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People movement

“The unique recreational trail network of the Samford Valley is a marvellous public asset comprising more than 42 km of existing trails and is one the Valley’s best kept secrets.”



People movement in Samford Valley takes many forms, ranging from daily commuter and transport needs to recreational and leisure activities at the weekend. Irrespective of the reason for travel, the enjoyment and experience of the journey is fundamental to the success of the particular transport mode.

For the purposes of this report, people movement is divided into ‘the recreational trail network’ and ‘traffic and transport’.



This is the way some children used to go to school. Minnie Clench on her way to Clear Mountain School



Doll and Ciss McNeven in a sulky about 1918

4.1 The recreational trail network

4.1.1 History and background

The unique recreational trail network of the Samford Valley is a marvellous public asset comprising more than 42 km of existing trails and is one the Valley’s best kept secrets. The network has been developed over many years to cover most of the Valley. Some sections of the trails existed long before the Valley was developed to the extent it is today.

Up to and including the 1950s, students used to ride horses via the local trail network to and from Samford State School and other local schools. Samford State School even had a horse paddock and a shed for the storage of saddles, which was located between the creek and school at the rear eastern side of the campus where the tall river gums grow today. This is where the horses were fed and provided with water and shelter during the day until school was over and it was time to ride home again.

The old trail network provided connectivity to railway station sites where commuters took the train to go to work and where cargo was loaded. Following the rail line closure, part of the old rail alignment was retained and eventually developed into new trail sections.

Many trails were determined by the need to move across the land by finding a convenient path around homesteads

and cattle fencing. The trail network is largely comprised of natural surfaces with no or minimal improvements. The numerous water courses throughout the valley became natural avenues for the regional trail network sections.

Today, these trails provide vital recreational links connecting our community and they integrate with the green parkland. They are used by walkers, horse riders and cyclists. Some trails are more suited to horse riding due to the nature of the terrain, such a creek crossings and long grass, whereas others are suitable for a variety of recreational activities.

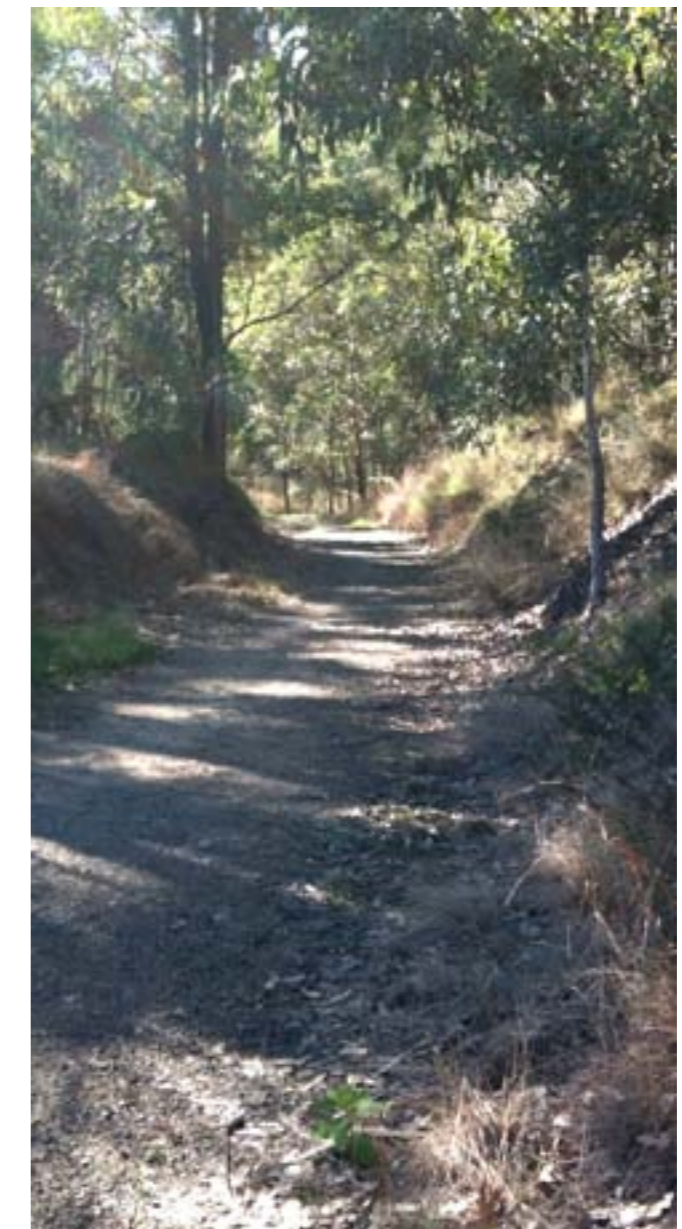
Trails provide vital recreational links connecting our community and integrate with the green parkland. They are used by walkers, horse riders and cyclists.

