City of DAREBIN

GreenStreets Streetscape Strategy

2012-2020

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Introduction

As the urban population grows and private green space becomes less available, public open space increases in social and community value. Darebin City Council recognises the significance of its urban parklands and streetscapes and commits to sustainable management and growth into the future.

The public **streetscape** inclusive of nature strips and street trees, represents a network of Council's smallest public open spaces. GreenStreets Streetscape Strategy 2012-2020 outlines a vision and set of principles to guide City of Darebin's approach to streetscape design and street tree planting for the next eight years.

The streetscape is an important component of Council's open space network and can have a significant impact on how people experience, perceive and interact with their surroundings and neighbourhood. Streetscapes are the "parks" that residents visit every day as they move in and out of their homes.

Streetscapes help define a community's activities, appearance, identity and transport conditions. Improved streetscapes offer a range of benefits including economic growth, increased habitat within the urban core, spaces for passive and active recreation, places for residents to interact with neighbours and increased civic pride.

The 'Green Streets Strategy' (1995) has been successfully implemented over the past sixteen years resulting in over 20,000 new street trees across the municipality. GreenStreets needs to be updated to take into account modern climactic conditions, Darebin's growing population, changing requirements for the public realm, increasing community expectations and modern learning.

GreenStreets Streetscape Strategy 2012-2020, sets the strategic vision for street tree planting in the City of Darebin building upon and continuing this success, while considering contemporary issues such as increasing urban population, climate change, urban habitat creation, urban food production, varied species selection, water security, Melbourne @ 5million as well as other Council strategies and policies.

GreenStreets Streetscape Policy (2012-2020) also contains a revised **Nature Strip Policy** to guide and direct the development of nature strips by residents and developers.

Elements in the streetscape include:

- street trees & garden beds
- kerb & channel
- road surface
- footpaths
- public toilets
- public art
- signage
- street furniture
- iconic buildings
- heritage values
- neighbourhood character
- community use & function
- public seating
- rubbish bins
- cycle parking
- public transport infrastructure
- street lighting.

Vision

The City of Darebin will have a safe and sustainable streetscape that increases accessibility and walkability, supported by a healthy and diverse urban tree population that enhances the community's daily experience while ensuring environmental, economic and social sustainability into the future.

This vision will be achieved by Council, residents, businesses and local communities taking action together to green the municipality for a sustainable future.

Relevant Documents and Policies

GreenStreets Streetscape Strategy 2012-2020 sits within a framework of Council policy and strategy. It defines Council's position on streetscape design and implementation as well as reinforces and supports other relevant documents that govern the management of Darebin's Open Space.

Documents that inform this strategy are:

1. Darebin City Council Plan

2. Municipal Strategic Statement, Urban Design Framework, Development Contributions Scheme, Heritage Overlays

*3. GreenStreets Streetscape Strategy, Housing Strategy, Urban Forest Strategy, Play Space Strategy, Open Space Strategy, Tree Retention Policy, Community Engagement Policy, Retail Activity Centre Strategy, Going Places Darebin Transport Strategy, Footpath Activity Policy, Darebin Safe Travel Strategy 2010-2015, Darebin Cycling Strategy 2013-2018, Sustainable Water Strategy, Sustainable Water Use Plan, Stormwater Management Plan, Waste Management Strategy, Public Signage Strategy, The Darebin Walking Strategy**

*4. Preston Structure Plan, Reservoir Structure Plan, Northland Structure Plan, Northcote Structure Plan and Preston Central Structure Plan, Plenty Road Integrated Land Use and Transport Study, Northcote Identity Development, Northcote Streetscape Master Plan, High Street Urban Design Framework**

* Some of these strategies and plans are under development or in draft form.

Purpose & how to use this document

GreenStreets Streetscape Strategy 2012-2020 is a high level strategic document that will support and inform Council staff in the management and design of municipal streetscapes. Additionally, the strategy is publically available to provide information for community members interested in understanding Council's methodology in the management of streetscapes.

Information in this document is divided into seven sections; five relating to the Key Directions and the remaining two dedicated fundamental areas for the Streetscape strategy. Each section is further divided into relevant categories.

Each section contains policy statements and actions that will guide Council into achieving the Vision of GreenStreets. The policy statements are strategic promises from Council to the community used to guide and support decision making while the strategy is active.

The appendices provide additional, relevant information should it be required.

Words in **bold** are defined in the glossary at the end of the document.

Ideology

Street tree planting and creative, sustainable streetscape designs are key methods to cost-effectively and aesthetically ready the public realm for the future.

High level priorities for street tree planting and streetscape design by 2020 are to:

- increase the overall number of trees in Darebin's streetscape
- increase the overall percentage tree canopy cover
- improve the overall community satisfaction with Council's implementation and management of streetscapes
- increase the quality of streetscapes through considered, creative design outcomes
- increase the amount of Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD), passive irrigation and permeable surface applications throughout the municipality
- implement designed streetscape outcomes benefiting the larger community
- provide safe, accessible and uncluttered streetscapes.

Achieving Our Vision

Council places a high value on increasing the urban street tree population and will commit an annual budget sum over the next eight financial years to facilitate streetscape design and street tree planting. This capital works budget will be in addition to programmed annual maintenance, **infill planting, replacement planting,** park tree planting and capital works projects that may involve tree planting on or near streets.

This capital works budget will lead to projects that renew a selected number of streetscapes each year. The streetscapes will be selected based on need and potential for successful streetscape upgrades inclusive of street tree planting.

When designing a streetscape, priority will be placed on maximising opportunities to return paved or hard surfaces to permeable, green space. This will mean widening nature strips, removing hard paving, creating kerb outstands and utilizing creative alternative methods of planting to increase the amount of planting area in streets.

In some cases a minimal amount of car parking may be removed to facilitate streetscape design improvements.

When possible, alternative planting methods and locations including ways to add green into narrow streets, congested streets and very busy streets will be implemented. **Alternative planting** refers to methods that fall outside of the standard garden bed or tree pit and may include **vertical gardens, green walls, rooftop gardens,** trellising and climbing frames for plants and better utilising the **borrowed landscape** in the **private realm.**

To increase **accessibility** and **walkability,** care will be taken to provide **public amenity** inclusive of seating with shade, rubbish/recycle bins, water points and **way finding signage** in activity centres, **transport hubs** and near public transport stops.

In addition to new street tree planting, Darebin City Council will continue to manage its existing street tree population to ensure the health and longevity of each tree. Management practices at Darebin are conducted in accordance with relevant Australian Standards and best horticultural practice.

Success Together

It is important to note that Council cannot deliver GreenStreets on its own. The success of this strategy is in collaboration between Council, community and relevant non-municipal authorities.

Residents are encouraged to contact Council to share thoughts, opinions, ask questions or report flaws or faults in the public realm.

GreenStreets Streetscape Strategy Key Directions

- Visual amenity & design process
- Response to increasing population & development pressure
- Sustainable transport & accessibility
- Urban food production
- Response to climate change

Measuring Our Success

Indicator	Desired Outcome	Timeframe	Target
Number of Trees	Increase the number of trees within the City of Darebin's streets.	Baselined and reported annually.	Increase urban street tree population by at least a net gain of 400 trees each financial year until 2020.
Canopy Cover	Increase the total tree canopy cover within the City of Darebin.	Baselined and reported every 4 years.	Increase the total percentage of canopy cover on streets by at least 25% by 2020.
Community Satisfaction	Darebin City Council's community are satisfied with street tree planting and streetscape design.	Baselined and reported annually.	Increase community satisfaction regarding Council's street tree planting and streetscape design to 80% positive by 2020.
WSUD & Passive Irrigation	Increase the number of WSUD and passive irrigation applications throughout the municipality.	Baselined and reported every 4 years.	Include WSUD and/or passive irrigation technology in at least 20% of all streetscape trees planted annually.
Permeable Surfaces	Increase *the amount of permeable surface* within streetscapes.	Baselined and reported every 4 years.	Increase the percentage cover of permeable surfaces in the streetscape by 15% by 2020.
Urban Food Production	Increase the number of opportunities for urban food production within the City of Darebin.	Baselined and reported every 4 years.	Provide at least one new community garden facility each year until 2020.

GreenStreets Streetscape Policy Statements

Darebin City Council commits to the GreenStreets Streetscape Strategy 2012-2020 and will allocate funding each financial year until 2020 to realising its actions.

Darebin City Council will include Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD), permeable surfaces and passive irrigation technology in new capital works projects and when retrofitting existing public spaces where practicable and possible.

Darebin City Council will increase the urban tree population by a net gain of at least 400 new street trees each financial year for 8 consecutive financial years.

Darebin City Council commits to increasing the number of opportunities for community gardening and urban food production in the municipality.

Actions

Measure or estimate the percentage canopy cover of the City of Darebin's urban forest inclusive of street trees, park trees and trees in private ownership.

Measure or estimate *the amount of permeable surfaces* within the City of Darebin's public realm.

Measure or estimate the amount of Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD), and passive irrigation applications within the City of Darebin's public realm.

Create a targeted set of questions surrounding street tree planting and community satisfaction in the City of Darebin's annual survey starting in 2013.

Submit capital works applications to the budget process for tree planting and streetscape design each financial year for eight consecutive financial years starting with 2013-2014.

Identify opportunities for designed streetscapes in the City of Darebin by conducting a survey of all streets and street trees in the municipality.

Create at least one new opportunity for community gardening in the municipality each financial year until 2020.

Benefits of Streetscapes

Streetscapes make an important contribution to residential living areas, industrial zones as well as commercial precincts and Council is committed to developing quality streetscapes.

Streetscapes are more than tree planting alone and Council supports taking a well-rounded view of streetscape design incorporating environmental sustainability, social sustainability, neighbourhood character, positive aesthetics, habitat creation, increased usability and safety.

Streetscapes create the look and feel of the municipality and offer many benefits to the urban environment through trees and vegetation including:

- calming traffic
- improving air quality
- improving physical health and mental wellbeing
- increasing walkability of streets by providing shelter and shade
- increasing a positive aesthetic
- increasing feeling of safety
- increasing imaginative play in children
- increasing opportunities for social and economic benefits
- increasing property values
- increasing tourism and business opportunities
- lowering stress and anxiety
- managing and absorbing stormwater flow
- protection from wind and storm events
- providing habitat for native flora and fauna
- providing summer cooling lowering energy needs
- reducing anti-social behaviours including vandalism and graffiti
- reducing heat-related respiratory difficulties, heat cramps and exhaustion, non-fatal heat stroke, and heat-related mortality
- reducing urban heat island effect
- reducing UV exposure
- sequestering carbon dioxide
- shaping neighbourhood character.

Trees are the most accessible and cost-effective means of combating climate change, mitigating the Urban Heat Island effect, absorbing increased storm water flows and increasing air quality. Trees and vegetation within streetscapes are currently not valued financially by Council as assets.

Impacts of Trees

Management of urban trees, inclusive of watering and pruning, is an important part of their lifecycle. The City of Darebin has maintenance practices and procedures to mitigate the negative impact of trees within the municipality.

Tree root damage

Some trees have large root systems that, with age and time, may cause damage to underground infrastructure, footpaths or masonry walls.

Before removal of a tree is considered, Council will investigate if root mitigation like root barriers can be installed to save the tree and minimise damage caused by tree roots. In some cases a tree may need to be removed protect Council's infrastructure or private property. This determination is made by Council's Urban Tree Coordinator.

Leaf litter and allergens

There is no such thing as a maintenance-free tree. All trees will drop leaves, flowers, and fruit. In some cases, residents may have allergic reactions to tree pollen or litter. The trees that are loved by some for their canopy cover, flower display or the shade they provide can cause distress for others as leaves and detritus are shed on footpaths and in private gardens.

Considered tree selection and maintenance over the lifecycle of the tree will help to mitigate any potential negative impacts of urban trees. Each tree is an individual, and removal or retention of trees perceived as a problem will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Council will not remove a tree solely because of leaf litter, seed or nut production or pollen production.

Shade on private property

Shading is often a desirable service provided by street trees. In some cases shade can conflict with other elements of a street. Council receives tree removal requests because shade from a street tree conflicts with their solar panels, vegetable garden or entry garden.

Council will not remove a tree solely because of the shade it casts on private property. Each request for tree removal will be assessed on its individual merits.

Community Consultation

City of Darebin is committed to keeping community members informed about changes to streetscapes near their residence or business.

Consultation Methods & Formats

Communication can take many forms and the nature of the proposed works will determine the method used to consult with residents.

The most common forms of communication are:

Information – When only one outcome is possible because of limitations arising due to site constraints, binding regulation, public safety or relationship to other fixed outcomes, Council will inform the community of an outcome and the reasons behind the decision.

