



WESTLEIGH PARK MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL NETWORK

Overview

Hornsby Shire Council is seeking input from key stakeholders including the mountain biking community and environmental groups to assist in the design of a formal mountain bike trail network at Westleigh Park and a possible link to Hornsby Park.

The project aims to co-design an appropriate network of mountain bike trails while protecting the high-value biodiversity at Westleigh Park. Any future approvals will need to be sought after the design has been finalised.

• What has been undertaken to date?

Council, through its external consultants, has undertaken 1 on 1 discussions with key stakeholders to better understand their views. Workshops have been held with the mountain biking community, environmental groups and other key stakeholders to understand their opinions and concerns. The four targeted workshops held were well attended and generated a breadth of ideas and perspectives. In addition to the workshops, a webinar was held to present key information associated with the site.

• What are the next steps?

Following the targeted stakeholder workshops, Council will run a series of co-design workshops to develop a mountain bike trail network that meets community needs and protects the ecology of the site. Expressions of interest are open until Tuesday 10th May 2022 for individuals to be considered for the co-design workshops. Expressions of interest are being sought through the project website.

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

A series of questions and answers are contained on the next page.

Development consent for the trail works would subsequently be required. The appropriate approval authority will be confirmed when the overall design and extent of works is finalised.

Q: Why is Council looking to establish formalised mountain biking trails at Westleigh Park?

A: Mountain biking in Westleigh Park is not new. There are well-established, yet unsanctioned mountain biking trails on the site, which have been present at Westleigh Park for many years, when the site was under the ownership of Sydney Water.

Hornsby Shire Council purchased the 36 hectare site in 2016 to provide additional recreational facilities for the local community.

Community demand for mountain biking facilities has been identified in recreational studies undertaken by Hornsby Shire Council since the early 2000s. Whilst Council constructed the very popular and extremely well utilised Hornsby Mountain Bike Trail at Old Mans Valley in 2013, the sport has experienced significant growth in participation and unmet community demand for additional facilities remains.

Council hopes that the introduction of formalised mountain biking trails will deliver safe recreational experiences that a broad section of the community can enjoy, while protecting, managing and monitoring environmental impacts.

Q: What environmental concerns are there regarding formalising mountain biking trails at Westleigh Park?

A: Westleigh Park is home to high-value bushland and critically endangered species, especially in the southern half of the park.

Council and the community has a responsibility to ensure that the principles of avoid, minimise and mitigate are applied when considering recreational activities in areas of high value biodiversity. Environmental concerns regarding mountain biking trails include habitat loss and damage to vegetation through track widening, soil compaction and erosion, and tree removal.

There are also concerns that increased movements through the bush will generate noise and other disturbances, disrupting the behaviour of local fauna and generating long-term impacts. For further information on the impacts recreation can have on biodiversity, listen to the webinar Council ran on 23 March.

Q: What is Council seeking to achieve through this community engagement?

A: Working with key mountain biking and environmental stakeholder, Council intends this co-design process to deliver a preferred mountain bike trail network that will provide an enjoyable experience whilst minimising environmental impacts on high value bushland diversity.

Q: Who will be the approval authority for the proposed trail network?

A: Following the co-design process, Council endorsement would be sought for the preferred mountain bike trails to be incorporated into the Master Plan for the site.

Development consent for the trail works would subsequently be required. The appropriate approval authority will be confirmed when the overall design and extent of works is finalised.

Q: Is Council looking into a trail link between Westleigh Park and Hornsby Park?

A: The primary purpose of this engagement centres on the trail network at Westleigh Park. However, the alignment of a connection between Westleigh Park and Hornsby Park is something that will also be considered as part of this co-design engagement.

Q: What are the next steps in this process?

A: Next step is to continue the co-design process to produce a preferred trail network alignment in Westleigh Park. This co-design process will consider the perspectives of both mountain biking and environmental stakeholders.

The proposed trail network will inform the updated Westleigh Park Master Plan and be reported to Council for endorsement.

Following endorsement of the updated Westleigh Park Master Plan, development consent will be sought for the entire Park, including assessment against the relevant legislation, independently of Council.