

Commentary by the ACT Equestrian Association on the Development Application for the Duplication of William Hovell Drive

The Development Application for the duplication of John Gorton Drive is now open for public comment by **Monday 1 August 2022**. The 33 documents in the application can be found at:

https://www.planning.act.gov.au/talk-with-us/pubnote/development_applications_ordered_by_closing?sq_content_src=%2BdXJsPWhOdHAIM0EIMkYIMkZhchBzLmFjdHBsYS5hY3QuZ292LmF1JTJGcHVibm90ZSUyRnB1Ym5vdGV EZXRhaWxfbmV3LmFzcCUzRkRBX25vJTNEMjAyMTM4NzlyJmFsbD0x

The ACT Equestrian Association has been diligent in commenting on this proposal because it will impact on:

1. the existing route of the Bicentennial National Trail, and
2. the option, as discussed with ACT Parks and Conservation, to create a link from The Pinnacle Nature Reserve to Karma Nature Reserve.

1. Bicentennial Underpass at Lands End

The original description of the project included the expressed objective of **upgrading the underpass for the Bicentennial National Trail**.¹ As far as we are able to ascertain the underpass, rather than being upgrades for the BNT has been made more dangerous.

The original consultation document indicated that the BNT would maintain its current alignment through the underpass but:

- it would be intersected on the Hawker side by a shared path running north-south through the greenspace between the William Hovell Drive and the back of the suburb, and
- the proposed upgraded access to the Lands End Cemetery would encourage cyclists to use the underpass as a short cut. See *Figure 1*.

The issues ACTEA and the BNT Co-ordinator had with the proposed arrangement were that:

- the western approach to the underpass is a blind corner
- the Cemetery access road would be used as a rat run to the bike path on the other side of William Hovell Drive, and
- the eastern approach is very steep, fenced and concrete making it extremely dangerous for any horse riders sharing the space with fast moving cyclists.

¹ (<http://203.9.249.10/e-registerfiles/pubnote/pdf/ENVIRONMENTALREPORT-202138722-S144C-01.pdf>) Page 5

As a result of community consultation and objection by the residents of Hawker to having a bike path through their dog off lead area the bike path has now been rerouted through the underpass itself – making it a certainty that fast-moving commuter bikes will be sharing the space with horses. See *Figure 2*