Consultation – A communication process where Council gathers views, opinions and experiences of community stakeholders. It then deliberates over these views, along with other relevant material and evidence before arriving at an official recommendation. Where possible, community members and other contributing stakeholders will be informed how their feedback was used and how it influenced outcomes.

Deliberation – A two-way process of learning and exchange involving community and Council where considered views and joint outcomes are developed. Communities and stakeholders are provided with information and sufficient time to discuss an issue in depth and engage with one another. Recommendations are then made to Council for genuine integration into its decisions.

Collaboration – Collaboration means shared decision-making between Council and communities and mutually defined areas of responsibility and action. In collaboration, Council and communities are equal partners in the ongoing processes of decision-making including, learning, reflection, discussion, weighing up competing priorities and goals developing alternatives and carrying out actions according to decisions made together.

Council will use one or more of following formats to convey information to affected residents:

- formal letters in the post to affected addresses
- informal notices in post boxes
- signs posted on trees to be removed
- signs posted onsite with proposed plans
- meetings onsite or at a nearby venue with community groups
- articles in local publications or Darebin Community News
- project description and notices on Darebin's website and social media
- notices posted in nearby community hubs.

The type of communication will vary with each project. Any community communication process takes time and resources to undertake. By committing to communicate with residents, Council commits to allocate capital funds and staff time to the process.

As with all Darebin publications, formal letters will include information in multiple languages directing residents to translation services offered by Council.

Selecting the area for communication

The area selected for communication with the community about a streetscape project will vary according to several factors including:

- type and scope of works proposed
- type and use of area
- amount of change proposed
- public perception and opinion of works
- configuration of street
- other site specific features.

Residents of properties adjacent to new or proposed street tree planting or designed street outcomes will be given the opportunity to comment on or influence design or tree selection on their street. In some cases this means that residents can select their street tree from a species list when planting is programmed in their street.

Timing of communication

Community communication will occur up to six months prior to street tree planting or removal and is linked to the annual capital works program. Exceptions are made for emergency tree works where a tree has been declared an immediate safety hazard. Emergency tree works include felled branch or tree due to storm, dangerous contact between branches and powerlines, damage due to a vehicular accident, incidences of vandalism or similar unplanned and unpredictable incidents. In cases where emergency tree works are required action will be taken as soon as possible mitigate risk.

Community communication is an important part of the design process. In all cases Council will endeavour to implement a design solution that suits the majority opinion as expressed by affected residents. In some cases the final outcome will be in contrast to public opinion due to high level Council policy, local laws implications, proposed development, budgetary implications, maintaining public safety, specialist knowledge etcetera.

The final decision for streetscape outcomes rests with Council. In all cases consultation materials will include background information to help residents.

For more information on community communication please reference Darebin Community Engagement Framework (2012-2017).

Major & Minor Streetscape Renewals

Council will engage or inform the community when **major streetscape renewals** are proposed within the streetscape. Major renewals include modifications in existing parking configuration, removal of more than 50% of existing street trees, installation of **street furniture,** change to the configuration of the nature strip or kerb, inclusion of WSUD and other situations as they arise.

Minor streetscape renewals are those that include removal of less than 49% of the existing street trees and do not generally involve civil works. Minor streetscape works include replanting of trees in vacant tree pits, creating new tree plots or installing small garden beds.

In some cases, Council may choose to progress with a design outcome or plant a street tree within the footpath, road surface, median strip or nature strip when a minority of residents object.

Infill Planting

Where possible, owners and occupiers of properties adjacent to proposed planting of **infill trees** will be notified informing them of Council's intention to plant.

Programmed Maintenance

Programmed street tree maintenance includes regular planned management, assessment of Council trees and associated tree works as required.

Programmed street tree works such as yearly pruning and mulching are undertaken on a rotational basis. Information regarding locations and timing of programmed street tree works will be listed on Darebin's Parks website or available by calling Darebin Customer Service 03 8470 8888.

GreenStreets Streetscape Policy Statements

Darebin City Council will not remove a tree solely because of leaf litter, seed or nut drop or pollen production.

Darebin City Council will investigate the use of root mitigation techniques before removing a tree suspected of having an invasive root system.

Darebin City Council will not remove a tree solely because of the shade cast on private property.

Darebin City Council will inform, consult, deliberate or engage residents in affected properties when designing and implementing new streetscapes 100% of the time (excluding only emergency tree works).

Actions

Create, maintain and implement a project page for streetscape design projects where community members can obtain information about streetscape upgrades in Darebin.

Create, maintain and implement a web based street tree maintenance roster detailing when street trees will be pruned for community use.

Make information regarding streetscape design, street tree planning and tree maintenance available to interested community members through all council customer service outlets and Council's website.

Inform, consult, engage or deliberate with the affected community for all streetscape design and street tree planting.

Street Tree Selection & Removal

Street and park trees are planted on Council land and are the property of Darebin City Council. As such, it is Council's responsibility to plant, maintain and remove trees. Residents are not permitted to prune or remove Council trees.

Every tree within the City of Darebin's urban forest needs to be well suited to the unique situation in which it is planted. There is no such thing as a perfect tree. As they grow and age, trees need maintenance in order to remain safe, healthy, vital and within the parameters required of urban trees.

Darebin City Council will not plant more trees than it has the resources and equipment to maintain. Consideration will be given to increasing resources as the urban forest grows.

When compared to their counterparts in parks, street trees need to be able to cope with increased:

- incidence of vandalism
- pollution from stormwater runoff
- concentrated predation from urban wildlife
- increased temperature from urban heat island effect
- isolation from other natural environments
- limited access to sunlight, water, soil nutrients and soil oxygen
- increased soil compaction from foot and vehicular traffic.

Street Tree Selection

Street trees will be selected based on suitability to the site, biological tolerances, predicted climate change conditions and potential to contribute to the landscape without onerous management implications.

Council does not favour an all native or all exotic approach to street tree planting and instead favours the 'right tree in the right spot'.

Some factors that will be considered when selecting a tree are:

- available sunlight
- ability of Council to manage and maintain trees
- biological tolerances
- drainage and other below-ground infrastructure
- habitat value
- heritage present in close proximity
- longevity and life cycle of tree
- low water and maintenance requirements
- mature height and spread of canopy
- neighbourhood character
- potential for allergen production
- potential for leaf litter, allergen and nut/seed production
- proximity to natural heritage areas and vegetation protection overlays
- proximity to powerlines and other overhead infrastructure
- quality and availability of stock
- root growth and habit
- shape, form, colour, habit and growth rate
- soil conditions
- structural integrity of tree
- suitability for current and predicted climate conditions
- unique attributes (autumn colour, bark colour, fruiting & flowering time etcetera).

Darebin City Council will always source quality stock and plant according to best contemporary horticultural practice.

Street Tree Removal

Where possible, Council favours retaining and preserving the trees in its urban forest. Street trees will be removed as they fail, become hazardous, decline or exceed their **safe useful life expectancy (SULE).**

In some cases trees may be removed before they appear dead to ensure long-term viability of the urban forest and to allow for **successional planting.**

Occasionally healthy trees may be removed as part of a major streetscape renewal, where a tree species change is required or in order to prevent potential site-specific issues.

Removal of a tree includes felling the trunk and removing the stump. These actions may not be performed on the same day as different equipment and resources are required to perform each task. Tree stumps are normally removed within 6 weeks of the tree being removed.

In cases where a tree is obviously dead, dying, potentially hazardous or a weed species, the Council's inspecting **arborist** or qualified **horticulturalist** will determine and program removal.

No tree should be removed without first undertaking an objective assessment. As part of this assessment, each tree will be assigned a retention value that is based on the desirable and undesirable qualities of each tree and a risk assessment that considers the tree relative to risk are included in this policy.

A tree amenity evaluation method is used to place a monetary value on trees when required by Council.

Tree Retention Values

A tree's retention status is based on the individual qualities of each tree surveyed and is not biased in favour of particular species or type (for example native opposed to exotic trees, green leaves opposed to purple).

Through the assessment process the tree will be given a retention value which will be used in decision making. The following retention values have been developed and can be used for practical applications in tree assessments across the Municipality.

High Retention Value

Trees with high retention value:

- Change to a tree is young and have a long life expectancy
- offer or exhibit cultural value
- pose minimal risk to person or property
- have trunk diameter larger than 400mm
- in very good condition having good shape, vitality, health and structure
- is of high amenity (aesthetic) value
- is worthy of auxiliary works to accommodate its retention
- may be a heritage listed tree
- is located in an Environmentally Significance Overlay or bush corridor or has very high biodiversity value
- has established hollows important for nesting and homes.

Medium Retention Value

Trees with medium retention value:

- Change to a tree is desirable to retain having the potential to be a medium to long term component of the landscape (medium to long life expectancy)
- is in good condition, has reasonable shape, health and structure
- is of medium to high amenity value
- may have some dead wood or be on a slight lean
- is worthy of consideration for auxiliary works to accommodate retention.
- is young (planted more than 3 years prior)
- may require appropriate levels of line clearance.

Low Retention Value

Trees with low retention value:

- Change to a tree is not desirable and have nominal impact on the streetscape if removed
- is in average condition with a medium to short life expectancy
- is in average condition, unhealthy and or average structure
- has an untreatable pest or disease infestation that will send the tree into decline
- is of a species on a Darebin's weed list
- may be on Council's tree removal program
- is not ideal for location and above average maintenance works are required to maintain the tree institute
- is less than 2 years old and easily replaced.

Poor Retention Value

Trees with poor retention value:

- Change to a tree is in decline and has a short life expectancy
- is in poor condition with possible major dead wood and/or structural or faults
- poses unacceptable risk to person or property
- is of a species on Darebin's weed list
- may be on a proactive tree removal program (eg. Prunus-Lagunaria)
- is dead or nearly dead
- is planted in poor location and not suitable for particular species.

Trees that have a **low or poor retention** value may be removed without elevation to a tree removal panel.

Tree Removal Requests

Council will always remove trees that are found to be dead, diseased, dying, potentially hazardous or causing damage. Council will consider individual resident requests for street tree/s removal. These requests should be made in writing to Darebin Parks Urban Tree Management Coordinator or through the "Contact Us" tab on Council's website.

Council will not remove or prune street trees solely because they:

- block or obstruct views
- shade solar panels or garden beds
- drop leaves, fruit or sap
- house birds, bats or possums
- damage fences, service pipes or other built structures unless all engineering alternatives have been considered
- inhibit grass growth
- are perceived to cause allergies, unless tree can be medically linked to allergy by a specialist.

When submitting a tree removal request the following information must be clearly stated:

- detailed location of tree
- species of tree (if known)
- number of trees to be removed
- detailed reason for removal request
- actions that have been taken with reference to the tree in question
- other relevant information specific to removal request.

Once a street tree removal request has been received, the tree will be inspected within 5 working days. If the tree is dead, diseased, dying, potentially hazardous or a weed species the tree will be removed. If these conditions are not met, the request will be considered by Council's arboricultural staff and/or the Urban Tree Removal Panel. The applicant will be informed of Council's decision in writing within 4 weeks.

Where an applicant is dissatisfied with a determination of an assessment, a request for a review of the initial decision through the Urban Tree Removal Panel can be initiated.

Tree Removal Appeal – Urban Tree Removal Panel

In instances where a resident disagrees with the decision of Council officers regarding a tree removal request they shall be referred to the Urban Tree Removal Panel. Appeals to the Urban Tree Removal Panel must be made in writing.

This panel shall meet on an as needed basis and will consist of two staff from Parks and Vegetation or Public Realm; both officers will be independent of the original decision.

The panel will assess the process, context and nature of the request in the content of both internal and external reports and determine whether the procedure followed was in line with Council policy and customer service standards.

The Urban Tree Removal Panel's decision will be final.

Trees Removed for Capital Works Projects or Development

In some cases a tree may be considered for removal in order to complete a municipal capital works project or private development. Internal requests for tree removal should be made in writing to Darebin Parks Urban Tree Management Coordinator or Planning Arborist.

Developers seeking the removal of a Council tree should do so as part of the planning permit application process.

When submitting a tree removal request the following information must be clearly stated or submitted:

- detailed location of tree
- species of tree (if known)
- number of trees to be removed
- detailed reason for removal request
- actions that have been taken with reference to the tree in question
- plans detailing the proposed project or development
- other relevant information specific to removal request.

Once received, the tree and application for removal will be assessed by Council's Urban Tree Removal Panel. This panel meets as needed and consists of at least 2 individuals from Darebin Parks and Public Realm. Applicants will be informed of the panel's decision in writing.

