

7.4 DE CARLE STREET SEPARATED BICYCLE LANES

Director City Futures Kirsten Coster

City Change

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the consultation outcomes on the proposed implementation of separated cycling lanes on De Carle Street, Coburg between Rennie Street and Moreland Road, as requested by Council in July 2020 (DCF27/20).
2. Approves the implementation of separated cycling lanes on De Carle Street as shown in Attachment 1 and Attachment 2.

REPORT

Executive Summary

Providing separated bicycle lanes on De Carle Street between Moreland Road and Rennie Street is identified in Council's capital works program for pedestrians and cyclists for delivery in 2021/22. This will provide a high-quality cycling route suitable for users of all confidence levels, including connection to Moreland Primary School and a childcare centre, as well as connecting to the Albion Street shared path and a future planned shimmy route along De Carle Street south of Moreland Road.

This project will result in a reduction of eight parking spaces on the east side of De Carle Street between Rennie Street and The Grove (with no parking impacts elsewhere) and reduce the traffic lane (for traffic in both directions) to approximately 3.1 or 3.3 metres depending on location. Concept plans are shown at **Attachment 1** and **Attachment 2**, with indicative cross-sections at **Attachment 3**.

Separated cycling infrastructure is key to providing more cycling options through increasing participation in cycling particularly for under-represented groups such as women, children and the elderly.

This project will be the first implementation of the Moreland Integrated Transport Strategy (MITS) 2019 headline action to "reallocate road space and car parking (when doing planned capital works such as road reconstruction) for sustainable transport improvements" as the section between The Avenue and Rennie Street is being reconstructed in 2021/22. This project is also a Council Action Plan 2020/21 item with project preparation to be completed by June 2021 (CAP item 38, Action 1(v)).

Council resolved in July 2020 (DCF37/20) to conduct further consultation with the community on this project following an initial period of consultation in January 2020. Letters were sent in February and March 2021 to owners and occupiers of all adjoining properties including Moreland Primary School (95 letters sent) and a variable message (VMS) was also placed on the road to inform other road users of the opportunity to provide feedback.

Five responses were received in the latest round of consultation (11 in total across both rounds), with three in favour (six in favour across both rounds). Key issues raised in the five responses opposing the proposed project were the reduction in parking spaces and narrowing of the traffic lane.

It is considered that impacts from reduction in parking spaces will be minimal due to the small amount of spaces that will need to be removed, low occupancy of on-street parking in the area where parking is to be removed, and the presence of off-street parking at all properties near where parking is to be removed.

It is also considered that the narrowing of the traffic lane will positively contribute to safety and residential amenity through discouraging rat-running and reducing traffic speeds, particularly as traffic volumes on De Carle Street exceed the preferred maximum for a local road.

It is recommended that Council approve this project to be delivered in 2021/22.

Previous Council Decisions

Removal of Car Parking Spaces to Support Cycling Infrastructure – 8 July 2020 (relevant excerpt only)

That Council:

- 1. 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.*

1. Policy Context

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. One of the headline actions of MITS is to "reallocate road space and car parking (when doing planned capital works such as road reconstruction) for sustainable transport improvements and greening which creates a more pleasant environment for pedestrians and mitigates the urban heat island effect".

MITS 2019 also contains (among others) the following policy positions:

- 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
- MITS 2019 is currently under review to give effect to Council's resolution to abandon two key actions relating to car parking and also acknowledge that some households require a car.

The Council Action Plan (CAP) 2020/21 states that "project preparation to enable future roll out of the first project to reallocate road space and car parks for sustainable transport improvements has been completed" with a target date of June 2021 (CAP item 38, Action 1(v)).

Moreland Urban Heat Island Effect Action Plan includes a commitment to "reducing the impact of extreme heat events in Moreland by creating a cooler, greener more liveable city".

2. Background

The first 10-year capital works program for pedestrians and cyclists, adopted in June 2019 (DCF37/19), identified De Carle Street in Coburg as an alternative cycling route to Sydney Road. At this time this route was envisaged as a "shimmy route" with wayfinding signage only.

De Carle Street, Coburg between Rennie Street and The Avenue has been identified for reconstruction in 2021/22 in Council's annual road resurfacing and reconstruction program. As such, this section of road has been identified as an opportunity to reallocate road space to support sustainable transport modes in accordance with MITS 2019.

This project is identified in Council's latest 10-year capital works program for pedestrians and cyclists for delivery in 2021/22.

