



CITY OF
MONASH

**NOTICE PAPER
FOR A SPECIAL MEETING OF
MONASH CITY COUNCIL**

20 NOVEMBER 2018

AT 7.00 p.m.

**Council Chambers
293 Springvale Road,
Glen Waverley**

SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNCIL

20 NOVEMBER 2018

7.00 PM

Apologies

Disclosures of Interest

BUSINESS OF THE MEETING

Proposal from Council Officers of removal of up to 10 trees in Atherton Road Oakleigh

1. ATHERTON ROAD RECONSTRUCTION (BETWEEN WARRIGAL ROAD AND CLYDE STREET) AND IMPACT ON TREES

(OM: File No CF2018193)

Ward: Oakleigh

Responsible Director: Ossie Martinz

RECOMMENDATION*That Council:*

- 1. Notes the current progress of the Road Reconstruction Project at Atherton Road, Oakleigh between Warrigal Road and Clyde Street.*
- 2. Notes and endorses the requirement to expeditiously remove a number of trees along the section between Atkinson Street and Clyde Road where all reasonable measures cannot mitigate safety and operational concerns.*
- 3. Notes that further information will be forwarded to Councillors regarding the status of the trees between Warrigal Road and Atkinson Street.*
- 4. Notes that any trees removed will be replaced with advanced species.*
- 5. Notes that a newsletter will be provided to the broader Oakleigh Area highlighting the rationale for tree removal and the proposal to replant with an advanced species and, to also advice of a proposed community meeting in January to discuss the remaining works.*

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to inform Council of progress of the Atherton Road Project and the requirement to remove a number of trees due to the significant risk if they were to be retained.

The report has been brought to Council ahead of the ordinary Council meeting cycle as works are already in progress and a number of Councillors have sought Council consideration on this matter.

This intervention has implications on the works plan, both financial and operational.

BACKGROUND

Council at its meeting of 31 July 2018 awarded a contract for the reconstruction of Atherton Road, Oakleigh between Warrigal Road and Clyde Street. Works are progressing on site in the section between Atkinson Street and Clyde Street, but there have been significant issues with the proposal to retain a number of trees.

Initial assessments undertaken as part of the design did not fully identify the extent of the roots systems of the trees. As demolition works have progressed, the extent of the root systems under the kerbs, drains, footpaths and road pavement have become more evident.

Construction Engineers have been working with experienced arborists to retain as many trees where it is safe to cut roots including modifications to the design on site if required. Non-Destructive Digging Techniques have been used to assess the extent of roots as part of the assessment process.

DISCUSSION

While the design plans indicated minimal removal of trees, there are a number of trees that pose significant risk and are identified as dangerous with further removal of trees required.

The status of additional tree removals in the section of works between Atkinson Street and Clyde Street is that 2 trees have been removed on the south side of Atherton Road, 2 trees have been removed on the north side with a further 2 requiring definite removal and 5 others been further assessed with the likelihood of needing to be removed on the north side.

If reasonable measures can be undertaken to mitigate the removal of these 5 trees, these trees will be retained. Under no circumstance can officers recommend retention of trees that are identified as dangerous.

The assessment process has included Non-Destructive digging to uncover roots without damage to trees. The roots and tree are then assessed by an experienced arborist.

The footpath is then removed to further expose roots and further assessment undertaken.

Removal or retention of the trees is based upon an assessment of the required extent of root removal of roots, an ability to change the design to avoid removal of the roots, the ability of the tree to survive, and future maintenance requirements. Safety considerations are paramount.

Officers strongly advise against retention of any tree that is determined to be dangerous through arborist assessment.

CONSULTATION

Council has consulted with Traders/Owners/Residents along Atherton Road in accordance with the Atherton Road Reconstruction Works Communication Plan including meetings with Trader Groups and letter drops.

Letter drops have been conducted in the immediate vicinity of the works as the works have progressed, including advising of progress and any changes including proposed tree removals.

The nature of the work on site requires steady progress and assessments once footpath pavement has been removed which makes extensive consultation impractical due to the evolving nature of the tree assessments once pavements have been excavated.

There is further consultation proposed on the section of Atherton Road between Warrigal Road and Atkinson Street. Non-destructive digging has commenced in this section and is expected to be completed shortly with tree assessments underway. These works are due to commence in January 2019.

Following this report, it is proposed to provide an update newsletter to the broader Oakleigh community advising them of the status of the project and the trees and informing them of a community meeting in January 2019, to discuss the proposed works.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The importance of retaining the trees in Atherton Road is recognised in the overall streetscape. Enhanced streetscape elements, including wider footpaths, will enable additional street trading opportunities into the future and promote pedestrian activity, which will stimulate the local economy.

The removal of trees is only to be undertaken if reasonable measures cannot be taken to mitigate risks. Advanced replacement trees will be planted in the next planting season commencing around April 2019. The species proposed to be planted will be selected to maximise tree canopy and foliage.

The works are being managed to minimise impact on the adjacent businesses and through traffic and pedestrian movements.

Any delays to work will impact on the amenity of the adjacent businesses. Council officers are seeking to complete a substantial amount of the works on the current section of Atherton Road (between Atkinson and Clyde Streets) to be able to remove traffic restrictions in Atherton Road and to complete a substantial amount of the footpath works prior to a construction break for the Christmas Period.

FINANCIAL

The works at this site has been prioritised due to the condition of the infrastructure. The anticipated project expenditure is around \$5.8M (GST exclusive). In addition, Council has carried out extensive maintenance works particularly to the kerb and channel and footpaths in the last few years. The most recent intensive maintenance works were carried out in late 2016/early 2017.

Works are currently being managed within the overall project budget but there has been an additional \$70,000 expended on Non-Destructive Digging to uncover the roots for assessment without damaging the trees. This has been deemed essential as officers are making best endeavours to retain as many of the existing trees as possible.

There are also costs being incurred due to delays to construction and these can be as high as \$5,000 to \$10,000 a day. These are currently being managed but any further delays or modifications to works may trigger contractual negotiations or disputes.

CONCLUSION

It is recommended that Council:

1. *Notes the current progress of the Road Reconstruction Project at Atherton Road, Oakleigh between Warrigal Road and Clyde Street.*
2. *Notes and endorses the requirement to expeditiously remove a number of trees along the section between Atkinson Street and Clyde Street where all reasonable measures cannot mitigate safety and operational concerns.*
3. *Notes that further information will be forwarded to Councillors regarding the status of the trees between Warrigal Road and Atkinson Street.*
4. *Notes that any trees removed will be replaced with advanced species.*
5. *Notes that a newsletter will be provided to the broader Oakleigh Area in the next few days highlighting the rationale for tree removal and the proposal to plant with an advanced species and, to also advise of a proposed community meeting in January to discuss the remaining works.*