

Track vs. trees by beach

BY BEAU DONELLY

BAYSIDE council is forging ahead with plans to complete the Beaumaris bike track, which conservationists fear will force the removal of more than 100 native trees on Beach Road.

The council applied to clear vegetation on the foreshore between Cromer and Charman roads late last year in a bid to complete the trail. The estimated cost of the bike track is \$900,000.

The Beaumaris Conservation Society objected to the proposal, which it said included the removal of more than 100 native trees.

In a letter to the council, BCS president Ron Morris said the plan would lead to “severe degradation” and further erosion of coastal bushland. “There are other options and the council hasn’t fully considered the effect on the habitat,” Mr Morris said.

Greens MLC Sue Pennicuik lobbied Parliament in 2008 to consider a 300-metre extension of the single lane on Beach Road near Charman Road to accommodate cyclists and preserve native bushland. “The single lane was put there 20 years ago to slow traffic down,” she said. “It’s safer for cyclists and pedestrians to have a single lane which would be an



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extension of an existing feature of the road.”

But Beach Road Cyclists spokesman Marcel Lema opposed any move that would narrow the road: “That section of Beach Road is already dangerous. We’re lobbying to make it wider for cyclists.”

Mr Lema said the environmental benefit generated by having fewer cars and more cyclists on the road should be considered.

VicRoads acting regional director Graham Clarke said an agreement with the council to narrow the left traffic lane would conserve some vegetation and meet safety requirements.

The council has vowed to reopen community consultation on the matter.