

Complaints,FeedbackandComplimentsRequestSummaryReference

Id: [REDACTED].XEJReceived:05-Dec-2021

19:54:57Priority:HighStatus:ActiveStage:New RequestAddress:PAGE [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]:Nature strip proposed new guidelines. If these new proposed guidelines getimplemented a lot of port Phillip will be dragged backwards.For a 'green' councilthese new guidelines are outdated with modern times. Yes some gardens needbetter maintenance & care but the majority will now have to be removed orreimagined under the new guidelines, meaning many will just be removed full stop.I have spent the past few days noting all the gardens around the trees that aresupposedly damaged by these said gardens yet not one tree is damaged ordying?!?!?! If anything these lovingly well tended gardens enrich the soil in whichthe trees thrive. Maybe the council should focus on planting more fruit trees &actually take better care of it's own grass, gardens & trees before coming at thecommunities well cared for ones.The forced removal of the creeping ivy onmoubray st is disgraceful, the artwork done along side this has given muchhappiness & enjoyment to children & adults alike in this tough time.CategorisationRequest TypeComplaints, Feedback and ComplimentsStageUpdatesDate CompletedStage05-Dec-2021New RequestCustomerFirst Name:[REDACTED]Surname:[REDACTED]Email [REDACTED] Number:Address:Notification By:EmailNotify On:Lodgement, Completion

Trees,ParksandOpenSpacesRequestSummaryReference Id:[REDACTED]

[REDACTED].VWWReceived:08-Dec-2021

15:32:49Priority:MediumStatus:ActiveStage:In ProgressAddress:[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]:Nature strips guidelinesDear Counsellor Pearl I have just been made aware of the new guidelines for nature stripsGiven the importance to community connectedness the planting up of nature stripshave been recently I wish to request that further community consultation isundertaken.Currently community engagement is via the Council website only and is due toclose on the 15th of December.Given the impact on community of this guideline a mail out and posters shouldhave been part of the consultation and communication mix.Is it possible have the closing date revised till the end of March and a mail out toresidence and posters added to the consultation and engagement mix.Kindest regards [REDACTED] CategorisationRequest TypeTrees, Parks and Open SpacesStageUpdatesDate CompletedStage04-Apr-2022In Progress08-Dec-2021New RequestCustomerFirst Name:[REDACTED] Address:[REDACTED] Number:[REDACTED] [REDACTED] Notification By:EmailNotify On:Lodgement, Completion

Trees,ParksandOpenSpacesRequestSummaryReference Id:[REDACTED]Tracking

Number:[REDACTED]QLPReceived:10-Dec-2021

13:39:58Priority:MediumStatus:ActiveStage:In ProgressAddress:99A CARLISLE

STREET ST KILDAVIC3182Detail:I wish to express support for the effort that many residents have put into gardens innature strips around our neighbourhood, which add considerably to the area'scharm and are an important vehicle encouraging social interaction within thecommunity.I don't think the draft Nature Strip Guidelines that have been put out forconsultation recognise this value.More fundamentally, the draft guidelines are conceived upon a false distinctionbetween 'gardens' and 'grassed' areas in nature strips which makes theirapplication nonsensical. Please refer to attachment to read full contents of emailCategorisationRequest TypeTrees, Parks and Open SpacesStageUpdatesDate CompletedStage04-Apr-2022In Progress10-Dec-2021New RequestCustomerFirst Name: [REDACTED] Surname: [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]5Notification By:EmailNotify  
On:Lodgement, Completion

Complaints,FeedbackandComplimentsRequestSummaryReference

Id:[REDACTED]Tracking Number:[REDACTED]XEJReceived:05-Dec-2021

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[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Date: 4 December 2021 at 1:43:39 pm AEDT

To: Tim Baxter - Deputy Mayor <[Tim.Baxter@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:Tim.Baxter@portphillip.vic.gov.au)>, Christina Sirakoff - Councillor <[Christina.Sirakoff@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:Christina.Sirakoff@portphillip.vic.gov.au)>, Marcus Pearl - Mayor <[Marcus.Pearl@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:Marcus.Pearl@portphillip.vic.gov.au)>, Peter Martin - Councillor <[Peter.Martin@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:Peter.Martin@portphillip.vic.gov.au)>, Heather Cunsolo - Councillor <[Heather.Cunsolo@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:Heather.Cunsolo@portphillip.vic.gov.au)>, Louise Crawford - Councillor <[Louise.Crawford@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:Louise.Crawford@portphillip.vic.gov.au)>, Katherine Copsey - Councillor <[Katherine.Copsey@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:Katherine.Copsey@portphillip.vic.gov.au)>, Rhonda Clark - Councillor

<[Rhonda.Clark@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:Rhonda.Clark@portphillip.vic.gov.au)>, Andrew Bond - Councillor

<[Andrew.Bond@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:Andrew.Bond@portphillip.vic.gov.au)>

**Subject: Nature strip guidelines**

⚠ [External Email] Please be cautious before clicking on any links or attachments. ⚠

Dear Mayor and Councillors

Thank you for the work you do to make our local area a fabulous place to live. You have an unenviable task!

However, today I want to urge you to halt the vote on the new guidelines for nature strips until you have had a chance to reconsider the impact that some of the changes you are proposing, will have on residents ,and visitors, and our urban environment.

Unfortunately , as an apartment dweller, I can't have a garden of my own so the street gardens have become important to me . I love watching them develop and bloom. I love that they encourage bees. I especially love the joy they bring to the area.

When I first discovered them I was thrilled and proud to know that I had a Council which actively supported the greening and softening of my urban landscape.

And when I met some of the gardeners, I was moved by the joy their tiny gardens, and the contribution they are making to their community, brings them.

I urge you to walk, talk and meet with the gardeners and residents in order to become better informed about the impact of your proposed changes. The residents are willing to work within Council's guidelines and are very aware of Councils need to preserve assets and to provide safe roads and footpaths. But first they need to feel included .

Please halt your vote and reconsider the severity of your proposed changes.

