



Shire of Plantagenet

Regarding: Tower Hill/Pwakkenbak, Trail Network Concept Plan

Dear Executive Team

Firstly, let us commend the Shire of Plantagenet for taking on Mountain Bike trail development with such enthusiasm. It's great to see.

In providing our response, we thought it might be easier for us to run through our comments as in order of the plan from start to finish:

- We like the idea of keeping the trails (at least some of them) inclusive and suitable for the use of hand cycles, this also includes the board walk for wheel chair access to the lookout.
- The plan obviously reflects the environmental and aboriginal heritage considerations, which is a very important aspect of any plan. Community consultation around this needs to be solid and needs a definitive plan of attack so that everyone is properly informed and supportive.
- Page 12 – Balance of trails: The concept of allowing for a progressive network that allows for all riders is an ideal concept for this location. Long XC loops allows for state XCO rounds to be held, which is ideal for the benefit of the town and having some good quality blue and black trails will allow for Enduro rounds to be held here, which will attract hundreds of riders to the area. This is something the region is severely lacking at the moment. The modern trail development strategy of allowing both beginner and intermediate riders to utilise different aspects of a trail and both intermediate and advanced riders to enjoy the same trails is significantly beneficial in a small area such as this. We also think that having the ability to allow for shuttle trails is significant and should be further considered by the Shire as this is very important for attracting downhill riders.
- Page 17 – Makeup and percentage of trails: The balance between Green, Blue and Black. We think the plan is very well balanced. Having the majority of trails as Blue will suit the overwhelming majority of riders. Plus, the broad scope of a “blue” trail is quite wide and this allows for easy progression from easier flow trails to more technical trails. While there are only 20% of green trails, the ability to progress quickly on these with modern bikes is well documented so we think that 2,300 metres of Green type trails is adequate for the overwhelming majority of riders, who will likely attempt a blue trail a short time after beginning to feel comfortable on green trails. This allows for more progression and blue trails are usually more challenging and enjoyable.
- We are very glad to see the inclusions of two types of Black trails. This is crucial in allowing for additional progression of riders and broadens the user group that will be attracted to the area. This is also significant for the region when compared to the proposed trails within the Albany Heritage Park, that do not allow for Black trails at this stage, which is somewhat disappointing for riders who want to progress and challenge themselves further.
- Page 18: Allowing for the majority of trails to be geared towards All Mountain and Enduro riding caters very well to the most popular style of Mountain Bike riding. Given the fall of the land in this area it appears Tower Hill is particularly well suited to this type of trail. Most cross country events these days utilise All Mountain trails to make racing more challenging and as such having the ability to have a pure XC trail mixed with challenging all mountain loops allows for a lot of flexibility in holding race events.
- The Suggested Trail System as a whole (on paper) looks amazing, given the limited space in this location the designed has done very well to get over 11km of trail in. We do question the location of the jumps trail and the linkage to be able to get to this location from the top of the network. We understand the reason for having it here from a topographical stand point and to allow closet access from the centre of town, although town is still 3km away, so it could really be anywhere on site? Was there a chance it could be included closer to the top trail head, where most people will park their car. Also, in regard to parking and car access, I note there is a proposed shuttle trail in the plan, We wonder if it would be possible to have vehicle parking and access at the lower south eastern corner or north eastern corner of this site, towards the lower trail head position? It is always preferable for riders to start and finish at the bottom of trails rather than at the top. I note there is a road reserve running the full length of the eastern boundary so this could be an option? This allows for a good warm up on the way up and an excellent finishing position at the bottom of the trails. I think this is something that should be considered



by the Shire. This also would allow good direct access to the jumps trails without having to ride the rest of the trails to get there.

- The preference for the club would be not to stage this development and to get it constructed as soon as possible in its entirety. The reason for this would be that the Great Southern is already years behind other regions such as the south west and Perth/Peel regions in constructed trail availability. The longer it takes to get construction of these networks the further the region falls behind and in doing so losses the ability to attract people to the area. Also, a full network of 10km is already limited in its ability to attract people from outside the region, especially given the distance of the Great Southern from other areas that has available trails. Therefore, staging it with small builds is going to limit it further, this also encourages illegal trail construction, when the small networks are not long enough to keep people interested. This activity is well documented and is already occurring at high levels in the region purely because there are not enough designated trails to satisfy rider demand.
- Pages 21 – 28: Circuits. This appears to be well thought out and is necessary for the rideability of the site. It appears on face value that there are some good circuit options that allows for rideability and enough trail to attract events to the area.
- Pages 29 – 52: Specific Trails: We have probably commented on these enough above on these. All sound very exciting and offer good progression from beginner to advanced levels.
- Page 56 – We think having A-Line options is absolutely critical in a small area such as this. It really opens up all of the terrain to all users and extends the rideability of the trails for all users. We strongly support this option and this it should be included in the detailed design, especially in relation to Double Black diamond options. If this can be included in the design, it truly opens the network to all user groups from learners to advanced riders.

In summary, the Albany Mountain Bike Club is very happy and excited to see the Shire of Plantagenet looking at this option for a trail network and we commend them on acting so quickly on this after the release of the Regional Trails Strategy. The design looks exciting, considers all user groups and the club is very supportive of this proceeding in the quickest time possible.

Thank you for considering this submission.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Walls', written over a white background.

Nick Walls

President, Albany Mountain Bike Club