

Tree Strategy Action Plan 2017

A Strategy to address the management of all trees in the public realm.

Responsible Directorate: Environment and Infrastructure

Authorised by: Council

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Tree Strategy Action Plan

This action plan sits under the Tree Strategy 2017 for the management of all trees in the public realm. It has been developed to define how Council's tree planning and operations will be amended to address the identified challenges and opportunities and to manage and maintain our tree asset well into the future.

1. Strategic theme: Preserving the character of our streets and neighborhoods

The collective value of trees is a critical element in defining the streetscape and neighborhood character. This is of primary importance, and individual decisions about specific trees or issues will always be made in the context of the broader impact on streetscape and neighborhood character.

Key actions will center on ensuring key risks, such as maturing tree population, are proactively managed so neighborhood and streetscape character is maintained over a long term.

| Action | Priority | Resources |
|--|----------|--|
| 1.1 introduce a new proactive street and park tree renewal plan addressing the City's aging tree population and to increase species diversity for a resilient future tree population | High | New program - ongoing resources required Development of educational material, planning and implementation personnel, planting and maintenance contracts (est. \$200k to \$400k per annum) |
| 1.2 Provide input from a tree perspective into place focussed planning for Council projects. | Medium | Existing resources |
| 1.3 Contract grow rare and unique species, where commercial nurseries are unable to service Council needs. | Medium | Existing resources |
| 1.4 Ensure streetscape upgrades/renewals/design/nodes retrofits have trees included at planning and design stage. | Low | Existing resources |
| 1.5 Investigate opportunities for an arboretum (tree botanic park), or virtual arboretum, to showcase the City's legacy trees | Low | Investigation within existing resources |

2. Strategic theme: Engaging with our community

This strategy is both about the City's tree assets, but also about the people that enjoy and value them.

Key actions will center around engaging the community and raising awareness community around critical issues, such as the aging tree population issue, and also participating at a local implementation level on significant change initiatives such as proactive street tree renewal.

| Action | Priority | Cost |
|--|----------|--|
| 2.1 Develop a community awareness program around key risks to the City's trees assets (in particular aging tree population), and implement case by case engagement with community over implementation of streetscape renewals. | High | Resources required. Included in action 1.1 |
| 2.2 Develop and implement a community engagement and communication mechanism regarding Boroondara's Trees, enabling improved educational and information sharing with the community. | Medium | Existing resources |
| 2.3 Develop an online public interactive tree map that includes base information about trees, significant and rare trees, and trees with historical significance. | Medium | Existing resources |

3. Strategic theme: Enhancing health, wellbeing and community connectedness

Trees play a key role in improving health, wellbeing and community connectedness of the Boroondara community.

Key actions will be to proactively pursue opportunities for improving walkability and active lifestyles, such increased canopy plantings, and the creation of landmark and future legacy trees, that resonate with people and contribute to a special sense of place.

| Action | Priority | Cost |
|--|----------|--------------------|
| 3.1 Develop a "Future Legacy and Landmark Tree program" and include within Council's existing annual tree planting program. | Medium | Existing resources |
| 3.2 Ensure adequate shade provision from tree planting in areas of need, including retail areas, playgrounds, key walking routes, public transport routes, and areas of social vulnerability | Medium | Existing resources |
| 3.3 Continue to provide adequate park tree shade to ensure amenity of parks to encourage residents to spend time in them | Medium | Existing resources |
| 3.4 Plant new trees to encourage active recreation along walking and cycling paths | Low | Existing resources |

4. Strategic theme: Managing Risk and Nuisance

There are risks associated with trees in an urban environment and this includes a nuisance or inconvenience they can sometimes cause.

Key actions will be to ensure renewal and replacement decisions are underpinned by the principle of the best tree for location, and to develop new Tree Management Guidelines that reflect the vision and objectives of this Strategy.

| Action | Priority | Cost |
|---|----------|----------------------------|
| 4.1 Develop new Tree Management Guidelines Key directions and content will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Species selection guidelines that implement the principle of the best tree for the location. This will address risk, damage and nuisance, streetscape character, species diversity and resilience, allergies and other human impacts, shade, other principals such as natives and exoticsKey processes, such as tree removal, tree replacementRisk management processes and mitigation measures. For example when and why root barriers are utilised | High | Existing resources |
| 4.2 Continue to build and improve inventory data about Council's street and park trees | Medium | Existing resources |
| 4.3 Apply asset management principles to Council's tree data, with a particular focus on acquiring and maintaining useful life expectancy (ULE) data on a periodic basis | Medium | Resources may be required. |
| 4.4 Investigate a corporate system to record and integrate risk data regarding claims and incidents | Medium | Existing resources |
| 4.5 Align existing and new tree data with Council's Asset Management Plan, and maintain tree data in a way that enables evidence based decision making regarding risk, maintenance, and renewal planning. | Medium | Existing resources |

5. Strategic theme: Continuing responsible stewardship and management

This strategy will ensure that the central role Council plays in stewardship and management of street and park trees aligns with the community vision.

The key action will be to develop new Tree Management Guidelines.

| Action | Priority | Cost |
|---|----------|---|
| 5.1 Develop new Tree Management Guidelines including | High | Existing resources |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop community information, FAQ's or handbooks, to support and explain Council's operation services and processes. Including:• How trees are selected• How trees are maintained• Guidelines around management of newly planted trees• Living with your street tree | High | Existing resources |
| 5.3 Review maintenance contracts as they expire to ensure new arrangements align with the Tree Strategy's vision and objectives. | Medium | Existing resources |
| 5.4 Review all operational service levels in the context of this Tree Strategy and the Tree Management Guidelines. | Medium | Existing resources |
| 5.5 Develop a Special Needs Tree Management Program, providing tailored maintenance to significant trees at risk of decline or with specialist maintenance needs | Medium | Further resources may be required -estimate 25k per annum |
| 5.6 Ensure that the 5 year capital works program aligns with tree program | Medium | Existing resources |
| 5.6 Establish an internal cross-functional Tree Working Committee (eg. Planning, Infrastructure, Environment, Landscape Design, Customer Service, Risk, Urban Planning) | Low | Existing resources |

6. Strategic theme: Improving our Natural Environment

Trees play an integral part in improving the natural environment, and how the community connects with nature.

Key actions will center on exploring and implementing storm water and biodiversity improvements, as well as the strategic use of trees in Council projects to provide opportunities to connect and interact with nature.

| Action | Priority | Cost |
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| 6.1 Explore opportunities for people to connect with nature through trees when undertaking capital projects (eg playgrounds and building renewal projects) | Medium | Existing resources |
| 6.2 Develop a street and park tree planting and renewal plan based on analysis of tree inventory and areas of strategic need e.g. for shade or biodiversity outcomes | Medium | Existing resources |
| 6.3 Trial passive stormwater irrigation for street trees | Low | Existing resources |
| 6.4 Map out streets that support Biodiversity outcomes and incorporate into Renewal Plan | Low | Existing resources |