

yonder.

**Streetscape Plan
Cudgewa**

May 2024 | Revision E

Prepared for
towong  shire

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We acknowledge and respect Traditional Owners as the traditional custodians of our shared lands, waters and seas. We recognise their unique ability to care for Country and their deep spiritual connection with Country. We honour Elders past, present and emerging, whose knowledge and wisdom will ensure the continuation of culture, and the values which uphold them.

1.0 Background



1.1 Introduction

Project summary

Yonder have been engaged by Towong Shire Council (TSC) to work with the community to prepare a Streetscape Plan for the town of Cudgewa which aims to capture the communities’ aspirations for their town, as well as other existing projects into a consolidated, graphic and easily understood document or ‘road-map’. The Streetscape Plan will be a high level strategic document to guide future funding applications and on-ground works.

The Streetscape Plan seeks to achieve a design solution which improves safety, functionality, aesthetics, connectivity, pedestrian amenity and traffic movement within the town of Cudgewa.

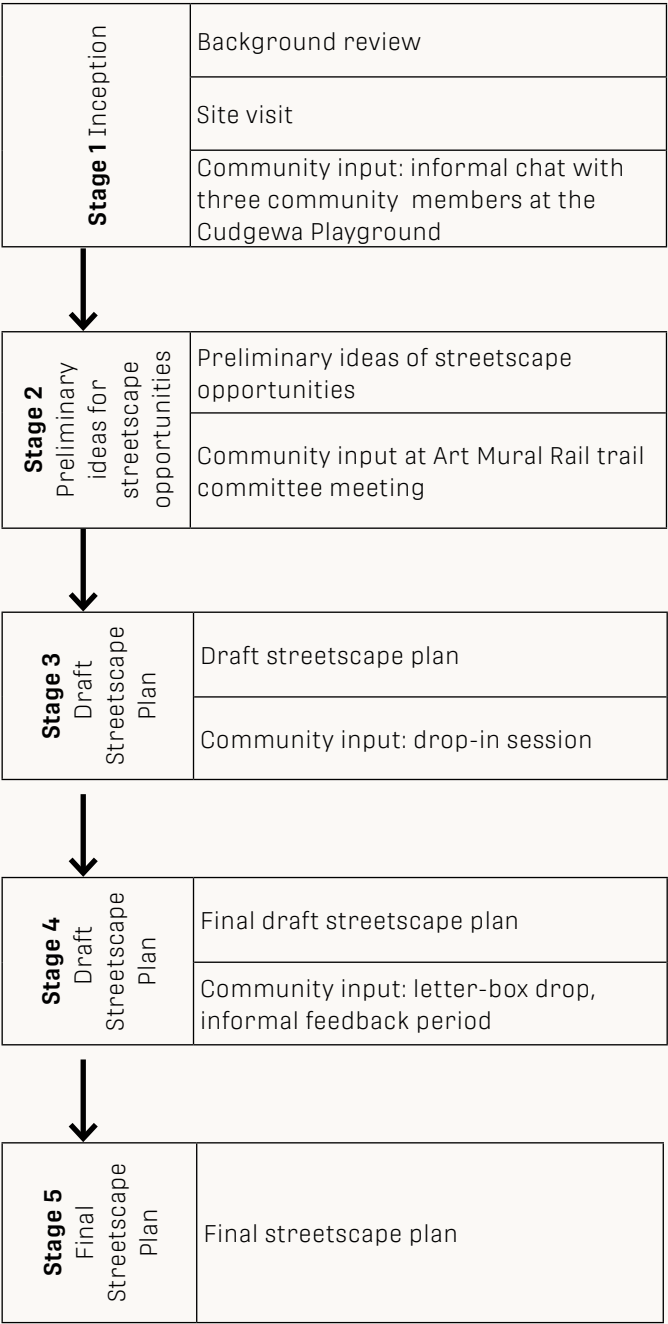
Key to this is thorough background research coupled with site analysis and the uniquely targeted engagement process. This will ensure the outcomes of the Streetscape Plan reflect community aspirations, wants and needs and help create a livable, vibrant environment for town’s future.

Objectives

The following objectives also formed part of the Brief:

- Incorporate key priorities of the Cudgewa Community Recovery Plan.
- Consider a succession species for the Avenue of Honour to replace senesecing Elm trees and those damaged in the 2019/20 fires.
- Reinforce Cudgewa as a key destination along the High Country Rail Trail and connect with the Art / Mural Trail project.
- Consider a unified streetscape treatment to better connect key destinations and improve access within the town.
- Celebrate the town’s rich history.
- Identify a signage strategy for way-finding and interpretation around the town.

Process



1.2 Context

Location

Cudgewa is a vibrant community with a population of 310, located in the north-east of Towong Shire, 14 km from Corryong. It is approximately 85 kilometres south-east of Albury-Wodonga along the Murray Valley Highway and 410 km from Melbourne.

