Shaping Whitehorse - Community Feedback
Proposed Budget 2025/26 and Revenue & Rating Plan 2025-2029

Response #	DOCUMENT	FEEDBACK	OFFICER RESPONSE
1	General Feedback	Just one thing that would be great and low-cost. The walkway on Eley Road that leads into the Brickworks living estate (right next to the retarding basin) is pitch black at night. It's an essential path to get to the trams, the the shops, etc. would be great to have some lighting along there to improve safety. Also more traffic control of some sort at the English language school.	**Comments are noted.** The request for public lighting on Eley Road and traffic calming devices at the English language school is noted. During 2025/26 (Year 1), Council officers will investigate both matters in order to determine an appropriate response and will return with a report to Council, which (pending support) will be implemented in Year 2 (2026/27 Budget).
2	2025/26 Proposed Budget	General Feedback: I am happy to see we have a surplus so we can pay off any council debt.	**Comments are noted.** While Council doesn't currently carry any long-term debt, aside from standard short-term creditor obligations, generating a surplus is important because it enables council to support both its operating and capital expenditures and is (generally) an indicator of financial sustainability.
3	2025/26 Proposed Budget	I would like to see more funding to assist elderly Italian migrants who are alienated in their senior years by having worked all their lives in factories with little or no social activities. As they age and there are fewer and fewer friends, they tend to spend more and more time alone at home. It would be great if there were some activities organised specifically for them or there are grants available to local Italian groups or Churches to organise activities and outings. I am available to discuss this if it is required.	**Officer recommendation:** Comment noted - no changed to Proposed Budget 2025/26. Council's Positive Ageing team can assist with connecting people with local activities in the community. Council also provides a community grants program which provides funding to a variety of community groups. The Positive Ageing team would be very happy to discuss further options.
4	2025/26 Proposed Budget	I am writing to express my strong support for ensuring that the council budget continues to fund the local swimming programs at Surrey Park. For years, this facility has been a cornerstone of our community, providing high-quality swim coaching, valuable resources, and accessible classes for people of all ages and skill levels. Surrey Park's long-standing history as a premier swimming centre is a testament to the dedication of its experienced coaches and the high standards of instruction it upholds. Maintaining this level of excellence requires consistent investment in staffing, training, and access to necessary resources. Reducing or limiting funding for these programs would not only impact aspiring swimmers but also diminish the community benefits that Surrey Park has provided for generations. Swimming is an essential life skill, and Surrey Park ensures that residents—from beginners to advanced athletes—have the opportunity to develop their abilities in a safe, structured, and supportive environment. Continued financial support will help uphold its tradition of excellence and make quality swim coaching available to all. I urge the council to prioritize funding for Surrey Park's programs, coaches, and facilities to safeguard the accessibility and high standard of swim instruction that defines this institution. Thank you for considering this request. I look forward to your commitment to sustaining and enhancing the swimming opportunities in our community.	**Officer recommendation:** Comment noted - no changed to Proposed Budget 2025/26. Council resolved to delegate authority to the CEO to execute contract documents with Surrey Park Swimming Club as the preferred respondent for the management of the learn to swim programs at Aqualink Box Hill. The resolution was the outcome of a expression of interest process for learn to swim program delivery. The outcome recognises the value of Surrey Park Swimming Club as a significant partner to Council and the community, with a long history of delivering aquatic education and training outcomes, from learning to swim to high performance squads. Surrey Park Swimming Club also support Council by funding and delivering the Welcome Around Water program, which provides programs for culturally diverse community groups, such as migrant, refugee and asylum seekers.
5	2025/26 Proposed Budget	It is good to see that with the myriad of demands/expectations on Council, the budget looks to be fiscally responsible. Of course, residents can't have everything they would like and I'm disappointed to see that home help/home maintenance for seniors is once again not included as the federal My Aged Care is doing nothing for a forgotten group of older seniors who are reasonably cognisant, independent, active and involved, but who just can't manage or afford the help they need. I can't help but compare this omission with how well the needs of Seniors in Banyule are catered for by their Council.	**Officer Recommendation:** No change to Proposed Budget 2025/26, however Council notes and understands your concerns. Although Council does not deliver services through the Australian Government/My Aged Care, the Whitehorse Positive Ageing team can help residents to access Aged Care Services and connect with local services to support them at home. They are also supporting a network of providers to advocate for improvement in services offered and the needs of the community including in the areas of home maintenance.

Response #	DOCUMENT	FEEDBACK	OFFICER RESPONSE
5	Revenue & Rating Plan 2025-2029	3% rise seems to be in line with community expectations and while residents would always like the increase in rates to be less, our expectations of Council responsibilities and services are ever increasing - it's just a matter of perspective.	**Officer Recommendation:** No change to Proposed Budget 2025/26 or Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029, however comments are noted that the proposed rate increase appears to be in line with community expectations. As noted, while there is often a desire for lower increases, there is also a clear recognition that the scope and quality of Council services continue to grow in response to community needs. This perspective highlights the ongoing challenge of balancing financial sustainability with rising service expectations. The resident's comments support the view that the proposed increase is a reasonable and responsible approach in the current context.
	General Feedback	Well done on not plunging us into significant debt in this ever-changing, volatile and uncertain world. I hope that the upcoming (July) negotiations with Council employees are positive, sensible and in line with the income and aspirations of residents, many of whom are seeing significant drops in their income due to superannuation volatility and rises in income or pensions not keeping up with the cost of living.	**Officer recommendation:** No change to Proposed Budget 2025/26, however comments are noted on Council's responsible financial management in what remains an uncertain economic environment. Their support for Council's approach to maintaining a strong financial position without accruing significant debt is appreciated.
6	2025/26 Proposed Budget	Copy of letter to Ratepayers Ass attached detailing some of my concerns re the Council's belief that ratepayers can afford never ending rate increases despite many doing it extremely tough and incomes not increasing. The new budget proposal is no different, with Council casually throwing out spending in the millions while your ratepayers are budgeting in terms of a script, a meal or a bill.	**Officer recommendation:** No change to Proposed Budget 2025/26. Council notes the concerns raised are understood to reflect the resident's views on the Proposed Budget 2025/26 and are therefore being treated as a valid contribution to the consultation process. We note the concerns regarding the affordability of ongoing rate increases, particularly in the context of cost-of-living pressures being experienced by many in our community. The budget is developed through a rigorous process, and these concerns are carefully considered as part of Council budget deliberations.
	Revenue & Rating Plan 2025-2029	Copy of letter to Ratepayers Association attached concerning Council continuing to expect singles and couples to foot the bill for families in the form or what we pay for in our rates, despite families being the lesser demographic. Far more justification for Council spending is needed, specifically how many ratepayers eg use the sporting facilities vs 100% of ratepayers being forced to pay for them/how often the play areas are actually used.	**Officer recommendation**: No change to council's rating structure in the Proposed Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029. Council acknowledges the resident's concerns regarding Council's uniform rating structure and their views on the distribution of costs across different household types. Council adopts a uniform rating approach as it is considered the most equitable and administratively efficient method for raising revenue under the current legislative framework. This approach treats all ratepayers equally based on property value, regardless of household composition, and reflects the principle that all residents benefit - directly or indirectly - from the broad range of services and infrastructure provided. Council also notes the request for greater transparency and justification of spending on specific services and facilities, such as sporting grounds and play spaces. While not every resident may use each facility, these community assets contribute to broader social, health, and economic outcomes that benefit the municipality as a whole.
7	General Feedback	I would like to thank the council for all the work they do. I constantly see improvements everywhere and that is very positive for the community. The streets are always clean, the plants and trees are always taken care of, the council bin trucks are always on time etc. I'm greatful for everything the council does for the community.	**Comments are noted.**
8	General Feedback	I think the councils needs to exercise its powers to fine breaches of local laws, rules and regulations more proactively as one stream of funding.	**Officer recommendation**: No change to Proposed Budget 2025/26. Council's Community Laws Team identify and investigate breaches of various legislation including the Local Law which relates to amenity and safety and regularly issue compliance notices, infringements and undertake direct prosecutions for serious offences. While operating with the current staff resources, proactive local law programs are undertaken which result in enforcement action. These proactive programs include footpath trading, building site enforcement, unsightly and unoccupied properties and other safety related proactive inspections. There is further opportunity to ensure our school community's are more aware of local laws and parking/traffic requirements through education. This will help keep the school community better informed.
9	2025/26 Proposed Budget	I'm in full support of the proposals relating to cycling infrastructure which will increase connectivity and safety. It is also important that the cycling infrastructure promotes increased active transport. Having a safe and more direct route to cycle to the city is a high priority for me.	**Comments are noted.** Cycling contributes to active transport and well being. The cycling strategy promotes connected and accessible paths and related cycling infrastructure.

Response #	DOCUMENT	FEEDBACK	OFFICER RESPONSE
10	General Feedback	More seats and shelters at bus stops.	**Officer recommendation:** No change to Proposed Budget 2025/26. Council officers will continue to advocate to the State Government for the provision of suitable and appropriate bus stop infrastructure such as bus shelters, seats and bins at bus stops. The provision of bus shelters and related bus stop infrastructure including signage and line markings is the responsibility of the State Government.
	General Feedback	More security at night . Frequent police patrols in streets.	**Officer recommendation:** No change to Proposed Budget 2025/26. The Proposed Budget 2025/26 reflects Council's commitment to addressing community safety and responsible governance. While direct funding for night-time security and police patrols is outside the Council's jurisdiction, the budget supports initiatives that contribute to a safer and more connected community. One of the priorities in 2025/26 is to establish a Community Safety Crime Prevention Committee to work collaboratively with safety partners across the Municipality to help address community safety concerns and create a safe environment.
	General Feedback	Lower rates and reduced pay for councillors .	**Officer recommendation:** No change to Proposed Budget 2025/26, however we note the comments regarding lower rates, particularly in the context of cost-of-living pressures being experienced by many in our community in the current economic environment. The budget is developed through a rigorous process, and these concerns are carefully considered as part of Council's budget deliberations. Councillor allowances are not set by individual councils. Instead, they are determined by the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal, an independent statutory authority established by the Victorian Government. The Tribunal is responsible for setting fair and consistent remuneration for Members of Parliament, local government councillors, and public sector executives across Victoria. This ensures that allowances reflect the responsibilities of the role while maintaining transparency and accountability across all councils. Whitehorse City Council adheres to the Tribunal's determinations and has no discretion to increase or reduce these payments independently.
11	2025/26 Proposed Budget	I would like to see some money directed towards making developers stick to the rules which are supposed to prevent them making noise before 7am on weekdays and before 9am on weekends. At the moment they get away with waking the building site neighbours day after day because the council officers are not working at these times and the police are too busy. Fining the developers could pay for this service. It is not fair that ordinary people are woken up by inconsiderate developers every day and no one cares or does anything about it. The developers know they can get away with it but this could be stopped by having council officers start work at say 6am and do site checks.	**Officer recommendation:** Comment noted - no change to Proposed Budget 2025/26. Community Laws undertakes proactive and reactive building site patrols and work on weekends and do undertake early morning patrols to identify any breaches related to building sites. Enforcement action is taken if breaches are identified. Council does have an after-hours response number, which is 9262 6333. Please note, although staff are working after hours and weekends on proactive programs such as building enforcement, the after-hours number is for emergencies only such as dog attacks, dog collections or animals at large.
	Revenue & Rating Plan 2025-2029	I would like to see a discount offered for up front early payment of rates	**Officer recommendation:** Comment noted - no change to Proposed Budget 2025/26. In the current economic climate, many households face significant cost-of-living pressures, making it less likely that a substantial proportion of ratepayers can afford to take advantage of an early payment discount, even if financially incentivised (60% of residents pay lump sum in February with some residents using Council's flexible payment platform to extend lump sum to May due date due to financial difficulty). This approach could unintentionally favour higher-income households with greater liquidity, potentially raising equity concerns. Council has already introduced a flexible payment platform designed to support ratepayers in managing their finances effectively, reducing financial stress and promoting timely payment. This platform aligns more closely with the broader goals of financial accessibility and community support, without the direct revenue impact of a discount program. Given these considerations, the financial viability and equity implications of an early payment discount should be carefully weighed against the potential benefits of alternative support measures that prioritise inclusivity and financial stability for all ratepayers.

