

UNCHAIN INC

Submission on City of Port Phillip Council Budget June 2013

What is unChain Inc?

unChain Inc (originally unChain St Kilda) is an incorporated body with membership of Port Phillip residents and traders. (See www.unchainstkilda.org). Originally we were brought together by concerns about the proposed development on the St Kilda Triangle. Now we are interested in an array of matters arising in Port Phillip, especially the appropriate development of our inner city, although the St Kilda Triangle remains our major concern.

We have members from all political parties but we do not have any political allegiance. We have an e-mail membership of over 2500 people. In the 2012 Port Phillip Council elections, three unChain councillors were elected and we gained about 36% of the first preference votes across the municipality. We can therefore claim to speak on behalf of a significant number of residents and traders in the Port Phillip community.

Submission on budget allocation for St Kilda Triangle in COPP budget 2013/14

We note that only limited references have been made to the St Kilda Triangle in the draft City of Port Phillip *Council Plan 2013-17* and *2013/14 Budget*.

The *City Plan 2013-17* cites as a key action under the Vibrant Cityⁱ section of the draft that Council will implement the St Kilda Triangle 2012 framework and continue to work to secure a sustainable future for the St Kilda Triangle and the Palais.

The draft *2013/14 budget* identifies that the C106 planning scheme amendment is a funded initiative within Council's current budgetⁱⁱ.

The St Kilda Triangle is also identified in the budget paper as an "internal influence" that is expected to have significant impact on the 2013/2014 budget. This is due to the ongoing demand placed on Council arising from Council's role as place manager for the St Kilda Triangle and in recognition of the fact that the St Kilda Triangle will require review, planning and implementation as a major project to be undertaken by the City of Port Phillipⁱⁱⁱ.

Notwithstanding existing funding initiatives and the status of the St Kilda Triangle as a major project only \$185,000 has been allocated in the draft budget for the St Kilda Triangle and this allocation is to facilitate both amendment to the planning scheme amendment and ongoing advocacy for the site. Assuming a reasonable allocation for planning scheme amendment activities it would appear there has been little allocation made for advocacy of the site and nothing for review, planning and implementation of the physical realisation of the Vision for the site given the Council's role as place manager and project proponent.

Unchain Inc agrees with the framework and Vision set down for the St Kilda Triangle in the *St Kilda Triangle – 2012* report as endorsed by the City of Port Phillip Council in August 2012.

We believe the St Kilda Triangle is one of Melbourne's most significant places and that the site provides the City of Port Phillip its best opportunity to strengthen local community and

contribute to the renewal of vibrancy within St Kilda through the development of a significant public space.

Public interest in the future of this site remains strong and Council is under scrutiny to develop an outstanding design and business case for the site so as to deliver world class social infrastructure providing enhanced amenity to the City of Port Phillip's growing population and enhanced opportunities for visitors to St Kilda.

The *St Kilda Triangle – 2012* report as endorsed by Council proposes a timeline for the site's realisation which includes the following activities in 2013 and 2014^{iv}:

- Submission of the planning scheme amendment to the Minister for Planning
- Investigate of options for the delivery of a preferred concept design for the site (i.e. Council, Council-State Government partnership, public-private partnership) and the site's future management
- Undertake community and stakeholder engagement.

With respect to developing a concept design for the site Council further anticipated that the following additional work would be undertaken in 2013:

- Finalise a comprehensive brief to inform the procurement of design concepts, based on St Kilda Triangle 2012 and any further research
- Undertake a process to procure a design concept
- Engage community and stakeholders on preliminary design concepts
- Identify a preferred design concept for the St Kilda Triangle site
- Implement a funding and advocacy strategy for delivery of the preferred design concept
- Develop a staging plan for delivery of the preferred design concept
- Adopt the preferred design concept, staging plan and funding strategy
- Undertake community engagement.

Council also anticipated via the endorsed report that the following preparatory site work and further studies would be completed in 2013:

- Conduct an Environmental Audit of the site to have the EPA categorise the level of contaminated fill on the site
- Refine project financial analysis for the site based on the contaminated material studies
- Prepare an Archaeological Artefact Finds Plan
- Prepare a Vegetation Assessment Plan for the site and its surrounds to identify trees for management or relocation
- Commence discussions with Department of Transport and VicRoads about the opportunities to enhance pedestrian access across Jacka Boulevard, including reduced speed zones, access, materials, public realm works and boulevard plantings
- Undertake planning work for the future of Cavell Street, the Palais Theatre forecourt and Lower Esplanade for a phased integration with the St Kilda Triangle site.

It is impossible to imagine that sufficient funds have been allowed in the draft budget to undertake the range of works indicated in the endorsed report.

Given the delay suffered due to a flawed approach to first development proposal for the site it is our submission that additional funds be allocated in the draft budget to allow the business case for the site to progress without further delay.

Unchain's policy position taken to the last Council election called for the establishment of a reference group and appointment of an experienced project manager to guide council through the realisation of the site's vision. It is our understanding that the tasks for project definition required for St Triangle, to be undertaken within the appropriate governance structure, will be by their nature complex and will require a dedicated project team to progress the simultaneous workstreams of project definition in an efficient and timely manner. We do not believe that Port Phillip Council has the capacity in-house to manage the process and accordingly believe that an external consultancy team experienced in project management within a complex project delivery environment be appointed by Council so as to achieve the broad goals and timeframes set out in the St Kilda Triangle-2012 report.

Our understanding is that options assessment, project proving and business case documentation, including adoption of a preferred design scheme for the site, would take approximately two years to achieve and that approximately \$400,000 dollars is required in the 2013-14 financial year to facilitated identification and appointment of an external consultant by January 2014.

unChain Inc accordingly submits that Council allocate an additional \$400,000 over and above the \$185,00 already allocated to complete the C106 amendment process so as to allow realisation of the vision for the St Kilda Triangle to proceed generally in accordance with the time frames endorsed by Council in the St Kilda Triangle -2012 framework.

Peter Holland & Sue Cleveland
On behalf of unChain Inc
Contact: hollandp@me.com, 0411 470 651

ⁱ Page 39 **Vibrant – A Vibrant City**; City of Port Phillip Draft Council Plan 2013-17

ⁱⁱ Page 29 **Funding Initiatives**; City of Port Phillip Draft Budget 2013-14

ⁱⁱⁱ Page 34 **Internal Influences**; City of Port Phillip Draft Budget 2013-14

^{iv} Proposed Timeline – St Kilda Triangle – 2012 (Part 04)