



## 7.1 Petition Response – Port Melbourne Shared Bike Path Area

**A Petition containing eight signatures, was received from local residents, and presented to a Council Meeting on 2 November 2022.**

Council received and noted the petition and noted that a full response to the petition will be provided to a future Council meeting.

Council officers met with the petitioner on site on the 17 November 2022 to better understand the details of their concerns.

**The Petition states the following: -**

***Urgent action to make the Port Melbourne shared bike path area safe***

*Petition from the following named citizens thanks councillors and council staff for the focus on transport and Road safety.*

*However local citizens and councillors would be aware of the serious safety concerns we all have for the shared bike-pedestrian paths, especially in the high density area of Beacon Cove.*

*There has been an increasing number of incidents involving collisions between speeding bicycles and scooters and pedestrians. Speeding bikes and scooters make it very difficult for families and elderly people in particular to safely cross paths. Urgent action is required by the council preferably before someone is killed or seriously injured.*

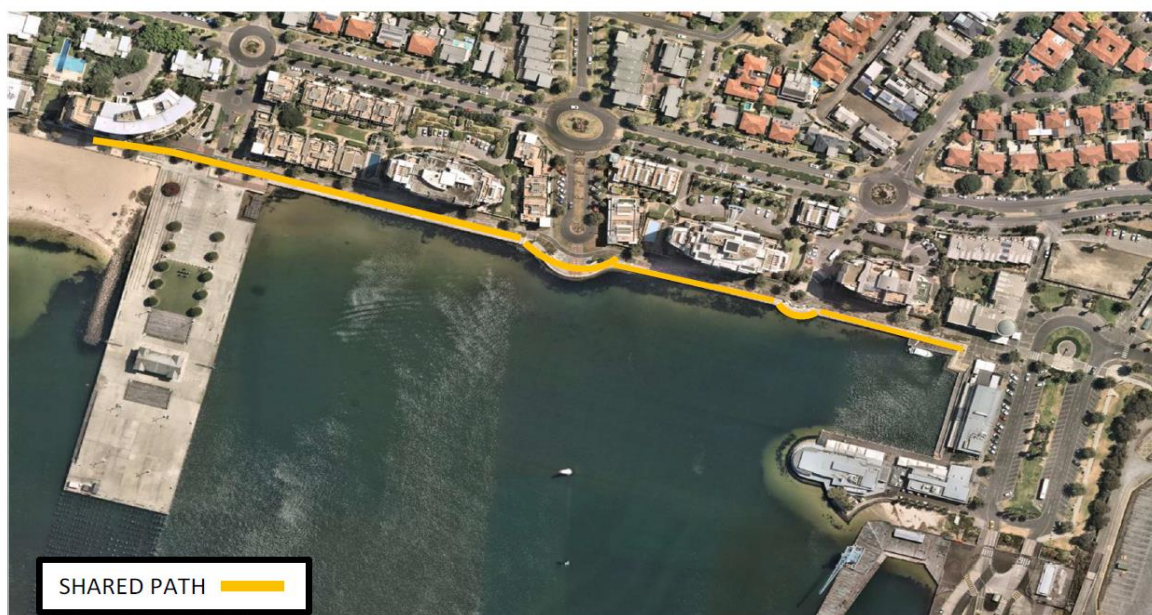
- 1. We request that a speed limit of **10km/h** be actioned in the Beacon Cove high-density shared Pedestrian/bike path area from the pedestrian crossing on Station Pier through to the end of the Beacon Cove precinct.*
- 2. **A number of small electronic signs to be acquired** to educate and advise of the 10kph speed limit and the fact that it is a shared path.*
- 3. **Motor Cycle Parking to be banned** in the area adjacent to the restaurants including Mr Hobson's and Delish Fish as that area is often made incredibly dangerous with large numbers of Harley Davidsons driving through pedestrians and young families purchasing fish and chips, etc.*

### **OFFICER COMMENT**

#### **History:**

Council officers are aware of incidents occurring, and community concerns about safety of pedestrians on the bay trail. This includes the section between the pedestrian crossing on Station Pier through to the end of the Beacon Cove precinct, referred to in the Petition, and shown below. In response to this a number of audits of the trail have been conducted between 2009 and 2018. Implementation in response to the audits has resulted in significant investment in the path, including upgrades, line marking, stencils, enhanced signage and pavement coating.

### Port Melbourne Shared Path Area



**Petition Request Part 1:** *We request that a speed limit of 10km/h be actioned in the Beacon Cove high-density shared Pedestrian/bike path area from the pedestrian crossing on Station Pier through to the end of the Beacon Cove precinct.*

**Officer comments:**

The shared path has been inspected on two occasions recently to note its condition, signs and lines and to observe interactions between riders and pedestrians.

The shared path runs parallel to a footpath along this section of the foreshore. Its purpose is to provide safe and convenient passage for recreational bicycle riders, scooters and in-line skaters as well as for joggers and walkers, including elderly and disabled pedestrians or parents with prams that find it impossible to use the adjacent footpath that has a number of steps.

The path is in good condition with clear and visible stencilling (pedestrian and bicycle logos) at frequent intervals (approximately every 20 – 25m) indicating that it is a shared path. Known conflict /crossing points have green surface with logos. No shared path signposts are installed due to physical constraints and/or aesthetic reasons.