From Rennie Street to The Avenue, it is proposed to reconfigure the road to include separated bike lanes as part of the road reconstruction. This will result in a reduction of eight parking spaces on the east side of the street between Rennie Street and The Grove and narrowing of the traffic lane along its length to 3.1 or 3.3 metres (for movements in both directions). The concept design for this section of De Carle Street is shown at **Attachment 1**.

The design for this section allows for retention of significant trees outside the former Kangan TAFE site, which are important to mitigating the urban heat island effect.

An opportunity has been identified to extend this cycling link further south to Moreland Road through use of bolt-down concrete dividers similar to those currently being used to deliver pop-up bicycle lanes as part of Council's transport response to COVID-19. This section of De Carle Street is not being reconstructed.

For the section between The Avenue and Moreland Road, the proposed change would not result in any car parking impacts however the traffic lane will also be narrowed to approximately 3.1 or 3.3 metres. The concept design for this section of De Carle Street is shown at **Attachment 2**.

Indicative cross-sections for the Rennie – The Grove (some parking removed) and The Grove – Moreland (no parking to be removed) sections of De Carle Street are shown at **Attachment 3**.

An initial period of consultation occurred in January 2020, with letters sent to owners and occupiers of all properties on De Carle Street between Rennie Street and Moreland Road (including Moreland Primary School (95 letters in total)). The letter asked for feedback on a concept plan of the Rennie Street – The Avenue section, as well as an indicative cross-section of The Avenue – Moreland Road section.

Following Council's resolution in July 2020 (DCF27/20) to consult further with the community on the proposed changes to De Carle Street, letters were sent to the same properties in February 2021 seeking feedback on a concept plan of The Avenue – Moreland Road section.

A follow up letter was sent in March 2021 including further explanation of the proposed changes following feedback from a resident that more information was required to fully understand the proposed change. A variable message sign (VMS) was also placed on De Carle street to notify road users of the opportunity to provide feedback.

3. Issues

Consultation feedback

There were five responses to the latest round of consultation in February – March 2021, with three in favour and two opposed to the project. In total across both rounds of consultation, there were 11 responses, of which six were supportive and five raised concerns.

The key issues that were raised were:

- Opposition to reduction in car parking, particularly as it may be required when the former Kangan TAFE site is redeveloped
- Opposition to narrowing of the road as it will make it harder to drive, and because this is not in keeping with typical widths of other roads in the local area
- That the project is unnecessary as the Upfield shared path is nearby and can be used by cyclists

These issues are explored further as follows.

Car parking impacts

The proposed changes to De Carle Street will result in a reduction of eight parking spaces between Rennie Street and The Grove. Parking occupancy surveys undertaken on De Carle Street (between Rennie Street and The Grove) in October 2019 and May 2021 indicated that parking occupancy did not exceed 40 per cent.

This data suggests that the reduction in parking spaces on De Carle Street would not affect residents being able to park near their homes. It should also be noted that all properties in this section of De Carle Street have off-street parking.

There is an existing accessible parking bay on De Carle Street on the western side of Moreland Primary School. It is not proposed to remove the existing space (i.e. relocate it) as this may still be useful for some people with disabilities. An additional accessible parking bay is proposed to be provided on Blair Street east of De Carle Street (northern side of Moreland Primary School) to provide an additional option for people with disabilities who may find it difficult to cross the separated bicycle lane.

In relation to potential future parking demand generated by the redevelopment for the former Kangan TAFE site, it should be noted that new developments are subject to parking requirements in the planning scheme. In addition, should a future development increase on-street parking occupancy to the point where this creates problems for residents, Council can consider introducing timed parking restrictions on the street (with parking permits for eligible residents).

As such, it is considered that the reduction in parking spaces as a result of the proposed changes would have minimal impact on the ability to park in the area and no changes are proposed to the plans.

Impacts of narrowing traffic lane

The proposed changes to De Carle Street will result in the traffic lane being narrowed to approximately 3.1 or 3.3 metres for traffic in both directions (where parking is occupied on both sides of the road). This narrowing is likely to act as a form of traffic calming, reducing vehicle speeds and discouraging through traffic, as drivers are required to wait and give way to oncoming traffic where there are parked cars on both sides of the road.

Surveys undertaken in 2019 indicate that traffic volumes on De Carle Street are approaching or have exceeded the preferred maximum traffic volume of 3,000 vehicles per day for a local road.

