



Engagement report Rail Corridor Landscape Plan



January 2024

Report written by Sue Sheridan and Simone Dalton

Table of Contents

Background to the project	2
Collated and themed summary of the engagement.....	4
Engagement at Kalkee Road Childrens Hub.....	10
The Engagement Process	11
Frequently Asked Questions	11
Rail Corridor Landscape Plan Engagement	13
Media release	14
Survey (online and hardcopy)	15
Engagement Summary	166

Name of project Horsham Rail Corridor Draft Landscape Plan

Dates of engagement November 22-23 2023.

Purpose of engagement seek feedback and input on the draft rail corridor landscape plan.

Level of impact High

Community engagement goal Consult

Promise to the community: We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decisions. We will seek feedback on drafts and proposals

Background to the project

The Horsham North Local Area Plan has been informed by previous background work, current research, investigation and valuable feedback from the Horsham North community, for which this plan is intended to serve. The *Horsham North Issues and Opportunities Paper (March 2022)* forms the basis and background work for the Plan, providing the analysis and context for a goal setting framework to guide future change within the precinct. The Rail Corridor forms a key part of the Horsham North Local Area Plan.

The Rail Corridor Landscape Plan provided designs of landscaping options within the rail corridor area. It took into consideration parking, connecting paths, plantings, art and the future provision of a bus terminal (should it be required). Connecting paths to David Street, the Horsham Railway Station, Wawunna Road and Kalkee Road were essential considerations in making the potential new underpass accessible and safe for all uses.

Designs for larger open space area applied a native 'bush' theme comprising larger native trees, shrubs, grasses and bush rocks. Landscaping designs aimed to bring the Silo Art, proposed new underpass and the railway station together.

Design for pedestrian lighting address safe levels of lighting when traveling through the underpass. Connecting paths with feature accent lighting within the underpass culverts and around the silo art could provide a visual experience and future talking points.

In keeping with the 'bush' theme depicted in the Silo Art illustrations, hard and soft landscape materials will be looked at to replicate the native and natural Australian bush look throughout the proposed landscape treatment. Native dryland plant species and natural materials will assist in long-term maintenance while also adding a sense of place and linkage between the Silo's and railway station.

The Horsham North Local Area Plan

Theme 2: Access and Connections - 7.5 Active Travel within the Rail Corridor

The rail corridor will provide a safe corridor for cyclists and pedestrians and facilitate convenient access for commuters.

The rail corridor was consistently the number one issue raised by the community due to its unmistakable presence as you enter Horsham North via the Kalkee Road Bridge. People are presented with a waste-land which is further compounded by the industrial blocks to the north.

Whilst the rail corridor is perhaps the biggest issue it is also the biggest opportunity to address in Horsham North with the potential for it to become a place of community focus. Connectivity can be significantly improved along both sides of the rail corridor, allowing freedom of movement and potentially avoiding the use of Kalkee Road as a crossing point.

Theme 3: Public and Open Spaces – 8.5 Shared Use of the Rail Corridor

The rail corridor is a long term opportunity to provide additional public open space that increases amenity and appearance for fronting neighbourhoods.

There is a degree of overlap with the Access & Connections Chapter, given that the rail corridor provides a range of opportunities that would benefit the community in terms of:

- *Pedestrian and cyclist connectivity*
- *Future public open space*
- *Public transport connectivity*
- *Enhanced character, identity and amenity for Horsham North*

10.6 THE RAIL CORRIDOR (These directions relate to Figure 8. Rail Corridor - Public + Open Spaces)

The following directions are set out for the Rail corridor to ensure coordinated future planning:

Action listed in the plan	Status Sept 2023
Continue discussions with VicTrack regarding the long-term use and acquisition of the available sections (lots) within the Rail Corridor, owned by VicTrack.	In progress
Ensure that the rail corridor is suitably remediated for future public use.	To occur once land is purchased
Integrate the design of all interfaces with local streets and footpaths (including Mill Street and Railway Avenue)	Included in draft landscape plan
Undertake a landscape plan for the entirety of the Rail Corridor (VicTrack land) in order to further undertake detailed design of the four sections of land to maximise their open space, pedestrian/cyclist and public transport connectivity opportunities (dependent on contamination, remediation and land required for train operations)	Included in draft landscape plan
Liaise with the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) regarding the establishment of a new underpass Furthermore, continue to advocate for the re-establishment of regional passenger rail services.	Ongoing
Engage a landscape design professional to undertake landscape plans for each of the four sections of the VicTrack land, ensuring that public access and connectivity are the number one priority.	Included in draft landscape plan
Look to international examples (such as the "High Line" in New York City) and local examples (such as the Level Crossing Removal Project) as a precedent for the conversion of former rail corridors into attractive and popular public spaces.	Included in draft landscape plan?

Rail Underpass Investigation Horsham North Local Area Plan

A third rail underpass location in proximity to the railway station has been investigated and is considered feasible from a design perspective. Funding for this third underpass will continue to be investigated as part of the Rail Corridor Landscape Plan.

HRCC strategic and operational plans (beyond Horsham North Local Area Plan) which connect to the Rail Corridor

Plan	Summary	Date
Greening Greater Horsham	A municipal tree strategy	2021-2031
HRCC Council Plan	Liveability, accessibility sustainability and community	2021-2024
Horsham Municipal and Shared Path Plan 2023-2033	Under Development	Consultation due in Feb 2024
Open Spaces Strategy	Open Space Strategy	2029
HRCC Health and Wellbeing Plan	Active living, social connectivity, safety priorities	2021-2025

Collated and themed summary of the engagement.

The Rail Corridor Landscape Plan provided designs of landscaping options within the rail corridor area. It took into consideration parking, connecting paths, plantings, art and the future provision of a bus terminal (should it be required). Connecting paths to David Street, the Horsham Railway Station, Wawunna Road and Kalkee Road were essential considerations in making the potential new underpass accessible and safe for all uses.

The Rail Corridor Landscape Plan was presented to the community over a 2 week period in November 2023. Seeking feedback by way of a survey and face to face sessions.

40 people filled in a survey 19 people attended face to face sessions held at Kalkee Road Children's Hub.

95% of respondents see it as visually appealing

90% say it provides good connections

87% think it has enough open space

82 % think it will be safer

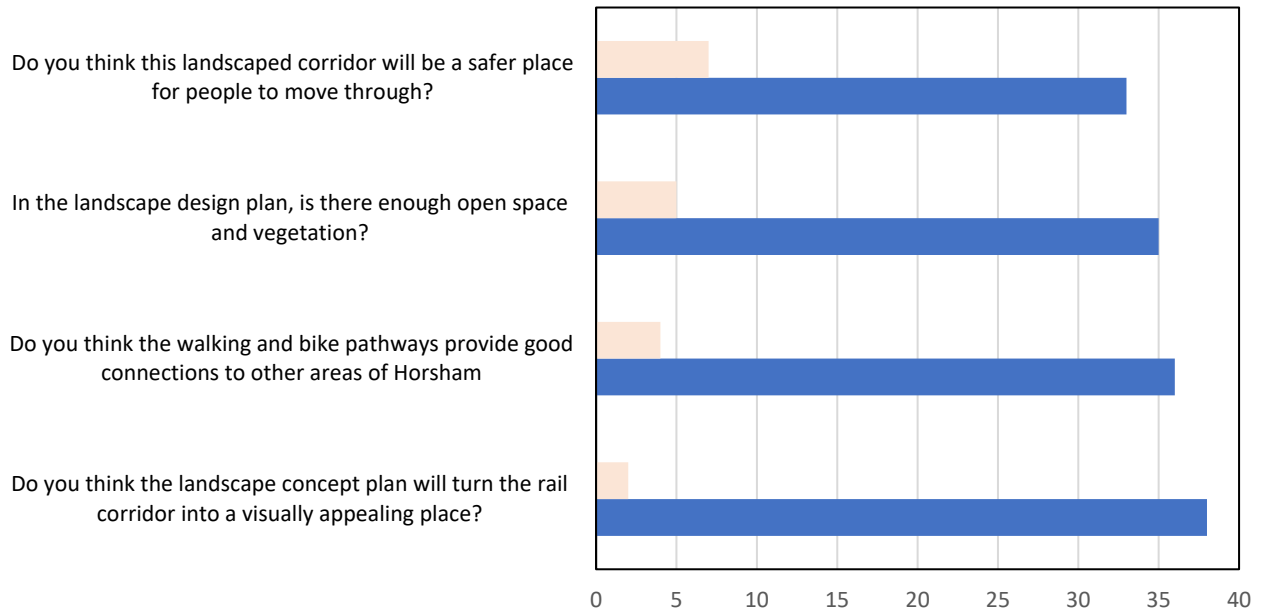
Overwhelming Support for the project:

Comments on the plan:

1. No issues with what is being proposed
2. Thank you for all you are doing, keep going
3. Congratulations on the longer-term planning
4. Like sound of another underpass
5. Parking for silo art also sounds good
6. Stop asking for feedback and do something
7. If this proposal is approved can it happen quickly. At the moment it is a complete eyesore and is embarrassing.
8. About time this got moving.
9. Thanks for your efforts Sue & team - also for the opportunity to contribute
10. Good to see something being done
11. About time this got moving.
12. Good to see something being done
13. I think that it is a fabulous plan
14. The proposed landscaping will be wonderful and passengers on the train will be very impressed by Horsham that cannot be said for now.
15. Love the different types of plant;

40 survey Responses were received further breakdown is below:

Survey Responses



	Do you think the landscape concept plan will turn the rail corridor into a visually appealing place?	Do you think the walking and bike pathways provide good connections to other areas of Horsham	In the landscape design plan, is there enough open space and vegetation?	Do you think this landscaped corridor will be a safer place for people to move through?
No	2	4	5	7
yes	38	36	35	33

■ No ■ yes

Comments and responses to various themes via the Survey:

Visual appeal?	Response
Too busy;	Noted
Need open space for Wimmera;	There are areas of open space included through the design
not reflective of the area;	Noted
Consider opening up the design;	Trees will be planted to ensure line of sight along pathways, with open green areas
Signage and silo viewing	
Signs at silo need to be situated so that people know the cockatoo mural is there too;	Wayfinding signs will be installed throughout the site
consider an information board at silo;	Yes, will be installed including a map of interest points, public toilets, walking and cycling tracks
Request viewing platform for Solo art	This will be investigated and we will look to uplift the canopy of the Peppercorn trees
Suggest signage highlighting paths to police paddock	Yes, will be installed including a map of interest points, public toilets, walking and cycling tracks
Peppercorn trees block silo view;	We will look to uplift the canopy of the Peppercorn trees
Need clear line of sight to the silo	Noted
Pathways and connectivity?	
Fencing	
Will safety fencing impact the walkways?	Fencing will be part of the process but also designed for line of sight, safety and amenity
Need safe fence between pathways/area and the railway to protect adventurous children;	Fencing will be part of the process but also designed for line of sight, safety and amenity
Fence along Mill street needs to be replaced with new one or trees.	Fencing will be part of the process but also designed for line of sight, safety and amenity
Footpaths	
Better places in Horsham for footpaths;	Mapping of footpaths is in progress. Refer protocol for at least one footpath on every street
Limited paths around town area;	Mapping of footpaths is in progress. Refer protocol for at least one footpath on every street
Areas in the south don't have footpaths outside houses eg Kalima Avenue.	Mapping of footpaths is in progress. Refer protocol for at least one footpath on every street
Are existing underpasses staying?	Yes, council will continue to maintain both underpasses. With a view to seek funding for a third DDA compliant underpass.
Budget issues	
Money should be spent elsewhere:	Noted
Population too small for such an expense;	Noted
better places than beside railway to develop;	Under the Horsham North Local Area Plan, which Council has endorsed, this is a long-standing wish of community to improve the visual appeal of this large area of land.
Should be no expense spared so the design can be sensationally better and put Horsham on the map!	We believe the concept design captures the aim for the area
Design?	

