

Surf Beach / Sunderland Bay Potential Road and Drainage Special Charge Scheme

Issue 7 – April 2023

Fact check

This regular newsletter aims to keep all property owners and residents informed of this project as it progresses, plus highlight anything you need to be aware of.

Council are aware that there may be some misinformation circulating, potentially creating confusion and concerns. For accurate, up-to-date information please always refer to engage.basscoast.vic.gov.au/surfbeachroads.

We recommend signing up to Engage Bass Coast, so that when we do update any information, you are immediately notified by email. You can also check out the Frequently Asked Questions section to see if someone has already asked the same query. If not, reach out to us at any time via the contact details shown.

Temporary signs

Temporary dust and slow down warning signs will be removed after the Easter holiday period. Signs will be re-installed to remind motorists in dryer conditions later in the year.

Please continue to drive slowly to improve the safety of pedestrians who walk along the roads while there are currently no footpaths.

Concept Plans Adopted

At the Council meeting of 15 March 2023, the preferred concept designs for a potential road and drainage improvement project were adopted. The Council will now move to the next phase of planning for this project, which involves cost estimating and cost proportioning.

This project is a great opportunity for the community to resolve the dust, drainage and safety issues in the area permanently and with all property owners and Council contributing. The preferred concept plan responds to community feedback received through extensive consultation regarding:

- minimal cost
- least impact on the environment and
- retaining the characteristics of the area.

If the improvement project is not supported, the unsealed roads and table drains will be maintained in the same manner that is currently undertaken.

The petition against the special charge scheme was also addressed at the March Council meeting. The outcome was to continue the planning phase of the project, which will have cost estimating and cost proportioning undertaken. This will enable property owners to make a more informed decision to support or oppose to the project in due course.

Soil testing

Council is arranging geotechnical testing by consultants to check for acid sulphate soils which are common next to coastal areas. The testing results will inform the detailed design so that appropriate management through construction ensures the surrounding environment including downstream wetlands are protected. If you have experienced any local indicators of this type of soil in your gardens while digging or perhaps through house foundation construction, please let us know as it will assist to map possible locations. Indicators include:

- Sulphur (rotten egg) smell when underlying soil is exposed to air
- Black to steely blue-grey coloured soils

Sunderland Bay and Surf Beach Urban Road and Drainage Improvement Project



Planning Stage Process



Flow chart of special charge scheme planning project

Project timelines

The timelines of the potential road and drainage upgrade project are being modified so that both the intent to declare a special charge and the declaration of the special charge can be undertaken post June 2023. This is due to the Local Government Local Government Legislation (Rating and Other Matters) Act 2022 being introduced and coming into effect on 20 June 2023. The legislative changes require Council to refer to this Act and not the predecessor Local Government Act 1989 in both the notice to declare a special charge and also the declaration of the special charge scheme.

Check and update your Postal Address

Formal notifications of Council's intention to declare a special charge in relation to a potential road and drainage upgrade project for the estates will be sent via registered mail to property owner's postal address. Please check that your postal address is up to date so that you receive this notification in due course. To check your address listed or update it, please contact Council rates department direct on 1300 BCOAST (226 278) or (03 5671 2211).

Financial hardship

If the special charge scheme is approved and you are experiencing financial difficulty, please contact Council's Revenue Services team on 03 5671 2211. Our officers are available to confidentially discuss payment options with you, considering your current situation.

If your only income is a Government pension, you may qualify for hardship assistance. Please contact our Customer Services team to learn more.

Next steps

Our next step is to now work out the costs of the total project, plus a proposal on how costs will be distributed between Council and property owners through a special charge scheme. Once the cost aspects are determined, these will be brought to a future Council meeting for consideration in a funding model for the project.