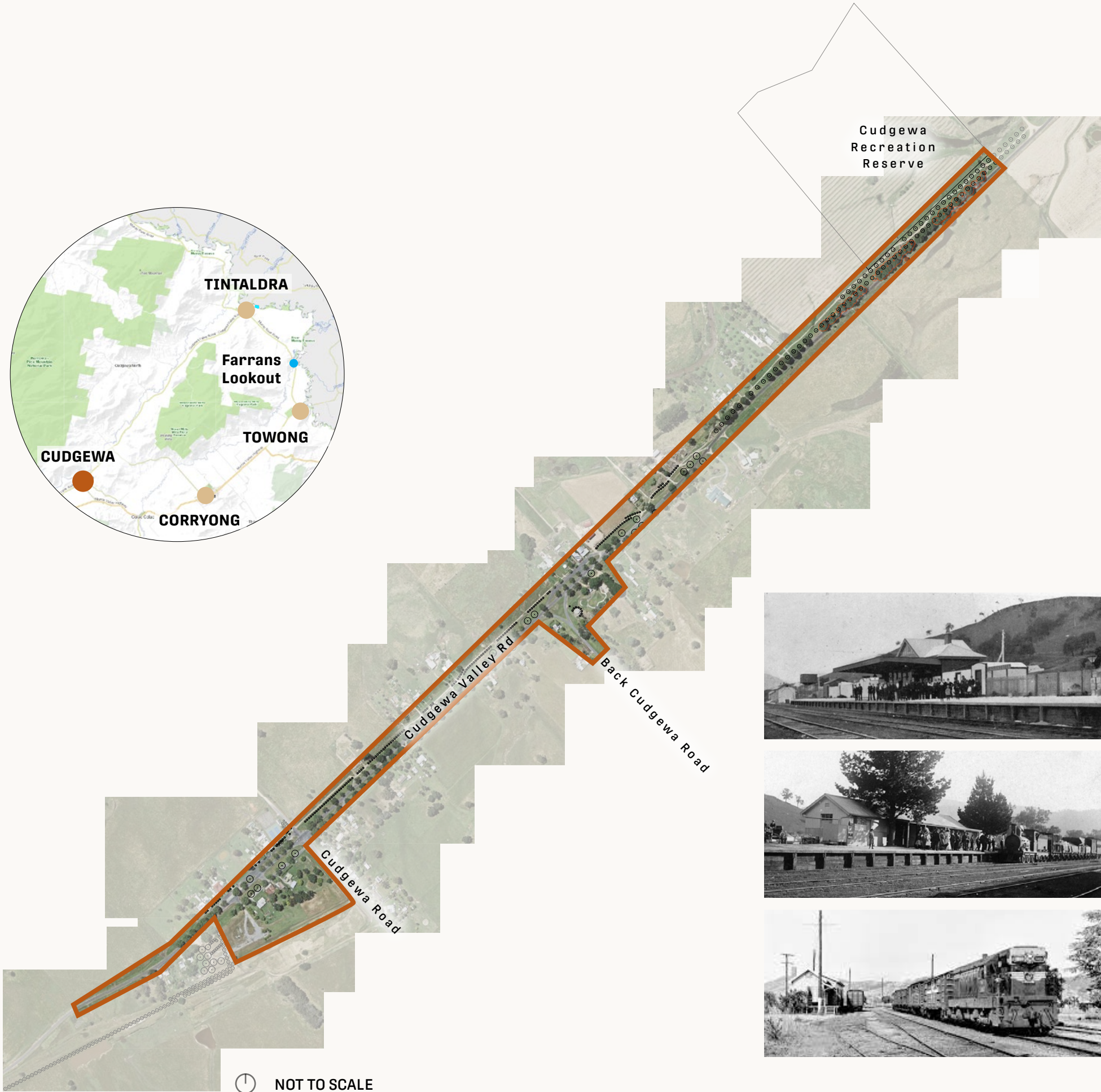
Study area

The study area extends along Main Street (Cudgewa Valley Road) from the old Railway Precinct to Cudgewa Recreation Reserve. It also includes the road reserves, parks, and public building settings within this area.

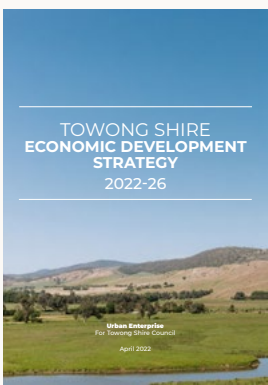
The project is also concerned with the macro landscape scale and how Cudgewa connects with other towns and landscape features.

History

Farmers took up land in the area in 1866 and the Cudgewa Creek Public School was opened in 1877. It was the last railway station on the branch line from the main North-East line, connecting Cudgewa to Wodonga. Political competition with rival town Corryong ultimately saw Cudgewa attain the railway line in an era when this new form of transport was the key ingredient to prosperity. The railway station was completed and officially opened in May 1921 and closed in 1981. In 1919 the first section of the line was used to carry materials for the construction of the Lake Hume weir. Cudgewa was also the railhead for materials bound for the Snowy Mountains Scheme during its construction, which extended the life of the railways. Ultimately the line was closed and lay dormant for decades before slowly becoming a new tourism asset in the form of a rail trail.



1.3 Policy and strategy



Council plans and strategies

A desktop review of the various strategies, plans and policies identified the following relevant to this project:

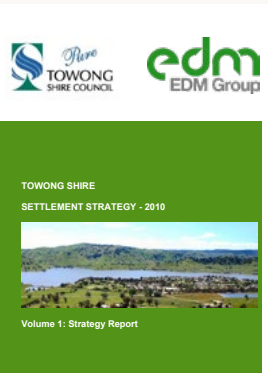
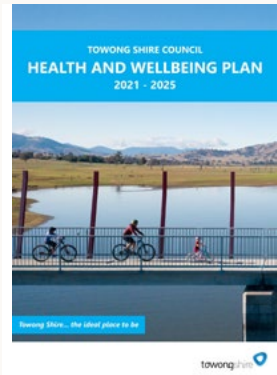
Draft Recreation Strategy for Towong Shire 20222-2033

The Strategy identified that to improve opportunities for walking and cycling in Towong Shire, there needs to be a network of cycling and walking trails / paths that are:

- Well designed and safe (even surfaces, wide enough pathways, well lit, clear lines of site, separation from vehicles, well maintained).
- Connected to key locations people want to visit.
- Well signed.