By careful planning and making use of trails, parkland, roads and road verges, there are endless opportunities for different users to follow loops that suit their particular activities.

4.1.2 Council policy regarding trails

The majority of the existing trail network in Samford Valley is situated on Council-owned land. As the authority responsible for trail network, Moreton Bay Regional Council (MBRC), undertakes maintenance of the network and oversees future planning. Trails such the Lanita Rail Trail and Bellbird Grove trail are situated on State-owned land under the authority of Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing.

The much-anticipated Council trail maps were released via www.moretonbay.qld.gov.au (via the website tabs Discover >> Sports and Recreation >> Recreational Trails) in February 2013. MBRC is currently in the process of creating a regional planning scheme due for release in late 2014. In the meantime, the 2006 Pine River Shire Planning Scheme remains in force. In June 2011, MBRC adopted the Infrastructure Charges Resolution, which encompasses maps of desired future parkland and trail connections.



School transport circa 1920-30s – no saddles, very few shoes, but all children wore hats



Standard council trail marker used to identify the access points for trail sections

4.1.3 The current limitations of the trail network

The following list outlines the limitations and issues that need to be resolved for the trail network to reach its full potential:

- The Council has been forced to close certain trail sections due to lawsuits from a few members of the public claiming to have injured themselves while using them. The Council has had to advise users via signage that natural rough terrain is to be expected and users enter at their own risk. As a result, the Council has advised that it cannot release any trail map data until it has investigated and confirmed the condition, true location and vertical grades of all trails.
- Current usage of the trail network is relatively low. Increased awareness and usage would justify the allocation of additional resources to maintain and enhance the trail network. By promoting and releasing a readily available trail map, more users could explore this amazing public asset.
- In the past, a number of trail sections have been closed or sold to private developers. By raising awareness of the trail network, this practice should stop.
- The trail network should be seen as a tremendous asset – not as a liability. Getting people to be more active in their local area would provide cost-effective health benefits for the community as a whole. The trail network provides a strong incentive to visit or live in Samford.
- Some sections of public trails have been offered to private residents for cattle grazing. Although this reduces maintenance costs, it sometimes prevents public access to the land. If grazing is to be allowed on some trails, restrictions should apply during peak times, such as during weekends and school holidays, to allow unimpeded pedestrian access. Allowing pedestrian use of trails where there are large groups of cattle could produce public liability issues. Some sections of the network are located on private land and agreements are needed with the private landholders to ensure these sections are kept open.
- Sections of the existing public trail sections appear to have been taken over by private landowners. There are some old agreements allowing private landowners to use this public land. It is understood that some

of these agreements are being renegotiated, but it is unclear what conditions will be imposed. Some of these trails need to be re-opened to improve the overall connectivity.

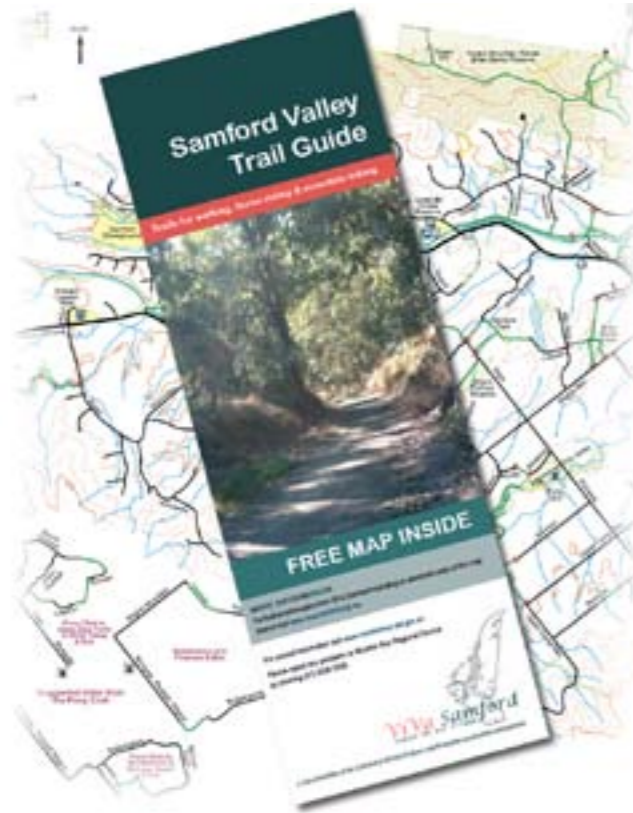
- There is limited signage and few trail markers at many of the access points to the trail network. The approximate location of trails can be determined via the guide maps, but in order to verify the location of the trails in the field a consistent trail marker is required at the connection point to each trail. The signage for some trails also shows the Australian Standard trail grading system, whereas others don't.
- More frequent maintenance is required in parts of the network, especially where creek crossings are washed out during floods.

