

2.6 Public Question Time

The aim of public question time is to provide an opportunity for the public to ask general questions at Council Meetings requiring routine responses. Questions with or without notice can be submitted.

Questions with notice are to be received in writing by 12.00pm the Friday prior to the relevant Council Meeting and can be lodged via the Shire's website. Questions received by this time will be provided with a considered response prepared by the relevant Shire officer and read by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) at the Council Meeting.

Questions without notice must be lodged in person no later than 15 minutes prior to the commencement of the meeting. The question will be read by the CEO and taken on notice with a written response forwarded to the person asking the question within 7 days of the Council Meeting and published on the Shire's website.

This segment does not substitute for appeal or other formal business procedures with the Council.

Written Responses

Safety Infrastructure on Arthurs Seat Road, Red Hill

Melissa Goffin, a resident of Red Hill asked the following question:

In 2019, at significant cost to ratepayers, Council commissioned and then approved the Red Hill Traffic Management study in response to community concern over the shortage of car parking spaces resulting in illegal and unsafe parking in the area. One of 2 high priority recommendations was that the road along Arthurs Seat Road should be upgraded and provide 2m sealed shoulders in each direction. Can Council explain why the recommendations of this report have been ignored in lieu of removing existing on road parking and blocking off access permanently through the provision of steel barriers?

Council advised that the Red Hill Traffic Management Study reviewed a number of community concerns including parking, speed limits, cyclist and pedestrian safety.

The specific recommendation raised about providing 2m of sealed shoulders is in relation to the concern of cyclist safety along a 70km/h or 80km/h road and not relating to additional parking along this stretch of Arthurs Seat Road. It is to be noted that due to the lowering of the speed limit from 70km/h to 60km/h along the Council owned section between Whitehill Road and Red Hill Road, the requirements for a sealed shoulder for cyclists is reduced to 1.5m (which aligns with Austroads Guide to Road Design).

It is important to note that there have been no guardrails installed where parking wasn't already restricted with 'No Stopping Signs'.

The Shire commissioned a parking and road safety assessment earlier this year to review the current parking restrictions and broader safety issues within this area. The Shire has an obligation to ensure that any parking in the area is safe and meets relevant traffic standards.

Tim Sexton, a resident of Red Hill asked the following question:

In developing the Black Spot Program plan for Arthur's Seat Road, was there any consideration of the significant visual impact it would have on a Scenic Road of Importance (as defined in the Mornington Peninsula Planning Scheme), and if there was no consideration of the impact, will future Black Spot Projects on the Peninsula be approached differently?

Tim Sexton, asked a follow up question:

In developing the Black Spot Program plan for Arthur's Seat Road, were any Red Hill businesses consulted about the potential impacts on their business by the planned works, and if there was no consultation, will future Black Spot Projects on the Peninsula be approached differently?

Jacqueline Lang, a resident of Red Hill asked the following question:

When driving toward the showground, has the Council considered the impact of sunglare for cars turning into the servo? Car coming from focus has already almost been hit.

Jacqueline Lang, asked a follow up question:

Why the road barriers on Arthurs Seat Road? The only accident (Oct 2023) was caused by speed and alcohol. It is unnecessary and unsightly. It's definitely not rural and fitting for our beautiful Red Hill.

Kerryn White, a resident of Red Hill asked the following question:

Did Traffic Management Programme visit site prior? Traffic Management expert at Red Hill General Store today. No requirement for signage place outside our front door. Customers unable to enter parks. Need to be placed further down. Small business – are we able to be compensated for heavy impact to business with unnecessary works undertaken?

Kerryn White asked a follow up question:

No business in vicinity was aware prior re: works to commence. Footpath on opposite side road incomprehensible – there is no foot traffic, leads to service station/restaurant based on study. Parallel parks on opposite side need to be restricted parking.

Jane Reynolds, a resident of Red Hill South asked the following question:

What empirical evidence let the Shire to apply for blackspot funding for the Arthurs Seat Road works noting many more other dangerous location and local community opposition?