Plants	
What about a sensory garden?	Will be considered
Think long term with plants; this area lends itself to larger trees. Tree options could be silky oaks, jacaranda (in cluster) melaleucas and consider angles for shade (5m). Consider whether lighting might damage nearby trees (eg tree in gardens which had light on it);	Tree strategy has guidelines which we will follow, types of plantings will be considered.
Consider creating an avenue of flowering trees in Mill street and Railway avenue - eg Cootamundra & Golden Wattle, Crepe Myrtle, Flame tree, Jacaranda etc; .	Tree strategy has guidelines which we will follow, types of plantings will be considered.
Love the fact that crushed Granite powder/soil/dust is used for pathways, corten steel edging to garden beds, native grasses including Billy Buttons/Drumsticks will be used through the woodlands & grasslands throughout the precinct;	Noted
The native design, sensory, & therapeutic elements also lend itself to encouraging local groups including primary schools & kinder to use space for bush kinder & experiential learning sessions;	Nature play is a realistic possibility as this would lend itself to the natural grassland and woodland design. This could include logs, rocks and stepping stones incorporated into the final design.
Urban Landcare/ Wimmera Nature society	Noted
Will need a lot of plants;	Noted
Use of non-indigenous Australian plants will greatly increase the variety to add to indigenous species	Noted
Tree heights – will they allow for good line of sight.	Noted and being incorporated into updated design
Avoid groups of trees to increase safety.	Noted and being incorporated into updated design
Lack of playground	
Playground needed;	Open space strategy is being developed and will audit all play spaces and current and future needs
This would be a great place for children to play;	Nature play would lend itself to the natural grassland and woodland design. This could include logs, rocks and stepping stones incorporated into the final design which would make great nature play
Play equipment would be nice;	See above
Train themes play equipment at silos.	See above
No playground included.	See above
Playground near Mill/Albert Street area be nice;	See above
would be good to have play area involved;	See above
Playground for younger kids – take out one of the kick-about to do this	See above
Child play areas/nature play;	Nature play would lend itself to the natural grassland and woodland design. This could include logs, rocks and stepping stones incorporated into the final design which would make great nature play.
Lack of Eating area	
Need picnic tables and seating for visitors to silo – possibly BBQ (Eg Wodonga);	This area is considered as a transit zone and not a destination for longer stays. Most silo visits last about 10 minutes and the design is seen as a walking/riding area for Horsham community and visitors. There are a number of eating outlets not far away