- Some strategic links in the network are missing, so users are forced to use very busy roads such as Mount Glorious Road. A long-term strategy needs to be developed to provide a single cohesive network of trails, as opposed to the current patchwork of discrete sections.
- Promotion of the trail network is lacking, so this valuable asset is not being used to its full potential. This means that most of the community is unaware of the existence of more than 42km of trail network.
- There are a number of discrepancies between the MBRC official map recently released and the map developed by ViVa Samford and authors of *Where to Mountain Bike in South East Queensland*. A number of existing trails have been omitted from the Council map, yet they exist and are currently being used. There are also a number of additional trails indicated on the Council map that make use of road verges. It is paramount that all trails are included and illustrated correctly to ensure maintenance and future planning does not omit important trail sections.

The trail network provides a strong incentive to visit or live in Samford



Potential future regional transport trail routes



Samford Valley Trail Guide



"Where to Mountain Bike in South East Queensland"

Dedicated bike tracks between Samford and Ferny Grove and within a 5-6 km radius of the Village connecting to outlying bus stops and the Village. This would assist with school transport as well as other travel.



View of South Pine River water hole with trail access from Westwood to Greenwood



Horseriding behind the Steiner School

4.1.4 Community aspirations

Many members of our community would like to see a greater emphasis placed on the local trail network so that it can reach its full potential (see *Our vision for action* below).

The key benefits of maintaining and enhancing the trail network are:

- It provides a sustainable place for recreational activities in the area close to where we live.
- It is environmentally responsible.
- It is one of the main reasons for visiting and exploring Samford Valley.
- It contributes to the overall advancement of community pursuits and cultural connections by linking places of interest.
- It encourages community involvement in, and care for, the trail network.
- It enhances the amenity of the valley.
- It provides access to the 'Samford Green lung' away from busy city life.
- It enables other community pursuits, such as food growing, along the trails.
- It provides beautiful scenery and enables access to, and enjoyment of, nature reserves and riparian habitats.
- It helps to preserve the vegetation around watercourses, while providing an opportunity to enjoy these important environments. Riparian vegetation reduces erosion and the transportation of pollutants downstream.
- It provides safe transport options away from traffic.
- It offers a family friendly environment.
- It connects residents to parkland and sports fields without the need to travel by car.
- It makes regional transport movements by bicycle possible, as an alternative to travelling by car.
- It provides a natural experience and promotes care for wildlife corridors
- It provides increased connectivity in the community (e.g. enabling youth to travel to friends without crossing major roads).
- It enables a multitude of recreational activities, such as horse riding, carriage way riding, bike riding, walking, jogging and running. It provides a place where you can go and read a book, have a picnic, meet people, exercise and enjoy unspoiled natural areas.
- It provides space for an 'arts trail' where art is placed on display along trails to celebrate local creativity.