Response #	DOCUMENT	FEEDBACK	OFFICER RESPONSE
11	General Feedback	I would like to see a public rubbish bin at the corner of Pacific Way and Glebe Street or on Glebe Street between Pacific Way and Flora Grove to stop people dropping their rubbish from Forest Hill Chase Shopping Centre [especially food and drink purchases] in this area. I would like to know whether any responses to this survey are ever taken on board by the council.	**Officer recommendation:** Comment noted - no change to Proposed Budget 2025/26. Forest Hill Chase has a responsibility to manage litter within their property, which includes Pacific Way, and into adjacent areas. We will investigate these concerns, contact the centre management, and determine what would be the best response to this issue. This is not a high pedestrian area that would warrant a bin, and a lot of litter in this area is blown there from the car park and other areas. The solution may be more regular inspections and collection of litter. All responses to this survey are considered. This request can be managed within existing budget allocations.
12	2025/26 Proposed Budget	On page 90 of the Whitehorse City Council – Budget 2025/26 there is an entry showing you are planning to spend $4.28 million on the Vermont Reserve pavilion upgrade. Is this allowed? Under your Whitehorse Gambling Harm Minimisation Policy 2024 on page 9 under the title Funding and Support Section 7.16, it states that the Council will: Not provide funding to hotels and clubs that own or operate electronic gaming machines. The Vermont Football Club own the licences for 140 Gambling Machines at the Wantirna Hill Club (60 machines) in Knox and The International (80 machines) in Lilydale. Under your gambling policy how is it possible to provide funding for the Vermont Football Club rooms? Gamblers lost $4.101 Million at the Wantirna Hill Club and $6.842 Million at the International over 2023/24, but the Whitehorse Council is going to fund them $4.28 million in contravention of their own gambling policy. Perhaps the Vermont Football club can provide their own funding under Section 7.17: Not accept financial contributions from the gambling industry or venues with electronic gaming machines, except in cases where proposed investments by clubs or hotels increases the amenity of its operations on leased Whitehorse City Council owned land and facilities, and are considered by Council to offer significant community benefit. Surely the Council considers that Pavilion upgrade already offers significant community benefit, otherwise the funding would not have been proposed.	**Officer recommendation:** Comments are noted - no change to Proposed Budget 2025/26. The proposed $4.28 million allocation is for capital works to upgrade the Vermont Reserve sporting pavilion. These funds are not being provided to the Vermont Football Club. Rather, they are Council funds directed towards public infrastructure improvements on Council-owned land. Given that there are no electronic gaming machines located at Vermont Reserve, the proposed upgrade is not considered to conflict with Council's commitment to reducing gambling-related harm. Accordingly, this proposed investment is not in breach of Council's draft gambling policy.
13	2025/26 Proposed Budget	I think as a property owner and a person working in Whitehorse we are spending to much money up grading sporting facilities which not everyone uses. I think more money should be spent on maintaining our parks which all the community has access to and can use. Also more money needs to be spent on services for the elderly in our community so they can continue to access the community in which they live.	**Officer recommendation:** Comments are noted - no change to Proposed Budget 2025/26. Council aims to balance a wide range of community needs in its budgeting and planning. Investment in sporting facilities supports physical activity, social connection, and community wellbeing, particularly for young people and local clubs. However, we absolutely recognise the importance of accessible open spaces and services for older residents. Maintaining and enhancing our parks and public spaces remains a high priority, and we continue to invest in positive ageing, universal accessibility, and programs that help older residents remain active and engaged in their community. Council also actively seeks external funding opportunities to support the delivery of sporting facilities. Where appropriate, we aim to broaden the use of these facilities for wider community benefit—for example, by opening sports pavilions for other community activities and extending sportsground lighting hours to accommodate passive uses such as dog walking, walking and running. Council is in the process of finalising a new booking system to enable a more user-friendly and optimised booking and event management process for all users, ensuring easier access for the community to Council's pavilions, venues and bookable spaces. We look forward to it being released in the next financial year.
14	2025/26 Proposed Budget	$280,000 for cycling for the entire City of Whitehorse is nowhere near enough. There are many outstanding actions from the Whitehorse Bicycle Strategy. Council will not achieve its targets or complete its own endorsed projects with this very low level of funding. This is only 1.86% of the transport budget. There is also no budget for walking improvements which should also be a high priority.	**Action: Inclusion of $150k in the 2025/26 Budget for the development of an Integrated Transport Strategy.** Council is delivering the recommendations and actions through its current Cycling strategy such as the Easy Ride Routes project over the past 5 years. Council officers are taking a strategic approach to managing cycling and safe cycling connection throughout the City in alignment with its cycling strategy. A Background Review of all Transport strategies (including the Cycling strategy) has commenced and will be completed by June 2025. This Background Study will lead to the development of a consolidated and Integrated Transport Strategy (which will include cycling, walking and public transport use).

Response #	DOCUMENT	FEEDBACK	OFFICER RESPONSE
15	2025/26 Proposed Budget	I'd like to emphasise the importance of art in our community and that extra funding should be allocated to the visual arts budget to allow for the extension of our Artspace art collection. The budget proposal of $31K for acquisitions seems modest when the gallery supplies such joy and pride for the community as well as encouraging and supporting local artists.	**Officer Recommendation:** No change to Proposed Budget 2025/26. Council's continued investment in the arts includes the acquisition budget allocation of approx. $38.5K (which has risen in recent years) plus a further budget allocation of $38.5k for the conservation of the Artspace art collection, which forms the full investment of $77k.
16	General Feedback	Why are we paying for the replacement of trees that are removed by the Victorian government. Mining is required to rehabilitate the mined areas, so why is the Vic Gov passing the cost onto rate payers.	**Officer Recommendation:** No change to Proposed Budget 2025/26. NELP and SRL are funding early tree planting programs across Council parks. Whilst Council are undertaking the tree supply and planting, all costs associated with this are funded by the State Government, not Council. The future tree replacements required as part of these projects will also be funded by the State Government.
17	2025/26 Proposed Budget	The projected surplus of $20.05 million, while slightly lower than the previous year's $21.25 million, remains substantial. While maintaining a surplus is prudent for unforeseen expenses and future investments, consistently high surpluses clearly indicates over-collection of rates and underinvestment in community services. There has been no Capital works funding allocated for Surrey Park Pavilion, Facitlies and Grounds which are in desperate need of upgrade and refurbishment. I would appreciate a review of the following: A further redirection of portion of the surplus towards underfunded community programs and infrastructure maintenance to address immediate needs. (As noted Surrey Park Football Club Facilities.)	**Officer Recommendation:** No change to Proposed Budget 2025/26. Maintaining a surplus is essential as it supports both operating and capital investment, and is generally an indicator of financial sustainability. This approach ensures the ongoing delivery of quality services and programs and the ability to invest in long-term community infrastructure. It is also important to note that the surplus result for 2025/26 includes non-recurrent capital grants expected to be received of $8.37 million and contributions such as open space $6.30 million, which are often earmarked for specific purposes. In 2025/26 a significant portion of capital grants is Government funding for Box Hill City Oval redevelopment $6.29 million as part of the capital works program. This means that a portion of the surplus is already allocated to projects that directly benefit the community. Surrey Park Pavilion is currently identified for upgrade in the medium-term (within 6 years) and the cricket nets and south west oval are also planned for renewal within that timeframe. The exact timing for delivery of this upgrade is influenced by several considerations and may change
18	Revenue & Rating Plan 2025-2029	**Cost Escalations:** Does the council acknowledge the recent impact of rising costs, likely due to high inflation, and is it focusing its efforts on maintaining essential services and infrastructure? If so, why then do they propose a 3% rate rise? Other councils such as Bayside have not raised rates? **Fiscal Responsibility:** What are the key factors that you are under taking to prioritize efficiency and responsible budgeting - inline with current cost of living issues - that can in anyway justify a 3% rise on rates? **Community Needs:** I do not believe that the council is consciously responding to the community by focusing on the most critical services and infrastructure, which are likely to be in the areas most in need, over the next 12 months in the current economic climate. How do they see fit to respond?	**Officer Recommendation:** No change to Proposed Budget 2025/26, however Council recognises the ongoing financial pressure that many households and businesses are experiencing due to rising living costs. We want to assure the community that this was front of mind during the development of the 2025/26 Proposed Budget. Like residents and local businesses, Council is not immune to inflationary pressures. The costs of delivering services and maintaining infrastructure particularly in areas such as construction, fuel, materials and insurances continue to rise at a rate well above the Victorian Government's rate cap. These increases place significant pressure on Council's ability to deliver the same quality and range of services without additional revenue. We understand that community members may have compared our approach to that of other councils, such as Bayside City Council, which has opted not to increase rates this year. However, it's important to note that direct comparisons between councils can be misleading. Each council operates within a distinct context, with different community needs, infrastructure responsibilities, and financial pressures. In Whitehorse, we face the challenge of maintaining ageing infrastructure, meeting increased service expectations, and delivering new assets to support a growing and diverse population. In preparing the 2025/26 Budget, Council has undertaken a disciplined and responsible planning process. To help offset some of the cost pressures above, we've reviewed operating budgets and prioritised essential services and infrastructure, before proposing any rate adjustments. Furthermore, Council's Continuous Improvement Program is designed to: •Deliver quantifiable benefits with a focus on financial benefits •Support and train staff to make improvements in their day-to-day work •Drive a culture of improvement to ensure that Council is always striving for better – more efficient, effective and aligned with customer expectations. The proposed 3% rate increase capped by the Victorian Government reflects a balanced and sustainable approach. It enables us to continue delivering the high-quality services our community expects, while also investing in the infrastructure and community assets needed both now and into the future. Importantly, this budget is strongly shaped by community input. Through the Shaping Whitehorse Community Engagement Process, residents identified their key priorities across five key themes. These insights have directly informed our budget planning. Specific initiatives that respond to these community priorities are detailed in Section 2 – Services and Initiatives, aligned with the Strategic Directions of the new Integrated Council Plan.

