

Date: Wed, 11 Jun 2008 3:15 PM
From: "paul mckay" <paulmckay7@optusnet.com.au>
To: "Moreland BUG" <BrunsBUG@googlegroups.com>
Cc: "rod.callander" <rod.callander@ato.gov.au>, "Toby Archer" <tobyarcher@gmail.com>, "Anna Stempel" <anna@mefl.com.au>, "Jason den Hollander" <jasondh@bv.com.au>, coburg@mac.com, "Harry Barber" <harryb@bv.com.au>
Subject: [MorelandBUG] Paul's Cycling HIghlights of Councils proposed budget

Hi Buggies,

Council have released their draft budget for next year and you can see it here
[http://www.moreland.vic.gov.au/council/pdfs/2008/Council%20Report%20DCS18%20Proposed%](http://www.moreland.vic.gov.au/council/pdfs/2008/Council%20Report%20DCS18%20Proposed%20Budget.pdf)

I have had a fair read of this and tried to save some time for others by preparing a summary of the cycling highlights below (basically council is proposing to spend 320k instead of what we and BV reckon is fair \$711k – ie \$5 per person of council funds). It is a long document and this was hastily prepared so it would be great if others checked my bits.

Anna has sent emails to councilors and Toby (anna and I cant make it) is hoping to be at tonight's council meeting at
Wednesday 11 June 2008 at 7 pm
Council Chamber, Brunswick Town Hall
Corner Sydney Road & Dawson Street, Brunswick

I reckon Toby would love to see some friendly faces and bike helmets at the meeting if any others can make it.

Also the next week might be a good time to make sure your views are heard. At this point we understand that Councillor Andrea Sharman will be putting an appropriate amendment tonight and we are unclear of the position of other councilors. This is the site that has their contact details
<http://www.moreland.vic.gov.au/council/1council-fr.htm>

So here is my summary of the proposed council budget.

Paul's Cycling Highlights of the Moreland Councils Proposed Budget

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1 Consultation Process

The Document says (Exec 6-12 pp12)

"This budget has been developed through a rigorous process of consultation and review and management endorses it as financially responsible."

However it has been hidden from us and despite repeated requests we have been advised that we are not

to be informed of amounts for cycling. I presume they mean they have consulted internally – this is not real or genuine consultation and the process detailed to consult with us now seems to have been the bare minimum consultation as required by state legislation – see 1-1 budget preparation pp 14

The preparation of the budget begins with Officers preparing the annual budget in accordance with the Act and submitting the “proposed” budget to Council for approval “in principle”. Council is then required to give “public notice” that it intends to “adopt” the budget. It must give 14 days notice of its intention to adopt the proposed budget and make the budget available for inspection at its offices. A person has a right to make a submission on any proposal contained in the budget and any submission must be considered before adoption of the budget by Council. The final step is for Council to adopt the budget after receiving and considering any submissions from interested parties. The budget is required to be adopted and a copy submitted to the Minister by 31 August each year. The key dates for the budget process are summarised below:

1. Proposed budget submitted to Council for approval 11-June-2008
2. Public notice advising intention to adopt budget 12-June-2008
3. Budget available for public inspection and comment 13-June-2008
4. Submissions period closes 26-June-2008
5. Submissions considered by Council/Committee 2-July-2008
6. Budget and submissions presented to Council for adoption 21-July-2008
7. Copy of adopted budget submitted to the Minister 22-July-2008

I understand there has been an internal process where departments have bid for amounts and then managers and directors have reduced these. We have not advised of what these amounts are or why they are changed despite repeated requests. The process to date seems to have been more secretive than consultative.

2 Strategic Objectives

2.1 Building communities

1-4 pp17 Social - Building communities
Mentions various festivals and no Cyclovia

2.2 Health and Wellbeing

1-4 pp17 Social – A City for Health and Wellbeing
Cycling not mentioned but disability action plan, Active women in Moreland strategy and Increased opportunity for partnership projects with local supporting clubs and active leisure

2.3 Environment

1-5 Environment – Urban Renewal
Cycling not mentioned though sporting pavilions, open space strategy, public toilets, Brunswick and oak park baths are

1-5 Environment – Addressing Climate Change
Says

*Improve bike path maintenance on existing bike paths
Implement Bike Plan, to expand bike bath networks*

3 Population

2-1 Population

The preliminary estimated resident population of Moreland for June 2006 was 142,325 people. In the 10 years from 1986 to 1996, the population of Moreland dropped by about 4000. The population of Moreland remained steady at around 136,000 between 1996 and 2001. The population increase since 2001 of nearly 6000 people more than offsets the population loss between 1986 and 1996. (Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2007, Regional Population Growth Australia, 1996–2006).

