

SAPIENS

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This is what is being done to the park. \$20 million plus is being spent to provide faster and more competitive racing. This view shows the creation of a 'sweeping right hander' in Lakeside Drive, replacing Turns 9 and 10 of the original track. With additional widening of the track at Turns, 1, 3, 6, 13 and 15, the average lap time will be reduced by just 5 seconds. (Photo from Formula1.com April 1, 2021, 'Revealed: The track tweaks set to make Melbourne's Albert Park Circuit 5 seconds a lap quicker in 2021.)

The value of parkland

An article in *The Age* on March 23, 'Councils priced out of parkland', reported that Melbourne's councils cannot afford to provide enough public open space because of the price of land. The Melbourne City Council was quoted as saying that it needs at least 40 hectares of new parkland and that \$60-70 million, which is available for the purpose, would not go far. SAP is pleased to note the MCC's commitment to providing parkland but find this to be in strange contrast to its position as a sponsor of the grand prix in Albert Park. The Victorian government is apparently committed to creating more than 6300 hectares of new parkland across Melbourne., which is an admirable objective, but as with MCC, there is not the same level of commitment to Albert Park.

Albert Park occupies 225 hectares next to some of the most expensive land in Victoria, valued at up to \$13,000 per square metre. As a development site the whole park is worth about \$29 billion. If the lake, the grand prix track, the golf course and major buildings were left in place, about 100 hectares of public open space could be sold off to developers for around \$13 billion. This could pay for the proposed new rail line to Tullamarine airport or the Metro tunnel, and must be a tempting option for the 'big build' planners in Spring Street. But the Victorian government would never sell off bits of the park just to prop up its financial position would it? It certainly happened in 1875, when, eleven years after the park had been permanently reserved and named 'Albert Park Reserve', and in the face of a public outcry, the state government of the day sold off 200 acres (809 hectares) of the park which then faced St Kilda Road, and also offered for sale sections of the park's Fitzroy street frontage.

It's a red alert

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, has just issued this statement: ***In this pivotal year for humanity, now is the time for bold climate change action. The science is irrefutable and globally agreed: to stop the climate crisis from becoming a permanent catastrophe we must limit global heating to 1.5 degrees. Countries making up about two thirds of the global economy have committed to do so.....but we urgently need every country, city business and financial institution to join this coalition and adopt concrete plans for transitioning to net zero.*** (*The Age* 22/4/21, 'It's red alert and the world must act.')

We hope our state government politicians are listening. The Secretary-General is talking to you. Are our politicians thinking of the ways that Victoria's contribution to global warming could be reduced, or are they thinking that it is so small in comparison to the world total that it is of no consequence what we do? Politicians like to claim that the carbon emissions for the whole of Australia represent only 1.3 % of the world total, but if our exports of coal and LNG are taken into account the figure rises to around 3.3%. On a per capita basis we are a leading carbon emitter, ahead of much larger nations such as the UK, Italy and France.

As a country we are a significant emitter; and what we do does matter. Very importantly, if Australia is to have any moral and diplomatic standing it must be seen to cleaning up its own backyard. For example, in Victoria we could clean up one outstanding carbon emitter: the F1 grand prix staged in a public park in a temporary circuit involving *66000 kilometres of heavy truck travel. (*It's 11 kilometres from Albert Park to Altona where the circuit infrastructure is stored. 3000 truck trips are made to move the gear to the park and a further 3000 truck trips are made to take it back again. That's 6000 11 kilometre truck trips, 66,000 kilometres in total.)

Asphalt replacing parkland as major changes are made to park roads

The photo below shows work in progress to widen the track at Turn 3, opposite to the MSAC, with asphalt to replace parkland. The South Melbourne Park Primary School is located about 50 metres from where this photo was taken.



Turns are being widened so that they can be taken at higher speeds. The work being done at Turn 6 (the intersection of Albert Road Drive and Lakeside Drive) is expected to increase speed at this location turn from 149 km/hr to 219 km/hr. In addition to the widening of corners, pit straight is being widened by about three metres, adding about 900 square metres to its asphalted area, with a similar area taken from adjacent parkland. The major work on Lakeside Drive, shown in the page 1 aerial photo eliminates the straight section of the track after Turn 8 and the sharp at Turn 9 and by cutting into the golf course, will create a new sweeping turn. This means that the area next to the lake can be enlarged (and incidentally, help to justify the road changes). More area next to the lake is also being provided at

Turn 13 and this has been achieved by effectively taking parkland from one side of the road and adding it to the lake side.

The new orientation of Lakeside Drive is expected to provide opportunities for the use of the F1 cars DRS (drag reduction system) capability that allows passing manoeuvres that will generate more excitement for the fans. Under F1 rules, DRS is allowed in certain sections of the track and at certain times in the race. Drivers are able to increase straight line speed by lowering the rear wing of their cars, but this reduces stability when turning.

The changes being made to the roads are significant and will affect the general character of the park. The changes are also generating some imaginative ways that they can be justified in terms of benefit to the community and 'alignment' with the master plan, eg., wider corners will increase safety for cyclists by allowing greater separation from cars, 'reduced hardstand space to increase open green space' and 'increased park utilisation opportunities'.

The Canadian grand prix: a socially acceptable event?

SAP opposes the grand prix event basically because it is staged in the wrong place - a public park within an inner city suburb - and is noisy and anti-social. Compounding the misuse of the park is the use of a temporary circuit involving months of setup and take-down. As SAP members are well aware, this is only part of a long story of deceptive promotion of the event and failure to justify the continuing propping up by public funding.

There are ways of staging an F1 grand prix where its effects are minimised, and the Canadian event is a good example. The Canadian grand prix is staged in Montreal in a permanent circuit on the man-made 'Notre Dame Island' in the St Lawrence River. The island, about two kilometres long and 500 metres wide, was built in ten months using 15 million tons of rock excavated for the Montreal Metro underground in 1965. It was created for Canada's centennial in 1967, and subsequently a long rowing and canoeing basin was created for Montreal's 1976 Summer Olympics. In 1978, the motor racing circuit, now called the Circuit Gilles Villeneuve, was created. It now hosts NASCAR (US stock car series) and sports car events as well as F1 events.

The island and the circuit (see photo below) are owned by the City of Montreal and are open to the public except when events are being held.



The F1 grand prix event is promoted by a private company 'Octane', which is reported to raise \$5m from the Canadian Government, \$4m from the Quebec government and \$1m from the City of Montreal. A further \$5m comes from the private Montreal Tourism organization, and the rest has to

come from ticket sales, food and drink and contributions from event sponsors. This adds up to a total of only \$C10m (\$A10.5m) from government sources, compared with the \$A60-70m our state government has to find to cover the annual grand prix operational losses. . (Ref.: yahoo.com/Joe Saward/ F1 Canadian Grand Prix in Jeopardy/ April 13, 2021.)

What if we had the imagination of the City of Montreal and built an island in Hobsons Bay between the shipping lanes, using the rocks excavated for our own Metro Tunnel project, and put a permanent race track on it? There would be only four days a year of grand prix noise and disruption. A good idea? Perhaps not, but it could be better than the current outrageous mistreatment of Albert Park Reserve.

Miami's grand prix will not be like Melbourne's

Since taking over the ownership of Formula One from Bernie Ecclestone in 2017, the US company Liberty Media has been trying to find another American city to add to the US grand prix held in Austin Texas. In May 2018, a proposal was put to the city commissioners of the coastal city of Miami, Florida, to stage a race through the palm-lined Biscayne Boulevard and Bayfront Park. The commissioners voted to continue negotiations with Formula One, but two months later, as the result of objections from local residents, the plans were put on hold.

Three years later, an agreement has now been reached to stage a race in 2022, under conditions that are very different to those originally proposed. Miami's commissioners voted on April to allow the race to proceed under a strict set of provisions:

1. The race to be held, not through the city's major streets and parkland, but downtown in the privately owned Hard Rock Stadium, home of the Miami Dolphins football team.
2. The race promoter, Stephen Ross, the owner of the stadium, is to bear the costs. It is understood that Formula One is so anxious to establish a second US-based race that the normal hosting fee is to be waived.
3. No public roads are to be used.
4. No race to start prior to 2.30pm on any week-day on which any public schools are in session.
5. No race or practice sessions to start after sunset.
6. Noise mitigation barriers of industry quality to be erected to protect nearby residents.
7. A \$5 million fund, to be administered by the city, to be established for community benefits.

These provisions are still not popular with the locals, who consider the \$5 million community fund figure is too low. (Ref.:yahoo.com/Joe Saward/Miami Grand Prix/path now clear/April 16, 2021.)

All this emphasises the stark contrast with the way the Melbourne grand prix was first announced in 1993 and has been administered over the past quarter-century, marked by total disregard for the views and needs of the public, combined with a profligate waste of public funds.

It is of interest to note here that the Austin grand prix, staged in the out-of-town 'Circuit of the Americas', has been reported to be struggling financially and, not surprisingly, is incensed at the F1's offer to waive the hosting fee for the proposed Miami race.

Dates of the 2021 and 2022 grand prix events We still don't know if the grand prix in November 2021 is to be followed by another event in March 2022 (ie, the prized season opening race), and if so, will the 2021 race infrastructure be left in place? All we are told is that various options are being considered. Can we expect 8-9 months of disruption in the park ?

Mothers will love to hear this The Australian Grand Prix Corporation is promoting F1 team and driver merchandise as Mother's Day gifts! An email circulated on April 26 suggests: *'What better way to celebrate than to grab some of her favourite merchandise!' 'Is Mum a Ferrari fan? We've got her covered.'* *'Everything a McLaren-loving mum could wish for.'*

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