Applicants can appeal a decision made by the Urban Tree Removal Panel. This appeal process can be initiated through contacting Darebin Parks Urban Tree Coordinator. The appeal will involve a motion by Council and the decision will be final.

Vandalised Trees

When acts of vandalism including illegal tree removal, pruning by a non-council employee, wilful damage or tree poisoning are suspected, Darebin City Council will perform a thorough site inspection to determine the likely cause of tree death or decline.

Depending on the type and location of damage, the vandalised tree may be replaced. Before replacing the damaged tree, Council may try to save the tree using current best practice arboricultural actions. In some cases 'tree vandal' signs may be erected in place of the tree to inform the community of the illegal activity. These signs may be up to the height and width of the tree at maturity and may be kept in place until a replacement tree reaches its mature height.

If vandals are caught in the act, they will be prosecuted and fined to the extent allowable by law.

Street Tree Protection and Development

Darebin City Council encourages the retention of trees in all forms of development. Developers will be given support and information to help them consider incorporating environmental sustainability into landscape plans.

In cases where a healthy tree must be removed, Council may require that the developer reimburse Council for the loss of the tree. City of Darebin uses the City of Melbourne Amenity Value Formula to determine a monetary value for each tree.

During development, trees on nature strips must be protected according to the Australian Standard (AS4970 - 2009: 'Protection of trees on development sites').

Any application for a building or crossover permit must consider the impact on the nature strip tree/s due to proposed construction of a new crossover, or widening of existing crossovers. Prior to applying for a building or crossover permit, applicants should contact Darebin Parks to determine tree protection measures required or tree replacement fee as applicable.

If no modification is proposed to the existing crossover, the nature strip tree/s must still be protected during construction.

Payment of any tree replacement fee is required before a crossover permit is granted.

Tree Protection Guidelines

Trees on nature strips require protection during building works to assure their long-term survival. The following guidelines are to be followed for the protection of these trees.

Circular exclusion zones or Tree Protection Zones (TPZ) are to be established around the trunks of trees on nature strips. A TPZ aims to protect the root plate and canopy of the tree during construction. The diagram below provides more detail.

When planning and designing roads, services, lot boundaries and building envelopes ensure that no works may occur within Tree Protection Zone.

Any unauthorized works within a Tree Protection Zone are liable to potential financial penalties under the Local Law asset protection process. This includes any unauthorized removal or lopping of a tree, unauthorized excavation or other works that cause harm to the tree.

Standard conditions for a Tree Protection Zone are:

- TPZs are to be clearly delineated with steel pickets and wire mesh
- Mulch within the Tree Protection Zone to a depth of 80-100mm
- Ensure trees are adequately irrigated, particularly over the summer months
- Do not enter the TPZ without Council consent
- Signage – No entry to T.P.Z.
- Do not store, spill or dump building materials, chemicals, or fuels in the TPZ
- Do not attach any nails, wires or other fixings to the tree trunk or branches.

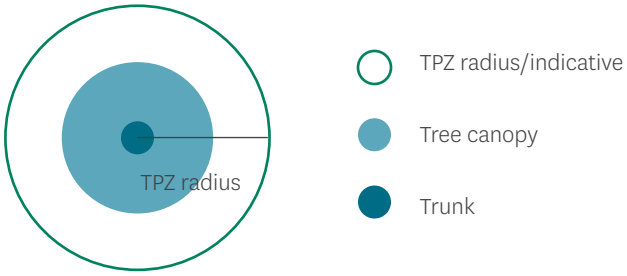
If permission has been granted by Council to enter a TPZ, the following conditions apply:

- Any works within a TPZ should be supervised by a suitably qualified arborist
- Protect the tree trunk and canopy from damage (immediately seek advice from Council approved arborist if damage occurs)
- Prevent soil compaction within the TPZ as compaction negatively affects soil porosity, aeration, water retention and strength
- The ground level in the TPZ is not changed through filling or excavation
- Water is not stored within the TPZ
- Prevent open-cut excavation in the TPZ as it can damage with the root system
- Alternatives: pier & beam footings or screw pile footings (within the site), service boring, no dig technology
- Stop work if roots greater than 50mm in diameter are encountered – please suspend work and get the advice of a council approved arborist on how to proceed.

Calculation of the Tree Protection Zone (TPZ)

The TPZ is calculated as 12 x the Diameter of the tree at Breast Height (DBH) which is 1.2m above the ground level.

The TPZ radius is measured from the trunk edge, not the centre of the trunk. The TPZ radius contains a large component of the feeder and absorption roots that are fundamental to a tree's health. Please refer to diagram for further information.



An encroachment of 10% of the root zone on one side only, is generally permitted under the Australian Standard. Darebin Parks must approve permission for further encroachment into the tree protection zone beforea crossover permit is granted.

Any queries regarding Tree Protection Zones can be directed to the Darebin Parks Arboriculture department on 8470 8720.

Tree Protection & Development Pressure

Darebin City Council encourages the retention of trees in all forms of development.

Developers will be given support and information to help them consider incorporating environmental sustainability into landscape plans.

All developments requesting a development permit must include landscape plans clearly indicating plans for removal of Council trees. In cases where a healthy tree must be removed, Council may require that the developer reimburse Council for the loss of the tree. City of Darebin uses the City of Melbourne Amenity Value Formula to determine a monetary value for each tree.

When development or civil works are undertaken near Council trees, works must respect a Tree Protection Zone (TPZ) as determined by the appropriate authority within Council.

Council may require that retained trees be fenced for protection at the developer's expense for the duration of works.

GreenStreets Streetscape Policy Statements

Darebin City Council will always source quality stock and plant according to best contemporary horticultural practice.

Darebin City Council will carefully select trees ensuring that 'the right tree is in the right spot.'

Darebin City Council will protect its urban forest by only removing trees when the option for retaining them is not viable.

Darebin City Council requires that any construction or development works respect Tree Protection Zones.

Darebin City Council encourages sustainable and environmentally sustainable development.

Darebin City Council will prosecute tree vandals.

Actions

Establish an Urban Tree Removal panel. Use this panel to guide the tree removal process.

Create, maintain and distribute guidelines for sustainable development including tree protection and retention to applicants for development permits.

Create, maintain and distribute guidelines for sourcing quality tree stock.

Create, maintain and distribute guidelines for planting according to best horticultural practice.

Council Resources

Staff & Equipment

As Council's urban tree population grows and the demand increases for more designed streetscapes more resources will be required to create, manage, maintain and install trees and streetscapes. These resources include appropriately trained staff members, machinery, vehicles and labourers.

In some cases new roles will need to be created within Council to manage this need.

Council will consider creating and filling positions within appropriate departments to create, support and maintain an increasing urban tree population including but not limited to a dedicated Streetscape Designer, arboricultural maintenance staff, street cleansing and asset management staff.

Internal Communication

Communication between Council staff members involved in maintaining, establishing, changing or inspecting urban trees and designed streetscapes must be regular and ongoing to ensure the best result for Darebin's trees.

This communication is especially important for Darebin Parks, Public Realm, Major Projects, Statutory Planning, Transport Planning, Transport Management, Asset Management, Statutory Planning, Strategic Planning, Risk Management, Bushland Management, Waste Management and Natural Resources.

GreenStreets Streetscape Policy Statements

Darebin City Council will not plant more trees than it can manage according to best arboricultural practice.

Actions

Create and fill a permanent ongoing role for a Streetscape Designer to manage, design and implement GreenStreets outcomes.

Create and fill ongoing roles for qualified arboricultural staff as required by changes in the urban tree population in the Darebin Parks Team.

Support and encourage internal consultation by prioritising interdepartmental collaboration.

Key Direction 1:
Visual Amenity & Design Process

Each street is a unique environment with a set of biological, physical and cultural needs. As such, each streetscape will be assessed individually to ensure the design response is best suited to the individual area.

The design process consists of several stages that can cycle back on themselves before reaching the final solution.

These steps are:

Identify a need

Detailed site analysis

Research

Preliminary or concept design

Community communication

Detailed or final design

Construction

Evaluation.

In order to assist in the selection and prioritisation of streets for upgrade, Council will undertake a detailed inventory of its tree population. At a minimum, this inventory will include details regarding tree species, numbers of trees, tree useful life expectancy, tree age, tree health and vitality, amenity value, potential planting space, neighbourhood character, site conditions and planting method for each tree and each street. These criteria will be weighted and applied universally to all existing streets within the municipality to assist in selecting the top streets for upgrade.

City of Darebin will prioritise public safety, **usability,** and **accessibility** when designing streetscapes.

Other high level priorities that may be considered are environmental sustainability, social sustainability, neighbourhood character, aesthetics, habitat creation and heat island reduction.

Elements in the designed streetscape – Street Trees

Street tree planting is a key element of a streetscape. Trees create character, provide shade and set the overall tone of a neighbourhood.

When practicable, street trees will be planted to maximize benefit and minimize inconvenience. This means that street trees will:

- not block footpaths, public infrastructure such as benches, civic signage and parking infrastructure
- not interfere with line of sight for pedestrians, cyclists, vehicles or trams
- be from a variety of species to ensure diversity within the urban forest
- be selected to suit the specific needs of the site
- be planted at the junction of parking spaces to allow for easier access to vehicles
- be planted away from points of entrance and egress into residences and businesses
- be planted to have low impact on signage for businesses and organizations
- be planted to minimize loss of parking within the streetscape.

Street trees in the City of Darebin are planted in the nature strip, median strip, roundabout, tree pits in the footpath or cut outs in the road surface.

Elements in the designed streetscape – Garden beds

In some streetscapes garden beds will be used as a tool to increase the impact, functionality, circulation pattern, habitat value or aesthetics of an area. Garden beds can be planted directly into the earth or in raised planting beds.

Garden beds are not suitable for every streetscape. Garden beds add to the overall amount of **green surfaces** in a street. The more living greenery there is the greater the impact for habitat, environmental cooling through **evapotranspiration,** visual softening and surface permeability.

As design elements, garden beds can be used to **calm traffic,** direct pedestrian and vehicle movement, limit access, signal directional movement, add colour and diversity, deter rubbish dumping or signal a change in street use or function. They are also a way for the local community to participate in their streetscape through helping with planting, maintenance and upkeep.

Elements in the designed streetscape – Public Toilets

Public toilets are most often found in open spaces reserves near recreation areas, playspaces, shopping precincts or community centres. They provide an important function for users of a space allowing extended use time.

At present, Darebin does not have a strategy to guide the placement, management, maintenance, functionality or construction of public toilets.

Elements in the designed streetscape – Street Lighting

Street lighting is important both from a functional as well as an aesthetic perspective. The colour, level, intensity, spill, shadow and density of lighting can all impact the walkability, usability, character and perception of safety connected to a streetscape. Lighting can be expensive and carries with it a lifetime maintenance and running costs.

In designed streetscapes, aesthetic lighting can be used to highlight key precincts, features or gateways. Size, colour, style and placement of lights adds to the iconic character of a place and can be used to set a mood.

Safety or street lighting can be used to light footpaths, alleyways or car parks to increase visibility at night and improve safety for street users.

Lighting can be electrical, solar, wind generated or reflective.

Elements in the designed streetscape – Public Signage

Signs in a streetscape provide information, direct users to public amenity, highlight a trafficable path, establish a hierarchy of space, provide building names, identify landmarks and set the rules governing an area. Signs should be consistent in appearance, type and method of conveying information.

Depending on the location, purposeful deviation from Darebin's standard signage suite may be appropriate to highlight a unique or important streetscape or area. Darebin's current Signage Strategy has limited options for public place signs in the public realm.

Elements in the designed streetscape – Civil Infrastructure

Much of a streetscape is composed of functional civil infrastructure such as kerbs, road surfaces, footpaths and drainage crossings. Civil infrastructure should be consistent, durable and maintained to a high standard to allow for a long, safe and usable life span.

In most residential or minor streetscapes asphalt, concrete and bluestone compose a majority of the public surfaces. These materials are durable, readily available and come in a muted colour palette that does not draw attention away from other elements in the street.

In key or major streets custom paving or colour patterns may be used to identify the area as different or special. Where possible, these materials should be stockpiled or made readily available for repairs or replacement.

Elements in the designed streetscape – Pavement treatments

Footpaths in the City of Darebin are most often made from concrete or bitumen. Concrete is used in key retail centres, some residential streets, areas of high traffic or where other circumstances require a strong, durable and weight bearing surface. Bitumen is used in residential streets, to repair areas damaged by wear or underground service works or where a more flexible surface treatment is required.