Sincerely

[Redacted signature block]

**From:** [Redacted]

**Date:** 4 December 2021 at 6:36:38 pm AEDT

**To:** Marcus Pearl - Mayor <[Marcus.Pearl@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:Marcus.Pearl@portphillip.vic.gov.au)>

**Cc:** Heather Cunsolo - Councillor <[Heather.Cunsolo@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:Heather.Cunsolo@portphillip.vic.gov.au)>, Peter Martin - Councillor <[Peter.Martin@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:Peter.Martin@portphillip.vic.gov.au)>

**Subject: Re new draft CoPP nature strip guidelines**

⚠ [External Email] Please be cautious before clicking on any links or attachments. ⚠

Dear Councillors,

I'm writing to you to strongly object to the proposed CoPP's new draft "Nature" strip guidelines.

Have the council bureaucrats nothing better to do with their time other than to worry about some locals trying to beautify the tarmac referred to as a nature strip!!!

As a matter of interest there have been some garden beds around the street trees in Cobden Street for 25 years and I have never seen anyone trip over them in that time.

I noted in Ms Consolos' profile she states "to beautify public spaces" is a footpath not a public space?

Mr Martin has a science background....don't we need more plants to attract bees etc ?

Mr Pearl states less red tape....really.

All three of you need to look at what has been created by some hard working locals and ACT.

Are you aware visitors are walking around these streets admiring the little gardens and spending money in the local shops.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted Signature]

Sent from my iPad

**From:** [Redacted]

**Sent:** Sunday, 5 December 2021 2:01 PM

**To:** Marcus Pearl - Mayor <[Marcus.Pearl@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:Marcus.Pearl@portphillip.vic.gov.au)>

**Cc:** Heather Cunsolo - Councillor <[Heather.Cunsolo@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:Heather.Cunsolo@portphillip.vic.gov.au)>

**Subject:** CoPP new draft Nature Strip Guidelines

⚠ [External Email] Please be cautious before clicking on any links or attachments. ⚠

Dear Councillors,

It seems to me that the Council is proposing that the majority of street gardens will be removed if it adopts the guidelines.

The establishment of street gardens particularly in South Melbourne has been an enormous success in beautifying the streets and enabling residents to interact with one another. I have met many near and distant neighbours who have been participating in the beautification of the streets and it has

been of great benefit to many young and elderly people who would not have had the opportunity to socialise and TALK.

There has been no communication from Council to me or my neighbours about this proposal, the information about it has come from neighbours who have been heavily involved in the street gardens.

PLEASE do not destroy our community by introducing this Guideline.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPad

From [REDACTED] >Sent:  
Mon, 6 Dec 2021 14:55:01 +1100To: "Assist"  
<Assist@portphillip.vic.gov.au>Subject: Street gardens ⚠ [External  
Email] Please be cautious before clicking on any links or attachments. ⚠ A new little  
garden has appeared on the nature strip in my street. We all like it and enjoy the odd  
sprig of parsley. And it has given so much pleasure to establish it. Don't spoil the  
pleasure. Please review your guidelines. [REDACTED] Sent from my iPad

To: City of Port Phillip

Re: South Melbourne Nature Strip Guidelines

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Dec 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Email: [REDACTED]

Dear City of Port Phillip

I am writing this letter in regards the new nature strip guidelines being prepared for South Melbourne.

We have been residents at [REDACTED] since 1990 and absolutely love our city.

For over 15 years now, my wife, [REDACTED] has created and tended to many nature strip gardens with the result of absolutely beautifying our neighbourhood, to the delight of all who walk or drive down our street. When we first moved here in 1990, Cobden Street was among the ugliest streets with just concrete and dirt. There is never a day now when [REDACTED] is not out watering and tending the plants. We have personally spent over \$5000 on the purchase of plants and flowers to beautify our neighbourhood.

The argument in the proposed City of Port Phillip guidelines that are mandating a certain distance that plants need to be from existing trees because of water issues do not seem to make sense to us. There is not a day over the last many years that Judy is not out with a hose or watering can to make sure the nature strip gardens are always watered. This of course means that any trees in the nature strip lots are receiving copious amounts of water above whatever they would receive from natural rainfall. The minimum distance for planting allowed under the proposed new guidelines would also mean that all nature strip gardens would be eliminated, due to the existing size of the council allotted beds.

As far as safety concerns, re the minimal borders. the fact that pedestrians already have to assume personal responsibility for stepping over gutters, water pipes, neglected footpaths with cracks and wear and tear aside from crossing roads with pot holes, makes this concern, I believe, negligible in comparison.

So, in finishing, I just wish to ask that consideration be given to allowing residents the right and opportunity to beautify our beloved neighbourhood with flowers and natural growth in street gardens that are very obviously well cared for, watered and tended to on a day by day basis.

Thank you in advance for your kind consideration to this letter.

Warm regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Hello Port Phillip Council,

I read with shock and no little anger at the proposed City of Port Phillip Nature Strip Guidelines. You are attempting to wind back the clock and remove what sense of community and beauty that we have been able to add to the City of Port Phillip over the last few years.

We have wide “nature strips” on our road, Napier Street. Before the community in this area became involved, and **became** a community, the local council did nothing to the trees, to the poor rocky, weed infested areas on our nature strips in the more than five years we have been residents in this street.

Now, as I look out my front door, I see more than a dozen garden boxes, abundant with flowers and shrubbery that delight the eye; the safe **beautification** and **increased biodiversity** of the neighbourhood is a wonder to behold.

How did they come to be? The **local community** needed something to do over the last few years of pandemic. In doing so, we have met and befriended neighbours both near and far, and now there is a palpable sense of **community**. I know folk from all along Napier Street, Clarendon Place, a number from Palmer Street and Cobden Street as well. I dare say that the mental well-being of many of us has been improved by this community spirit.

Now that we are a community and know each other, there has been **sharing** of plants, **sharing** of labour, sharing of laughter as the garden boxes have been built, the good earth added, tilled and filled with glorious plants to add colour and brightness to an otherwise dull and insipid streetscape.

Your requirements for residents (page 8) are difficult and imposes a large impediment to the 50% of properties that are rental in this area. You should be thinking in terms of streamlining the process rather than hindering.

