

11.1.2 Road Verge Development and Maintenance Policy	
File Ref:	PR.7 Parks And Reserves Maintenance Street Trees/Verges
Previous Items:	Nil
Applicant:	Nil
Author and Responsible Officer:	Director Infrastructure and Development Services
Declaration of Interest:	Nil
Voting Requirements:	Simple Majority
Appendix Number	11.1.2 A – Road Verge Development and Maintenance Policy 11.1.2 B – Road Verge Development and Maintenance Guidelines 11.1.2 C – Communication Strategy

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. adopts the Road Verge Development and Maintenance policy; and**
- 2. endorses the Road Verge Development and Maintenance Guidelines;**

for the purpose of public consultation.

IN BRIEF

Excluding trees and any sites actively managed by the Shire, the owner of the property adjoining a road verge is responsible for the maintenance of verge vegetation. Where a verge adjoins land owned by the Shire, the Shire will maintain the vegetation on that verge.

However, currently a select few ratepayers are still getting their verges maintained by the Shire of Waroona at the cost of the other ratepayers, which is not equitable nor sustainable. The Road Verge Development and Maintenance policy and guidelines are to standardise and clarify the delivery of the related Shire services.

Their implementation will result in the discontinuance of 'free' verge mowing from the 01/12/2023 in line with other Local Government Authorities across Western Australia.

BACKGROUND

To maintain services which are both equitable and sustainable, consideration is requested with regards to discontinuing the mowing of front lawn verges of the select properties that receive this service for free, to the detriment of other Rates payers as providing this service costs the Shire of Waroona considerable levels of wage and plant operating costs.

Excluding trees and any sites actively managed by the Shire, the owner of the property adjoining a road verge is responsible for the maintenance of verge vegetation. Where a verge adjoins land owned by the Shire, the Shire will maintain the vegetation on that verge.

However, currently a select few ratepayers are still getting their verges maintained by the Shire of Waroona at the cost of the other ratepayers, which is not equitable nor sustainable.

Other ratepayers are required to pay for private works if they want the Shire to mow their road verges. The Road Verge Development and Maintenance policy and guidelines are to standardise and clarify the delivery of the related Shire services.

The Road Verge Development and Maintenance policy and guidelines are to standardise and clarify the delivery of the related Shire services.

Their implementation will result in the discontinuance of 'free' verge mowing from the 01/12/2023 in line with other Local Government Authorities across Western Australia.

REPORT DETAIL

This change is motivated by a commitment to enhancing our community's well-being and sustainability, while utilising our resources more efficiently. The reasons for the change include:

- I. **Resource Reallocation:** Our community's needs have evolved over time. We are reallocating the resources previously dedicated to verge mowing - to creating and maintaining a new community precinct that will serve as a vibrant hub for our residents. This new precinct will include recreational spaces, social amenities, and green areas, significantly enhancing the quality of life in our community.
- II. **Environmental Impact:** In an era of growing environmental awareness, it is our responsibility to make sustainable choices. By reducing mowing, we are taking a modest yet crucial step toward reducing our carbon footprint and promoting a greener, more eco-friendly community. This aligns with our commitment to environmental stewardship and will encourage homeowners to transition to waterwise verges in the longer term.
- III. **Efficiency & Equity:** Efficient resource allocation is essential to responsible governance. Focusing on delivering our whole communities service needs, optimises our budget, ensuring that ratepayer funds are spent wisely and equitably. This reallocation allows us to invest in other community projects and services that will benefit a broader cross-section of our residents. As opposed to the broader community subsidising services only provided to a select few.
- IV. **Community Engagement:** by encouraging residents to take ownership of their front verges, we can foster a stronger sense of pride and community engagement. As residents have the opportunity to design and maintain their verges, thereby contributing to the character and identity of their area.

The decision to discontinue verge mowing and redirect resources toward the new community precinct offers several key benefits:

- I. The resources are needed for the community precinct which will become a central point for recreational and social activities, enriching the lives of all of our residents.

- II. In the future we will be introducing a "Verge Beautification Program" that empowers residents to create distinctive, sustainable, and waterwise verges. Guidance, resources, and incentives will be provided to support residents in this endeavour.
- III. This reallocation of resources will go to equitable services and will encourage homeowners to transition to waterwise verges in the longer term.