Response #	DOCUMENT	FEEDBACK	OFFICER RESPONSE
19	2025/26 Proposed Budget	I would like to see public toilets and barbecues in the park in Wurundjeri walk and the Fulton road retarding area. I see families having to rush off as a child needs to use the toilet as is none in the park.	**Officer Recommendation:** No change to Proposed Budget 2025/26. As part of the current Wurundjeri Walk Masterplan process (https://yoursay.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/mirrabooka-master-plan), various locations have been assessed for the provision of public toilets and BBQ facilities. Due to its proximity to a conservation area, a public toilet cannot be provided at Orchard Grove Reserve. A similar challenge exists at Fulton Reserve, further complicated by Melbourne Water restrictions. Instead, two publicly accessible toilets are proposed within the Mirrabooka Pavilion currently in development to service the broader park area. A BBQ facility is proposed at Orchard Grove Reserve, subject to community feedback and Council endorsement. The draft masterplan is expected to go out for community consultation in mid to late 2025. We encourage you to subscribe to the Your Say project page to receive a notification when the consultation opens.
20	2025/26 Proposed Budget	Still too much being spent on pavilions and physical infrastructure and NOT enough on upgrading parks, green open spaces, planting and maintaining vegetation and trees.	Council aims to balance a wide range of community needs in its budgeting and planning. Investment in sporting facilities supports physical activity, social connection, and community wellbeing, particularly for young people and local clubs. However, we absolutely recognise the importance of accessible open spaces and services for older residents. Council has a clear objective to ensure maximising use of sporting facilities, especially pavilions, for multi-use by community groups. Maintaining and enhancing our parks and public spaces remains a high priority, and we continue to invest in positive ageing, universal accessibility, and programs that help older residents remain active and engaged in their community. Council also actively seeks external funding opportunities to support the delivery of sporting facilities. Where appropriate, we aim to broaden the use of these facilities for wider community benefit—for example, by opening sports pavilions for other community activities and extending sportsground lighting hours to accommodate passive uses such as dog walking, walking and running.
	2025/26 Proposed Budget	In parks, a bigger variety of activity equipment and upgrading play spaces for people of all ages and abilities – including young children under 2, people with disabilities, and the aging community – is also very much needed.	We appreciate your emphasis on the need for a wider range of activity equipment and inclusive play spaces. Ensuring our parks cater to people of all ages and abilities — including young children under 2, individuals with disabilities, and older adults — is a key priority. These needs are being actively considered through several strategic planning processes. Notably, the Open Space Strategy, which is currently being finalised, includes a key direction of increasing the diversity of facilities in open space. A Play and Social Recreation Action Plan is currently in development to respond to this key direction and recommend facilities that cater for all ages and abilities. We encourage you to subscribe to Council's Your Say page to stay informed about upcoming opportunities for community consultation the Play and Social Recreation Action Plan project.
	2025/26 Proposed Budget	Good to see money being spent on drainage around Hamilton Street, Mont Albert and Hamilton streetscape plan, but generally need to spend more on drainage across Whitehorse.	Council has budgeted for an increase in capital expenditure on drainage over the next four years: 2025/26 $2.385M 2026/27 $5.274M 2027/28 $4.982M 2028/29 $4.827M There is also a further $1.21m allocated via the 2025/26 operating budget on drain maintenance.
	2025/26 Proposed Budget	More needs to be spent on public open spaces around Blackburn Station, making it more attractive and appealing to the public.	We acknowledge the importance of creating an attractive and welcoming environment for both the community and commuters around Blackburn Station. While the forecourt was recently upgraded as part of the Level Crossing Removal Project, Council is also developing a Play and Social Recreation Action Plan, which will review the priority for renewing and/or upgrading the existing play space. Additionally, the Open Space Strategy, currently being finalised, recommends the creation of new open space within the station precinct to support future growth in the activity centre. This includes a proposed local-level open space near the station, featuring a variety of play and social recreation facilities, as well as green space for informal use.
	2025/26 Proposed Budget	The crime prevention project is a good initiative.	Comments are noted. The Proposed Budget 2025/26 reflects Council's commitment to addressing community safety and responsible governance, and supports initiatives that contribute to a safer and more connected community.
	2025/26 Proposed Budget	Good to see commencement of the Box Hill City Oval project, as that is a pavilion that does need attention.	Comments are noted. The major development of the Box Hill City Oval pavilions aims to provide contemporary, inclusive facilities that support the participation of all genders and abilities. The project is being funded by Council in partnership with the Australian and Victorian Governments.

Response #	DOCUMENT	FEEDBACK	OFFICER RESPONSE
20	2025/26 Proposed Budget	More money should be spent on creating open space in the Western end of Whitehorse – i.e.; Surrey Hills & Mont Albert.	The Open Space Strategy, currently being finalised, identifies low levels of open space provision in Surrey Hills and Mont Albert, both in terms of land area and in relation to population density. The Strategy highlights that these suburbs, located in the western part of the municipality, have limited open space due to historical development patterns. While there are no Regional or Municipal open spaces within the boundaries of these suburbs, Wattle Park (Regional open space) adjoins the southern boundary of Surrey Hills, and Surrey Park (Municipal open space) directly borders the eastern boundary of Mont Albert. The Strategy proposes the creation of new open space and the expansion of existing open space in the western areas of the municipality, aligned with forecast population growth.
	2025/26 Proposed Budget	Davey Lane should be retained as a park with additions to the community garden instead of putting in more sports facilities.	The current masterplan project for the Strathdon, Davy Lane, and Jolimont Precinct takes a holistic approach to enhancing both sports and community uses, positioning the area as a key gateway to the major open space corridor. This planning aims to serve the needs of both current and future Whitehorse residents. We acknowledge the community's desire to preserve the tranquil atmosphere of ngarrak nakorang wilam park (the former Healesville Freeway Reserve), and this will be carefully considered throughout the masterplanning process. The plan will strive to strike a balance between preserving green space and the serenity valued by the local community, while also enhancing opportunities for both active and passive recreation.
	2025/26 Proposed Budget	Council should be more active in trying to acquire more land for public open space and continue pushing hard for the Box Hill Federation Brickworks site to be acquired for a public open space and heritage park.	The Open Space Strategy, currently being finalised, makes recommendations for additional new open spaces in areas where growth is forecast. The former Box Hill Brickworks site is privately owned land and therefore the Open Space Strategy does not identify this site as future open space. The Strategy identifies the need for new open space in the Box Hill precinct. The Strategy will also make reference to the community identifying the former Box Hill Brickworks as an opportunity site for future open space in the context of future change associated with the Suburban Rail Loop project.
			Overall Officer Recommendation - Response #21: No change to Proposed Budget 2025/26.
21	Revenue & Rating Plan 2025-2029	The container deposit scheme should be expanded to enable residents to drop off their glass items, instead of introducing a whole new set of glass bins at an additional cost to residents and ratepayers. Council should advocate to the State Government to get rid of that.	**Officer Recommendation:** No change to Proposed Budget 2025/26, however comments are noted. There is a State Government legislated requirement to provide a glass bin service. Council agrees with your suggestion and sees this as a valid opportunity, and will continue to advocate for the expansion of the container deposit scheme and to delay the introduction of the glass bin until there has been further investigation into the cost and benefits of the service.
22	General Feedback	It's important to maintain funding for the arts - the Round, visual arts ie. the art collection and the gallery in the Town Hall. These are jewels in the crown of Whitehorse that are widely admired, especially the Box Hill art camp Impressionist Artists. New artworks purchased keeps the collection interesting and they display them well.	**Officer Recommendation:** No change to Proposed Budget 2025/26. Council's continued investment in the arts includes the acquisition budget allocation for new artworks of approx. $38.5K (which has risen in recent years) plus a further budget allocation of $38.5k for the conservation of the Artspace art collection, which forms the full investment of $77k.
	General Feedback	I'm pleased to see Box Hill listed as a priority to support through the extensive suburban rail loop disruptions. Hard to comment on the budget as they are headline figures. I've been a resident of Box Hill South for 28 years. We've seen a lot of change and it's important to embrace the change through supporting the people, celebrate our multicultural population through culture and community. Thank you.	**Officer Recommendation:** No change to Proposed Budget 2025/26. Both the Box Hill and Burwood precincts are priority sites for Council in its advocacy to the State Government for the SRL Major Transport Project. Officers continue to place significant importance to both precincts and advocate to achieve the best possible outcome for our community. With respect to Box Hill, the SRL early works are nearing completion and the contractors appointed to construct the tunnels between Glen Waverley and Box Hill have commenced site investigations. Officers will continue to advocate to ensure positive community outcomes. Council recently reviewed and lodged its submission regarding the draft Structure Plans for Box Hill and Burwood. Recent advocacy has seen the paths within Box Hill Gardens reopened for community use following Council officer support and other community areas within the gardens will be opened once Council officers are happy with the standard of the grass.
23	2025/26 Proposed Budget	Enough is enough, only sport sport sport. Connect bike paths, make it easier to use the mullum mullum creek path from Forest Hill. Introduce more walking space and renew nature strips and walking paths, police the overgrown walking paths.	**Action: Inclusion of $150k in the 2025/26 Budget for the development of an Integrated Transport Strategy.** Council understands the importance of providing a wide range of open space opportunities beyond organised sport. While investment in sporting facilities plays a key role in supporting physical activity, social connection, and community wellbeing—particularly for young people and local clubs—we also recognise the strong community desire for better walking and cycling connections, improved nature strips, and well-maintained public paths. Maintaining and enhancing our parks, paths, and open spaces is a continuing priority. Council is committed to supporting positive ageing, universal accessibility, and active lifestyles for residents of all ages. We are also working to improve connectivity, including better links to key trails such as the Mullum Mullum Creek path, and will continue to monitor and address maintenance issues such as overgrown walking paths.