Your “Figure 1 Clearances from driveways, kerbs, footpaths and service pits” (page 10) would effectively make illegal all recent garden boxes, as well as all that were extant prior to the community activity that made the streets around where we live so beautiful. Your section on raised planter beds (page 13) where “ ... a 1m clearance from the edge of the kerb and 1.5m clear footpath area must be maintained” is a further nail in the coffin of any beautification of our street.

Your comments re Tree Health (page 15) are in direct opposition to the gardens that were here prior to the recent increase in **biodiversity** and **beautification**. Keeping 1.5m – 2.5 from the bole of the tree would effectively mean no garden boxes are allowed as we have mature trees in our street.

**Why do you want to return our street to barren, hot, ugly, dirt?**

I find it rather sad and very out of touch that this proposal is part of the strategic direction “**Liveable Port Phillip**” (page 3), as your proposal appears to be the antithesis of that objective; removing biodiversity, increasing heat, eliminating greenery and removing avenues for bees to flourish.

Please reconsider.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I wish to express support for the effort that many residents have put into gardens in nature strips around our neighbourhood, which add considerably to the area’s charm and are an important vehicle encouraging social interaction within the community.

I don’t think the draft Nature Strip Guidelines that have been put out for consultation recognise this value.

More fundamentally, the draft guidelines are conceived upon a false distinction between ‘gardens’ and ‘grassed’ areas in nature strips which makes their application nonsensical.

The draft guidelines seem to assume that non-‘garden’ nature strips somehow exist without maintenance, without risk of damage to street trees, without risk of injury to residents, and without conflicts with services or access to service pits. Requirements in the draft guidelines for clear zones around garden beds also seem to assume some kind of neutral void exists in grassed areas, but in fact:

- Some residents pile grass clippings around tree trunks (noted as a no-no in the draft guidelines on p.16, but *not* an issue related to the creation of gardens).

- Careless use of mowers and trimmers frequently causes damage to tree trunks.
- Operating mowers and trimmers create risks of injury to operators and passers-by.
- Residents are expected to maintain nature strips while working in hazardous debris produced by *Lagunaria* trees.
- Many grassed nature strips are left unmown most of the time, and are overgrown by grass and weeds that ignore the setbacks and height limits set out in the draft guidelines.
- Many 'grassed' nature strips are densely populated by significant weeds. (Given the failures in even basic routine mowing, weed control is clearly too much to expect.)
- Kikuyu in nature strips actually grows into and through the edges of asphalt footpaths, breaking up and destroying the street infrastructure.
- The mix of turf and garden areas indicated in the illustrations in the draft guidelines adds hugely to maintenance requirements due to the invasive nature of kikuyu, couch etc. — almost guaranteeing maintenance failures.

The requirement for clearances around garden beds therefore cannot be assumed to meet the (generally unclear) objectives for setting out those clearances.

Nature strips are landscape spaces. The important distinction that should be made is that some of these are managed carefully by residents, while many are neglected. It is perverse that the draft guidelines place undue restrictions on one type of landscape management (care of garden beds) while ignoring failings in the other (neglect of lawn). It penalises residents who put effort into improving the environment of our city and imposes bureaucratic busywork such as a requirement to 'register your nature strip garden' (p.8) while 'grassed' nature strips filled with bindii, burr medic and capeweed are silently accepted as a given.

I note and endorse the concern expressed in the draft guidelines for protecting street trees from inadvertent damage, but would call attention to more fundamental problems with Council's management of street trees, e.g.:

- Trees are planted but then not provided with follow-up maintenance and watering during critical establishment periods.
- Trees are planted at surface level in openings in the paving that are only large enough to plant into, ensuring that (if it grows well) the tree roots will heave the surrounding paving and create trip hazards, and then the roots will be damaged when the paving is repaired.
- Pruning is erratic, especially with the biohazard *Lagunaria*, which results in radical swings between neglect and over-growth, and then gruesome amputations.

Some guidelines to protect tree health are appropriate but these go overboard, and in particular seem to be based on over-estimations of the size of typical trees in many streets, so the limitation on digging and clearances from trunks could be much less onerous. Digging into tree roots will obviously cause damage, but permanent ground cover plantings may provide more protection for tree roots than would exist if they were exposed to trampling and compaction.



I therefore suggest that a fundamental revision of the document is appropriate.

Sincerely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED] >

**Sent:** Friday, December 10, 2021 12:34:05 PM

**To:** Katherine Copsey - Councillor <[Katherine.Copsey@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:Katherine.Copsey@portphillip.vic.gov.au)>

**Subject:** Response Nature Strip Guidelines Review 2021

 **[External Email] Please be cautious before clicking on any links or attachments.** 

To Councillor Lake Ward

Dear Katherine ,

I'm writing to you to express my dismay at the new Draft Nature-strip Guidelines.

As they stand they will prevent a great proportion of Port Phillip residents from street gardening, and threaten to remove many existing established gardens.

Below are my detailed questions and comments.

1. Could you please look at these and raise the issues with other councillors and council officers?
2. I would like to ask some of these questions at a council meeting.

Many thanks for your help with this.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

### ***Doing nothing risks everything***

If not you, who? If not now, when?

## **Response Nature Strip Guidelines Review 2021**

### **Summary response**

These Nature Strip Guidelines, as they stand will prevent a great proportion of CoPP residents from street gardening. The parameters for the draft guidelines relate solely to risk management at the expense of greening, biodiversity and social connectivity in the city. These guidelines directly work against City of Port Phillip's own research and policy responses to sustainability, biodiversity and climate threats. Clearance areas are so enormous they obliterate many residents' capacity to help create cooling, flood mitigation, and biodiversity in our highly urbanised environment.

That's not just a pity. It's inexcusably short-sighted in this time of major environmental & climate damage.

I'm calling for **a complete redraft in consultation with sustainability trained officers** from council and with highly experienced members from the EcoCentre, Westgate Biodiversity Bili Nursery as well as **existing dedicated street gardeners** such as [www.theheartgardeningproject.org.au](http://www.theheartgardeningproject.org.au)

### **GUIDING QUESTIONS & COMMENTS**

1. Why haven't you included the following rationales for nature-strip gardening?

- a. Foster urban biodiversity for flora and fauna, especially for at-risk plant & fauna communities
- b. Foster community engagement with nature
- c. Foster informal & formalised community social connectivity

Draft rationales are SOLELY safety of pedestrians, gardeners, workers & long-term health of trees.

