

Verge Landscaping Conditions for Residential Property

The purpose of this guideline is to provide information and advice to residents about landscaping the verge in front of residential property.

The road verge is part of the road reserve that is managed by the City of Kalamunda. Although the City has responsibilities for some infrastructure, it does not actively look after or create landscaping for most road verges. This provides an opportunity for owners with road verge area: to design and install landscaping that they are willing to care for and maintain.

For the interest of the wider community, there are some conditions that need to be applied to landscaping on the road verge. The conditions for verge landscaping are:

1. Landscaping must be maintained, watered, pruned, weeded, mown and cared for by the resident or owner. Loose stones, branches and gum nuts that arise from landscaping must be swept off of footpaths.
2. General access to the verge area must be available for government, utility services and emergency service's needs.
3. Access must be available for postal deliveries.
4. Landscaping must not impact on the function of City infrastructure, for example vegetation must not obscure authorised signs, drainage system integrity must be maintained, and road sight lines must be kept clear.
5. The Dial Before You Dig service and cable location services should be used to confirm the location of services (water, electricity, fibre optic and so on) before any excavation work.
6. Where no footpath is present, a level even space must be maintained for pedestrians to walk through with a one and half metre wide and two-metre-high clear space.
7. Where a footpath is present, the vegetation must be trimmed and controlled from protruding onto the path area with a minimum two-metre-high clear space above the path.
8. Vegetation may comprise:

- (1) Waterwise plants,
 - (2) Local and endemic species,
 - (3) Species with low fertilizer demand, and
 - (4) Loose mulch around vegetation with loose soil (not compacted).
9. Vegetation must not include:
- a. Pest, toxic or irritant species, or
 - b. Species with large thorns or needles (such as Yuccas, Pear cactus, or Bougainvillea), with the exception of pruned rose bushes and similar pruned garden species.
10. Trees must comply with the approved tree species and be planted in accordance with the City's Street Tree policy. Root growth and pruning needs should be considered for when the trees become mature.
11. Non-vegetated areas (paving, gravel, sand, synthetic turf):
- a. Must not consist of loose pea gravel,
 - b. Must be compacted if made of gravel, sand, or similar materials, and
 - c. Must occupy no more than 50% of the total verge area.
12. Synthetic turf is to be treated as a non-vegetated area.
13. Fencing and walls are not permitted in the verge.
14. Seating, tables and similar furniture must be fixed to stable footings.
15. Structures over 1.8 metres high are not permitted in the verge.
16. Statues and other artistic representations may not represent lewd or inappropriate imagery.
17. Retaining walls require an application to be submitted for the approval of the City. Retaining walls are not supported within the road verge unless absolutely necessary.
18. Signs are subject to a separate application under the Signs Local Law.

19. Bollards and similar items. For road safety purposes, non-frangible objects are not permitted within 3.0 metres of the face of kerb or edge of seal. Refer to the notes below for more details.

a. For un-kerbed roads, frangible posts shall be at least 600mm clear of the outer edge of the road shoulder.

b. For kerbed roads, frangible post shall be at least 300mm from the face of kerb.

Notes:

20. For condition 2, the requirement is to ensure that service vehicles and staff can access infrastructure if they need to. For example, emergency services may need to be able to access a property for firefighting, or the phone company may need to access an exchange box.

21. For condition 8, mulch is vegetation that has been chipped or shredded, and should ideally be free of pest species, weed seeds, and waste. Mulch may also comprise natural leaf and tree litter on an undisturbed ground surface. In terms of these conditions, the mulch does not need to be at any particular depth provided the ground that is being covered is completely covered. The use of weed mats is optional.

22. For condition 11(c), measure the verge area from kerb to boundary line, and from the left and right edges of the property. The area when divided in half represents the minimum area that must have vegetation. To measure vegetation area, the area is the ground area, so does not include canopy cover. The area around the plants and trees will need to be mulched or grassed to be measured as vegetation. Mulch may only be considered part of vegetation if applied to loose, un-compacted soil where vehicles are not permitted to park.

