

Improving access to The Boulevard information session and Q&A, 3 April 2025, The Ivanhoe Centre

Resident Question: What is Council's justification for undertaking this project?

The current condition of The Boulevard between Bourke Road North and Banksia Street is poor. Under Section 40 of the *Road Management Act 2004*, Council has a statutory responsibility to inspect, maintain and repair public roads in accordance with the standards set out in its Road Management Plan.

The Boulevard was sealed in the early 1990's, after complaints from residents regarding dust and potholes. As it is a sealed road, Council is obligated to maintain it based on the standard it has been constructed to. Failing to do so could be considered a breach of our duty of care and expose Council to liability if an incident occurs. The road has previously been listed as unsealed which is not correct.

Resident Question: Why is this project happening now?

The resurfacing of The Boulevard is being proposed now to address ongoing safety concerns, improve accessibility, address the increasing cost of maintaining the road's long-term usability and to meet our obligation with the *Road Management Act 2004*. While the road has served the community for decades, its condition has deteriorated over time due to wear and tear which has increasing maintenance costs and safety risks. The average cost to maintain a square metre of pothole is around 10 times the cost of resurfacing the same area.

Resident Question: Why haven't we been consulted on this project before this?

Work to date on this project has been informed by ongoing feedback from the community, safety assessments, and maintenance requirements. While formal consultation is happening now, the need for improvements has been identified over time through concerns raised by residents, staff, and road condition monitoring.

Background work has included identifying options to improve the surface quality of The Boulevard while ensuring safety for all users, including pedestrians and bike users as well as cars. Maintaining a low-speed environment will need to be done in a way other than by using the potholes as a deterrent. The results of this have informed the documents presented by Council including The Boulevard Access Improvement Plan and project map and impressions included on the Shaping Banyule consultation page.

Feedback provided by you through the information session on 3 April and ongoing correspondence is helpful in shaping the final plan and locations where further or different treatments are needed. The online survey and interactive map will be open for feedback until 22 April. We encourage you to contribute your feedback if you have not already done so.

Resident Question: Given that the road has already become a rat run and has caused issues such as vehicle damage and personal injuries, including a recent incident where an ambulance driver commented on the poor condition of the road, could Council consider introducing a measure, such as an electronic boom gate with local access for residents, to address these concerns while still allowing necessary improvements to the road?

Thank you for sharing with us that rat running is already a concern. We know that resurfacing a road improves driving conditions, which in some cases may lead to increased traffic or higher speeds. However, we are keen to take action to prevent this and effectively managed and reduced using traffic filters and calming measures to reduce through traffic and discourage speeding.

As a public road, The Boulevard must be accessible for the entire public, an obligation on Council under the *Local Government Act 1989*. This means that measures to restrict access to the broader community such as via a boom gate are not open to us.

However, we have provided examples of the types of measures that are possible, and these are available with the project map and impressions on the Shaping Banyule consultation page.

Resident Question: Cars travelling along The Boulevard already disregard the No Through Road signage. What is Council going to do about this?

We welcome feedback from the community on matters such as this, as it helps inform further investigation and may lead to additional measures being considered in the next stages of the project.

Resident Question: Has Council considered the impacts of the proposed resurfacing on local streets like Streeton Crescent; McCubbin Street and The Condor?

This project considers a range of measures to support The Boulevard and surrounding streets—such as Streeton Crescent, McCubbin Street, and The Condor—as local access routes. Through these measures, we aim to enhance safety for residents and visitors while discouraging non-local, cut-through traffic.

Community feedback is a valuable part of this process. To assist with this, we have developed an interactive map available on the Shaping Banyule consultation page. If you have not already done so, we encourage you to contribute your feedback via the map and complete the online survey

Resident Question: Gruyere Crescent is essentially a gravel track. Why do you want to seal this as well?

This project considers opportunities to improve conditions for residents on Gruyere Crescent as well as options to extend walking and bike riding access to the Main Yarra Trail. We are seeking your feedback in relation to this and other proposed traffic treatments. If you haven't already, please add your feedback to interactive map on the Shaping Banyule consultation page and complete the online survey.

Resident Question: What is the average speed along the Boulevard? I noticed a black counter on the road.

Traffic speed and volume counts were conducted as part of Council's preparatory work for this project, and the data is available on the Shaping Banyule consultation page. The findings show that between 2022 and 2024, the majority of cars traveled at speeds below 40km/h. Any proposed improvements to The Boulevard aim to maintain or reduce these traffic speeds. In terms of traffic volume, there has been a 32% (65 cars per day) increase over the past two years.

As noted by the study, this marginal increase highlights that discouraging rat running is a relevant consideration for this project.

Resident Question: We have been asking for reduced speeds along The Boulevard. What is the option for creating a low-speed shared zone in this location?

The 30km/h signs currently installed along The Boulevard are advisory only and therefore not enforceable. In Victoria, speed limits are set by the State Government, and the default speed for built-up areas is currently 50km/h. Unless this is formally changed, Council must rely on alternative measures, such as the proposed traffic calming treatments, to help reduce vehicle speeds.

