

Nature Strips Policy

Policy Classification	- Infrastructure
Policy No.	- POL/480
Policy Status	- Current
Responsible Service Unit	- Parks and Recreation
Authorised by	- Council
Date Adopted	- 31 March 2015
Next Review Date	- NA

This policy is part of a suite of policies adopted by Council or the Executive Management Team (EMT).

New or replacement policies can be created and developed within Service Units but can only be added to Council's Policy Register by Governance Services following the approval of the policy by Council or the EMT.

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UNDER REVIEW

PURPOSE

To specify Council's requirements in relation to the maintenance and use of nature strips in Manningham, in order to ensure the provision of safe and attractive streetscapes.

POLICY STATEMENT

Maintenance

1. Manningham City Council is responsible for the planting and maintenance of street trees in nature strips.
2. Owners of adjoining properties are responsible for maintaining nature strips by regular mowing, weeding and picking up litter.
3. Where a property owner fails to maintain a nature strip adjoining the property, Council may arrange for appropriate maintenance, including mowing, at the cost of the owner, if the condition of the nature strip is considered to be a traffic or safety hazard or considered to impact unfavourably and significantly on local amenity.

Works in nature strips

4. Except in special circumstances specified in the *Nature Strip Planting Guidelines*, hard landscaping elements are prohibited within a nature strip, including:
 - a. Rocks or pebbles
 - b. Crushed rock (scoria/toppings) except on approved vehicle crossings
 - c. Bollards
 - d. Hard surfaces, such as bricks, pavers, concrete, asphalt, etc
 - e. Bluestone pitchers
 - f. Sleepers
 - g. Planter boxes
 - h. Gate entry pillars and feature entry walls
 - i. Fences
 - j. Star pickets or wooden stakes

- k. Private power and lighting
 - l. Concrete edging around trees or garden beds
 - m. Letterboxes
 - n. Sporting equipment
 - o. Ornamental statues
 - p. Irrigation
 - q. Synthetic turf
 - r. Any other material which could pose a traffic or safety hazard
5. Council may require a property owner to remove any prohibited landscaping or other works undertaken within an adjoining nature strip.

Planting

6. In nature strips containing indigenous vegetation, the planting or removal of vegetation is prohibited
7. In nature strips not containing indigenous vegetation, a permit is required for a property owner to plant within an adjoining nature strip.
8. Any application for a permit will be considered having regard to the *Nature Strips Planting Guidelines*, which specify requirements in relation to:
- a. provision of minimum widths for clear, safe and unobstructed pedestrian zones and kerbside zones;
 - b. provision of clear, safe and unobstructed sightlines for cyclists, drivers and other road users;
 - c. prohibited and recommended plant species; and
 - d. maximum height of plants.
9. Any property owner granted a permit for planting within an adjoining nature strip must have public liability insurance to the value of \$10 million.
10. The property owner is liable for any damage to infrastructure located on, or in, the nature strip, caused by works carried out by them, or on their behalf.
11. The cost of establishment and maintenance of any permitted planting is to be met by the property owner.
12. Council may require a property owner to remove any planting which has been undertaken without a permit, or which does not comply with the permit

conditions, including planting which is poorly maintained, and to reinstate the nature strip to its previous condition, at the cost of the owner/resident.

13. Council and service authorities reserve the right to access existing and future infrastructure assets within a nature strip. The affected area will be reinstated with topsoil and grass seed. Any reinstatement of permitted modified nature strips is the responsibility of the property owner.

SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy relates to all nature strips in Manningham, with the exception of nature strips associated with VicRoads' Declared Roads.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the requirements relating to the protection of Council land and assets in *Manningham's Community Local Law 2013*.

RESPONSIBILITY

CEO
Director Planning and Environment
Director Assets and Engineering
Manager Health and Local Laws
Manager Parks and Recreation

DEFINITIONS

Nature strip

A nature strip, or roadside verge, is an area of public land between a property boundary and the road kerb or shoulder, excluding any footpath or vehicle crossing where they exist. Most nature strips in Manningham are vegetated or grassed. Nature strips are commonly the location for utility services, such as gas, telephone, water and power, as well as public lighting. They also accommodate infrastructure, including signage and bus shelters, and provide a location for the collection of garbage, recycling and green waste bins, as well as hard rubbish.

RELATED POLICIES

Manningham Streetscape Character Study 2009
Manningham's Community Local Law 2013
Manningham Parking Management Policy 2014
Manningham Road Management Plan, November 2004
Roadside Environmental Management Strategy, June 2004
Roadside Environmental Management Strategy Guidelines, June 2004
Roadside Strategy East Mullum Mullum Map, January 2004
Roadside Strategy West Mullum Mullum Map, January 2004

SUPPORTING PROCEDURES

Nature Strips Procedures

GUIDELINES

Nature Strip Planting Guidelines

RELATED LEGISLATION

Local Government Act 1989
Road Management Act 2004
Road Safety Act 1986

SUPPORTING RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Well maintained nature strips add to the appearance of the municipality and its streetscapes.

Council is responsible for the planting of street trees in nature strips on the accordance with the *Streetscape Character Study 2009*. It is the responsibility of property owners to maintain the nature strips adjoining their property.

Under *Manningham's Community Local Law 2013*, in relation to Council land, which includes a nature strip, a permit is required to commence or carry out any works or to remove, damage, destroy or interfere with any vegetation, material, thing or asset owned by Council.

There are increasing instances of adjoining property owners and residents undertaking works or planting within nature strips which have not been permitted by Council and are often unsafe and/or unsightly and affect the amenity of the streetscapes. In addition, an increasing number of requests are being made for planting in nature strips.

A clear policy is required in relation to Council's requirements for the maintenance and use, including planting, of nature strips, to ensure that they are safe, functional and attractive.