Moonee Valley
Nature Strip Landscaping Policy

October 2018
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Appendices

Appendix A – Nature Strip Landscaping Guidelines
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Introduction

This policy applies to all nature strips within Council’s road reserve throughout the municipality (unless specifically specified otherwise) and must be read in conjunction with the Road Management Act 2004 (Vic) and Council’s Activities and General Amenities Local Law (2018).

The Policy does not apply to nature strips which incorporate the principles of Water Sensitive Urban Design, such as swales or rain gardens and which are required to be maintained in accordance with its design intent and planning permit requirements.

Although the Policy makes reference to footpaths, crossings, services/utilities and roadways (also located within the road reserve), these do not form part of the scope of the Policy, other than prohibiting additional planting or landscaping works within these areas under the Policy. The intent is to ensure these assets are not adversely impacted or compromised and that public safety is not at risk.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the use of the nature strip for purposes other than landscaping treatments also falls outside the scope of this Policy.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Nature Strip Landscaping Guidelines (Appendix A).

Policy Statements

Personalised Nature strips

Residents wanting to landscape a nature strip must apply to Council for permit as required under the Road Management Act 2004 (RM Act) and Council’s Activities and General Amenities Local Law (2018). Unless otherwise approved, all proposed works must abide by Council’s Residential Nature strip Landscaping Guidelines.

Unauthorised works within a Road Reserve is a breach of the Road Management Act. As such, existing nature strips landscapes without Council consent will be reviewed against the Nature strip Landscaping Guidelines and the resident advised of any changes required. Technical Permit Officers will determine whether the nature strip works present an immediate risk of danger, and any rectification works will be prioritised based on a risk assessment of the site. The property owner will be given a fair and reasonable time to rectify the works unless the level of risk warrants a more timely response. If the nature strip has been constructed as part of a street landscaping or road reconstruction project, and it is in the maintenance period of the contract, any changes in levels or maintenance will be the responsibility of the contractor.
The property owner or residents of abutting properties are expected to undertake to general maintenance of nature strips. General maintenance is defined as mowing, weeding, edging and any works required in keeping the nature strip in a safe and tidy condition.

Service authorities are responsible for the reinstatement of grassed nature strips only, if damaged following its works. The reinstatement may be undertaken by Council by arrangement with the Service Authority. Repairs or new treatments other than a basic grass treatment will be the responsibility of the land owner.

Enforcement/Compliance

Council approval is required to carry out works within the Road Reserve, including implementing any alternative landscape treatments other than grass. Please refer Appendix B for a copy of the application form.

Under the Road Management Act 2004, Section 63(1) and 65, it is an offence to conduct works on roads without the consent of the coordinating road authority and for the failure to comply with the conditions on consents.

Under Clause 19 of Schedule 7 of the RM Act, Council has the power to order rectification of works where the works have not been conducted in accordance with the RM Act or previous legislation. The rectification is required to be undertaken at the other party’s expense.

Penalties for non-compliance with the order to rectify works are based on set units per offence, as prescribed in the RM Act.

Failure to obtain a permit or to comply with the Policy will require property owners to rectify the situation at their own cost as directed by Council, in accordance with the process outline below.

Notice to comply

Where a prohibited treatment has been installed, Council has the authority to issue a ‘Notice to Comply’. As a first order of protocol Council officers will write to the relevant property owner requesting that they attend to the identified problem within a defined timeframe.

Failure to comply

A failure to meet the conditions of such a Notice within the given time (usually 14 days), may result in further action by Council. This could include Court proceedings and /or compliance works authorised by Council, at the cost of the property owner/occupier.
Removal and reinstatement

Where a treatment poses an immediate safety risk or seriously affects traffic, Council is obligated to take immediate action and arrange for compliance works. This can occur without issuing a ‘Notice to Comply’, and at the cost of the property owner/ occupier.

Notes

• Where an existing modified nature strip is not compliant with this policy, the resident will need to contact Council’s Local Laws unit. The resident may be required to return the nature strip to lawn grass or apply for written consent to be issued under the Road Management Act 2004 (Vic).