Response #	DOCUMENT	FEEDBACK	OFFICER RESPONSE
24	2025/26 Proposed Budget	Your budget, considers the issues you have, yet doesn't consider the issues the community have! In case you haven't noticed, a pair of steaks at coles costs $38 and a dozen eggs is $8...power prices are through the roof. People are hurting...and you think its ok to wack people with the maximum rate rise allowed. How about you get more efficient. You rate rise should be less than inflation....i am sick of seeing waste at council....the staff are great..the councillors need to get a grip and starting fighting back.	**Officer Recommendation:** No change to Proposed Budget 2025/26, however we note the concerns regarding the affordability of ongoing rate increases, particularly in the context of cost-of-living pressures being experienced by many in our community. The budget is developed through a rigorous process, and these concerns are carefully considered as part of Council's deliberations. Like households and businesses, we are also facing rising costs across areas such as construction, fuel, work cover premiums, insurances and significant increases in the State Government waste levy of 27.9%. These factors make it challenging to maintain the quality of services and infrastructure that our community relies on. Despite these challenges, in preparing the 2025/26 Budget Council has undertaken a disciplined and responsible planning process. The proposed budget seeks to maintain a balance between rate adjustments and continuing to deliver essential services and infrastructure to the community. Guided by community engagement the budget emphasises our continued focus on responsible governance, long-term financial sustainability, and increased advocacy to secure resources and outcomes that matter to our community. It supports essential services and infrastructure, while planning for population change, evolving community needs, and enhance safety. Ensuring that every dollar spent delivers clear community value remains a key principle, with a continued focus on transparency, accountability, and long-term financial sustainability.
25	2025/26 Proposed Budget	[redacted] a big rate increase...you lot need a good hard look at yourselves....binned aged care services, the youth activities centre at Box Hill, privatised the pools...I am ok with all of that, yeah what have you done with the savings? Clearly you have wasted it. I voted for an efficient council, rate increases should be less than half the rate of inflation, I get it you pay more for power too...I wait 20 mims if I ever try calling you...so I call Cr Prue (she is excellent) even the ph response isnt good...start spending less and charge us less...Cr Prue put me onto the snap thing on my phone, do more things like that and stop lecturing me about aboriginals and climate change, I am sick of it.	**Officer Recommendation:** No change to Proposed Budget 2025/26, however comments are noted. We understand your concerns and recognise that any rate increase particularly during a time of cost-of-living pressures is difficult. Council does not make these decisions lightly. Like households and businesses, we are also facing rising costs across areas such as construction, fuel, work cover premiums, insurances and significant increases in the State Government waste levy of 27.9%. These factors make it challenging to maintain the quality of services and infrastructure that our community relies on. Despite these challenges, in preparing the 2025/26 Budget Council has undertaken a disciplined and responsible planning process. You raised important points about some services, and we'd like to provide some context: • Aged care services: The transition of aged care services followed significant national reforms by the Federal Government. The Government restructured aged care funding, leading to the introduction of the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP). This shift encouraged local councils to reconsider their direct involvement in service delivery and explore alternative models. Councils across Victoria including Whitehorse made the difficult decision to transition out of direct delivery. However, this has not meant walking away from our older residents. Some of the funding previously used for aged care has been reinvested into positive ageing programs that support seniors to stay active, connected, and well in the community. • The Youth Connexions Drop in Centre at Box Hill was closed as part of a service review. The resources have been redirected into an information and referral service making it more accessible to young people and the youth team are now in more locations across the municipality. • Council is currently exploring management model options for the Aqualink facilities, with external contract management an option being considered. In all options being considered Council will retain ownership of assets and determine the direction of the facilities in relation to service provision, fees and charges and access. We're continuing to find efficiencies through internal reviews, service planning, and technology initiatives like Snap Send Solve, which you rightly pointed out is a practical tool that's working well for many residents. Finally, thank you for acknowledging the work of Cr Prue Cutts, we will make sure to pass on feedback. Councillors play a vital role in connecting residents to Council services, and it's positive to hear that this support has been helpful.

Response #	DOCUMENT	FEEDBACK	OFFICER RESPONSE
26	2025/26 Proposed Budget	You need to be more focussed on the things that make a difference to local communities and be a lot more effective. - The solar panel lights are wonderful so too aqua link. Sadly the concerts, the performing arts centre, the big new sports complex at Elgar Park are hardly ever used and are a waste of money. - The rates rise and rise because you do not focus on value. Many councils have rate freezes, including the city of Melbourne. There should be no rate increase and no more of the projects people don't use much. - There is too much dumped rubbish and too much petty crime, put in CCTV rather than saying prayers at council meetings…. - you preach about climate change and hundreds of your staff cruise around in big 4x4 utes, surely they could make do with smaller vehicles or share them?	**Officer Recommendation:** No change to Proposed Budget 2025/26, however we acknowledge that rate increases are a concern, especially in the current economic climate. Some councils have announced rate freezes, but it's important to understand what that really means and how our position differs: • The City of Melbourne uses a different valuation method called Net Annual Value (NAV), whereas our council uses Capital Improved Value (CIV). These rating structures produce very different rateable values and make simple rate comparisons misleading. • Melbourne also has over $212 million in loan borrowings in 2025/26, which allows for short-term flexibility but creates long-term repayment obligations. • By contrast, our council operates with no loan borrowings, meaning we're not directing rate revenue toward interest or debt repayments. This debt-free position gives us greater long-term financial stability. • Some councils that offer "rate freezes" are actually increasing their rates and then applying a rebate to offset the impact temporarily. A key downside of this approach is that it can lead to a sharp increase the following year when the rebate is removed. Residents may feel the full impact of two years' worth of increases in one go. Our preference is to be transparent and avoid "rate shock" by managing increases gradually and sustainably. Council's Community Laws Team regularly undertaken investigations for illegal dumping which result in enforcement action. This is to deter offenders dumping waste in Whitehorse. Council currently has public CCTV which is to assist Victoria Police and deter crime. Attendance at The Round and Council's Festival and Event's concert series will exceed expectation this year. Attendance is expected to reach over 170,000 people visiting The Round and Festival's Concert series specifically. Feedback from the Community regarding The Round and Festivals is extremely positive with 95% of attendees rating their experience at Council's Arts and Cultural events as either good or excellent. Council's Arts and Cultural Services programming also includes fun free and/or affordable family friendly events which support the community during times of cost of living challenges. We are continuing to seek to reduce the fuel consumption for our fleet of vehicles and to maximise the use of the vehicles. In many cases a ute is required as the tray is needed to carry tools or collected items, or a commercial vehicle is required so that it does not attract Fringe Benefits Tax. Only a few utes in the fleet are four wheel drive and these are those utes who have to drive off road from time to time, in parks etc., to attend for works.
27 Combined Residents of Whitehorse Action Group (CROWAG)	2025/26 Proposed Budget	We are supportive of how the budget is framed and reported against the five strategic themes. We see a potential improvement opportunity. The budget report talks of everything that Whitehorse is going to do. But there is little in the document that indicated the performance achieved against the previous budget.	As required by the Local Government Act 2020 (Victoria), Council takes an integrated approach to planning and reporting. This means our budget not only sets out the financial and non-financial resources needed to deliver on the Council Plan but also forms a key part of our broader accountability framework. To keep the community informed about our progress, we report on actual performance against the budget through: Quarterly Budget Reports – providing regular updates on financial performance. Annual Reports – offering a comprehensive overview of achievements and financial outcomes. Financial Policies – supporting responsible financial management and transparency. This structure ensures we remain transparent and accountable, reflecting both the aspirations of our community and our commitment to effective financial stewardship.

Response #	DOCUMENT	FEEDBACK	OFFICER RESPONSE
27 CROWAG	General Feedback	**Measuring the Social Return on Investment.** Whitehorse's purpose statement which is – 'At Whitehorse City Council, community is at the heart of everything we do. We aspire to be a healthy, vibrant, prosperous, and sustainable community. We enable this through strong leadership and community partnerships. We strive to stay ahead of evolving changes and needs of our community.' So how does spending $12+ million on the Box Hill Sporting pavilion help? How does this compare against the spend on new nature paths, cycling routes for children to ride to school, the library, or community health program - so no one is left behind? It is time that Whitehorse added more sophisticated tools to selecting programs, and measuring performance against their objective to improve community value. Just as there is a Return on Investment (ROI), there are now Social Return on Investment (SORI) tools available. Which help quantify the traditional externalities such as social and environmental value.	Council is starting to implement strategies to measure the impact of its investment on community outcomes with officers exploring the development of an outcomes framework and using program logic to better define problems and explore solutions, before taking action. We will continue to explore the use of social return on investment tools as we agree this aligns with the community aspiration. With regards to the comment about spending $12+ million on the Box Hill City Oval redevelopment, it should be noted that Council's funding contribution towards this project is $5.5M, with the remaining funding provided by the Federal Government ($13.6M) and State Government ($6M). Council will review as part of its ongoing monitoring and performance, social return on investment.
	2025/26 Proposed Budget	**Public Open Space:** A more ambitious use of the Public Open Space reserve for land purchase should be incorporated into the budget e.g. Expending at least 5% annually for strategic land purchases of public open space. Failure to expend in a year adds to the spend nominated the following year. The reserve has grown significantly in recent years without significant additional POS acquired. There should also be sufficient flexibility in the float and in policy to seize once-off opportunities. **Also, the budget must report details of land purchases made in the previous 12 months.** On 26th March 2021 Council advised by email that under the current open space strategy (2007) the following land purchases (mostly single lots) had been made in the previous 14 years using the Public Open Space Fund. **A stronger commitment is needed from Council to maintain the present ratio of open space to population growth.** • 46 Graham Place, Box Hill • 11 Chaucer Street, Box Hill South • 14 and 16 Scott Grove, Burwood • 21 Wattle Valley Road, Mitcham • 17 Rowland Street, Mont Albert • 23 Oak Street, Surrey Hills A major budget external influence on loss of POS (big build impacts Page 14 dot point 4.) is highlighted as not within control of Council. **But council does have control of a sizeable Public Open Space Fund.**	Council notes your considered feedback regarding the use of the Public Open Space (POS) Reserve, and agree that funds should be expended as soon as practical. While we recognise that some broader pressures, such as development trends and state-led projects, are outside Council's direct control, we agree that the POS Reserve remains a critical tool Council can actively use to respond to these challenges where suitable opportunities arise. A $3M annual funding provision is included in Council's Capital Works Program for the acquisition of land. Council recognises the importance of maintaining and enhancing the open space network in line with population growth. While we are committed to strengthening this network, it is important to acknowledge the significant constraints involved in acquiring land. As you can understand, while Council has the legal ability to pursue compulsory acquisition of land deemed suitable for open space, this approach is rarely exercised due to its potential significant impact on those living in or owning the affected properties. Instead, the more typical and preferred approaches involve: - Converting Council- or government-owned land for open space use, where appropriate, and - Purchasing properties that come onto the market in areas identified as having gaps in open space provision. However, both of these approaches are highly dependent on timing, availability, and suitability of sites, including factors such as location, size, planning overlays and configuration, to ensure they support the creation of safe, accessible, and usable open spaces. Given these constraints, land acquisition for open space is often opportunistic rather than planned, as Council has limited control over when suitable sites become available. That said, Council continually monitors the property market and is prepared to act quickly when opportunities arise that align with strategic open space needs. Your reference to previous acquisitions such as 46 Graham Place (Box Hill) and 14–16 Scott Grove (Burwood) reflects Council's ongoing efforts to incrementally grow the open space network. We remain committed to building on this work, guided by data and need, and aligning future actions with the goals of the updated Open Space Strategy currently under development.
	2025/26 Proposed Budget	**Timelines** P43. Statutory Planning Timeliness Planning applications decided within required timeframes 58.0% (with deemed to comply applications likely to increase this is a very low target?)	The target has been derived based on the average of the past 6 years (which is 54%), therefore 58% has been set as the performance target. The target was set before the introduction of the new deemed to comply provisions, and will be reviewed as officers receive applications under the new provisions, with opportunities to assess and determine these applications and gauge timeframe implications.

