

Policy Application

The street verge is part of the road reserve and, as such, is under the care, control and management of the City. Underground service provision such as power, water, gas and telecommunications are assigned standard alignments within the road reserve and typically these are between 0.0 and 5.0 metres from the property boundaries. As these are located in the verge, service utilities need to access them from time to time to maintain and/or repair services.

Landscaping of Verges

The underlying principle of the City's approach to managing verges in the road reserve is to encourage residents to: install and maintain soft landscaping which contributes to the aesthetic presentation of the streetscape; apply sound environmental consideration to verge development such as utilising low water demand plantings of species indigenous to the local area and minimising the use of impervious surfaces; meet the communities requirements for safety and protect the City's obligations for duty of care.

Biodiversity value

Consistent with environmental sustainability the policy aims to preserve and promote "green" verges throughout the City. Green verges are an important component of the City's streetscapes, which form green corridors that link to parks, reserves and natural bushland areas. Revegetated verges act as 'ecological stepping stones' and assist native animals and birds move throughout the urban landscape. Planting of local native flowering plants is supported to provide food and shelter for wildlife. Mulch should be applied prior to all plantings to a depth of 7-10 cm to assist water conservation.

Water infiltration

On site infiltration of storm water is desirable as a means of contributing to the replenishment of groundwater. Storm water runoff from large sections of hard surfacing can cause localised flooding and adversely impact on the City's storm water system.

Vegetable gardens

While the City encourages the planting of native species indigenous to the local area on verges, installation of vegetable gardens on the verge is permissible. Vegetable gardens on the verge should not stockpile waste, mulch or manure and all spent vegetation should be removed. Stakes, lattice and/or other supporting structures are not considered appropriate due to safety reasons.

Irrigation systems

Where the property owner wishes to install a permanent irrigation system on the verge the water supply is to be from within the adjacent private property boundary. All pipework is to be installed below ground and under footpaths. Sub-surface drip

irrigation is preferred where possible to assist conserve water. Alternatively, the sprinklers should be the pop-up variety or type approved by the City.

Non-compliant use

The installation of hard landscaping elements such as borders and or planter boxes around mature street trees is not supported.

The construction/installation of tree houses and other play structures/equipment within the verge is not considered appropriate due to safety issues.

The tethering of boats, trailers and other such items to street trees, street lights and/or road signs is not considered appropriate within the road reserve due to safety issues and the potential to compromise the health of the tree and/or damage infrastructure.

The installation of synthetic turf as a verge treatment is not permitted due to the number of issues relating to its use.

Verge Compliance Criteria

In order for applications to install landscape treatments on the verge to be approved the following criteria will need to be addressed:

- Verge treatments are limited to low growing plants and ground covers and be non hazardous to pedestrians, motorists, and/or cyclists;
- The proposed landscaping provides a positive contribution to the aesthetic presentation of the streetscape
- Landscaping does not create barriers within the verge
- Dense planting or other low maintenance forms of landscaping is acceptable providing a pedestrian access 1.5m wide is maintained at all times;
- Where the proposal includes provision of a footpath through the verge between the existing footpath and the kerb line, the path is to be 1.5 metres wide, constructed of a suitably trafficable material and laid flush with the existing footpath, kerb and native soil level.
- Where a bus stop exists within a verge, the proposed development must provide a minimum 1.5 clearance around the bus stop and between the bus stop and the foot path;
- The mature height of vegetation will be maintained below 500 mm. However, midstorey plants, particularly those that are indigenous to the area such as grass trees (*Xanthorrhoea* species) and banksias (*Banksia* species) are permissible so long as they are not planted between a footpath and the road, to ensure sight lines are maintained ;
- Hedges or similar borders of plants are acceptable if planted to maintain, a minimum clearance of 500 mm from any existing and/or proposed footpath, and/or crossover and a minimum clearance of 1,000 mm from the kerb line;
- Reticulation, where proposed, does not present a hazard to either pedestrians or traffic;
- Appropriate measures are undertaken and maintained to minimise erosion and dust
- The use of loose inorganic materials (eg gravels / stones / rocks / bricks) will not be supported;
- The use of any hard landscaping elements to create garden edging or retain soil adjacent to any proposed or existing footpaths, crossovers, and or kerbs will not be supported.
- Temporary barricades for the purpose of establishing verge landscaping are

acceptable provided that the materials used do not create a hazard are identified with an abundance of markers to ensure the safety of pedestrians.

Barriers must not be erected across pedestrian access ways, or in a manner, which creates a sight line barrier / hazard.

Verge Development Approval Process

All proposals for landscape treatment of the verge require approval from the City of Subiaco.

In order for applications to install landscape treatments on the verge to be assessed property owners are required to submit in writing an outline of the landscape proposal which includes a diagram to illustrate the proposed work including plant species and the layout of any proposed reticulation system(s).