**The draft guideline rationales are limited and exclude reference to relevant CoPP policies below**

2019 City of Port Phillip Climate Emergency Declaration

Strategic Directions of newly adopted council plan 2021 (p24 Sustainable PP)

City of Port Phillip Council Plan 2021-2031

City of Port Phillip Biodiversity Report 2020

Act & Adapt Sustainable Environment 2018-2028

Greening Port Phillip. An Urban Forest Approach 2010

Missing rationales: These draft Nature-Strip Guidelines are in direct conflict with the issues outlined in the Climate Emergency declaration webpage, and the above policies.

Specifically, these guidelines

- 1) limit flora that can increase carbon sink,
- 2) forbid larger shrubs & small trees that mitigate flooding,
- 3) reduce potential habitat for urban flora and fauna,
- 4) increase urban hot spots as mown grass has far less cooling capacity than plants & tree cover, 5) reduce biodiversity & construction of green corridors by severely limiting the possibility of residents planting in these extensive areas of our municipality.

2. **Why can other councils in Australia actively facilitate nature-strip gardening to foster biodiversity & community engagement AND manage safety** in a way that encourages nature strip gardening? 😞 e.g. <https://www.vincent.wa.gov.au/residents/environment/environmental-sustainability/news-events/adopt-a-verge.aspx>
3. Did you do any socio-economic research? E.g., Into community connectivity to nature, to each other, into the mental health benefits of gardening & social connectivity, and other well-being benefits (e.g., physical health)? There are social and monetary costs to deficits in these areas.
4. Where is the data that demonstrates the impact of such limiting restrictions? Did you do any spatial analysis for the municipality to document who has what public land out the front of their properties? What proportion of the CoPP community in which areas will be excluded from nature strip gardening because of where they live?
5. Proposed clearance dimensions and plant height restrictions mean that for much of the City of Port Phillip (highly urbanised, asphalt dominated streets with narrow nature strips) these gardens will be impossible. Why do you apparently want to prevent or discourage most nature-strip gardening? Why do you want to deny residents the ability to contribute to the natural beauty of Port Phillip, the empowerment of individually responding to climate change and declining urban biodiversity, and

the enjoyment of social contacts made through nature strip gardening? This goes against all CoPP policy motherhood and action statements.

6. What research shows that planting around and under street trees kills or damages them?
7. How do nature strip gardens create a barrier to maintenance or make maintenance unsafe? People pruning large street trees use mechanical cherry pickers. Nature strip gardens in no way interfere with this.
6. Why should no edibles or herbs (even lavender and rosemary) be allowed to be planted outside raised beds? Many of these plants have flowers that provide perfect habitat for bees, and other pollinators & insects, which in turn provide food for birds.
7. Why should no planting take place on central median nature strips on quiet roads? This represents huge areas of land that are currently wasted.
8. Who is responsible for decisions around nature-strip gardens? Who is responsible for 'enforcement'? How much money will you spend on doing this? What mechanisms are in place for decision-making? How can decisions made by compliance officers be disputed? What is the process for that?

I'm utterly dismayed at this statement (p 20) "If the garden is causing a safety hazard, Council may take immediate action to make the area safe without notifying the resident." Why would you behave in this way? A resident may not understand that safety is an issue. It is totally disrespectful. It sets up an unproductive 'us against you' culture.

By the way, why are you reviewing nature strip policy before updating these relevant policies?

- Greening Port Phillip 2010. Review due 2022
- Open Space Strategy 2009. Was due for Review in 2015. No review scheduled as of Dec 2021

Hi Marcus,

I am contacting you as a South Melbourne property owner and resident in relation to the new proposed guidelines for nature strip planting.

I have read through the guidelines and are really unhappy about how this document has been

written. The document doesn't have any supporting research for the various claims it makes and it is so restrictive in relation to clearance areas that it doesn't really allow much to be planted anywhere. The draft also doesn't allow tree squares to be planted and seems to have ignored the benefits existing street planting has had on mental health and bringing our community together.

Whilst I totally support having a new set of guidelines for nature strip planting – I don't accept the current draft version. Whatever new guidelines you come up with existing street gardens need to be considered in this plan. My recommendation would be to begin with looking at what exists and building a rough set of guidelines around that – that isn't too prescriptive as all of our nature strips are so different and one set of regimented rules simply doesn't work.

At the moment residents in our area – South Melbourne – are furious with the way this document has been written – and frightened that should this document become our guidelines for street planting council will come around and take most of these gardens away as a majority of existing gardens don't fit within these proposed guidelines.

Please get these guidelines re-written to be more progressive, more supportive of greening our suburbs and more supportive of its environmentally conscious residents. We're planting for our future – please develop a set of guidelines that allows us to do more of this, not less.

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted] <[Redacted]>

**Date:** 8 December 2021 at 5:22:43 pm AEDT

**To:** Marcus Pearl - Mayor <[Marcus.Pearl@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:Marcus.Pearl@portphillip.vic.gov.au)>, Katherine Copsey - Councillor <[Katherine.Copsey@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:Katherine.Copsey@portphillip.vic.gov.au)>, Andrew Bond - Councillor <[Andrew.Bond@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:Andrew.Bond@portphillip.vic.gov.au)>, Christina Sirakoff - Councillor <[Christina.Sirakoff@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:Christina.Sirakoff@portphillip.vic.gov.au)>

**Subject:** CoPP Nature Strip Guidelines and Related Matters

⚠ [External Email] Please be cautious before clicking on any links or attachments. ⚠

Dear Mayor and Lake Ward Councillors,

Firstly, I hope you and your family and friends and colleagues are all well and safe. Wishing you all a wonderful 2022.

I am writing directly to you to express my dismay at the contents of the draft Nature Strip Guidelines (NSGs). Port Phillip Council should be encouraging nature strip, street and lane way gardens where ever possible. Not making them virtually impossible!

We need more street gardens to: encourage bee, insect and bird life, cool our urban environment by replacing asphalt, reduce water usage by reducing grass, increase neighbourhood beauty, nurture neighbourhood well-being and encourage neighbourhood participation and ownership.

