

## Appendix 2

### NATURESTRIP LANDSCAPING GUIDELINES

#### 1. Background to Guidelines

##### 1.1 Naturestrips Summary

A naturestrip is the land that is within the boundaries of a road (other than the shoulders of the road) which is not a roadway or pathway. As stated in the *Road Management Act 2004* ("RM Act").

Naturestrips provide space for utilities such as power, water and telecom. Clear access is required for repairs or tapping new lines within the naturestrip.

The Naturestrip Landscaping Guidelines have been developed to ensure a safe, sustainable and consistent approach to the design and selection of materials used on naturestrips throughout the City. They have also been developed as a result of the ongoing drought conditions and subsequent inability to sustain turf on a naturestrip.

##### 1.2 Guidelines Scope

These Guidelines provide residents with landscape treatment options which could apply to the naturestrip in front of their properties. These are Guidelines only and Council will consider each application on a case by case basis.

##### 1.3 Alternative Naturestrip 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:

1.3.1 Grass: warm season grasses such as Couch, Buffalo or Kikuyu

1.3.2 Mulch: such as organic barks or in organic gravel.

1.3.3 Planted: only low growing species below 400mm allowed.

#### 2. Applications

2.1 An application is required pursuant to both the *Road Management Act 2004* and Local Law No. 1.

2.2 Any works conducted on the naturestrip without the consent of the Council will be in breach of the RM Act and Local Law no 1.

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- 2.3 An application for a permit to alter a naturestrip 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.
- 2.4 The application, a "Non Utility Minor Works 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.
- 2.5 The Council will not unreasonably withhold consent for the naturestrip works. However, it reserves the right to make the final decision on any application and insert appropriate conditions where necessary.
- 2.6 If the works are not carried out in accordance to the consent granted, Council can request rectification works, or carry out such works at the expense of the persons responsible for the works.
- 2.7 Council WILL NOT accept any financial responsibility for changes or repairs to the landscaped naturestrip. Such costs will be at the adjoining land owner's expense. Council will only repair grassed nature strips where it represents a risk to the community.

### 3. Approvals

- 3.1 Approvals will be based on the "Application Form for a Permit to Dig Within a Hume City Council Road Reserve" being completed with site and landscape plans and the required information supplied. The application meets the required standard set out in these guidelines.
- 3.2 The applicant must provide a copy of title when an application for permit is made.
- 3.3 The application must meet the standards outlined in the Guidelines.
- 3.4 The applicant accepts full responsibility for public safety during the construction of the approved landscape works.

### 4. General Points

- 4.1 Public safety is paramount. The designated work area MUST BE KEPT SAFE at all times. This requires safety barriers, bunting, barriers mesh or safety tape around the boundary of the work area as a minimum. These barriers will be required for the duration of the project.
- 4.2 Materials removed from or delivered to the site are to be contained within the barrier at all times.
- 4.3 Applicants are required to call Dial "1100" before you dig for any excavation greater in depth than 200mm deep.
- 4.4 Relevant Service Authorities will need to be advised of works in naturestrip reserves as prescribed in RM Act.

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- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 Irrigation or private lighting systems are not permitted on the naturestrips.
- 4.7 Council will not permit rocks, bluestone pitchers, railway sleepers or retaining walls to be installed in the naturestrip. These items are all potentially tripping hazards so can not be included in the naturestrip.
- 4.8 Retaining structures will be considered where there is a steep crossfall between the street alignment level and road.
- 4.9 If a "Swale Drain" is located within the naturestrip, treatments other than grass are not permitted.
- 4.10 Service Box's or Pit Covers are often in place in naturestrips. Such box's or pit covers are not to be covered or removed and must remain accessible.
- 4.11 Organisations that supply water, gas, electricity and telecommunications may require access to the naturestrip to do maintenance work. The utility organisations are required to make good the naturestrip 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.

## 5. Alternative Naturestrip Treatment Guidelines

Please refer to Appendix 3 for examples of alternative naturestrip treatments.

### 5.1 Grass Naturestrip

It is recommended that the following points are considered when constructing a grass naturestrip.