• When a property with a permit for planting on the nature strip is sold and the new owner is not a party to the original permit, the nature strip is to be returned to the original condition by the previous owner at the previous owner’s cost. Alternatively, the new owner of the modified nature strip may agree to take on maintenance liability by obtaining a permit.

• Council does not carry out renovation or maintenance of nature strips. It is common, accepted practice throughout Australia that the property owners or residents of abutting properties maintain the plants (excluding trees) and any landscape features on the nature strip. Generally, this amounts to weeding, mowing and edging turf.

Policy Implementation

The Policy will be effective from the date formally adopted by Council. Existing modified nature strips not compliant with this Policy may remain, however any Nature Strips containing alterations deemed to be a risk to the public, or impede pedestrians, may be issued a notice to remove offending materials.

The Manager, Regulatory and City Compliance will be responsible for implementing this policy in conjunction with the Coordinator Technical Permits as follows:

Residents

• Media releases to outline policy detail and how it affects residents of Moonee Valley City Council.

• Policy to be placed on Council’s website.

• Policy outline and Naturestrip Landscaping Guidelines flyers produced for distribution at Council offices.

• Provision of information booklet.
Staff

- Customer Service, Technical Permit officer’s staff to be briefed and provided with FAQ’s.
- Technical Permit officers delegated to assess and determine Nature strip Landscaping applications.

This policy will be monitored as follows:

- Inspections by a Council Officer of works requested.
- Reports of non-compliance compiled by assigned staff and forwarded to Manager, Regulatory and City Compliance for enforcement.

Related Documents

Appendix A – Nature strip Guidelines

Appendix B – Nature Strip Permit Application Form
Appendix A – Nature Strip Landscaping Guidelines

1. Background to Guidelines

Nature strips are an important aesthetic element of our streets and in contributing to the character of our neighbourhoods. Nature strips not only complement and enhance our streetscapes, they act as a buffer between vehicles, pedestrians and private property boundaries. Further, nature strips house important Council infrastructure and other utilities.

Nature strips are generally grassed, with street trees planted in the centre, and Moonee Valley is no exception, with this being the most common form of nature strip treatment throughout the municipality (refer Image 1).

![Image 1: Traditional Grassed Nature Strip](image)

As the municipality evolves, it is evident more residents are seeking alternative treatments to the traditional grass nature strip, and Council is keen to work with property owners/occupiers who wish to replace an existing grass nature strip with other plants or landscape materials. It is for this reason that Council developed a Nature Strip Landscaping Policy and related guidelines to provide property owners with alternative treatment options, whilst protecting the character element nature strips play in defining our neighbourhoods and municipality. Image 2 below is an example of alternative plantings.
In providing these alternative options, the policy takes into consideration important aspects such as neighbourhood character and city image, climate change and sustainability (Melbourne’s weather is getting hotter and drier), maintenance, life cycle costs, community safety and street infrastructure.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a safe, sustainable and consistent approach to the design and selection of materials used in residential nature strips throughout the City.

Although personalised nature strips can provide benefit to the Community in terms of identity and the use of drought tolerant plants, they can represent a greater safety risk to the community. As such, Council has developed this Policy to provide a Nature Strip Landscape Standard.

This Policy defines how Council will manage nature strips in the City to assist residents, property owners, authorities, Council officers, contractors, developers and those working with Council to understand the City’s requirements for the construction of nature strips.

2. Alternative Nature strip treatments

Council supports alternative landscape treatments where the efficient and safe use of the road reserve and other services/infrastructure are not compromised, and where community and environmental benefits can be demonstrated, such as beautification of the street scape, improved runoff infiltration, etc.

Permissible landscape treatments include:

- Native and drought-tolerant grasses
- Planting with low growing ground covers *(Refer 7 – Planting Specifications)*
- Organic mulch*
• Planter boxes that are raised above ground or soil filled containers intended for growing produce and other vegetation (refer Appendix A for more detail on the design criteria, such as size, height and placement of planter boxes).