The existing line marking defines the shared path as per Road Safety Road Rules 2017:

A shared path is an area open to the public (except a separated footpath) that is designated for, or has as one of its main uses, use by both the riders of bicycles and pedestrians, and includes a length of path for use by both bicycles and pedestrians beginning at a shared path sign or shared path road marking and ending at the nearest of the following— (a) an end shared path sign or end shared path road marking; (b) a no bicycles sign or no bicycles road marking; (c) a bicycle path sign or bicycle path road marking; (d) a road (except a road related area); (e) the end of the path.



Rule 250 of Road Safety Road Rules 2017 - Riding on a footpath or shared path states that: The rider of a bicycle riding on a footpath or shared path must— (a) keep to the left of the footpath or shared path unless it is impracticable to do so; (b) give way to any pedestrian (except a person travelling on an electric personal transporter) on the footpath or shared path. Penalty: 3 penalty units.

Shared e-scooter and e-bike providers are able to geofence areas to enforce slow speed zones. They have limited device speeds on this path to 10km/h under power. This reduced speed was introduced in November 2022.

Introducing speed limits on shared paths has significant challenges. The main issue being that bicycles are not required to be equipped with speed measuring devices, so many riders will not know if they are riding over the speed limit. In addition, only Victoria Police can enforce speed limits and their resources are already stretched.

It is understood that the City of Melbourne has sign posted a 10km/h speed limit along their Southbank shared path and partnered with Victoria Police to trial enforcement of this through use of handheld speed detection devices. Further investigations and discussions with City of Melbourne, the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP), and Victoria Police are required to understand the effectiveness of the Southbank Trial. There are mixed views within the community, and by users, of this approach as it can be perceived as overly punitive. Council officers are also aware of concerns from bicycle advocacy groups about the current level of infringements for this matter being excessive, compared to a range of road traffic offences with a higher likelihood of serious injury.

**Petition Request Part 2:** *A number of small electronic signs to be acquired to educate and advise of the 10kph speed limit and the fact that it is a shared path.*

**Officer comments:**

As per the above point no.1, further investigations and discussions are required to understand the success of the Southbank Trial.

Should the Southbank Trial prove to have been successful, and Council chooses to seek a similar speed limit on this shared path, it would most likely be stencilled, not sign posted.

Electronic signs may not be possible to place along the path due to physical and aesthetic constraints. The path is narrow. Signs could cause unnecessary obstructions and become a hazard to users of the path.

Officers will continue to monitor and record any community feedback regarding behaviour on shared paths. In 2015 Council delivered non-slip markings along the Sandridge Trail, in areas where there was a high risk of conflict, such as close to tram stops, playgrounds and crossings. These messages – including ‘slow down’, ‘ring bell when passing’ and ‘watch for cyclists’ – can encourage safer use of the shared path. It may be possible to use similar treatments to remind users of safe shared path on the Beacon Cove precinct shared path. However, this will need to be investigated further as there are already very regular shared path markings on this path. Any possible changes will be carefully considered to ensure these do not confuse path users.



**Petition Request Part 3:** *Motorcycle Parking to be banned in the area adjacent to the restaurants including Mr Hobson's and Delish Fish as that area is often made incredibly dangerous with large numbers of Harley Davidsons driving through pedestrians and young families purchasing fish and chips, etc.*

**Officer comments:** The site has been inspected on two occasions. No dangerous or illegal motorcycle or scooter parking has been observed.

Council's website under Motorcycle parking in the City of Port Phillip states:

Council sees motorcycles as an important mode of transport that helps to alleviate ever increasing traffic congestion and parking pressures.

Motorcyclists are welcome in the City of Port Phillip. Council supports motorcyclists parking on footpaths, as long as they comply with Road Safety Rule 197. This means if motorcyclists chose to park on the footpath, they must:

“Park their motorcycle at least 1.5m (one motorcycle length) out from the building line to allow free movement of pedestrians; and

Park their motorcycle at least 0.5m (a wheel) back from the road kerb to allow pedestrians free access to and from the road and parked vehicles.

Parked motorcycles must not inconvenience, obstruct, hinder or prevent free passage of any pedestrian or another vehicle”.

Port Phillip allows as many motorcycles to park in one marked parking bay as can be safely fit.

Parking Enforcement Officers enforce any reported or observed illegal motorcycle parking. To ban motorcyclists from parking as per the request would contradict Council's long-standing practice, Road Safety Road Rule 197, and has potential to impact local businesses.

## OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Thanks the petitioners for their efforts to support safe use of the Port Melbourne foreshore shared path by people of all ages, genders and physical abilities.
2. Notes that Officers will seek further information from the City of Melbourne, Department of Transport and Planning, and Victoria Police to understand the success of the Southbank shared path speed limit trial, and to consider if this is an appropriate and applicable approach on this section of the Port Melbourne foreshore shared path.
3. Notes that officers will investigate options of educating and advising of appropriate behaviour and riding speed on this section of the bay trail for the 2023/24 season.
4. Notes that Parking Enforcement Officers enforce any reported or observed illegal motorcycle parking consistent with Victorian Road Safety Road Rule 197.

## ATTACHMENTS