The Strategy also identified:

- Higher levels of participation in equine activities and subsequent equine infrastructure in Towong Shire compared with many other Shires, e.g. Tintaldra and Corryong Recreation Reserves.
- Gaps in the trail network and opportunities to better connect towns with one another (e.g. Bethanga and Bellbridge; and Corryong and Towong).
- Poor way-finding signage to many of the recreation reserves in the Shire.
- Lack of infrastructure that could help to further activate sites, e.g. paths, seats, shade, picnic tables, water bubblers and play equipment.



Towong Shire Council Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025

The Plan identifies a number of actions to a safe and healthy community:

- Review and deliver the strategic parks and playgrounds upgrade program.
- Complete streetscape upgrade in Cudgewa.
- Map and publish walking and cycling trails that connect townships, link destinations and create circular routes.

Towong Shire Destination Management Plan

The Plan identifies a number of tourism themes for Towong Shire, namely:

- Theme 1 accommodation: Cudgewa valley for wellness retreat.
- Theme 3 nature and water: Multi-day canoe trail from Towong to Bellbridge.
- Theme 4 ride: High country rail trail improvement and extension: Shelley to Corryong.
- Theme 6: branding marketing and awareness - Shire-wide: Build on the brand framework project currently being delivered by Tourism North East to deliver a consistent branding approach aligned to market understanding of the Shire.

The Plan also recommends that a signage strategy to be developed focusing on a cohesive brand approach, clear connection to place, improved hierarchy of signage, and removal of outdated and obsolete signage.

Towong Shire Settlement Strategy - 2010

The Strategy recommends that all residential development is retained within the existing extent of the town with the retention of existing Low Density Residential Zone in its current form.

Towong Shire Economic Development Strategy 2022-2026

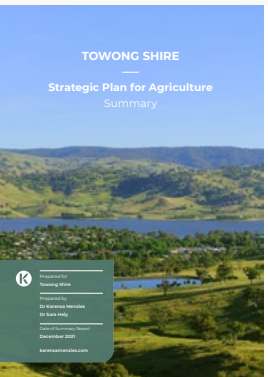
This Strategy identifies a number of themes for economic development, notably economy growth through visitation.

The Strategy also talks about improving livability outcomes for residents as an economic development objective.

Other strategies

A desktop review of the following strategies, plans and policies were also reviewed.

- The Council Plan
- UM2030 Plan
- Municipal recovery plan
- Community emergency management plans
- Tree management plan
- Town entry signage plan (in development) and Standard signage strategy
- Strategic Plan for Agriculture



1.4 Strengths, issues and opportunities - photo study

The following photo study demonstrates site assessment and analysis of Cudgewa and its context.

Strengths



A rich military history: the Avenue of Honour and memorials



Community driven town improvements: the new tennis courts, public toilets, community hall and playground have been developed in the past three years.



Town identity: Hotel Cudgewa is an iconic landmark in the town.



Town identity and stories: The Avenue of Honour is a defining element of the streetscape.

Issues and opportunities



Signage and branding is out of date and confusing. Refresh to align with other Towong Shire and Upper Murray towns.



The existing walking trail lacks shade. Plant small trees which are suitable under overhead power-lines.



Parking is undefined in front of the hall and playground. Upgrade parking area.



The old railway precinct is under-utilised public land with little physically remaining from its history. Activate the space as a trail head through the extension of the HCRT.

1.5 Existing plans and projects

Cudgewa was significantly impacted by the Black Summer Bushfires in 2019/20 which included the loss of houses and buildings on Cudgewa Valley Road, and the loss of their playground. Through the Bushfire Recovery process, the community have come together to form the Cudgewa Community Recovery Committee and produced a Community Recovery Plan with several key priorities.

Other projects such as the High Country Rail Trail Art Mural project are also captured.



1
High Country Rail Trail - Art Mural Project
Currently in the design stage, this project will be constructed in the future.

2
High Country Rail Trail - Cudgewa to Corryong
Currently in the design stage, this project will be constructed in the future.

3
Upgrade to Cudgewa Tennis Courts and public toilets - Cudgewa Community Recovery project
Recently completed, this project includes new surfacing of the tennis courts and replacement of the toilet block adjacent.

4
Upgrade to Cudgewa playground - Cudgewa Community Recovery project
Currently in construction, this project includes upgraded tank and pump track. The new play equipment, bike track and furniture have been completed. Provide mural to water tank.

5
Avenue of Honour - Cudgewa Community Recovery project
Reflecting Town Planning Application for staged Removal of Vegetation in Heritage Overlay Main Street (Cudgewa Valley Rd) Cudgewa December 2022.