Jane Reynolds, asked a follow up question:

Why was the community not consulted prior to the application for blackspot funding and installation of traffic island at United Petrol Station.

Carolyn Massola, a resident of Red Hill asked the following question:

Given the strong local outrage at the current roadworks projects in Arthurs Seat Road, what action will Council take to remove the disproportionate infrastructure and signage.

Carolyn Massola asked a follow up question:

Why did Council ignore community concern that the current roadworks projects in Arthurs Seat were inappropriate.

Sam Norris a resident of Red Hill asked the following question:

Why was there was no traffic report from Nash's lane to Whitehill road and are the current guard rails proportionate to the risk considering 10 plus accidents at the intersection of Whitehill road /Arthurs Seat road including a fatality. Yet no measures have been taken yet guard rails have been installed where there has been no accidents.

Council advised that the Mornington Peninsula has a long history of unacceptably high levels of road trauma, being one of the worst municipalities in Victoria. As such, Mornington Peninsula Shire has a strong commitment to improving road safety and reducing road trauma through our Mornington Peninsula Towards Zero 2020-2025 Road Safety Strategy which targets zero deaths and serious injuries on our roads by 2050.

The Arthurs Seat Road project has been Federally funded under the Black Spot Program which aims to address areas of high risk and/ or a history of crashes. In the past 10 years, there has been 14 crashes of various types on this section of Arthurs Seat Road. Analysis of the crashes showed a pattern of 'run off road' and 'head on' crashes (six within the five year Black Spot analysis period between mid-2016 to mid-2021) at various locations along the road, and that there was risk that these types of crashes could continue to occur in the future. This pattern of crashes can be reduced with treatments such as improvements to linemarking, Raised Reflective Pavement Markers, guideposts and signage, and installation of road safety barriers. Additional risks to pedestrians crossing Arthurs Seat Road were identified which could be made safer with construction of a pedestrian refuge and threshold linemarking in advance of the high pedestrian activity areas.

The improved delineation is intended to reduce the likelihood of crashes occurring, and the road safety barriers are a critical element of the safety improvements, as they're designed to reduce the severity of crashes in the highest risk locations by redirecting errant vehicles, relative to striking a rigid object such as a tree or power pole, so that death or serious injury are less likely to occur.

The Black Spot Program is a competitive grant program where councils across Victoria apply for road safety improvement funding based on historic crashes and road safety risk. The applications are extensively assessed by the Victorian Department of Transport & Planning (DTP), and the most justified road safety improvements receive funding. Arthurs Seat Road was assessed by DTP as being among the most warranted road safety improvements after considering all of the applications from around Victoria.

The Shire have been in discussion with the contractor and the project delivery team regarding the traffic management setup to find a way that enables vehicles to be able to enter the car spaces at the front of Red Hill General Store whilst also ensuring that when they leave and head west, that they know whether they can go or whether they need to wait for traffic coming from the other direction. The team have found a solution that will allow for both scenarios and this will be implemented as soon as possible.

Regarding the footpath on the opposite side, it is a popular parking area and currently presents a risk for those crossing the road. It was decided to put this path in to ensure that people with young children, prams or any accessible users can safely cross the road as well, connecting to that pedestrian crossing in front of service station which will then link up to existing paths out the front of the general store and on the other side of the service station.

The sun glare at the pedestrian refuge that has been raised, will be further investigated. Once works are completed there will be a road safety audit and reporting back any findings or proposed changes.

Regarding our consultation process, the Shire sent letters to just over 100 of the nearby residents and businesses along Arthurs Seat Road and on roads adjoining Arthurs Seat Road which included Eldridge Estate and the address of the owner. There was also a community information session held in March of 2024 to discuss any concerns in relation to the project with residents and other local stakeholders where both the road safety barriers and pedestrian refuge island was discussed.

Whilst the process of community consultation was consistent with other Black Spot projects that have taken place over the past few years, we can always learn, make changes, and improve for future projects that take place around the Mornington Peninsula.