The City will then:

- Inspect the location;
- Notify the owner in writing whether the City supports or does not support the proposed landscape development;
- On completion of any approved works the City will inspect the works;
- Works not carried out in accordance with the relevant approvals will require any noncompliance issues to be rectified.

Verge Development Assistant Scheme

The objective of providing verge development assistance is to encourage and support property owners to develop and maintain verges that contribute to the aesthetic presentation of streetscapes and a sustainable quality environment for the community. The city offers three services as part of its verge development assistance scheme, as follows:

1. Verge Restoration: Residential property owners can apply for one or more of the following verge restoration services to prepare the verge for planting:

- a) Provision of mulch to spread over the verge at a depth of 70 mm;
- b) Provision of a soil amendment to be incorporated into the soil during planting;
- c) Removal of existing soil/vegetation to a depth of approximately 50 mm below the kerb/footpath levels, where existing levels exceed the height of the surrounding kerb/footpath and required earthworks will not have a negative impact on existing street trees. Where a vehicular crossover is no longer used to gain access to the property, this service will include the removal of the redundant crossover.

Verge restoration applications must be from the property owner. An application for verge restoration will not be considered where building work or activities within the property have damaged the street verge. To submit an application, please complete and return the verge restoration form located on the city's website. Applications will be assessed by the city collectively once per annum in early autumn, with approved assistance scheduled for April/May.

2. Plant Subsidy: Residential property owners can apply to purchase subsidised low water demand native plants for landscaping the street verge adjacent to their properties. The objective of providing subsidised plants is to encourage residents to support biodiversity, water conservation, and the establishment of green corridors to link habitat areas within the Western Suburbs. The City will subsidise

up to a maximum of 80 plants per property each year. Plants are available from APACE Nursery, 1 Johannah Street, North Fremantle during the month of May. To take advantage of the plant subsidy, residents are required to present APACE staff with proof of residency, such as a driver's license or utility bill.

3. Landscape Design Advice: Plant selection advice and landscape design expertise is available to residential property owners requiring or seeking assistance in regard to verge landscaping. The City will subsidise assistance to a value of \$100. This scheme will be available once in every 5 years for individual properties. Applications for the subsidy should be made in writing by contacting the City of Subiaco.

It is recommended property owners kill any existing turf prior to verge restoration to avoid resprouting. This may be done when the turf is actively growing (spring or autumn) by using weed control matts or biodegradable herbicides (e.g. Round-up Biactive).

Verge Maintenance

In areas of high visibility where a property owner(s)/resident(s) are not inclined to maintain the verge adjacent to their property the City will provide limited assistance to ensure public safety and to maintain a level of amenity commensurate with the expectations of the Subiaco community.

The following maintenance service is proposed:

The City will each year mow (once only) unkempt road verges in residential areas, which on the 1 December, display weed growth, which exceeds a height of 500 mm across the entire verge.

The City will mow all unkempt road verges adjacent to residential properties that are borders to the City on a programmed basis to a maximum 2 times per year.

Verges that are not typically maintained by residents which have weed/vegetation growth less than 500 mm in height and/or that do not pose a safety hazard, are left un-maintained. This standard is in keeping with the level of maintenance carried out by all other councils within the western suburbs.

Introduce community education program surrounding the benefit of verge maintenance by residents for the whole community.

Verge Paving

Where there is a legitimate requirement for verge parking and there is no reasonable alternative property owners can apply to pave a portion of the verge directly adjacent to their property. The objective is to provide a balance between legitimate off street parking requirements, streetscape enhancement by landscaping and the onsite infiltration of storm water.

Proposals for verge paving require consideration from the City of Subiaco.

Applications will only be approved where the application complies with the requirements of the Verge Policy and/or there is a legitimate requirement to provide for on verge parking and there is no reasonable alternative. Assessment will include a review of the properties ability to accommodate the onsite parking of two passenger vehicles.

Where the installation of paving to the verge is likely to compromise the longevity of an existing street tree the application will not be supported.

Where paving is proposed to provide a footpath between the property boundary and

the kerb line, the path is to be 1.5 metres wide.

In order for verge paving proposals to be assessed the property owner is required to submit in writing an outline of their proposed paving plan with a diagram that illustrates the proposed location, alignment, and the materials to be used. The City will then:

- Inspect the location
- Notify the owner in writing of whether the City supports or does not support the proposed paving plan.
- On completion of any approved works the City will inspect the works. Works not carried out in accordance with the relevant approvals will require any noncompliance issues to be rectified.
- In order for applications to install verge paving to be approved the following criteria will need to be addressed:
 - Applicable only where in conjunction with new soft landscaping elements with low water demand.
 - Applicable only where verge parking is required and there is no reasonable alternative.
 - Proposed parking configuration will not cause obstruction of the footpath or carriageway;
 - Where there is provision to park two vehicles within the adjacent residential property the installation of conventional clay or concrete paving within the verge is not supported.
 - Where there is no provision to park vehicles within a residential property and there is no crossover into the property the property owner may apply to pave a portion of the adjacent verge to accommodate two vehicles. Where conventional clay or concrete paving is proposed, the area permitted to be paved will be no more than 70% of the verge area (excluding any existing footpath and/or approved single width crossover) where to do so would not compromise the longevity of any existing street tree. The use of soil reinforcing cells will entitle the property owner to pave up to 100% of the adjacent verge.
 - Where the provision to park vehicles within private property is limited to one car; the property owner may apply to pave a portion of the adjacent verge to accommodate a second vehicle. Where conventional clay or concrete paving is proposed, the area permitted to be paved will be no more than 30% of the verge area (excluding any existing footpath and/or approved single width crossover) where to do so would not compromise the longevity of any existing street tree. The use of soil reinforcing cells will entitle the property owner to pave up to 70% of the adjacent verge.
 - Where the road reserve is narrow and the verge contains a large and mature street tree with a wide spreading canopy, which overshadows the whole verge and which prohibits the establishment of ground covers the adjacent residential property owner may apply to pave up to 70% of the verge consistent with the requirements of this policy.
 - Where there is approval to install conventional clay or concrete paving to 70% of the verge the adjacent property owners must make provision for the on-site drainage of storm water within the verge. The adjacent property owner is required to provide detailed plans of the proposed method of storm water infiltration to the City for its consideration and approval. The use of soil reinforcing cells (which provide for storm water infiltration) will not require additional drainage provisions.
 - A minimum two (2) metre paving clearance from any street tree is to be

maintained.

- The property owner is to acknowledge in writing that any approved verge paving installed within the verge will be maintained by the property owner at grade consistent with the surrounding soil level at all times to ensure safe pedestrian access.
- The property owner is to acknowledge in writing that there is no responsibility on the part of the Council or utility service provider to reinstate verge paving removed to provide for routine maintenance of services or projects approved by Council.
- Commercial areas are treated separately from residential verges as paving is permitted to 100% of the verge in commercial areas.

Property Development

To minimise the risk of tree damage/death a minimum construction clearance of two (2) metres is required from the base of an existing street tree. Where excavation to a depth greater than 100mm is proposed the clearance should be greater than three(3) metres from the base of an existing street tree.

Existing Verge Treatments

Where verge treatments are not consistent with the policy and are identified as safety hazards the City will request the property owner to carry out remedial works. Where the owner of the property is unable or unwilling to complete remedial works, the City will complete works.

Existing verge treatments, which are not consistent with this policy, are required to be rectified, on the following basis:

- Identified hazards or safety issues eg tree houses, play equipment or any structure that has not been approved etc, boats and/or trailers tethered to street trees etc, landscaping that has thorns, spear like leaves or plants that are known to be toxic etc, landscaping that impedes sightlines/pedestrian access etc, rectification within 14 days of notification. Where an existing verge treatment is identified to present an immediate hazard the City will rectify within 24 hours.
- Paving (not approved by the City of Subiaco) in excess of areas defined in this policy are to be rectified within 60 days of notification.
- Planter boxes/borders not constructed to meet Australian Standards or industry standards; or constructed to a height greater than 150mm and/or within 500 mm of an existing footpath/crossover and/or within 1,000 mm of the kerb line, require rectification within 60 days.

Residents and commercial property owners are encouraged to maintain the verge adjacent to their property, for their own benefit, the benefit of their neighbours and the benefit of the wider Subiaco community.

Public Awareness

The City will acknowledge residents efforts to develop a sustainable verge landscape via a 'Sustainable Verge Award' each year in spring. The award will target verge landscapes which contribute to the City's green objectives. The award is available for two categories' residential and commercial/schools. The award is judged on the following criteria: biodiversity; water wise strategies; design; maintenance and any unique aspects. Nomination forms are available at the Administration Centre, and can be submitted from August to mid-September annually.

Public awareness programs to highlight the responsibilities of residents and the City on the issues of planting and maintenance of the verges will be undertaken,

including:

- Articles placed from time to time (quarterly) in the Post newspaper and Talk about Subiaco newsletter. The articles should include all aspects of verge planting and maintenance, including responsibility and relevant By Laws.

Glossary Of Terms

Street Verge - Portion of road reserve between the property boundary and edge of carriageway (kerb line).

Street Tree - A tree planted and maintained by the City typically located 2.7 metres off the property boundary.

Verge Treatment - Landscaping of the portion of street verge not occupied by a footpath or crossover. Typically involves the planting of grass, ground covers or low shrubs and may include reticulation or paving.

Verge Restoration - The removal of any existing treatment and excavation of soil up to 100mm below existing paved levels. Topsoil is placed and levelled so that the new soil is flush with existing paving (footpath, crossover, kerbing, etc).

Soft landscaping - Refers to grass, ground cover and shrubs

Hard Landscaping - Refers to retaining structures or edging / borders, but not paving.

Paving - Refers to clay or concrete paving materials for footways or hardstand for parking of vehicles.

Structures - Refers to built structures