Response #	DOCUMENT	FEEDBACK	OFFICER RESPONSE
27 CROWAG	2025/26 Proposed Budget	**Parks, open space and streetscapes** 2025-26 $3,736,000 & 2026-27 $4,721,000 A $1M increase mostly being spent on Box Hill Oval upgrades and pavilions on other Reserves?	The projected increase in funding from $3.736 million in 2025–26 to $4.721 million in 2026–27 reflects planned investments in key community infrastructure, including Box Hill City Oval and pavilion upgrades and various other reserves. These projects are part of Council's long-term strategy to improve the functionality, accessibility, and capacity of recreational facilities across the municipality. The proposed investment in Box Hill City Oval precinct is focused on enhancing both community use and broader sporting outcomes, while the pavilion upgrades aim to meet current standards for universal access, gender equity, and user needs in line with the Pavilion Development Guidelines.
	2025/26 Proposed Budget	**No budget item for ongoing lidar canopy tree measurement is in the budget.** You don't know what you don't measure, and the Urban Forest Strategy is aiming for 30% canopy cover. To monitor performance annual or biannual lidar measurements are critical. As it is a matter of public health, the data needs to be transparently and publicly available. Budget should be provided to report the value of % canopy cover value on Council's Urban Forest dashboard. Council has not published an update since 2018 (even though it has had 2024 data for about 12 months).	2024 Lidar data will be made publicly available in the first quarter of 2025/26. This data has been heavily assessed and scrutinised to ensure accuracy which is complex and has taken significant time. Council aims to capture Lidar ever 4-5 years to enable enough time for canopy growth and measure canopy changes. Capturing Lidar data is extremely expensive (>$100K) and undertaking it more frequently than this does not allow enough time for canopy changes so would be expensive for little benefit. Council has targets for a net increase of trees on Council managed land and reports on this annually. This metric ensures the overall tree population is increasing which will have a lag period relating to tree growth to see the canopy expansion. Future Lidar data captures will be run through the annual budget process for consideration when required.
	2025/26 Proposed Budget	**Capital works for footpaths and cycleways – Details of cycleways to be improved should be included in the Budget document.** Footpaths need to adapt access to people of all abilities. • **Footpaths and cycleways should be separate line items** so that expenses for works carried out on cycleways are transparent. For footpaths its mostly repairs, for cycleways it is mostly about new infrastructure. Resist the temptation to make footpaths and cycleways the very same asset. • Footpaths and cycleways (2024/25 to 2028/29) 5,523 5,172 5,162 4,701 4,690 Line items footpaths and cycleways are allocated decreasing funding out to 2028/29. A growing population, increased car and footpath congestion and inflation **should have a more forward leaning allocation of funding reflecting the need for enhanced active transport infrastructure.**	The asset categories used to group capital works projects in Council's draft budget document have been determined by Local Government Victoria to enable consistent, comparable reporting across the Victorian local government sector. However, Council will review the level of information provided in the detailed capital works listing for future budgets. The projects and programs within the Footpath and Cycleways include a mix of renewal, upgrade, new and or expansion type works to the path transport network including : -General footpath renewals, -Gravel paths in parks renewal -Constructed paths in parks renewal -Footbridge and path structures in parks renewal -A number of cycling focused programs including easy ride routes program, cycling connection upgrades, Box Hill Integrated transport strategy implementation and bike path upgrades at service rd intersections One of Council's key financial principles for maintaining long financial sustainability is to focus renewing and maintaining existing infrastructure. Consequently, a significant portion of Council funding is directed toward the renewal of existing roads and pathways rather than the development of entirely new cycling-specific paths. While Council's capital works program does include cycling focused projects that specifically address improvements in cycling infrastructure, the majority of cycling infrastructure provided in Whitehorse is shared infrastructure that is used by other groups of users – ie roads and shared user paths, and Council invests a large amount to maintain and renew these assets each year to the benefit of all users of those assets. Although there is a slight decrease to funding over the future 5 years, work to update and revise the current cycling strategy will be underway in the future and the completion of the revised strategy will guide future funding towards cycle and shared path projects within Whitehorse City Council. Further, there is a large focus in 2025/26 on early investigation and design work for cycling infrastructure improvements that is likely to be delivered in future years, once this early work has been completed.
	2025/26 Proposed Budget	Positive initiatives. - It is pleasing to see funding for the Nelson Road safety improvements, however the O'Brien report suggested a staged upgrade. Where is the funding allocation beyond 25/26 for that work?	The Nelson Road safety improvements are currently in the design stage and Council plans to deliver the works in three stages. Funding was allocated in 2024/25, with further funding allocated in 2025/26 ($250k) and 2026/27 ($302k) financial years, and any funding requirements to complete works beyond that will be identified in future budgets following finalisation of the design and project timeline. This project is being partly funded by Council's funding allocation for the implementation of the Box Hill Integrated Transport Strategy and partly by the State Government.
	2025/26 Proposed Budget	Positive initiatives. - It is pleasing to see funding allocated to the upgrade of Station Walk, Box Hill and Dorking, Linsley, Dunlavin and Edward streets and investigations and concept designs for improving cycling connections to existing trails.	We're pleased to hear that you welcome the investment in these projects, we hope they will enhance accessibility, safety, and the overall public realm for pedestrians and the broader community.
	2025/26 Proposed Budget	Positive initiatives. - It is pleasing to see funding in relation to Parks and open space streetscape, renewals and upgrading of Lundgren Chain are welcome, however we believe the SRLA is proposing to also upgrade the Lundgren Chain, **is council providing additional funding to SRL or counting funds SRL are providing?**	The capital budget allocated to Lundgren Chain in 25/26 is additional to any SRL proposed projects. This Council funding is allocated for landscape improvements including tree and vegetation planting to increase biodiversity, habitat and canopy. Items listed in the SRL East Draft Burwood Structure Plan include the potential extension to Lundgren Chain, a pedestrian/ cycling connection across Station Street, and investigating the retention of the temporary SRL open space that is adjacent to Lundgren Chain between Cumming Street and Gillard Street.

Response #	DOCUMENT	FEEDBACK	OFFICER RESPONSE
27 CROWAG	2025/26 Proposed Budget	**Planning compliance and enforcement** - There appears to be insufficient funding allocated to Planning compliance and enforcement, an area the community has had concerns over for a long time.	Planning enforcement have an operational budget allocation of 6.0 EFT which comprises 3 planning enforcement officers, 2 construction management officers and the Statutory Planning Enforcement Team Leader. The work undertaken by this team covers enforcement of planning permits, the Whitehorse Planning Scheme and building sites covered under a construction management plan where conditioned under a planning permit. Officers manage a caseload that reflects the extent of construction activity within the municipality as well as the increasing demands of residents and the community in undertaking reactive and proactive compliance.
	2025/26 Proposed Budget	**Heritage and Neighbourhood Character -**The draft Budget is silent on our heritage and neighbourhood character. Given the assault on both of these from recent planning changes there needs to be some contingency to defend one of the highest values recognised by Whitehorse residents.	Council continues its Heritage Advisor service and Heritage Assistance Fund (HAF) which are both important resources aimed at maintaining the integrity of heritage places in Whitehorse. The 2025/26 budget, proposes to allocate funds to review the Housing Strategy (2014). The associated Neighbourhood Character Study (2014) will be a relevant part of that process, noting however that the State government has diminished the importance of neighbourhood character in the planning process. Most recently, this has included removal of references to consideration of neighbourhood character in the planning process for 'deemed to comply' applications under Clause 55 as part of the planning reforms.
	2025/26 Proposed Budget	**Supporting Council Policies.** We acknowledge the connection of the budget to supporting council documents. There appears, however, to be a diminished response to the themes and initiatives from those documents that the community strongly values - public open space, active transport, natural environment, sustainability and mitigating climate impacts.	The community of Whitehorse is very diverse, as are its interests. The values of public open space, active transport, natural environment, sustainability and mitigating climate impacts have been incorporated in the Integrated Council Plan. Public open space and active transport are prioritised and appear under Strategic Direction 2 Built, and natural environment, sustainability and climate feature under Strategic Direction 4 Natural. Council has a separate Climate Response Strategy and Action Plan previously adopted by Council, which also seeks to support these issues under Strategic Direction 4 of the Integrated Council Plan 2025-29.
	Integrated Council Plan	**Community Vision** The overarching Community Vision document identified Sustainable climate and environmental care as one of 7 community vision themes.	Noted, this is correct.
	Integrated Council Plan	**Strategic Direction Two: Built**, is not represented in the Service Area table. ***Objective 2.1 Safe and accessible public places*** • Create a priority list of public spaces to review for safe and easy access • Enhance and upgrade pedestrian and cycling paths across the municipality to encourage active transport uptake by the Community • Deliver the Cycling Strategy recommendations to promote healthy living outcomes • Implement the Connect with Confidence – Public Transport Community Education Program for older people to improve confidence and overcome barriers to use public transport.	These actions have been prioritised by Council as projects to be completed in the 2025/26 year. All business as usual services related to Strategic Direction 2 Built have been listed in the services list within the Integrated Council Plan.
	Integrated Council Plan	**Initiative 4.1 Enhanced and protected natural and green spaces.** Unsure why the SRL East is not included (?) Add: Continue to deliver SRL East funded tree planting of local indigenous trees to offset trees removed as part of the Victorian Government project. Add: Advocate and plan for improved open spaces, biolinks/corridors and infrastructure for the Community as part of the State Government's SRL East project. The SRL East project will have direct significant impacts on open space around its Burwood Station component and impacts on the Blackburn Creeklands from its Box Hill counterpart. [Re the latter: These should include improvements to accessibility and inclusivity, defensive plantings against noise, dust, litter and air pollution from Middleborough Road and the feasibility study of construction of a second pedestrian bridge on the western side of Blacks Walk as documented in the 2002 Master Plan for the park].	North East Link funded tree program is listed in the annual action plan. SRL funded tree plantings were not included in this plan as the initial planting requirements are scheduled to be completed in May 2025, which is outside the timeframe of this annual action plan (2025/26). The quantity of trees to be removed as part of the SRL East project need to be confirmed by SRLA to determine if further offset plantings are required.
	Integrated Council Plan	**Initiative 4.2 An environmentally sustainable and climate resilient City** • Develop an Emissions Reduction Plan for Council operations to work towards reducing emissions including energy efficiency, electrification, renewable energy and fleet opportunities. This Plan doesn't appear to be funded in the Budget document.	There is a $40k budget allocation to prepare an emissions reduction plan in 2025/26.

