

1 Purpose

This planning bulletin has been prepared by the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) to explain proposed changes to the street trees and utility planning clauses in *Liveable Neighbourhoods and Development Control Policy 1.3 Strata Titles*. The objectives of the proposed amendments are to ensure:

- 1) road verges are of sufficient width to continue to accommodate all transport requirements, street trees, paths, utilities and services now and in the future;
- 2) flexibility in the road reserve for future changes in services, transport and future densification; and
- 3) that street trees are planted and maintained.

2 Background

Liveable Neighbourhoods is an operational policy for the design and assessment of structure plans and subdivisions for new urban areas in the metropolitan and country areas, on greenfield and large urban infill sites. The policy generally replaces the development control policies although where there is conflict, *Liveable Neighbourhoods* will prevail unless an applicant can demonstrate why the relevant *Liveable Neighbourhoods* policies cannot or should not apply.

Streets are multifunctional with uses including traffic and pedestrian movement, car parking, accommodation of utilities and services, paths, street trees, street furniture and for facilitating interaction of people within a community and their environment. Due to the wide range of uses of the road reserve, it is essential that enough space be provided to allow for all current and future functions.

Street tree provisions in *Liveable Neighbourhoods* have become more specified with each edition and the current document continues to require street cross-sections to be submitted prior to approval for most structure plans and subdivisions (Guide to *Liveable Neighbourhoods*, table 1, page 13). There are many provisions in *Liveable Neighbourhoods* indicating the need to create road reserves that can accommodate street trees as well as utilities, paths and car parking. Examples of this are seen in element 1 R9 and R30, and element 2 R46, R47 and tables 3 and 4. The footnote to table 4 and R47 provides for the planting of shade trees by subdividers at subdivision stage. Road verge widths are generally shown as 4.1m.

In late 2006 the WAPC Sustainability Committee raised the issue that the creation of road and verge reserves in *Development Control Policy 2.6 Residential Road Planning, Liveable Neighbourhoods* and other policies were not being effectively implemented to enable the planting of street trees. This has been a contributor to new developments with few or no street trees present. Coupled with a significant reduction of trees on private land (due to smaller lot sizes with larger houses) the inclusion of street trees in new developments has become increasingly important. Lack of street trees in an area can have large negative impacts on its environment, amenity, community, biodiversity and economy.

3 Proposed amendments to Liveable Neighbourhood

Following consultation with stakeholders and research into the options available for ensuring space in the road reserve for all uses (including pedestrian and vehicle movement, utilities and services, and street trees) the WAPC has

proposed a standardised approach to road and verge reserves in *Liveable Neighbourhoods*. It is proposed that all verges in access streets B to D increase from 4.1m to 5m to ensure enough space in the road reserve for current and future uses.

Element 2, R47 would also be amended to make it clear that street trees are to be planted by subdividers and that an agreement between the subdivider and local government be reached regarding street tree selection, care and maintenance, and a handover period arranged with the local government, as per the *Local Government Act 1995*. To implement street tree planting, it is proposed that the provision of street trees in the road reserve will become a standard condition of approval at subdivision stage.

The WAPC has proposed a standardised approach as the clauses in *Liveable Neighbourhoods* requiring street cross-sections to be provided with subdivision applications are rarely adhered to, and ensuring administration and compliance is not always possible. Standardising a minimum road reserve width allows greater space for all utilities and services, simple administration and compliance of policy for developers, engineers and planners, and sufficiently wide reserves reduces land conflicts in the future.

A 5m minimum verge reserve will not be required in two situations. The first is on streets when medians with street trees are provided, for example integrator arterials A and B (element 2, table 3, page 4 and figures 12 - 16, pages 13 - 14), neighbourhood connector A (element 2, table 4, page 5 and figures 17 - 18, page 15) and access street A (element 2, figure 19, page 16). Street trees on these movement networks would still be required via

the standard subdivision conditions. The second would be on special streets; such as small town centre streets and laneways for rear vehicle access, as shown in element 2, figures 23 and 24, page 18.

4 Proposed amendments to development control policy 1.3

The SPC requested that the Department for Planning and Infrastructure also investigate the strata title implications of changes to the road reserve and street tree clauses. It is proposed that access ways in strata titled developments be designed in accordance with Liveable Neighbourhoods principles. It is also recommended that access way widths be further considered in the Residential Design Codes (R-Codes) so that strata title development requirements are consistent in both state and local government policies.

It is acknowledged that strata titled properties will require special considerations within the verge and road reserve. Therefore, it is proposed that sufficient space be required on either side of the common accessways to accommodate large canopied trees, landscaping, a path on one side and visitor parking. For 7-20 strata lots a minimum width of 10m for a common property access way is proposed. Where there are greater than 20 strata lots the special streets described in *Liveable Neighbourhoods* element 2, figure 23 are proposed to apply although the landscaping space on either side would be a minimum of 3m.

5 Information and comment

More information regarding the impacts, project history and purpose of the proposed changes is provided in **Street Trees and Utility Planning Discussion Paper**.

Comment on the proposed changes are to be invited by Monday 20 July 2009 and should be directed to:

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