Figure 1 2021 Drawings for BNT Underpass

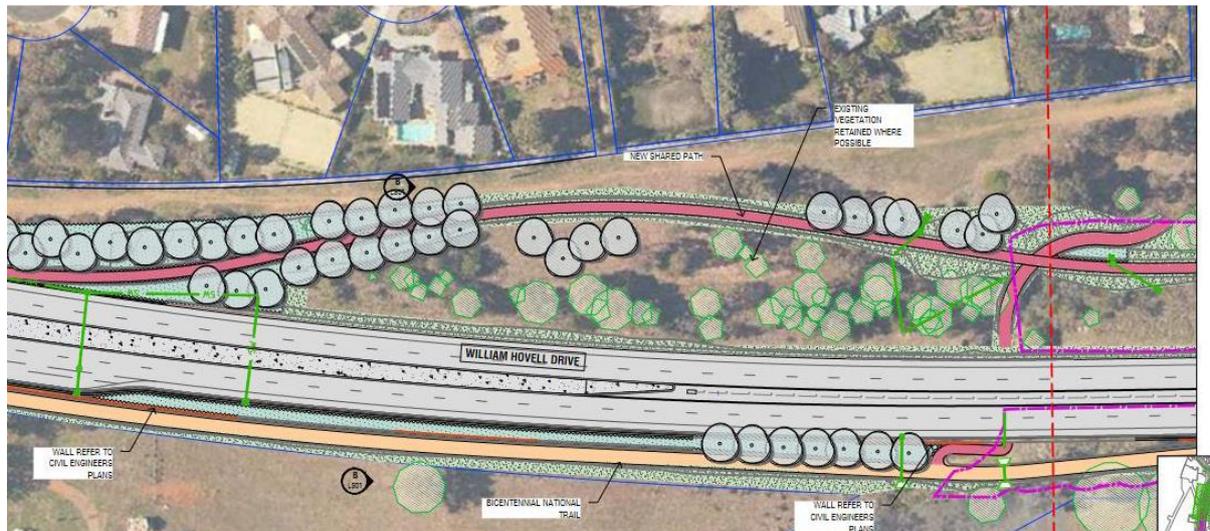
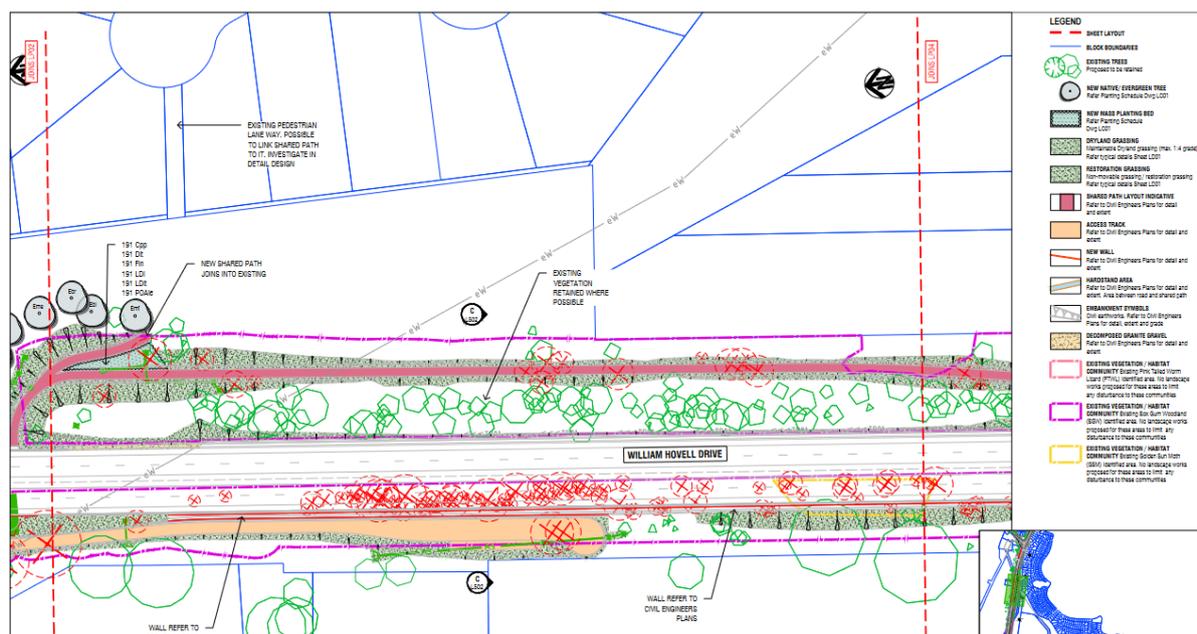


Figure 2 2022 Drawings for BNT Underpass



The new drawings for this section of the shared path (see *Figure 2*) are extremely disturbing. They show that the shared path on the Hawker approach will merge with the eastern approach to the underpass out of an incised path with no indication of any measures to

slow cyclists. Horse riders coming up out of the underpass could easily meet cyclists coming downhill at them at speed.

There are now no drawings at all indicating how the BNT will connect the western entrance to the underpass.

In the Stakeholder Engagement Report³ included in the documentation the project addresses ACTEA’s concerns. ACTEA’s comments on the table below are in red.

Table 1

<p>ACT Equestrian Association expressed concern about the Bicentennial National Trail being disrupted by the shared path location.</p>	<p>In order to deconflict the BNT with the shared user path, TCCS has commenced the process of relocating the BNT through the adjacent rural property to minimise interaction on the shared user path between equestrians and other users. There has been no detailed consultation with the BNT Coordinator about where this route will go, but the shortest route to the underpass is through the farmhouse curtilage itself. This is not an option because of privacy and probably farm dogs. ACTEA is acutely aware that Lands End has been purchased by the ACT Government as part of its development land bank and have no faith that any equestrian route in Lands End is protected. The short section interaction on the shared zone, through the underpass, will be regulated with appropriate signage. The Project keeps suggesting that the underpass itself is the only problem with the routing of the shared path which is not the case. Signage is NOT an active approach to equestrian safety.</p>
<p>The ACT Equestrian Association strongly objects to the shared path being routed through the Lands End underpass.</p>	<p>Mitigation measures are being incorporated into the Project to make the alignment safe for horse riders, horses, cyclists and pedestrians. ACTEA has heard of no mitigating measures that will reduce the risk to local riders and travellers using this underpass. Advisory signage will be installed to address these issues. ACTEA’s experience elsewhere is that advisory signage is purely decorative as far as many cyclists are concerned.</p>
<p>ACT Equestrian Association and the local BNT Section Coordinator expressed strong concern about the lack of consideration given to the safety of horse riders, and even walkers, having to share the underpass and its approaches with fast moving bicycles.</p>	<p>Fencing adjacent to the path on the eastern approach to the underpass will be removed, as will some vegetation to improve sight lines into the underpass. Horse riders need to be able to GET OFF the steep eastern approach especially now the shared path will be entering from the south at the steepest point. Signage will be installed to instruct both horse riders and cyclists to dismount before crossing through the underpass. Who will be ensuring the cyclists dismount and walk through the underpass??? Signage will also be installed to instruct pedestrians or cyclists to remain outside the underpass if it is already occupied by a horse. Again, ACTEA’s experience elsewhere is that advisory signage is purely decorative Safety</p>

