

5.4. UTILISATION OF TEAMSTERS PARK PROJECT 2017

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DEPARTMENT: CEO Unit - Connected Communities

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. **Adopts the content of the Teamsters Park Utilisation Project; and**
2. **Delegates authority to the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer in accordance with the Local Government Act 2009 to progress the options identified.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In accordance with the 2016-2017 Operational Plan initiative 2.3.1, officers were requested to develop a strategy to increase the utilisation of Teamsters Park and present the strategy to Council with recommendations for potential use and improvements of the reserve to enhance its unique qualities as a rest stop area with a design applicable to the location.

BACKGROUND

Queensland roads are the lifeblood of communities. Roadside rest areas or stopping places are designated spaces on highways and roads where drivers and passengers can take breaks to reduce driver fatigue. When suitably located they also play an important role in maximising the drive tourism experience and the economic benefit to surrounding towns.

The drive tourism market plays a significant role for tourism in the Douglas region. In 2015, Department of Transport Main Roads conducted road travel counts along the Captain Cook Highway with a yearly average of 8,194 vehicles passing Teamsters Park per day. Approximately 6,610 vehicles travel in one direction past the reserve and 4,009 vehicles of these do not return past this point thus venturing off into other areas of the region. 24.45% make a return trip and 9.46% are heavy vehicles.

National Geographic April 2017 recognised the drive along Captain Cook Highway as "one of the best in North Queensland". As part of The Captain Cook Highway Strategic Plan 2015, Executive Summary (2.), 'Stopping Places & Signage', Douglas Shire Council was recommended to investigate the feasibility of a visitor information centre at Teamsters Park. The Plan aims to strategise the development and presentation of the coastal road between Cairns and the Daintree River. Currently, the only official stopping place along the highway is Rex Lookout.

The Department of Natural Resources and Mines has given Council "in principle" support for the State Government owned, Willie-Pye Memorial Teamsters Park to go ahead with the Utilisation Project as a rest stop area.

COMMENT

Roadside rest areas provide opportunity to deliver interpretative signage and supporting infrastructure.

The aim of the Teamsters Park Utilisation Project is to upgrade amenities and facilities to a standard design that ensures a comfortable, rest destination for tourists, long distance travellers and our Shire locals who frequently use the reserve for regular sporting events.

Goal 1: Marketing tool as an economic support to promote tourism for the Region.

Goal 2: Access to visitor information.

Goal 3: Encourage and support driver safety and fatigue management

Goal 4: Provide facilities to enhance the drive experience.

Goal 5: Endorse the Shire's environmental awareness as a 'green' rest stop.

PROPOSAL

It is proposed the Utilisation of Teamsters Park Project is adopted by Council as a staged process for the upgrade of the reserve as a roadside rest stop area.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The Utilisation of Teamsters Park Project will be progressed through securing grant funding and/ or as capital works and operational budgeting allows.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There is a risk that the recommendations of the project will not proceed due to lack of funding support. This will be mitigated by ensuring all possible funding opportunities are explored and applied for where appropriate.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic: As the gateway to the Douglas Shire, this re-development will support the local economic activity and endeavour to increase the Shire's visitor expenditure. The Queensland Drive Tourism Strategy 2013 researched 950,000 domestic and 360,000 international visitors tour Queensland Roads annually.

The Captain Cook Highway Strategic Plan (Final report) 2015 noted Port Douglas having 15% of TNQ visitor with approximately 332,000 per annum and international visitors are considered the key user group for a stopping place.

Environmental: Emphasis has been placed on this reserve as a 'green' rest stop to have access to facilities such as 'waste and recycle' bins and a proposed black water dump point to dispose of litter and waste responsibly.

These points are in line with the Waste Reduction & Recycling Plan 2016 and Council's Corporate Plan 3.1.4, promoting 'zero tolerance for littering'.

Utilising solar panels where possible as an alternative source of power, will show commitment in reducing greenhouse omissions.

The installation and introduction of an Electric Car Re-Charge Station to the Shire would reflect Council's contribution to the support and progress of sustainability.

Social: The enhancement of Teamsters Park as a rest stop area will assist to support the perception and expectations of visitors and drivers for the Douglas region as a welcoming destination which caters for tourist market needs. This initiative will help to establish a positive reputation potentially having the ability to increase returning visitor numbers.

As the 'green' rest stop along the Captain Cook Highway opportunities have been recognised to partake in the marketing campaign for the 'Great Barrier Drive' initiative by TPDD.