* Mulch must only be used in conjunction with other plantings/landscaping treatments and not as the sole surface treatment; mulch is primarily to be limited to areas around/between plantings. It is not allowed onto the footpath, driveways or in the kerb and channel, and the level of the mulch must not extend above the level of the footpath or kerb. If applied correctly, mulch can assist with moisture retention and dust suppression.

Any of the above treatments, other than growing grass, require Council be informed prior to commencing any works.

Lawn grass
Grassed nature strips with low maintenance drought-tolerant grasses that only require periodic mowing and weeding remain the most common form of nature strip treatment within the municipality. No notification to Council or other form of formal approval permit is required for a grassed nature strip.

Plantings
The planting of suitable vegetation, such as ground cover plants and low growing shrubs that provide a soft and visually pleasing alternative are allowed under the Policy, as it can contribute to the streetscape, especially if well maintained. However, a number of factors need to be considered when applying this type of treatment, including safety, ease of passage for footpath users, maintenance and neighbourhood character.

The primary guidelines are summarised below and must be read in conjunction with Section 7 which provides a comprehensive set of requirements for planting within the nature strip.

- A minimum footpath width of 1.5 meters is to be retained.
- A minimum buffer zone of 0.5 meter from the back of the kerb and footpath is to be retained. Any plantings within this buffer zone must be maintained below a height of 150 millimeters.
- Approved plantings elsewhere within the nature strip must be maintained below a height of 500 millimeters.
- A minimum clearance of 1 meter from street trees and utilities (hydrants, poles, pits and Council’s underground drainage pipes, etc.) and 9 meters from an intersection must be maintained.
Hard landscaping elements such as rocks, timber, retaining walls and ornaments must not be used. Note: Planter boxes excluded (refer Section 8 for guidance).

Adequate space must be left for placing rubbish and recycling bins for collection.

Image 3: Alternative planting treatment

Suggested plants for nature strips
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common name</th>
<th>Height (mm)</th>
<th>Density (plants /m²)</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kidney weed</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Prostrate/low growing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running Postman</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Prostrate/low growing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut-leaf Goodenia</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
<td>Flower heads to 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creeping Myoporum</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Prostrate/low growing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inland Pigface</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td>Prostrate/low growing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matted bush-pea</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
<td>Prostrate/low growing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tall Daisy</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
<td>Flower heads to 500mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native violet</td>
<td>170</td>
<td></td>
<td>Prostrate/low growing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River mint</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slender Wallaby Grass</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrigal Greens</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
<td>Prostrate/low growing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulbine Lily</td>
<td>300</td>
<td></td>
<td>Flower heads to 500mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamomile Spray</td>
<td>300</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden Billy-buttons</td>
<td>300</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grey Tussock Grass</td>
<td>300</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honey -pots</td>
<td>300</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lemon beauty-heads</td>
<td>300</td>
<td></td>
<td>Flower heads range from 150 to 500mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milky beauty-heads</td>
<td>300</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Flax</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nodding Saltbush</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nodding Chocolate Lily</td>
<td>350</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berry (creeping) Saltbush</td>
<td>400</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut-leaf Daisy</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grey Germander</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kneed Wallaby Grass</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Name changed. Now &quot;Rytidosperma geniculatum&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrow Rock Fern</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windmill Grass</td>
<td>400</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wattle Mat-rush</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Leaves between 130 – 470mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austral Storks Bill</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black-anther Flax Lily</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common name</td>
<td>Height (mm)</td>
<td>Density (plants /m²)</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chocolate Lily</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clustered Everlasting</td>
<td>500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Everlasting</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Not often over 500mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kangaroo Grass</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pale Everlasting</td>
<td>500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tufted Bluebell</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weeping Grass</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Planter boxes

Planter boxes that are raised above ground or soil filled containers intended for growing produce and other vegetation are permissible under the Policy. Table 1 below provides a summary of the sizing and siting requirements. For more detail on the design criteria, please refer to Section 8.