Response #	DOCUMENT	FEEDBACK	OFFICER RESPONSE
27 CROWAG	Integrated Council Plan	**Climate** - Reference should be made to the Climate Response Plan and Climate Response Strategy. Given the impending climate issues that council will need to manage over coming years, resources need to be allocated to mitigate against those impacts in line with the strategies outlined. In particular adapting to urban density changes with more green space and better access to the environment – for physical and mental health and providing community EV charging facilities to encourage the uptake of EV's.	Reference is made to the Climate Response Plan and Strategy over pages 21 and 22 of the Integrated Council Plan. In addition to the Climate Response Strategy, there are several strategies that respond to climate issues including the Open Space Strategy, Urban Forest Strategy, Integrated Water Management Strategy, transport strategies as well as strategic planning considerations. Council is in the process of seeking Expressions of Interest for community charging facilities for EVs. This submissions will be considered by Council.
	Integrated Council Plan	The above themes from Shaping Whitehorse, Community Vision and Council Plan as well as the Climate Response Plan and Climate Response Strategy and associated initiatives should better underpin the budget outcomes and should be given higher priority in funding allocation and committed projects.	Some of the key actions from the Climate Response Plan are to develop business cases for Council to consider funding in subsequent budgets. This includes transition from gas to electric for Council facilities, and a transition to net zero emissions for fleet.
			Overall Officer recommendation to CROWAG submission: No changes to the 2025/26 Proposed Budget, except where stated.
28	2025/26 Proposed Budget	I believe the proposed further outlay of $4.28 million towards the Vermont Reserve Pavilion upgrade would be better directed to more essential Council Services and parkland upgrades. During and since Covid /2020/2021, the Vermont Reserve Facility has benefited from allocated Council Funding for: - Pavilion and Club rooms development; - Cricket Net upgrade; - Tree Removal and Children's Play area upgrade; - Oval surface irrigation, drainage works. These works have already been financed from Whitehorse City Council to the tune of many millions of dollars. Another $4.28 million project is not essential to Vermont Reserve users.	**Officer Recommendation:** No change to Proposed Budget 2025/26, however Council acknowledges your concern about the prioritisation of funding across community services and facilities. We recognise that Vermont Reserve has seen significant investment in recent years, including upgrades to the pavilion, cricket nets, play space, tree management, and oval infrastructure. These improvements were aimed at enhancing safety, usability, and community benefit. At the same time, Council understands the importance of balancing funding across a wide range of community needs, not just organised sport. We are committed to maintaining and improving open spaces, walking and cycling paths, nature strips, and accessible facilities that support the wellbeing of all residents, including older adults and those not engaged in formal sporting activities. Council aims to deliver broader community benefits in the traditionally sporting dominant facilities such as pavilions, Vermont Reserve Pavilion upgrade, which aim to deliver multi-use community spaces that go beyond sport, offering broader benefits such as community gatherings, social programs, and passive recreation.
29	2025/26 Proposed Budget	The lack of apparent expenditure on dog-friendly facilities and amenities (beyond $30,000 for drinking fountains with dog bowls) is disappointing but ultimately unsurprising. Council's budget allocates $53 million to its Capital Works Program, of which just over $12 million (23%) has been allocated for the upgrade or redevelopment of sporting facilities and almost $6 million (11%) is earmarked for various sports fields/courts upgrades and renewals. Nowhere under 'Buildings' or 'Recreational, leisure and community facilities' is any capital works expenditure listed that directly relates to the provision of dog-friendly facilities. Indeed, the only dog-friendly expenditure item listed is $30,000 (0.06%) for 5 new dog bowl drinking fountains. While I appreciate Council's recognition of the importance of sports to the community, it is incredibly disappointing to see it still appears to hold the view that sports is the only worthwhile or meaningful manner in which residents recreationally engage with the community and one another. Council's ongoing failure to provide dedicated dog facilities or amenities increasingly stands Whitehorse in stark contrast with other Melbourne LGAs as a place where the needs and voices of pets and their owners are routinely ignored and disregarded.	**Action: Additional allocation of $50,000 in the 2025/26 operational budget for the completion of a technical and feasibility study on options for a dog park within the municipality.** Council acknowledges the growing community interest in enhanced dog amenities and recognises the importance of supporting a diverse range of recreational activities. Council has previously consulted with the community on two dog parks since 2020, however due to significant community opposition these did not proceed. While the current draft budget includes limited direct investment in dedicated dog infrastructure, these needs are being actively considered through several strategic planning processes. Notably, the Open Space Strategy, which is currently being finalised, includes recommendations for managing dog access, providing dog-related infrastructure, and identifying potentially suitable sites across the municipality. In addition, several current master planning projects—including those for the Strathdon Davy Lane Precinct and Mahoneys Reserve—are exploring the inclusion of dedicated, fenced dog parks. Council remains committed to balancing the needs of various user groups within our open space network. Promoting inclusive and equitable access to recreational facilities continues to be a key principle guiding our planning and investment decisions. The Whitehorse animal management service is incorporated into the Community Safety team with services which include Pound contract, animal investigations, responsible pet education, dog attack management, and statutory functions under the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

Response #	DOCUMENT	FEEDBACK	OFFICER RESPONSE
29	Integrated Council Plan	It is incredibly disappointing to see that neither Council's Integrated Plan nor the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Action Plan make any mention of dog-friendly facilities or amenities. Despite boasting about managing "over 631 hectares of open space", Council evidently cannot find the roughly 2 hectares required for a dedicated dog park (size as recommended by by dog experts and landscape architects). The five key focus areas of the Integrated Plan include "Foster social connections and a sense of belonging" and "Partner to enhance mental health and build resilience", with 20% of adult Whitehorse residents reporting feeling lonely. Strategic Objective 1.1 includes facilitating opportunities for groups and individuals to connect and fostering social connections and a sense of belonging, while Strategic Objectives 2.2, 2.3 and 4.1 all also include strategies that would be well-served by providing more and enhanced dog-friendly facilities to residents. I acknowledge that some of the strategies and objectives outlined in the Integrated Plan could encompass the provision of dog-friendly facilities as unarticulated components, and I certainly hope this is indeed the case. However, the failure of any of the seven documents provided on this webpage to mention dog-friendly facilities and amenities (other than dog bowl water fountains) is extremely disheartening and a wasted opportunity for Council to openly declare its inclusive intentions in this regard.	**Comments are noted.** Council acknowledges the growing community interest in enhanced dog amenities and recognises the importance of supporting a diverse range of recreational activities. Currently, 32 parks and reserves within Whitehorse offer off-lead dog exercise areas. Council has previously consulted with the community on two dog parks since 2020, however due to significant community opposition these did not proceed. While the current draft budget includes limited direct investment in dedicated dog infrastructure, these needs are being actively considered through several strategic planning processes. Notably, the Open Space Strategy, which is currently being finalised, includes recommendations for managing dog access, providing dog-related infrastructure, and identifying potentially suitable sites across the municipality. In addition, several current master planning projects—including those for the Strathdon Davy Lane Precinct and Mahoneys Reserve—are exploring the inclusion of dedicated, fenced dog parks. Council remains committed to balancing the needs of various user groups within our open space network. Promoting inclusive and equitable access to recreational facilities continues to be a key principle guiding our planning and investment decisions.
30	2025/26 Proposed Budget	I have for sometime been very disappointed at the inequity of spending by WCC on healthy lifestyle activities for the Whitehorse community. Time and again we have seen budgets that favour structured sports such as cricket and football, against non structured activities such as cycling and walking. At times analysis has shown an inbalance of 97% to 3%, what I cannot reconcile is that only somewhere between 12 -15% of people from Whitehorse participate in structured sports, meaning the rest of us just get tablescraps. You need to do better, much better.	**Comments are noted.** We acknowledge your frustration and appreciate your advocacy for greater investment in unstructured, healthy lifestyle activities such as walking and cycling. Council recognises the importance of supporting a diverse range of recreation opportunities to reflect the needs of our entire community—not just those participating in structured sport. While investment in sporting facilities plays a role in promoting physical activity, social connection, and supporting local clubs, we also recognise that the majority of residents engage in informal and self-directed activities like walking, running, and cycling. Maintaining and enhancing our parks, walking trails, shared paths, and green spaces remains a core priority for Council. We continue to invest in improving connectivity, accessibility, and safety across our trail networks and public spaces, and we are committed to expanding opportunities for passive and informal recreation.
31 Whitehorse Ratepayers & Residents Association	2025/26 Proposed Budget	Whitehorse Ratepayers & Residents Association We note that Whitehorse Council is raising rates by 3% in the Proposed Budget 2025/26, which is the top rate of increase under the rate-capping regime. We would like to bring to your attention that Bayside Council is increasing its rates by 0%, i.e. the rates are not increasing at all. This council has decided that it will concentrate on the nuts and bolts of council services I.e. on drainage, roads, footpaths etc . We note that this council did not abandon its aged care services, unlike Whitehorse Council, and has in fact amalgamated with Glen Eira Council to provide these services to both council areas. We thus query why one council is able to not raise its rates at all and the other council is raising its rates by the top rate-capping percentage. Bayside Council is also affected by the Suburban Rail Loop and also has been nominated for a number of activity centres, so this council will also need to provide for advocacy in these areas.	The proposed 3% rate increase capped by the Victorian Government reflects a balanced and sustainable approach. It enables us to continue delivering the high-quality services our community expects, while also investing in the infrastructure and community assets needed both now and into the future. In developing the 2025/26 Budget, Council has undertaken a disciplined and responsible financial planning process. We have reviewed operational budgets and prioritised essential services and infrastructure. The majority of Victorian councils have increased rates in line with the rate cap set by the Victorian Government. In fact, some councils have received approval from the Essential Services Commission (ESC) to increase rates above the cap due to economic and local pressures, and funding requirements. We understand that community members may have compared our approach to that of other councils, such as Bayside City Council, which has opted not to increase rates this year. However, it's important to note that direct comparisons between councils can be misleading. Each council operates within a distinct context, with different community needs, infrastructure responsibilities, and financial pressures. In Whitehorse, we face the challenge of maintaining ageing infrastructure, meeting increased service expectations, and delivering new assets to support a growing and diverse population.

Response #	DOCUMENT	FEEDBACK	OFFICER RESPONSE
31 Whitehorse Ratepayers & Residents Association	2025/26 Proposed Budget	We query the benefit of the $1.07 million dollars being spent on Positive Aging. We query what this program is actually achieving as we understand that residents have raised a number of issues with this program and that it does not appear to be doing anything particularly worthwhile.	The Positive Ageing Connect and Support service officially launched from April 2024 and in the first year supported over 500 older Whitehorse residents over the phone and in person. This support is typically over a number of sessions and follow ups to ensure people get the support they need. Additionally, the service has delivered over 60 educational events reaching over 4500 local older people on a range of topics such as dementia, seniors rights, physical activity, women's health and men's health. The Positive Ageing team have also initiated regional network to bring together local aged care service providers to assist communication and collaboration. The Positive Ageing service is still in its infancy and is working on a number of initiatives to improve the lives of older people, including working in partnership across the eastern region to help address some of the age care system challenges.
	2025/26 Proposed Budget	We also highlight the monies being spent on the Transition Program which has had many millions spent on it and wonder what cost benefit this program has achieved.	The transformation program reports progress and benefits in the Corporate Performance Report quarterly and annually. Since its inception in 2021 the program has delivered $3M realised savings or income through a range of initiatives such as the introduction of digital rates distribution, construction management permits and final notices for infringements reducing legal costs. A further $7.6M in cost avoidance or cost recovery was delivered for example through service reviews, reduction in fleet vehicles, avoided merchant fee costs and optimised insurance.
	2025/26 Proposed Budget	Monies were spent in the past to achieve increased technological benefits but the council webpage has had much work done to it in the past and should by now be extremely user-friendly. So how much more money needs to be spent on technological improvements, given the monies already spent?	All Council services rely on technology to enable them and ongoing investment is required because technology changes rapidly and Council needs to make improvements to support service delivery and customer experiences (this extends beyond our website) This includes making Council's online services easier to use, replacing old technology systems that are no longer supported or outdated, making changes to improve how we handle data, so we can turn it into useful insights. Local Government like other Government enities are targetted by Cyber criminals, keeping our cybersecurity strong has been a key priority to strengthen and protect Council's data and information.
	2025/26 Proposed Budget	We query the allocation of monies in the budget as to priorities, given that there are areas which may require flood mitigation and the monies spent on nuts and bolt issues such as roads, drains and footpaths in the scheme of things do not appear to have achieved adequate priority.	Council has budgeted for an increase in capital expenditure on drainage over the next four years: 2025/26 $2.385M 2026/27 $5.274M 2027/28 $4.982M 2028/29 $4.827M There is also a further $1.21m allocated via the 2025/26 operating budget on drain maintenance. There is an additional $1.00m allocated in the 2025/26 capital expenditure budget for road maintenance on top of the ongoing renewal program, for a total of $7.0m in 2025/26. Renewal expenditure on footpaths is budgeted at $3.26m.
	2025/26 Proposed Budget	In line with this is the amount of monies being spent on tree planting which is necessary to provide shade in Australia's harsh environment and also provides an avenue for carbon emission reduction.	Council's Urban Forest Strategy aims to increase tree canopy and shade through new tree planting on Council managed land. Street tree planting is undertaken to maximise shade which provides urban cooling for streets, footpaths and residents. Council's budget enables over 3,000 trees to be planted each year.
	2025/26 Proposed Budget	We feel that the Council has made some positive initiatives in relation to crime prevention and youth involvement, which given the increase in crime in Whitehorse is positive as well as helping with youth engagement and issues.	The Proposed Budget 2025/26 reflects Council's commitment to addressing community safety and responsible governance, and supports initiatives that contribute to a safer and more connected community. Council is seeking to promote this issue, including the establishment in 2025/26 of a Community Safety Crime Prevention Committee to work collaboratively with safety partners across the Municipality to help address community safety concerns and create a safe environment.