4 Petrol pricing

2-3 page 23

2.2 External influences

In preparing the 2008/2009 budget, a number of external influences have been taken into consideration, because they are likely to impact significantly on the services delivered by Council in the budget period. These include:

- *• Local government increase as disclosed by the MAV is expected to be around 4.4%; and*
- *• Continuing increases in Fuel Prices well above CPI.*

I wonder what it to say they have taken increases in fuel prices into consideration. What impact or changes did these external influences have.

5 Services

3-3 page 26 lists services including

Leisure Planning & Community Support

Provision of leisure planning support and support to community leisure and recreation organisations

Network Leisure

- Operation and management of a range of services through Fawkner Leisure Centre, Fawkner Community Hall and Oak Park Aquatic Centre
- Recreation Services • To enable and support equity of access to all Council leisure, community recreation and sporting resources across the municipality
- • To support and strengthen the capacity of local community groups to improve the quality of life of the Moreland community
- • To be a leader in identifying and assessing needs and developing leisure opportunities through a program of continuing community development and best value
- • To adopt an integrated approach to leisure planning by linking with other social, environmental and economic planning activities

3-5 page 28 details that council city infrastructure look after bike paths and on-road facilities, transport planning and road maintenance

6 Funding

4-1-5 Grants Capital

This seems to indicate that we hope to receive 60k to extend the merri path to fawkner

4-2 Expenditure

Wages and salaries are due to increase by 5m and contractors, materials and supplies are due to decrease by 1m

6-1 page 39 The total capital budget is about 26m

This consists of

- Buildings – 6.8
- Road Assets - 5.7
- Drainage – 1
- Open Space – 1.5
- Plant and Equipment – 5.2
- Other Structures – 2.3
- New Assets – 3.3

I suspect that those that want to limit the funding for cycling might suggest that we are getting a fair % of the road assets capital spend. Our response might be that cycling is about much more than roads – it is also about public open space and health and environment which is where much of the rest of the money is spent. And anyways in the context of

- global warming
- peak oil
- inactivity epidemic
- congestion explosion in Melbourne
- a history of more than a hundred years of cycling getting a poverty of attention,
- a fabulous geography and weather for cycling
- Moreland experiencing a boom in cycling

That this is nowhere near a fair allocation for cycling.

6.2.2 page 41 states that the footpath and bikepath renewal project is 1.59m

Page 61

Bike paths are allocated 360,000 from council and 60,000 from grants (for the merri creek I expect). I would also like to check that the grants for the Upfield path have not somehow been included. We might also check to see if some of the consultancy money is for an evaluation of the “Glenroy extension”.

Appendix e seems to measure the budget against council strategy. Against the goal of improving bike path maintenance and existing paths the target is a “revised Road Asset Management Plan” ie in order to improve the bike path maintenance all they have to do is revise a road asset program – they don’t have to actually maintain or improve anything. That’s seems absurd and disrespectful – like someone had to write something in the box rather than actually maintain or improve anything. There is no commitment or reference to the bike plan or the audit that the BUG completed.

Under the Strategic Activity of “implementing the bike plan” the measure is that that they will review the plan and identify new projects and the target is to have a report adopted by council. The strategic activity is about implementing the plan and again there is no commitment to do this – rather the goal is to have a report adopted by council. Surely they have got to be kidding.

7 Summary

Moreland has around 142,325 people and is planning to spend 320,000 of its funds on cycling. That is 2.24 per person – less than have BV’s more than reasonable recommendation of \$5 per person.

This would not make us the highest spending council and will still be well below many others including Casey and Mornington. This is just a pass mark and even this doesn't give council the right to feel they are doing anything more than desperately necessary. \$5 per person would equate to \$711,625.

Despite all of the words and strategies from council, they don't appear to be serious and we might conclude that they have little respect for us. I reckon we have great relationship with council and it has probably been a bit too cosy. They have spent money on strategies and writing reports and making carbon neutral statements, but budget time is the time for commitment and they have continually underfunded cycling. The bike plan at the start of this decades made funding recommendations and council have failed year after year to meet these.

I have lived in Moreland all my life - went to school here, captained the swimming club, played footy here, had my first kiss here and I love my community. People are real and fascinating and kind. But when I read this I am left disappointed, embarrassed and cranky that these folk have been allowed to get away with this.

They are not leading the way in addressing greenhouse issues, or obesity and activity issues, or congestions issues or peak oil and petrol pricing.

Regards,

Paul McKay
Australian Mobile – +61 425 796 001
Skype name - paultmckay

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