**Table 1: Raised Planter Box Design Criteria**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raised Planter Boxes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Width</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Height</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spacing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Setback from kerb: 0.5m (min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Setback from footpath: 0.5m (min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Distance from intersection: 9.0m (min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Distance from vehicle crossing: 2.0m (min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clearance from utilities, pits or fixtures: 1.0m (min.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is recommended planter boxes within the nature strip be provided with a weed mat or geo-fabric layer on the bottom to form a separation barrier between the existing site soil and the imported growing soil or compost, to allow for improved drainage.

Also referred to as verge gardens, planter boxes can offer a number of benefits if designed and placed appropriately within the nature strip. Gardening with planter boxes can be an excellent way of getting to know your neighbours, building a strong sense of community, and adding to the biodiversity and beauty of your local street.

3. **Prohibited Treatments**

Prohibited landscape treatments include:

- Synthetic turf
- Hard surfaces such as concrete, pavers or asphalt
- Surface treatment, using a fine granitic sand or similar graded material and fine gravel. These are loose material that could end up on the footpath and if compacted to prevent this, it creates a hard surface that is not permeable. The loose material could also scour and enter the stormwater system, contributing to blocked pits.
- Irrigation systems or private lighting systems
- Street trees (other than those planted by Council)

Landscaping elements and treatments that do not allow for the efficient and safe use of road and/or footpath are prohibited under the Policy. The same applies to plantings and treatments that could impede the maintenance of services, including planting in open drains or changes to the gradient of the land, as the latter may cause flooding.
It is important property owners/occupiers confirm with Council that no other Council policy or guidelines are applicable prior to commencing any works, including those related to neighbourhood character, livability and sustainability.

Where a prohibited treatment has been installed, Council has the authority to issue a ‘Notice to Comply’; Failure to meet the conditions of such a Notice within the given time (usually 14 days) may result in further action by Council. This could include Court proceedings and/or compliance works authorised by Council, at the cost of the property owner/occupier.

Where a treatment poses an immediate safety risk or seriously affects traffic, Council is obligated to take immediate action and arrange for compliance works. This can occur without issuing a ‘Notice to Comply’, and at the cost of the property owner/occupier.

Where an existing modified nature strip is not compliant with this policy, the resident will need to contact Council’s City Compliance unit. The resident may be required to return the nature strip to lawn grass or apply for written consent to be issued under the Road Management Act 2004 (Vic)

Further detail regarding prohibited treatments is as follows:

- **Street Trees**
  
  Planting of trees by residents in the nature strip or road reserve is not permitted.
  
  If not carefully selected, Street trees can pose a danger to road and footpath users, damage paved surfaces and drains. As such, selection and management of street trees is undertaken by Council’s arborist in accordance with Council’s Tree Management Strategy.

- **Tall plants**
  
  Plants with a mature height of over 500mm in the nature strip or road reserve are not permitted.
  
  Tall plants can reduce the visibility and viewing distance for both road and footpath users.

- **Unsafe, weedy and invasive plants**
  
  Unsafe and declared noxious weeds in the nature strip or road reserve are not permitted. Refer Victoria’s consolidated lists of declared noxious weeds and pest animals for guidance (link provided below).
Plants that pose a safety risk include those that are woody, prickly, spiky, noxious and invasive.

- **Loose surfaces**

  Loose surfaces within the nature strip and road reserve are not permitted.

  Over time, loose surfaces are prone to escape from the contained area, and then posing a slip hazard as well as an obstacle to prams and mobility devices. Loose surfaces are prone to weeds and establishment of invasive species, and may give the appearance of providing the ability for cars to park, which is prohibited. In the case of granitic sand, increased rutting, puddling and reduced permeability are common problems.

  Examples of loose surfaces include gravel, pebbles, stones, sand, mulch and granitic sand.

