Notice of Motion, Cr Leppert: Safe City Camera Program

Motion

That Council:

1.   Notes:

   1.1.   The expansion of the Safe City Camera Program (SCCP) since its inception in 1995.

   1.2.   That the draft Annual Plan and Budget for 2023–24 includes the proposed activity "In partnership with the Victorian Government, expand, enhance and upgrade the Safe City Camera program. This includes expanding the camera network to Lygon Street in Carlton, and investigating the use of the network to identify amenity issues that contribute to perceived community safety concerns, such as cleanliness, graffiti and dumped rubbish," with a capital expenditure allocation of $520,000.

   1.3.   That this proposed program takes the SCCP outside the central city, and anticipates a purpose beyond crime detection and emergency response, both for the first time.

   1.4.   That all previous major expansions to the SCCP have been paid for by the State Government, often after a tragic event, with the Council paying for maintenance after installation.

2.   Seeks confirmation from management on whether the State Government is willing to pay for the capital outlay of the expansion of the SCCP into Carlton and, where possible, requests that any agreement is reflected in the final 2023–24 Budget.

3.   Maintains a policy of not funding new capital expenditure to expand the SCCP through Council funds and that any future expansions of the SCCP will therefore only be contemplated where the State Government provides the cost of purchase and installation of new cameras, with any exceptions to this policy to be determined by express decision of the Council in open session, on notice.

4.   Resolves that any expansion of the SCCP beyond its purpose to "aid detection of crime, aid identification and apprehension of offenders, and assist emergency response" should only come after the SCCP policies and manual are comprehensively reviewed, including by the SCCP Audit Committee, Victoria Police and the same stakeholders involved in advising on the program at its inception and in the 2010 policy review, and proposed updated policies and manuals are endorsed by Council or delegated Committee in open session, on notice.

Background

The City of Melbourne's Safe City Cameras Program (SCCP) was established by resolution of Council in December 1995, with the initial cameras fully operational by February 1997.

During the development of the Annual Plan and Budget 2023–24, Councillors considered a recommendation to expand the SCCP into Carlton and for purposes beyond identifying criminal activity. Councillors were not aware of the decision of the Future Melbourne Committee of 13 July 2010 when considering the recommendation:
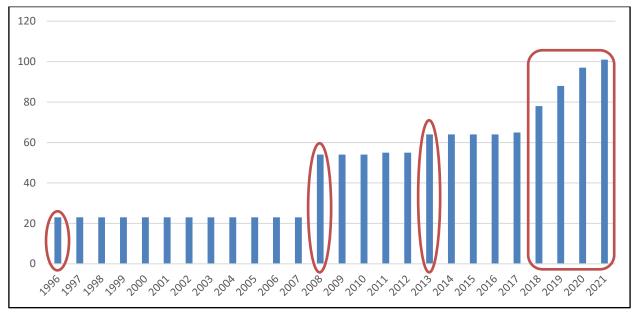
Excerpt of minutes of 13 July 2010 Future Melbourne Committee meeting

The activity in the Annual Plan and Budget for 2023–24, therefore, is currently a breach of the Council's policy. The purpose of this motion is to facilitate an outcome that is either consistent with past policy and practice, or which follows a careful update to past policy.

The most significant review to SCCP policies was in 2010, some 14 years after inception. It is now 13 years after that significant review and, given the extent of variation to the policy contemplated by the proposed Annual Plan activity, now is the appropriate time for another review.

The motion also acknowledges that all previous major expansions of the SCCP have been funded by grants from the State Government, not by Council initiation. The expansion of the SCCP since inception, by total camera numbers, annotated to show the major expansions, is shown below.

On 6 December 1995, the City of Melbourne resolved to establish the "Safe City Cameras Program" in the CBD. The initial policy and manual was developed in conjunction with Victoria Police, Liberty Victoria and others.

State Government funded 31 cameras $1.8M

State Government Grant via Victoria Police for 9 cameras $250K

PTZ Cameras installed as part of State Gov Funding $3.7M

This motion reasserts the principle that Council is not in a position to voluntarily take on cost shifting from the State Government, but will contemplate an expansion if the outlay for new cameras is provided by the State. The motion further articulates that any exceptions to this position must be made by express decision of the Council in open session, on notice.

Council has budgeted $283,000 for the renewal and maintenance of the SSCP in each of the next four financial years.

Further reading

Reports to Council and Committee relating to the 2010 SCCP policy review:
- 6 April 2010: Policy Review of the SCCP. Report.
- 1 June 2010: Supplementary Report – Policy Review of the SCCP. Report.
- 13 July 2010: Policy Review of the SCCP – further report. Report. Minutes.
- 27 July 2010: Council - Policy Review of the SCCP. Report.

Public information on the scope and performance of the SSCP:
- City of Melbourne website.

Moved: Cr Rohan Leppert

Seconded: Cr Dr Olivia Ball