These measures have been outlined in the project map and visual impressions available on the Shaping Banyule consultation page¹. We will consider whether an application can be made to permanently reduced the speed limit as part of the proposed works.

Resident Question: We appreciate that whilst traffic management measures may slow down cars, has Council considered how it will manage bicycle speeds to prevent local streets from becoming a high-traffic route for cyclists?

A key objective of the resurfacing project is to enhance safety for all road users, including cyclists and pedestrians. The proposed upgrades aim to provide a smoother and more consistent road surface, addressing hazards such as potholes and uneven sections that can pose risks to these users.

At the same time, we are aware of community concerns regarding excessive bicycle speeds. As such, the traffic calming measures being considered will also aim to manage bicycle speeds, helping to maintain a safe and comfortable environment for all, particularly vulnerable road users such as children and pedestrians.

Resident Question: Does Council have any plans to seal the Main Yarra Trail?

The unsealed section of the Main Yarra Trail between Burke Road North and Banksia Street in Yarra Flats Regional Park is managed by Parks Victoria. Parks Victoria have advised that they have no intention to change the surface treatment of the trail in this location.

Resident Question: Has Council considered the impact on local wildlife, particularly the local mob of kangaroos?

The Boulevard is known to Council and the community for its natural beauty and biodiversity and preserving this is a key priority. Resurfacing and ancillary works will be carried out in a way that avoids unnecessary disruption to local flora and fauna. No significant vegetation removal is planned, and measures will be taken to ensure that wildlife corridors remain intact. Since it was paved dust has reduced and improved the environment for flora and fauna.

Resident Question: When the freeway was stopped in the 1970s, it was agreed that The Boulevard would be a country lane. Is it possible for the road to be considered a heritage road and protected in its current state? Can't the existing road continue to be patched instead of resurfaced?

The Glenard Estate Heritage Guidelines adopted by Council in May 2005² notes that The Boulevard should remain unsurfaced and without kerb and channel in order to maintain the rural character of heritage precinct. However, the road at that time was already sealed and this

¹ Speed limits in Victoria - <https://transport.vic.gov.au/road-rules-and-safety/speed-limits>

² Prepared by Andrew Ward Architectural Historian with Ian Wright Planning and Heritage Strategies.

creates a conundrum for Council. We have an obligation to maintain the surface of the road. Unsealing the road would result in other issues including excessive dust for residents.

Patching The Boulevard may seem like a simpler and cheaper solution, but it is only a short-term fix and does not sustainably address the underlying issues with the road surface. The Boulevard has experienced ongoing wear and tear over the years, and patch repairs are becoming less effective, leading to frequent maintenance needs and increased costs. Resurfacing the road provides a long-term solution by improving safety, creating a smoother and more durable surface, and reducing the need for ongoing patchwork repairs. It also allows the implementation of traffic calming measures, ensuring a safer environment for residents, cyclists, and pedestrian.

Resident Question: Has Council taken any steps to address the condition of the roundabout at the top of Burke Road North, given it may be contributing to increased traffic on The Boulevard? Additionally, what actions is Council taking to support residents affected by the impacts of the North East Link Project?

The roundabout in question facilitates access to multiple roads and is located on a Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) road. As it falls under DTP's jurisdiction, any queries or concerns regarding its condition should be directed to enquiries@transport.vic.gov.au.

Council continues to work closely with the North East Link Project (NELP) across various aspects of design and delivery, advocating on behalf of the local community. However, this matter is being managed separately and is outside the scope of the current consultation.

Also, to avoid cut through to avoid roundabout there may be other options Council can consider such as turn bans or closing the road to motorised vehicles between McCubbin Street and Mossman Drive.

Resident Question: Given that hay baling becomes problematic without tractor access, will Council ensure that tractor access is available along the length of The Boulevard?

We understand the importance of maintaining access for tractor operations, particularly for hay baling. Council is committed to supporting local volunteer groups and will take this need for tractor access into consideration when planning any works along The Boulevard. We will review the situation and ensure that the necessary access is maintained to facilitate ongoing maintenance activities.

Resident Question: What is the timeframe for this project? Has a decision been made? How will a decision be made? Who will be making the decision?

The online survey and interactive map will be open for feedback on the Shaping Banyule consultation page until 22 April. Council will then undertake an analysis of the feedback and propose revisions to the current plans as a result of this. We expect that Council will consider the analysis of feedback in June 2025. In regard to the project, we anticipate that detailed designs for the access improvements will be undertaken in the 2025/26 financial year. We will be undertaking localised consultation with residents directly affected by the proposed traffic treatments.

Resident Question: Can the road be reclassified to a shared use path?

If sections of The Boulevard are closed to motorised vehicles, Council could consider using its powers under the *Local Government Act 1989* to install permanent barriers to effectively ban motorised vehicles and making it a shared use path.