³ http://203.9.249.10/e-registerfiles/pubnote/pdf/SUPP-202138722-S144C-STAKE_H-01.pdf Page 25

	mirrors will be installed at the bends in the path.
ACTEA requests that the shared path be moved in its entirety to the eastern verge of William Hovell Drive.	Due to the various constraints from different parts of the project, having the Shared Path on the western (we assume this is a typo!) side of WHD in this location is deemed the most appropriate

2. The Underpass from The Pinnacle Nature Reserve to Karma Nature Reserve.

ACTEA and the BNT Coordinator, mindful of the future pressure on the National Trail as Canberra becomes increasingly urbanised, have discussed with Parks and Conservation the possibility of someday routing the Trail from The Pinnacle, via the stock underpass near the entrance to Karma, down the western edge of Whitlam. This proposal being positively received, we informed Gerrard Coffey, the William Hovell Drive Project Manager, and he contacted Daniel Iglesias directly on **27 March 2018**. See text of email below.

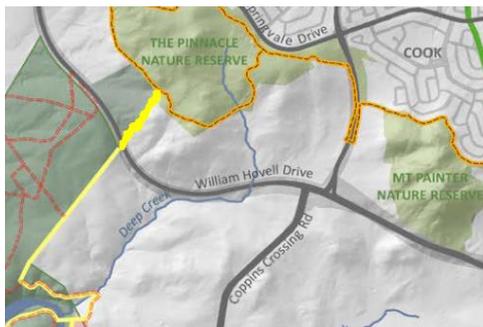
Figure 3

Morning Daniel

You might be aware Civil Infrastructure Planning in EPSDD are delivering a roads feasibility study for WHD. As part of this delivery we met with ACTEA yesterday to discuss the BNT underpass and other interface with the future road upgrade.

As an aside ACTEA asked for consideration to be given to modifying the proposed equestrian trail so it meets up with the BNT as follows.

I advised ACTEA that I would contact you to commence the consultation with you for this.



Proposed / requested equestrian trail location to link to BNT.

Gerard Coffey

Civil Infrastructure Planning

EPSDD

Aware that Parks wanted to use the underpass to move stock between The Pinnacle and Karma for management purposes, ACTEA was relaxed about leaving this matter to them and understood they would be talking to Gerard Coffey as part of the first round of consultation on the road duplication.

We were astonished to find that the drawings for the Karma underpass made no provision for any use other than cyclists and there was no obvious connection between The Pinnacle extension and the access to the underpass. ACTEA wrote to Daniel Iglesias, copied to Stuart

Jeffress and Mark Sweaney, on 9 August 2021 asking for a conversation about this development which seemed to rule out any use of the stock underpass for an equestrian connection to the Whitlam buffer zone. We never heard back from anyone in Parks.