23. In relation to condition 19, in accordance with Austroads Urban Road Design – Guide to the Geometric Design of Major Urban Roads, a frangible item is defined as roadside furniture designed to collapse on impact. The severity of potential injuries to the occupants of an impacting vehicle are reduced, compared to those that could occur if the furniture was unyielding. Example of frangible objects are as followed:

- a. Plants and vegetation that are soft and yielding,
- b. Trees with a mature trunk diameter less than 100mm,
- c. Poles or sign posts that are designed to fracture, break away, give way or bend such that the damage to a colliding vehicle and risk of injury to vehicle occupants upon impact is minimised,

- d. For timber bollards in hardwood, the maximum bollard diameter is 125mm. Examples of hardwood species are: Grey Coast Box, Red Forest Gum, Grey Ironbark, Red Ironbark, and Jarrah with density between 800 to 1100 kg/m³ and toughness between 13.2 to 33.0 Nm as per AS 1720.2 2006.
- e. For timber bollards in softwood, the maximum bollard diameter is 150mm. Examples of softwood species are: Hoop Pine, Radiata Pine, and Slash Pine with a density between 550 to 600 kg/m³ and toughness between 4.5 to 11.0 Nm as per AS 1720.2 2006.
- f. For round galvanized steel bollards or posts, the maximum bollard diameter is 90mm. For other post types, refer to the manufacturer's specifications.
- g. For posts with larger diameters than are listed above, the frangibility may be achieved by a mechanical or structural modification to the base of the post at ground level. Systems include slip-bases, bases incorporating a component with low impact strength, and bases weakened in shear but not in bending. Refer to AS 1742.2 2009 for further information.

Verge

The verge is the portion of land between the road kerb and the property boundary line, or the road edge and the property boundary line. The area of verge that an owner can landscape is identified by the owner's property side boundaries.

In general, it is the responsibility of property owner to maintain the verge associated with the property. This includes grassed areas and trees.

Design Considerations

When designing your landscaping, make sure the following questions have been addressed:

- Can I use water-wise plants that prevent the need for watering?
- Am I managing the fire fuel load caused from timber and leaves?
- Are people driving past able to see past my landscaping to the next road or path?
- During heavy rain, where will the surface water go? Will it cause erosion?
- Am I able to maintain my landscaping if I become ill or infirm?
- If there is a fire, will emergency vehicles be able to access the verge, or my, or my neighbour's property?

- Am I creating a risk of injury from people walking through?
- How big will the plants and trees grow, and what will their roots and branches reach?

Parking

Parking is a controlled activity under the Parking and Parking Facilities Local Law 2008. The local law provides that:

- The occupier or owner of a property may ask other parties not to park their vehicle on the verge,
- No parking is allowed on or over footpaths.

If you have a parking problem, please contact the Ranger Services on 9257 9999.

Kerb, Footpaths, Drainage and Crossovers

The road kerb is a structural part of the road, providing both traffic and drainage functions. It must not be disturbed during or after landscaping construction.

If the road verge outside your property does not have a kerb, then the landscaping may extend to within one metre of the edge of the sealed road or road shoulder, provided it meets the full set of conditions above.

Footpaths in road verges are constructed and maintained by the City of Kalamunda. Any landscaping must not interfere with existing paths, and owners will be asked to keep branches, leaf litter, loose stones and gum nuts off the path outside their properties.

If the road verge outside your property does not have a footpath, then you must ensure a free clear space is provided for people to walk through as noted in condition 6. If you would like a footpath provided, please contact the City's Development Engineering team on 9257 9999. Path requests are assessed, and where deemed necessary they are prioritised and submitted for capital budget consideration.

Landscaping designs must prevent erosion, prevent ponding, enable free drainage, and consider the natural flow of water during heavy rainfalls. If the road verge outside your property has a swale, culvert or other drainage feature then this must be kept clear and functioning and must not be affected by any landscaping. For advice please contact the City's Development Engineering team on 9257 9999.

Crossovers are addressed by a separate document “Specifications for Crossover Construction”. Any landscaping must not interfere with the function of the crossover, and the future growth of vegetation and trees must be managed to ensure adequate sight lines for road users.

Approvals and By Law

The City of Kalamunda By Law Relating to Street Lawns and Gardens (1964) sets out the legal requirements for work in verges.

In respect of approvals, the by law requires that:

“A person shall not plant a lawn or garden in a street, except pursuant to a permit issued by the council and then only in conformity with these by-laws”.

This guideline represents an informing document in support of the by law. In the interests of reducing unnecessary administrative work, a formal application is not required where all of the conditions in this guideline have been complied with. If a resident / owner has any doubt as to the compliance with their current or proposed verge landscaping, they should contact the City as below.

The by law takes precedence in all cases.

As stated in the by law clause 9, the City may request any landscaping or part of, to be removed at the owner’s cost.

Enquiries

Enquiries regarding these conditions and other types of treatments can be directed to the City’s Development Engineering team on 9257 9999.