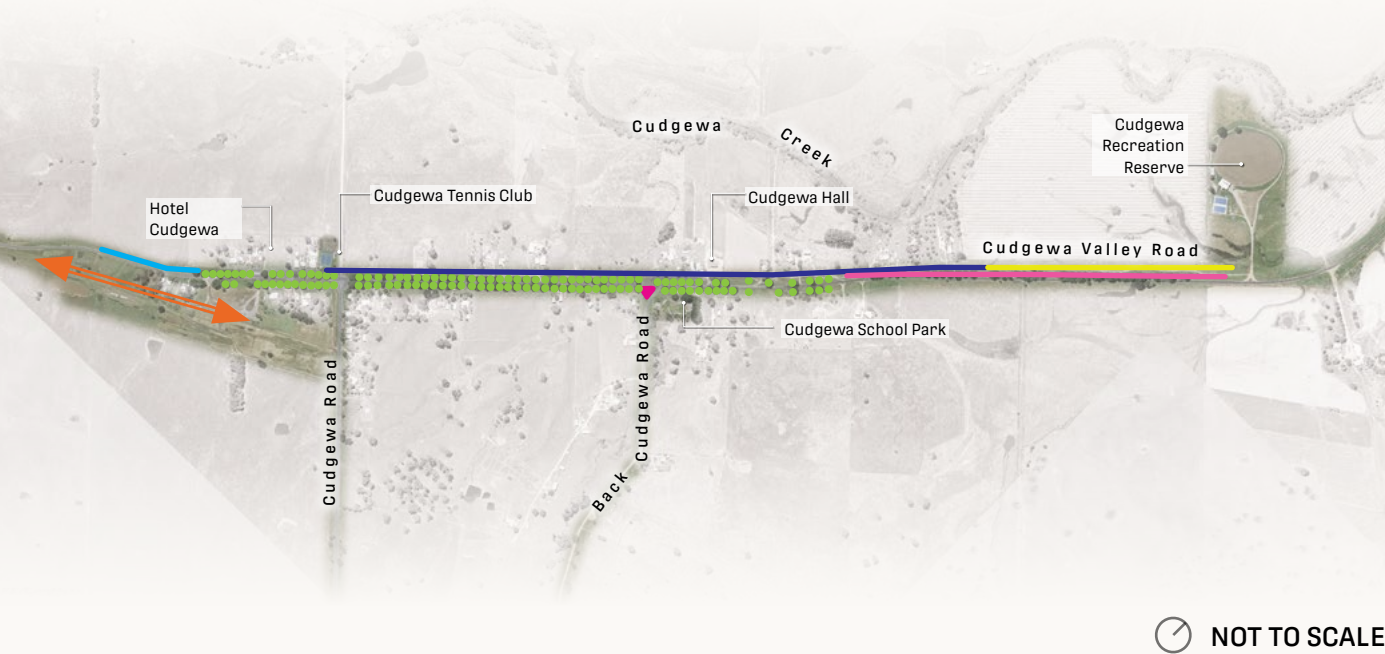
6
Walking track upgrade - Cudgewa Community Recovery project
Recently completed re-surfacing of the existing track and future relocation to support replacement tree planting.

2.0 Preliminary ideas



2.1 Preliminary ideas for streetscape opportunities

Preliminary ideas for streetscape opportunities plans were developed as part of the first stage of this project. High level plans were developed which identified ongoing projects and previously identified opportunities as well as future opportunities, and were based on the following four principles/themes.



Green infrastructure

Implement a street tree strategy, which acknowledges history, community aspirations and also provide succession planting appropriate for a changing climate.

Future opportunities identified:

- Small shade trees along walking track under overhead power lines.
- Signature entry trees to improve the sense of arrival to town.
- Feature trees along both sides of HCRT.

