

6.2 Updating Council's Walking & Cycling Strategy

Submitting Councillor: Dr Anjalee de Silva

MOTION

That Council:

1. *Directs officers to update the Monash Walking and Cycling Strategy, with consideration given to matters including but not limited to:*
 - *the prioritisation of walking and cycling identified in the Council Plan;*
 - *improvements to safety and perceived safety in public spaces for women, girls, and gender diverse people, reflecting responses received from women and gender diverse people through the recent YourGround consultation;*
 - *closing key gaps in the cycling network; and*
 - *identifying and signposting primary and secondary pedestrian routes.*

INTRODUCTION

The Monash Walking and Cycling Strategy was developed in 2012/13 to consider opportunities to better cater for the needs of all people who use footpaths and bike infrastructure including cyclists and walkers of various ages and abilities. It is timely for the Strategy to be updated to reflect current thinking and identify actions and activities to further Council's commitment to sustainable transport.

An update of the Strategy is an opportunity to incorporate and build on the findings of the recent "YourGround" report that identified personal safety issues associated with walking and cycling in Monash as a top issue. Primary and secondary pedestrian routes across Monash would also be identified to encourage residents to take short trips on foot, reducing vehicle emissions, supporting local business and enhancing positive health outcomes.

DISCUSSION

Well-planned, inviting walking and cycling paths encourage people to be more active as part of their daily routine and derive the social, health, environmental and economic benefits that come with walking and cycling. This is reflected in the Sustainable City strategic objective of the Council

Plan 2021-2025 to “prioritise sustainable transport options, including walking/cycling paths and public transport.”

An update of the Monash Walking and Cycling Strategy will enable the development of strategies and education programs to encourage sustainable transport choices, based on contemporary thinking and community participation. The Strategy would also provide a renewed focus on planning, design, improvement and management of Council’s network of footpaths, shared paths, bike lanes and trails.

In April to July 2021, Council, in partnership with Monash University, participated in the ‘YourGround’ project along with 22 other local Councils. The project sought to identify public recreational spaces that make women, girls, and gender diverse people feel unsafe, unwelcome, or excluded. Women and gender-diverse people in the City of Monash supplied a total of 77 ‘pins’ to the YourGround survey. Around 81% (62 pins) of submissions for Monash were classified as unsafe, concentrated on our trails. These ‘unsafe’ pins are shown in Attachment 1.

An update of the Walking and Cycling Strategy provides an opportunity to enable more community engagement regarding safety along our paths and trails, address issues raised and embed the principles of the YourGround report into the Strategy.

The Council Plan also identifies the Enhanced Places strategic objective to encourage “prioritisation of pedestrians and active transport over vehicles”. The identification of primary and secondary pedestrian routes as part of the updated Strategy would enable a principal pedestrian network to be established and a rollout of identifiable key walking routes to be determined, planned and activated to help fulfil this objective.

FINANCIAL

An update of the Monash Walking and Cycling Strategy is estimated to cost around \$100,000 with funding required from Council’s operational budget.

CONCLUSION

An update of the Monash Walking and Cycling Strategy would contribute to the realisation of Sustainable City and Enhanced Places strategic objectives of the Council Plan, and through various programs would encourage our community to choose sustainable transport options. The Strategy would

assist Council in the future planning, investment and management of our valuable network of key walking and cycling routes, and address issues of personal safety for some of our most vulnerable residents.