



### 3. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

### 4. PETITIONS AND JOINT LETTERS

#### **Item 4.1 Petition Response: Closure of Esplanade West / Dow Street, Port Melbourne**

A Petition containing 24 signatures, was received from Port Melbourne resident Nathan Kuperholz, and presented to a Council Meeting on 13 September 2019. The petition was considered and resolved that Council:

1. Notes the concerns raised in the petition regarding the volume and speed of vehicles travelling through Esplanade West/Dow Street, Port Melbourne.
2. Receives the petition and refers it to the Transport Safety Engineering (TSE) team for investigation.
3. Advises the petition organiser that the TSE team will investigate the road safety concerns raised in the petition and will provide officer comments and recommendations at the Ordinary Council meeting on 20 November 2019.
4. Takes into account the aspirations of the residents to close the street at the speed hump, retain parking, improve park amenity and address these concerns in the report.

The Petition stated the following:-

*We, owners/occupiers of residences in Esplanade West and Dow Street, Port Melbourne hereby petition the City of Port Phillip with a request to consider and, if thought fit, to implement all steps necessary to achieve the closing of Esplanade West/Dow Street, Port Melbourne at the location of the existing speed-hump, adjacent to Edwards Park, where those two streets meet.*

*The reason for this petition is that each of us is becoming increasingly concerned about the volume and speed of vehicles (including buses) travelling through Esplanade West/Dow Street, principally as a "short-cut" in lieu of using Lyons Street, between Liardet Street and Bridge Street, which is a much more suitable connecting street in that it is wider and has much less residences fronting it. Our overriding concern is for the improved safety and welfare of extensive numbers of children (and their parents) who enjoy visiting the playground in Edwards Park immediately adjacent to the speed-hump and in the genuine hope and expectation that an inevitable accident, involving one or more of those children, can be avoided.*

#### **OFFICER COMMENT**

Esplanade West/Dow Street is a local road that runs between Lyons Street and Liardet Street. It provides access to residential properties, Edwards Park, on-street parking spaces and has been an approved weekday bus route for the 606 Elsternwick Station – Fisherman's Bend service which has been in operation since 2009. No bus stops are provided in this section of the route.

#### **606 bus route**

Regarding the existing 606 bus route, PTV provided the following information:



- Up until 2009, the 606-bus route run between Liardet Street and Bridge Street via Bay Street in both directions.
- Bus operators found it difficult to safely turn right into Bay Street from Liardet Street, without blocking the intersection (right turns at a busy uncontrolled intersection).
- In 2009 it was agreed, that the 606 service would operate via Esplanade West / Dow Street on weekdays for services going to Fisherman's Bend (approximately 10 trips per day).
- Unfortunately, bus drivers had been using Lyons Street instead of Esplanade West / Dow Street until 2019, when the mistake was realised, PTV notified all bus drivers and directed them to use the approved Esplanade West / Dow Street route.
- Lyon Street was not considered a safe option due to a significant number of 90-degree parking spaces (vehicles reversing into the street) and loading operations for shops fronting Bay Street.

#### **Traffic Volumes and Vehicle Speed Investigations**

In 2002, records showed 910 vehicles per day with an 85<sup>th</sup> percentile traffic speed of 50 km/h in Dow Street-Esplanade West, when posted speed limit was 50 km/h. In 2003, a speed hump was installed at the point where Dow Street and Esplanade West meet. The speed limit was changed to 40 km/h in 2012 as part of the introduction of 40 km/h Speed Limits in Local Areas.

Results of traffic volume and vehicle speed surveys carried out at two locations along Esplanade West/Dow Street from Monday, 14 October to Sunday, 20 October 2019 found:

- Esplanade West (between Lyons Street and speed hump)
  - Average weekday traffic volume: 1,034 vehicles
  - The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed: 45.6km/h
  - AM (8am-9am) peak hour traffic volume: 99 vehicles
  - PM (5pm-6pm) peak hour traffic volume: 100 vehicles
- Dow Street (between speed hump and Liardet Street)
  - Average weekday traffic volume: 953 vehicles
  - The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed: 36.0km/h
  - AM (8am-9am) peak hour traffic volume: 82 vehicles
  - PM (5pm-6pm) peak hour traffic volume: 95 vehicles

An on-site inspection found that the 40 km/h sign located at the intersection of Dow Street and Liardet Street was damaged, and no 40kph sign was located at the intersection of Esplanade West and Lyons Street. Rectifications have been arranged.

Officers also observed a route 606 bus utilizing Esplanade West / Dow Street, noting that the bus travelled at a safe speed, entered and exited the street in a safe and timely manner with no impact on safety on adjoining residents or park users.

The traffic volumes have increased in average by only 7 vehicles per year since 2002. They remain in the mid to low range for a local street within the City of Port Phillip, which typically is between 500 and 3,000 vehicles a day.

The industry standard guidelines for the peak hour volume ratio up to 14% typically indicate no rat running in an inner-city street. The October 2019 assessment identified the AM and PM peak hour traffic volumes in Esplanade West / Dow Street to be between 8.6%-9.6%



(AM) and 9.7%-10.0% (PM). This indicates that traffic volumes recorded during the peak periods are within an acceptable range, suggesting that rat-running is not an issue.

The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile traffic speeds recorded are either below or within 15% of the posted speed limit of 40 km/h. This indicates that travel speeds are within an acceptable range. The speed limit reduction to 40 km/h, together with the speed hump are effective in lowering the travel speed of vehicles along these sections of the road.

A review of the crash history in Esplanade West/Dow Street, between Lyons Street and Liardet Street has found no recorded casualty accidents in the past five-year period.

Council takes safety related concerns seriously and treats safety of all road users as highly important. The thorough investigation that was conducted, has concluded that there is no speeding or crash history in Esplanade West/Dow Street that warrants additional traffic management measures.

### **Park Amenity and Open Space**

The aspirations of the residents to close the street to address their concerns of safety around the park are acknowledged. The park is substantial in size with wide open lawn, mature trees and views to all surrounding areas. Should a closure take place around the existing speed hump, the creation of two cul-de-sacs would remove a significant amount of parking spaces on both sides of the street and could result in loss of mature street trees to provide for turn-around areas.

Council has recently completed extensive community engagement on the Public Spaces Strategy, which resulted in positive feedback for Edwards Park with no requests to improve or expand the current park amenities. The responses included comments regarding how publicly accessible the entire gardens are, with people agreeing that it was a large attraction for families and small groups. Residents stated that they enjoyed and valued the significant trees and sprinkler system.

Further work and studies could be undertaken for Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) opportunities on the east side of Esplanade West, as well as infill street tree planting on the western side to create more of a consistent tree canopy. Any other significant streetscape works or road closures would require reconfiguration and loss of car parking.

### **OFFICER RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

1. Acknowledges there is community support for the closure of Esplanade West/Dow Street, near Edwards Park, Port Melbourne.
2. Reviews the officer comments and notes that no warrants have been met, nor accident history identified, for a closure of Esplanade West/Dow Street.
3. Further work and studies could be undertaken for Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) opportunities on the east side of Esplanade West, as well as infill street tree planting on the western side to create more of a consistent tree canopy.
4. Advises the petition organiser Nathan Kuperholz of the outcome.

**TRIM FILE NO:** 30/21/22

**ATTACHMENTS** Nil