

Dr Christine Hosking

Presentation to:
Councillor Fiona Cunningham,
Environment, Parks and Sustainability Committee
Brisbane City Council

Regarding:
Draft Brisbane Off-Road Cycling Strategy

25th January, 2021

A Landscape Ecology Perspective:

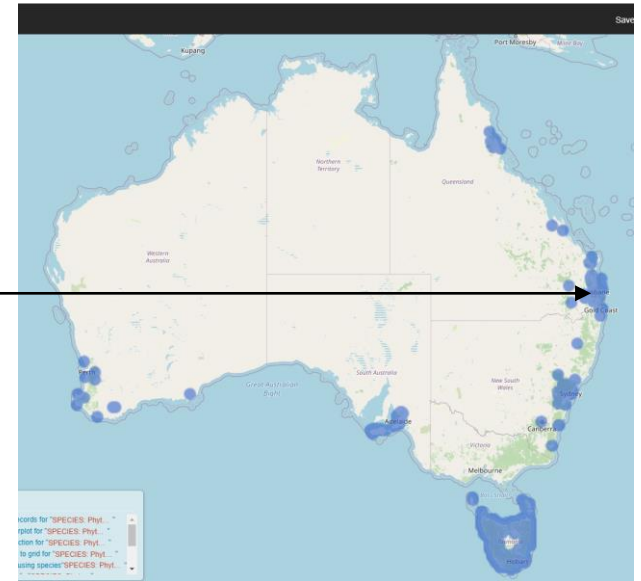
We appear to know a lot about what mountain biking needs, but what do our bushlands need?

Disturbance from machinery during construction, and the ongoing maintenance and activity on trails can detrimentally affect threatened species such as Powerful Owls and Koalas, as well as small mammals, reptiles and invertebrates that would be less able to avoid the rapid approach of mountain bikers

Edge Effects can affect species when trail construction causes changes in the vegetation structure at the edges of their habitat. Edge effects also encourage weeds and can spread serious environmental threats such as Phytophthora (*Phytophthora cinnamomi*) which can cause permanent damage to ecosystems and landscapes

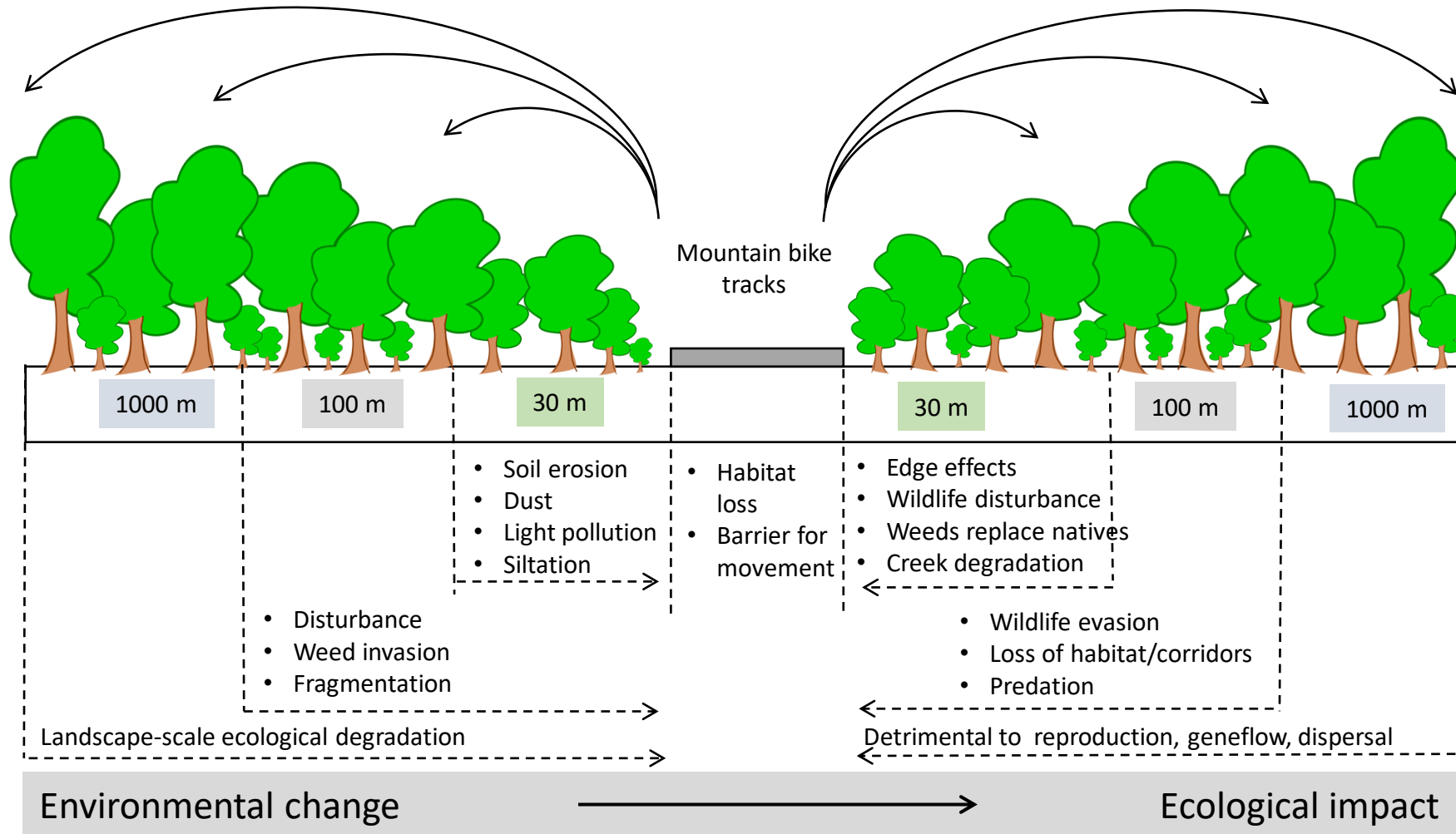
Habitat loss and fragmentation can lead to 'niche reductions' for plant and animal species. They lose their 'homes' and thus, ecosystems decline