	in the May Park precinct. A map will also be located in the area.
BBQs be nice;	See above
BBQ for people visiting the silos;	See above
Toilets	
Public toilets would be nice;	There are public toilets at May Park and Dudley Cornell. There are few houses nearby and passive surveillance is very limited. The silo and corridor is not an ideal location for toilets because of safety concerns.
Need public toilets near silo art – none in north Horsham;	See above
Need toilets for tourists and locals to use;	The silo and corridor is not an ideal location for toilets because of safety concerns and length of stay is average of 10 minutes
Toilets near silo.	The silo and corridor is not an ideal location for toilets because of safety concerns and length of stay is average of 10 minutes
Want toilets.	See above
toilets; toilets; consider Maybe incorporate use at Railway station with signage;	Return of passenger rail is a long-term goal of the HRCC and community. While we have little control of when this will happen its return would require facilities to be provided at the railway station.
Water	
How about underground water storage?	This is being investigated
Needs drinking fountain;	Drinking / filling station will be added to the plan
Water filling station;	See above
Water stations for people and pets	See above
Other recreational pursuits	
Like to see Half basketball court;	As the corridor will be more of a landscape transit area, not really the right location
want to see three kickabout area;	There is a large irrigated lawn area
Like to see outdoor exercise equipment;	This is being considered
outdoor games area.	There is a large irrigated lawn area
Like idea of big lawn area;	There is a large irrigated lawn area
Like to see Off leash area	Off leash areas are currently being audited and reviewed for future needs
Allow ample spacing for caravans & campervans for parking for silo viewing;	There is considerable parking in the plan
The no through road section of Wawunna Road in front of the Silo art may be considered a potential events area - consider dedicated vehicle spots & appropriate power supply in parking area near Silo art for food/event vehicles/caravans;	This area is considered as a transit zone and not a destination for longer stays. Most silo visits last about 10 minutes and the design is seen as a walking/riding area for Horsham community and visitors. There are a number of eating outlets not far away in the May Park precinct. A map will also be located in the area.
For the future development zones consider the Nightingale Housing model - www.nightingalehousing.org - this model of housing may also be considered by the CAD reference group for revitalizing the city precinct with apartment living as well;	Outside of scope
Gathering space	

Adults/kids meeting space would be good;	A gathering space will be incorporated into the plan
Allow spots throughout the green areas for shade, timber & stone sitting, meditating & recharging, reading;	Will incorporate. The numerous trees will provide plenty of shade areas and the area will include seating
There should be an area where there is a meeting place/s and seats that surround it.	A gathering space is being incorporated. The numerous trees will provide plenty of shade areas and the area will include seating
How about piping the sounds of nature at the site to make it a relaxing place	Will consider
consider a public art competition with residency for a project;	There will be provision for Art in the design
Opportunity for aboriginal art and interpretation.	There will be provision for Art in the design
Need Seats	Multiple different seat options will be incorporated in the space
Other public activities ideas	
Soundshell;	The community has a large soundshell near the Wimmera River
Space for farmer's market;	There is unlikely to be sufficient room, access or parking for this activity. Dudley may be a better option when developed under the Multisport plan
Creating greater safety?	
Suggested design safety changes	
Suggestion to enter silo car park from Mills Street (3 on map) rather than Wawunna Rd); Remove bitumen at Wawunna Rd/Mill street intersection and landscape in front of silo art to allow pedestrians to safely walk there.	Noted and will be investigated, we will address the line marking to make safer for Pedestrians
Crossing in Mills Street beside busy fuel business; Truck access is an issue for Lowes BP depot and also the Wilkies trucks	Noted and will be amended
Safer to get rid of parking outside Lowes in Mills Street.	Noted and will be amended
Spend a day in Mill street and watch the traffic before deciding on final design	Traffic count from Mill Street being revisited
Need to allow access to emergency vehicles to this space for safety;	The site is easy to access
Need access for emergency vehicles.	See above
Need wider walkways and straighter paths	Noted and being incorporated into updated design
Surveillance cameras in main areas	To be investigated
Don't need that many long bays in Mill Street.	Noted and being incorporated into updated design
Concern about crossing Kalkee Road at the Linnert Street intersection and need for roundabout (maybe be outside of scope)	Outside the scope of this project
Lighting	
Lighting needed.	There will be lighting
Install sensor lights as crime deterrent;	See above
Need good lighting and good line of sight for safety in corridor;	See above
ensure ample solar powered lighting	To be investigated on this site
Connectivity safety	
Include safe bike connections to CBD – Kalkee Rd to May Park,	Bike and connectivity strategy has been considered with this plan
Albert St underpass does not meet disability; like improvements in Wawunna Road underpass.	Correct, we are unable to make our current underpasses compliant due to a variety of reasons but a new DDA underpass is proposed
Need a wombat crossing at the Railway Ave/Kalkee Rd underpass	Will look at how we address this
Other	
The area is unsafe because of who lives there.	Aim is to improve the area for residence and visitors