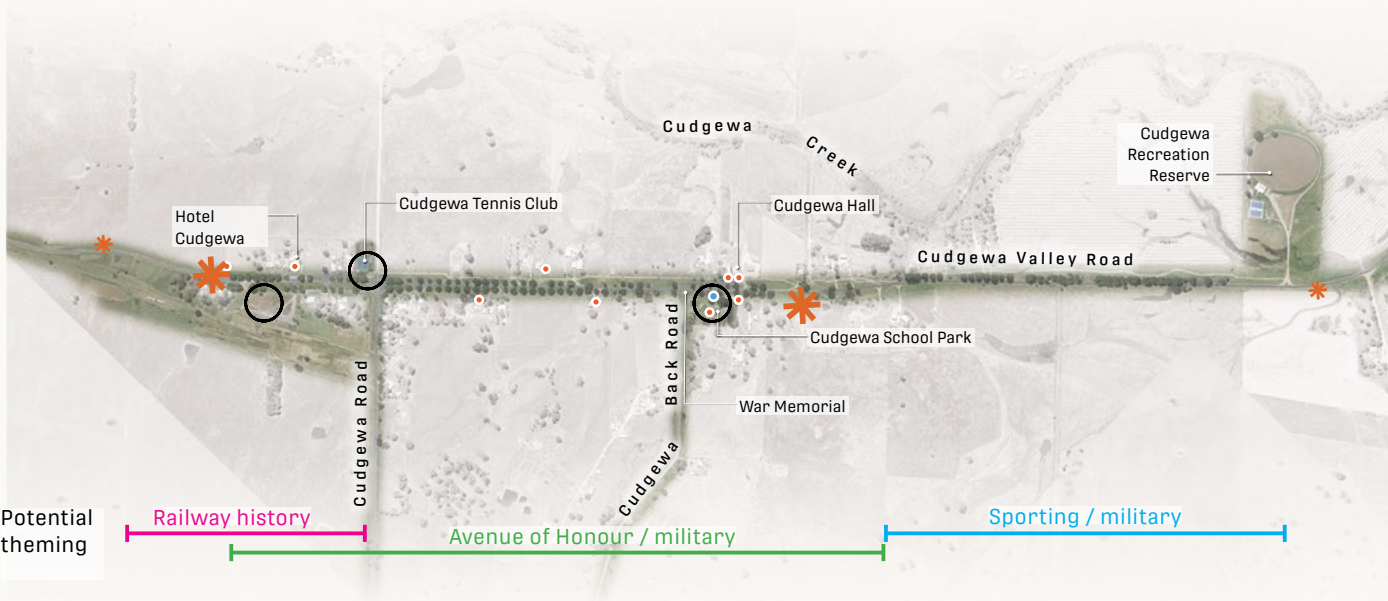


Circulation and amenity

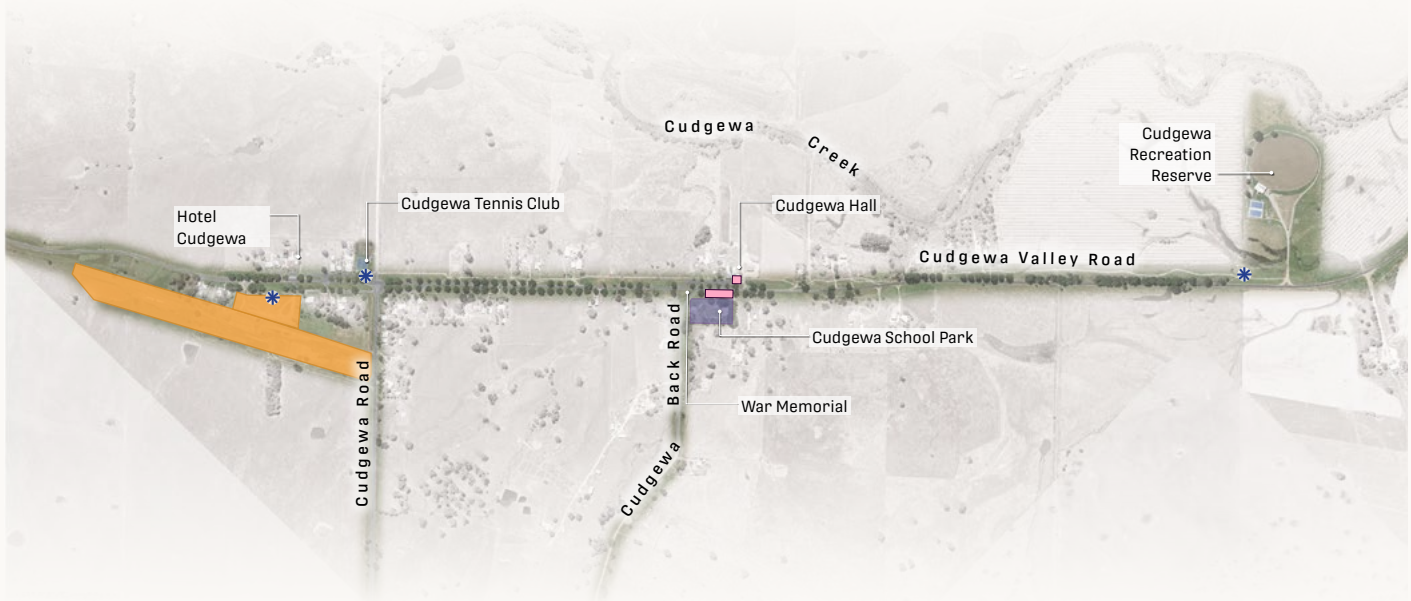
Prioritise the pedestrian by improving tracks, and paths as well as providing seating, shade and lighting.

Future opportunities identified:

- Potential access to Cudgewa Creek.
- Two potential alignments for the HCRT to connect to Corryong.
- Realign and upgrade (potentially seal) walking track, for improved access and safety.
- Improve drainage lines and pedestrian crossings.
- Resting spots.
- Improve access for pedestrians and cyclists between townships.



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Key destinations

- Activate public spaces for community use and gathering.
- Future opportunities identified:
- Cudgewa Station precinct - develop a historical station precinct as part of the High Country Rail Trail development and Art Mural project. Formalise designated parking area.
 - Cudgewa School Park precinct - implement remaining proposals from Cudgewa School Park Master Plan. Formalise designated parking area. Provide mural art on CFA water tank.
 - Improve access to toilet and presentation of surrounds.
 - Provide interpretive signage, seat and shelter at the Cudgewa Station precinct, School Park precinct and adjacent to the Recreation Reserve entry.

Story-telling and way-finding

- Strengthen identity and legibility by introducing entry features, directional and interpretive signage, as well as a cohesive suite of street furniture.
- Future opportunities identified:
- Reinforce the sense of arrival by providing new entry elements.
 - Introduce markers for historic sites within the township. e.g. small plaque on buildings / sites.
 - Introduce interpretive and way-finding signage with a consistent branding / theme.

3.0 Engagement findings



3.1 Round 1: Preliminary Ideas for Streetscape Opportunities

Yonder met with a group of four interested community members on the 11th January 2023 (including members from the Community Recovery Committee) for an informal discussion. This discussion informed the Preliminary Ideas for Streetscape Opportunities plans.