- 5.1.1 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.
- 5.1.2 Spread 100-150mm with good quality topsoil. Bring the soil level to the top of the kerb and footpath if present.
- 5.1.3 Lightly compact the soil with a roller or by walking over the area until a firm and flat surface is achieved.
- 5.1.4 Rake until level and smooth.
- 5.1.5 Select a lawn seed mix. Council recommends the use of Couch, Buffalo or Kikuyu grasses as they are hard wearing and require up to 60% less water than conventional grasses.

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- 5.1.6 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.
- 5.1.7 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 naturestrip.
- 5.1.8 Use of seed preparation or lawn starter fertilizer could be considered.

## **5.2 Mulched Naturestrip**

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

- 5.2.1 No compaction is allowed around the base of the naturestrip tree within the drip line. The final level must be from top of kerb to the top of the footpath and level across.
- 5.2.2 To ensure no root damage occurs during excavation work, hand digging is required within one metre of the base of the naturestrip tree. No soil is to be removed within this area to ensure a suitable growth medium is available for tree establishment.
- 5.2.3 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.
- 5.2.4 Two inorganic materials are permitted for use on a naturestrip:
- Lilydale or Tuscan toppings
  - Granitic Gravel also called Granitic Sand
- 5.2.5 To prevent/reduce tripping hazards, no large boulders are permitted to be placed on the naturestrip.
- 5.2.6 Mulched treatments will generally not be permitted on sloping sites due to washout potential.

## **5.3 Planted Naturestrip**

It is recommended that the following points be considered when constructing a planted naturestrip.

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

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- 5.3.2 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.
- 5.3.3 To reduce the likelihood of trip hazards on planted naturestrips, 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 naturestrip adjacent as well as parallel to the kerb.
- 5.3.4 One metre of CLEAR access around the letter box is required to meet Australia Post requirements.
- 5.3.5 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).
- 5.3.6 Planted naturestrips must provide suitable space for the provision of waste and recycling bins.
- 5.3.7 To prevent competition with the naturestrip tree, NO planting is permitted within one metre of the base of the tree.
- 5.3.8 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.
- 5.3.9 Planted naturestrips can be accompanied by mulch covers as described in Section 5.2.
- 5.3.10 For a list of suitable plants to use please refer to Hume's Sustainable Gardening Handbook.
- 5.3.11 Council will only allow planted naturestrips if the land owner's insurance policy indemnifies Council against an injury claim.

## 6. Maintenance Responsibilities

Residents are required to keep the naturestrip in a well maintained and safe condition at all times.

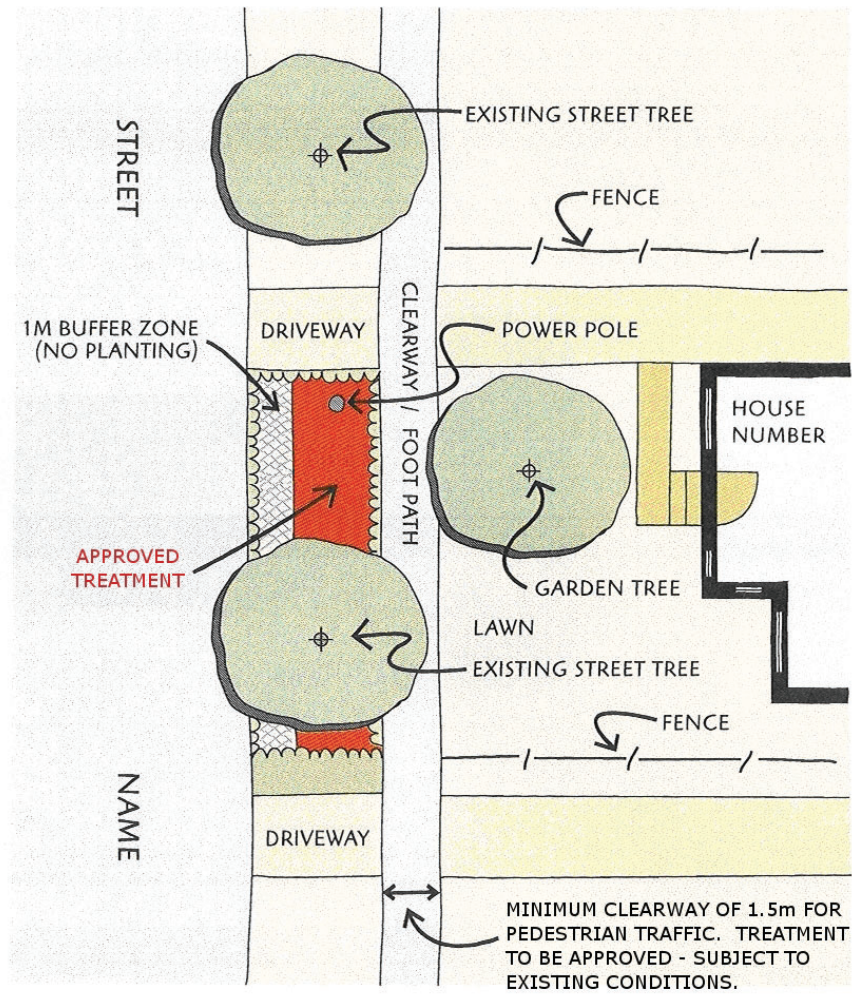
- 6.1 Plants are to be pruned to a height of no more than 400mm at all times.
- 6.2 Plants are to be pruned so that they do not protrude onto pathways, driveways or beyond the back of the kerb.
- 6.3 The naturestrip is to be kept free of weeds and rubbish.
- 6.4 A Mulch cover is to be maintained over the naturestrip.

