



Item 7.1 Petition Response - Hoon Driving

A Petition containing 8 signatures, was received from the Port Melbourne Road Safety Group and considered by Council on 21 August 2021.

The Petition states the following: -

Due to frustration with escalating hoon driving and associated noise in the City of Port Phillip, a Port Melbourne Road Safety Group (PMRSG) was established in 2020, closely aligned with the Beacon Cove Neighbourhood Association.

Early in 2021, Council received a petition from the PMRSG regarding increasing hoon incidents in the CoPP. This petition was considered in the Council meeting of 3 February 2021 under Item 7.4, with the support of several residents who spoke to the meeting. The minutes from that meeting recorded actions against Item 7.4 and we draw your attention to key items, namely:

That Council:

- 3. Notes that Council officers will continue to meet with Victoria Police and the Department of Transport to discuss these issues and investigate options such as road safety cameras, variable message signs and other treatments to deter this behaviour.*
- 7. Request officers to provide Council with a report to consider the requirements and costings of the purchase and implementation of mobile CCTV trailers in conjunction with the Port Phillip Police Service Area by July 2021.*
- 8. Requests officers submit a joint application with the Port Phillip Police Service Area to the Community Safety Infrastructure Grant Program for the purchase of a mobile CCTV camera.*

Regarding Action 8, we understand the application for the grant was unsuccessful, to our joint dismay. Whilst the application may have been declined, the need has not diminished, in fact we believe it has become more urgent.

Last summer saw a significant increase in the amount and severity of hooning within the City of Port Phillip (CoPP). Councillors will recall the hoon gatherings at Station Pier in Gateway Ward, similar gatherings on Pier Road and the violent events on Marine Parade where the police had to retreat from a dangerous situation in Lake Ward. Additionally, local police inform us of similar events along the foreshore of Canal Ward.

Unfortunately, we advise Councillors that hoon activity is continuing. Evidence of this is contained in a video we recently sent to all Councillors, taken at Station Pier from a residential balcony on the night of Friday 30 July 2021. Disturbed residents called 000 to report the occurrence and police did attend, but by that time participants had largely dispersed.

Our Road Safety representatives recently held a fruitful meeting with Inspector Helen Chugg of the CoPP Police Service Area, supported by two of her senior road traffic personnel. They confirmed that, whilst they support our requests for assistance, the lack of CCTV equipment disadvantages their enforcement activity. They also affirmed our contention that incidents will increase as the weather warms and the beach promenade becomes more attractive. Feeder main roads will again be impacted by the problem.

We also inform Councillors that we have been investigating the use of acoustic cameras in other jurisdictions, particularly overseas. From that research, it is apparent that the UK is taking a leading role and we have contacted a local borough there to enquire as to their approach and results. From preliminary feedback, it appears they are having considerable success in identifying and charging offenders. We note however, that our research is somewhat constrained by a dearth of formality and authority.



The following Petitioners hereby request that:

- Council acts as a matter of urgency in addressing this issue, as the frequency of anti-social behaviour traditionally increases as summer months approach;
- Regarding Action 3 from Council's 3 February meeting, the PMRSG be given a summary of the information derived from discussions with Victoria Police and the Department of Transport;
- Regarding Action 7 from Council's 3 February meeting, the PMRSG be given a copy of the report that was to be prepared by July 2021;
- Regarding Action 8 from Council's 3 February meeting, in absence of gaining a grant, CoPP funds be specifically and urgently allocated as part of the September Quarterly Budget Review, to procure one or more CCTV cameras for use across the City. We ask that these be allocated by police to places of greatest need and nominate Station Pier as a primary location. There are also other areas in the CoPP where the siting of a mobile CCTV unit will (a) act as a deterrent to those considering behaving in an antisocial manner (including "hooning" behaviour) and (b) assist police in identifying those involved in such behaviours and in substantiating any charges that may be laid arising from those behaviours;
- Regarding acoustic cameras, that a CoPP officer be assigned to urgently, and formally, investigate the introduction of acoustic traffic cameras in Australia, the UK, Europe, and the US. Further, we request the PMRSG assist with the terms of reference of any such investigation with a view to reporting back to the CoPP before the end of this calendar year.