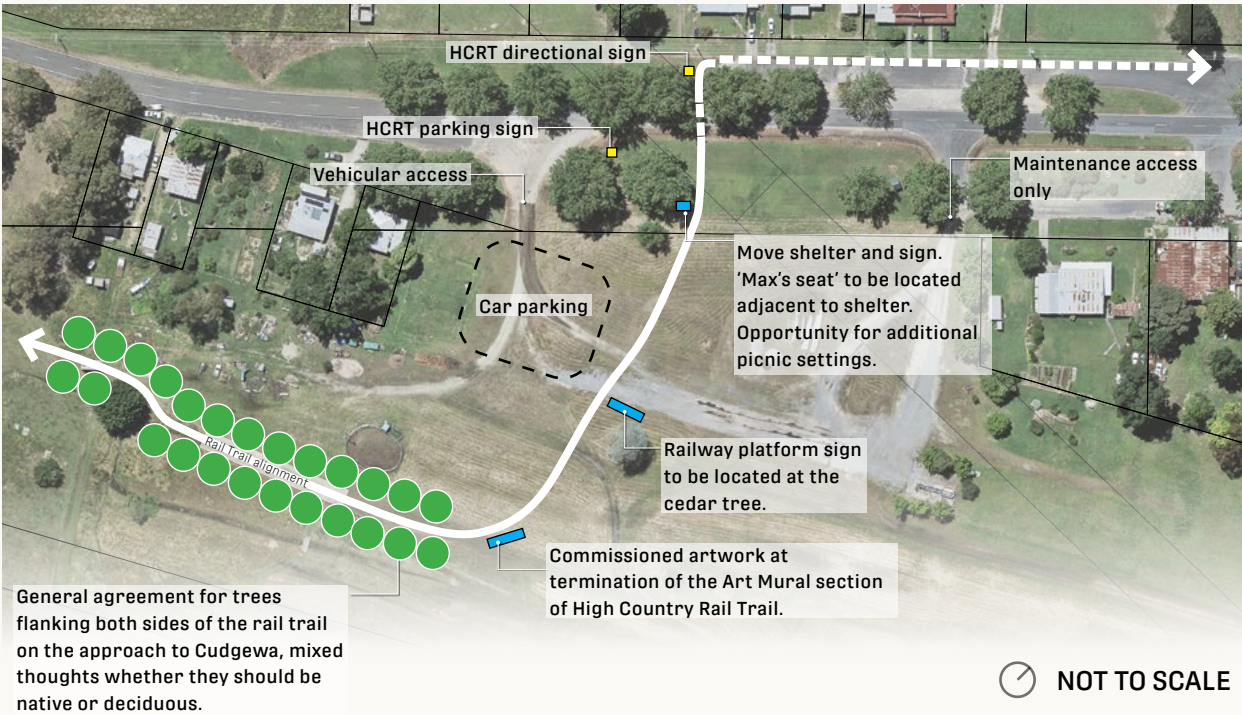
The following ideas were discussed:

Summary of community feedback

Circulation and amenity	- Supportive of upgrade of walking track including re-alignment between the pub and the Recreation Reserve with seating, lighting and shade. - Agreed that there is a need to control and improve drainage. - Mixed thoughts of development of HCRT alignment options. - Access to creek should be from Recreation Reserve only.
Story-telling and way-finding	Signage upgrade required.
Key destinations	- Mixed thoughts about development of rail land. - Create improved parking in front of town hall and playground. - Complete the un-realised elements of the playground master plan. - Should be for residents, not just visitors.

Yonder attended the Art Mural Rail Trail committee meeting on 20th February 2023. With the Preliminary Ideas for Streetscape Opportunities plans in hand, we discussed integration of the HCRT Art Mural project with the streetscape design for Cudgewa.

Summary of feedback



3.2 Round 2: Draft Streetscape Plan

A community session was held on th April 2023 at 4pm at the Cudgewa Hotel. Two residents attended the session, and one written submission was received. Hard copies of the Draft Streetscape Plan were left at Cudgewa Hotel and with those who attended the session. Appreciation is extended to all community members for their feedback.

The feedback has informed the Final Draft Streetscape Plan.

Summary of feedback

	Issue/opportunity	Draft Streetscape Plan response
Street trees	– Concern that the planting of small street trees along the walking track will impede views, create additional maintenance and increase bushfire risk.	– Small street trees have been noted as: ‘possible future small tree beneath overhead power-lines (dependent on bushfire risk assessment and community support)’. To liaise with individual property owners regarding additional tree planting near their properties.
	– Request that the existing planting in front of 82 Main Street be retained.	– Included.
	– Concern that there are too many deciduous trees proposed for the old railway precinct, which will create increased ongoing maintenance.	– Fewer deciduous trees are proposed. The trees flanking the rail trail have been changed from Maples to a fire retardant native species, such as Kurrajongs or similar.
Circulation	– Re-alignment of the walking track between the Old Cudgewa Road and Cudgewa Road is not necessary, given it has recently been upgraded.	– Alignment noted as possible future.
	– Consider upgrade of road drainage, with new kerbs and gutters across the town.	– Noted; will require a broader review of street drainage in the town.
Story-telling and way-finding	– Town entry feature at the approach to Cudgewa Road was suggested.	– Included.
	– The town entry feature on the eastern approach from Tintaldra be moved.	– Included.
Key destinations	– To protect the safety and security of residents, ensure any seating, signage and shelters are not located in front of residences.	– Included.
	– Create formal parking in the median in front of town hall and playground, including with kerbs and gutters.	– Included.

4.0 The Streetscape Plan

4.1 Design objectives

The Streetscape Plan builds on recent improvements in the town and will help to further define and retain the community’s identity and economic vitality through a vibrant, safe and attractive public realm.

Six design objectives have been formulated which underpins the Streetscape Plan. The principles are based on the outcomes of the site assessment, data review and community feedback from the initial ‘Preliminary Ideas’ stage.



One of Cudgewa’s historic buildings.



The Avenue of Honour is an integral part of the streetscape character.



The existing walking track lacks shade and has areas of poor drainage.



The style of recent street furniture improvements to be continued.



The old railway precinct has a rich history, though little physically remains.



Poor drainage has impacted accessibility.