The short version of my comments is : This is a mean-spirited document and has all the humanity of a procedure manual for a nuclear-powered submarine.

The longer version (but still highly summarised) of my comments is as follows:

The large clearances/distances of gardens and plantings from curbs, driveways, footpaths, trees etc etc makes it virtually impossible for most residents to create any sort of planting yet alone a garden.

Low heights near intersections are needed but should be reviewed and be more flexible with respect to the direction of traffic/the side of the road.

The rules will inhibit planting of vines along the walls of houses which have boundaries with footpaths and laneways. These vines can assist with keeping houses cool in summer.

The guidelines discourage planting of small greenery in nooks and crannies along fence lines and down lane ways. It will only be weeds that flourish in these forgotten places.

The guidelines will mean the removal of all child-friendly fairy trees and other artistic 'installations' which raise the human spirit and nurture community well-being.

The guidelines will mean the removal of many, many wonderful, existing street gardens that I enjoy on my daily walks. Are you willing to sign your name to the demolition of these existing gardens?

The guidelines will mean I will have to pull out and replant a small area outside my front door. I put time, effort, money and water into this area to turn a council grass & weed area into a garden which will eventually be insect friendly, drought resistant and a pleasure to view.

The guidelines are excessive, heavy handed and totally discourage community participation and ownership of our environment.

The guidelines appear to have been written for spacious, outer Melbourne suburbs such as Eltham. Not for the inner-city suburbs of Port Phillip. And why are they have been developed now? Did you get a handful of complaints? How about polling all rate payers and residents?

Instead ....

1. Port Phillip Council should spend its time, and rate payers' money, on proper planting and maintenance of the all the rain gardens and their surrounds. These are an eyesore and mega-incubator for weeds and more weeds. And when did mono-cultivation of a single grass species become good environmental practice? Is it time to change your maintenance subcontractor? Is employing the cheapest contractor just money wasted?
2. Port Phillip Council should also properly maintain the area around glass recycling bins which are strewn with glass fragments of all sizes. Talk about a safety hazard!
3. Port Phillip Council should be taking responsibility for planting trees of an appropriate height underneath power lines. That is, not planting trees that need their 'guts' cut out every second year. Nor ones that grow so big their branches encroach onto private land and drop leaves and seeds into second storey gutters! Or is Council willing subsidise the cleaning of my second storey gutters from the melia tree outside our property?
4. Port Phillip Council should either a) take responsibility for maintaining the footpaths under street trees which drop pods (eg melia trees) or large nuts (eg flowering gums) on the footpath and are a danger to pedestrians, or b) remove and replant with trees which do not drop dangerous debris on footpaths.
5. Port Phillip Council should not be inhibiting any child-friendly street installations which encourage imagination and happiness. This means several fairy installations in the area. They are not a safety issue. Leave them alone.

6. Port Phillip Council should immediately remove the native orchids planted either side of the pedestrian crossing between Woolworths and Aldi in Market Street, South Melbourne. These orchid bushes are too high and too dense and definitely a safety issue. Similarly, Port Phillip Council should audit and make safe all Council plantings adjacent to pedestrian crossings. That is, put your own house in order first.

Enough for now. Feel free to contact me for more comments and photos. More public consultation and agreement is required before the Nature Strip Guidelines are changed.

Regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Date:** 7 December 2021 at 12:42:12 pm AEDT

**To:** Heather Cunsolo - Councillor <[Heather.Cunsolo@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:Heather.Cunsolo@portphillip.vic.gov.au)>, Peter Martin - Councillor <[Peter.Martin@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:Peter.Martin@portphillip.vic.gov.au)>, Marcus Pearl - Mayor <[Marcus.Pearl@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:Marcus.Pearl@portphillip.vic.gov.au)>

**Subject:** Nature Strip Garden Guidelines

 [External Email] Please be cautious before clicking on any links or attachments. 

Dear Counsellors

It has come to my attention that there are new guidelines for planting on nature strips.

The value residents receive from both the community and visual impact of this relatively new activity cannot be overstated, and I am dismayed that Council seeks to curtail the activity without reasonable consultation.

It is completely unrealistic to expect a considered response by 15 December, when the only notification is via a website announcement that is unlikely to be seen by a majority of residents.



You will be aware that in addition to the many new planting initiatives that occurred during periods of lockdown, there are several long-standing plantings around the neighborhood. In my observation, none of these create any kind of hazard to pedestrians, or danger to the trees they underplant... in fact, the opposite is more likely to be true, as they create a green cover that prevents the ground around the trees from drying out, and adds much-needed leaf mould to enrich the soil.

Such draconian guidelines as these require a far higher level of consultation with the community than has been sought, and I urge you to extend the deadline to be the end of March 2022, to ensure the community can respond in a constructive way.

I hope you will take note of my response, and of the many others you will doubtless receive.

Sincerely

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Dear Mayor, CEO and Councillors,

Let me say at the outset that I do sympathise with the Council and each of you that you no doubt have to deal with and investigate a whole lot of malignant and ill-founded complaints.

But you don't have to indulge those complaints with an over-the-top inquiry, a 21 page treatise, bizarre proposed rules and Big Brother over-reach - all funded by ratepayers. This is all the more bizarre when it comes from a Council which trumpets itself (generally fairly as far as I can see) as green conscious and a friend of the environment.

Street and nature strip gardens such as we have (and, hopefully, will increasingly have) in Port Phillip, are important:

- \* They are good for the environment
- \* The vast majority have been carefully installed and meticulously kept.
- \* They enhance the streetscape whether situate on established nature strips or on footpaths in some of the less naturally endowed streets (especially in South Melbourne).
- \* They provide a great deal of pleasure to our residents and visitors (I know this from my observations walking every street in Port Phillip multiple times during the lockdowns - like many others).
- \* They provide an important outlet and source of pleasure for those who establish and care for them - many of those people live in confined houses or apartments. You should be encouraging this sort of healthy activity by the residents.

