

# Mount Glen Rock Adventure Park – Draft Master Plan

## Frequently Asked Questions

Version 2: 20 June 2022

\* New FAQs

### GENERAL

#### Background

Where did the idea originate from?

Mount Glen Rock is synonymous with Esk, but Somerset residents and wider community have never had safe and legal access to the site.

Community representatives, including those on Council's Tourism Advisory Committee (now referred to as the Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee), had requested Council investigate potential recreation and tourism opportunities on Mount Glen Rock.

In July 2020 Council purchased 127 hectares on the western face of Mount Glen Rock with the view of providing community access to the iconic location for the first time and providing multi-use recreation facilities. Preliminary research has since been conducted into the development over the site to inform Council of what is possible. A further preliminary assessment of Economic Potential, Constraints and Opportunities was conducted in June 2021 to inform the approach.

How was the steering committee selected?

Council resolved to form the Steering Committee in October 2020. The Steering Committee features elected Councillors and relevant Council Officers. The Steering Committee was selected to promptly progress feasibility research and the development of a master plan to guide the long-term development of the Mount Glen Rock site. The Steering Committee meets and reports to quarterly and may invite community representatives to meetings.

The name MGR Adventure Park brings connotations of adrenalin and high octane, is this consistent with the vision for MGR of maintaining a natural landscape?

The name of the Mount Glen Rock Adventure Park is aimed to align with other great natural features and attractions that we have within Somerset. For example, Lake Somerset, Lake Wivenhoe, the Mid-Brisbane River, the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail, Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield and Skydive Ramblers.

Council welcomes feedback regarding the name.

There is concern that work has already started on the Mount Glen Rock Adventure Park without public consultation. Can you explain what work has taken place so far and how that relates to the draft Master Plan?

Following the bushfires in 2019, Council successfully applied for a grant through the Queensland Reconstruction Authority 2019 Bushfires Local Economic Recovery Program. This grant provided funding for upgrades to the Sandy Creek Fire Break, which protects the township of Esk, a summit trail up Mount Glen Rock and a pedestrian bridge from Hassall Street to the Sandy Creek Fire Break Trail.

Work was completed on the Sandy Creek Fire Break Trail in 2021. The fire break is now open for use as a shared trail for walkers.

## **Consultation**

What is the process for community consultation post the information session?

Council encouraged the community to have their say through an online survey available via [somerset.qld.gov.au](http://somerset.qld.gov.au) Feedback from the community Have Your Say Survey closed on Friday, 29 April 2022. Council extended the Have Your Say Survey deadline multiple times following significant interest from the local community and a significant flooding event.

Council is currently reviewing feedback and, where appropriate, will incorporate suggestions into a revised master plan. Council will also include feedback from other stakeholders, including traditional custodians.

Whilst the Have Your Say period is now closed. Council will continue to welcome feedback from stakeholders throughout the project's progression.

\* It appears that the Have Your Say Survey could be completed multiple times by the same person. Does Council have confidence in the feedback collected through the survey?

The Have Your Say Survey was established to prevent people completing the Survey multiple times. This was managed by restricting the use of the same IP address (i.e. same device).

Council has identified a number of duplicate IP addresses but this has not affected the overall validity of the survey. Survey results will be collated and reported to Council and will be made available to the public through that forum.

\* How was the draft Master Plan developed?

In developing the draft Master Plan for public comment, Council has consulted with various industry experts to identify the opportunities and constraints of the site. These experts include outdoor recreation experts, ecological consultants, civil designers, landscape consultants, quantity surveys and economic modelling consultants.

Council has now sought community feedback and engaged with stakeholder groups through the 'Have Your Say' survey. This feedback will be reviewed and incorporated into a revised Master Plan.

\* Will Council seek further feedback regarding a revised Master Plan and is there any intention for the Council to engage further with the Community regarding the proposed development?

Council will continue to invite community feedback and engagement through various forums through the planning, development, construction and operational phases.

### **Social Benefits**

\* Can Council explain the benefits of the park on the social, physical and mental wellbeing on residents?