Council repairs and replaces footpaths and road surfaces on a rotational basis. When possible, streetscapes will be upgraded at the same time as footpath and road works to minimise disruption and maximise funding and labour.

In some cases service providers such as Melbourne Water, Telstra or Jemena may need to access their cables or pipes located under Council footpaths or nature strips. It is important that these providers have access to underground assets as they are responsible for making water, sewer, electricity, telephone and internet available to Darebin residents. These service providers are required to put back or 'make good' surfaces they disturb. In the case of footpaths or road surfaces this is bitumen or concrete, for nature strips it is seeded turf.

In key or prominent streetscapes and retail activity centres distinctive or custom paving may be used to highlight or accentuate the use of a particular area.

Council will prioritise the increase of permeable surfaces or paving within streetscapes and public spaces understanding that these technologies may limit the scope or increase the budget of some civil works.

Pavement, as with most hard surfaces, can absorb heat from the sun. This heat is radiated back into the air causing ambient temperature to rise. This heat emission occurs into the evening hours after the sun has set causing temperatures in urban areas to be hotter for longer than their rural counterparts. This phenomena is called the Urban Heat Island Effect. Choosing materials in lighter colours with low albedo reflects rather than absorbs heat and light. This should be considered when designing a streetscape.

Elements in the designed streetscape – Parking

Car parking is an important function of the streetscape. However, in some cases a minimum of car parking space may be reconfigured or removed to facilitate a more accessible public realm.

Depending on the configuration of the street, there may be extra or unused space between the standard 6-meter long car parks. Formalising or measuring the street and consolidating these spaces can make space for tree planting without a loss to the overall number of car spaces.

In some cases a minimum of parking spaces may be removed to facilitate increased street tree planting. The community will always be consulted when changes to the existing on-street parking are proposed.

Council will prioritise street tree planting over increasing car parking.

Elements in the designed streetscape – Street Furniture & Amenity

Every street and public open space is different. Darebin City Council has a standard suite of street furniture for use in public streetscapes. Where available, Darebin preferences local suppliers, recycled, recyclable and sustainable products.

Seating

Darebin has two standard seat types, the Warrigal and the Promenade, each with a backless bench and seat style.

Warrigal seats are simple, sturdy and functional and are installed in residential streets, small retail centres, bus shelters, pocket parks, reserves and play spaces. Warrigal seating is made from recycled cast aluminium with recycled spotted gum timbers stained Jarrah.

Promenade seating is installed in major retail activity centres, key civic precincts and other high profile locations. It has a more designed finish and aesthetic appeal. Promenade seating is made from mild steel with recycled spotted gum timbers stained Jarrah.

Water Points

Darebin has a standard suite of stainless steel water fountains. Depending on the location the water fountains may be standard, standard with dog bowl or standard with dog bowl and refill tap.

Water points are located in major retail activity centres, civic precincts, BBQ areas, large parks, sporting grounds and other locations where groups of people frequent and congregate. Barring special circumstances, water points are not installed in residential streets.

Bicycle Hoops

Darebin has a standard bicycle hoop that is installed at public transport hubs, community centres, retail activity centres and areas of dense population. Where possible hoops will be installed in a group.

Rubbish & Recycling Bins

Darebin has a standard suite of rubbish and recycling bins for use in major streetscapes, retail activity centres, civic precincts, play spaces, parks and reserves.

Bins come in two standard sizes, 120L and 240L, and are made from perforated mild steel. Recycling bins are distinct from rubbish bins in that they bear the recycle logo and have yellow lids. Rubbish and recycling bins must be located where collection vehicles can access them.

Custom & Non-Standard Furniture

In some locations, custom furniture or non-standard may be used to create a sense of place or highlight an area. Custom furniture is often more expensive than the standard suite of furniture and may have additional maintenance requirements. Because custom furniture is often one of a kind, replacement may be challenging or impossible.

Non-standard furniture includes salvaged, recycled, repurposed and repositioned civic furniture. When a piece of furniture is uninstalled, it is taken to the Council works depot. If all or part of it is salvageable it is repaired, repainted and reinstalled in small parks, residential streets and play spaces. This helps to manage costs, keep usable products out of landfill and minimise unnecessary use of raw materials.

Elements in the designed streetscape – Accessibility & Walkability

Accessibility and walkability are key functions of the streetscape and ensure that wherever possible streets, parks and other public land is accessible to all.

Where possible, streets and public open spaces will be accessible by default. This means that people of all abilities can move freely without having to use a specially designed or distinct access point or entrance (eg – separate ramps). This is not possible in all situations but is a design principle to which Council aspires.

In practice this means that grades and slope will be gentle, major paths will be solid and stable, a minimum of 1.5 metres of uncluttered and accessible walk way must be left on public streets, major thoroughfares will be uncluttered and open, tactiles will be included at all major intersections and street furniture will be installed to relevant Australian Standards.

Walkability refers to the level of comfort and ease that pedestrians experience as they move through a space or street. High levels of walkability mean that pedestrians feel safe and comfortable in a space which in turn encourages use of the streetscape for enjoyment through walking, shopping, cycling, gathering, dining and public transport.

In practice this means providing appropriate levels of seating, water, bins, bicycle hoops, shade, level footpaths, aesthetic applications, wayfinding signage and other useful public amenities.

Retail activity centres, civic spaces, café precincts, major parks and regional play spaces should have high levels of walkability.

Sustainable Purchasing

Where possible, purchases of elements for Darebin's streetscapes should be locally made, sustainably sourced or recycled. When purchasing a sustainable product the environmental impacts of the product's entire lifecycle should be considered. This means considering the energy embodied in sourcing raw materials, manufacturing, transporting and packaging before committing to a purchase.

Additionally, products that embody less energy to produce should be used preferentially over traditional products. This means 'green' or ecocrete (concrete), warm pour asphalt, recycled road base or reclaimed steel. This may mean committing more funds sustainable purchasing.

In designing streetscapes opportunities to reuse existing objects or resources should be considered. In practice this means reusing kerbing as a feature in a nearby play space, reconditioning street furniture for use elsewhere in the municipality, draining water fountains into nearby garden beds, crushing removed concrete footpaths into road base etcetera. This will involve more planning and communication with related Council departments.

Alternative Greening

Traditionally, street trees are planted directly into the nature strip or in tree pits fashioned into the existing road surface, median strip, round-about, and footpath. The size of the tree pits varies depending on the amount of available space but a minimum of 1 metre by 2 meters is preferred. This method works in streets with ample available space.

In some areas of Darebin, streets and footpaths are narrow necessitating creative solutions to allow safe and effective tree planting within streets.

Where possible, Darebin City Council will consider inclusion of alternative means of planting to maximise green in the streetscape.

Alternative planting methods include but are not limited to:

- green walls or vertical gardens
- raised beds or planters
- climbing plants and trellising
- garden beds
- living sculptures made from plants
- WSUD tree pits
- extensions of nature strips or median strips.

Hierarchy of Streetscapes

Darebin City Council will upgrade streetscapes according to need and opportunity not prioritising one type of street, suburb or ward over another. In this manner residential, gateway, retail, major and industrial streetscapes are treated the same.

Need will be determined through a detailed street tree inventory and weighting system. At a minimum, this inventory will include details regarding potential planting space, neighbourhood character, site conditions, quantities, tree species, tree age, planting method, amenity value, health and vitality for each tree and each street. These criteria will be weighted and applied universally to all existing streets within the municipality to assist in selecting the top streets for upgrade.

Streetscape works and design can be initiated as a result of other Capital Projects, such as Council's Road Reconstruction Program.

When two or more streets have an identical rating, precedence will be given as follows:

- Gateways
- Retail Activity Centres
- Industrial Precincts
- Residential streets.

Gateways & Major Streets

Gateways are significant entry and exit points for the municipality and have been developed to create a sense of occasion, primarily through tree planting and signage.

Most gateways and major streets are large or iconic streets that serve as transport corridors, retail activity centres, industrial hubs and residential centres. Gateways throughout the municipality are in a state of decline and need to be strategically assessed for upgrade.

A detailed master plan shall be created for all gateways and major streetscapes. This master plan will be presented to community members and key user groups for comment.

Written permission is required from Council to plant on a nature strip in a Major Streetscape. See also Darebin's Nature Strip Policy.

Some major roads within the City of Darebin are owned and managed by VicRoads. In these cases, the City of Darebin will adhere to VicRoads streetscape design, management and maintenance policies. These policies can be accessed through VicRoads website.

Darebin's Major Streetscapes are:

- Albert Street
- Banbury Road
- Bell Street
- Broadhurst Ave
- Broadway
- Cheddar Road
- Cramer Street
- Darebin Road
- Dundas Street
- Dunne Street
- Edwardes Street
- Gilbert Road
- Grange Road
- Heidelberg Road
- High Street
- Kingsbury Drive
- Mahoneys Road
- Massey Avenue
- Miller Street
- Murray Road
- Normanby Avenue
- Plenty Road
- Separation Street
- Spring Street
- St Georges Road
- Station Street
- Victoria Road
- Westgarth Street.

Retail centres

Retail Activity Centres are small and large streets or areas devoted to trade in the form of cafes, restaurants, boutiques, and shops as well as service-based businesses such as real estate agencies, banks, health services and personal services.

Streetscape design for Retail Activity Centres will include amenities for centre users including seating, shade, shelter, lighting, footpath improvements, wayfinding signage, drinking fountains, centre branding, public art, rubbish/recycling bins, water points and pause points.

In larger Retail Activity Centres, streetscape master plans will be developed to guide and streamline upgrades. Major Retail Activity Centres are identified in the City of Darebin Retail Activity Centres Strategy (2005).

Streetscape designs in Retail Activity centres will support commerce and business development through improvements to cycling infrastructure, walkability and public transport through provision for pedestrian comfort and inclusion of innovative and profuse cycle parking facilities will be a key consideration for all retail centres. These improvements have been demonstrated to increase visitation and the economic benefit to activity centres in many cases. Street tree planting will work with and highlight opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport in line with "Going Places: Darebin Transport Strategy 2007-2027".

Industrial areas

The industrial areas of Darebin have changed considerably in the past 5-10 years and industrial precincts are now undergoing a gradual change with many of the larger, high intensity uses being relocated to less constrained sites on the outer urban fringe of Melbourne. This change has enabled some smaller industrial and semi-industrial uses to move into the area.

Changing land use provides an excellent opportunity to increase liveability of the City of Darebin. Many of the industrial and light industrial areas are poorly served by tree planting, shaded seating infrastructure and cycling facilities. In some cases, use of heavy vehicles can make the use of road space for walking and cycling unsafe and unpleasant. Industrial areas may also contain a high percentage of impermeable hard surfaces making them susceptible to overheating and absorbing heat on hotter days contributing to rising temperatures.

A large amount of Darebin's industrial areas adjoin creeks, which are important environmental corridors. Council supports enhancing these areas and improving water sensitive urban design to reduce stormwater pollutants are also important considerations.

Industrial areas should be considered equally for street tree planting to take advantage of the benefits of trees. Illegal parking on nature strips will be monitored and parking regulations enforced.

Streetscape design for industrial areas will include the installation of shared paths should be a priority for industrial areas. In particular walking and cycling access should be a focus in those areas adjacent to the creek corridors, either to provide missing links, or increase the accessibility of existing links.

Residential Streets

Residential streets are the most common type of street within the City of Darebin and present great opportunity for increasing the enjoyment of the municipality on an intimate level.

Residential streets within the City of Darebin take on many shapes and sizes and each will be considered as an individual.

Public land not owned or managed by Council

There are significant parcels of public land not owned or managed by Council that contributes to streetscape amenity including:

- rail corridors
- pipe tracks
- private land functioning as public land
- reserves.

This land is often owned by Melbourne Water, VicTrack, Yarra Trams, VicRoads as well as other public and private authorities. Maintenance and risk management issues can make the treatment of these spaces as public land problematic for Council and landowners. The importance of these and other spaces as a form of borrowed landscape, especially as urban open space pressures increase, should not be underestimated.

In some cases, a Memorandum of Understanding or lease agreement can be entered into with the landowner granting Council permission to use or develop this land for community benefit.

As opportunity presents itself, Darebin City Council will seek out opportunities to enter into long term agreements with landowners to use public land not owned by Council for community benefit as public open space, community gardens, sporting grounds or play spaces.

Parks as part of streetscapes

When designing a streetscape, the site context will be analysed for cues that will be included in the final outcome. Parks and the vegetation within them contribute to the streetscape but will not be considered a replacement for street tree planting.

Private gardens as part of streetscape

In some streets vegetation, art, architecture and other aesthetic elements contribute to the public streetscape. These contributions can be physical in the case of private land functioning as public land or visual in the case of front gardens and trees on private land. Depending on the configuration of the street, private greenery may be the only option for greening a neighbourhood.

As part of a holistic approach to greening Darebin, Council will investigate opportunities to support residents to green their gardens through information distribution, educational programs, community planting initiatives and subsidised plant materials.

GreenStreets Streetscape Policy Statements

Darebin City Council will prioritise incorporating environmental sustainability, social sustainability, neighbourhood character, aesthetics, habitat creation as well as increased usability and safety when designing and implementing a streetscape.

Darebin City Council will prioritise street tree planting over increasing car parking.

Darebin City Council will prioritise the increase of permeable surfaces within streetscapes and public spaces understanding that these technologies may limit the scope or increase the budget of some civil works.

Darebin City Council will upgrade streetscapes according to need not prioritising one type of street, suburb or ward over another.

Darebin City Council will encourage and support purchasing sustainable products even if they come as a slightly elevated cost.

Actions

Create a Gateway Strategy including an action plan to drive upgrade of gateways over the next 8 years.

Develop a major streetscape master plan program where major centres are identified and designed.

Develop informational materials and programs to encourage gardening on private land that contributes to the public streetscape.

Coordinate footpath replacement, road re-sheeting, traffic infrastructure works and streetscape upgrades to maximise funding and labour costs while minimising disruption.

Create and implement a master plan for the development and management of all major retail activity centres and major streetscapes inclusive of street tree planting.

Develop and implement a toilet strategy to guide management, maintenance and installation of public toilets in Darebin.

Identify streetscapes within the municipality that are most in need of a renewed streetscape design and create an 8-year plan for streetscape renewal.

Create and implement a system by which the value of street trees can be added into Council's asset database.

Update and implement Darebin's signage strategy to include increased options for placemaking and wayfinding signage.

Update City of Darebin's preferred plant palette to include trees, shrubs, groundcovers and climbers suited to the modern changing climate. Make this plant palette available on Council's website and update it annually.

Increase enforcement of illegal parking on nature strips in industrial areas.

Create programs to educate, encourage and assist residents and community groups to increase the amount of green space, garden beds and tree planting in private spaces.

Investigate opportunities to support residents to green their gardens through information distribution, educational programs, community planting initiatives and subsidised plant materials.

Key Direction 2:
Response To Population & Development Pressure

Darebin's population is forecast to increase by 30,000 over the next 20 years and there is continued pressure for residential expansion. The ageing population, the high cultural and linguistic diversity, as well as more transient student populations are factors to consider in how Darebin's streetscape is planned and enjoyed.

There is a particular focus on development around activity centres and public transport routes. Increasing medium density development and reducing private green space intensifies pressure on public open space and prompts Council to provide leadership in developing quality streetscapes.

As public space becomes more important and there is greater urban density, access through links to green space, and in particular green corridors including cycling and walking facilities is encouraged and will be reflected in streetscape design.

When approving plans and issuing permits for development within the municipality, Council will strongly advocate for increased planting on rooftops, vertical gardens, public/private plazas and streetscapes. Council will strongly encourage developers to integrate WSUD, native or water wise planting, environmentally sensitive design and make efforts to integrate private green space into the public realm.

New developments will be encouraged to include undergrounding for services such as phone, internet and electrical to allow for increased tree planting in the urban context.

Council will develop, update and expand on current landscape conditions for planning permits to include environmentally sensitive implementations including permeable paving, green walls, green roofs, WSUD, passive irrigation, vegetation height minimum limits, increased public open space and sustainable products.

GreenStreets Streetscape Policy Statements

Darebin City Council will strongly encourage developers to incorporate WSUD, native or water wise planting, environmentally sensitive design and make efforts to integrate private green space into the public realm.

Darebin City Council will advocate for increased greening and environmentally sensitive design in private development.

Actions

Encourage underground electrical cabling for services such as phone, internet and electrical in new developments.

Consider a plan to underground overhead cabling for services such as phone, internet and electrical for major streetscapes, retail activity centres and key civic precincts.

Create and implement a series of workshops for developers, landscape architects, landscape designers and individuals to educate regarding the benefits of sustainable development, increasing permeable surfaces, WSUD and passive irrigation, urban habitat creation and water wise planting.

Update current landscape plan planning conditions to include environmental sensitive, increased green infrastructure, permeable paving and increasing tree planting.

Provide adequate staffing resources to evaluate and inspect landscape plans associated with development.

Key Direction 3:
Sustainable Transport & Accessibility

Darebin City Council is committed to promoting alternative forms of transport including cycling and walking. Shade, shelter and visual amenity are all important aspects of making walking and cycling attractive and a sustained and regular activity.

Increased take-up of sustainable transport has health, wellbeing and community benefits that are very important within the municipality.

Streetscapes will be designed to ensure that all of Darebin's residents, including people with a disability or limited mobility are able to access all public facilities.

Streetscape design will focus on highlighting public transport nodes and community hubs and activity centres through carefully considered planting, **pause points,** inclusion of adequate cycling infrastructure, water points, rubbish/recycling bins, seating and improving public lighting.

Darebin City Council will increase the walkability of the municipality through design interventions aimed at improving the pedestrian experience through provision of:

- adequate sheltered seating
- improved directional and wayfinding signage
- increased inclusion of all abilities infrastructure
- increased number of garden beds
- pockets of diversity and interest including public art
- adequate public lighting
- adequate rubbish/recycling bins
- seating nodes, pause points and gathering spaces
- water points.

GreenStreets Streetscape Policy Statements

Darebin City Council will design streetscapes that give precedence to sustainable transport inclusive of walking, cycling and public transport.

Actions

Design streetscapes to include public amenities that make walking, cycling and catching public transport more comfortable and usable.

Develop and implement a pause point strategy to guide and development of seating infrastructure throughout the municipality.

Key Direction 4:
Urban Food Production

As part of Darebin's long-term food security, health and environmental policies, growing food in the urban context is encouraged and supported. Council provides programs, tools, guidelines and planning to develop the capacity of the community to develop and share knowledge and skills around food growing and environmentally sustainable gardening.

Residents are encouraged to plant edible plants and trees on their private property and take advantage of community gardening initiatives present in the municipality.

Where possible, Council will include edible plants in public landscapes. This includes increasing the number of community gardens, urban orchards and garden beds.

Council will provide increased opportunities for urban food production on public land through increased community gardens and other opportunities to grow edible plant materials in the municipality's parks and residential streets. A strategy guiding the location, type and proliferation of community gardens should guide this initiative.

It is vital that the local community support initiatives to include edible and food producing plants into the urban context, as the maintenance and harvesting of fruit trees cannot be undertaken within existing Council resources and care is best undertaken by those who will be harvesting the food.

A list of recommended food production plants is available on Darebin City Council website.

GreenStreets Streetscape Policy Statements

The City of Darebin will invest in publically accessible spaces for urban food production and community gardening throughout the municipality.

Actions

Create and update a recommended list of food production plants and make it available on the Council website.

Create and implement an urban food production strategy.

Increase the prevalence of community gardens in the City of Darebin.

Create the opportunity for one community garden on public land each year until 2020.

Key Direction 5:
Response To Climate Change

Climate change is a critical and urgent issue for the community and the future. If the worst impacts of climate change are to be avoided fundamental cultural and social changes must occur.

Risk management, planning for future conditions and ensuring streetscapes contribute or complement energy and heat reduction actions are important factors to address as identified in Council's Climate Change and Peak Oil Adaptation Plan and Community Climate Change Action Plan.

Expected climate change impacts for street trees and vegetation include:

- heat stress
- extreme storms and weather events
- lower rainfall
- higher species susceptibility to and increases in pests and diseases.

Water remains a scarce resource and improvements in conservation as well as stormwater treatment and use is a priority of Darebin City Council. This reflects best practice, current water restrictions and public opinion on using potable water to sustain landscapes.

Darebin City Council will seek opportunities to incorporate water sensitive urban design and passive irrigation into capital streetscape upgrades.

GreenStreets Streetscape Policy Statements

Darebin City Council will consider inclusion of street tree planting, WSUD, passive irrigation and other environmentally sensitive design features in new streetscape designs.

Actions

Ensure that streetscape design, where possible, considers and contributes to reduction of the urban heat island effect (where urban areas heat up and retain heat longer than less dense, vegetated areas) and energy conservation, including access to solar energy.

Nature Strip Policy

The primary purpose of nature strips is to provide access to essential services such as telephone, gas, water and power as well as providing the clear line of sight required for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians to use the streets and footpaths safely. The development of nature strip gardens should not interfere with these primary functions.

Darebin residents are encouraged to help beautify their street and neighbourhood through nature strip gardening, **adopting a tree** and taking an active role in reporting hazards and maintenance concerns as soon as they happen. Changing or amending a nature strip may require a permit.

Nature strips are a communal space, therefore individuals or households developing the nature strip nearest their property should do so in consultation / collaboration with their neighbours to encourage community based gardens.

Where nature strip upgrades are undertaken they are always at the resident's expense.

Should a nature strip fail to meet the above conditions Council may choose to remove the plant material and any objects without notice.

Edible plants (excluding climbing plants and vines) may be planted on nature strips provided that they meet the Nature Strip Amendment Conditions. However, due to concerns for personal safety, integrity of soil conditions, cleanliness and hygiene, Council does not recommend ingesting any plant material grown on the nature strip.

Council's Public Realm team is available to provide guidance and advice regarding nature strip planting if required.

Nature strip maintenance

It is a common and accepted practice in Australia that the property owner / occupier of abutting properties maintain the nature strip whatever the surface finish, this excludes the street tree which is maintained by Council. Nature strips are generally turf and must allow access for waste and recycling collection, service/utility lines and space to access adjacent parked cars.

Council does not carry out renovation or maintenance (including soil remediation, mowing or watering) of nature strips. Minor changes in soil levels can be expected depending on the soil type, annual rainfall, time of year and type of grass present on the nature strip. Council will top dress or top up the soil levels should they fall below the kerb level. To access this service please contact Council on 03 8470 8888.

Some nature strips will be fully or partially void of grass for portions of the year due to soil type, turf species lifecycle, lack of natural rainfall or other site specific conditions.

Nature strip mowing assistance

At present, Darebin City Council has no program offering assistance to residents who are unable to perform minimal maintenance on their nature strip.

Trees on nature strips

Selection, planting and maintenance of street trees is the responsibility of Council, in consultation with the community. The planting of street trees on nature strips by individuals, households or communities is prohibited.

Trees and garden beds in residential streets has been shown to change the attitude and behaviour of individuals driving through, leading to lower speeds and safer streets. This is desirable as it encourages walking, cycling, and reducing car use (people will be more likely to walk themselves, and let their children walk to school, the shops etc if they feel safe) and associated health benefits. The increased social activity also acts as natural surveillance, increasing public safety and perception of safety for local residents.

Resident planting on nature strip - Permission not required

Written permission is not required from Council to amend a nature strip provided that the Nature Strip Amendment Conditions are satisfied. Permits are free.

Even when a permit is not required, residents are strongly encouraged to contact Council before amending their nature strip. Council has Landscape Architects on staff available to help with nature strip amendment plans and plant selection.

Nature Strip Amendment Conditions

A permit is not required to amend a nature strip if:

- the nature strip abuts the amender's residence or business
- plant material is will not exceed 500mm in height
- 300mm clearance is left between the edge of footpath and the planted area
- 300mm clearance is left between the back of kerb and the planted area*
- the nature strip is not within 100 meters of a creek or waterway
- the nature strip is not on a major streetscape or within a retail activity centre
- the nature strip is not within 50 metres of an intersection with a major streetscape
- no trees are included in the planting plan
- sufficient space is left for collection of rubbish and recycling
- climbing plants or vines are not included in the planting plan
- **environmental weeds** are not included in the planting plan
- **impermeable surfaces** or paving are not proposed
- decorative rocks, edging material or other raised objects are not present.

These requirements are in place to protect public safety, preserve a consistent look and feel in Darebin's key precincts, maintain integrity of Darebin's creek ecosystems and maintain accessibility in Darebin's public streets. Nature strips are Council land and as the land manager, Council has the responsibility maintain public safety and accessibility.

When enforcing these requirements Council must be consistent and treat all residents equally. This means that a well-intentioned gardener may be asked to remove or change their nature strip garden so as not to set a precedent contradictory to the Nature Strip Policy.

Height requirements are in place to preserve a clear line of sight to and from vehicles on the road and pedestrians. Small children and pets can be obscured if vegetation is allowed to grow too high. The same principle applies for distances from major intersections. A clear line of sight must be maintained especially in places where traffic is travelling at speed.