Our vision for action: trails

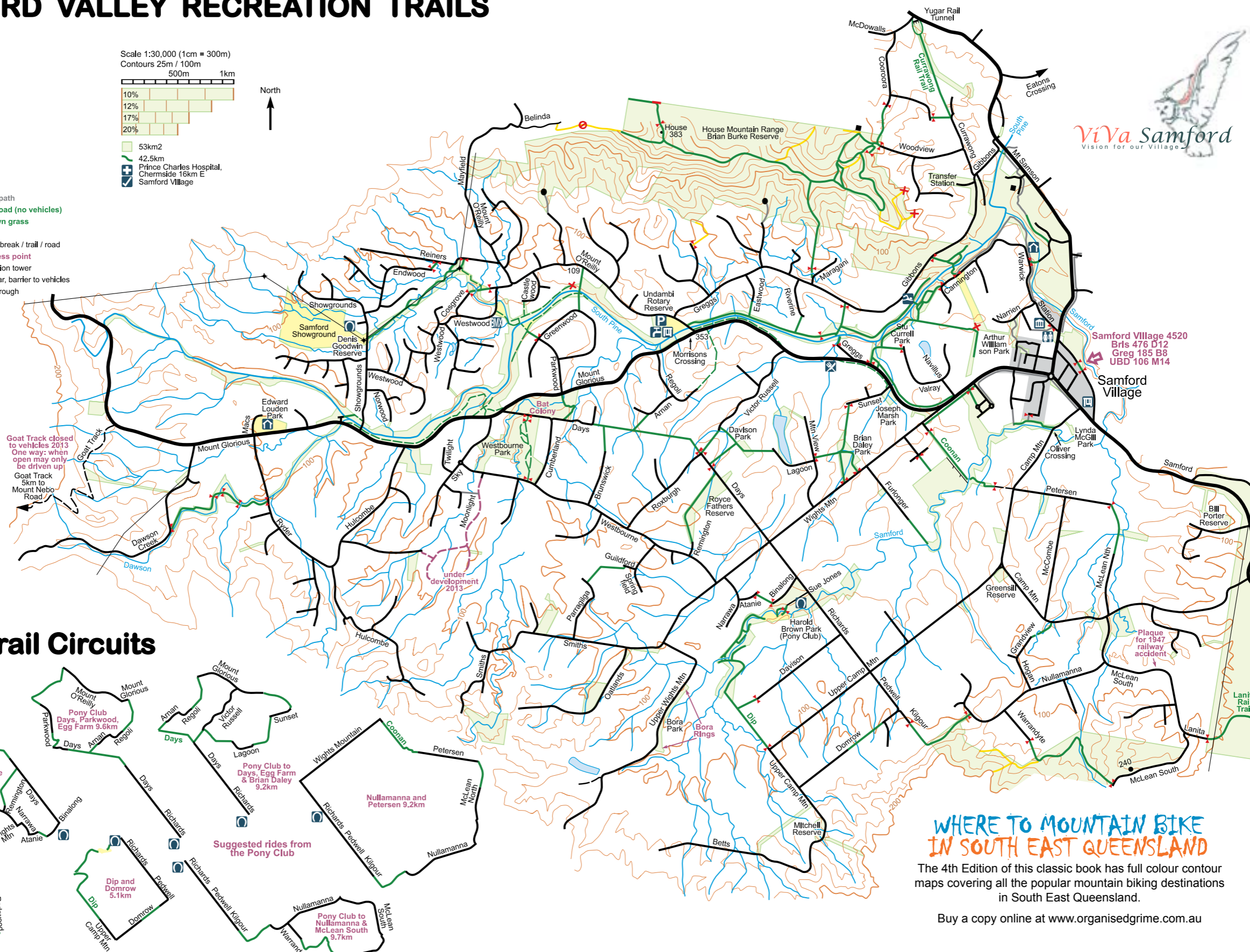
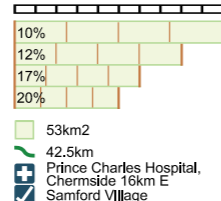
- Plan, review, and implement regional connectivity links and missing links within the trail network to increase connectivity and avoid major roads.
- Raise awareness of, and promote the multi-purpose use of, the trail network by both residents and visitors.
- Protect and enhance the existing trail network.
- Expedite the release of the trail map for public use (ACHIEVED).
- Provide consistent signage and markers at trail connections.
- Review alternative funding arrangements for enhancements, upgrades and expansions.
- Promote continuous maintenance and upgrades to the existing trail network.
- Promote the re-opening of closed trail sections.