Objective 1: Reinforce sense of place

Celebrate Cudgewa’s unique military, sporting and railway heritage, forgotten historic buildings, and community spirit. Create an iconic town gateway at each end of the Avenue of Honour.

Strengthen the town’s identity and legibility through way-finding and interpretive signage. Rationalise the signage styles and review locations of existing interpretive signage panels.

Objective 2: Green the streets

Soften, cool and green the streets with street tree planting to create a more attractive and comfortable environment, providing shade, biodiversity and ameliorating heat island effect.

Implement an ongoing street tree planting program in the town, which provide succession planting appropriate for a changing climate.

Build on recent planting of Maples on Cudgewa Valley Road and continue this treatment to the Recreation Reserve. Provide a second row of trees to shade the re-aligned walking track where appropriate.

Objective 3: Prioritise the pedestrian

Create a safe and comfortable environment for the pedestrian. Rationalise and define car parking areas and provide designated locations for pedestrian to cross roads. Improve tracks and footpaths, as well as drainage.

Objective 4: Unified design

Implement a consistent treatment of paving, furniture and signage to improve the appearance and visually unify the town.

Upgrade existing and install new street furniture, and provide clear way-finding signage. Draw on Council’s existing suite of street furniture as appropriate.

Use signage to navigate people to the old school site, playground, recreation reserve, public toilets, the pub and HCRT. Provide a stand for bicycle users at the old railway precinct.

Objective 5: Activate public spaces

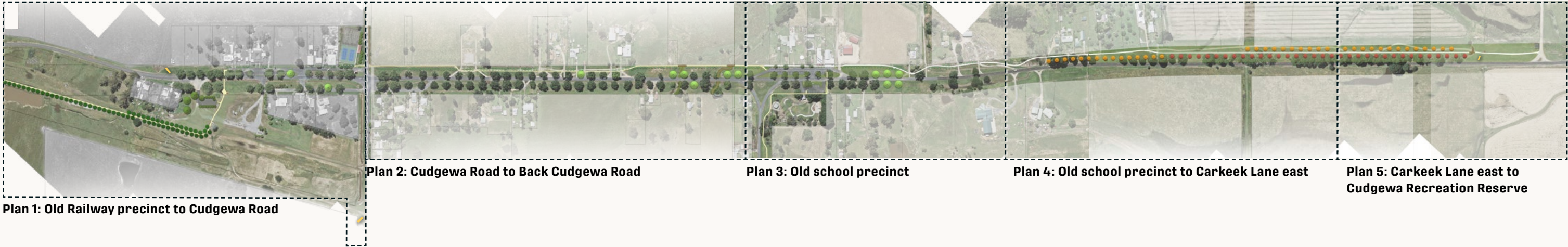
Investigate opportunities for new or improved public spaces for community use and gathering.

Provide parking and resting opportunities as well as way-finding and interpretive signage at the Old Railway precinct to complement proposed works as part of the HCRT project. Improve access from tennis courts to the new public toilets. Improve access and parking at the Community Hall and playground to complement the recent improvement works for both facilities. Improve access and pedestrian experience along the walking track.

Objective 6: Access for all

Encourage and facilitate an equitable and accessible environment which responds to the needs of the different user groups. Incorporate all abilities parking and access for all measures.

4.2 Streetscape overview plan



- Legend**
- Rail trail tree - Kurrajong
(e.g. *Brachychiton populneus*)
 - Street tree - Elm
(e.g. *Ulmus parvifolia*)
 - Street tree - Maple
(*Acer freemanii* 'Jeffersred')
 - Street tree - Oak
(e.g. *Quercus rubra*)
 - Possible future small tree beneath overhead power-lines (dependent on bushfire risk assessment and community support)
(e.g. *Lagerstroemia indica*)
 - Deciduous open space tree
 - Avenue of Honour sign

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4.3 Plan 1: Old Railway precinct to Cudgewa Road



Design objective

Highlight the old railway precinct as a key destination in town for residents, High Country Rail trail users and visitors, provide pedestrian connections, outdoor seating opportunities and designated parking.

Recommendations

Old Railway Precinct

- 1 The HCRT follows the alignment of the original rail-line and is flanked by fire retardant natives trees (such as Kurrajongs) signifying the approach to Cudgewa.
- 2 The HCRT turns toward the town, passing a new commissioned artwork telling stories of the railway station, and the old cedar tree with its 'Cudgewa' platform sign and seat.
- 3 A new car park provides parking for users of the HCRT as well as visitors to the town and the Cudgewa Hotel. The existing sign and shelter is proposed to be re-located in new location or replaced. Picnic tables, a bespoke seat (Max's seat), bike racks and interpretive signage is also proposed.

Hotel Cudgewa frontage

- 4 Designated nose-in parking is proposed in the median, and parallel parking in front of the Hotel. The HCRT is on road with signage to indicate this. Possible small trees on the verge provide shade for HCRT users.

Public toilet and surrounds

- 5 A widened concrete pavement surrounding the toilet block provides easier access for all into the building. A bike rack and seat cater for HCRT users.

Cudgewa Tennis Club and public toilet

- 6 Existing tiered seating to be refurbished as required. The area south of the club rooms is proposed to be improved with new deck and shade sails.

Drainage improvements

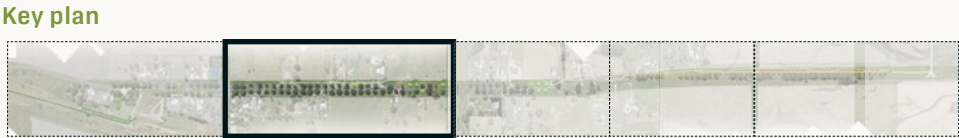
- 7 Improve drainage along Main Street and Cudgewa Road by means of cleaning and rock beaching to drainage lines.