OFFICERS' COMMENT

The 2020/2021 summer season saw hoon driving in St Kilda and Port Melbourne that attracted large numbers of spectators. Residents reported antisocial behaviour including violence, excessive noise, property damage and public order offences. The excessive speed and dangerous driving compromised the safety of bystanders and participants and had a detrimental impact on residential amenity and community safety.

Council does not have the statutory powers to respond to criminal and antisocial behaviour such as speeding and dangerous driving but does work closely with Police. In response to the 2020/2021 hooning, police increased patrols over the summer of 2020/21 at 'hot spots' including Station Pier carpark and Pier Road, targeting noisy vehicles and hoon driver behaviour. In addition, police deployed mobile speed cameras to Beaconsfield Parade and Pier Road.

In anticipation of further hooning activity over the summer months, Council officers will continue to meet with police to advocate for additional patrols to ensure that where possible, police are ready to address hooning activity. Council officers, working with Police, have identified actions Council can take to assist police in discourage and prevent hooning. The outcome of these discussions and Council's response is considered in this brief.

The petition of 21 August 2021 referenced a petition of February 2021. The February petition and Council's response is summarised below.

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3 February 2021 Petition and Council's response

A petition regarding concerns about hoon activity and related antisocial behaviour was presented to Council on 3 February 2021. In response, Council passed a resolution that officers:

- Prepare a report to consider the requirements and costings for the purchase and implementation of a mobile CCTV trailer in partnership with the Port Phillip Police Service Area by July 2021.
- To submit a joint application with the Port Phillip Police Service Area to a State Government's Building Safer Communities Grant Program for the purchase of a mobile CCTV trailer.

On 19 May 2021, officers presented a report to Council which indicated:

- That the costing to purchase a mobile CCTV trailer would be \$117,120. An additional \$5,000 per annum would be required to cover maintenance, insurance, registration and data costs for the infrastructure.
- That a grant application was made to the State Government's Building Safer Communities Grant Program on 15 March 2021 to acquire a mobile CCTV trailer.
- That the Public Place CCTV Network Policy indicates that any new public place CCTV systems should only be progressed by Council when State or Federal Government funding has been acquired.

In June 2021, Council was advised that the funding submission to the State Government's Building Safer Communities Grant Program to purchase a mobile CCTV trailer was unsuccessful.

Council has borrowed the City of Stonnington's mobile CCTV trailer, to assist police in identifying, locating and responding to crime more effectively. The trailer was positioned in Port Melbourne to act as a deterrent. The mobile CCTV trailer was well received by the community.

Council will continue to trial the Stonnington CCTV camera this summer and continue to support the location of Victoria Police cameras at hoon sites on Council infrastructure if requested.

Council is currently exploring other avenues to acquire a mobile CCTV trailer and, on 5 August 2021, submitted a grant application to the Federal Government's *Safer Communities Fund – Infrastructure Grants* to fund a mobile CCTV trailer. The outcome of the grant application is anticipated in October 2021.

The State Government's Fixed Camera Site Selection Committee determines the location of fixed speed cameras. Officers have provided a list of six sites for additional permanent safety cameras to be included in a Department of Transport submission to the Committee. Unfortunately, the Committee is not likely to make a finding on the location of additional cameras before summer.

The petitioners in the August petition sought a copy of the June report which was provided on 19 May 2021. The report is publicly available on Council's website at <https://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/media/0tmlongji/report-9-1-mobile-cctv-trailer.pdf>

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Action Council can take to assist police

Council officers have been meeting with Police and the Department of Transport on measures Council can take to support police to reduce hoon behaviour in the coming summer months. Police have identified a number of mitigation measures mainly focused on Pier Road.

