

26 June 2013

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Beaumaris Reserve Sports Ground Car Parking

Dear Mr Kabir,

Beaumaris Conservation Society Inc. has received and considered the document that Bayside City Council has produced entitled, "[Beaumaris Reserve Sports Ground Car Parking](#)", dated May 2013.

Mistaken Claims in Document: The second paragraph of the document states,

"This is a heavily used car park. Particularly during the winter months around 4000 vehicle (*sic*) per week use this facility. Due to this high volume of vehicular movements the existing surface remains in a constant state of deterioration. As a result it is proposed that the car park be sealed."

The Society completely disagrees with that statement in a number of respects detailed below.

- Car park not heavily used: The Sports Ground car park is certainly not a heavily used car park, as it is unused for most of the daylight hours in the week, and is fully used on rare occasions only.
- Implausibly high use cited: The claim in Council's document that, particularly during the winter months, around 4,000 vehicles per week use the Sports Ground car park is not credible. If such a high rate of movement did exist, and even if it was spread evenly for each of the 168 hours in a week, there would still be almost 24 vehicle movements per hour, every hour, day and night. A claim so at odds with BCS Inc. members' observations causes the Society to ask Council to provide it with the detailed survey figures on which the claim is based, please. Actual use is typically almost entirely concentrated on less than 25 hours per week, which would result in an average movement of 160 vehicles per hour during that time. That rate is equivalent to a vehicle entering or leaving the present 33-space car park every 22 seconds (3,600/160). Such a high average rate of ingress and egress would result in a complete turnover time for all the 33 vehicles in the car park, if it were fully-occupied, of 24 minutes (33x44/60), i.e. a mean dwell time per vehicle of only 24 minutes. The mean dwell time would be shorter in inverse proportion to the percentage occupancy of the 33 car park spaces so that, under the 4,000 vehicles a week scenario claimed, the car park, if only half-full, would experience a mean dwell time per car of 12 minutes. A car park and access road is unjustified just for such quick gawking.
- Surface in a constant state of deterioration: The surface of the car park and its access road is dry, clay-free sand that stays well drained and free of mud owing to its elevation above much of the reserve, and the low level of use it experiences.

The third dot point above is critical to the validity of the proposal that the car park and access road be sealed. BCS Inc. members inspecting the surface of the car park and access road in mid-winter have seen a surface that is generally flat and even, and perfectly suitable for walking or driving on at the very low speeds that are the only speeds feasible or desirable in such a small area.

If the surface is in a constant state of deterioration, as is claimed in the document, BCS Inc. would appreciate receiving a statement by Council on the type of deterioration of this asset, and the work done to offset that deterioration and the cost of that work during each of the last ten years, please. The extremely low cost of establishing that asset is relevant in its overall costs.

If, as BCS Inc. considers is the case, the deterioration is not substantial, the matter of the number of vehicles entering and leaving it per week - which the document gives as the sole reason for the proposal to asphalt the surface - is irrelevant as a reason for such asphaltting.

The existing type of car park and access road surface should be retained:

The existing sandy surface is a distinctive and desirable environmental quality of Beaumaris Reserve. The recreational use of the reserve benefits people by allowing them to experience there a change from the surfaces and surroundings they come across almost everywhere else, and a more natural surface, which accords best with the surrounding indigenous vegetation.

Beaumaris is naturally and inherently a very sandy place, which has always been one of its attractive features, but it is becoming increasingly difficult for residents and visitors to experience any substantial surface that is still in that condition. Those places that are still in that condition and that do not need to be changed because of excessive water retention leading to mud being created are desirable, and should be conserved, rather than being obliterated with a ubiquitous surfacing material like asphalt. A sandy surface is a much safer surface for falling on than a hard bitumen surface. Unlike bitumen, sand gives less [trouble with bottles breaking on it](#).

Replacing a presently permeable surface with an impermeable surface is contrary to what the [Council encourages in new developments](#) in Bayside, as the increasingly impermeable nature of the land area of Bayside is lowering the overall water table, and makes higher peak demands on the drainage system, with greater sudden discharges into Port Phillip in times of heavy rain.

The proposal to cover the natural surface of a large section of Beaumaris Reserve with [asphalt](#), an imported petroleum product, which has a high aromatic hydrocarbon content, and gradually breaks down and then becomes more waste to pollute the Australian environment, is unjustifiable in this location, given the necessarily low vehicle speeds and low rate of use detailed above.

If, and when, the car park and access road might eventually need some restorative treatment of the surface, beyond the gentle grading that is all that has been done for the last fifty years, there is an entirely local and heavily undervalued resource at hand in the form of the vast quantities of Beaumaris's own sand that is annually being dug from residential lots for underground garages and basements in new developments, and trucked permanently from Beaumaris. That sand is not a pollutant when it finds its way to Port Phillip Bay, as sand is the material that produces its beaches. Bayside City Council would make a constructive and worthwhile contribution to our economy, and to our environment, if it required, as a condition of its approval of such developments, that a suitable amount of that sand resource is to be provided to Council for storage for replenishment works in its reserves rather than allowing the present wasteful disposal of the sand elsewhere to be the only fate of that neglected geological resource.

Recent spreading of concrete for an increased number of cricket practice nets replacing what was previously a smaller area of mats was a noticeable increase in the paving of the reserve.

Bicycle racks needed rather than trees giving way to cars:

Several bicycle racks should be provided at the southern end of the reduced car park area to offset the reduced number of car parking spaces. That would change the balance of what is practical for people visiting the sports field, in a way that would encourage more use of bicycles or walking for local transport instead of cars, which would spare trees from destruction, benefit visitors' fitness, and help reduce the already large impact of cars and car parking facilities on Beaumaris Reserve.

No trees should be removed as part of the proposal:

BCS Inc. opposes the removal of the six trees that Council proposes to remove, all of which are ostensibly protected from damage by the Vegetation Protection Overlay in the Bayside Planning Scheme that applies to them. Three of those trees are River Red Gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*), which are large, long-living, but slow-growing, indigenous trees that are a particularly impressive part of the Beaumaris environment, but are steadily being lost from Beaumaris. The two Blackwoods (*Acacia melanoxylon*) are also indigenous trees that are a significant component of the Beaumaris ambience.

Reduction in car parking area is not opposed:

BCS Inc. does not oppose the proposed reduction in the area of Beaumaris Reserve available for car parking and manoeuvring. It notes that two other sports fields in Beaumaris, at both Donald McDonald Reserve and Balcombe Park Reserve, have quite reasonably no parking space at all on the perimeter of the sports field itself. Such space is more appropriately reserved for people sitting, standing, or walking around watching the game. A view from the sports field of such onlookers, rather than inanimate cars, is more appealing to most people. Most sports fields, even those as large as the Melbourne Cricket Ground, manage quite well without cars at the fence line.

Yours sincerely,

Ron Morris
President
Beaumaris Conservation Society Inc.