  *Note:* *Mulch may be permitted where it assists with the establishment of plantings as discussed in this Policy.*

- **Paving and pavers**

  Paved areas within the nature strip and road reserve are not permitted.

  Paved areas are generally considered visually unappealing, not in keeping with neighbourhood character, encourages cars to be parked on the nature strip and individual pavers pose a trip hazard. Further, the MV2040 Green Action Plan - Water Sensitive City outlines Council’s commitment to improve the quality of downstream waterways by minimising the loss of permeable surfaces and reducing rainfall runoff from hard surfaces.

  In rare cases, paved nature strips have been permitted by Council where off street parking is not available and the resident suffers from mobility impairment.

- **Artificial turf**

  Artificial turf within the nature strip or road reserve is not permitted.

  Artificial turf has a number of disadvantages including discoloration, dislodgment, compaction and/or release of toxic chemicals from foundation materials, impractical to match after removal or excavation, requires regular cleaning, reduced permeability/increased runoff, and, is not self-repairing (unlike grass).
• **Raised surfaces and barriers**

Raised surfaces and within the nature strip and road reserve are not permitted.

Raised surface such as garden edging pose a trip hazard and prevents prams, mobility devices, and children on bicycles from maneuvering around other users or obstacles.

• **Retaining walls and steps**

Retaining walls and steps in any part of the road reserve are not permitted.

In addition to posing a fall, trip and obstacle hazard, retaining walls also prevent access to underground services and free access for maintenance vehicles. Where a retaining wall is located adjacent to a road reserve but within a private property the owner must ensure the wall does not:

- lean or extend over the property boundary into the road reserve
- cause the level of the road reserve to change
- pose a danger to footpath users
- hinder access to Council and utility assets.

**Note:** It is recommended property owners consult Council prior to commencing any retaining wall construction to minimise the risk of non-compliance.

• **Garden features**

Garden features within the nature strip and road reserve are not permitted.

Garden features pose an obstacle and tripping hazard to footpath users. Example of garden features not permitted in the nature strip include (but not limited to) rocks, sleepers, statues and solar lights.

• **Irrigation, water systems and water features**

Water features and water supply systems in the nature strip are not permitted.

Ponds, bird baths and similar features within the nature strip pose a trip hazards and are a general safety risk as: the water supply cannot be turned off from the road reserve, is prone to damage from loads and vehicles; and may prevent free access to Council and utility services. Further, components above ground tend to be visually unappealing and detract from the neighbourhood character. Water systems and their components include sub-surface irrigation, agricultural drains, rainwater tanks, control boxes, pumps and sprinklers.
• **Electrical systems**

Electrical systems in the nature strip and road reserve are not permitted.

Electrical systems including electrical supply pose a safety risk to the general public in the case of accidents or interference. In particular, electrical supply located below the surface poses a significant risk during excavation by Council and utilities.

• **Miscellaneous items and treatments**

Any items or treatment Council considers unsafe or inappropriate; Examples include permanent signs, railing, basketball hoops, seating, etc. other than those installed or permitted by Council.

The Table 2 below provides a sample list and examples of prohibited treatments.

**Table 2: Sample List of Prohibited Treatments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prohibited Treatment</th>
<th>Examples of prohibited materials and treatments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trees and tall plants:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Any plantings must be less than 500mm in mature height</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Only trees planted by Council is allowed within the nature strip</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prohibited Treatment</td>
<td>Examples of prohibited materials and treatments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raised edging and surfaces:</td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Raised edging example" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sleepers, garden edging, retaining wall, and raised beds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrigation:</td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Irrigation example" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Agi drains, water supply and sprinklers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden- and water features:</td>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Garden-water features example" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Large rocks, statues, ponds and lights (including solar lights)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prohibited Treatment</td>
<td>Examples of prohibited materials and treatments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loose surfaces:</td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Loose surfaces example" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Gravel, granitic sand, scoria, pebbles and mulch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paving and pavers:</td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Paving and pavers example" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Concrete, asphalt and pavers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsafe and invasive plants:</td>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Unsafe and invasive plants example" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cactus, serrated tussock and cruel vine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prohibited Treatment</td>
<td>Examples of prohibited materials and treatments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical systems:</td>
<td><img src="image1.jpg" alt="Electrical systems example" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lighting, pumps, control boxes, power supply</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous items and treatments:</td>
<td><img src="image2.jpg" alt="Miscellaneous items example" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Signs, railing, basketball hoops and seating</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fences, stakes, log barriers and retaining walls</td>
<td><img src="image3.jpg" alt="Fences example" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prohibited Treatment</td>
<td>Examples of prohibited materials and treatments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artificial lawn</td>
<td><img src="image1.jpg" alt="Artificial lawn example" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bollards</td>
<td><img src="image2.jpg" alt="Bollard example" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. **Excavation and Cultivation**

Before undertaking any excavation or cultivation of the nature strip, it is important to confirm the location of any underground services or private drains within the nature strip. An
approximate location of underground services can be obtained by accessing the free online service ‘Dial Before You Dig’ on 1100 or visiting their website at https://www.1100.com.au/.

If excavation works are to be undertaken, and due to the variation in depth of Council’s drainage assets, please also contact Council’s Infrastructure Maintenance Department as some drainage pipes are at a depth of only 100mm. Digging must only be performed by using hand tools and limited to a depth of 150mm below the original level of the nature strip as mechanical excavation (bobcat/dingo) or cultivation (rotary hoe) may damage underground infrastructure/services and cause damage to tree root systems.

Care must be taken not to damage street trees. Please refer the AS 4970 – Protection of Trees on Development Sites which provides guidance for the planning and protection of trees during construction and landscape works.

It is important to note that many areas in the municipality are still served via overhead power lines and the use of mechanical plant and equipment such as mobile cranes, tipping trucks, etc. being operated near overhead power lines can also pose a risk. This also applies to tree pruning. Please refer the Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2015 S.R. No. 67/2015 for more detail.

The owner/occupier are responsible for repairing any damage to infrastructure caused by any landscaping works or modification of the nature strip to the satisfaction of Council.

5. Utilities and Maintenance Work

Utility companies that supply water, gas, electricity and telecommunications may from time to time require access to the nature strip to perform maintenance/emergency works. In addition, as Council’s drainage network is mostly located within the nature strip, Council may require access to repair damage/aging assets.

It is standard practice for utility companies to re-instate the nature strip following maintenance/emergency works, but is unlikely to re-instate residential nature strips with anything other than grass, even if an alternative landscaping treatment had been applied.

In the event a modified nature strip is re-instated by the Infrastructure/Works Manager at own choice, Council cannot guarantee any of the replaced plants or landscaping will match the condition that existed prior to the maintenance works. Council will not be responsible for replacing plants or landscaping as a result of such works.

Once modified, the property owner/occupier will be responsible for ensuring the nature strip is kept tidy and safe for footpath and road users.
6. **Risk management and safety**

As the nature strip is public land, Council is obliged to ensure a safe environment.

Equally, before modifying the nature strip, it is advisable for property owners/occupiers to confirm if they are covered under their insurance policy for public liability and, if not the owner of the property, to have written consent from the registered property owner.

Where an alternative treatment has been installed and the resident intends to later vacate the property, it is advisable to fully inform the new resident of Council’s Nature Strip and Roadside Policy requirements and public liability responsibilities. Alternatively, the nature strip can be returned to lawn grass at the owner’s choice.

7. **Planting Specifications**

For the life of the treatment plantings must comply with the following:

- **Height (mature):**
  - 150mm (max.) within 0.5m of kerb or footpath
  - 500mm (max.) elsewhere within the nature strip

- **Clearance:**
  - 1.0m (min.) from street trees and utilities (e.g. hydrants, poles, pits, etc.)
  - 9.0m (min.) from an intersection

- **Depth (of soil preparation):**
  - 150mm (max.) below level of surrounding kerb and pavement

- Must not interfere with Council’s street tree watering or WSUD systems

- Must not interfere with the health of Significant Trees ([Refer Section 9 – Definitions](#) for Significant Trees/Environmental Significance Overlay)

- Must not otherwise impact on the efficient and safe use of the road reserve and activities such as rubbish collection and street sweeping.

Further:

- Any digging within the nature strip must be performed using hand tools

- Soil to be flush with kerb and footpath, i.e. no raised edging or tapered beds
• Service pits must remain uncovered
• Any mulch must be stable and contained within the nature strip
• Use of chemicals/poisons is prohibited
• Where a formal footpath is absent, a clearance of 1.5m (min.) wide must be maintained for the length of the nature strip to act as an informal path.

Note:
• Should Council or a utility need to access its services, the nature strip will be reinstated with top soil and lawn seed regardless of any pre-existing treatment.
• Council cannot prevent members of the public from interfering with plants including the harvesting of produce.

8. Planter Box Specifications

For the life of the planter box, it must comply with the following:

• Length: 0.7-1.0m
• Width: 0.7-1.0m
• Height: 0.6-0.8m to top of planter box (+ 0.3m (max.) vegetation)
• Elevation: 100mm from ground surface to base
• Corners/edges: 20mm (min.) rounded radius
• Setback from kerb: 0.5m (min.)
• Setback from footpath: 0.5m (min.)
• Distance from intersection: 9.0m (min.)
• Distance from vehicle crossing: 2.0m (min.)
• Clearance from utilities, pits or fixtures: 1.0m (min.)
• Free of splinters and protrusions (e.g. nails, bolt heads, etc.)
• Portable and able to be moved without damage or spilling
• Colour and material in keeping with the neighbourhood character
• Located immediately in front and/or side (if a corner block) of the owner's property
• Located on existing lawn grass
• Pits located within the nature strip must remain uncovered
• Must not interfere with Council’s watering, irrigation or WSUD systems
• Must not otherwise impact on the efficient and safe use of the road reserve.

Specifications for planter boxes have been developed with consideration to: tripping hazards; road visibility and viewing distance; resistance to tipping by vandals; clearance for signage, street furniture and waste collection; vehicle access; maneuvering room for footpath users including those with impaired mobility; access to Council and utility services; maintaining neighbourhood character; and risk to safety.

Note:

Should Council or a utility need to access its services, the resident may be required to remove the planter box prior to commencement of works.

Council cannot prevent members of the public from interfering with a planter box including the harvesting of produce.

9. Definitions

Nature Strip

The nature strip is the area of public land between the property boundary and the back of kerb (including between the footpath and property boundary), but excluding any footpaths, crossings, paved areas, trees, furniture, structures or civil infrastructure. In most cases, a nature strip is grassed. Refer Diagram 1 below for a schematic explanation.

*Diagram 1: Typical Nature Strip Setting within Road Reserve*
Road Reserve
The road reserve is the area between property boundaries and usually houses the road surface and adjacent footpaths, traffic islands, crossings and nature strip. Also refer the Road Management Act 2004 (Vic) for clarification.

Roadside
In simplistic terms, the roadside is described as the area bordering the side of a road. The Road Management Act 2004 (Vic) defines it in more detail as 'any land that is within the boundaries of a road (other than the shoulders of the road), which is not a roadway or a pathway and includes the land on which any vehicle crossing or pathway which connects from a roadway or pathway on a road to other land has been constructed.'

Footpath
A footpath, also referred to as a “pathway”, is intended for use by pedestrians and usually connects public spaces. It is not intended for other forms of traffic, such as motorized vehicles.

Crossing
A crossing can be a vehicle crossing, pedestrian crossing or even a pram crossing. A vehicle crossing is the strip of the driveway that crosses the nature strip and footpath, allowing vehicles to enter and exit the property from the roadway. A pedestrian crossing similarly allows access from the roadway to the footpath. For convenience and safety purposes, a crossing is usually graded (same level as the road) and not obscured by the roadside kerb.