In 2022 the section of Pier Rd south of the Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron will be permanently closed due to construction of the new Pier and the associated landside works. An assessment of the resulting traffic flow changes will be undertaken including measures to reduce hooning. The interim measures identified below are to address hooning until the closure.

1. Changes to parking restrictions: Police have requested “No standing” restrictions between 11pm and 5am on Pier Rd to enable police to require parked vehicles to ‘move on’ and to improve enforcement. These changes will allow Parking Enforcement and Police officers to issue infringements to cars after 11pm including cars that bypass the closed gates.

Cost of sign changes is \$10,000 (funded through BAU budget).

Delivery Timeframe: November 2021.

2. Install physical temporary deterrent on the footpath of Beaconsfield Parade at Cowderoy Street approach to Pier Road to prevent unauthorized access to Pier Road by vehicles driving on the footpath and bike lane. A trail of concrete blocks from November 2021 – April 2022 is recommended to assess the effectiveness of physical obstructions to stop the use of the cycleway to bypass the Pier Road gates. This will not impede cyclist access on the cycleway. A review of the trial will consider the effectiveness of the proposal and the merits of permanent measures as part of long term Pier Rd works.

This proposal is subject to DoT approval which is pending and may delay installation. In addition, a Road Safety Audit will be undertaken to ensure safety is not compromised along this busy cycle path.

Cost: \$20,000 (currently unbudgeted).

Delivery Timeframe: 1.5 months subject to DOT approval.

3. Trial a 30 kph speed limit on Pier Road: Police have requested the trial to assist with anti-social behaviour. Pier Road currently has a 50 kph speed limit. The review of the trial will consider the success of the measure and if the speed should be further reduced to a 20 kph shared zone on Pier Road. This proposal is subject to DoT approval.

Cost: \$3,000 (to be funded through BAU budget).

Delivery Timeframe: November 2021 subject to DOT approval.

4. General measures to improve traffic operations on Pier Road:

In addition to the above, Police and Council officers have agreed to

- Ensure Pier Road gate is consistently closed at 11pm during summer nights

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- Investigate current signs, replace damaged signs and install additional signs as recommended by Police to encourage driver compliance with road rules.

Cost: \$3,000 (to be funded through BAU budget).

Delivery Timeframe: November 2021.

Acoustic Cameras

In the August 2021 petition the use of acoustic cameras is identified as a possible measure against honking.

Police, usually working with the EPA, are responsible for enforcement of laws relating to noisy vehicles. Council officers have met with police to seek additional resources to address noisy vehicles. However, police enforcement is constrained by the technology they use which is inefficient, slow to set up, and can only deal with a small number of vehicles at any one time. Better noise technology may improve police capacity and outcomes.

In Australia, noise camera trials have been undertaken in several states including Victoria. However the focus has been on braking noise from trucks rather than noisy exhaust systems. When trials commenced in 2010, the state government raised several factors that needed to be addressed to reliably use noise cameras (identifying and excluding background noise, credibility of certification and calibration of noise cameras, complexity of current regulation). Trials in the United Kingdom undertaken in 2019 – 2020 concluded that the technology needs to be further developed and recommended further trials before the cameras are deployed.

It is recommended that Council pursue the development and use of noise cameras with the Department of Transport and report to Council on any further developments.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Thanks the PMRSG for their advocacy on behalf on the community.
2. Notes that Council officers, Victoria Police and DoT are working to prevent antisocial and illegal honking activities.
3. Supports the delivery of the actions identified in this report to reduce speed limits, provide physical barriers to reduce access to Pier Road, review existing signs, and introduce new signs and parking restrictions. Noting that funding for the installation of the physical barriers will need to be sought through the budget process.
4. Notes the progress in relation to the delivery of the mobile speed camera, including the use of the City of Stonnington mobile CCTV trailer and Council's application for six additional fixed cameras.
5. Requests that Council officers advocate for the development and use of noise camera technology by Police and the State Department of Transport and report back to Council on developments.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil