

HUME CITY COUNCIL RESIDENTIAL NATURE STRIP LANDSCAPING GUIDELINES

1. BACKGROUND TO GUIDELINES

1.1 Hume City Council Residential Nature Strip Policy

These Guidelines support the implementation of the Hume City Council Residential Nature Strip Policy.

1.2 About Nature Strips

Nature Strips provide space for utilities such as power, water, telecom and provide additional amenity to the neighbourhood.

Clear access is required for repairs or tapping new lines by utility authorities within the nature strip.

Council has developed the Guidelines to ensure a safe, sustainable and consistent approach to the design and selection of materials used on nature strips throughout the City.

1.3 Guidelines Scope

The Guidelines apply to private landscape works on Residential Nature Strips for roads listed on the Hume City Council Register of Public Roads.

These Guidelines provide residents with landscape treatment options which could apply to the nature strip adjacent to their properties. These are Guidelines only and Council will consider each application on a case-by-case basis before issuing a permit.

1.4 Alternative Nature Strip Treatments

The objective of these guidelines is to achieve a safe and sustainable environment for Hume. These guidelines set out the requirements necessary to achieve this objective.

Three treatment options will be considered:

- Grass: warm season grasses such as Couch, Buffalo or Kikuyu
- Mulch: such as organic barks or inorganic gravel.
- Planted: only low growing species up to 400mm in height.

1.5 Applications

An application for a permit is required pursuant to both the Road Management Act 2004 and Local Law No. 1.

Any works conducted on the nature strip without the consent of the Council will be in breach of the Road Management Act and Local Law no 1.

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An application for a permit to alter a nature strip from grass to one of the listed treatments can be obtained from the Hume City Council website or by contacting any Hume City Council Customer Service Centre.

The application, a '*Consent to work within a Hume City Council Road Reserve*' permit, must be completed with a landscape plan to include location of treatment, dimensions and areas to be treated with details of materials to be used. There is no fee for this permit application.

The Council will not unreasonably withhold consent for the nature strip works. However, it reserves the right to make the final decision on any application and insert appropriate conditions where necessary.

If the works are not carried out in accordance with the consent granted, Council can request rectification works, or carry out such works at the expense of the persons responsible for the works.

Council WILL NOT accept any financial responsibility for changes or repairs to the landscaped nature strip. Such costs will be at the adjoining landowner's expense. Council will only repair grassed nature strips where it represents a risk to the community.

2. APPROVALS

Hume City Council recognises residents' desires to personalise their nature strips by undertaking landscape works, however residents must apply to Council for and obtain a '*Consent to work within a Hume City Council Road Reserve*' before undertaking and landscape construction works in a road reserve.

As the Responsible Road Authority, Hume City Council must ensure compliance with its community obligations and legal requirements under the Act. As such any Nature Strip landscape works must be consistent with Council's roles and responsibilities under the Act.

Approvals will be based on the '*Consent to work within a Hume City Council Road Reserve*' (Permit) being completed with site and landscape plans and the required information supplied. The application meets the required standard set out in these guidelines.

The application must meet the standards outlined in these Guidelines.

The applicant accepts full responsibility for public safety during the construction of the approved landscape works.

Information and forms regarding permit application can be found on the Hume City Council website at <https://www.hume.vic.gov.au/Building-and-Planning/Building-and-Renovations/Driveways-and-Nature-Strips>

3. GENERAL POINTS

Public safety is paramount, and all work must be carried out within the terms of the permit and associated drawings and Council Officer instructions.

Applicants are required to call Dial "1100" before you dig for any excavation works within a Road Reserve.

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Relevant Service Authorities will need to be advised of works in nature strip reserves as prescribed in RM Act.

Materials removed from or delivered to the site are to be contained within the works site and are not permitted to obstruct the normal operation of the road and associated public foot paths.

Timber or other types of edging when used must be installed with the top edge level and flush with the kerb and footpath surface. Material used must remain firm in place and not warp.

Irrigation or private lighting systems are not permitted on the nature strips.

Council will not permit rocks, bluestone pitchers, railway sleepers or retaining walls to be installed in the nature strip. These items are all potentially tripping hazards so cannot be included in the nature strip.

Retaining structures will be considered where there is a steep crossfall between the street alignment level and road.

If a "Swale Drain" is located within the nature strip, treatments other than grass are not permitted.

Service Box's or Pit Covers are often in place in nature strips. Such boxes or pit covers are not to be covered or removed and must remain accessible.

Organisations that supply water, gas, electricity, and telecommunications may require access to the nature strip to do maintenance work. The utility organisations are required to make good the nature strip following their maintenance work. Council cannot guarantee that any of the maintenance contractors will replace plants and mulch in the same condition as prior to maintenance work.

4. ALTERNATIVE RESIDENTIAL NATURE STRIP TREATMENT GUIDELINES

Please refer to Appendix 2 for examples of alternative nature strip treatments.

4.1 Grass Residential Nature Strips

It is recommended that the following points are considered when constructing a grass nature strip:

- Remove any building rubble such as concrete debris or plaster/timber off cuts etc and excess soil to 100-150mm below the top of the kerb or footpath level.
- Spread 100-150mm with good quality topsoil. Bring the soil level to the top of the kerb and footpath if present.
- Lightly compact the soil with a roller or by walking over the area until a firm and flat surface is achieved.
- Rake until level and smooth.

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- Select a lawn seed mix. Council recommends recommend drought tolerant warm season grasses as they are hard wearing and require less water than conventional grasses.
- Water the area until it is evenly moist. Keep seed bed moist until germination. Taper off watering as grass gets established. Watering must be in accordance with Water Restrictions as prescribed by the relevant Water Authorities.
- If turf sods are used, roll them out ensuring that all edges are abutting and that the turf is cut off neatly along the edge of the kerb, footpath, and any valve box and or lids in the nature strip.
- Use of seed preparation or lawn starter fertilizer could be considered.

4.2 Mulched Nature strip

It is recommended that the following points be considered when constructing a mulched nature strip.

- No compaction is allowed around the base of the nature strip tree within the drip line. The final level must be from top of kerb to the top of the footpath and level across.
- To ensure no root damage occurs during excavation work, hand digging is required within one metre of the base of the nature strip tree. No soil is to be removed within this area to ensure a suitable growth medium is available for tree establishment.
- Organic mulches can be used provided they are between 10mm - 30mm diameter. Care must be taken to ensure that mulch does not flow over kerbs and be likely to block drains.
- Two inorganic materials are permitted for use on a nature strip:
 - 'Lilydale' or 'Tuscan' topping
 - Granitic Gravel/Granitic Sand.

Mulched treatments will generally not be permitted on sloping sites due to erosion potential.

To prevent/reduce tripping hazards, no large boulders are permitted to be placed on the nature strip.

4.3 Planted Nature strip

It is recommended that the following points be considered when planting a nature strip:

- No additional trees are to be planted on the nature strip. Council is responsible for the planting and maintenance of street trees.
- Please advise Council if your street tree has died or is missing. Council may replace the dead or missing tree.

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- Plantings are to be no more than 400mm in height on maturity. Vegetation above 400mm may hinder or obscure driver sight lines. It is the responsibility of the landowner to ensure that plants do not exceed 400mm in height.
- To reduce the likelihood of trip hazards on planted nature strips, it is recommended that planting be made in clusters or blocks at spacing of 1m, rather than single plantings. This will allow pedestrian movement on the nature strip adjacent as well as parallel to the kerb.
- One metre of CLEAR access around the letter box is required to meet Australia Post requirements.
- Plantings must not hinder car passengers alighting from cars parked along kerbs. A one metre CLEAR buffer must be maintained along the kerb length within the planted area using mulch or gravel (please refer to Appendix 1).
- Planted nature strips must provide suitable space for the provision of waste and recycling bins.
- To prevent competition with the nature strip tree, NO planting is permitted within one metre of the base of the tree.
- The planting selection must be in context to your front yard and/or estate median treatments. Proposed plant species must be indicated on your site plan with the application for consideration.

Planted nature strips can be accompanied by mulch covers as described above.

For a list of suitable plants to use please refer to Hume’s Sustainable Gardening Handbook.

5. MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

Residents are encouraged to always keep Nature Strips outside their properties in a well maintained and safe condition.

Plants are to be always pruned to a height of no more than 400mm.

Plants are to be pruned so that they do not protrude onto pathways, driveways or beyond the back of the kerb.

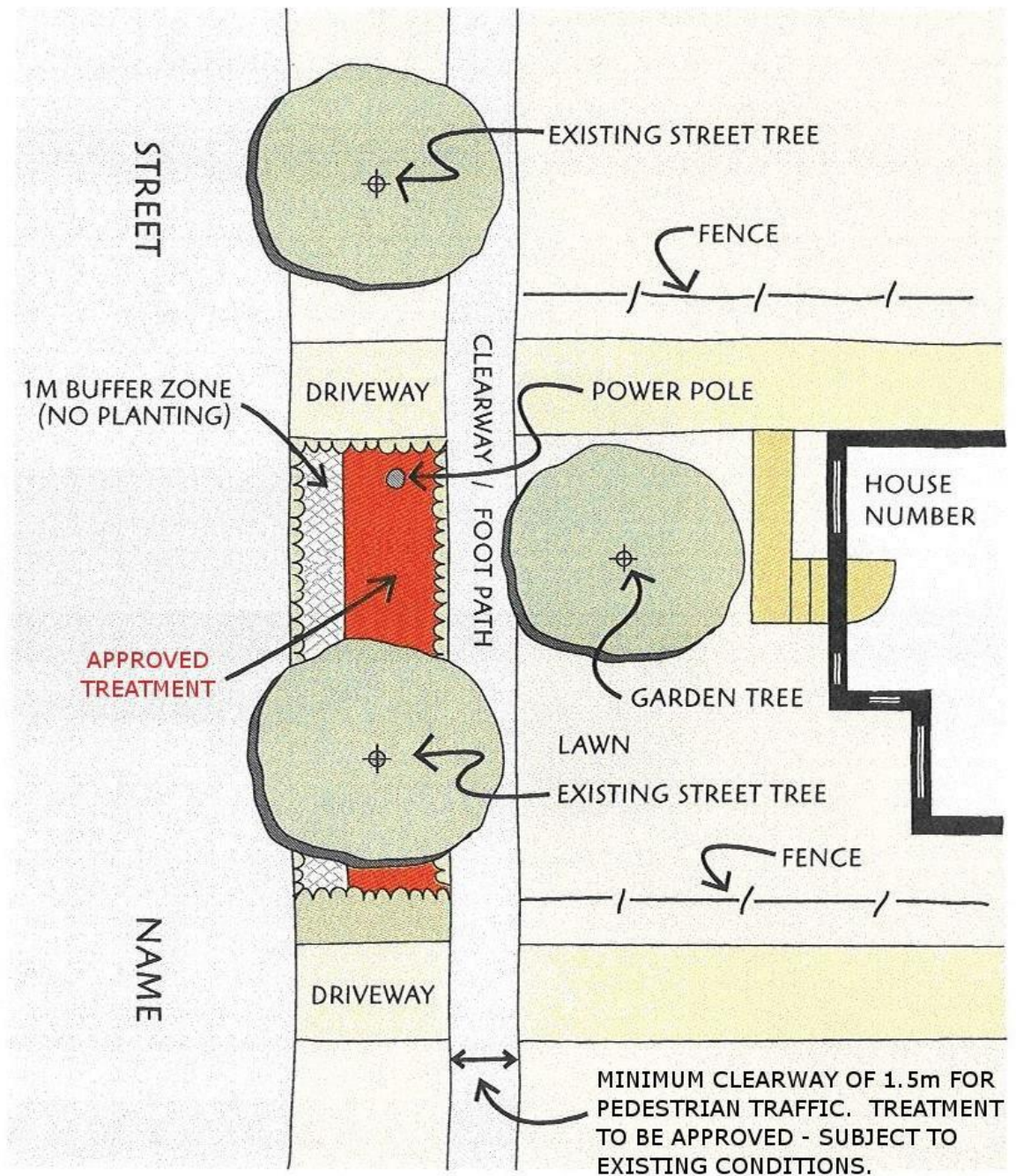
The nature strip is to be kept free of weeds and rubbish.

A Mulch cover is to be maintained over the nature strip. No mulch is allowed onto the footpath, driveways or in the kerb and channel.

The nature strip is to be free of any tripping hazards and any protruding objects.

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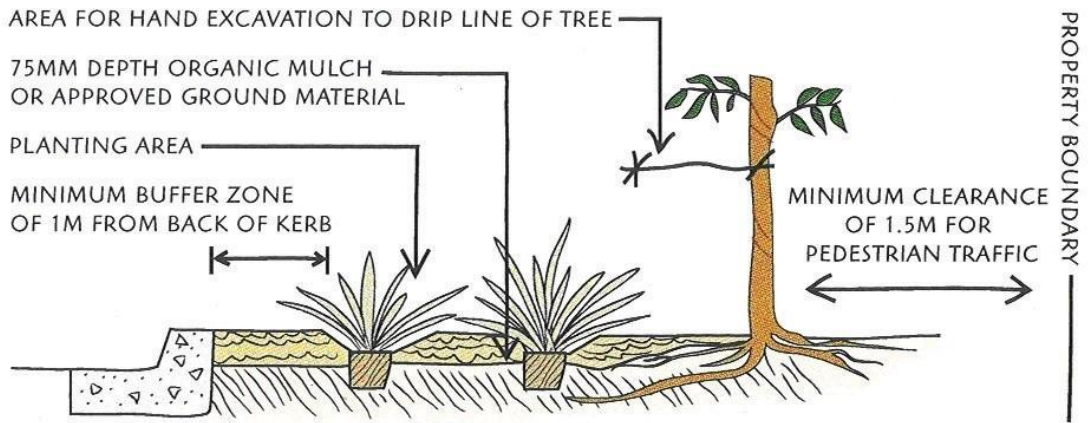
Appendix 1 – Alternative Nature strip Treatment – Layout



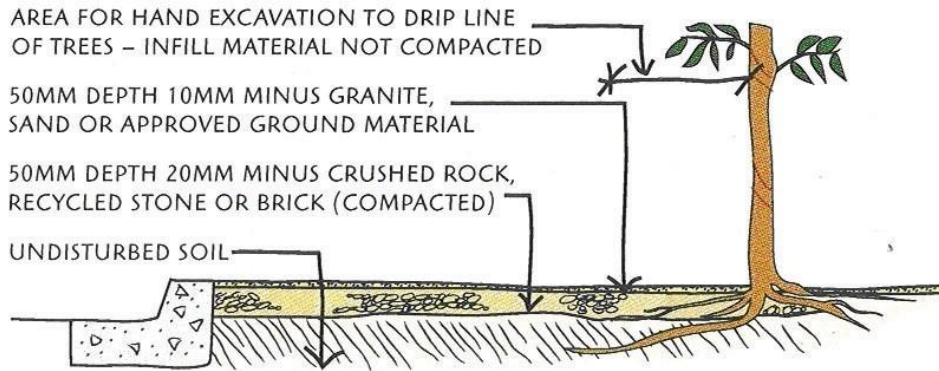
Proposed Naturestrip Development

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Appendix 2 – Alternative Nature strip Treatment – Layout



Installation details for alternative Option 1 - Planted Naturestrip



Installation details for alternative Option 2 - Mulched Naturestrip

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GOOD	BAD
	
<p>Tuscan Toppings replacing grass & mulch to base of tree (Preferred Practice)</p>	<p>Traffic sight lines and pedestrian access blocked</p>
	
<p>Good planting example</p>	<p>Tripping Hazards for pedestrians from pavers and rocks</p>

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Good Planting and mulching



Pedestrian access blocked and tripping hazard.

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