



VERGE LANDSCAPING AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

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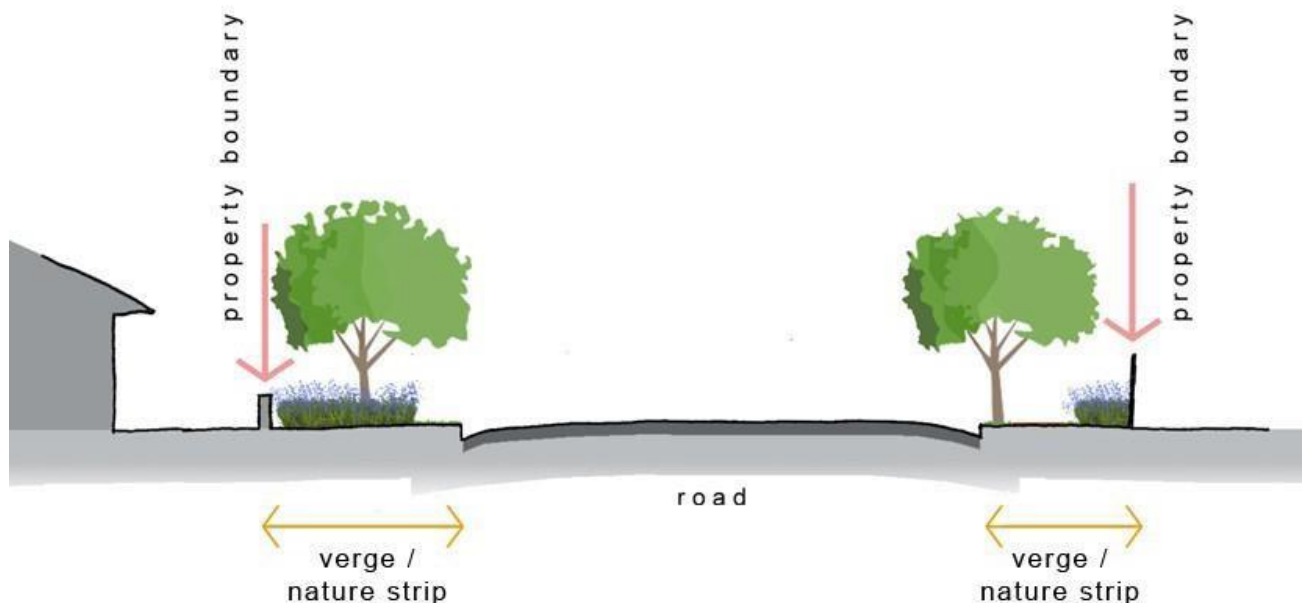
1. INTRODUCTION

What is the verge?

Did you know that area that sits between the road and your property boundary (roughly where the water meter is located) is known as the verge?

This area is used by pedestrians and often to accommodate Service Utilities.

In the *Local Government Act 1999* it is referred to as a road reserve, but we commonly know and refer to it as the verge.



What does the Act say about the verge?

The Local Government Act 1999 section 221 states that “a person (other than the Council or a person acting under some statutory authority) must not make an alteration to a public road unless authorised to do so by the Council”

An alteration to a public road includes the planting of trees or vegetation, the installation of a structure, or altering a road to facilitate or provide access from an adjacent property.

What does this mean?

This means property owners and residents require permission from Council if they wish to landscape or maintain a Council's verge.

Can I organise to maintain / landscape my verge?

Yes. If you would like to landscape or maintain the verge we ask that you submit a [Verge Landscaping and Maintenance Application form](#) found on Council's website. Approval may take up to 30 business days and applicants cannot start any work on the verge until the application is approved.

Once approved, applicants will have 30 business days to complete any landscaping/maintenance on the verge before an inspection is carried out. Refer to 'Timeframes' on page 10. The verge will remain the property of City of Playford, however ongoing maintenance will remain with the applicant.

Important: If the verge landscape/maintenance work does not reflect what has been submitted in an approved application, Council will need to remove and reinstate the verge at the applicant's expense. We encourage applicants to contact Council ahead of any changes to avoid this from occurring.

2. HOW TO APPLY

Prior to any works, including purchasing or planting vegetation or installing any material on the verge, written approval is required. You can submit a [Verge Landscaping and Maintenance Application form](#) to **City Operations team** via:

Email: playford@playford.sa.gov.au
Post: 12 Bishopstone Road, Davoren Park 5113
In Person: Playford Civic Centre, 10 Playford Boulevard, Elizabeth; or
Stretton Centre, 307 Peachey Road, Munno Para

Council will reach out to you within 30 business days to update you on the status of your application.

3. NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

A housing development is a planned residential development built within a certain timeframe.

These developments have approved masterplans that cover stormwater, road hierarchy, and open space provision. Urban Design Guidelines and Landscape Masterplans set by developers are in place to build the character of that development. It provides direction for the entire development about the verge treatment and ensures a uniform approach is applied to all the developments within the city.

The Urban Design Guidelines and Landscape Masterplan is approved by Council and identifies the residential streetscapes with an approved verge treatment. This means any changes to the verge are not accepted. While Council encourages property owners to take ownership of their verges, within planned developments it has strict limitations.

In some cases, developments do not have an approved verge treatment. This means property owners can apply to landscape/maintain the verge with Council approval.

Ahead of any work, it is recommended property owners review the Residential Design Guidelines or contact Council.

4. HOUSE RENTAL CONDITIONS

Where an applicant is not the property owner, i.e. tenant, pre-approval from Council is required from the applicant's landlord or property manager.

If a landlord / property manager approves a tenant who would like to landscape/ maintain a council verge, the landlord / property owner has the responsibility to continue maintaining should the tenant vacate. Should a new tenant occupy the property, verge maintenance responsibility must be included within the residential tenancy agreement; or a landlord / property manager must make contact with Council to return maintenance to Council.

Refer to page 4 section 12 of the Verge Landscaping and Maintenance Application Form for landlord / property owner authority to upgrade verge.

Please note applications must be approved by the landlord / property manager prior to any works taking place, including the planting of vegetation.

5. PEDESTRIAN ACCESS / SIGHT DISTANCE ISSUES

Any form of landscaping that prevents pedestrian access to or along the verge is not permitted, regardless of whether a footpath has been constructed or not.

Any landscaping of a verge area without an existing footpath must allow for the possible future construction of a footpath by Council or passive use by residents.

Removal or alteration of any part of the verge to facilitate construction of a footpath will be at the discretion of Council and no compensation to the applicant for such removal or alteration will be considered.

No structure or object on the verge that may be unsafe or inconvenient to the passage of pedestrians is permitted, including parking or storing any type of vehicle or trailer.

DIAGRAM 1 – NO FOOTPATH

Residents must not allow any foliage to obstruct pedestrian access to footpaths.

Where no footpath exists, residents must not allow any foliage to obstruct pedestrian access and a 1.5 metre strip must remain for public access. Any landscaping of a verge which currently does not have a footpath must allow for the possible future construction of a footpath by Council. No compensation is given to the applicant for removals or alterations required to construct new footpath.



Diagram 1 – no foliage to obstruct pedestrian access to footpaths

DIAGRAM 2 – FOOTPATH IN VERGE

Where a footpath is in the centre of the verge, residents must not allow any foliage to obstruct pedestrian access or exceed the area of 500mm from the kerb to the verge, to allow car doors to open and an area for Council bins.

