

## **DCF27/20 REMOVAL OF CAR PARKING SPACES TO SUPPORT CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE (D20/251567)**

### **Director City Futures**

### **City Change**

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#### **Executive Summary**

A Council Plan 2017-21 key priority is to facilitate a demonstrable shift to more sustainable modes of transport that also targets a long-term reduction in car use. The Moreland Integrated Transport Strategy (MITS) 2019 is Council's overarching transport strategy with an aim to achieving this mode shift. Headline Action 4 in MITS is that Council should be reallocating space from cars and car parking to walking, cycling, public transport and for greener, more pleasant streets (especially during scheduled maintenance of road surfaces).

The COVID-19 State of Emergency in Victoria has significant implications for transport, particularly due to social distancing requirements that necessitate an estimated 84 per cent reduction in public transport capacity. As 27 per cent of Moreland residents used public transport to get to work pre-COVID-19, this equates to an additional 17,650 vehicle trips per work day if all of these residents drove instead, significantly increasing congestion and other traffic issues.

As such, there is a need to encourage as many trips as possible to be made by walking and cycling, particularly for shorter trips where these modes are more viable. Providing walking and cycling improvements would have other benefits in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, including facilitating social distancing and hygiene, supporting local businesses and economies and improving physical and mental health.

Low stress cycling routes are critical for promoting mode shift as they cater for all ability levels, especially less confident cyclists, who are interested in cycling, but fearful of riding near cars. The Victorian Cycling Strategy 2018-28 states that 60 percent of Victorians are curious about cycling but are deterred by real or perceived safety concerns. Low stress cycling routes separate bicycles from motor vehicles (for example, protected lanes or off-road paths) and are considered to be the best way to encourage new riders to take up cycling as a means of transport.

On-road projects are being prioritised for bicycle projects until the issues of progressing shared path projects in the rail reserves are resolved. Typically, due to limited space, concessions need to be made when altering the road cross section to implement low stress cycling infrastructure. Council approval to progress with four bike projects that require the reallocation of road space is being sought:

- O'Hea Street, Pascoe Vale;
- Railway Place, Brunswick;
- De Carle Street, Coburg;
- Boundary Road, Hadfield/Pascoe Vale/Coburg North.

The continuation of the O'Hea Street bike path from Sussex Street to Irvine Street is the next stage in the planned 'low stress' cycling route from Coburg to Glenroy (see Attachment 1 for this link in the overall route). To provide low stress cycling infrastructure and protect significant trees, some car parking would require removal. A parking survey that was undertaken revealed that impacts of the parking loss would be minor for current usage as it showed that the usage of those spaces is relatively low. No consultation has been undertaken with the abutting properties at this stage.

This project is listed for and construction in 2021/22 and approval to commence design and consultation in 2020/21 is recommended.

The Upfield Shared Path is Moreland's primary low stress commuter cycling route which provides a north-south route through Moreland and access to the city. Railway Place, Brunswick is the last on-road section of the Upfield Shared Path (south of Bell Street). Most of this shared path is within the rail corridor. Council officers are proposing to upgrade the Upfield Shared Path by continuing the three metre shared path along Railway Place and install a refuge island on Union Street (see Attachment 4). This project would improve access for Jewell Train Station, and RMIT. The proposal would remove nine parking bays from Railway Place.

Consultation was undertaken with surrounding properties and the broader community. Council received 63 responses, with 75 per cent in favour (47 for and 16 against). This project is listed for construction in 2020/21 in the 10-year bike capital works program.

Council has determined that De Carle Street, Coburg (between Rennie Street and The Avenue) needs reconstruction. De Carle Street is an alternative to Sydney Road for cyclists (on the eastern side). De Carle Street is narrower between Rennie Street and The Grove and parking would need to be removed from one side of the road to provide a high quality dedicated bicycle lane. A parking occupancy study showed that this would have minimal impact on current parking usage.

