ROADSIDE VEGETATION CONSERVATION POLICY – EV-01

Responsible Directorate	Built and Natural Environment
Responsible Service Area	Environment and Sustainability
Resolution	August 2026 C-21-8-2026
Local Law Ref	Shire of Mundaring Activities on Thoroughfares and Trading in Thoroughfares and Public Places Local Law 2004
Procedure Ref	N/A

1. PURPOSE

Vegetation within the road reserve is recognised as a significant natural asset that contributes to biodiversity, climate resilience, landscape character and community wellbeing.

This Policy provides a framework for the protection, management and enhancement of roadside vegetation within the Shire of Mundaring. It also gives effect to the Shire's Council Plan and Local Biodiversity Strategy by guiding how roadside works can be planned and undertaken to:

a. support biodiversity and ecological connectivity, including identified local biodiversity values
b. maintain and enhance landscape character areas (Foothills, Hills, Rural) as described in the Council Plan 2024-2034
c. contribute to amenity, shade and increased urban tree canopy, including the protection and integration of designated street trees
d. ensure safe and functional road environments
e. comply with environmental legislation and existing Shire policies
f. support coordinated and consistent decision-making across all roadside activities

2. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all non-emergency works, activities and proposals within the road reserve, including those undertaken by Shire staff and contractors, developers and consultants, utility and service providers, residents, community groups and other stakeholders.

Emergency works are governed by State emergency management arrangements and the clearing exemptions under the Environmental Protection Act 1986.

Roadside works shall reflect the values and expectations of the landscape character areas, with detailed requirements provided in supporting guidelines.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Council Plan, Local Biodiversity Strategy, and Street Tree Policy and supporting operational documents where roadside conservation outcomes are identified and prioritised.

3. DEFINITIONS

If a word or expression used in this policy is listed in this clause, its meaning is as follows:

Biosecurity risks	Includes weeds, dieback, plant pathogens generally, Polyphagous shot-hole borer (PSHB) and other declared pests.
Bush verge	Areas of remnant native, high value and priority vegetation within the road reserve, distinct from previously cleared and landscaped verges with planted street trees.
Clearing	As defined under part V of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*
Crossover	Driveway component of property access located within the verge, from the kerb or road edge to the front boundary of the property.
Dangerous tree	A tree that has been assessed by an Australian Qualifications Framework (AFQ) Level 5 Arborist, as posing an unacceptable risk of failure to people, property or infrastructure, based on recognised arboriculture assessment methods and relevant Australian Standards.
Dieback	Soil-borne plant disease caused by *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, which infects plant roots and leads to the decline or death of susceptible vegetation.
Emergency works	Works undertaken immediately before, during or after an emergency event (such as fire, flood, storm, or other incident) where urgent action is required to protect life, property or essential or critical infrastructure.
Environmental weeds	Plant species that pose a threat to native vegetation or ecological values and are listed in Shire guidelines or relevant State legislation.
Landscape area	Landscape character areas defined in the Shire's Council Plan 2024-2034, i.e. Foothills, Rural, Hills.
Habitat tree	Mature native tree (alive or dead) that provides, or is likely to develop, important habitat features such as hollows, roosting sites, nesting sites, or significant foraging resources for native fauna, including threatened species.
High Conservation Value Roadside Vegetation	Roadside vegetation identified as having significant ecological, biodiversity or habitat value, including areas mapped in the Shire's Local Biodiversity Strategy or assessed as high value through site inspection.
Local Natural Area	Remnant or regenerating native vegetation area within a local government boundary that are not part of the formal conservation estate, but serve to retain ecological,

	habitat or biodiversity value and are managed through local planning and environmental policies.
Native vegetation	Plants that are naturally occurring within the region, as defined in Clause 51A of the Environmental Protection Act 1986.
Naturally occurring native tree	Native tree that has established through natural regeneration within the road reserve and is not intentionally planted or managed by the Shire as a street tree.
Road formation	Running surface, shoulder, drain and batter.
Road reserve	Crown Land, vested in the Shire and set aside for roads, including the road formation and verge. The road reserve (verge) accommodates essential services such as utilities, drainage, pedestrian access and roadside vegetation.
Roadside vegetation	Vegetation within the road reserve, including naturally occurring native vegetation, planted vegetation, regenerating vegetation, street trees, introduced species and environmental weeds.
Street tree	A tree planted by or on behalf of the Shire, or planted with Shire approval, within the road reserve for the purpose of contributing to streetscape, shade, amenity or canopy cover.
Tree Protection Zones	The area around a tree that is required to be protected to maintain the tree's health and structural stability, calculated and managed in accordance with *AS 4970 – Protection of Trees on Development Sites.* The Tree Protection Zones (TPZ) is a designated exclusion area where soil disturbance, compaction, excavation, storage, vehicle access and other impacts are restricted.
Verge	The portion of the road reserve outside the road formation/carriageway.
Works	Activities undertaken within the road reserve, including but not limited to maintenance, construction, verge management, revegetation, street tree planting, vegetation management and biosecurity actions. The term includes all roadside activities described in this Policy.

4. POLICY

4.1 Landscape Character Areas

Council acknowledges three distinct landscape character areas as defined in the Shire's Council Plan 2024-2034, each with unique conservation priorities and management considerations. All roadside activities shall prioritise the conservation objectives of the relevant landscape character area and be planned to protect and enhance long-term environmental values.

Conservation priorities for each landscape character area are informed by the Shire's Local Biodiversity Strategy, including mapped Local Natural Areas and ecological linkages.

4.1.1 Foothills

The conservation priorities are:

a. increasing canopy cover
b. strengthening ecological linkages
c. improving resilience of remnant vegetation.

Roadside management shall support urban cooling and contribute to the Shire's canopy targets, aligned with the State Government's objective to increase urban tree canopy across the Perth and Peel regions.

4.1.2 Hills

The Hills contain extensive intact bushland and high conservation value vegetation and the conservation priorities are:

a. strict protection of native vegetation
b. preservation of ecological integrity
c. prevention of dieback spread

Roadside management shall minimise disturbance and maintain the natural landscape character.

4.1.3 Rural

The Rural area is defined by open landscapes and remnant vegetation corridors and the conservation priorities are:

a. maintaining habitat connectivity
b. protecting remnant vegetation
c. managing invasive species

Roadside management shall retain rural character and safeguard ecological linkages.

4.2 Native Vegetation Retention and Clearing

Native vegetation within the road reserve must be retained wherever practicable. Clearing will only be supported where necessary for road safety, essential infrastructure, drainage where no alternative exists, or for bushfire risk mitigation consistent with approved plans.

This policy does not exempt any person or organisation from obtaining required approvals. Clearing of native vegetation may require approval under the Shire's Local Planning Scheme, the *Planning and Development Act* 2005, the *Environmental Protection Act* 1986, or relevant State and Federal environmental legislation.

4.3 Environmental Approvals

Works that may involve clearing or disturbance of native vegetation, habitat trees or high conservation value roadside vegetation must be assessed for environmental approval requirements. Works must not proceed until all necessary approvals, permits or exemptions are in place.

4.4 Unauthorised Clearing and Burning

The Shire will investigate reports of unauthorised clearing, removal, damage or burning of native vegetation or street trees within the road reserve. Where unauthorised activity is confirmed, the Shire may require reinstatement and may take enforcement action in accordance with Shire policies and relevant State and Federal legislation.

4.5 Habitat Trees

Habitat trees are recognised as high value environmental assets and shall be retained wherever possible. Where a habitat tree is suspected of posing a safety risk, an application must be submitted to the Shire in writing. The application shall include an assessment by an AFQ Level 5 arborist confirming whether the tree presents an unacceptable risk and whether that risk can be reasonably mitigated without removal.

The Shire will only support the removal of a habitat tree where:

a. an AFQ Level 5 arborist has determined that the tree presents an unacceptable risk that cannot be reasonably mitigated; and
b. the removal is required for essential infrastructure and no reasonable alternative exists; and
c. the removal is the minimum necessary action to address the risk.

Where removal is approved, the Shire may require replacement habitat values as a condition of approval. These may include nest boxes, planting of future habitat trees, revegetation, or other measures considered appropriate by the Shire.

4.6 Dangerous Trees

Where a tree is suspected of posing a safety risk, the Shire will require an assessment prior to any works being undertaken. The assessment may be undertaken by an Environmental Officer, a suitably qualified member of the Shire's Operations team, or, where further specialist advice is required, an AFQ Level 5 arborist. The assessment must determine whether the tree presents an unacceptable risk and whether mitigation or removal is necessary.

4.7 Roadside Works and Verge Modifications

4.7.1 Roadside Works

Roadside works must be planned and undertaken in a manner that avoids unnecessary disturbance to native vegetation, including understorey, habitat trees and areas of high conservation value, wherever practicable. Works must consider environmental impacts, biodiversity values, landscape character and the presence of services, and must comply with relevant legislation and approvals.

4.7.2 High Conservation Value Roadside Vegetation

Where works are proposed within areas of high conservation value roadside vegetation, the Shire may require additional environmental safeguards to avoid or minimise impacts. These may include pre-works assessment, modified work methods, reduced disturbance, timing restrictions or other reasonable measures determined by the Shire.

4.7.3 Watercourses

Works near watercourses must be planned to avoid or minimise disturbance to riparian vegetation and ecological function and must be undertaken in a manner that prevents erosion, sedimentation and pollution. Any works that may alter watercourse flow or function must be assessed for environmental approval requirements and referred to relevant agencies where applicable.

4.7.4 Bushfire Risk Management

When the Shire or relevant fire management authorities undertake fuel load management within the road reserve, works shall be planned and undertaken in a manner that protects native vegetation, habitat values and roadside conservation significance, while ensuring community safety. Fuel load management must be limited to what is necessary for fire prevention or hazard reduction and must avoid impacts on significant flora, fauna habitat and habitat trees unless required for safety.

Fuel load management must align with the Shire’s Bushfire Risk Management Plan and relevant State frameworks.

4.7.5 Services and Utilities

The road reserve often accommodates essential services and utilities, including underground and above ground infrastructure. All works within the road reserve must consider the presence of these services and ensure they are protected from damage.

In planning new or upgraded infrastructure, utility providers and developers must consider long-term roadside conservation values and avoid locating services in areas identified for street trees, revegetation or other environmental priorities, to prevent future conflict and unnecessary vegetation loss.

Utility providers undertaking works within the road reserve must comply with the Utility Providers Code of Practice (Utilities Working in Road Reserves) and any conditions set by the Shire.

Where, in the Shire's opinion, utility works have the potential to impact native vegetation, habitat trees or high conservation value roadside vegetation, the Shire may require consultation, environmental assessment and appropriate mitigation measures to minimise disturbance.

The Shire encourages early coordination between utility providers, contractors and Shire officers to ensure works are planned and undertaken in a manner that maintains public safety, protects infrastructure and supports roadside conservation values.

4.7.6 Limitations on Works

Roadside maintenance works must be limited to what is necessary for safety, access, drainage and infrastructure protection, and must not result in broadscale clearing or removal of native vegetation unless approved under the mechanisms detailed within this policy or required for emergency works.

4.8 Revegetation and Street Trees

The Shire encourages revegetation and street tree planting to enhance local character, biodiversity, shade and community amenity. All planting within the road reserve must support safety, access and the long-term ecological function of the verge.

4.8.1 Revegetation

Native revegetation within the road reserve contributes to biodiversity, habitat connectivity, ecological function and the Shire's urban canopy objectives. The Shire encourages the use of local native species, including understorey and mid-storey vegetation, to enhance landscape character and support long-term canopy outcomes.

Revegetation works must protect existing native vegetation and habitat trees, complement conservation priorities, and avoid impacts on road safety, sightlines, drainage and services. Revegetation within the road reserve must be undertaken in accordance with the Shire's relevant guidelines and environmental objectives.

Where vegetation has been disturbed, the area must be reinstated through appropriate revegetation consistent with Shire requirements, targeting a like-for-like approach.

4.8.2 Street Trees

Street trees are protected public assets that contribute to the Shire's canopy cover, landscape character, and environmental values of the road reserve. Requirements
relating to the planting, maintenance, pruning, removal or replacement of street trees are governed by the Shire's Street Tree Policy and associated guidelines.

4.8.3 Subdivision and Development

Subdivision and development verge works must be planned to retain existing native vegetation wherever practicable and avoid unnecessary disturbance to native vegetation, including understorey, habitat trees and areas of high conservation value and must consider weed management to prevent long-term degradation of roadside vegetation.

New development must incorporate street tree planting and native revegetation appropriate to the character area, in accordance with Shire requirements. Vegetation and street tree locations must be identified early in the design process to avoid conflict with future crossovers, services or access arrangements.

Structure plans and subdivision designs must provide a minimum 16-metre road reserve in urban areas, with wider reserves required in rural or constrained locations to accommodate services, drainage, street trees and roadside vegetation.

4.9 Biosecurity Risks (Weeds, Dieback, PSHB and Other Pests)

4.9.1 General Requirements

All roadside works must be planned and undertaken to prevent the introduction or spread of weeds, dieback, PSHB and other biosecurity risks. Appropriate hygiene and risk-management measures must be applied in accordance with relevant State guidelines and the Shire's procedures.

4.9.2 Weeds

All roadside works must be planned and undertaken in a sensitive manner to prevent the spread of invasive weed species. Weed management must be considered before, during and after works, with disturbance kept to the minimum necessary. Any soil or vegetation disturbance triggers follow-up weed control, and disturbed areas should be stabilised through revegetation or natural regeneration to discourage reinfestation and maintain roadside condition.

4.9.3 Dieback (Phytophthora spp.)

All roadside works must apply appropriate dieback hygiene measures to prevent the spread of Phytophthora species. Disturbance of soil and vegetation should be kept to the minimum necessary, with machinery, tools

and materials cleaned down before entering and leaving sites. High-risk areas require additional controls, including restricted soil movement, careful timing of works and the use of certified dieback free materials for construction and landscaping.

4.9.4 Polyphagous Shot-Hole Borer (PSHB) and Other Pests

Roadside works must follow approved hygiene, movement and disposal protocols in areas affected by PSHB or other declared pests. Any suspected infestation must be reported immediately, and infested material must be contained and disposed of appropriately. Species selection for planting should consider susceptibility to PSHB and other emerging pests to support long-term vegetation health.

5. RELATED LEGISLATION

Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016
Bush Fires Act 1954
Environmental Protection Act 1986
Environmental Protection (Clearing of Native Vegetation) Regulations 2004
Planning and Development Act 2005
Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015
Local Government (Uniform Local Provisions) Regulations 1996
Shire of Mundaring Activities on Thoroughfares and Trading in Thoroughfares and Public Places Local Law 2004
State Planning Policy Bushfire (WAPC)

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Bushfire Area Access Strategy
Council Plan 2024-2034
Local Biodiversity Strategy 2023-2030
Local Planning Scheme No 4
Landscape and Revegetation Guidelines
Bushfire Risk Management Plan (BRMP)
Plants Out of Place Environmental Weeds Booklet
Street Tree Policy