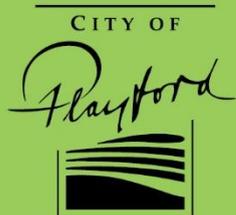




# City of Playford

## Verge Landscaping and Maintenance Guidelines

February 2026



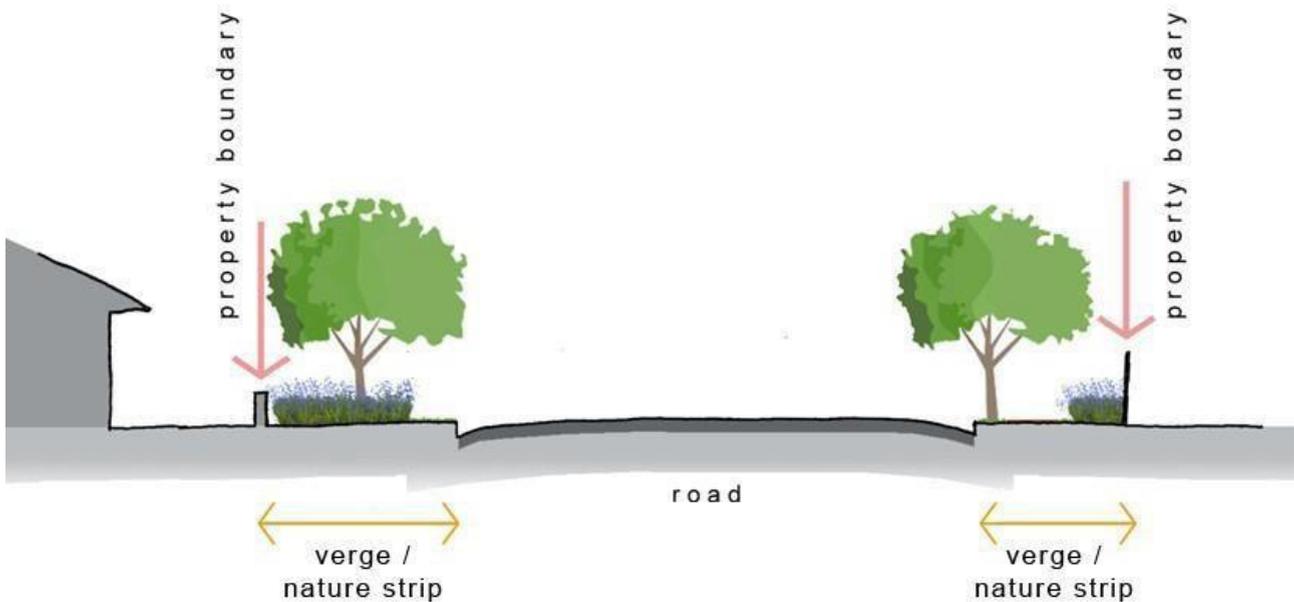
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## 1. Introduction

### What is a verge?

A verge (or nature strip) is the area between your property boundary and the kerb (roughly where the water meter is located). 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.



Verges vary in length and width, and may include a side fence line. Some rural verges contain native vegetation or declared weed species meaning it will be protected by different legislation requirements.

The verge can be utilised for many different purposes, including.

- Pedestrians, and access in and out of cars
- Vehicle access
- Street Trees
- Rubbish collection
- Service utilities
- Australia Post, mail delivery corridor

### What this guideline means

Many property owners prefer to manage the Council owned verge in front of their residence to a different standard than that provided by the City of Playford service standards.

The Verge Landscaping and Maintenance Guidelines detail the technical information used by Council to assess verge upgrades and assist property owners in meeting and understanding their responsibilities.

To ensure our streets are attractive, consistent, safe and manageable, verge upgrades are authorised to these guidelines and written permission from Council is required.

## 2. Responsibilities

Verges will remain the ownership of Council as they are classified as part of the public road under the Local Government Act 1999.

*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.**

### **PROPERTY OWNERS:**

When property owners modify the verge, they shall be responsible for the ongoing maintenance and associated costs of their authorised verge upgrade.