Utility
Utilities refer to service infrastructure, such as water, sewerage, drainage, gas, electricity, telecommunication or other like services provided by an Authority or Service Provider that is governed by legislation.

Permeable surfaces
Permeable surfaces (also known as porous or pervious surfaces) allow water to percolate into the soil. In the case of nature strips, it predominantly caters for rainfall runoff to infiltrate the underlying soil and has the added benefit of filtering out pollutants and recharging the water table.

Significant Trees/ Environmental Significance Overlay
Moonee Valley City Council has undertaken extensive work to protect trees considered to be significant i.e.: trees which contribute substantially to the amenity of the municipality. These
‘Significant Trees’ are protected by Schedule 2 to the Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO2) in the Moonee Valley Planning Scheme.

Protected trees are shown on maps accessible via the following link:

http://services.land.vic.gov.au/maps/ pmo.jsp (see example image of maps available below)

with areas covered by the ESO searchable by property address.

Planting proximate to significant trees should have regard for the need not to impact the root system of the significant tree or the possibility of introducing disease to the tree. ESO2 clarifies the planning permit requirements associated with significant trees.

**Map 1: Example of areas with Environmental Significance Overlay 2 (ESO2) within the Moonee Valley Planning Scheme**

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**Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD)**

Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) is a planning and engineering design approach which integrates the urban water cycle, including stormwater, groundwater and wastewater management and water supply, into urban design to minimise environmental degradation and improve aesthetic and recreational appeal.
Appendix B – Application Form for approval to undertake works within a road reserve

### PERSONAL CONTACT INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone No:</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Is this the property address you are intending to alter the landscaping of the nature strip? **Yes**  **No**
- If no, please specify:
- Are you the owner of this property? **Yes**  **No**
- If no, do you have the owner’s consent to the requested alteration **Yes**  **No**

### EXISTING NATURE STRIP TREATMENT

- Are there existing street tree(s) on your nature strip? **Yes**  **No**
- Are there existing services on your nature strip? (e.g. gas, power, water) **Yes**  **No**
  - **Note** Dial Before You Dig’ on 1100 or visit their website at [https://www.1100.com.au/](https://www.1100.com.au/)
- Has the nature strip been modified (any other landscaping treatments other than grassed)? **Yes**  **No**

### CHECKLIST

Please provide a separate site plan/sketch of the proposed landscape works as per the example below (refer to Appendices for Planting Specifications, Planter Box Specifications and Prohibited Treatments in preparing the plan)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you shown all existing services (such as gas, water, electrical etc.)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you shown all existing trees (if any)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you shown your property boundary, footpath, kerb and entire nature strip?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you shown where your bin(s) will go?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you shown and detailed all planter boxes (if proposed)?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you shown the offset distance between the footpath and new garden(s)?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you shown all proposed surface treatment (e.g.: turf, mulch, other)?</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does your proposal allow for clear access and site lines?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Have you informed the Owner in writing of the intended works (if the occupant and not the owner)?

Have you confirmed if you are covered under insurance policy for public liability?

Have you provided a description of your immediate streetscape and broader neighbourhood in support of your application?

Have you informed your neighbours as a courtesy?

**PLANTING SPECIES**

Please complete a table with the following headings showing all the new plants to be installed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Botanical Name (If known)</th>
<th>Mature Height &amp; Width</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Example of a Sketch Plan**

- Location of existing services
- Existing street tree
- Kerb & Road
- Bin location
- Garden bed (dimensions/plants/etc.)
- Distances from footpath and road existing street tree
- Property boundary
- Footpath

**Notes:**

- The application must be accompanied by the applicable application fee.
- A minimum of four weeks is required for processing.
- The permit must be enacted upon within 90 days of issue otherwise the permit will expire and a new application must be made with Council, including the applicable application fee.
PROPERTY

FOOTPATH

300mm

500mm

KERB

ROAD

Neat soil or 50-75mm of organic mulch

1000mm

500mm

KERB