The proposed design is a similar configuration to many local roads in Moreland, and is considered the preferred width for local roads to discourage rat-running and protect residential amenity.

As such, it is considered that narrowing of the road for motorists will contribute positively to protecting De Carle Street as a local road from increasing traffic volumes, and no changes are proposed to the plans.

Project rationale and benefits

The Victorian Cycling Strategy identifies that separated cycling infrastructure is key to increasing cycling among under-represented groups such as women, children and the elderly.

A study conducted by Monash University in 2020 found that 83 per cent of people living in Moreland were classified as "Interested but Concerned". People who fall into this category would ride a bike if physically separated lanes were provided.

In addition, a YouGov poll conducted for the Amy Gillett Foundation in 2020 found that 75 per cent of drivers feel safer driving near cyclists where there are separated cycling lanes.

The proposed changes to De Carle Street provide a safer alternative to cycling along Sydney Road in the local area, and will connect to the existing off road shared path on Albion Street. Additionally, it will connect to a future planned shimmy route leading to Barkly Square Shopping Centre in Brunswick.

The Upfield Shared Path does not remove the need for this link, as it is 400m away and does not cater for people on the east side of Sydney Road. De Carle Street provides access to Moreland Primary School and a childcare centre. Providing low stress links to facilities like this is key in promoting the shift to more sustainable modes of transport.

Human Rights Consideration

The proposed project potentially engages the right to recognition and equality before the law (section 6 of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006) and the right to freedom of movement (section 12).

Given the minor reduction in car parking as a result of this project and the availability of parking in the area (including off-street parking at most properties), it is not considered that this change would adversely impact the human rights of any person, including people with disabilities who rely on cars to travel.

The potential for bolt down kerbing to impact accessibility has been considered in the design of this project, as with other projects using this type of kerbing. It is not considered this will adversely impact accessibility as it is the same height as existing kerbs and there will be a break in the bolt down kerbing wherever a pram ramp exists. Furthermore, the bolt down kerbing can be modified in future to respond to any unanticipated issues that emerge.

It is also not considered that the proposed narrowing of the traffic lane adversely impacts the human rights of any person, as vehicle access is retained for all motorists, although speeds are likely to be reduced at times.

The proposed project positively impacts the right to freedom of movement for people using bicycles and is likely to positively impact this right for pedestrians through reduced traffic and improved safety.

Overall, the proposed project is likely to make a positive impact to human rights and is not likely to adversely impact the human rights of any person.

Gender Impact Assessment

Overall across Moreland and in most part of Melbourne, more men than women cycle. Research indicates that a significant factor in this gender disparity is safety concerns. Where quality bike routes are provided through separated infrastructure or reduced traffic volumes, the gender disparity is smaller or does not exist.

As such, the provision of separated cycling infrastructure is likely to positively impact on gender equity by increasing participation in cycling among women, and providing additional transport options for women.

There appears to be little evidence on the relationship between safety and gender differences in cycling in relation to non binary and gender diverse people.

As described in the human rights assessment, it is considered that this project is unlikely to adversely impact the rights of any person, including women and gender diverse people.

4. Community consultation and engagement

As described in Sections 2 and 3 of this report, consultation was undertaken with owners and occupiers of adjoining properties through mailouts including plans and cross-sections, and a link to a Council webpage with more information. A VMS was also placed in the street to advise of consultation to encourage non-local road users to submit feedback.

Subject to Council's approval, communications will be sent to local properties of upcoming works and changes to the street.

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

The 2021/22 capital works program for pedestrians and cyclists includes \$250,000 for installation of separated bicycle lanes on De Carle Street and \$135,000 for MITS Road renewal improvement outcomes. In addition, the 2021/22 road resurfacing and reconstruction program includes \$895,780 for reconstruction of De Carle Street between Rennie Street and The Avenue.

7. Implementation

Both projects for De Carle Street are planned to be constructed during the 2021/22 financial year. Works will be tendered for construction once approval is granted. Timing will be coordinated once the contactors have been engaged.

An indicative timeframe for construction is for works to be completed in January 2022.

Notification of works will occur once the timeframes are known.

Attachment/s

1	Plan - De Carle Street Reconstruction - The Grove to The Avenue	D21/185597
2	Plan - De Carle Street Separated Bike Lanes - The Avenue to Moreland Road	D21/185598
3	De Carle Example Cross Sections of Separated Bicycle Lanes	D21/187028