The potential benefits that have been identified specifically for the proposed Mount Glen Rock development include:

- Improvements to long-term health, leisure, family and community wellbeing
- Increased social morale
- Enhancing regional pride within local communities
- Creating connections between people and places
- Attracting new residents to small rural communities
- Increased investment and development of service and support industries

In addition, Queensland Mountain Bike Strategy and GHD Report for AusCycling identify:

- Improved mental and physical health outcomes, which can result in reduced health care costs and reduced risk of disease and illness
- Opportunities for friends and families to socialise and spend time together
- Provides an outdoor classroom for children to learn about nature, culture and history while being active
- It is a form of 'green exercise' with research suggesting that undertaking exercise in natural environments results in greater benefit than activity alone.

### **Economic Growth**

Has Council conducted research into the proposed economic growth and was this based on the experience of other similar projects?

Council has organised two external consultants to undertake research to review the economic impact of the proposed Mount Glen Rock Adventure Park.

Under the current development proposal about 15 full-time jobs would be created and inject over \$5 million dollars into the Somerset economy. The longer-term economic benefit would see \$600,000 invested into the Somerset community annually and support eight full-time jobs.

The economic modelling uses a range of sources to create a model that most accurately reflects potential economic impact of the project, including trends and costs estimates from industry experts.

#### How have you determined the economic benefits of the MGR Park?

A preliminary Economic Potential, Constraints and Opportunities assessment was conducted in 2021.

A further Economic Impact assessment was completed in 2022 by AEC Group that estimated that significant economic impacts would be generated. A Cost-Benefit Analysis revealed the project was economically viable.

The project will support economic activity and jobs in the Somerset local government area (LGA) both from construction activity as well as ongoing maintenance activity. Once developed, the project is also anticipated to deliver a range of benefits to the Somerset region, including:

- Improved physical and mental health outcomes for the Somerset community through increased access to outdoor recreational space and associated increased participation in mountain biking, bushwalking and rock climbing.
- Enhanced opportunities for social and community interaction and wellbeing, through the provision of a public space for local residents to congregate and interact within the region.
- Increased tourism and visitor expenditure in the region through provision of additional activities for tourists to enjoy during their stay in the region.

#### How will Council ensure that any economic benefit will be to the advantage of the town, not just a few businesses?

The economic benefits include empirical spending by visitors to the region through the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail. This spend may include drinks, meals, accommodation, transfers, purchases from local retail shops and increases based on the length of stay.

The support of full-time employment within the area will also have flow-on effects throughout the community. Additional housing requirements, demand for services (e.g. hairdressing, trade services), more children in schools and greater contribution to community groups.

## Finance

#### Can you clarify the information contained in the budget flyer received with the 2021-22 financial year rates notice and the draft Mount Glen Rock Development Master Plan?

The budget flyer covered projects that Council has received funding for through the Queensland Reconstruction Authority 2019 Bushfires Local Economic Recovery Program. This includes the upgrade of the Sandy Creek Fire Break Trail. The trails and features currently proposed in the draft Mount Glen Rock Master Plan are not yet funded or approved by Council.

Who has financed the cost of the project so far?

Somerset Regional Council, with the support of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority.

This project is still in its infancy. There are further studies required to inform the potential development of the site including cultural and environmental impact studies, before the project can progress to detailed design and acquire necessary State and Federal approvals.

How will the ongoing maintenance of the trails, trailheads and amenities be financed?

Council will incorporate maintenance of all facilities into current maintenance practices and develop a long-term plan for the sustainable management of the facility.

\* What is the proposal for insurance liabilities for MTB trails?

The recreational infrastructure provided in the Mount Glen Rock Adventure Park would be covered under Council's existing public liability insurance.

Council will undertake risk assessments activities to occur on site to ensure risk is adequately managed and users can safely enjoy the facilities.

## **Future Use**

Is there any intention to further expand the park in the future?

Council's intent is to develop Mount Glen Rock in line with the final approved Master Plan, once developed and adopted by Council.

## **CULTURAL HERITAGE**

How will Council address concerns over Cultural Heritage impacts?

Further on-site surveys need to be conducted to determine the location and extent of culturally significant sites. Council has reviewed the Cultural Heritage Register which does not presently list any areas of significance on Mount Glen Rock.

Council has had preliminary discussions with traditional custodians, with further discussions and surveys to be completed in due course. Understanding potential cultural heritage impacts will be critical to progressing to detailed design. Strategies will be implemented to protect sites and features of cultural significance.

\* How will the impact of rock climbing be assessed on the cultural heritage, geology and also the habitat of the brush tailed wallaby?

