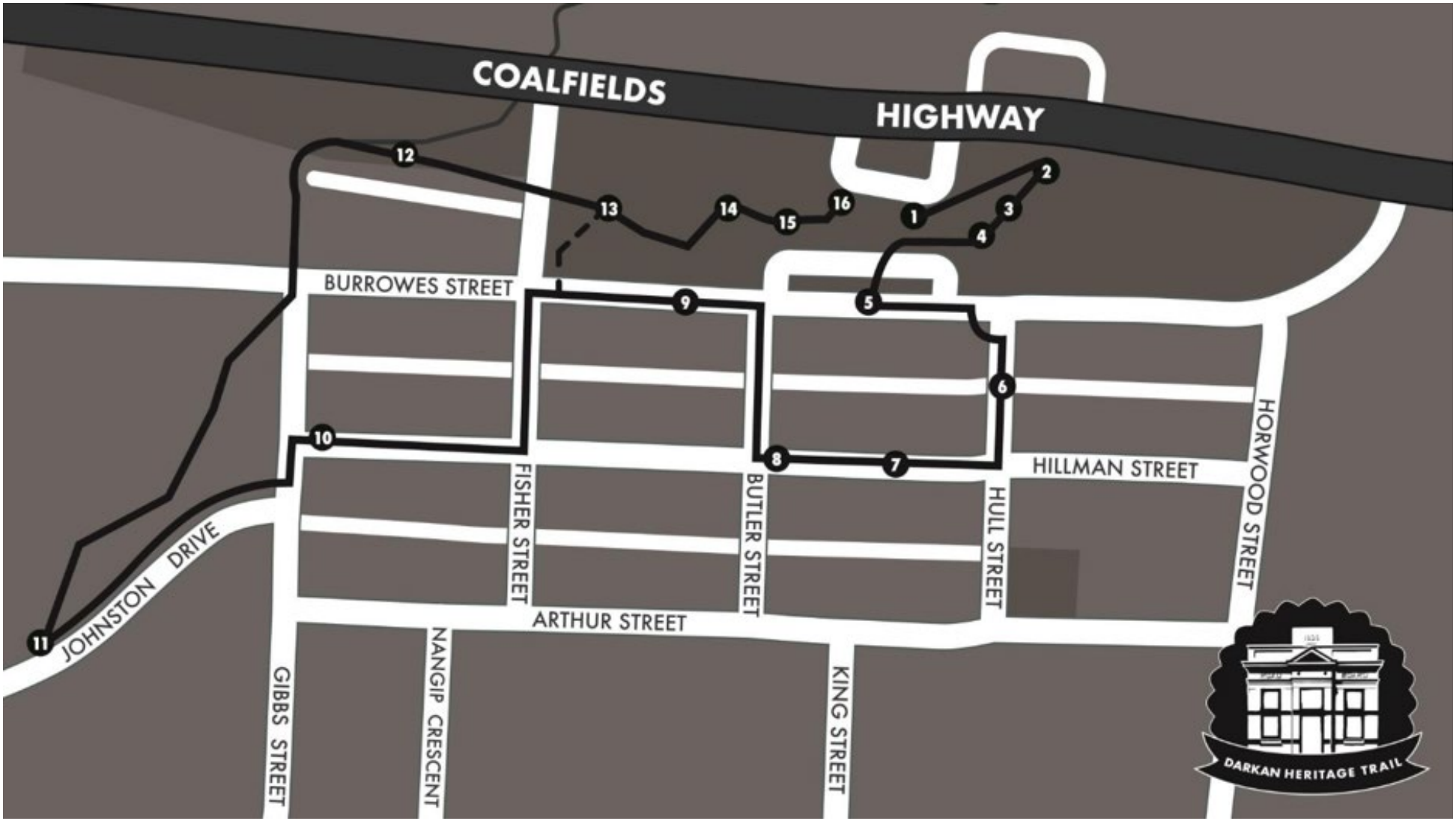
Emergencies

In the event of an emergency, phone Triple Zero (000).
The nearest hospital is located in Collie.

Further information

Collie Visitor Centre 156 Throssell Street, Collie Phone: (08) 9734 2051
Shire of West Arthur 31 Burrowes Street, Darkan Phone: (08) 9736 2222

Map of Darkan Heritage Trail



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