Source: environmental-impacts-mountain-biking.com



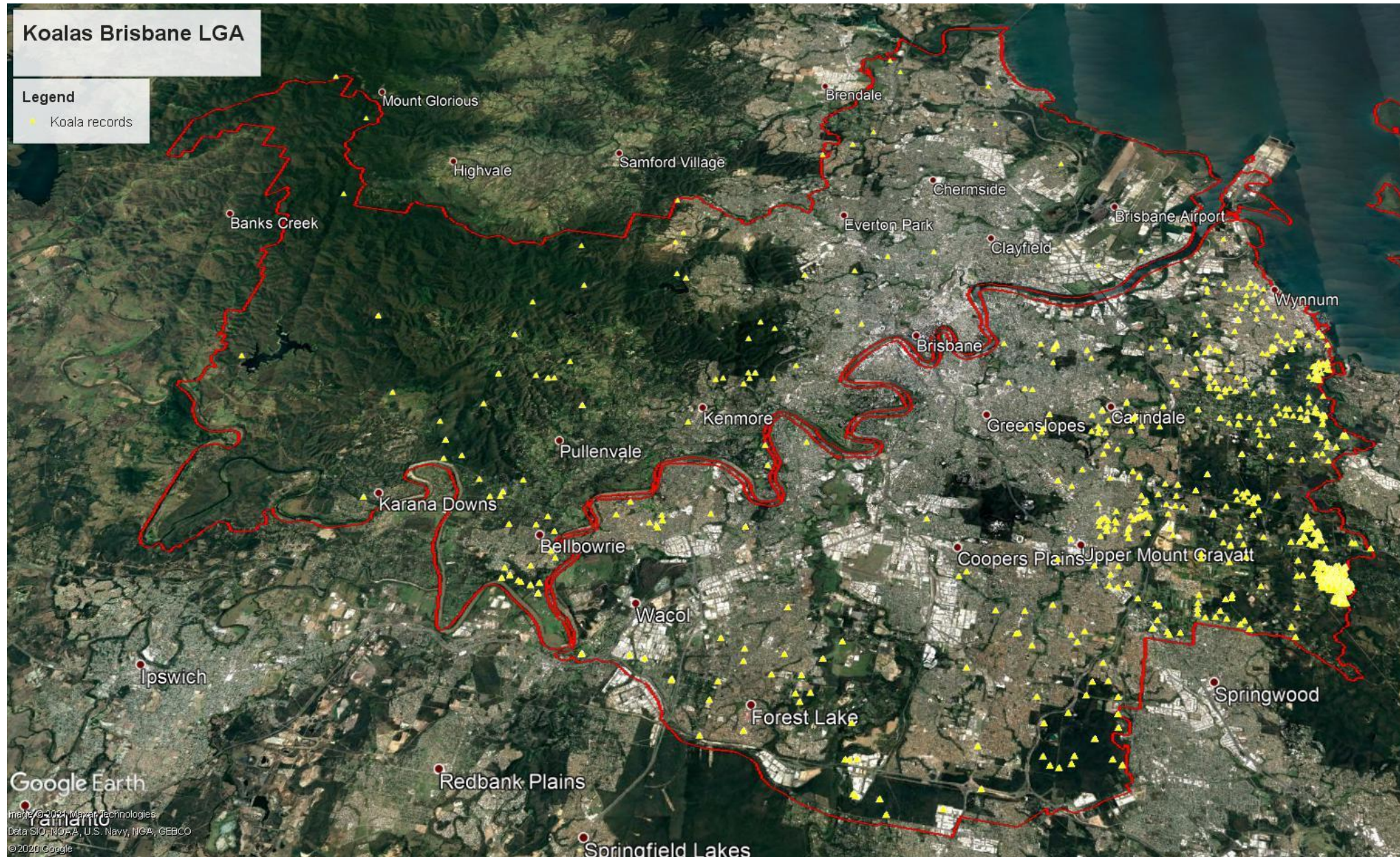
Source: *Atlas of Living Australia* (ala.org.au)

Potential Impacts to a Bushland Patch



Cumulative impacts on ecosystems due to the ever-increasing number of mountain bike trails

A Landscape - Scale Perspective



Draft Brisbane Off-Road Cycling Strategy DECEMBER 2020

We address #3



1. Definition of a **Key Natural Area** in Brisbane:

A Council Park, Council Natural Area Park, National Park or State Conservation Reserve that contributes significantly to Brisbane's persistence of biodiversity.

Guiding principles

Eight principles will guide the Brisbane Off-Road Cycling Strategy:

1. **Sustainability** – Invest in off-road cycling facilities that are socially, economically and environmentally sustainable.
2. **Diversity** – Provide a wide range of off-road cycling facilities that can be well-used by adults, children and families in the community.
3. **Diligent planning** – Develop off-road cycling facilities with a high regard for environmental values, conservation, protection of sensitive areas and mitigation of impacts.
4. **Collaboration** – Work with key stakeholders, including community and environmental groups, off-road cyclists, relevant government agencies, peak bodies and the wider community, to ensure that off-road cycling opportunities are provided for sustainably.
5. **Accessibility** – Provide off-road cycling facilities that are accessible to all and are conveniently located close to local neighbourhoods, education institutions and workplaces. These should be supported by appropriate facilities (e.g. car parking, public toilets, trailhead infrastructure and signage).
6. **Optimal use of facilities** – Making the most of existing facilities that are appropriately located and have the capacity for additional use.
7. **Safety and mitigating risk** – Provide safe off-road cycling facilities through best practice design and adherence to relevant legislative and activity safety requirements.
8. **Education and engagement** – Riders and wider community members who understand rider etiquette and the best use of facilities can help ensure the ongoing sustainability of the network of off-road cycling facilities.