Old Railway precinct: artist impression



Artist Impression - Indicative only and subject to change

4.4 Plan 2: Cudgewa Road to Back Cudgewa Road



Design objective

Activate the streetscape experience between the Cudgewa Hotel and Community Hall / playground by improving the existing path, and providing interpretive signage and seating.

LEGEND

Street trees and landscape

- Existing tree retained
- Street tree - Elm (subject to site conditions)
- Possible future small tree beneath overhead power-lines (dependent on bushfire risk assessment and community support)

Access and movement

- High Country Rail Trail
- Pedestrian bridge
- Seat
- Rock beaching at culverts

Identity and way-finding

- Historic marker
- Interpretive/way-finding signage

Recommendations

HCRT and walking track

The alignment of the HCRT follows the existing walking track. There is a long term opportunity to relocate the HCRT/walking track closer to the Avenue of Honour providing better shade and amenity. On the other side of the path, small trees could be planted to provide shade in the afternoon (subject to bushfire risk assessment and community support). Two seats are proposed along the Avenue of Honour, with a third seat proposed as part of the future possible long term path re-alignment concept.

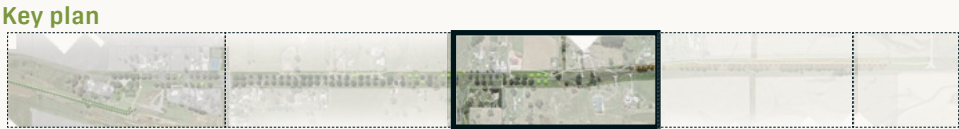
Drainage improvements

Re-shaping and placement of rock beaching to drainage lines is proposed to address drainage.

Typical section: Cudgewa Road to Back Cudgewa Road



4.5 Plan 3: Community Hall and old school site precinct



Design objective

Activate Cudgewa Hall and the Old school site playground as a cohesive precinct with designated parking, clear pedestrian and shared paths, as well as interpretive and way-finding signage.

LEGEND

Street trees and landscape

- Existing tree retained
- Street tree - Elm (subject to site conditions)
- Possible future small tree beneath overhead power-lines (dependent on bushfire risk assessment and community support)
- Deciduous open space tree
- Grass

Access and movement

- High Country Rail Trail
- High Country Rail Trail (on road)
- Footpath / walking track
- Pedestrian bridge
- Seat
- Rock beaching at culverts

Identity and way-finding

- Historic marker
- Interpretive/way-finding signage
- CFA water tank mural
- Avenue of Honour sign

Recommendations

Community Hall and old school site playground

- Designated parallel parking, widened pavement and seat is proposed in front of the Community Hall. 90 degree angle parking with new kerbs and gutters is proposed in the median. The HCRT is on road at this location, while a new footpath provides a pedestrian connection to the existing walking track.
- Improve parking at the playground. The Avenue of Honour historic sign could be relocated to a more visible location.
- Unrealised elements of the playground master plan to be delivered. The HCRT connection to Corryong is proposed to be located outside the playground fence.

4.6 Plan 4: Old school site precinct to east of Carkeek Lane



Key plan



Design objective

Improve the connection between the Community Hall precinct and the Cudgewa Recreation Reserve with new tree planting, shelter, seating, commemorative plaques and interpretive signage. Interpretive signage could be themed around military and sporting history, as well as the impact of the Black Summer fires on the town.

LEGEND

Street trees and landscape

- Existing tree recently removed
- Existing tree removed - Stage 2
- Existing tree retained - future Stage 3 removal
- Existing tree retained
- Street tree - Oak
- Street tree - Maple
- Grass

Access and movement

- Footpath / walking track
- Seat
- Rock beaching at culverts

Identity and way-finding

- Interpretive/way-finding signage
- Commemorative plaque (optional)

Recommendations

- Fifteen Maples have been recently planted following the removal of the existing Elms.
- Oaks are proposed following the second stage removal of the existing Elms. The walking track will be re-aligned closer to the proposed Oaks for improved shade. The Oaks also mark the start of the Commemorative Walk; a series of commemorative plaques could be installed at each tree. Interpretive signage is proposed to announce and provide information about the Commemorative Walk.

4.7 Plan 5: Carkeek Lane east to Cudgewa Recreation Reserve



Design objective

Improve the connection between the Community Hall precinct and the Cudgewa Recreation Reserve with new tree planting, shelter, seating, commemorative plaques at trees and interpretive signage. Interpretive signage could be themed around military and sporting history, as well as the impact of the Black Summer fires on the town.

LEGEND

Street trees and landscape

- Existing tree removed - Stage 2
- Existing tree retained - future Stage 3 removal
- Existing tree retained
- Street tree - Oak
- Street tree - Maple
- Grass

Access and movement

- Footpath / walking track
- Seat

Identity and way-finding

- Avenue of Honour sign
- Interpretive/way-finding signage
- Commemorative plaque (optional)



Artist impression

Recommendations

- The existing Elms will be replaced with two rows of trees; Oaks closer to the road and Maples between the walking track and property boundary. The walking track will be re-aligned closer to the proposed trees for improved shade. The Commemorative Walk continues west of the proposed pedestrian bridge with an option for commemorative plaques to be installed at each tree.
- 1
- 2
- 3
- Future public access to the Cudgewa Creek is proposed from the Recreation Reserve.

Typical section: Carkeek Lane east to the Cudgewa Recreation Reserve