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- 6.5 No Mulch is allowed onto the footpath, driveways or in the kerb and channel.
- 6.6 The naturestrip is to be free of any tripping hazards and any protruding objects.

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### Appendix 3 – Alternative Naturestrip Treatment – Layout

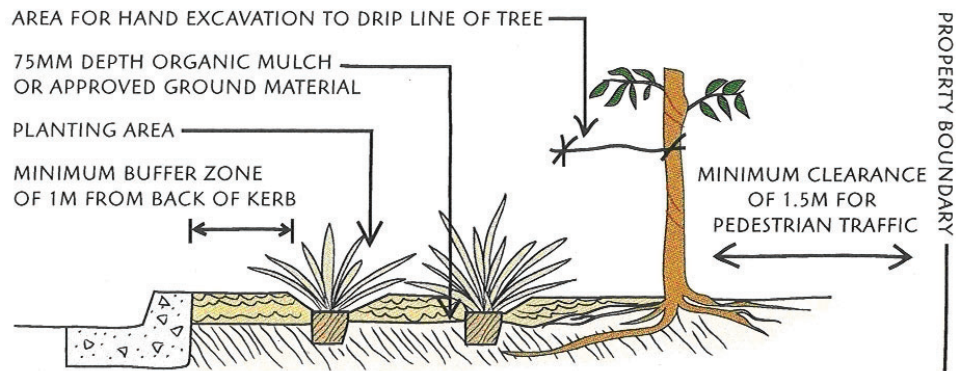


Proposed Naturestrip Development

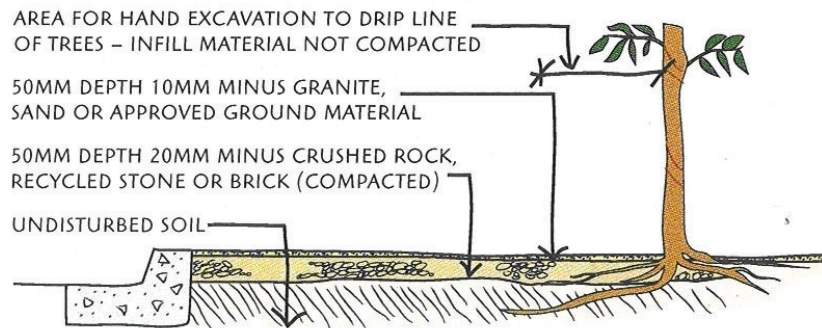
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### Appendix 3 – Alternative Naturestrip Treatment



Installation details for alternative Option 1 - Planted Naturestrip



Installation details for alternative Option 2 - Mulched Naturestrip

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### Appendix 3 - Examples of Naturestrip Treatments

#### Good

#### Bad



**Tuscan Toppings replacing grass & mulch to base of tree (Preferred Practice)**



**Traffic sight lines and pedestrian access blocked**



**Good planting example**



**Tripping Hazards for pedestrians from pavers and rocks**



**Good Planting and mulching**



**Pedestrian access blocked and tripping hazard.**

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