#### **Property owners are responsible for; may include but is not limited to;**

- Watering
- Weeding
- Mowing
- Pest and disease control
- Pruning of planted vegetation for pedestrian and road user access.
- Material or plant replacement of their own; and
- Ensuring that there are no trip hazards for pedestrians and road users

### **CITY OF PLAYFORD:**

While the City of Playford encourages the authorised upgrade of verges, monetary subsidence or undertaking any works shall not be provided.

#### **Council is responsible for;**

- Street trees on verges, including all maintenance and pruning and irrigation systems (where applicable)
- Safe public access across verges always
- Maintaining existing native vegetation requirements and legislation

#### **Council reserves the right to:**

- Remove non-conforming or poorly maintained verge upgrades.
- Construct a footpath within the verge when required.
- Plant a new or replacement street tree within the verge; and
- Access the verge to maintain the street tree at its discretion.
- Access the verge to maintain street tree irrigation (where applicable)

## 3. 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 apply at this link:**

<https://epathway.playford.sa.gov.au/epathway/Production/web/CustomerService/ExternalRequestBroker.aspx?Module=ECRREQT&Class=&Type=CWVERG>

or submit a [Verge Landscaping and Maintenance Application form](#) to **City Operations team** via:

**Email:** [playford@playford.sa.gov.au](mailto: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

## 4. 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.

## 5. Verge Treatments

The following verge treatments are **permitted**:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>LAWN</b></p>                              | <p>May be irrigated or unirrigated lawn provided it is maintained to the level of kerb or footpath.</p> <p>Please refer to irrigation systems below for further information.</p>   |
| <p><b>PLANTS<br/>(max height<br/>600mm)</b></p> | <p>Please ensure that plant selections do <u>not</u> exceed 600mm at full maturity.</p>  |
| <p><b>GROUNDCOVER</b></p>                       | <p>Alternative option to lawn or planting of any shrubs.</p>   |
| <p><b>MULCH</b></p>                             | <p>Organic mulch must not be large, become a tripping hazard or easily blown/kicked onto paths.</p> <p>It must be stable and <u>properly</u> always <u>properly</u> contained. Care must be taken to ensure that the road, drains, and footpaths are protected from such matter for environmental and safety purposes.</p> |
| <p><b>SURFACE<br/>TREATMENTS</b></p>            | <p>Other surface treatments are permitted provided it is rubble, pebbles or granulitic and it within the appropriate sizing as follows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compacted rubble (<i>10mm or less</i>)</li> <li>• Pebbles (<i>12mm or less</i>)</li> </ul>  |

The following verge treatments are **NOT** permitted:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>ARTIFICIAL TURF</b>                          | Artificial turf will not be permitted in any circumstances.  |
| <b>HARD LANDSCAPING STRUCTURES</b>              | Hard landscaping structures such as moss rocks, sleepers, edging, letterboxes and metal stakes are not permitted.<br>Barriers and structures such as retaining walls, rocks, supporting frames or lattices and bollards will not be permitted within the verge area.   |
| <b>CONCRETE &amp; PAVERS</b>                    | If you wish to install hard landscaping such as paving or a concrete stepping path, <b>you must first seek further approval.</b> Professional installation is strongly recommended. Council will assess applications based on potential risks to all road users. Any materials that are unsafe, obstruct pedestrian movement, or create uneven surfaces between the footpath and kerb will not be permitted. |
| <b>FULLY IMPERVIOUS MATERIALS</b>               | Impervious materials under mulch, or other materials, such as black plastic and weed mat are not permitted.  |
| <b>PLANT SAFETY &amp; DECLARED WEED SPECIES</b> | Plants that are prickly, poisonous, spiky, or sharp are not permitted within the verge area.<br><br>The use of declared plant species nominated under the Landscape South Australia Act 2019 (refer to <a href="http://www.pir.sa.gov.au">www.pir.sa.gov.au</a> ) will not be permitted.   |
| <b>FRUIT, AND VEGETABLE PLANT SPECIES</b>       | Vegetables, fruit trees and/or herbs are not permitted.  |
| <b>CHEMICALLY STERILISED TREATMENTS</b>         | Chemical soil sterilising treatments is not permitted.   |

## 6. Pedestrian Access & Sight Distance

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

### 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.



*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.