Why should you interfere? Sure, you will have received complaints from that usual set of people

who complain because they can, who seek causes because it's something to make themselves feel self important - not because they are hurt by the gardens in some way. But, as I said above, you don't have to indulge them. Some observations on some of the complaints:

- \* They block footpaths. I have not seen any that do - that complaint has no validity.
- \* They have the potential to cause trips and falls. I have not seen any where this could be reasonably seen a risk. However, there must be some simple guidelines on construction if I am wrong.
- \* They constitute an annexation of public land to private use. This is glib - we should all be encouraged to enhance and enjoy public land and the street gardens are there for all to enjoy.
- \* When built around the base of trees, they can interfere with the health of the trees. Really? If there's any example of that it must be lonely. Depending on the location, this can be an attractive and neat way to have the garden.
- \* They can interfere with me getting out of the car. Really? Just move the car to another spot to drop off.
- \* They cause arguments with passers by eg dog walkers where the gardener objects to the dog being on the garden/nature strip. Really? Would it not be simple to just go over the other side of the road? But, oh no, I have my right of free passage, albeit in the company of my dog.

This is over-reach and Orwellian. Next, you could perhaps explore developing another treatise whether dogs should be banned from the streets because of their droppings so often not recovered by their owners, causing pollution, a hazard for walkers and unpleasant street scapes??

There is always a tendency for those who develop papers like this to be defensive for fear that change may reflect on them. Please do not allow this to happen.

I mention we do not have a garden on our nature strip, only a hideous, ill maintained and hazardous Telstra/NBN substation and pit.

Just a compliment before I finish - much of the Council works on maintaining and enhancing Port Phillip outdoor environment over the last couple of years have been really first rate and are appreciated.

Thanks

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>

**Date:** 14 December 2021 at 12:34:51 pm AEDT

**To:** Heather Cunsolo - Councillor <[Heather.Cunsolo@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:Heather.Cunsolo@portphillip.vic.gov.au)>, Marcus Pearl - Mayor <[Marcus.Pearl@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:Marcus.Pearl@portphillip.vic.gov.au)>, Peter Martin - Councillor <[Peter.Martin@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:Peter.Martin@portphillip.vic.gov.au)>

**Cc:** Andrew Bond - Councillor <[Andrew.Bond@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:Andrew.Bond@portphillip.vic.gov.au)>, Christina Sirakoff - Councillor <[Christina.Sirakoff@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:Christina.Sirakoff@portphillip.vic.gov.au)>, Katherine Copsey - Councillor <[Katherine.Copsey@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:Katherine.Copsey@portphillip.vic.gov.au)>, Louise Crawford - Councillor <[Louise.Crawford@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:Louise.Crawford@portphillip.vic.gov.au)>, Rhonda Clark - Councillor <[Rhonda.Clark@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:Rhonda.Clark@portphillip.vic.gov.au)>, Tim Baxter - Deputy Mayor

<[Tim.Baxter@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:Tim.Baxter@portphillip.vic.gov.au)>

**Subject: New Nature Strip Guidelines**

⚠ [External Email] Please be cautious before clicking on any links or attachments. ⚠

Hi,

Thank you for taking the time to read my email.

I'm contacting you about the new restrictive nature strip guidelines proposed by the council.

These guidelines represent an overreach of the council into an well functioning community driven process where locals could plant small sustainable gardens in their otherwise hot, barren asphalt naturestrips.

The people maintaining and building these gardens are passionate locals who provide far better care to the street scape and particularly street trees than the council coming by every few months. The suggestion these gardens have been damaging the trees is backed by no statistics or evidence. In fact the council has issued multiple permits to developers to cut down healthy trees in my street while not a single one has died from a garden being planted.

Aspects of the guidelines are devoid of logic include, minimum set backs from the street regardless of whether parking exists, a blanket ban on any planting under trees and requirements for excessive set backs around in ground services.

The council has delivered a climate emergency but rather than supporting sustainable green street gardens they are seeking to outlaw them. This is against the Port Phillip 2021-2031 vision. In fact as an attendee of the consultation workshops in February 2021 I can know that support for street gardens was the most highly voted suggestion in the sustainability area. That council seeks to reject this is a massive disappointment.

I urge you to reject this council overreach into residents well functioning street gardens and reject this policy. My vote and many of my neighbours will be directly dependant on this.

Thank You

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Dear Have Your Say

First, I tried to do the online survey but because of a glitch in the document I was stopped from answering 9/13, hence this response. I would appreciate an acknowledgement of receipt of this submission, thank you.

The outrage at the draft policy is understandable. We all understand that some guidelines are required to address issues like health and safety. However, the draft policy reads as a clear disincentive to the proposed use of planting nature strips in the municipality.

The bias in the draft policy should be reversed, that is, it should be a tutorial on the benefits of planting on nature strips. It should start on the numerous obvious benefits of such activity, for example:

the human interaction flowing from street gardening

the pleasure from discovering a random street gardens

conversely, the enjoyment tracking the development and change in relation to known street garden

street gardens invariably contribute positively in the fight against climate change and increasing bio-diversity

The policy is overly prescriptive.

Also, a more nuanced document may recognise and accommodate the fact our streets and suburbs are not uniform, Streetscapes are very different and those difference should be taken into account.

We believe the tone of this policy document may be driven by a number of isolated insistences where the nature of street plantings has generated unfair and/or unreasonable commentary.

The application of this policy would result in the removal of existing gardens.

The adoption of an overbearing policy such as that proposed can have a dampening impact on residents (and businesses), drain people's enthusiasm, people's innovation and so on. There must be a better balance possible. A position which provides both protection against risks to our health and a safety and the communal benefits offered by appropriate nature strip planting. This draft does not achieve that balance.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

15 December 2021

Please read this article from The Guardian when reviewing your position on street landscaping, nature-strips gardens and and the value a healthy environment aided A healthy community.