The impact of rock climbing on cultural heritage, geology and habitat will be included in the cultural heritage and ecological studies that will be conducted.

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Have studies been conducted to determine if the ecology (fauna, flora and ecosystem) will be impacted?

The Mount Glen Rock Master Plan is in a draft, concept level of development.

The draft Master Plan has already taken into consideration Category C Regulated vegetation, Wetlands protected under the Vegetation Management Act 1999 and Protected watercourses under the Water Act 2000. None of the proposed trails are located in those areas.

Environmental Impact Studies, including on site surveying, will be conducted as recommended in the draft Master Plan, including:

- Surveying 10m buffer areas each side of proposed trail locations (20m width)
- Targeted threatened fauna surveys that comply with the applicable Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) during peak activity periods
- Targeted threatened flora surveys during peak flowering periods

Following the flora and fauna surveys, and the identification of significant ecological areas, strategies will be implemented to protect sites and features of cultural significance.

There is concern about trails causing erosion and sedimentation of creeks, how will this be managed?

Proposed trails would follow the contour of the land to ensure a minimisation in disturbance to the environment.

Trail widths for single track mountain bike are approximately the width of a mountain bike handlebars. Shared use trails are wider but follow the same approach. Trails seek to make use of the natural landscape and complement it. Where required, rock armouring and other natural construction techniques may be utilised.

There are requirements for the angle and slope of the trails to ensure that water follows the natural course of the land, not the trail.

All trails will be developed in line with Australian and international mountain biking standards.

\* Given the impact dogs have on native wildlife, particularly koalas, will dogs be permitted in the Mount Glen Rock park?

The impact of dogs on wildlife and flora will be taken into account during the ecological studies that will be conducted. A decision on whether dogs will be permitted on Mount Glen Rock will be informed by those studies.

\* How will the development of Mount Glen Rock benefit the environment, in particular wildlife and habitat?

The development of Mount Glen Rock will benefit the environment in the following ways:

1. Minimise the use of undeveloped areas of the mountain by encouraging the use of the trail network
2. Good quality trail design and construction will minimise the construction of unsanctioned trails
3. Identify areas of key ecological value and cultural heritage for protection
4. Encourage the community to be involved in environmental activities (e.g. revegetation)
5. Passive identification of wildlife requiring assistance (e.g. koalas)
6. Improved bushfire management through the use of trails as line of defence, preventative burns and escape routes for wildlife

\* Does Council know which specific areas of the project site will be disturbed?

It is too early to determine exactly how much land will be impacted by the trails.

The proposed development allows for approximately 28km trails, lookouts and day use areas. During the development of the draft Master Plan, Category C Regulated Vegetation areas, protected wetlands and watercourses have already been avoided. Further 'on ground' ecological studies, covering the entire trail network, are required to confirm the presence of key ecological values.

This information, in conjunction with Cultural Heritage surveys, will inform the exact location and length of the trails, lookouts and day use areas to ensure minimal impact on flora, fauna and cultural heritage.

\* How is the Council proposing to protect the bat colony that is located near the proposed Francis Terrace Day Use area?

The impact of the proposed development on the bat colony will be assessed during the ecological studies that will be conducted. Recommendations from those studies will be taken into consideration in the revised Master Plan.

\* How does the Council propose to manage weed dispersal from mountain bikes and boots?

The ecological studies will assist in informing Council what currently exists in the area that requires management. As the project progresses, a Weed and Disease Management Plan will be developed and implemented for Mount Glen Rock. This will include information on how to prevent the spread of existing declared weeds/diseases, controlling existing declared weeds/diseases within the area and preventing the introduction of new weeds/diseases into the area.

\* Will Council be making copies of any impact assessments (i.e. flora, fauna, ecosystems, cultural heritage) available to the public?

Council endeavour to provide information to the public in a timely manner, where appropriate.

## TRAIL USE

There is a large proportion of trails for mountain bikes compared to hikers, why are there not more hiking trails?

Council is open to feedback on the types of trails available. Council has feedback regarding the proportion of hiking trails to mountain bike trails and will be taking this into consideration in the final version of the master plan.

It is important to note that the mountain bike and hiker experiences are different and take different amounts of time to enjoy or complete.

There is concern that there is going to be 'adrenalin junkies' racing down the trails, can you explain the nature of the trails that are going to be constructed and who the target market is?

The majority of mountain bike trails are classified as green (easy) and blue (intermediate) in line with the International Mountain Bike Association trail classification system. The Sandy Creek Fire Break Trail, which is a shared use trail, is classified as white (very easy). There are no black (difficult) or double black (extreme) trails.

In relation to hiking trails, Sandy Creek is Grade 1 (suitable for people with a disability with assistance). The Summit Trail is proposed to be Class 3 (some bushwalking experience necessary) and the Ridge Trail is proposed to be Class 4 (experienced bushwalkers) trail in sections.

The park is aimed at beginners or those with intermediate experience (e.g. families with young kids or older individuals seeking something a bit more challenging than the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail). It will give some progression for beginners. Those looking for an extreme style of mountain biking will not find satisfaction at Mount Glen Rock.

How is the safety of walkers on shared trails going to be ensured and the risk of collision between MTB and walkers mitigated?

Shared trails are ascending trails only. These trails are dual direction for walkers and ascent only trails for mountain bikes. There are no shared descending trails.

This ensures that the mountain bikes are moving slowly uphill, or in some cases will be walking their bike up the hill.



Common shared trail courtesy rules will apply:

- Riders must yield to hikers and provide indication (i.e. Call out) that they are approaching.
- Hikers must be aware of their surroundings and always hike single file, not taking up more than half of the trail space
- Both need to ensure they are able to hear the environment around them.

Would the Council consider allowing horses to access Mount Glen Rock? How would you assess the impact?

At this stage, no horse access has been planned, however the BVRT Horse Bypass Trail that currently runs behind the caravan park and down Russell Street, is proposed to be realigned to follow the Sandy Creek Fire Break Trail, minimising exposure of riders and horses to vehicles.

What is the plan for controlling noise to minimise impact on residents near the Rock?

There will be no motorised vehicles permitted (excluding wheelchairs and assisted transportation devices).

The majority of mountain bike trails proposed are singletrack. This means that the width of the track (approximately handlebar width) does not allow for bikes to ride side, avoiding the requirement for communication.

While it is too early to provide specific detail, it is likely that the park will be closed at night.

What access will be made for the elderly or those with disabilities?

Where possible and viable, low gradient trails will be installed to ensure that trails are accessible to all.

Given the terrain and topography this will not be achievable on all sites, but universal design principles will be considered throughout the planning process.

How will access to the trails overnight or after severe weather events be monitored?

Access will be monitored in line with a site management plan, which will be developed as the project progresses.

A mixture of surveillance, community feedback and other measures will be utilised to implement mitigation strategies to deter individuals from accessing unsafe trails.

\* How will council prevent unauthorised access to the trails by motorised vehicles (i.e. motocross bikes, 4WD, small vehicles)?

The typical width of a mountain bike or hiking trail is approximately handlebar width. This will prevent access to small vehicles/4WDs. Shared use trails, or fire break trails may accommodate vehicles for emergency access purposes. These trails will be cordoned off using appropriate means such as bollards, gates or chains.

\* How will Council prevent members of the public from entering private property adjacent to the development?

Well designed, constructed and signposted trails will minimise the risk of members of the public entering private property. Additional signs may also be erected at/near boundaries.

\* Will Council consider constructing wildlife hides/birdwatching hides to encourage other types of visitors to the area?

Council will continue to consider alternative recreation-based activities that may occur on Mount Glen Rock.

Further information from ecological studies is required so that we can understand the nature of the wildlife, including birds, that presently exists on Mount Glen Rock before a decision can be made.

\* Will council be considering the provision of educational information, signage to inform visitors and residents of any culturally significant items/areas of interest, flora, fauna, birdlife etc.?

The draft Master Plan allows for the provision of interpretive and trailhead signage, information, maps and wayfinding.

Further on-site surveying is required to understand cultural and ecological values found on site. Such values, where appropriate, will be incorporated into interpretive signage.

## **TOWN SERVICES AND AMENITIES (previously PARKING)**

Has Council considered the impact of additional vehicles on local residents as well as access to local services?

Council is aware of the additional vehicle impacts that a project such as this may bring. Council is investigating potential additional opportunities for car parking in the township, as well as utilising existing car parking more efficiently.

In the draft Master Plan, Council is seeking to create a balance between an appropriate level of parking to meet peak usage and an economic and environment outcome to achieve the best outcome for residents and reduce environmental impact.