Response #	DOCUMENT	FEEDBACK	OFFICER RESPONSE
31 Whitehorse Ratepayers & Residents Association	2025/26 Proposed Budget	In summary, while we feel that there have been some positive initiatives in the budget, we query the priorities contained therein and the need to increase rates by the top rate-capping percentage, given that the community has suffered, and continues to endure a cost of living crisis.	First, we recognise that any rate increase particularly during a time of cost-of-living pressures is difficult. Council does not make these decisions lightly. Like households and businesses, we are also facing rising costs across areas such as construction, fuel, work cover premiums and significant increases in the State Government waste levy of 27.9%. These factors make it challenging to maintain the quality of services and infrastructure that our community relies on. Despite these challenges, in preparing the 2025/26 Budget, Council has undertaken a disciplined and responsible planning process. The proposed budget seeks to maintain a balance between rate adjustments and continuing to deliver essential services and infrastructure to the community. Guided by community engagement the budget emphasises our continued focus on responsible governance, long-term financial sustainability, and increased advocacy to secure resources and outcomes that matter to our community. It supports essential services and infrastructure, while planning for population change, evolving community needs, and enhance safety. Ensuring that every dollar spent delivers clear community value remains a key principle, with a continued focus on transparency, accountability, and long-term financial sustainability.
			Overall Officer recommendation to Whitehorse Ratespayers & Residents Assocation submission: No changes to the 2025/26 Proposed Budget.
32	2025/26 Proposed Budget	It is great to see the start of proposed expenditure once more for cycling infrastructure for Whitehorse. The $0.15 million to develop concept plans for bike path upgrades along service roads (Dorking Road, Linsley Street, Dunlavin Road and Edward Street intersections) and $0.13 million to commence investigations and concept designs for cycling connection upgrades, including linking service lanes, footpath widening and trail connections. will represent important work in the years ahead. However, we note that a similar council in terms of distance from the Melbourne CBD (Whittlesea) has the following in their budget for FY26: $1 Mil for Yan Yean Pipe Trail (2.1km) $0.75M for McDonalds Rd Shared Path (1.6km) $0.8M for Darebin Ck Trail SUP (0.6km) $0.12M for Lighting of Shared Paths Their delivery of new off-road paths which are all the time aimed at joining up several paths plus the lighting program delivering a denser & safer network, highlights where Whitehorse should be aiming and just how far we lag behind in terms of development of plans and implementation of them compared to other municipalities in Melbourne. We encourage Whitehorse to aspire to match or better what Whittlesea has been doing in this space for many years now and to emulate the quality, connectivity and safety that their network brings.	**Action: Inclusion of $150k in the 2025/26 Budget for the development of an Integrated Transport Strategy.** Council is delivering the recommendations and actions through its current Cycling strategy such as the Easy Ride Routes project over the past 5 years. Council officers are taking a strategic approach to managing cycling and safe cycling connection throughout the City in alignment with its cycling strategy. A Background Review of all Transport strategies (including the Cycling strategy) has commenced and will be completed by June 2025. This Background Study will lead to the development of a consolidated and Integrated Transport Strategy (which will include cycling, walking and public transport use). Funding for cycling projects and infrastructure is considered and allocated as part of Council's annual Capital Works program. The new strategy will provide a proactive and strategic approach to cycling paths and infrastructure over the life of the strategy. Cycling considerations and initiatives will be considered as part of all transport related capital works projects.

Response #	DOCUMENT	FEEDBACK	OFFICER RESPONSE
33	2025/26 Proposed Budget	I write to express concern over the lack of action on a number of items in this budget, open space, active transport , tree canopy, transformation (customer service) to name a few. Once again there is limited time to go through the budget and other related documents. just trying to workout what council has received and spent towards open space can be an interesting time. With open space there has been many chances for council to expand open space in the city, with land becoming available along with land council has locked up, yet we see no action.	**Comments are noted.** We understand that reviewing detailed financial information in a comprehensive document particularly regarding allocations for open space can be challenging. To support greater transparency and ease of reference, we'd like to highlight key information provided in the proposed budget document: - Page 84 includes a summary of reserve balances, including detailed commentary on the Public Open Space Reserve. - For the 2025/26 financial year, Council plans to: - Transfer $8.56 million into the Public Open Space Reserve, reflecting anticipated developer contributions and interest. - Allocate $10.45 million from the reserve to mainly fund capital works that support the development and enhancement of public open spaces, recreational areas, and community facilities. - The detailed Capital Works Program (outlined on page 94-99) specifies which projects are funded from reserves, with the majority being funded from the open space reserve fund. We actively monitor opportunities to acquire or repurpose land for open space when it becomes available. However, these decisions can be complex and are influenced by several factors, including land use constraints, planning overlays, and the suitability of the site (in terms of location, size, and configuration). While it may appear that some opportunities have not been acted upon, it's important to note that site suitability is assessed against strategic priorities outlined in the Open Space Strategy. Acquiring land outside of these identified gap areas may reduce Council's ability to secure open space where it is most urgently needed. In addition, some land identified as "locked up" may not meet the criteria necessary to be converted into safe, accessible, and functional open space. We understand the importance of seizing opportunities to expand open space and remain committed to making considered, strategic decisions to deliver the best long-term outcomes for the community. Active transport and urban greening are also priority areas for Council. Investments continue in shared path improvements, cycling infrastructure, and increasing tree canopy coverage through our Urban Forest Strategy.
	2025/26 Proposed Budget	Active transport is another item that needs action, with council spending little money in their budget to expand infrastructure for those using this form of transport.	**Action: Inclusion of $150k in the 2025/26 Budget for the development of an Integrated Transport Strategy.** Active Transport is a critical function of all Transport and Road Safety Strategies and features in key Operational and Capital Works Projects annually. Officers believe that reasonable funding is allocated in the 2025/26 budget to enable delivery of targeted active transport projects. Such projects included in the Proposed Budget 2025/26 include: - $150k to develop concept plans for bike path upgrades along service roads (Dorking Road, Linsley Street, Dunlavin Road and Edward Street intersections); - $125k to commence investigations and concept designs for cycling connection upgrades, including linking service lanes, footpath widening and trail connections. - $78k on the Easy Ride Routes Upgrade Program. Council officers are taking a strategic approach to managing active transport throughout the City in alignment with its current cycling and transport strategies. A Background Review of all Transport strategies has commenced and will be completed by June 2025. This Background Study will lead to the development of a future consolidated and Integrated Transport Strategy (which will include cycling, walking and public transport use). A further $150,000 allocation has been included in the 2025/26 Budget to fund the development of the Integrated Transport Strategy.
	2025/26 Proposed Budget	Tree canopy also needs to be addressed, with so many mature trees being cut down and councils policy on shading of reserves.	**Comments are noted.** Councils Urban Forest Strategy aims to increase tree canopy through new tree planting on Council managed land. Any tree removed on Council land is replaced where appropriate. Council aims to have a net increase of at least 500 trees every year. Council has also strongly advocated for the tree controls on private land in the Planning Scheme to be preserved through the various planning reforms being undertaken by the State Government.
	2025/26 Proposed Budget	We see millions of dollars spent on improvements yet it still takes over an hour to get anyone to answer the phone and over a week to get a reply to an e-mail, quicker to ask a question in council.	**Comments are noted.** We understand your frustration and are aware of the delays in responding at peak demand times. Council is implementing a number of strategies to improve response times, including aligning resourcing to volume of telephone calls, rolling out new Customer Committments based on feedback from our Community and a new knowledge base to provide consistent and quicker advice to customers.
	2025/26 Proposed Budget	I thank you for the chance to comment and hope next year you will allow more time to look at the final document for comment. Regards	**Comments are noted.** The 2025/26 Proposed Budget went through extensive community engagement as part of Shaping Whitehorse, with a further opportunity in May 2025 for community feedback on the Proposed Budget. We will take this feedback into consideration for future budget engagement activities.

