

DANDENONG NORTH COMMUNITY FORUM

7 October 2015, 6.30pm – 8.00pm

Paddy O'Donoghue Centre



MINUTES

Attendees:

Councillors:

Cr Roz Blades (Chair – Ward Councillor), Cr Peter Brown (Ward Councillor), Cr Heang Tak (Ward Councillor)

Council Officers:

Lisa Roberts (Manager Governance), Peter Shelton (Manager Regulatory Services), Sharon Sykes (Senior Coordinator Community Planning), Jo Thorn (Mayor & Councillors Executive Assistant)

Victoria Police Members:

Inspector Bruce Kitchen (Local Area Commander for Greater Dandenong), Senior Sergeant Mick Wearn

Level Crossing Removal Authority

Brett Summers, Rob Mair

Community Members:

39 attended

Business:

Formal business started at 6.30pm

Speaker	Comments
Cr Roz Blades	Welcome to everyone here tonight. We will talk about a number of issues here tonight including CCTV cameras, rail/road level crossings and community safety. Please remember to sign your names on the sign-in sheets. We will start of the evening by asking Peter Shelton, Council's Manager Regulatory services to talk about CCTV cameras in Greater Dandenong.
Peter Shelton	<p>Council has embarked and been working on a program called Safe City CCTV for a while now. A 12-13 camera installation has been put into Dandenong around the railway precinct. 15 cameras have been installed into Noble Park in the Buckley Street, Leonard Avenue, Heatherton Road and Skate Park areas. live and recorded footage from cameras can be monitored at police stations.</p> <p>Victoria Police can also use these systems if they are running operations and if big incidents occur they can be monitored in real time. Council has applied to the Federal Government this year for additional funding to allow expansion of the programs in Springvale which will hopefully start in April next year to extend through Dandenong CBD.</p> <p>Locations for cameras are based on crime statistics and areas where there is a lot of anti-social activity in streets, retail areas and railway stations, such as Dandenong. In Springvale at the moment, crime statistics are quite low so the priority is lower. CCTV in and of itself is not a solution to a problem but it is a tool that helps the police solve problems and we have had some success in that to date. I am happy to answer any questions.</p>

Speaker	Statement/Question	Response By	Response
Resident	Are there going to be any cameras installed in Copas Park to stop rubbish being dumped behind Leonard Street near the bakery? Residential bins have been taken away and now the rubbish is just being dumped there.	Peter Shelton	The system is designed to be expanded and I can investigate the litter issue and look at expansion of the camera system to capture that area.
Resident	I am also concerned about Copas Park. Is there anywhere we can go to, a website or Council, to see where the cameras are located?	Peter Shelton	We have that information and should have it available for you but it has not yet been put in place.
Speaker	Comments		
Cr Roz Blades	I will introduce you now to Sharon Sykes, Council's Sharon Sykes, Council's Senior Coordinator Community Planning.		
Sharon Sykes	<p>There are several things I would like to talk to you about tonight. These are Council's Community Safety Plan, graffiti, family violence and Council's funding programs. I have brought along some information about graffiti, being safer as you move around your community, family violence and Council's community response grants program for you to take away and read.</p> <p>At Council, I work in the area of Community Development and community safety sits within that. We work with Victoria Police, the Department of Justice and other organisations to help keep Greater Dandenong as safe as possible for everyone. Your Council has just adopted a Community Safety Plan. Copies are available – all you have to do is contact Council or visit the website. Lots of work has been put into the plan and extensive consultation has been had with Victoria Police and other organisations. There are six main areas of the plan which I will summarise for you now.</p> <p>Greater Dandenong has a diverse, multicultural community and there is a need to have a greater understanding between us and among us. Diversity brings opportunities and challenges. Preventing family violence is a major issue in our community. Victoria Police works to address violence when it occurs and Council works to try and help prevent violence before it occurs.</p> <p>Council works to improve the accessibility and safety of its public places through design and how those spaces are used and made to feel safe and welcoming. Council works to improve safety for road users, pedestrians and public transport users, particularly at transport hubs and railway stations. Alcohol and drug abuse can be caused by and attributed to many issues. Council works with many organisations to help reduce abuse that affects people's health and wellbeing. The use of emerging technologies such as social media provide our community with great opportunities but also exposes young and vulnerable people to risk because it touches them in their own homes. Technology however also provides us with opportunities to use it in emergency situations. Council's Community Safety Plan will last for next eight years and will be continually reviewed with Victoria Police and other organisations.</p> <p>Council recently received a community hub and community development framework to help design infrastructure and facilities such as this building. This framework will go out to the public for consultation in the near future so Council can develop an understanding of the most effective way to manage these types of facilities in the future. Community development at Council looks at how Council works with the community to help people feel a greater sense of belonging to their community. As an example, Council is looking at community hubs in both Keysborough South and Springvale and how to best develop those hubs in a way that meets the community's needs.</p>		