Concern about fire risk in corridor. Fire hazard concern; Can you also maintain the Vic Trac land even though you don't maintain it	Ongoing issue and one of the reasons Council would like to have access to the land.
Safety is something we need to be aware	Noted
Other comments/suggestions	
RV Dump? Would this be a good location as long vehicles come there	Noted
Future proof the design to allow the development of a new railway station for the resumption of rail services to Horsham;	Return of passenger railway is a priority and this design takes the goal into consideration. Decisions around this return are beyond the scope of this project.
Consider collaborating with VicTrack to restoring existing railway station building as a community facility - this facility can then be hired out to the community for events & user groups;	The Station is owned by VicTrack and now used by U3A for community purposes.
10 . Zoning questions around land in Mill Street, questions about land in other parts of corridor	These were answered by Planning Department
Opportunities for grants from mining companies.	This has been noted as an opportunity
What happens to the shed and house right beside the underpass?	(Not sure which one they mean)

Engagement at Kalkee Road Childrens Hub

November 22 and 23 2023

Four sessions 11am- 1.30pm and 5pm -7.30pm both days.

Comments received:

Visual appeal

- Looks great would be great to see if happen
- No issues with what is being proposed
- Thank you for all you are doing, keep going

Pathways and connections

- Question about whether Wawunna Rd and Albert St underpasses were staying
- Truck access is an issue for Lowes BP depot and also the Wilkies trucks
- Long bay we don't need as many bays along Mill Street

Landscape design and open space

- Need for signage to located or created that will ensure people know the cockatoo mural is on the silo
- Would like a space for Farmers Market
- Space for car shows and reasons to come to the North
- groups of trees - no group tree plantings for safely
- Question about potential kiosk opportunity at the silos
- Please think long term with planting so they don't have to be lopped as others have recently. It is the perfect areas to be able to have some large trees.

Potential Specimen trees:-

- Flame trees
- Grevillia Robuster (silky oaks)
- Jacaranda – maybe several in a cluster
- Melaleucas /paperbarks have also done well as street trees

- **Please consider 5m angles for warmer** weather so shaded areas will be possible as trees grow
- **Please research this area- Botanic Gardens river end of Firebrace Street** – whether long term lighting direct on trees is harmful to the long-term health of trees
- No toilet or BBQ's and Playgrounds
- Question the tree heights for safety and line of site
- Peppercorn trees block the view
- viewing platform for Silo art
- Need toilets
- There should be an area where there is a meeting place/s and seats that surround it.
- Opportunity for aboriginal art and interpretation.

Safety

- Concerns about security - will there be lighting and good line of sight in the corridor?
- Concerns about safety in existing underpasses
- Safety is something we need to be aware
- Outdoor exercise equipment
- Outdoor games area
- Refill Station for water
- Great to see an area of lawn to have a kick
- Concerns about fire risk this year and questions about responsibilities for managing the landscape

Other

- Question about the zoning of the land on the northern side of Mill Street
- Zoning questions relating to Mill Street
- Bob Redden attended - Wednesday night – concerns about shelter at the railways station and lack of public toilets – out of scope
- RV Dump? Would this be a good location as long vehicles come there
- Can you also maintain the VicTrack land even though you don't maintain it
- Mine funding/grant opportunities
- Urban Landcare/ Wimmera Nature society
- Concern about crossing Kalkee Road at the Linnert Street intersection and need for roundabout

The Engagement Process

A series of Frequently Asked Questions were developed and approved by VicTrack. These were used in displays and posted on the HRCC website.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is this project

The landscape plan to transform part of the industrial rail corridor into public open space – as outlined in the Horsham North Local Area Plan, released in May 2023 .

- It will open up beautify this former industrial area
- It will help connect Horsham's north and south and east and west with walking and bike routes.
- It will include paths, trees, shrubs and grasses, a car park, art and storytelling
- It will improve safety for walkers and cyclists

Where is it?