SAMFORD VALLEY RECREATION TRAILS

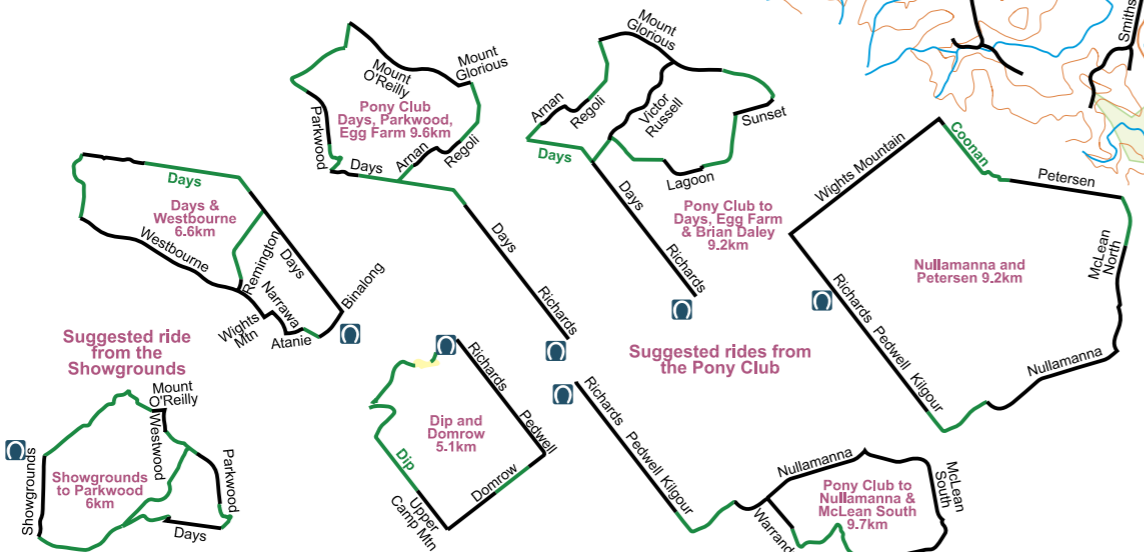
- Horse facilities
- Museum
- Playground
- Café / restaurant
- Shelter
- Picnic area
- Parking
- Drinking water
- Toilets
- Information
- Swimming
- BMX jumps
- Public road
- Gravel public road
- Sealed shared bike path
- Multi-use trail; fire road (no vehicles)
- Multi-use trail - mown grass
- Rail trail
- Closed or private fire break / trail / road
- Recommended access point
- Power line, transmission tower
- Step-through or similar, barrier to vehicles
- Trail stops, no way through
- Reserve (bushland)
- Open land in reserve
- Residential area
- Contour
- Index contour
- Creek, lake, marsh
- Bridge, ford

Scale 1:30,000 (1cm = 300m)
Contours 25m / 100m

500m 1km



Horse Trail Circuits



WHERE TO MOUNTAIN BIKE IN SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND

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Recreational trails map for Samford Valley first released publicly in July 2012



4.2 Traffic and transport

4.2.1 History and background

The rural feel and relatively sparse population are two of the key reasons why people choose to live in Samford Valley. However, choosing to live in a green area away from busy city life adds challenges in terms of finding sustainable alternative means of transport. The majority of residents use motor vehicles as their main mode of transport because they are perceived to be affordable, convenient and flexible.

Samford Valley was serviced by a commuter and freight railway line until the Australia's second worst railway incident in 1947, which, among other factors, led to its closure. The removal of the rail line is a major reason why Samford is not more developed and densely populated today. Had the railway line remained, it would have made Samford Valley a more likely target for population growth.

The removal of the railway line is a major reason why Samford is not more developed and densely populated today.

Transport using motorised vehicles commenced in the 1920s, but it wasn't until the 1960s that a local 'pig bus' commenced operation, alternating as a school bus and for transporting pigs to the abattoir. Horse riding provided an alternative means of transport until the 1960s and was then gradually replaced by bicycles for non-recreational local trips. Today, half the households in the valley have two motor vehicles and one third of the households have three or more. Just one per cent of households do not have access to a motor vehicle.



High School Bus at the corner of Bunya and Eatons Crossing Roads, August 1986

The affordability of motor vehicles – coupled with a steady average annual population growth rate of just over 300 additional residents in the Samford Valley over the past 20 years – and the fact that an estimated 70% of the working population work in other areas, means that there is an ever-increasing reliance on motor vehicles.

Commuting by bicycle is largely limited to using the main roads. The network of trails is almost exclusively used for recreational trips, apart from the Lanita rail trail to Ferny Grove, which is currently accessible for commuters by mountain bike or hybrid bike. The former Queensland State Government's proposed upgrade to the Lanita trail is likely to attract further regional bicycle movements away from the busy Samford Road.