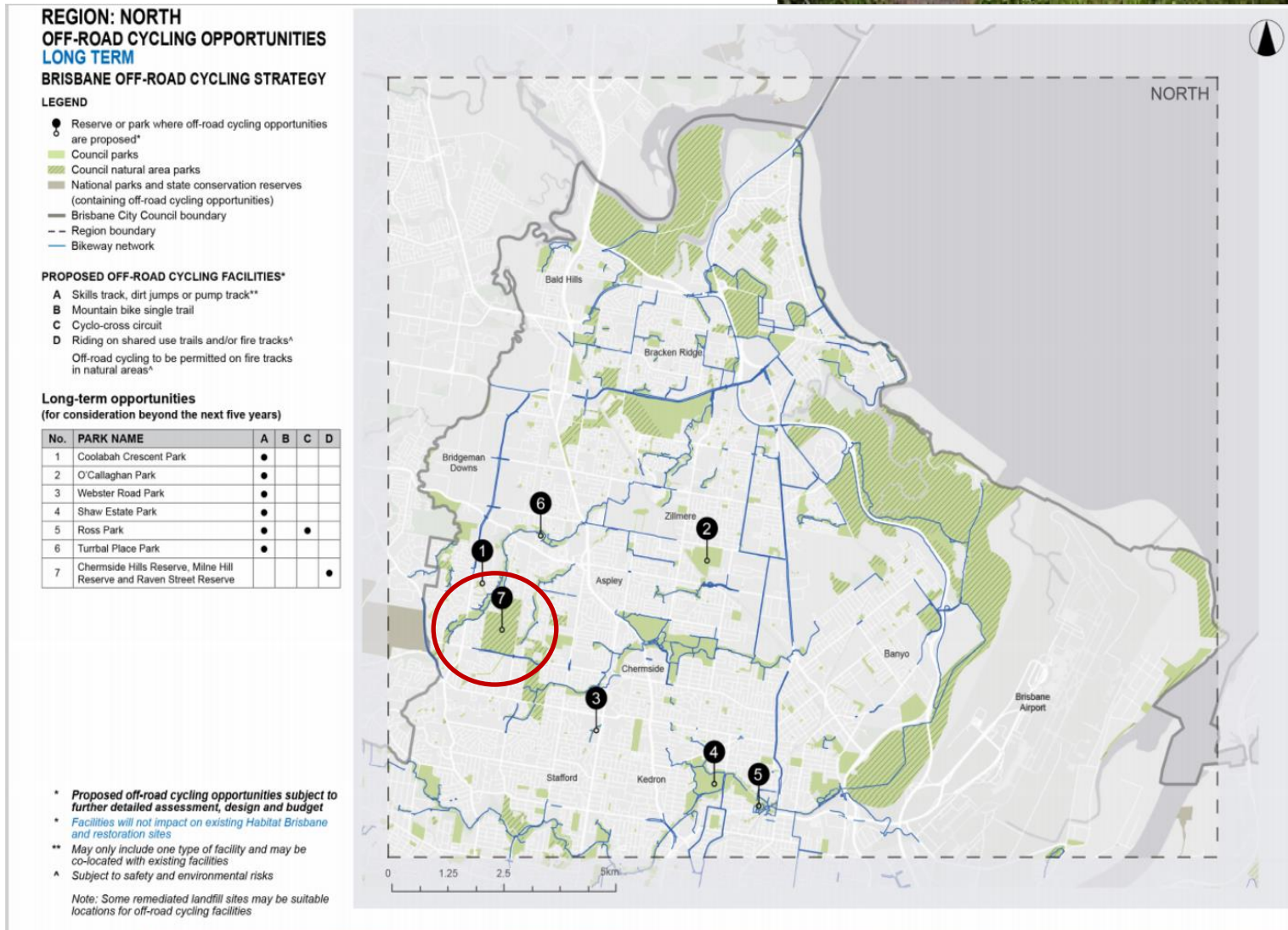


Brisbane North: Chermside Hills Reserves



- The reserves provide protection for more than 200 native plant species from 72 families, representing 25 per cent of the native plant families found in Australia
- 115 bird species that have been recorded in the area, e.g., honeyeaters, treecreepers, pardalotes, fairy wrens, dollarbirds, rainbow bee-eaters, spangled drongos, grey shrike-thrushes, kingfishers
- Home to a variety of mammals including swamp wallabies. At night you might see gliders, possums, bats and flying foxes

Source: BCC May 2020



Brisbane East: Brisbane Koala Bushlands, Whites Hill Reserve

Brisbane Koala Bushlands were set aside primarily to protect significant koala habitat

- Part of the Koala Coast Network that is one of the most important koala habitat areas in Australia

Source: BCC October 2020

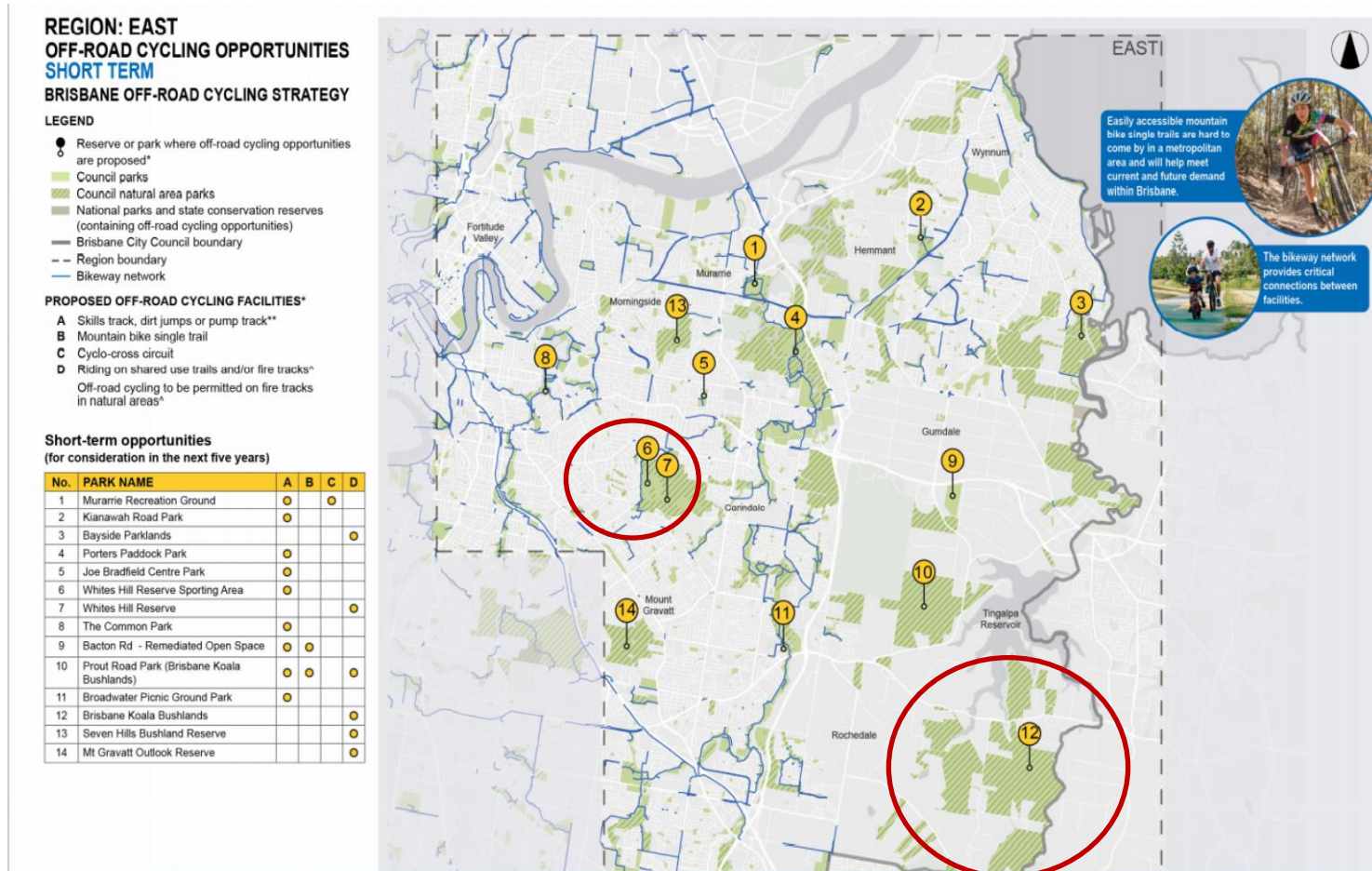
White's Hill

- An important bushland remnant supporting a number of vegetation communities including eucalypt forest and dry rainforest
- powerful owls
- koalas
- velvet geckos
- Brisbane short-necked turtles
- short-beaked echidnas
- sacred kingfishers nesting in termite nests high in the eucalypt

Source: BCC May 2020

- 375 native plant species** were recorded during a 2000 survey

Source: Glen Leiper June 2000



Brisbane South: **Toohy Forest**

- Koalas have established a growing population in the area with approximately 40 individuals inhabiting the forest on the eastern side of the M3
- The population has been steadily growing with approximately 6 joeys identified over 2019/2020

Source: BCC May 2020

- Listed Flora/Fauna: • Koala • Powerful Tusked Frog • Glossy Black Cockatoo • Slender Milkvine
- It has more than 75 species of birds, five tree-dwelling mammals and a diversity of reptiles, butterflies and frogs

Source: Greg Lambert (for Toohy Forest)



REGION: SOUTH OFF-ROAD CYCLING OPPORTUNITIES SHORT TERM BRISBANE OFF-ROAD CYCLING STRATEGY

LEGEND

- Reserve or park where off-road cycling opportunities are proposed*
- Council parks
- Council natural area parks
- National parks and state conservation reserves (containing off-road cycling opportunities)
- Brisbane City Council boundary
- - Region boundary
- Bikeway network
- - Future bikeway – route alignment is indicative only and subject to further investigation and consultation

PROPOSED OFF-ROAD CYCLING FACILITIES*

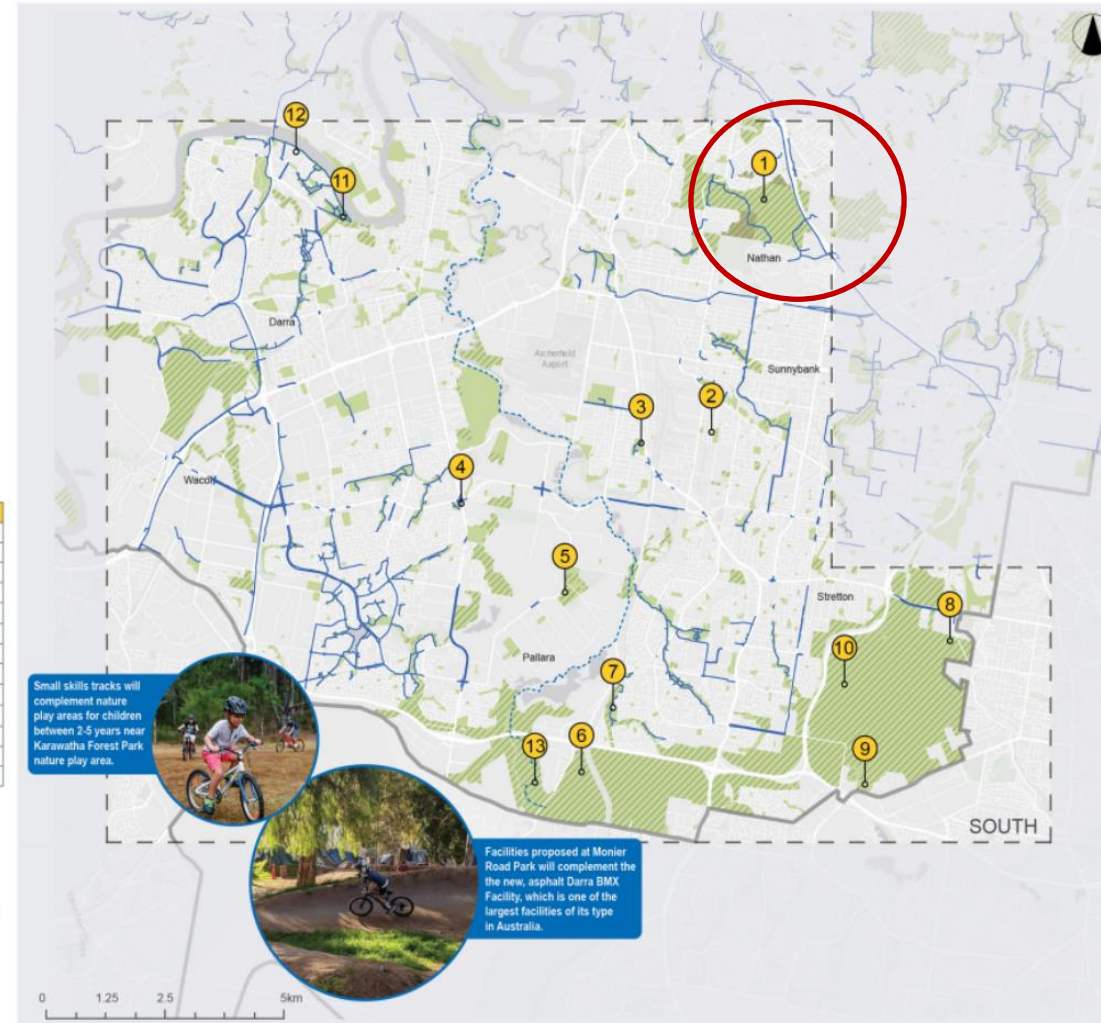
- A Skills track, dirt jumps or pump track**
 - B Mountain bike single trail
 - C Cyclo-cross circuit
 - D Riding on shared use trails and/or fire tracks*
- Off-road cycling to be permitted on fire tracks in natural areas*

Short-term opportunities (for consideration in the next five years)

| No. | PARK NAME | A | B | C | D |
|-----|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Toohy Forest | | ● | | ● |
| 2 | Robert Mitchell Park | ● | | | |
| 3 | C.A. O'Sullivan Park | ● | | | |
| 4 | D.J. Sherrington Park | ● | | | |
| 5 | Pallara Park | ● | | ● | ● |
| 6 | Glider Forest | ● | ● | | ● |
| 7 | Greenways Esplanade Park | ● | | | |
| 8 | Karawatha Forest Park - Picnic Area | ● | | | |
| 9 | Scrubby Creek Recreation Reserve | ● | | | |
| 10 | Karawatha Forest Park | | ● | | ● |
| 11 | Rocks Riverside Park | ● | | | |
| 12 | Amazons Place Park | ● | | | |
| 13 | Warri Parkland | | | | ● |

- * Proposed off-road cycling opportunities subject to further detailed assessment, design and budget
- * Facilities will not impact on existing Habitat Brisbane and restoration sites
- ** May only include one type of facility and may be co-located with existing facilities
- * Subject to safety and environmental risks

Note: Some remediated landfill sites may be suitable locations for off-road cycling facilities



Brisbane South: Karawatha Forest Park/Glider Forest



- Due to the size of Karawatha Forest Park and variety of habitats it contains, this forest is an important refuge for over 200 species of wildlife
- Has the highest diversity of frog species in Brisbane
- The forest also supports red-necked wallabies, swamp wallabies and eastern grey kangaroos.
- Hollows in older eucalypts are nesting places for gliders, possums, bats, parrots and owls
- Over 100 bird species found

Source: BCC May 2020

Karawatha Forest and Glider Forest are part of the Karawatha-Greenbank-Flinders Peak Corridor

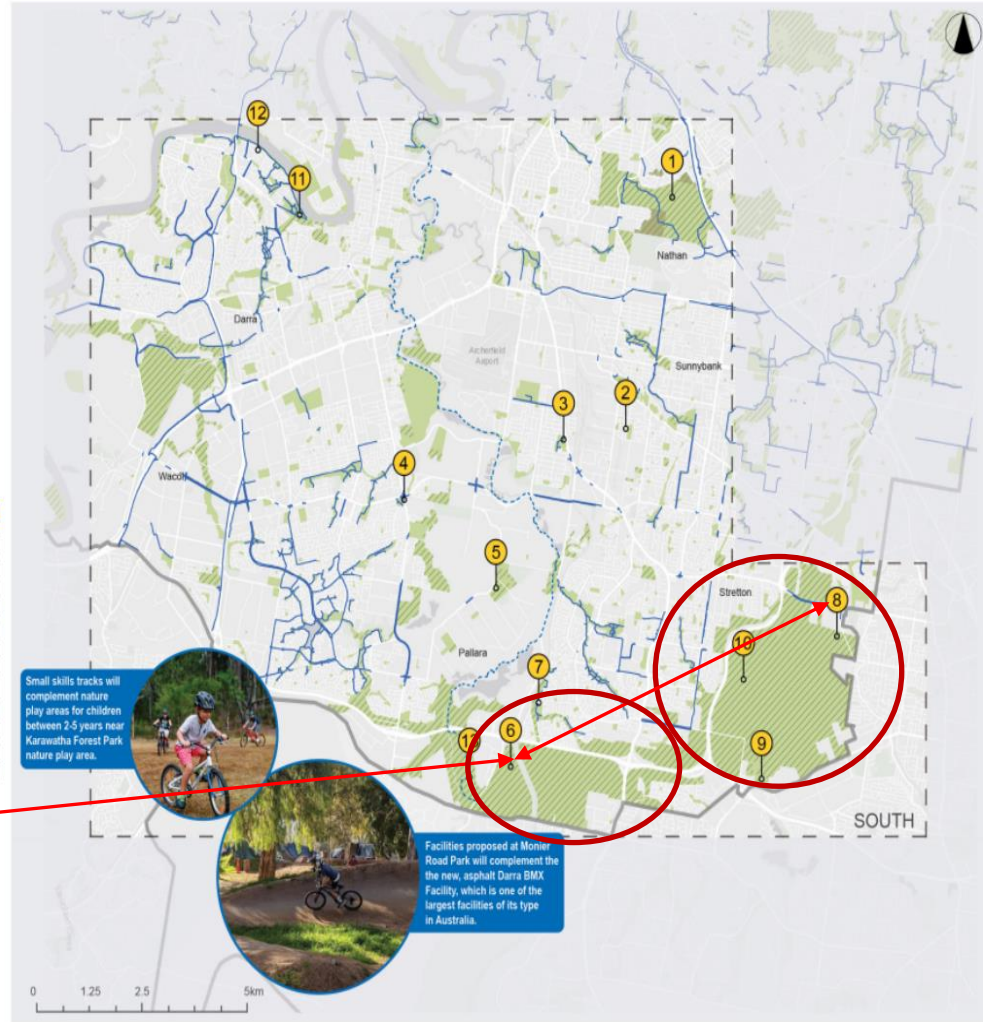
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Brisbane South: **Glider Forest and Parkinson Bushland**

Endangered, Vulnerable and Near Threatened Species in or nearby Glider Forest and Parkinson Bushland

- Koala-EPBA Vulnerable. Multiple found in 2018 by detection dogs
- Greater Glider-Vulnerable. Multiple present in 1990s
- Wallum froglet-Vulnerable. Found in wetland in the forest

Source: Greg Tasney January 2021



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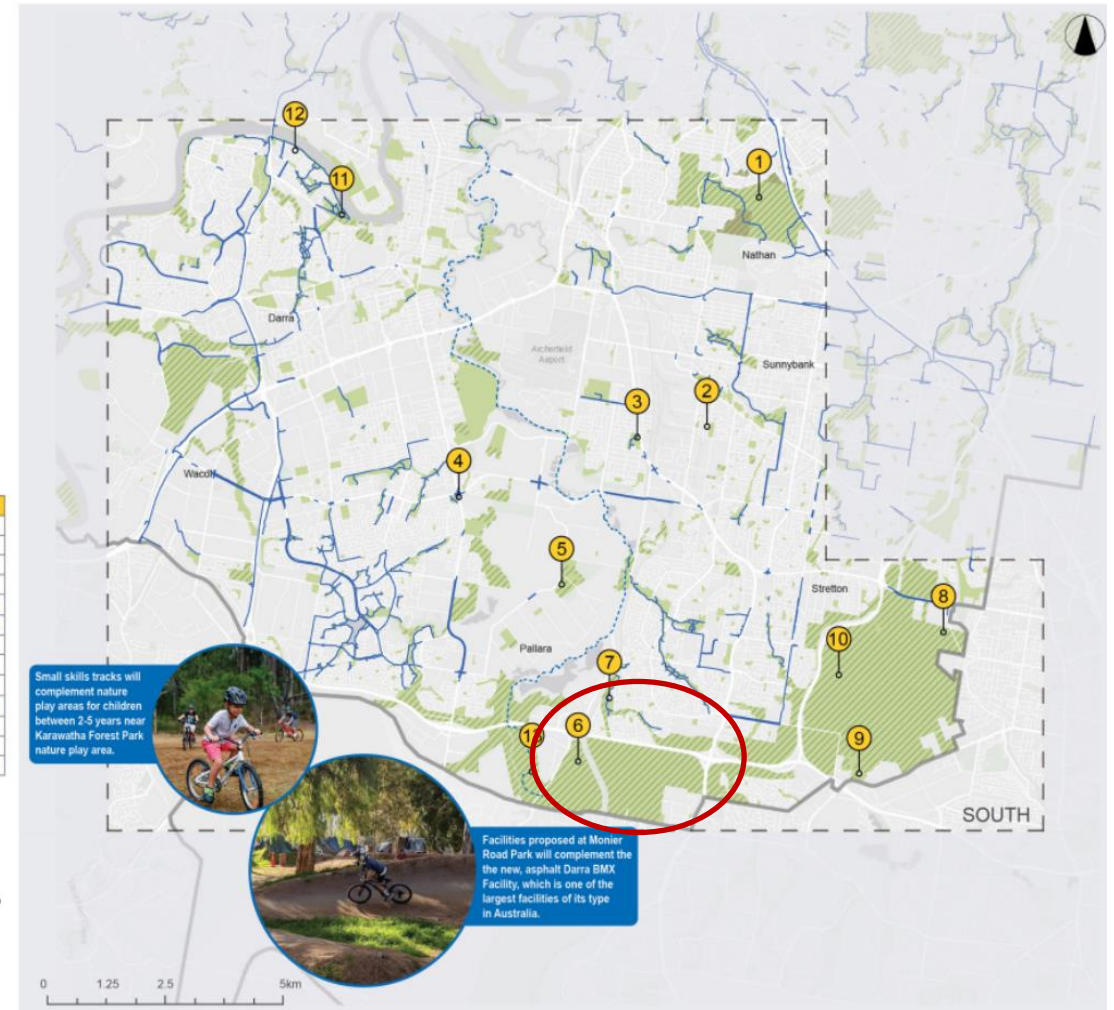
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Brisbane West: Mt Coot-tha Forest/Gap Creek, Gold Creek Reserve