Regards

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Mature trees are key to liveable cities – housing intensification plans must ensure they survive  
[https://www.theguardian.com/world/commentisfree/2021/dec/14/mature-trees-are-key-to-liveable-cities-housing-intensification-plans-must-ensure-they-survive?CMP=Share\\_iOSApp\\_Other](https://www.theguardian.com/world/commentisfree/2021/dec/14/mature-trees-are-key-to-liveable-cities-housing-intensification-plans-must-ensure-they-survive?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other)

Sent from my iPhone

Good afternoon

- the nature strip guidelines are overly prescriptive

- they reflect a siloed approach to nature strips rather than a whole of Council response. The public health and wellbeing benefits of the guidelines as well as their biodiversity benefits are not taken into account.
- street gardening was one of the few things to bring joy during COVID to the gardeners as well as people walking by.
- application of the guidelines will result in an unrealistic compliance burden on Council and be a misuse of Council resources better allocated elsewhere.
- with plunging insect populations, it is a responsibility to create gardens that support insects.
- the draft guidelines will encourage either dull, weed infested 'grass' or over fertilised 'lawns' which result in run off to stormwater. Biodiverse nature strips give back - to insect and bird life, stormwater management and human happiness.

Street gardens bring life, interest, biodiversity and joy. They create community.

Please create some enabling nature strip guidelines based on a more nuanced approach to risk.

Thank you

[REDACTED]

--

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: XXX> Sent: Wednesday, 15 December 2021 3:56 PM  
To: Helpdesk - Strategic Engagement <engagement@portphillip.vic.gov.au>  
Subject: Nature Strip Guidelines ⚠ [External Email] Please be cautious before clicking on any links or attachments. ⚠ To Whom it May Concern, I have completed the survey on the website, but I have no certainty how these will be applied in the 'consultation' process so have decided to also email. First and foremost there is a considerable lack of community awareness raising

that these draft guidelines even existed. Not everyone works off online communication and I am unaware of any other medium of sharing these guidelines with the broader community. There is a total lack of regard for the wealth of knowledge that exists within the City of Port Phillip regarding the area's ecology, and what would actually work well for our natural environment and the trees that are allegedly under threat. The plan is short-sighted and does not take into consideration the hard work that many people have undertaken to beautify their community. Given the wide-ranging issues from trip hazards to impact on infrastructure caused by large trees around CoPP, these unrealistic nature strip guidelines are targeting the wrong kind of planting. Water retention, pest management, beautification, weed suppression, positive communities are all positive aspects of nature strip plantings. Many of the beautifully established gardens would be targeted for removal according to these guidelines. Yet, strangely we have to fight to have large trees removed that are struggling through lack of water and pests and diseases and whose roots are causing major infrastructure issues. The guidelines are unrealistic and mean that narrower nature strips can only really be grass. Many nature strips cannot be mown due to the large tree roots protruding. Pushing people to lawns also encourages carbon emissions whereas healthy and diverse nature strip planting is actually climate-positive. By all means there needs to be height restrictions and it is reasonable to expect owners of nature strip planting be responsible for keeping them of pathways, but the distances prescribed by the guidelines are arbitrary and clearly created by bureaucrats and not by people who care for the community or the environment. Council would do far better in spending time and money on workshops and supporting community groups who can educate and support effective and well-maintained nature strip planting. Time for the Council to listen to informed voices in our community rather than working in opposition to the environmental-based organisations and strong community spirit keen to enhance our natural environment. Yours XXX Resident and rate payer

From: " [REDACTED] " >Sent: Fri, 24 Dec 2021 22:31:58 +1100  
To: "Business" <Business@portphillip.vic.gov.au>; "Assist" <Assist@portphillip.vic.gov.au>  
Subject: City of Port Phillip's controversial nature strip garden draft guidelines ⚠️ [External Email]  
Please be cautious before clicking on any links or attachments. ⚠️ No one will be pulling up their exotics in a hurry. <https://www.theage.com.au/lifestyle/life-and-relationships/nature-strip-gardening-enthusiasm-grows-but-new-guidelines-dampen-cheer-20211217-p59igl.html>  
Sent from my iPhone

From: XXX > Sent: Monday, 24 January 2022 2:04 PM  
To: XXX  
Cc: Heatherconsolo@portphillip.vic.gov.au; Marcus Pearl - Mayor <Marcus.Pearl@portphillip.vic.gov.au>  
Subject: More thoughts on verges- (nature strips) ⚠️ [External Email]  
Please be cautious before clicking on any links or attachments. ⚠️ First. Congratulations to the three of you for creating your own beautiful

and nourishing verges. You are living testimony to all the benefits that we try and remind council about regarding Nature strips. As well your policy and community work is inspiring. So a few thoughts from my perspective as a member of the Council's older person's Advisory Committee (OPAC) COMMUNICATION ISSUES At our meeting I brought up the subject of who is this policy for and how understandable is it? Andrea added what is its purpose to the mix. So my concerns are mainly about usability and accessibility. Widen the reach of the document. I would like this document to reach non computer or phone literate members of our community and multi cultural groups. Glossary. Version: 1, Version Date: 28/01/2022 Document Set ID: 6215857

To aid understanding of the document I think we need a glossary for terms such as tube stock, indigenous setbacks etc. And limit abbreviations like NSG as people forget the meaning when they are half way through the document. I would even spell out by example what a metre or other measures looks like( so many handspans) A picture is worth a 1000 words. Loved Emma's pictures of different nature strip 'models' Help is there. Most importantly as you have suggested, have someone at the end of the line to talk to at Council and as Andrea suggested, get some volunteer scheme happening so people can call on volunteers to help if needed. School kids could have projects where they assist residents who require help in gardening on their nature strips. The vexed question of indigenous/native versus other. As Rachel brought up perhaps we don't need all indigenous plantings. But I agree with Emma that they have an important part to play in our goals. So we need to understand what that is and where to find indigenous plants and what they look like. Best Regards, XXX

Hello I'm a long term resident of St Kilda , 30 years long . Lately it has been so lovely to see people embracing community through sharing their love of gardening through creating nature strip gardens . These efforts of locals bring happiness to passers by , allow people who may not have access to gardens the chance to test their green thumbs and also, address numerous negative impacts our cities have on the environment. I am horrified to learn that council is trying to restrict this !!! Why in this day and age would this be on the hit list of a council that is supposed to be progressive ??? Why when people try to make positive change to themselves , the environment and their community do they face resistance ? What a shame , actually a bit of a disgrace . Regards [REDACTED] Sent from my iPhone