Acknowledging that protected bicycle lanes for only two blocks would be an ineffective length of treatment, it is proposed to install protected bicycle lanes from The Avenue to Moreland Road and modify the roundabouts. Similar to O'Hea Street, Council officers will finalise designs, undertake further consultation, and apply for a planning permit on this project in 2020/21, with the aim to construct in 2021/22.

The final location for proposed removal of parking is Boundary Road, Coburg North/Hadfield/Pascoe Vale. This section has existing bicycle lanes but parking is currently permitted. Parking surveys have recently been undertaken and occupancy is generally low. It is recommended to ban parking in the bike lanes between Upfield railway line in Coburg North and West Street, Pascoe Vale. This would provide a more direct and safer route for cyclists in Coburg North / Pascoe Vale to access the Upfield railway line and shared user path.

## **Officer Recommendation**

That Council:

1. Consults with the local community on the recommended solution for the O'Hea Street bike path extension which would require the removal of parking to protect the existing trees and receives a report on the findings on the consultation with recommendations on the next steps prior to any construction.
2. Reallocates road space on Railway Place, Brunswick to support the installation of a shared path by removing parking on the west side, as indicated in Attachment 4 to this report.
3. Consults with the local community on the detailed design for the De Carle Street, Coburg road narrowing and bike path construction which would require the removal of some parking and receives a report on the findings on the consultation with recommendations on the next steps prior to any construction.
4. Bans parking on both sides of Boundary Road, Coburg North/Hadfield/Pascoe Vale between West Street and the Upfield Shared Path to provide a more direct, and safer, route for cyclists in this area to access the shared user path, receives a report to on the parking removal three months after the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

## 1. Policy Context

The Council Plan 2017-21 states that a key priority of Council is to:

- Facilitate a demonstrable shift to more sustainable modes of transport that also targets a long-term reduction in car use.

The Moreland Integrated Transport Strategy (MITS) 2019 is Council's overarching transport strategy with an aim to achieving a demonstrable shift towards sustainable transport modes. It states that Council will, among other things:

- Reallocate road space and car parking according to the road user hierarchy (in descending order, pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users and motorists).
- Protect our local streets from the impacts of increasing vehicle traffic.
- Establish high-quality pedestrian routes and places that are safe, comfortable and accessible.
- Make cycling safe, comfortable and a preferred mode of travel in Moreland.
- Encourage local trips to jobs, services and facilities by walking and cycling.

## 2. Background

Victorian Cycling Strategy 2018-28 states that 60 percent of Victorians are curious about cycling but are deterred by real or perceived safety concerns. Providing a lower-stress cycling experience by taking a whole-of-route approach to reducing traffic stress fits into an integrated network.

Low stress cycling routes are critical for promoting mode shift as they cater for all ability levels. However, a route is only as good as its weakest link. If there is a section that a person finds uncomfortable to travel on, they are likely to stop riding if they do not find an appropriate alternative.

In most instances, constructing low stress on-road infrastructure requires the reallocation of road space. This would typically require either the narrowing the through traffic lane, removal of car parking, or reduction in the nature strip width.

## 3. Issues

On-road projects are being prioritised for bicycle projects until the issues of progressing shared path projects in the rail reserves are resolved. Typically, due to limited space, concessions need to be made when altering the road cross section to implement low stress cycling infrastructure. Four bike projects that require the reallocation of road space are:

- O'Hea Street, Pascoe Vale;
- Railway Place, Brunswick;
- De Carle Street, Coburg;
- Boundary Road, Hadfield/Pascoe Vale/Coburg North.

### **O'Hea Street, Pascoe Vale Bike Path Extension**

Council is developing a low stress cycling link between Glenroy and Coburg as shown in **Attachment 1**. The route provides connections to major attractors such as schools, sporting facilities, and local shops. Works have been completed from both directions to help support cycling in the two areas.

The O’Hea Street extension from Sussex Street to Irvine Street is the next planned section to be completed in this overall link. On road protected bike lanes are the recommended solution. They provide the physical separation for cyclists from both cars and pedestrians, and are more economical than a concrete path.