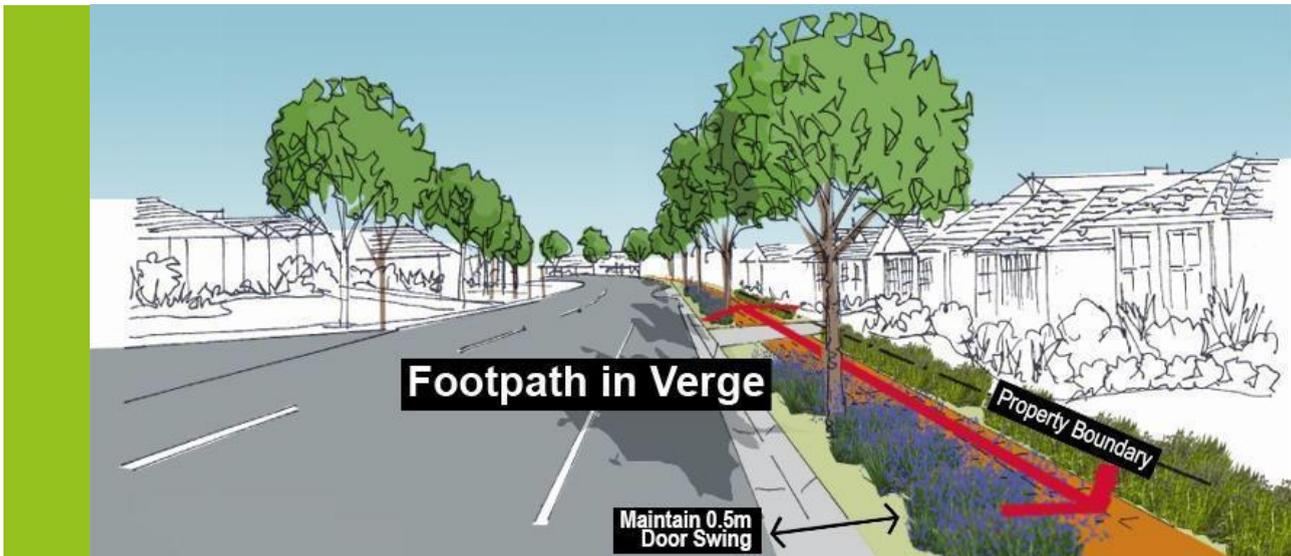


Diagram 2 – Footpath in Verge

## DIAGRAM 3 – 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.



## 7. 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.

Please protect the existing trees on your verge: do not cut or damage tree roots and, when landscaping, consider how you can preserve trees' vital root systems.

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.

**Note: Removal of new or existing verge trees will not be approved under any circumstances as part of this application. If it is identified that a verge tree has been removed, Council may seek reimbursement from the resident for the associated costs.**

## 8. 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.

**You can find out more about plants from:**

- Your local nursery or community garden
- The labels on plants that show how big they grow and what type of conditions they prefer
- Green Adelaide's garden guides - [Resources](#)
- [Plant Selector](#) from the Botanic Gardens of South Australia
- 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.
- Vegetation (other than a Council Street tree) must not **exceed** 600mm at full maturity

## 9. 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.

The City of Playford does not contribute to the cost of irrigation installation, lawn or water used on verges, except in circumstances that will be individually advised.

Manually watered verges are our preferred option. However, property owners are allowed to install irrigation systems which could include pop-up sprinklers or below ground drippers in line with the following:

- Water is sourced from your property.
- Water is directed away from footpaths and crossovers. The system must be designed so as not to drift outside the verge to ensure safe access for pedestrians.
- Installation must not damage or remove Council infrastructure including footpaths or kerb. Any damage caused must be reported to Council and repaired at your cost.
- Any maintenance or repairs of your irrigation system are your responsibility.
- Any valves or controllers must be on your property.
- There are no exposed irrigation components in the verge or anywhere else on public land.

### 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).

## 10. Footpath Construction

Footpaths will be constructed progressively year by year in order of priority and funding. The entire footpath network is developed in various stages, which is in line with Council's annual budget allocation.

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.

## 11. Underground Services

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.

## 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 [the](#) 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 always 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.

### City of Playford

Call 8256 0333

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playford.sa.gov.au

### Post

12 Bishopstone Road  
Davoren Park SA 5113

### Visit

Playford Civic Centre  
10 Playford Boulevard,  
Elizabeth SA