CORPORATE/OPERATIONAL PLAN, POLICY REFERENCE

This report has been prepared in accordance with the following:

Corporate Plan 2016-2017 Initiatives:

Theme 2 – Building a Sustainable Economic Base

2.3.1 Develop strategy to increase the utilisation of Teamsters Park.

2.4.1 Economic Development Strategy.

Theme 3 – Improve Environmental Performance

3.1.2 Development of the Sustainable Strategy incorporating targets for reducing Council's carbon footprint.

Operational Plan 2016-2017 Actions:

CEO Unit - Report to Council for adoption with recommendations of possible uses and improvements to the location.

COUNCIL'S ROLE

Council can play a number of different roles in certain circumstances and it is important to be clear about which role is appropriate for a specific purpose or circumstance. The implementation of actions will be a collective effort and Council's involvement will vary from information only through to full responsibility for delivery.

Asset Owner	Meeting the responsibilities associated with owning or being the custodian of assets such as infrastructure
Fully-Responsible	Funding the full cost of a program or activity
Information Provider	Bringing people together to develop solutions to problems

CONSULTATION

Internal: Broad consultation was undertaken in the development of the Project:

- CEO Unit
- Development & Assessment Coordination
- Governance
- Infrastructure
- Public Spaces
- Councilor Workshop 16 May

External:

- Queensland Department of State Government
- Department of Natural Resources & Mines
- Department of Transport Main Roads
- Tourism Queensland
- Tourism & Events Queensland
- Tourism Port Douglas Daintree
- Touchscreen solutions, NSW
- Jennoli Art, NSW (local tile artist)
- EVE Australia, NSW (Electric car chargers)

ATTACHMENTS

1. Teamsters Park Strategy **[5.4.1]**

TEAMSTERS PARK UTILISATION PROJECT

Increase the utilisation of Teamsters Park

Possibilities

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1. Situation Analysis

1.1. Background

In 1877, Christie Palmerston discovered the route from the Tablelands to Craiglie - the 'Packers & Teamsters Village'. This route is notoriously known as the 'Bump Track'. 'Teamsters Memorial' was established at this location in 1977 and pays tribute to those who braved the old 'Bump Track' including drivers, horses and bullocks, packers and travellers.

Teamsters Park is situated at the entrance to Port Douglas on the Captain Cook Highway at Craiglie. Located on the left when approaching from the south, the park designates the 'gateway' to the Shire.

In 2015, Department of Transport Main Roads conducted road travel counts on the Captain Cook Highway with a yearly average of 8,194 vehicles passing Teamsters Park per day. Approximately 6,610 vehicles travel in one direction past the reserve and 60.66% (4,009 vehicles) of these do not return past this point thus venturing off into other areas of the region. 24.45% make a return trip and 9.46% are heavy vehicles.

The 2015 Captain Cook Highway Strategic Plan Final Report, Executive Summary, 'Stopping Places & Signage' recommended Douglas Shire Council investigate the feasibility of a visitor information centre at Teamsters Park

The Council Operational Plan of 2016-2017, recognised and identified as part of its initiative to *increase opportunities to promote the Shire as a destination of choice*, to develop a strategy to increase the utilisation of Teamsters Park. (G3 2.3.1).

In 2016, Council upgraded the pathway around the wetlands and towards the 'Bump Track' including a bridge. The path is compacted dirt with edging to avoid the path becoming uneven and unsafe when wet. This path provides clear access both to and from the park for recreational users.

A vast array of wildlife inhabits the wetlands which includes sightings of a crocodile. Safety is a priority for any recommendations provided.

1.2. Aim

- Enhance and draw attention to Teamsters Park reserve as the 'Douglas Shire Green Rest Stop'.
- Identify uses of Teamsters Park.
- Improve the overall gateway to Douglas Shire.
- Provide tourist information and locations of the area.
- Encourage interest in the Memorial and proposed pieces of historical interest.
- Reserve to become a marketing tool to promote tourism within the whole Shire.
- Enhance and provide visitors with beneficial and practical facilities.
- Encourage driver-safety and fatigue management.
- Provide a comfortable rest stop for locals and tourists using the 'Bump Track'.
- Enhance the tourism self-drive experience to encourage the drive beyond anticipated destinations.

1.3. Scope

Table The target audience has been identified as the following:

Table 1. Target Groups

Group	Objectives
Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance the Douglas Shire experience. Provide tourists with information of the area to enable planning of their time in the Shire.
Locals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage locals to utilise the park facilities. Establish a sense of pride in the community.
Tour Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educate agents on what is available in the area. Provide comfortable rest stop. Allow groups to identify other tourist opportunities in the area.
RV Drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide amenities. Encourage drivers to stop and rest at this location.