On 12 June 2020, the Member for Pascoe Vale announced that the state government would provide painted bicycle lanes and other upgrades along Derby Street, Pascoe Vale, rather than protected bicycle lanes on Cumberland Road, as previously announced by the State Government in May 2018.

Regardless of the north-south route in this location, Council officers recommend extending this link to Irvine Street as it gets access closer to the shops at this end of Cumberland Road.

O’Hea Street has significant trees along its length that provide a high value to the community through natural amenity, and natural shade which helps combat the urban heat island effect and improve conditions for pedestrians.

It is recommended that some parking is removed to be enable protected lanes without affecting the significant trees.

The section between Derby Street and Sussex Street has a 12.5 metre road pavement which can accommodate two-way traffic lanes, parking on one side, and protected bike lanes. See **Attachment 2** for an example cross section.

The section between Derby Street and Irvine Street has a narrower pavement width. To accommodate the same cross section, a section of the nature strip would need to be removed. The trees along this section vary in size and significance. The trees of low significance can be replaced; however, trees of high significance are to be protected. An arborist report would be commissioned to determine each tree’s level of significance.

Parking would need to be removed from both sides of the road to protect the trees of high significance (see **Attachment 2** for the example cross section). The exact number of parking spaces lost would only be known during the design phase (once the functional layout, community consultation and an arborist report was completed).

A parking survey was undertaken on O’Hea Street between Cumberland Road and Sussex Street from 6 am to 10 pm, on Thursday 10 to Saturday 12 October 2019. The results of the survey have been summarised in **Attachment 4**. The survey showed that the maximum occupancy rarely exceeded 40 per cent. As such, the removal of parking would likely have a minimal impact on the typical low current usage.

Importantly all properties have access to off street parking which likely contributes to the finding of the recent spot check surveys undertaken during COVID-19 restrictions that have shown that occupancy levels have been similar to what was found during the pre COVID parking survey. Site inspections have shown that parking in surround streets are low, as such, there may be capacity in the side streets for any displaced vehicles.

The proposed buffer between the bike lane and the vehicle traffic has sufficient width for the bins to be placed for waste collection.

There is a longer-term aspiration to extend a quality cycling link on O’Hea Street from Irvine Street to Cumberland Road. The constraints, including street trees and indented parking for the RSL club at Cumberland Road, require further investigation before detailed design work can be advanced.

## **Upfield Shared Path Upgrade - Railway Place, Brunswick**

It is proposed to upgrade the Upfield Shared Path in Railway Place and Union Street, Brunswick.

The Upfield Shared Path is Moreland's primary low stress commuter cycling route which provides commuter access to the city. Pre-COVID-19, it was carrying approximately 2,300 cyclists per day.

Railway Place, Brunswick is the last on-road section of the Upfield Shared Path south of Bell Street. The other remaining section is Railway Place, Coburg which is being removed during the LXRP works. All other sections are within the rail reserve and have the safety benefit of no interaction with vehicles.

The Upfield Shared Path is a part of the Department of Transport's Strategic Cycling Corridor (SCC). The SCC is the highest level of importance that a route can be designated. The SCC is a strategic network of low stress cycling routes throughout Melbourne.

The proposal includes a 3 metre shared path on Railway Place and a refuge island on Union Street (see **Attachment 4**). The removal of native trees to continue the shared path along the rail corridor would be avoided. This project would not only address the final missing off-road link in the Upfield Shared Path, but it would also greatly improve crossing over Union Street. This has the benefit of improving access to the Upfield Shared Path, Jewell Train Station, and RMIT.

This proposal would remove approximately nine parking spaces from Railway Place Brunswick.

## **De Carle Street Projected Bike Lanes**

Council's Asset Management plan has highlighted that De Carle Street, Coburg (between Rennie Street and The Avenue) needs reconstruction.

During the development of Council's 10 Year Capital Works Program for Cyclists, a route was proposed on De Carle Street to provide an alternative to Sydney Road on the eastern side.