- It covers an area stretching along the railway line from Albert Street to Wawunna Road with the main focus of landscaping north of the railway line between Wawunna Road and Kalkee Road overpass.
- The plan also includes areas near the railway station and east to towards MacPherson street.

- Some land remains in rail use and the areas for future public use are still to be acquired by HRCC

Why now when you don't have all the land?

- The community has clearly told us that this area is unsightly and needs urgent work
- This work will connect walking and bike paths and make it safer for people to travel north-south and east-west along the corridor.
- It also meets the community's need for more public open space

What can we have on site?

- Wide walking and cycling paths for people to travel through the area
- Smaller paths to wander through the woodlands and grasslands
- A green area for recreation
- Trees to provide shade
- Art installations
- Signage and storytelling
- Seats
- A car park for visitors viewing the silo art

What are the limitations

- Part of the corridor is used for rail and will remain off limits to the public
- Historic fuel deliveries created soil contamination which while recently cleaned up, still limits activities at the site including playgrounds
- Not all land can be acquired by HRCC for public use
- We do not have funds to build a third underpass at David Street.

How does this align with the Horsham North Local Area Plan?

The Landscape plan was designed based on feedback and recommendations from the Horsham North Local Area Plan including:

- Remediating the rail corridor for public use
- Creating a landscape plan with walking and cycling connectivity and open space as priorities
- Working with government to get a new modern underpass for the corridor
- Managing the risks of contaminated land
- Building upon the Silo Art through public art projects
- Identifying and addressing barriers to pedestrian movement and safety
- Providing infrastructure that encourages active transport
- Improving pedestrian and cycling connectivity across the rail corridor

What are the benefits of this Rail Corridor Landscaping?

The area will now

- be upgraded to a place that looks and feels attractive
- provide more public open space
- connect north and south and east and west Horsham
- provide shade and flora and fauna habitat
- be safe for walkers and cyclists
- be a place for art and storytelling
-

Why now?

- Negotiations are getting closer for HRCC to finally be able to start progressively buying some parcels of land in the rail corridor
- Contamination clean ups have been completed on some of the land
- Based on what you said in Horsham North Local Area Plan consultations – we have created this concept for landscaping the area

- This is the final stage – checking with the community that we have not missed anything before the detailed plan is finalised

Please look at the plan and provide some feedback on

- Whether you think the landscape concept plan will turn the rail corridor into a visually appealing place?
- Whether you think the walking and bike pathways provide good connections to other areas of Horsham?
- In the landscape design plan, is there enough open space and vegetation?
- Whether you think this landscaped corridor will be a safer place for people to move through?
- Is there anything else you want to say?

What happens after this feedback process?

- Based on the community feedback, council will make any necessary additions or adjustments to the concept plan
- Once this is finalised, the project will be costed and then council will determine how and when it will be funded and the landscaping carried out.

Rail Corridor Landscape Plan Engagement

Council appreciates the feedback provided and submissions will be considered and any changes to the plan will be made.

The plan transforms the disused area from wasteland into a series of connected paths, woodlands, green areas and a car park for the silo viewing. It provides safer walking and riding options, especially along Mills Street and includes the planting of trees, shrubs and grasses to beautify the site and provide valuable shade for pedestrians and riders travelling through the area.

The plan is compatible with any return for passenger rail and includes provisions for a third, accessible underpass to be built near David Street, when funding is secured.

There are various limitations on the plan including:

- The area sits beside an operational railway line which limits some activities and access to some areas
- Historic contamination from fuel deliveries by rail has been remediated (or cleaned up), but this still limits some land uses in the area
- HRCC is still working to buy land in the corridor so all of the corridor may not be developed at once
- Some parts of the corridor will continue to be used for rail purposes
- We don't yet have funds to construct the modern underpass near David Street
- The project can't be costed until after this feedback process.