Response #	DOCUMENT	FEEDBACK	OFFICER RESPONSE
34	2025/26 Proposed Budget	Hello Council, The 2025/25 budget proposes an operating surplus of more than $20 million. There is a rate increase of 3% and millions spent on sporting facilities. Yet, there is not a single dollar going towards the creation of a dedicated, fenced dog park. Whitehorse City Council is one of only four councils in Greater Melbourne without a dedicated, off-lead fenced facility. We pay council nearly $1 million in registration fees per year and we get $30,000 spent on adding dog bowls to some water fountains. Not only is council not addressing this appalling lack of service, it was actively trying to create unsafe environments on its current "shared use" dog spaces. The Victorian Government has previously offered co-funding to deliver a dog park, including a chosen site and all necessary plans but council refused it because councillors wanted to choose the location. It has been two years and nothing has happened: no site, no discussion, no budget, no consultation. The best time to deliver a Whitehorse dedicated, fenced dog park was two years ago - the second best time is now. Best regards.	**Officer Recommendation: Additional allocation of $50,000 in the 2025/26 operational budget for the completion of a technical and feasibility study on options for a dog park within the municipality.** Your feedback regarding the need for a dedicated, fenced dog park in the City of Whitehorse is noted. We appreciate your passion and advocacy on this important matter and acknowledge the concerns you've raised about service equity for our dog-owning community. Council recognises that dogs are valued members of many households and that access to safe, high-quality off-leash spaces is important for both animal welfare and community wellbeing. While we currently provide a range of shared-use and 32 off-leash areas across the municipality, we acknowledge that these spaces may not meet the needs of all dog owners—particularly those seeking a secure, fully fenced environment. Council has previously consulted with the community on two dog parks since 2020, however due to significant community opposition these did not proceed. In relation to your points: Budget and Prioritisation: Council is managing a broad range of community needs within a limited budget, balancing investments in infrastructure, open space, community services, and environmental initiatives. While this year's budget includes investment in sporting facilities and other public assets, we understand your concern about the lack of allocation towards a dedicated dog park. Your feedback will be considered as part of our ongoing budget review and future planning. Fenced Dog Park Progress: You are correct that Whitehorse is one of the few Greater Melbourne councils without a fenced, dedicated dog park. While the current draft budget includes limited direct investment in dedicated dog infrastructure, these needs are being actively considered through several strategic planning processes. Notably, the Open Space Strategy, which is currently being finalised, includes recommendations for managing dog access, providing dog-related infrastructure, and identifying potentially suitable sites across the municipality. In addition, several current master planning projects—including those for the Strathdon Davy Lane Precinct and Mahoneys Reserve—are exploring the inclusion of dedicated, fenced dog parks. Council agrees that the community should play a central role in shaping the design and location of any future fenced dog park. We encourage you to subscribe to Council's Your Say page to stay informed about upcoming opportunities for community consultation on dog-related facilities, including the two previously mentioned masterplans. The Whitehorse animal management service is incorporated into the Community Safety team with services including Pound contract, animal investigations, responsible pet education, dog attack management, and statutory functions under the Domestic Animals Act 1994.
35	2025/26 Proposed Budget	I think my biggest concern may be around the projections of the operating surplus falling over the next years in the budget papers.	**Comments are noted.** Maintaining a surplus is essential as it supports both operating and capital investment, and is generally an indicator of financial sustainability. This approach ensures the ongoing delivery of quality services and programs and the ability to invest in long-term community infrastructure. It is also important to note that the surplus result for 2025/26 includes non-recurrent capital grants expected to be received of $8.37 million and contributions such as open space $6.30 million, which are often earmarked for specific purposes. The movement in the surplus result in years 3 and 4 of the Proposed Budget 2025/26 is mainly due to a reduction in forecast capital grants income. These grants are often linked to the timing, nature, and scale of major capital projects and are typically not confirmed until closer to the relevant budget year. Additionally, changes in the surplus may also reflect varying levels of expenditure, including the timing and scope of initiatives undertaken in those years. Council will update the forecast as funding is confirmed by the relevant Federal or State bodies and as project planning evolves.
		I welcome the $800,000 in funding allocated to the Mirrabooka upgrades and $100,000 for upgrading Bungalook, both directly from Council Cash, too!	**Comments are noted.** The draft Wurundjeri Walk Masterplan (https://yoursay.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/mirrabooka-master-plan) is expected to go out for community consultation in mid to late 2025.
		Personally, I welcome $5.17 million spending on cycleways and footpaths and hopefully would like to see more spending on this in the future. Keep ensuring the council provides funding to build more bike lanes, bike paths, walking trails, cycleways, waste collection, parks and the like. Keep offering grants to volunteer groups. I have little other feedback. Thank you.	**Comments are noted.** One of Council's key financial principles for maintaining long financial sustainability is to focus renewing and maintaining existing infrastructure. Consequently, a significant portion of Council funding is directed toward the renewal of existing roads and pathways rather than the development of entirely new cycling-specific paths. While Council's capital works program does include cycling focused projects that specifically address improvements in cycling infrastructure, the majority of cycling infrastructure provided in Whitehorse is shared infrastructure that is used by other groups of users – ie roads and shared user paths, and Council invests a large amount to maintain and renew these assets each year to the benefit of all users of those assets.

Response #	DOCUMENT	FEEDBACK	OFFICER RESPONSE
36	2025/26 Proposed Budget	We need a purpose built fully fenced dog park. It's shocking that Whitehorse does not have one.	**Action: Additional allocation of $50,000 in the 2025/26 operational budget for the completion of a technical and feasibility study on options for a dog park within the municipality.** Your feedback regarding the need for a dedicated, fenced dog park in the City of Whitehorse is noted. We appreciate your passion and advocacy on this important matter and acknowledge the concerns you've raised about service equity for our dog-owning community. Council recognises that dogs are valued members of many households and that access to safe, high-quality off-leash spaces is important for both animal welfare and community wellbeing. While we currently provide a range of shared-use and 32 off-leash areas across the municipality, we acknowledge that these spaces may not meet the needs of all dog owners—particularly those seeking a secure, fully fenced environment. Council has previously consulted with the community on two dog parks since 2020, however due to significant community opposition these did not proceed. While the current draft budget includes limited direct investment in dedicated dog infrastructure, these needs are being actively considered through several strategic planning processes. Notably, the Open Space Strategy, which is currently being finalised, includes recommendations for managing dog access, providing dog-related infrastructure, and identifying potentially suitable sites across the municipality. In addition, several current master planning projects—including those for the Strathdon Davy Lane Precinct and Mahoneys Reserve—are exploring the inclusion of dedicated, fenced dog parks. In addition, in 2025/26 Council will complete a technical and feasibility study on options for a dog park within the municipality. We encourage you to subscribe to Council's Your Say page to stay informed about upcoming opportunities for community consultation on dog-related facilities, including the two previously mentioned masterplans.
37	2025/26 Proposed Budget	**Measuring the Social Return on Investment.** [redacted] is concerned as is CROWAG that spending $12+ million on the Box Hill Sporting pavilion shows quite an imbalance in fund allocation to Sporting venues without an assessment to compare with spending on cycling routes for children to ride to school, the library, or community health program - so no one is left behind.	**Comments are noted.** Council is starting to implement strategies to measure the impact of its investment on community outcomes with officers exploring the development of an outcomes framework and using program logic to better define problems and explore solutions, before taking action. We will continue to explore the use of social return on investment tools as we agree this aligns with the community aspiration. With regards to the comment about spending $12+ million on the Box Hill City Oval redevelopment, it should be noted that Council's funding contribution towards this project is $5.5M, with the remaining funding provided by the Federal Government ($13.6M) and State Government ($6M).
	2025/26 Proposed Budget	The following Initiative is commendable particularly the initiative shown in red. However we have concerns re the limited allocations to active transport infrastructure overall. The following are a description of the initiatives identified by Council as priorities to be undertaken this financial year. Strategic Direction Two: Built Objective 2.1 Safe and accessible public places Create a priority list of public spaces to review for safe and easy access Enhance and upgrade pedestrian and cycling paths across the municipality to encourage active transport uptake by the Community Deliver the Cycling Strategy recommendations to promote healthy living outcomes Implement the Connect with Confidence - Public Transport Community Education Program for older people to improve confidence and overcome barriers to use public transport.	**Action: Inclusion of $150,000 in the 2025/26 Budget for the development of an Integrated Transport Strategy.** Active Transport is a critical function of all Transport and Road Safety Strategies and features in key Operational and Capital Works Projects annually. Such projects included in the Proposed Budget 2025/26 include: - $150k to develop concept plans for bike path upgrades along service roads (Dorking Road, Linsley Street, Dunlavin Road and Edward Street intersections); - $125k to commence investigations and concept designs for cycling connection upgrades, including linking service lanes, footpath widening and trail connections. - $78k on the Easy Ride Routes Upgrade Program. Council officers are taking a strategic approach to managing active transport throughout the City in alignment with its current cycling and transport strategies. A Background Review of all Transport strategies has commenced and will be completed by June 2025. This Background Study will lead to the development of a future consolidated and Integrated Transport Strategy (which will include cycling, walking and public transport use). Council is delivering the recommendations and actions through its current Cycling strategy such as the Easy Ride Routes project over the past 5 years. Council officers are taking a strategic approach to managing cycling and safe cycling connection throughout the City in alignment with its cycling strategy. A Background Review of all Transport strategies (including the Cycling strategy) has commenced and will be completed by June 2025. This Background Study will lead to the development of a consolidated and Integrated Transport Strategy (which will include cycling, walking and public transport use). Funding for cycling projects and infrastructure is considered and allocated as part of Council's annual Capital Works program. The new strategy will provide a proactive and strategic approach to cycling paths and infrastructure over the life of the strategy. Cycling considerations and initiatives will be considered as part of all transport related capital works projects.

Response #	DOCUMENT	FEEDBACK	OFFICER RESPONSE
37	2025/26 Proposed Budget	The above initiatives are repeated in the Council Action Plan 2025/26 Draft leading to an expectation of substantial commitment in the Budget. In the Capital Works Program below there is a reasonable amount allocated to Total Footpaths and Cycleways of $5,17- 000. However, with Footpaths Renewal Program taking $3,260 the amount left for cycle infrastructure is pitiful. Again, as CROWAG have spelt out there is still the need and value in separating out Cycling investment from the footpaths for which the funds are mostly for repairs, whereas for cycleways it is mostly about new infrastructure. Cycleways should be separate line items so that expenses for works carried out on cycleways are transparent. Footpaths and cycleways are not the same asset.	The asset categories used to group capital works projects in Council's draft budget document have been determined by Local Government Victoria to enable consistent, comparable reporting across the Victorian local government sector. However, Council will review the level of information provided in the detailed capital works listing for future budgets. The projects and programs within the Footpath and Cycleways include a mix of renewal, upgrade, new and or expansion type works to the path transport network including : -General footpath renewals, -Gravel paths in parks renewal -Constructed paths in parks renewal -Footbridge and path structures in parks renewal -A number of cycling focused programs including easy ride routes program, cycling connection upgrades, Box Hill Integrated transport strategy implementation and bike path upgrades at service rd intersections One of Council's key financial principles for maintaining long financial sustainability is to focus renewing and maintaining existing infrastructure. Consequently, a significant portion of Council funding is directed toward the renewal of existing roads and pathways rather than the development of entirely new cycling-specific paths. While Council's capital works program does include cycling focused projects that specifically address improvements in cycling infrastructure, the majority of cycling infrastructure provided in Whitehorse is shared infrastructure that is used by other groups of users – ie roads and shared user paths, and Council invests a large amount to maintain and renew these assets each year to the benefit of all users of those assets. Although there is a slight decrease to funding over the future 5 years, work to update and revise the current cycling strategy will be underway in the future and the completion of the revised strategy will guide future funding towards cycle and shared path projects within Whitehorse City Council. Further, there is a large focus in 2025/26 on early investigation and design work for cycling infrastructure improvements that is likely to be delivered in future years, once this early work has been completed.
	2025/26 Proposed Budget	The intent to connect service roads along Whitehorse Rd is welcomed however the opportunity to connect more service roads appears to appears to have been overlooked. I refer to the often-stated opportunity to connect service roads along Burwood Highway to provide active transport to the Tally Ho precinct. The most recent suggestion for this is in the [redacted] and [redacted] Your Say Feedback on the Tally Ho Structure Masterplan.	The capital budget allocated to Lundgren Chain in 25/26 is additional to any SRL proposed projects. This Council funding is allocated for landscape improvements including tree and vegetation planting to increase biodiversity, habitat and canopy. Items listed in the SRL East Draft Burwood Structure Plan include the potential extension to Lundgren Chain, a pedestrian/ cycling connection across Station Street, and investigating the retention of the temporary SRL open space that is adjacent to Lundgren Chain between Cumming Street and Gillard Street.
		Capital works for footpaths and cycleways – Positive initiatives. – As per CROWAG submission It is pleasing to see funding for the Nelson Road safety improvements; however, the O'Brien report suggested a staged upgrade. Where is the funding allocation beyond 25/26 for that work?	The Nelson Road safety improvements are currently in the design stage and Council plans to deliver the works in three stages. Funding was allocated in 2024/25, with further funding allocated in 2025/26 ($250k) and 2026/27 ($302k) financial years, and any funding requirements to complete works beyond that will be identified in future budgets following finalisation of the design and project timeline. This project is being partly funded by Council's funding allocation for the implementation of the Box Hill Integrated Transport Strategy and partly by the State Government.