MITS classifies De Carle Street as a local road however recent a traffic count highlights that volumes are approaching, and have exceeded, the preferred maximum volumes of 3,000 vehicles per day. Two traffic surveys were completed in De Carle Street in 2019 which have been summarised as follows:

De Carle Street Location	Average Daily Volume	Date
Outside 36 De Carle Street	2,845	9-16 September 2019
Outside Moreland Primary School	3,524	17-24 June 2019

Council officers are proposing to narrow the road width and install protected bike lanes. The preferred width of a local road is 7.2 metre which allows parking on both sides and a single lane of traffic. The bottleneck created when vehicles park opposite each other slows traffic by requiring drivers to give way to oncoming vehicles. This is a form of passive traffic calming and is desirable in some local streets. It is not planned to make the street one-way.

De Carle Street is narrower between Rennie Street and The Grove, as such parking would to be removed from one side of the road. A parking occupancy study from Thursday 10 to Saturday 12 October showed that the highest occupancy was 39 per cent. As such, parking can be removed from one side without effecting the current usage. Due to the higher amount of parking on the west side, it is proposed to remove parking on the east side (approximately 8 spaces). Spot check surveys during COVID-19 restrictions have shown that occupancy levels have not changed.

The kerb would be extended at the former Kangan TAFE Building at 31 The Avenue, to protect the existing trees. Tree protection is vital to reduce the Urban Heat Island Effect and maintain residential amenity. See **Attachment 6** for the proposed plan for De Carle Street between Rennie Street and The Avenue.

It is acknowledged that protected bicycle lanes for only two blocks would be an ineffective length of treatment. As such, it is proposed to extend the length by installing protected bicycle lanes from The Avenue to Moreland Road and modify the roundabouts with funding from the 10 Year Capital Works Program for Cyclists. See **Attachment 5** for an example cross section.

### **Boundary Road Bike Lanes**

Boundary Road has an existing marked bike lane from West Street to the Upfield Railway Line, providing access to the Upfield Shared Path (which is the main route into the city), local shops, and schools. Parking is currently allowed across the bike lane reducing its effectiveness as a cycling route. Cyclists are required to pass parked cars, forcing them into heavy traffic.

Boundary Road is an arterial road with a 60 km/h speed limit. Only confident cyclists are likely to use the bike lane as they are required to merge into traffic to get around any parked vehicles.

The effective length of this route is approximately 2.2 kilometres.

Due to the increase in cycling and reduction in the use of public transport during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is recommended that parking should be banned on Boundary Road to improve cycling as a viable alternative.

Council officers undertook multiple inspections to gauge the parking occupancy. The parking occupancy data is below:

Time Date	West Street to Cumberland road	Cumberland Road to Derby Street	Derby Street to Sussex Street	Sussex Street to the Upfield Shared Path
2:20pm 16/06/2020	2	15	12	1
9:00pm 16/06/2020	6	15	8	0
8:15am 19/06/2020	5	9	7	0
3:30pm 20/06/2020	4	9	11	0
5:45pm 20/06/2020	6	15	8	0

This data shows that over the 2.2 km length the parking occupancy is relatively low. Additionally, the inspection revealed that all properties have access to off street parking, and parking occupancy in side streets is low. As such, existing on street parking could be relocated to side streets and the off-street parking could be used for people with restricted mobility.

### **Human Rights Consideration**

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

The removal of car parking does not limit or interfere with any Human Rights, in particular 'section 12 – right to freedom of movement'. Although residents in the area will be required to find alternate locations to park their private vehicles, all properties have access to off street parking on their property. Additionally, improving the safety and usability of walking and cycling improves movement for people who either cannot afford to own a car or do not drive for a number of reasons.

## 4. Consultation

The social distancing restrictions have not affected the engagement as consultation occurred prior to restrictions coming into effect in relation to the Railway Place and DeCarle Street project or, further to Council's June 2020 resolution (NOM27/20 - Traffic Matters and Written Consultation), consultation can proceed in relation to the O'Hea Street project. No consultation is proposed prior to implementing the Boundary Road project to enable a rapid COVID-19 response. The consultation for each project is discussed further to follow.