Speaker	Comments		
Cr Roz Blades	I will introduce you now to Inspector Bruce Kitchen (Local Area Commander for Greater Dandenong), Senior Sergeant Mick Wearn from Victoria Police.		
Inspector Bruce Kitchen	<p>Welcome everyone. Some of you I know already. I look after all Greater Dandenong's uniformed police members (does not include Highway Patrol or the detectives).</p> <p>I would like to start off by giving you a few crime statistics for the first quarter of the 2015-2016 year for the Springvale Response Zone.</p> <p>Incidents of rape=6, sexual assault=6, family violence=37 (increased), robbery=15 (reduced), assaults=68 (reduced), abduction=4 (reduced), property damage=4 (reduced), residential burglary=105 (reduced), theft from motor vehicle=226 (increased), theft of motor vehicle=82 (increased), theft of bicycle=4 (reduced), theft other =123 (increased), drugs detected=23 (increased), going equipped to steal=66 (increased), weapons=92 (increased) – note that we have increased the action of checking people.</p> <p>The major issues causing the crimes are alcohol and drugs such as ice and marijuana which often lead to situations of family violence and street assaults, of which many are known to each other, hoon behaviour and theft of and from motor vehicles.</p> <p>Our plain clothes officers have tasking efforts focused on public order issues around retail markets and railway stations. Our family violence unit focuses on perpetrators and recidivists. One of the positive examples I can cite is that Mills Reserve has been cleaned up through various efforts such as a proactive alcohol diversion strategy utilising a group of males who previously were alcoholics who caused issues. The idea is to get recidivists or repeat offenders through the courts and put them into a program and then use them to try and clean up the area and we are seeing some really good results through programs like these. Hopefully they can do something good with their lives as well.</p> <p>We have also done a number of community forums like this with Council and this is the best attended so far.</p>		
Cr Roz Blades	The most important advice Council can give you is to always let the police know of any bad or criminal behaviour that occurs by calling Triple 000 or Crimestoppers. You could even call me and I will be sure to pass the information onto the police. The most important information to get are details, registration numbers, names etc.		
Speaker	Statement/Question	Response By	Response
Resident	Should you let the community know about security for their number plates?	Inspector Bruce Kitchen	You can always use superglue.
		Cr Roz Blades	Dawn can also talk to you about that after the formal session. Special screws are available from hardware stores for a couple of dollars.
Resident	Licola Crescent gets hoons all the time.	Simon – Highway Patrol	Yes it is well known across Melbourne and we struggle to pin them down when they are there. Getting to the right place at the right time is difficult but even if we can get there and disperse them that is good. If we keep them moving so they can't start up then that is a good thing.

Speaker	Statement/Question	Response By	Response
Resident	I was at a health and wellness seminar last night and one of the attendees was telling us about some catchy posters up for kids – “Kids in sport are not in court”. Packaged alcohol is still our biggest problem. There are too many outlets in Noble Park already. How do we monitor and control it?	Sharon Sykes	Council is involved with six other councils and Victoria Police and are looking at packaged liquor and point of sale packaging points. Two permits are required - one through Council and one through the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation. There is still a lot of work to be done about where outlets are located and changing the law but there is much research being done to advocate for getting the rules changed.
		Inspector Bruce Kitchen	My concerns around packaging are serving alcohol to minors so if you are aware of any instances of this, please let Victoria Police know. We do have a liquor accord in Greater Dandenong but because of the packaging laws many packaged outlets get around it.
		President Noble Park RSL	We don't sell to minors and if any of the staff were caught doing so, they wouldn't have their job.
Speaker	Comments		
Cr Roz Blades	Now we have Brett Summers from the Level Crossing Removal Authority		
Brett Summers	<p>I am the Project Director for the nine level crossings remaining along the Caulfield to Dandneong section of the Dandenong Pakenham railway corridor. The job for all nine crossings has gone through a competitive alliance tender process and was shortlisted to two proponents in July 2015. The preferred tenderer will be announced by the end of this year with construction commencing early 2016 and completion by the end of 2016. Works will involve level crossing removals at the nine crossings, rebuild of four stations, platform modifications, Oakleigh junction rationalisation and associated signalling and power works.</p> <p>There has been extensive stakeholder engagement to date with all Councils involved, hospitals, schools, associations, transport user groups, trader associations, and workshops have been held.</p> <p>I cannot tell you if it is proposed to have rail over or under road at this stage, which is what you want to know, until the competitive tendering process is completed. The Authority has taken on board what the Greater Dandenong community has told them to date such as its ageing population needs better connections, including bike connections and footpaths; that there is lots of foot traffic which also needs better connections between stations and services; that open space is important to you, that the existing roundabout at Heatherton Road is chaos; that traders consider Douglas Street is the main area people come to in Noble Park mainly by foot and that the north-south connectivity is important and the station is disconnected to that space.</p> <p>All of this feedback has been passed onto the tender bidders to they can develop mitigation strategies within their plans and explore value capture and to activate centres so whole precincts can be revitalised.</p>		
Speaker	Statement/Question	Response By	Response
Cr Roz Blades	We want to see the same examples that were provided with Springvale where it has revitalised the area with no interruption.		