Mt Coot-tha Forest Reserve/Gap Creek

- Approximately 370 wildlife species and 450 native plant species (including rare and threatened species)
- Koalas,
- eagles, small forest birds
- parrots and cockatoos
- Tawny frogmouths, owls, gliders, possums
- microbats
- powerful owls

Source: BCC October 2020

Gold Creek Reserve

- Sits within the D'Aguiar National Park, an ecologically diverse area with rainforests, open forests, tall open forests and woodlands
- Numerous listed species, including koalas, quolls, swift parrot, collared delma

Source:

https://parks.des.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0032/165758/daguilar.pdf

REGION: WEST OFF-ROAD CYCLING OPPORTUNITIES SHORT TERM BRISBANE OFF-ROAD CYCLING STRATEGY

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| 2 | Ross Road Park | | | | |
| 3 | Keppera Bushlands | | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 4 | Alfred and Lucina Best Park | | | ○ | |
| 5 | Sunset Park | | ○ | | |
| 6 | Mt Coot-tha Reserve | | | | ○ |
| 7 | Gap Creek Picnic Area (Mt Coot-tha Reserve) | | ○ | | |
| 8 | Gold Creek Reserve | | ○ | | ○ |
| 9 | Anstead Bushland Reserve | | | | ○ |
| 10 | Primley Street Park | | | | ○ |
| 11 | Platypus Park | | ○ | | |
| 12 | Marstaeller Road Reserve | | | | ○ |
| 13 | Kholo Bushlands | | | | ○ |
| 14 | Changing Mountain & Dandy's Range Bushland Reserves | | | | ○ |
| 15 | Shelley Road Park | | | | ○ |

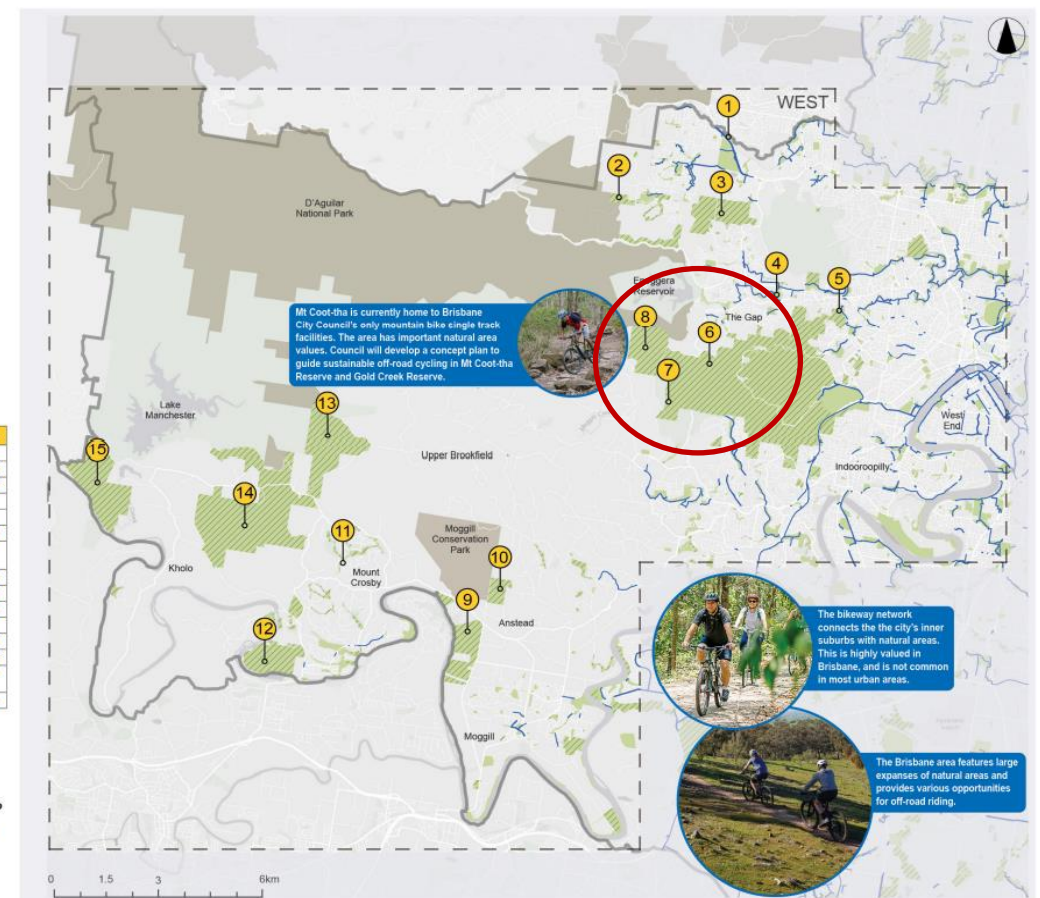
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Brisbane West: **Kholo Bushlands, Anstead Bushlands**