Following extensive lobbying by the residents of Samford Valley, a bus service has been operational in

Samford Valley since 2005. Both Bob Millar (Division 11 Councillor for MBRC) and Geoff Wilson (former state member for Ferny Grove) actively supported the initiative and aided its development and similar support is now sought from current State MP Dale Shuttleworth.

The Queensland University of Technology undertook a transport research study in collaboration with the Queensland Parliament Intern Program in 2011. The Samford Transport Group (a subcommittee of the Samford and District Progress and Protection Association) provided guidance for this study. The report will be used to inform and improve the local public and alternative transport options.

The existing road network and parking facilities are experiencing incremental increases in usage each year as a consequence of the influx of new residents. As a result, certain locations within Samford Village are becoming increasingly congested and troublesome. Many residents have raised concerns and highlighted the need for improvement of infrastructure in the village (see Section 2.2.5).

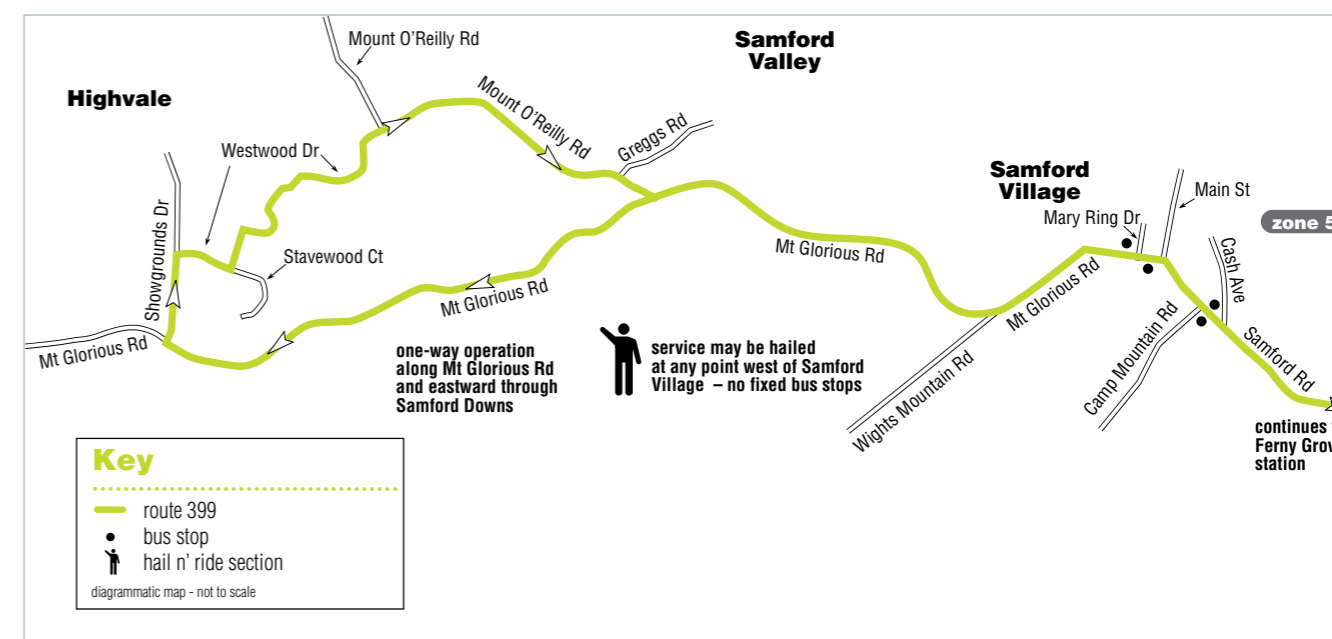
4.2.2 Current limitations of public transport and traffic infrastructure

Public transport

Some significant limitations will need to be overcome to make alternative means of transport (other than motor vehicles) to and from Samford viable and more attractive. The key limitations are:

- A recent Samford Transport Analysis revealed that a whopping 70% of surveyed residents were unaware of the existence of the 399 bus service at the time of the survey. This means that the bus line has been operating for 6 years yet 70% of people had no idea the service existed. A top priority should be to raise the awareness so that residents can make an informed decision.
- There are limited options available to commute via bicycle to Ferny Grove (or beyond to the city) without riding on the narrow side of busy roads with speed limits up to 80 km/hr.
- No working solution has yet been found to enable school buses to also service the wider community. Such a proposal has limitations with regards to child safety, but, if these could be solved, it would provide significant additional coverage at certain times of day during school terms.