### **O'Hea Street Bike Path Extension Proposed Consultation**

Once designs are ready to share with the community, Council officers will consult with all property owners and occupiers for all properties that are adjacent to O'Hea Street where the proposed works are planned. The feedback will be reviewed and form a follow up Council report with proposed next steps.

### **Upfield Shared Path Upgrade - Railway Place, Brunswick Consultation Outcome**

Properties surrounding Railway Place, Brunswick were sent letters to owners and occupiers. The proposal was also put on the consultation section of Council's website. The proposal advertised through multiple methods to get feedback from the broader community. This includes Council's social media, the Moreland Bicycle Users Group (MoreBUG), and a flashing message board was installed on Railway Place.

Council received 63 responses, with 75 per cent in favour (47 for and 16 against).

The proposal was supported for the following reasons:

- Improved safety for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Were more comfortable allowing their children to ride on the Upfield Shared Path with the removal of the on-road section and improved crossing at Union Street;
- Protection of the existing trees is critical in a climate emergency;
- Better access for people with prams;
- Did not feel comfortable riding with the heavy vehicles that use Railway Place.

A summary of issues that were raised is below:

- Loss of parking

Council officer comment - The loss of parking on street parking would be the biggest negative impact of the proposal. However, MITS states that reallocating space from cars and car parking to walking, cycling, public transport and for greener, more pleasant streets is the preferred outcome.

- Additional street activation was required to stop anti-social behaviour (trees, benches, better fencing, improved lighting etc.)

Council officer comment - Improved fencing, trees, and lighting will all be considered during the design phase. Fencing would most likely be best placed on VicTrack land so it is unlikely to be a part of the design. However, Council will advocate to VicTrack/Metro Trains Melbourne if it is the desirable outcome.

- Some households need more parking permits than currently allocated (especially shared houses)

Council officer comment - Public road space is utilised for a range of people for a multitude of reasons. Residential permits give residents an advantage but does not guarantee a space. Additionally, this is one of the best locations for alternative modes of transport, which includes Jewell Train Station, Tram 19 and 58, a range of car share companies, and Bus Routes 504, 506, 508, 509.

- Railway Place is a low speed and volume road, so it is safe to ride on.  
Council officer comment - The likelihood of a crash resulting in fatality is statistically low at the speed of traffic. However, perceived risk is as important as measured risk when trying to achieve mode shift. If someone feels unsafe they are unlikely to walk or ride. Feedback showed that people would be more comfortable letting their child ride on the Upfield Shared Path if the works were to go ahead.
- Elevated rail will be coming so it is not worth undertaking these works  
Council officer comment - The State Government has not announced any works in this section of the railway. If works were to be announced it would take many years of planning before construction begins. It would be inappropriate to delay this project for presumed works.
- Residential off-street parking is too small to use  
Council officer comment - It is not possible for Council to provide storage for every private vehicle on the public road reserve.
- Residents who are not eligible for parking permits do not want the removal of the few remaining unrestricted parking spots in the area  
Council officer comment - Any properties subdivided after August 2011 were informed that they would be expected to keep their private vehicles on their property as permits were not available. However, the MITS parking rollout will create new permits that will allow residents of properties subdivided after this date to parking all day wherever the new parking restrictions are installed.
- Need more parking as the car park at Jewell Station was removed  
Council officer comment - As the Jewell Station car park was on PTV/VicTrack managed land, it was their decision to remove parking from the train station. It is the responsibility of PTV/VicTrack to provide parking for rail commuters.
- Install "Permit Only" parking for residents.  
Council officer comment - Council has currently paused the roll out new parking restriction changes however this could be considered at a later date.
- Put the path on rail corridor by removing the trees and heritage signal box.  
Council officer comment - The Urban Heat Island Action Plan provides that Council should be increasing the amount of shade to create a cooler more liveable city and Council has actively sought retention of heritage features with the rail corridor. It is currently unclear if Council can continue to undertake works within the rail corridor due to ongoing issues with Metro Trains Melbourne. Council wrote to the Minister for Public Transport in November 2019 for a resolution however has not yet received a response.
- Risk turning vehicles from Railway Place and RMIT will hit a pedestrian  
Council officer comment - All turning vehicles must give way to all pedestrian movements. Clear lines of sight will be included in the final design to insure drivers have clear vision of pedestrians.
- Give priority to the Upfield Shared Path by installing Stop signs on Union Street  
Council officer comment - Installing Stop signs for Union Street traffic would result in vehicles stopped on the level crossing. As such, the only method to give priority is to install pedestrian crossing signals so vehicles can safely stop on the other side of the level crossing. Unfortunately, this is cost prohibitive as current estimates for a signalised crossing that links with a level crossing is \$1 million. A refuge island is therefore the preferred option. A similar treatment has successfully been implemented on Munro Street, Coburg.