Kholo Bushlands

Phil from Western Suburbs (8 years ago)
 “Congratulations to Brisbane City Council on this initiative of acquiring land for walkers and wildlife. This is another jewel available to Brisbane Ratepayers that is not too far away”

Source: <http://www.brisparks.com.au/qld/kholo/kholo-bushland-reserve>

Anstead Bushland Reserve

- Open eucalypt forest
- Habitat for over 130 wildlife species, including a number of species that are identified as significant or noteworthy at a city-wide level. Some of these species include koalas, echidnas, wallabies and powerful owls

Source: BCC May 2019

REGION: WEST
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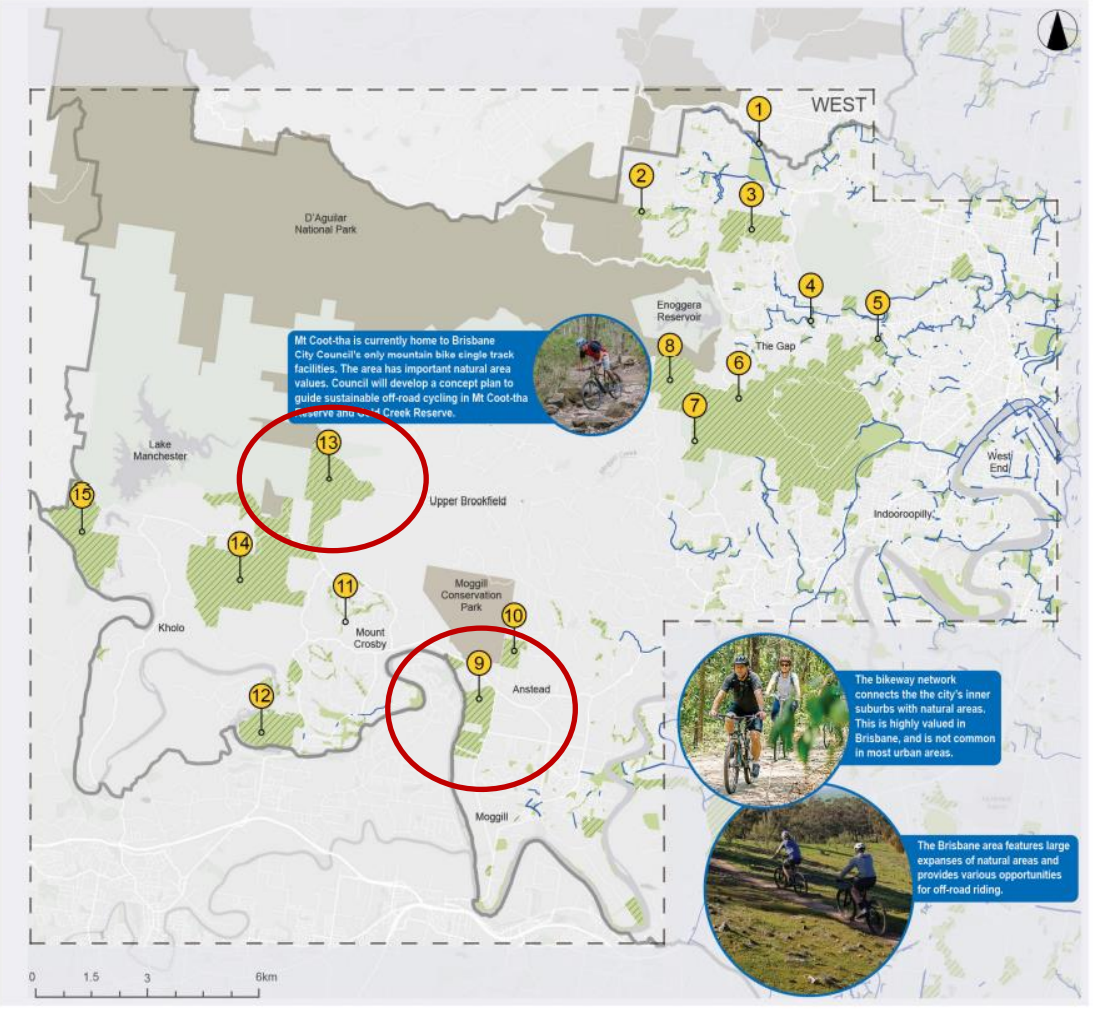
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Extract from a Bushcarer

“There is currently no evidence to suggest that the mountain bike community or the Brisbane City Council Draft Brisbane Off-Road Cycling Strategy can mitigate past, current or future damage caused by mountain bikes in Greater Brisbane. As such, how can the community in general have any confidence that this impact recreational sport can be regulated in a way to be sustainable and maintain the current habitat and biodiversity that reside here.

This current strategy will lead to a decline in the conservation aspects of land that is meant to help Brisbane keep its title of the “Biodiversity Capital of Australia”. Brisbane’s Bushland Areas and Mountain bike riding are the antithesis of each other and cannot co-exist sustainably.

- Natural Areas must be kept for Nature
- Forest Parks/Bushland Reserves need to be preserved
- Communities cannot lose their natural areas to self interest groups”.

THANK YOU