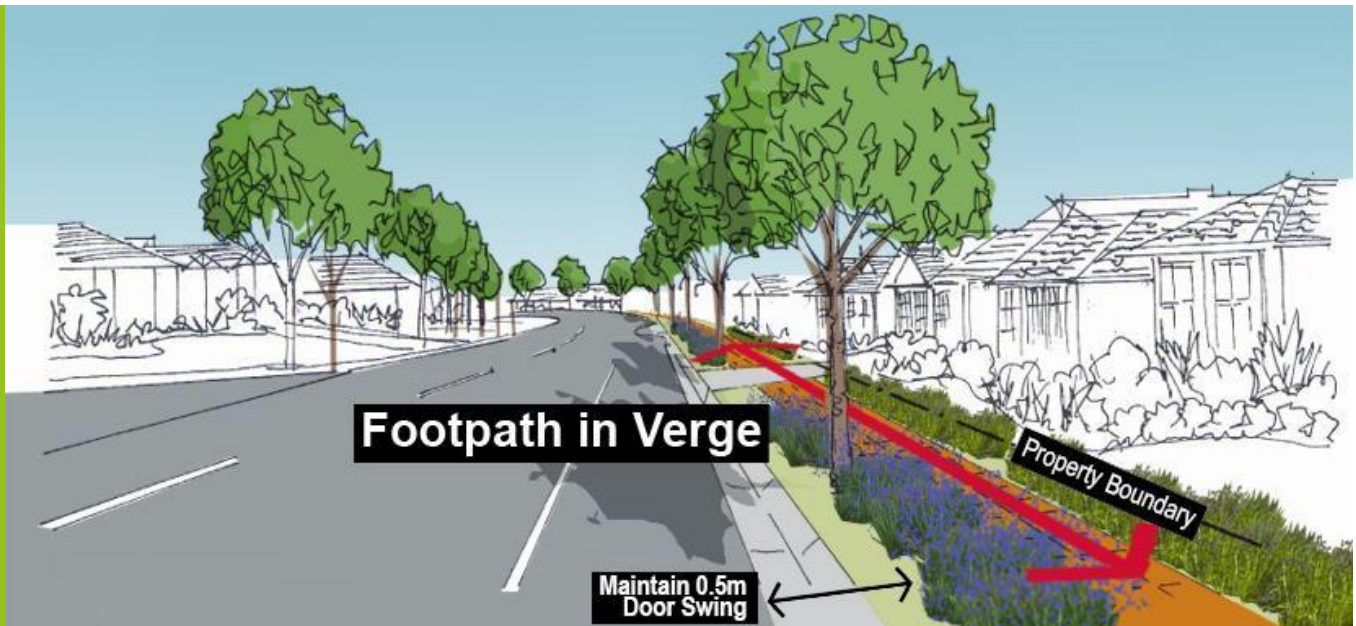


Diagram 2 – Footpath in Verge

DIAGRAM 3 – FOOTPATH AT KERB

Council's standard location for the provision of a footpath is to the back of the kerb.



Diagram 3 - where the footpath runs along the kerb - 0.5 metre clearance

DIAGRAM 4 – SIDE FENCE LINE LANDSCAPING EXAMPLE



Any landscaping upgrade to a side fence line must have a signed approval from adjacent and adjoining residents.

In this example, if resident A is applying for a side fence line upgrade, residents B and C must consent their approval on the [Verge Landscaping and Maintenance Application form](#).

Diagram 4 – Side Fence Line Landscaping

DIAGRAM 5 – SIDE FENCE LINE ACCESS

Public access is required along the kerb side of the fence line a 500mm clearance must be adhered to allow pedestrian access.



Diagram 5 – Side Fence Line Access

SIGHT DISTANCES

Any landscaping must not create a sight distance problem for vehicles or pedestrians, obstruct streetlights or street signs or encroach onto private land.

- On a front verge, vegetation (other than a Council street tree) must not **exceed** 600mm at full maturity
- On a side verge, vegetation (other than a Council street tree) must not be higher than the fence height at full maturity

6. UNDERGROUND SERVICES

The verge may be occupied (above or below ground) by the following:

- SA Power Networks overhead wiring and poles or underground cables
- Telecommunications cables, pits, poles, etc.
- Gas Mains
- Water and sewer mains and connections
- Street trees
- Australia Post, mail delivery corridor
- City of Playford stormwater drainage systems
- City of Playford footpath
- Various street furniture – signposts, seats, bus shelters, indicator posts, etc.
- Any form of landscaping that prevents pedestrian access to or along the verge is not permitted

The Applicant is responsible for obtaining information on the location of underground pipes and cables from communications, gas, water and electricity providers. Plans can be requested via the Dial Before You Dig Website – [DBYD | Dial Before You Dig](#) or by contacting 1100 during normal business hours. At any time, utility companies can require access to the verge area to perform maintenance. The service authority is responsible for the replacement of any vegetation (e.g., shrubs, median grasses, etc.) which are removed or damaged during trenching works.

7. PLANT SELECTION

Council has a preference of using local native plants and or Australian native plants, however water wise non-native plants can be considered. Local native plants are suited to the City of Playford's soils and rainfall, resulting in the conservation of water and encouraging local biodiversity.

For a list of local native plant species, please refer to the Council's [Local Native Plant species listings](#) or contact Council's Revegetation Officer.

Please ensure that plant selections do not exceed 600mm at full maturity.

8. STREET TREES

Where a street tree exists on the verge, the maintenance (including pruning) is to be carried out by Council staff only. A request to Council can be made for any inspections and pruning work to be carried out to street trees.

When a street tree does not already exist as part of Council's commitment to green our city, a tree will be planted where possible - this needs to be considered within your verge landscape design.

9. SURFACE TREATMENTS

The below types of verge surface treatments are considered suitable:

- Unirrigated or irrigated grass surfaces (*see irrigation systems information below*)
- Compacted rubble (*10mm or less*)
- Groundcover (*lawn substitute*)
- Organic mulch materials (*must not be large and become a tripping hazard or easily blown/kicked onto paths and into the storm water road network*)
- Pebbles (*12mm or less*)

Approved organic mulch or similar ground treatments must be stable and properly contained. Care must be taken to ensure that the road, drains and footpaths are protected from such matter for environmental and safety purposes, as road drains empty into local creeks, rivers and oceans without treatment.

The below types of verge surface treatments are **not** permitted:

- Fully-impervious materials such as paving and concrete, except for crossover and footpath. This includes impervious membranes under mulch, or other materials, such as black plastic
- Rough, coarse or irregular mulch materials which are uncomfortable or difficult to walk on
- Large-sized mulch such as river pebbles must not be used (they can become missiles and may become dangerous if spilled onto footpaths or roadways)
- Hard landscaping structures such as moss rocks, sleepers, edging, letterboxes and metal stakes
- Vegetation that is prickly, poisonous or thorny
- Chemical soil sterilising treatments
- Vegetables, fruit trees and/or herbs

ARTIFICIAL TURF

Council do not recommend the use of artificial turf or any impervious material as a verge surface treatment due to being detrimental to tree and vegetation health.

Council will not permit artificial turf if the following currently presents on the verge:

- Existing street tree
- Proposed street tree to be planted within a current plan

However, Council may approve artificial turf when the above conditions are not applicable.

Should residents be granted the installation of artificial turf, **Council has the right to request the removal for the following reasons:**

- Upgrade of underground services
- Street tree placement

10. IRRIGATION SYSTEMS

It is important to think carefully about irrigation. Up to 40% of household water goes on the garden, so it is vital to make every drop count.

Below ground drippers (sub-surface irrigation) are allowed. However, **pop-up sprinklers are not permitted** on verges, with the exception of where the footpath is to the kerb (as per Diagram 3). The City of Playford does not contribute to the cost of irrigation installation, lawn or water used on verges.

WATER CONSERVATION MEASURES

Information is provided by SA Water via the website [here](#), or by contacting the Water Wise Measures Hotline on [1800 130 952](tel:1800130952).

11. TIMEFRAMES

Timeframes are put in place to ensure any upgrades or works undertaken on Council verges are done in a timely manner to reduce any inconvenience or risk to residents / public. Typically, we request works are completed within 30 business days from date of approval letter. However, please contact Council should you require additional time.

A subsequent inspection will occur by a City Operations Quality Coordinator to ensure any works undertaken comply with Council's guidelines and application conditions.

12. MOWING OF COUNCIL VERGE – URBAN

When a resident would like to mow the Council verge in an urban area, an application is required. If approval is granted an inspection will be undertaken and a green marker will be placed on the kerb to identify to mower operators not to cut. Any grass clippings must be removed from kerb and water table to ensure clippings do not enter the road drains which empty into local creeks, rivers and oceans without treatment.

Safety requirements for mowing by urban residents:

1. Residents should walk the area prior to mowing for identifying hazards such as any obvious 'missiles' given the close proximity to the road and passing vehicles
2. Residents should wear protective gear such as safety glasses, sturdy boots, appropriate clothing, etc.

13. MOWING OF COUNCIL VERGE – RURAL

When a resident would like to mow the Council verge in a rural area, an application is required. An inspection will be undertaken to ascertain risk e.g., sloped areas etc., and if the verge is a native grass site or is affected by Chilean needle grass.

If Chilean needle grass has been identified on Council verge in front of property mowing will not be permitted during the months of October, November and December. During this time Chilean needle grass is growing and setting seeds and Council needs to map and treat these grasses if any occur on your verge. Mowing at this time spreads Chilean needle grass.

Chilean needle grass can sometimes occur at different times of year. To prevent inadvertently spreading it with your mower, cleaning of the mower's blades and underside is required after mowing.

Safety requirements for mowing by rural residents:

1. Any mowing or slashing procedures undertaken must be conducted with the cutting blades set at a height that will not cause any contact with rocks or cause sparks to be produced
2. The person carrying out the cutting or slashing must have a water always extinguishing medium (knapsack or similar) available
3. Ensure suitable clearance exists along the roadside verge so as not to place the person or the cutting machinery into pathway of traffic. Mowing should occur no less than 2.5m from the road's edge. Mowing closer to the road may be a safety issue, please refer to the Department for Infrastructure and Transport (DIT) Workzone Traffic Management conditions (please visit their website for more information)
4. Cutting and slashing should occur during the cooler parts of the day to minimise any chance of sparks igniting the grass. Generally the most moisture will be present in the early morning. The time when the mowing should be done is best left to the assessment of the resident. Shadows across the verge and the mower or the position of the sun may also have an impact on visibility
5. Residents should walk the area prior to mowing for identifying hazards such as, hidden tree stumps and any obvious 'missiles' given the close proximity to the road and passing vehicles
6. It is the resident's responsibility to ensure appropriate and properly maintained equipment is used
7. Mowing should not be undertaken on steep verges or in conditions where slipping may occur
8. Residents should wear protective gear such as safety glasses, sturdy boots, appropriate clothing, etc.

CALL

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