Kerb offsets allow for access to vehicles parked along the kerb and pedestrians using the footpath to pass safely without vegetation blocking their path or entangling their legs. Climbing plants are prohibited because, if they are not maintained properly, can become trip hazards or interfere with street signs or power poles.

In many cases major streetscapes or retail activity centres have detailed master plans that guide the look, feel and amenity of a precinct. Permission is required to amend these streetscapes to ensure that the integrity of the master plan is maintained.

If placed in or close to in the footpath objects like decorative rocks, potted plants, raised garden beds or logs may be trip hazards in low light or dark conditions.

* 600mm offset may be required on some streets.

Written Permission required

Written permission is always required to amend a nature strip if it:

- is located on a major streetscape
- is located in a retail activity centre
- is located within 100 metres of a creek or waterway
- is located within 50 metres from an intersection with a major street
- contains a proposal for a raised garden bed or structure
- the design contravenes the criteria for 'Permission not required' nature strips.

Permission may be obtained by submitting a detailed plan showing the:

- nature strip area to be amended including site context
- proposed plant species and planting density
- location of underground services (Free Dial Before You Dig service available)
- proposed maintenance schedule
- other details relevant to the site.

Permission must be granted in writing by Council's Public Realm team. There is no application fee.

Council may choose to remove any plant material or objects that present a trip hazard or safety risk with no advance warning.

Any damage to resident planted nature strips caused by Council during street maintenance, service providers during asset works or any other source is the responsibility of the resident.

Synthetic Turf

The use of artificial or synthetic turf is discouraged on nature strips because of adverse effects it has on the environment and the increased likelihood of maintenance related risk. In all cases a resident must apply for permission from Council before installing synthetic turf on nature strips.

Synthetic turf is discouraged on nature strips because:

- Environmental Sustainability - Harmful and potentially carcinogenic petrochemicals are used in the manufacture of many synthetic turf brands.
- Environmental Sustainability - Synthetic turf has high embedded energy during the production and shipping process.
- Environmental Sustainability - Most synthetic turfs absorb heat as or more quickly than concrete adding to the heat island effect.
- Environmental Sustainability – Synthetic turf reduces soil permeability and health.
- Disposal – Synthetic turf does not break-down. It requires land-fill disposal at the end of its useful life.
- Maintenance – If not maintained or installed properly, synthetic turf can become a trip hazard (like a carpet peeling up at the edges).
- Maintenance – Nature strips and medians are frequently disturbed by service authorities, or damaged by vehicles and deliveries. Repairs or replacement are expected to be frequent, costly and unsightly.
- Cost – Initial supply and installation costs are significantly higher than standard materials such as natural grass, granitic gravel and asphalt. Repair or replacement costs are also medium to high.
- Character - Synthetic turf changes the look and feel of streets in which it is laid, with potential impacts on neighbourhood character.
- Reduced Biota – Synthetic turf does not support insect or other biological processes.

In some cases the use of synthetic turf on nature strips may be permitted if the following conditions are met:

- The turf product must be installed by a qualified and insured professional company.
- The turf product must be shown to comply with Australian Standard AS 4422:1996.
- The turf product must be regularly maintained by the applying resident and be kept in an intact, neat and weed free condition.
- The applicant must demonstrate the need for synthetic turf.

Need is demonstrated through the resident providing evidence of:

- an illness or disability preventing them from carrying out minimal maintenance on their nature strip
- financial hardship preventing them from carrying out minimal maintenance on their nature strip
- exceptional patterns of use making synthetic turf a suitable alternative to other surface treatments
- other situations as they arise.

As part of the permitting process the applying resident will be asked to provide written confirmation that the installation meets all of the above criteria. Any and all costs associated with synthetic turf installation are the responsibility of the resident. Any and all costs associated with damage to the synthetic turf are the sole responsibility of the resident.

Council retains the right to request removal of turf in the case of non-compliance with this policy at the resident's cost. The resident may be asked to provide evidence of continued compliance with these conditions at any time.

Exceptions

Council will consider plans for upgrading nature strips that fall outside these guidelines.

Exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis where the applicant can demonstrate the positive benefits of their nature strip planting or installation in conjunction with a safety and management/maintenance plan.

Written permission is required for all exceptions.

Nature strips and capital works

Nature Strips may need to be disturbed to perform works to underground services, repair the road surface or perform capital works.

If Council performs works that disturb a nature strip, all efforts will be taken to return the nature strip to a reasonable condition using similar materials to those existing. This process is commonly known as 'making good' after construction or civil works. Custom materials will not be replaced if damaged through works to a nature strip.

In practice this means that asphalt or concrete nature strips will be levelled and patched with similar material and turf nature strips will be levelled and seeded with a turf blend.

If a nature strip is disturbed by a service provider or contractor external to those employed by the Darebin City Council, it is the responsibility of that entity to return the nature strip to a reasonable condition using similar materials to those existing.

GreenStreets Streetscape Policy Statements

Darebin City Council discourages the use of synthetic turf on nature strips.

Actions

Create nature strip planting guidelines to assist residents in planting their nature strip and make them available online. These guidelines should include case studies and best-case options to illustrate the preferred planting style.

Create and make available an updated nature strip planting application containing relevant information to assist applicants in preparing their application.

Secure a reoccurring budget for management of nature strips including the Nature Strip Maintenance Assist program and removal of non-compliant vegetation.

Create guidelines and an application process for the Nature Strip Mowing Assist program.

Urban Forest Management

Trees and garden beds are a key component of Council's urban streetscape. Ongoing and preventative maintenance is key in maintaining a safe, healthy and vibrant urban forest.

Maintenance and in particular pruning is important in ensuring space on foot paths, clearances to overhead services and shared paths, and visibility where drivers interact with pedestrians and cyclists.

Tree species selection & diversity

A recently completed review of the street tree species commonly used in Darebin's municipal planting identified some species to be discontinued from further planting as they have established poorly within the municipality. This list is available on Darebin Parks' website.

Selection of the right tree species for the location minimises the resources required for management and maintenance. With this in mind, Council has maintained its commitment to trialling new species considered appropriate for Darebin as they have become available.

Climate change may extend the range of some pests and diseases, and may also increase the duration of the threat. Selecting a diversity of species and cultivated plants may protect or reduce the impact on Darebin of potentially devastating effects of species-specific diseases.

Tree establishment & maintenance

Council has a proactive cyclic street tree maintenance program that is completed every 2-3 years. During this program street trees are routinely pruned to achieve the following:

- Electric line clearance in accordance with Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2010
- Uplifting of branches for pedestrian clearance
- Pruning to maintain sight lines
- Formative pruning
- Clearance of dead wood to maintain tree health
- Property clearance
- Traffic signal/sign clearance
- Street light clearance.

If a resident has a particular concern with a street tree that requires works as outlined above they can call Darebin City Council on 03 8470 8888 and lodge a service request.

Where possible all pruning works are completed in accordance with Australian Standards 4373-2007 'Pruning of Amenity Trees'.

Council can not engage in neighbourhood disputes regarding private trees. These trees are the responsibility of the property owner and should be pursued through the appropriate channels.

When planting and selecting trees for Darebin's streets, Council staff will ensure that quality stock is planted according to best horticultural practice.

Newly planted trees will be maintained for up to two years inclusive of formative pruning, watering, replacement if required. Watering requirements can be minimised with selection of drought tolerant species or water supply opportunities.

Electrical Line Clearing

The Electrical Safety Act was updated in November 2010 and received considerable negative press for the extent of pruning around power lines required in low bush fire prone areas. These additional pruning requirements will result in significant change for Darebin's existing tree avenues and increased resource requirements.

In some cases mature and healthy avenues of trees will need to be removed or heavily pruned due to their proximity to power lines. This can be avoided with Aerial Bundle Cabling (ABC) and or undergrounding power lines. These solutions have high financial implications.

Council will continue to work with state, national and local groups to advocate for the inner urban forest.

Budget Implications

Many of the policy directions or actions in GreenStreets Streetscape Strategy 2012-2020 involve increasing or improving upon existing services or systems, funding must be committed to achieve this vision.

The table below presents an indicative cost to implement the actions suggested in this survey. These costs are estimates only and do not include all costs that may arise from this survey. Staff time is required to perform many of the tasks associated with this strategy. Additional staff resources may be required to accomplish all of GreenStreets' actions.

Action	Indicative Cost	Frequency of Funding
Immediate and Ongoing		
Increased internal consultation	Staff time	Ongoing
Develop Guidelines for sustainable development	Staff Time	Ongoing
Year 1: 2012/2013		
Nature Strip Mowing Assistance	$35,000	Annually and ongoing
Year 2: 2013/2014		
Measure canopy cover, permeable surfaces, consultation questions and WSUD	$30,000	Ongoing
Gateway Strategy	$25,000	Once
Develop Toilet Strategy	$25,000	Once
Benchmark Survey of existing trees in Darebin's streets	$50,000	Once
Create and maintain informational materials for Nature Strip Policy, private gardening, nature strip mowing assist,	Staff time	Ongoing
Create and maintain horticultural guidelines and fact sheets	Staff time	Ongoing
Year 3: 2014/2015		
Nature Strip Mowing Assistance	$30,000	Annually and ongoing
Update internet and planting palette	Staff time	Ongoing
Urban Forest Designer	Band 6A permanent role	$82,000
Arboriculture Staff	Band 6A permanent role	$82,000
Update Signage Strategy	$25,000	Once
Designed streetscape implementation program	$500,000	Annually and Ongoing
Design and install Community Garden	$200,000 - $500,000	Annually and Ongoing
Implement Gateway Strategy	$100,000 - $300,000	Annually and Ongoing
Implement Toilet Strategy	$200,000 - $500,000	Annually and Ongoing
Developer workshops	Staff Time	Ongoing
Create pause Point Strategy	$30,000	Once
Year 4: 2015/2016		
Create Urban Food Production Strategy	$30,000	Once
Implement Signage Strategy	$100,000-$200,000	Ongoing
Implement Pause Point Strategy	$200,000-$400,000	Ongoing
Year 5-8: 2016-2020		
Implement Urban Food Production Strategy	$200,000-$400,000	Ongoing

GreenStreets Consultation

Community communication undertaken to help create GreenStreets Streetscape Strategy took place over 2011-2012 and included several stages:

- Request for information from Council teams who were stakeholders in streetscapes
- Draft circulated to internal teams for comment
- Draft circulated to community reference groups and individuals who contacted Council with questions or concerns about street trees
- Presentations to key stakeholder groups and call for feedback
- Draft made available to broad municipal community.

Council teams contacted include:

- Acting Manager, Assets and Properties
- Business Development Coordinator
- City Works Manager
- Civil Engineer
- Climate Change Action Officer
- Community Planning, Partnerships & Performance Manager
- Coordinator - Compliance & Amenity
- Coordinator Arboriculture
- Coordinator Architectural Design
- Co-ordinator Bushland Management
- Coordinator Capital Works
- Coordinator Environmental Operations
- Coordinator Infrastructure Maintenance & Support
- Coordinator Leisure Services
- Coordinator Project Management
- Coordinator Statutory Planning
- Coordinator Strategic Planning
- Coordinator, Horticulture & Open Space
- Coordinator, Urban Tree Management
- Equity & Diversity Coordinator
- Health and Safety Advisor
- Infrastructure Maintenance Coordinator
- Litter Management Coordinator
- Major Works Engineer
- Manager City Design & Environment
- Manager City Development
- Manager Coopers Settlement & Café
- Manager Environment and Natural Resources
- Manager Facilities Maintenance
- Manager Leisure & Public Realm
- Manager Major Projects, Engineering & Transport
- Manager Arts & Culture
- Manager, Parks & Vegetation
- Northcote Place Manager
- Planning Arborists
- Property Manager
- Retail Development & Marketing
- Safe Travel Officer
- Sustainable Transport Officer
- Team Leader Arboriculture
- Team Leader City Works
- Team Leader Cleansing
- Team Leader Transport Engineering
- Transport Strategy Coordinator
- Water and Waste Strategy Coordinator
- Youth Services Coordinator.

Community Reference Groups:

- Active and Healthy Ageing Committee
- City of Darebin Leadership Forum
- Darebin Community News
- Darebin Creek Management Committee
- Darebin Parklands Association
- Darebin Women's Advisory Committee
- Disability Advisory Committee
- Friends of Merri Creek
- GreenStreets Community Reference Group
- Merri Creek Management Committee
- On Hold Message
- Sex and Gender Diversity Advisory Committee.

Feedback collected from this process is collated in Appendix 1.