2. Budget

The budget would be estimated based on the following:

- Infrastructure Surveys.
- Concept Plan.
- Project Management.
- Contingency Plan.
- Accessible toilet block.
- Educational game.
- Drinking fountain.
- Replace 3 x sheltered picnic tables and install an undercover BBQ with 2 x picnic tables
- 'Waste and recycle' bin.
- Waste dump point.
- Electric car charge (free standing).
- Touchscreen Information Kiosk (free standing).
- Renovate bird watching hut.
- Signage:
 - Interpretive signs
 - Wildlife plaques
 - Electric car charge sign
 - Crocodile education signs
- Parking bays including one specifically designated for the electric car charger and a couple on Boar Street for RVs at the Dump Point.
- Pathway upgrade
- Revitalise wetlands and woodland surrounds.
- Solar power installation.

3. Current Facilities

- 1 Toilet block – 2 toilets in ladies; 1 toilet and 1 urinal in men's.
- 2 uncovered picnic tables.
- 4 cement picnic tables under cover.
- Large grassed area at the back of the park.
- Walking path from car park to wetlands and 'Bump Track'.
- 1 covered wooden picnic table at wetlands.
- Wooden bird watching hut.

4. Options to Achieve Aims

- Upgrade amenities.
- Replace 3 x sheltered picnic tables and install an undercover BBQ with 2 x picnic tables
- Interpretive signage including environmental and safety information.
- Wildlife/bird species plaques.
- Large information map of the Douglas Shire.
- Renovate bird watching hut.
- Revitalise the wetlands
 - Audit of bird species
 - Wetland information board
 - Croc/swimming warning signs (unless croc is removed)
 - Fencing off lake
 - Beautification of lake, wetlands and natural woodland
 - Upgrade of pathway adjacent to lake and bird watch hut
- Electric car charger.
- Dump point for RVs.
- 'Waste & Recycle'
- Play area.
- Drinking fountain.
- Effective signage from pull-in road.
- Parking bays (including one designated for the electric car charger and dump point).
- Solar power installation.

4.1. Upgrade Amenities

Figure 1. Current Toilet Block



There is currently one toilet block with a male toilet and separate trough and two female toilets. The toilet block does not cater for accessibility as there is no path from the parking area to the amenities, where there are two small steps at the entrance to both the male and female facilities.

Option

1. Remove the current amenities and replace with amenities that consist of two unisex toilets and one disabled including a fold-down baby change table allowing for wheelchair accessibility. This concept appears to be working well at the Daintree Gateway. The amenities block would have a similar modern design to those already located throughout the Shire.

Figure 1.



Figure 2.



4.2. Picnic tables

Figure 1. Current tables



Figure 2.



Currently, there are three outdoor bench picnic tables and four cement picnic tables under the one shelter. The sheltered tables are quite awkward to access as they are placed very close to the walls. None of the picnic tables are accessible.

Options

1. Remove and replace current undercover picnic tables and including the picnic tables to create more room for parking.
2. Install a dual undercover BBQ with two picnic tables.

Figure 1. Picnic Table Option



4.3. BBQs

Facilities in Teamsters Park are restricted to picnic tables. Installing BBQ facilities would provide those travelling through an opportunity to 'rest and revive' before continuing on their journey.

Options

1. Install a dual undercover BBQ and two picnic tables. The BBQs would be installed close to an electrical power source.
2. Install a tap close to the BBQ to allow for easy access to water once BBQs have been used.

Figure1. BBQ Options



Figure 2.



4.4. Visitor Information Options

Information centres are a wealth of local knowledge and provide visitors with a range of services and access to attractions and information. An information kiosk in the park opens up a variety of options to tourists and gives them an insight into the Shire.

Options

1. Touch Screen Kiosks

Touch screen information kiosks are already in use in a locations and do not require an officer to be present. Mixed forms of imagery, text and videos can be uploaded onto the kiosk and the user is able to navigate through its content 24 hours a day.

Utilising a small space, the kiosk could be installed under shelter allowing for added protection from the elements. They generally have an auto-dimming system allowing for use in direct sunlight. Kiosks are secure and designed to withstand vandalism and applied with an anti-graffiti powder coating.

Figure 1. Touchscreen Kiosks

Figure 2.



Touchscreen kiosks have the ability to incorporate a GSM modem for connection - Council would supply the 4G SIM and cover the data cost. Most popular amongst Councils is in-house management using web-based content - nominated pages can be pulled from the website and regularly updated. There are a number of ways content can be managed or triggered.

Visitors will be able to access local weather and directions to local businesses or partner tourism organisations. This system would allow for direct access to Council website and the Events Calendar which would increase the economic impact in the Shire.

This is a low, on-going cost solution to Council for providing current information to the user.

2. Information Boards

The information boards would be themed similar to those already installed at the Daintree Gateway. This information displayed would feature the whole Shire therefore limiting the amount of content.

Information Board Options

Figure1. Information Board Options



Figure 2.

Figure 3.



Figure 4.