Figure 4 Karma Stock Underpass 2021 Plan

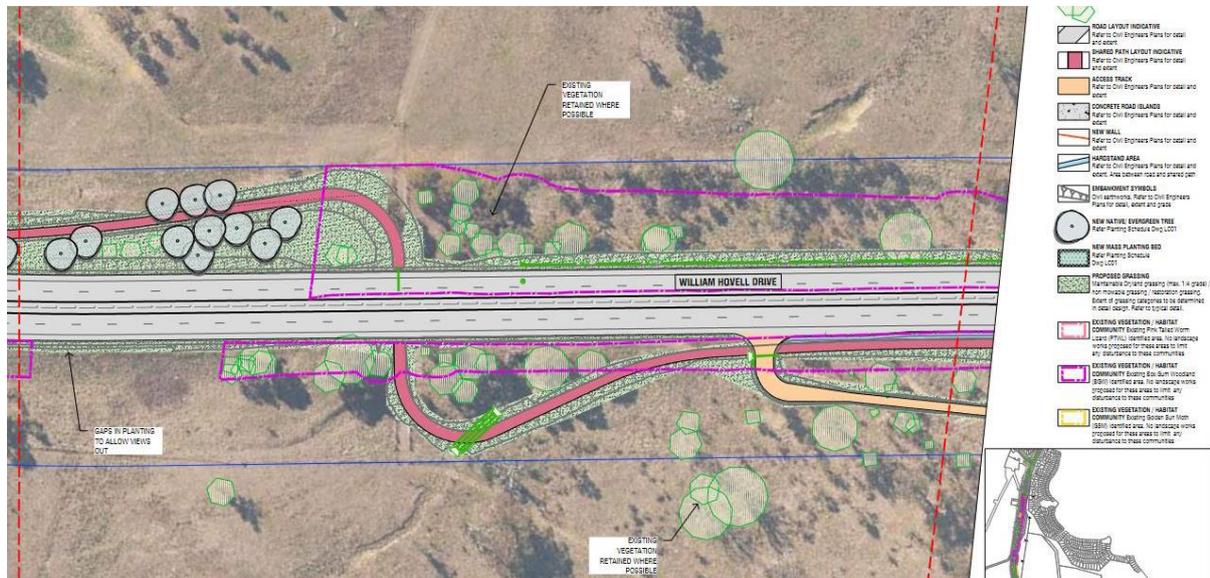
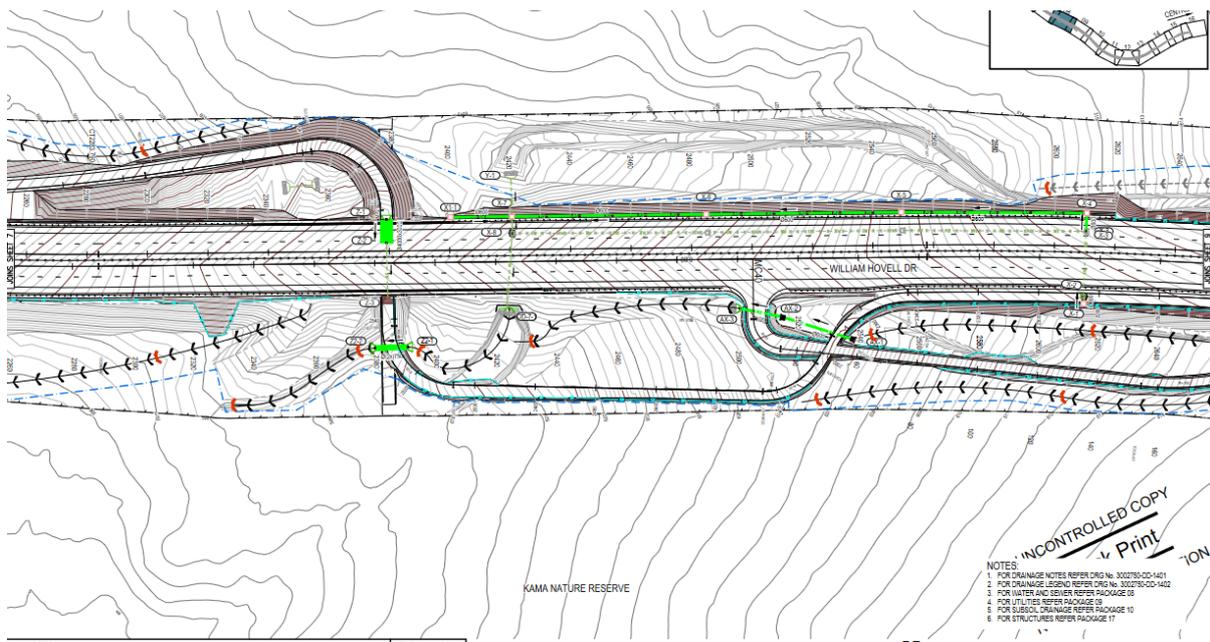


Figure 5 Karma Stock Underpass 2022 Plan



From the above drawing it is plain that there has never been any intention of connecting the stock underpass to the gate in the fence of The Pinnacle Extension. If anything, the design of

the bike path has made what is currently a slight slope into an unnavigable obstacle. If this design is implemented there will be no clear, safe way to get cattle, let alone horses, across William Hovell Drive at this point.

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