- The proposal is removing more than nine car spaces

Council officer comment - Car size varies greatly, and it is possible that more than nine small cars could fit. The estimated nine spaces were taken from measurements and recent aerial photography however did not include vehicles parked illegally within 10 metres of the intersection of Union Street. The plan shows the area where parking is proposed to be removed.

### **De Carle Street Projected Bike Lanes**

A letter was sent to all owners and occupiers of properties that are adjacent to De Carle Street, Coburg (including Moreland Primary School) requesting feedback on the proposal.

95 letters were sent with a total of six responses from residents, that revealed that 50 per cent supported the proposal.

A summary of issues that were raised is below:

- Parking should not be removed because it is unknown what will happen with the unused TAFE building

Council officer comment - The development of this site would need to consider the current surroundings when being developed. Additionally, making cycling a viable option would likely reduce the traffic impact of this site.

- Narrowing the road will cause congestion

Council officer comment - De Carle Street is a local street that already is above the preferred maximum traffic volumes. Without intervention it will continue to increase. The friction caused by vehicles needing to hold to give way to oncoming traffic helps in the reduction of traffic as people will choose a more appropriate road to travel. The road is being narrowed to the standard width of local roads in Moreland.

- Cyclists can already use the Upfield Shared Path

Council officer comment - The Upfield Shared Path is 400 metres away and does not cater for people on the east side of Sydney Road. De Carle Street provides access to Moreland Primary School, a childcare centre, and the TAFE building. Providing low stress links to facilities like this is key in promoting the shift to more sustainable modes of transport.

- It does not match the existing local roads in the area

Council officer comment - The road is being narrowed to the most common width of local roads in Moreland. MITS Action 4 specifically targets reconstructing roads as an opportunity to support sustainable transport and create more pleasant streets.

### **Boundary Road, Pascoe Vale to Coburg North**

If this proposal is adopted as an emergency (COVID-19) measure, all affected property occupiers and owners will be notified prior to the banning of parking.

## **5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

## **6. Financial and Resources Implications**

These projects are currently identified in the 10-year Capital Works program for Cyclists and its priority will be assessed along with all other projects within the program.

All projects are considered high priority, and planned to be constructed during the 2020/21 or 2021/22 financial years

## **7. Implementation**

Subject to Council's decision:

- Railway Place and De Carle Street will continue to the detailed design phase and planned to be completed in the 2021/22 financial year.
- Consultation will be undertaken regarding the O'Hea Street proposed works and a follow up Council report be submitted.
- Boundary Road could be implemented in the next three months.

### **Attachment/s**

<b>1</b>	Map - Coburg to Glenroy Link - Craigieburn Shared Path	D20/258087
<b>2</b>	O'Hea Street Extension - Road Cross Sections	D20/98579
<b>3</b>	O'Hea Street Parking Survey Summary - Sussex Street to Irvine Street	D20/100290
<b>4</b>	Plan - Upfield Shared Path Upgrade - Railway Place Union Street - Brunswick	D20/19669
<b>5</b>	De Carle Street Cross Section between The Avenue and Moreland Road	D20/103476
<b>6</b>	Plan - De Carle Street Between Rennie Street and The Avenue	D20/103525