2.1 Native Wildlife Plaques

Small wildlife species information plaques on pedestals would be sporadically placed around the park and wetland area as points of interest for visitors.

3. Manned Information Centre

A manned information centre was recommended as part of the Captain Cook Highway Strategic Plan, Final Report (2015) however, this is not a feasible option to Council due to the significant costs associated with construction, on going operational and maintenance costs and depreciation.



Figure 1. Manned Information Centre

4.5. Waste Disposal

An unnecessary amount of illegal dumping can occur at Teamsters Park as the wheelie bins allow people to dump large bags of mixed rubbish. Once the bins are full the overflow is placed on the ground beside the bins, along with TV's, boxes, etc. The aim is to promote 'zero tolerance to littering' in line with the 2016/2017 Corporate Plan, 2016 RV Strategy and Economic Development Strategy 2017 and Waste Reduction & Recycling Plan 2016 as a 'green' rest stop area.

Options

1. Install similar waste and recycle bins already in use at Cape Tribulation. These bins have reduced the amount of illegal dumping in Cape Tribulation. They are contained and easily cleaned, limit the size of rubbish placed and allow for waste to be sorted from recycling.
2. There is also the opportunity to fit a perspex display case on the side of bins to be used for promotion or imagery. Eg. Disaster information, Council messages or Council events.



Figure 1.. Waste & Recycle Bins

4.6. RV Dump Point

There are no public RV waste Dump Points for black waste in Port Douglas. Investigation has been undertaken to use the current location of the CL 2 Sewer Pump and integrate it with the installation of an RV Dump Point.



Figure 1 RV Dump Point

4.7. Children Entertainment

1. Educational Game

An educational game in the park allows children to expel energy whilst learning about a subject on the local area. An instruction board is placed at the start of approximately 30 staggered tiles. The game would follow a subject native to this area. Children would be able to follow the path learning about different aspects of the topic. eg. Crocodile lifecycle - mother laying eggs, hatching, diet, predators, habitat, history of the area etc. There is the option of this being a Council initiated RADF project. On going costs for this would be minimal and the tiles would be set into the ground for easy maintenance.

Figure 1. Educational Tile Game



Figure 2.



4.8. Renovate the Bird Watching Hut

Renovate the wooden bird watching hut close to the wetland area. Again, there is a possibility of giving schools the opportunity to participate and produce a frame of local bird life species artwork inside the hut.

Figure 1. Bird Watching Huts



4.9. Drinking Water Fountain

Install a water drinking station close to the picnic tables/BBQ area and the play area and one close to the 'Bump Track'. Style to be kept in line, with those provided in other 'open spaces' areas such as the Port Douglas Esplanade.

4.10. Electric Car Charge Station

E-mobility is becoming increasingly popular and TPDD is looking to promote the use of electric cars in the Shire. QT Resorts have installed Car Chargers in all locations including Port Douglas as part of their 'Green Strategy' to reduce 'greenhouse' emissions. Designs have expanded to cater for most leading car brands; Tesla, Nissan, BMW, Hyundai, Mitsubishi etc. There is an option for single or double charging ports from the charging stand.

Figure 1 Electric Car Charge Station

Figure 2. Allocated Car Park for Charge Station



4.11. Solar Power

Utilising solar panels where possible as an alternative source of power, will assist Council to express its participation in reducing greenhouse pollutants with an environmentally responsible image.

Council have installed solar power at designated areas of the Esplanade at Port Douglas. Other areas around the Shire include the Council Administration Building. This is environmentally friendly and cost effective to Council. Solar panel stands are strategically placed around picnic and BBQ tables, benches, on top of information plaques/boards and shelters. The panels are approximately \$1,000 per light and installation is simple.

5. Next Procedure

Stage 2 of the project would be to:

- Secure funding.
- Conduct a detailed survey of the site's contours and natural features, to identify the underground infrastructure, i.e. fibre optic cables, electrical sources, water, dump point – location to sewer, drainage etc.
- Draft a Concept Plan pinpointing effective location of infrastructures, picnic shelters, amenity building etc. ensuring the layout is natural and visually appealing.
- Sketch floor plans and elevations of the amenity building.
- Local drainage investigations to determine stormwater discharge/outlet conditions.
- Examine the current waste-dump point to ascertain effective standard of operation.
- Ascertain suitable access from Captain Cook Highway following liaison with the Department of Transport and Main Roads.
- Full investigation into the proposed services and associated costs – water, power, gas, internet and data access.
- Draw up a landscape plan to revive natural woodland and revitalisation of wetlands, including pathways to and around the lake taking into account the appearance of the rest area facilities and woodland surrounds when viewed from Captain Cook Highway.
- Plan the renovation for the current bird watching hut.
- Survey of bird species and install signage inside the hut of species for easy reference for users.