Council is investigating potential additional opportunities for car parking in the township, as well as utilising existing car parking more efficiently.

\* Is there enough accommodation options in Esk to support this development, in particular low-cost accommodation?

There are a range of accommodation options in Esk currently that are able to cater to an increased level of recreational tourism. Council is currently investigating other suitable sites within Esk that may cater to caravans and camping at low cost.

\* Please explain the decision to locate the pump track in Pipeliner park and any benefits that it will bring compared to the loss of parkland

Pipeliner Park was chosen for the location of the Pump Track for the following reasons:

1. Proximity to a carpark (off Esk Hampton Rd)
2. Ease of access for families
3. Located away from a main road (Esk Hampton Rd)
4. Adjacent to the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail
5. Existing drainage line adjacent to the site
6. The site is relatively flat, removing the need for extensive preliminary earthworks

The benefits of a pump track include:

1. They are suitable for all ages and all skill levels
2. Provides extra activities for the youth in the area
3. Builds skills and confidence in a safe environment, away from roads
4. Encourages community spirit
5. Promotes an active outdoor lifestyle

## **EMERGENCIES**

Have emergency services (SES, QAS, QPS, QFES, Esk Hospital) been consulted about the proposed development?

Emergency Services have been informed of the project and consultation is ongoing.

Are there sufficient resources to manage any additional pressures on the system, in particular QAS and Esk Hospital?

Council has sought feedback on this directly with the relevant stakeholders and will continue to liaise with such parties to ensure mitigation strategies are implemented.

How will bushfire risks be mitigated and what is the plan to evacuate people from the area in case of bushfire?

Council is seeking feedback on this directly with the relevant stakeholders. Evacuation and communication plans would be incorporated into the overall management of the site, as too would bushfire management.

\* There is limited to no mobile service on the eastern face of Mount Glen Rock, will people be able to access mobile services in an emergency?

In developing an operational plan for the development, Council will consider emergency communications across the site, including mobile phone coverage.

In some locations mobile phone coverage may not be possible. In line with industry standards, Council will provide information for users to access that clearly identify trail grades, lengths and durations so that users may adequately plan ahead and inform a responsible person of their whereabouts. As with hiking in remote parks, users should never be in remote areas on their own.

\* Some activities may contribute to fire ignition (i.e. smoking, use of glass), what is Council's position on smoking and use of glass in the Mount Glen Rock Park?

In due course, Council will develop a park operational plan which will be informed by the guidelines established for parks and forests by the Queensland Department of Environment and Science - Parks and Forests group. In line with Queensland Health changes to smoking laws, smoking will be prohibited within 10m of most visitor facilities, including picnic tables, barbecues, shelter shed and toilets.

## **MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

How will Council manage unsanctioned trails?

Council will draft and incorporate a long-term management plan of the site in due course. The management plan will incorporate the surveillance, monitoring and disruption of unsanctioned trails.

The implementation of a well-planned trail network from the outset is significantly important to deterring individuals from creating unsanctioned trails.

Can council provide detailed plans on how the park is going to be maintained to retain the natural landscape and mitigate against damage from weather, littering and overuse?

It is too early to provide specifics on a detailed management plan for Mount Glen Rock. This will be developed as the project progresses similar to any new community park, sporting or recreation facility.

There is concern over the top of the rock being used as a toilet and/or littering site.

Adequate amenities are proposed to be constructed at Lions Park and Francis Terrace with existing amenities available for use at Pipeliner Park, Esk.

Somerset Regional Council has shown a commitment to protecting park facilities and other natural environments as demonstrated by the recent management of sites around the mid-Brisbane River.

\* How will the installation and maintenance of the bolts be managed? Will any climber be able to install bolts?

Somerset Regional Council will be responsible for installing and maintaining all bolts on any climbing routes that might be established. This is to ensure the safety of both the rock face and the climber. Climbers will not be permitted to install/remove bolts in the rock face. Any identified unauthorised bolts will be removed.

\* How will council manage unauthorised use of the day use areas, such as overnight camping, consumption of alcohol, night-time hang out etc.

Council will develop a long-term plan for the sustainable management of the facility. As outlined in the draft Masterplan, a visitor code of conduct will be in place similar to that adopted in Queensland Parks and Forests. At this stage, camping will not be permitted on Mount Glen Rock.