GreenStreets Policy Statements

By accepting this strategy, Darebin City Council commits to the following policy statements:

Darebin City Council commits GreenStreets Streetscape Strategy 2012-2020 and will allocate funding each financial year until 2020 to realising its actions.

Darebin City Council commits to increasing the number of opportunities for community gardening and urban food production in the municipality.

Darebin City Council will include water sensitive urban design (WSUD), permeable surfaces and passive irrigation technology in new capital works projects and when retrofitting existing public spaces where practicable and possible.

Darebin City Council will increase the urban tree population by a net gain of at least 400 new street trees each financial year for 8 consecutive financial years.

Darebin City Council will not remove a tree solely because of leaf litter, seed or nut drop or pollen production.

Darebin City Council will investigate the use of root mitigation techniques before removing a tree suspected of having an invasive root system.

Darebin City Council will not remove a tree solely because of the shade cast on private property.

Darebin City Council will inform, consult, deliberate or engage residents in affected properties when designing and implementing new streetscapes 100% of the time (excluding only emergency tree works).

Darebin City Council will carefully select trees ensuring that 'the right tree is in the right spot.'

Darebin City Council will protect its urban forest by only removing trees when the option for retaining them is not viable.

Darebin City Council requires that any construction or development works respect Tree Protection Zones.

Darebin City Council encourages sustainable and environmentally sustainable development.

Darebin City Council will prosecute tree vandals.

Darebin City Council will not plant more trees than it can manage according to best arboricultural practice.

Darebin City Council will prioritise incorporating environmental sustainability, social sustainability, neighbourhood character, aesthetics, habitat creation as well as increased usability and safety when designing and implementing a streetscape.

Darebin City Council will prioritise street tree planting over increasing car parking.

Darebin City Council will prioritise the increase of permeable surfaces within streetscapes and public spaces understanding that these technologies may limit the scope or increase the budget of some civil works.

Darebin City Council will encourage and support purchasing sustainable products even if they come at a slightly elevated cost.

Darebin City Council will upgrade streetscapes according to need not prioritising one type of street, suburb or ward over another.

Darebin City Council will strongly encourage developers to incorporate WSUD, native or water wise planting, environmentally sensitive design and make efforts to integrate private green space into the public realm.

Darebin City Council will advocate for increased greening and environmentally sensitive design in private development.

Darebin City Council will design streetscapes that give precedence to sustainable transport inclusive of walking, cycling and public transport.

The City of Darebin will invest in publically accessible spaces for urban food production and community gardening throughout the municipality.

Darebin City Council will consider inclusion of street tree planting, WSUD, passive irrigation and other environmentally sensitive design features in new streetscape designs.

Darebin City Council discourages the use of synthetic turf on nature strips.

GreenStreets Actions

Immediate and Ongoing

Inform, consult, engage or deliberate with the affected community for all streetscape design and street tree planting.

Create, maintain and distribute guidelines for sustainable development including tree protection and retention to applicants for development permits.

Create, maintain and distribute guidelines for sourcing quality tree stock.

Create, maintain and distribute guidelines for planting according to best horticultural practice.

Support and encourage internal consultation by prioritising interdepartmental collaboration.

Coordinate footpath replacement, road re-sheeting, traffic infrastructure works and streetscape upgrades to maximise funding and labour costs while minimising disruption.

Create and implement a master plan for the development and management of all major retail activity centres and major streetscapes inclusive of street tree planting.

Increase enforcement of illegal parking on nature strips in industrial areas.

Encourage underground electrical cabling for services such as phone, internet and electrical in new developments.

Design streetscapes to include public amenities that make walking, cycling and catching public transport more comfortable and usable.

Ensure that streetscape design, where possible, considers and contributes to reduction of the urban heat island effect (where urban areas heat up and retain heat longer than less dense, vegetated areas) and energy conservation, including access to solar energy.

Create the opportunity for one community garden on public land each year until 2020.

Year 1: 2012/2013

Submit capital works applications to the budget process for tree planting and streetscape design each financial year for eight consecutive financial years starting with 2013-2014.

Secure a reoccurring budget for management of nature strips including the Nature Strip Maintenance Assist program and removal of non-compliant vegetation.

Year 2: 2013/2014

Measure or estimate the percentage canopy cover of the City of Darebin's urban forest inclusive of street trees, park trees and trees in private ownership.

Measure or estimate the amount of permeable surfaces within the City of Darebin's public realm.

Measure or estimate the amount of Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD), and passive irrigation applications within the City of Darebin's public realm.

Create a targeted set of questions surrounding street tree planting and community satisfaction in the City of Darebin's annual survey starting in 2013.

Identify opportunities for designed streetscapes in the City of Darebin by conducting a survey of all streets and street trees in the municipality.

Identify at least one new opportunity for community gardening in the municipality each financial year until 2020.

Create, maintain and implement a project page for streetscape design projects where community members can obtain information about streetscape upgrades in Darebin.

Establish an Urban Tree Removal panel. Use this panel to guide the tree removal process.

Create a Gateway Strategy including an action plan to drive upgrade of gateways over the next 8 years.

Develop a major streetscape master plan program where major centres are identified and designed.

Develop informational materials and programs to encourage gardening on private land that contributes to the public streetscape.

Develop and implement a toilet strategy to guide management, maintenance and installation of public toilets in Darebin.

Identify streetscapes within the municipality that are most in need of a renewed streetscape design and create an 8 year plan for streetscape renewal.

Investigate opportunities to support residents to green their gardens through information distribution, educational programs, community planting initiatives and subsidised plant materials.

Update current landscape plan planning conditions to include environmental sensitivity, increased green infrastructure, permeable paving and increasing tree planting.

Create nature strip planting guidelines to assist residents in planting their nature strip and make them available online. These guidelines should include case studies and best case options to illustrate the preferred planting style.

Create and make available an updated nature strip planting application containing relevant information to assist applicants in preparing their application.

Create guidelines and an application process for the Nature Strip Mowing Assist program.

Year 3: 2014/2015

Update City of Darebin's preferred plant palette to include trees, shrubs, groundcovers and climbers suited to the modern changing climate. Make this plant palette available on Council's website and update it annually.

Create, maintain and implement a web based street tree maintenance roster detailing when street trees will be pruned for community use.

Make information regarding streetscape design, street tree planning and tree maintenance available to interested community members through all council customer service outlets and Council's website.

Create and fill a permanent ongoing role for a Streetscape Designer to manage, design and implement GreenStreets outcomes.

Create and fill ongoing roles for qualified arboricultural staff as required by changes in the urban tree population in the Darebin Parks Team.

Update and implement Darebin's signage strategy to include increased options for placemaking and wayfinding signage.

Create programs to educate, encourage and assist residents and community groups to increase the amount of green space, garden beds and tree planting in private spaces.

Create and implement a series of workshops for developers, landscape architects, landscape designers and individuals to educate regarding the benefits of sustainable development, increasing permeable surfaces, WSUD and passive irrigation, urban habitat creation and waterwise planting.

Provide adequate staffing resources to evaluate and inspect landscape plans associated with development.

Develop and implement a pause point strategy to guide and development of seating infrastructure throughout the municipality.

Increase the prevalence of community gardens in the City of Darebin.

Year 4: 2015/2016

Create and update a recommended list of food production plants and make it available on the Council website.

Create and implement an urban food production strategy.

Year 5-7 : 2016/2019

Create and implement a system by which the value of street trees can be added into Council's asset database.

Consider a plan to underground overhead cabling for services such as phone, internet and electrical for major streetscapes, retail activity centres and key civic precincts.

Year 8: 2019/2020

Revise and update GreenStreets Streetscape Strategy to reflect changed conditions and understandings.

Identify streetscapes within the municipality that are most in need of a renewed streetscape design and create an 8-10 year plan for streetscape renewal.

Glossary

Accessibility The ease by which all users can approach, manoeuvre, reach, enter or use a space

Adopt A Tree A formal or informal program where residents assist Council in caring for a street tree through advocacy and watering

Alternative Planting Methods of planting that are non-traditional where a tree/plant is planted directly into soil

Albedo The ratio of the light reflected by an object; often lighter coloured objects reflect greater amounts of light and heat

Arborist A specialist in the cultivation, management and care of trees.

Borrowed Landscape Landscape that can be seen but not accessed; creates a frame or backdrop

Calming Traffic Slowing down the flow of traffic

Design Process A process used by designers to uncover a workable solution. These steps can circle back on each other before achieving the final solution

Design Response The implemented solution or outcome for a space

Designed Streetscape A streetscape that has been designed to suit the use, needs and requirements of an area

Dripline The imaginary line drawn from the outer most leaf in the canopy of the tree down to the ground. This is the zone where most of the tree's root system is located

Environmental Sustainability Practices that require little or no use of new, rare or non-renewable materials and preserve habitat or ecological systems

Environmental Weeds Plants or trees that have been identified as invasive or detrimental to the ecological balance of an area

Evapotranspiration The biological process by which plants give off water

Exotic Plant Plant not native to an area

Gateways Entry ways into a municipality; often large, well trafficked streets or ports

Green Surfaces Planted surfaces

Green Walls Vertical surfaces with plants growing on them; this includes climbing plants as well as vertical gardens or structures

Horticulturalist A specialist in the field of cultivation, management and care of plants

Impermeable Surface A surfaces that does not allow for the exchange of water, gases or nutrients

Indigenous Plant A plant native to a specific area

Industrial Areas Areas whose main function is industry, manufacturing or storage of goods

Infill Planting Planting new trees of the existing street tree species in vacant spots

Major Streetscape Renewals Streetscape changes that include modifications in existing parking configuration, removal of more than 50% of existing street trees, installation of street furniture, change to the configuration of the nature strip or kerb, inclusion of WSUD and other situations as they arise

Minor Streetscape Renewals Streetscape changes that include removal of less than 49% of the existing street trees and do not generally involve civil works

Native Plant An Australian plant

Nature Strip Policy A guiding statement governing what residents can do on the nature strip adjacent to their property

Nature Strip Area of Council land between the back of kerb and fence line of a public street. Also known as a verge

New Streetscape Planting Planting of trees and garden beds in a street

Passive Irrigation Using available stormwater in channels, sheeting from footpaths and dripping from roofs to water vegetation

Pause Points Areas in public streets where users can stop, rest and relax. These nodes are usually welcoming with shade and other amenities for human comfort

Percentage Canopy Cover	The amount of the ground that is shaded by the canopy of a tree
Permeable Surface	A surface allowing water, air and nutrients to flow in and out
Private Realm	Privately owned land or property
Public Amenity	Elements or items in the public realm meant to provide comfort, convenience or pleasure. In this context bins, benches, water fountains, cycle hoops and recycling bins compose the most common forms of amenity
Public Realm	Public space inclusive of public streets, parks, amenities and vegetation
Replacement Planting	Replacing like for like in a plant or tree that has died or otherwise failed
Residential Areas	Areas where the most common land use is residential living
Retail Activity Centres	Streets or precincts where the most common activity is commerce
Right Tree In The Right Spot	Selecting trees for a street based on a host of factors including biological tolerances, site use and required street function.
Rooftop Gardens	Rooftops that are specially engineered to support the weight of gardens
Sequestering Carbon	Storing or absorbing carbon as part of the natural process of growing
Street Furniture	Public amenity inclusive of bins, benches, seats, cycle hoops and water fountains
Streetscape	The combination of all the man- made, natural and cultural elements present on a street
Successional Planting	Method of planting by which trees removed and replaced in a staggered pattern over time ensuring a more consistent look and feel
Transport Hubs	Nodes or areas dedicated to moving people from one place to another; includes public an private transport means
Tree Canopy Cover	The shadow cast by the leaves and branches of a tree
Urban Forest	The sum total of all trees and associated vegetation growing within an urban area. The ecological grouping of vegetative and biological organisms within the urban context inclusive of private front and back gardens; balcony gardens; rooftop gardens; vines and creepers growing on walls, buildings or fences; street trees, natural bushland and conservation areas, shrubs and groundcovers in nature strips and roundabouts; trees and garden beds in public open spaces; trees and vegetation in the streetscape.
Urban Heat Island Effect	Phenomena by which hard surfaces in the urban context absorb and radiate the heat of the sun making urban areas 4-8 degrees warmer than their rural counterparts
Urban Tree Removal Panel	A group of horticultural and design professionals tasked with making decisions about removal and retention of urban trees
Vertical Gardens	Gardens that are grown on climbing frames or in engineered boxes prepared for growing plants
Walkability	The level of comfort and ease that pedestrians experience as they move through a space or street.
Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD)	Designed planting beds or tree pits that capture and filter or clean storm water runoff removing litter, pollutants and debris.
Wayfinding Signage	A suite of signage meant to help pedestrians and cyclists navigate the urban environment with references and services, activities and points of interest
Safe useful life expectancy (SULE)	The span of time that a tree can safely exist in the urban environment