- The public transport alternatives, such as the 399 bus service coupled with the Ferny Grove rail line, must offer a combined convenience and comfort to compete with private vehicles. This involves high reliability, minimum waiting times between services, minimum number of transport mode changes and efficient total commuter times.
- Student bus passes are restricted to students living more than 3 km from schools, yet very few alternatives are available, such as walking paths and bicycle paths.
- There is currently no formally structured car pooling system that encourages people to share transport.
- Many residents are not aware of alternative transport options available to them, such as the Council subsidised Community Assisted Transport Services (CATS), Samford Shuttle Service and the Arana Leagues Club Courtesy Bus.
- The fixed line 399 bus route and limited timetable does not suit all residents. With 50% of all households in the valley having dependent children, parents often need to make multiple trips to drop off and pick up children, as well as running other errands.



The 399 bus route between Samford and Ferny Grove

- The fixed line 399 bus route has a limited catchment area. Increasing its coverage may lead to reduced patronage by existing travellers as the bus route and travel time is extended.
- Public transport options are reduced during weekends (e.g. the 399 bus service is not available during the weekends).
- In the past, an insufficient number of bike lockers at the Ferny Grove train station may have prevented additional uptake of bicycles as an alternative means of transport.
- The road network in the Samford area lacks dedicated bike lanes or wide shoulders. This is especially dangerous when roads cross bridges and culverts, where shoulders are often non-existent, forcing cyclists to merge into the main traffic.

Traffic infrastructure

The key limitations of the existing traffic infrastructure are:

- Limited car parking is available in parts of the village during peak times.
- The design of roads such as the Mount Glorious Road entry into the village doesn't suit the posted speed limit. Proactive road design solutions, rather than reactive police controls, would provide a safer traffic environment.
- The traffic volume and speed along Main Street, particularly intrusive truck movements, tend to dissect the village in two halves and are causing concern for pedestrian safety.
- School bus and parent pick up and drop off access to Mount Glorious Road to and from Samford State School is ill suited to the volume of traffic and the number of vehicles turning right during peak times.
- In the past, inadequate car parking at Ferny Grove Station discouraged people from using the train to travel to the city.
- Generally poor Internet services prohibit many people from working from home (see Chapter 7). Better Internet connections would enable more people to work from home and therefore reduce the number of vehicles on the road at peak times, congestion and the community's carbon footprint.

4.2.3 Community aspirations

Public transport

The community aspirations for public transport include:

- the provision and promotion of more sustainable and energy efficient means of transport
- a reduced dependence on private motor vehicles and reduced road traffic
- the provision of safe and efficient bicycle travel away from busy roads
- suitably flexible transport options to suit a variety of different residents, including provision of transport alternatives that cater for young and retired people
- increased opportunities for people to work from home to reduce transport needs
- the provision of regional bike paths and trails, which would enable safe and efficient travel to Ferny Grove.

Traffic infrastructure

- The community aspirations for traffic improvements to traffic infrastructure are:
- improved parking facilities in the village, both in terms of number and layout
- reduced speed limits coming into and through the village
- further involvement in long-term planning for transport movements
- providing traffic solutions that complement and improve the village identity.



Our vision for action: transport

Public Transport

- Increase the promotion of the 399 bus service so that more residents are aware of the existence of the service.
- Promote a greater uptake of public transport by providing services that suit more travel needs
- Investigate the options for car pooling. Provide community forums where car pooling can be discussed and implemented
- Better promote the existing alternative transport options such as the Community Assisted Transport Service, Samford Shuttle Service and the Arana Leagues Club Courtesy Bus.
- Continue to review and analyse the public transport system to make it more economically viable.

Traffic Infrastructure

- Implement an alternative transport scheme for the local schools by providing incentives for parents and children to use alternative means of transport to and from school. Promote improvements to the intersection between Mount Glorious and School Road for bus and car access.
- Engage in long-term planning to provide traffic solutions that suit the village identity.
- Promote pedestrian safety by improving the pedestrian crossings in Main Street.
- Implement proactive traffic solutions in lieu of reactive band-aid solutions and policing to improve road safety.



Traffic congestion at Mount Glorious Road and School Road



QUT Students and Geoff Wilson (former State Member for Ferny Grove) during the finalisation of the transport study report



Main Street Samford

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www.samfordfutures.org