Speaker	Statement/Question	Response By	Response
Resident	It is important whether the rail line goes over or under. I live near the RSL. How are we going to get onto Heatherton Road safely? We can only do it now when the gates are down. How will we do it when the level crossing is in? Have you considered stopping parking on Heatherton Road between Corrigan and Chandler Roads? For example - there has been a vehicle parked there for weeks. Have you considered four lanes being maintained when this road/rail crossing work takes place?	Brett Summers	If there are existing access issues with Heatherton Road, they should have been raised by the road authority. We are working with all authorities and will look at impacts of this projects on all aspects of the area.
President Noble Park RSL	Why haven't the tenderers been out to talk to me or stakeholders or gone to the local MPs to discuss the concerns of the community?	Brett Summers	We have passed on the results of all of our consultations to the tenderers and admit to not being able to solve all problems as the Level Crossing Authority.
Resident	18 months ago I complained to VicRoads about Heatherton Road and how it should be a Clearway and nothing has been done. Shouldn't Council be attending every meeting you have with VicRoads?	Cr Roz Blades	Council can take talk to VicRoads about that issue?
		Rob Mair	We are working with VicRoads and they are looking into what is being proposed by the tenderers. All of this commentary will be taken back and fed into the mix. A little later, when the preferred tenderer is chosen we will come back and have everything on the table and further consult and you will have more opportunity to comment. That will probably be early 2016.
		Peter Shelton	I would just remind everyone of what happened in Springvale. There were significant issues for those who lived on the north side of the railway line and some clever things were done to overcome them by providing other access points and get good results. It is early days in this project.
Resident	But Noble Park is unique and we have no safe outlets onto Heatherton Road.		

Speaker	Statement/Question	Response By	Response
Resident	All of our streets in Noble Park have problems which are caused by big multi-storey developments and lack of parking provided within those developments. The problem with parking on Heatherton Road is caused by the development of units.		
President Noble Park RSL	The main problem is that the railway gates are always down.	Cr Roz Blades	Yes. In Greater Dandenong, railway gates are down effectively 40 minutes every hour. In terms of the housing, that is as much a frustration to residents as to me and fellow Councillors.
Inspector Bruce Kitchen	If we say we want a Clearway along Heatherton Road then that affects the residents who live along there as well.	Cr Roz Blades	Council is currently talking about better parking options for Noble Park and that is something we are considering. Peter Shelton's staff have also been patrolling the streets to check out different parking infringements.
Resident	Most residents think the problem is caused by overdevelopment.		
Resident	We want traffic flowing and we also want parking to be considered in that and pedestrian access to Noble Park facilities made safe and easy.	Brett Summers	In that respect, there are some benefits in considering a rail over road solution where pedestrian access is not impinged in any way.
Cr Heang Tak	Could you ensure that this sort of information is available via an interpreting service?	Brett Summers	Taken on board.
Resident	Where are the extra tracks going to go?	Brett Summers	We are at the consultation stage now and the tenderers still need to bid and what they come back with may be two very different offers. We are developing a solution and in January we will have a solution.
Resident	If it ends up being rail over road, will you consult with home owners who are affected?	Brett Summers	Regardless of whatever solution is chosen we will be consulting fully with all communities and those affected. We really are committed to urban design working for this project.
Inspector Bruce Kitchen	Have you got any idea of which crossing would be done first?	Brett Summers	Not really but we are likely to start in Greater Dandenong first.

Speaker	Statement/Question	Response By	Response
Resident	I am a civil engineer and surveyor. There is a lot of work involved in this design. The community should make the decision about this.		
Resident	There is a noise issue with rail over road. We went to the Little Day Out information session you held. Is there any way of incorporating some cultural relevance in the urban design?	Brett Summers	There will be some opportunity to talk about cultural factors later in the process. Everyone automatically considers that rail under road is automatically the best solution but there are many examples, particularly overseas where that is not the case – where spaces under railways are utilised effectively for public access, open space and urban design projects. In regard to noise, the Victorian Government Noise Policy states that if you are creating infrastructure and increase noise then you must investigate but this does not apply when improving Infrastructure which is what we are doing.
Cr Peter Brown	There is still discussion being had on the development of the Port of Hastings. If it was to proceed there is a suggestion that transport would be rail-based and that would be moving mainly at night. If these crossings are rail over road then that would be a huge noise factor that needs to be considered.	Cr Roz Blades	I would like to have another forum when the Level Crossing Removal Authority is ready in the early new year.
Cr Roz Blades	How will people get to work in the off line period? As much as possible, will the work be done off line and next to?	Brett Summers	There will be times when the train line will be closed but it will be kept to a minimum and buses will replace services.
Speaker	Comments		
Resident	I would like to thank the Level Crossing Removal Authority for their thorough and honest presentation tonight.		
Cr Roz Blades	And I would also like to thank everyone for their attendance tonight – the community, the Level Crossing Removal Authority, Victoria Police, my fellow Councillors and Council staff.		

Formal meeting closed at 8.04pm. (Informal discussion closed at 8.45pm)