Appendix 1:
Consultation Responses

Comment	Response
Can the nature strip Amendment Conditions be stated more positively and be supported by reasons behind the conditions?	*Sentiment behind positive statements is a good one. In practice it requires more words and complex language to state the requirements in the positive. Statements retained as they were to preserve simplicity.* *Reasons included in discussion of nature strips.*
Can best practice case studies for nature strip planting be a part of the Nature Strip Policy?	*Best case examples and images to support this will be included as an action from this section.*
There needs to be a special selection on growing food in public spaces and considerations for this.	*Urban food production is a component of the urban streetscape but should not distract from the intention of this document which is a holistic guide to streescape design. Urban Food Production requires its own strategy. This will be one of the actions resulting from GreenStreets.*
The strategies objectives and actions in the strategy should be framed within existing laws and guidelines.	*All effort has been made to do so.*
This strategy must be a response to the changes in bushfire risk, expected climate changes and expected extreme weather events.	*Bushfire risk and the resulting regulations are touched upon in this strategy. At the time of writing it is unclear what the final outcome of these regulations will be. If required this document can be amended or a separate strategy developed.*
Information not readily available to the public such as list of tree species from sites for information such as growth height and water appetites should be included.	*A list of preferred tree species will be created and maintained on Council's website. This list will change over time and in order to maintain consistency it will be a 'living' document on the web. Horticultural information can be sourced through personal research if required.*
It would useful to document what worked well with customer service and "When were your needs or requests handled badly?".	*This information is always useful and residents are encouraged to provide feedback to Council through the online form or by calling Customer Service on 03 8470 8888.*
Darebin City Council could unify the processes/guidelines of the strategy with those of the City of Yarra as they are an adjoining municipality with an established Urban Agricultural Guideline.	*This will be investigated for the Urban Food Production Strategy.*
Council could set up supporting services which may be drawn upon by residents e.g. promotion campaigns and the provision of on the ground tools such as mulch and tools.	*This will be investigated for the Urban Food Production Strategy or future strategic work on Community Gardens. This document's primary focus is the urban streetscape.*
Can Council investigate setting up Community Composting Sites?	*This will be investigated for the Urban Food Production Strategy or future strategic work on Community Gardens. This document's primary focus is the urban streetscape.*
Can Council make provision for partnering with community groups or non-profits such as Cultivating Community for the purposes of planning, harvesting and/or maintenance of edible streetscapes.	*This will be investigated for the Urban Food Production Strategy or future strategic work on Community Gardens. This document's primary focus is the urban streetscape.*
This reads like a procedural manual for internal use rather than a Council Strategy that community can participate in.	*For all intents and purposes it is. It is meant to guide Council in developing streetscapes. Information clarifying the audience has been added in Purpose & How to Use this Document*
Actions require time lines and an indication of who/where in Council the responsibility sits for undertaking the actions.	*This information has been included in the final draft.*
Community engagement section requires clarity about the difference between engaging the community and informing the community. When will each type of consultation occur?	*This information has been included in the final draft.*
Can consideration be given to how easily this information can be obtained from the website?	*Yes. Council's website is under review.*

Comment	Response
While the strategy articulates many Strategy Statements and Actions – it is not clear what gets done first, how, why and when?	*This information has been included in the final draft.*
How do the tree species and Strategy objectives sit with the Heritage Overlays, not including heritage listed trees but neighbourhoods which have Heritage Overlays, will there be a statement of intent regarding this?	*Heritage overlays are considered as part of the design process and are one of the criteria taken into account when selecting tree species and designing a street. In some cases the look and feel will be maintained in the final design outcome if the species is no longer appropriate.*
Will a measure also be by monitoring the number (increase or decrease) in complaints lodged by residents about street tree planting?	*This can be accomplished using the existing customer request software.*
Are there options for site specific meetings/surveys to measure community satisfaction with specific sites e.g., Fido Park?	*Yes. A post implementation survey rating resident's satisfaction will be considered.*
Will this strategy reference Councils Community Engagement Policy – which articulates the need for Community Engagement to be planned and inclusive of various formats that support resident participation.	*Yes, Council's Community Engagement Policy will be taken into account when communicating with the community.*
Does 'contact with power lines' fall under Emergency Tree Works?	*Possibly. It depends on the type of power lines (low or high voltage), the location of the issue (unpopulated street or major street) and the nature of the contact (resting, rubbing, hanging etcetera). If there is a concern contact Council immediately.*
Is vandalism of trees in Darebin a high occurrence?	*There are moderate levels of tree vandalism in Darebin.*
Why does a career development plan or human resources action appeared in the strategy.	*Actions suggested in this strategy require staff to carry them out. Current staffing levels are not sufficient undertake the additional tasks.*
Is there another way of describing a *living sculpture?*	*Language changed to a living sculpture made of plants.*
What is the relationship between this Strategy and State Government strategies relating to Vic Roads, especially in relation to Darebin's Major Streetscapes and how are residents informed to understand why things aren't possible on these roads?	*This strategy is a guide for streets over which Darebin City Council has governance. VicRoads strategies take precedence on VicRoads managed roads. This information will be provided upon consultation for affected roads. If there is a specific question it can be asked of Council's Traffic Management Team or by calling VicRoads directly.*
Public land not owned by Council: This section lists public land not owned or managed by Council – rail corridors, etc. It would be beneficial to residents to understand who these landowners may be, e.g., state government, Victrack, commonwealth government, private trusts, etc.	*These areas can have multiple land owners or managers. This information goes to a level of detail that is too specific for a high level strategy. More research and information gathering needs to be done into this matter.*
Will the Strategy include Council's capacity to advocate to the State Government planning schemes to have WSUD and street scapes a high priority in planning processes?	*This strategy's main focus is on the public streetscape. WSUD advocacy is specified in other Council strategies.*
Urban Forest Management: The two paragraphs provided in this section do not offer a definition of what an Urban Forest is?	*This will be included in the glossary.*
Eight years is a long-time. My read of the document, was a tactical approach based on today's world. Rather than a medium-term strategy through to 2015, and long-term strategy to 2020. If you ask how the world was different 8 years ago, will the strategy hold merit in 8 years' time? 8 years ago, smart phones were hardly in distribution, and more specific to this field, synthetic materials were rare.	*The strategy aims to have achievable goals that will help support Council to prepare for the unknown by strengthening the urban forest and bringing underdeveloped and underutilised streets up to an average standard for the municipality.* *The actions suggested in the strategy will take considerable time and money to achieve.* *More specific suggestions are welcome.*
Can accessibility and walkability be included in the vision statement?	*Yes. Included.*

Appendix 1:
Continued

Comment	Response
Achieving our vision: I think this section misses the opportunity to highlight that Council cannot achieve its vision, without partnerships it can positively influence.	*I tried to include this more directly.*
Key Direction 3: Can Council lobby Yarra Trams and VicRoads to take better care of their assets in Darebin? Tram stops are a disgrace. There are no bins and seating is limited.	*Yes.*
Key Direction 4: I think it's important to recognise here, that where you create an excessive canopy near a dwelling, you may be impacting the ability of residents to get the required sun and water to their garden beds.	*True. There are benefits of canopy cover over dwellings including lower energy bills because of passive heating and cooling (shade). Individual situations can be discussed as they arise.*
Miscellaneous Comment: I could not locate the phrase smell anywhere in the document? E.g. what of the role streetscape plays in allowing lawn to be cut, and its smell to waft through streetscape?	*Scent is definitely a powerful element of the streetscape. Streetscapes are public land and do not impact mowing of lawns on private property.*
I could not locate any strategy around the future of overhead wiring, and how it degrades a streetscape.	*This has been more directly included.*
I could not locate any conversation on how vehicles parked on the street degrade a streetscape.	*Vehicles parked on a nature strip render the space unusable, visually or physically, by anyone other than the individual parking. Also, car tires damage grass and tree roots creating erosion and uneven ground.*
Why are issues of tree safety not featured in the Council streetscape strategy?	*Safety is one of the driving factors of the Strategy.* *Arboricultural safety is assumed in tree management.*
Over the years we have been forced to improvise in the face of Council neglect. In Plimsoll Grove, for example, numerous residents, have tidied up or 'pruned' the unruly lilly-pilly street trees. This is not vandalism; rather the results have invariably been beneficial to the streetscape.	*Thank you for bringing this to our attention.* *In the future, please contact Council requesting pruning be undertaken.*
Does the Council have standard protocols for dealing with members of the public which could be mentioned here?	*Council's Community Engagement Policy covers this topic. It is more clearly referenced in this version of the document.*
The strategy should state that only 1-3 warnings will be given to advise property owner that they have breached nature strip maintenance guidelines.	*There is no set number of warnings given before Council decides to take action to rectify a noncompliant nature strip. This communication and negotiation will take place on a case-by-case basis.*
I think the most important thing to do is ensure stormwater is treated through a raingarden before it goes down the drain. Whenever a street is resurfaced or a new street made the stormwater should be directed into a raingarden in the nature strip or similar. I think Darebin has some, but it should be a council policy.	*This will be covered in an upcoming policy.*
It would be great to see our streets planted with fruit and nut trees and herbs for anyone to use. I realise fruit trees require some care to get started, however an arrangement could be possibly made with local residents to do the watering until the tree is established.	*One of the actions resulting form this strategy is to develop a strategy to govern urban orchards and urban food production.*
I was wondering if there was a more detailed report stating which suburbs the 800 trees annually will be planted?	*The 400 trees will be planted in streets where the need is the greatest. This need will be determined by a streetscape audit (one of the actions of this strategy).*

Comment	Response
How will streets be nominated for upgrade? Is it a certain number in each suburb? By ward? Or otherwise?	*This information will be available once the detailed analysis of all streets and all trees (a suggested action of Greenstreets) is undertaken. The information will be made available through the website and through consultation with impacted residents.*
Are there any plans to make Thornbury and South Preston greener? For example: plant more trees up High Street? The High street is looking very industrial, so it would be great to soften it with some plant life which I think would bring it in line with neighbouring suburbs like Northcote and Carlton.	*Upgrades will be based on a need basis as opposed to a geographical basis. Need will be determined by an audit of all the streets and all the trees in the municipality.*
Lowering urban heat island effect: This section should include benefit of subsequent reduction in heat related respiratory difficulties, heat cramps and exhaustion, non-fatal heat stroke, and heat-related mortality?	*Included.*
Darebin's major streetscapes : should include Cramer St and Edwardes St? Or are they covered as retail centres?	*Included.*
Nature strip: Does it need to include the caveat that council will not be responsible for any damage to a residents planting due to necessary works by Council or service providers?	*Included.*
Lighting and pedestrian safety could be taken into consideration in the selection of new street trees. Some street trees, namely paperbark trees, grow above the height of the street lights and block the light, creating patches of footpath without adequate lighting. This can impact on the sense of safety and amenity for pedestrians at night.	*Lighting is a consideration when streetscapes are designed. This is made more clear in the document.*
In general terms, the current DCC guidelines are framed in the negative. That is: here are the restrictions, submit a plan and it will be reviewed then accepted or rejected. What I feel is lacking is positive guidance of what can be done.	*The items have been framed in the negative for reasons of clarity. There will be a series of guidelines and fact sheets created as a result of one of the streetscape's actions that will clearly outline what can be done in a positive way.*
Can a simple fact sheet containing design ideas and plant choices be available with the nature strip planting application form?	*What a great idea. These will be developed.*
Industrial Sites – has there been any consideration made in regards to potential contamination issues? My experience in the past with sites has been they have been contaminated and the costs associated with the removal of such can be considerably expensive	*Yes. This will be determined on a site-by-site basis.*
Program Maintenance: Would this also include general maintenance such as rubbish removal? I know this will depend on how the trees are planted but rubbish left in planters is an issue in retail centres.	*Yes, it should include rubbish removal. Please contact council to remove rubbish if it is a problem.*
Will parking be removed in retail centres to facilitate tree planting?	*Possibly, but only after consultation with traders associations.*
It seems the way that some organisations managing trees approach the question of replacement is to give each tree a lifespan. This would mean registering trees, having them assessed, and maintaining a database of their location, type, condition, etc.	*Yes, a number of Councils collect this data. Darebin does not keep this information at present.* *This would be a long term goal of GreenStreets and the Urban Forest Strategy.*

City of DAREBIN

GreenStreets Streetscape Strategy

2012-2020