From: [REDACTED] >Sent: Sun, 6 Feb 2022 20:25:56 +1100 To: "Assist" <Assist@portphillip.vic.gov.au> Subject: St gardens ⚠ [External Email] Please be cautious before clicking on any links or attachments. ⚠ These are amazing and loved by all . So you need to leave them as they are . [REDACTED] [REDACTED] rate payer middle park Sent from my iPhone



From [REDACTED] >Sent:  
Mon, 7 Feb 2022 15:34:34 +1100To: "Assist"  
<Assist@portphillip.vic.gov.au>Subject: Nature strip guidelines  
feedback ⚠ [External Email] Please be cautious before clicking on any links or  
attachments. ⚠ Hello can you add this to resident's feedback on the nature strip  
guidelines. While I support the establishment of guidelines I think the width minimums  
are too large and basically exclude lots of existing plantings around the area. Does  
that mean your officers will come along and poison all the non compliant plantings? I  
love walking the streets and seeing resident's inventive ways in which they've added  
a bit of greenery around street trees. Are these all to be poisoned because they don't  
meet the guidelines? More generous guidelines are required, especially for streets  
without nature strips. Please Don't take a sledgehammer to the issue! We should be  
able to plant around street trees as long as it doesn't hamper access. Thanks and  
regards [REDACTED] Stkilda resident Sent from my iPhone

From [REDACTED] >Sent:  
Mon, 7 Feb 2022 15:41:04 +1100To: "Assist"  
<Assist@portphillip.vic.gov.au>Subject: Street gardens ⚠ [External  
Email] Please be cautious before clicking on any links or attachments. ⚠ As a  
paying resident of south Melbourne I have been thrilled to see locals develop street  
gardens where once the dried out nature strip of grass prevailed. With the street  
gardens has come news and bird life which are integral to the future of our planet.  
However, you don't need me to tell you this!!! On the nature strips near many of these  
gardens are rubbish and hard waste which are largely in social housing  
accommodation and flats. What would be wonderful would be to see restrictions  
placed on the rubbish in so called nature strips where overflowing bins and hard  
waste preside and the replacement of them with more street gardening. Please do  
not destroy the hard work of our gardening community. It will improve the landscape  
and city lives of Generations to come Yours sincerely [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

I enjoy nature strip gardens but would like the followings rules applied:

1 metre clearance on kerbside so car doors open freely.

Actual gardens tailored to fit size of nature strip.

Gardens not be allowed too close to footpaths, to allow free passage for pedestrians.

Thank you. [REDACTED].

Park Services, City of Port Phillip, Private Bag No. 3, St Kilda PO VIC 3182 To whom it may concern AILA Response to City of Port Phillip Draft Nature Strip Guidelines The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) Victorian Chapter welcomes the opportunity to offer feedback on the City of Port Phillip's draft nature strip guidelines. AILA is the peak body for the landscape architecture profession in Australia. Representing over 3500 members, we champion quality design for public open spaces, stronger communities, and greater environmental stewardship. Our membership covers a diverse range of professional and creative services including strategic planning, urban design, open space design and natural resource management, working across all levels of government and within the private sector. AILA's Charter stresses that urban and rural landscapes contribute to the Australian quality of life and that the condition of the landscape influences the economic, social, and environmental health of the nation. It strongly endorses urban greening as a strategy to combat climate change and to build sustainable and resilient cities. Nature strips are an important site within a city for this greening to occur. Nature strips are one of three major components of the local streetscape. The others are the road itself and the footpath. Such streetscapes in Victoria generally account for 20 - 25% of a residential neighbourhood (Wissing, 2021, in press). The amount of road easement green space, which includes the privately managed nature strip, within the street corridor is around 7% of land area in Melbourne and accounts for 36.7% of public green space, although this varies greatly according to the date of estate establishment (Marshall et al, 2019b, 1). This is similar to the average amount of privately managed nature strip in four urban design eras from 1835 to today in Geelong of 28% (with roads and footpath accounting for 64% and street trees at 9%) (Wissing, 2021, in press). Further, almost a quarter of privately managed nature strips in Melbourne contain resident verge gardening (Marshall et al, 2019a, 1). The City of Port Phillip is to be commended for offering its residents the opportunity to collaborate on the design of their nature strips. In a Geelong study, interviews conducted with 22 residents in 2018 revealed that all would be willing to be actively involved in the redesign of Version: 1, Version Date: 11/02/2022 Document Set ID: 6235844

Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (Victoria) M: 0422404224 E: vic@aila.org.au W: www.aila.org.au ABN: 84 008 531 851 2 their streetscape if the local Council approached them (Wissing, 2021, in press). Of the desired streetscape design features, 82% wanted to grow vegetables, 77% wanted a place for children to play, and 68% wanted places to sit, places to gather and the installation of rain gardens (Wissing, 2021, in press). Further, preliminary analysis from a national survey undertaken in 2021 and 2022 by Macquarie University, to understand how Australians used their backyards, local streets and local parks during the COVID-19 pandemic, found that 76% of respondents across Australia visited their local street at least weekly, with 68% seeing the street as highly important or important. This compared with 53% visiting their local recreation park weekly, which

60% identified as highly important or important (Wissing, pers. comm, 2022). In municipalities such as the City of Port Phillip, with very small land areas and predominantly characterised by pre-World War II residential subdivision, the proportion of public open space that nature strips comprise, and thus their importance, is even greater. In the City of Port Phillip, the proportion of public open space (POS) of Council area is 19.5%, double the metropolitan Melbourne average of 9.3%. However, the per person average of POS in the municipality is 38.4 m<sup>2</sup> compared to a metropolitan average of 57.7 m<sup>2</sup> (Victorian Planning Authority, 2017). Further, the City of Port Phillip is generally characterised by comparatively very small residential lot sizes. For example, in 2016, South Melbourne had an average block size of 120 - 140 m<sup>2</sup>, compared to a national average of 735 m<sup>2</sup>. For mostly financial reasons, the opportunity to create new parks in such areas is almost impossible. This makes the local streetscape outside residential properties a particularly attractive option for redesign. Historically, the City of Port Phillip and its predecessors have been at the vanguard of nature strip development in Melbourne. Early photographs of Melbourne's residential streets, including Carlisle Street, Balaclava, in the City of Port Phillip in 1862, show either grass or a combination of grass and footpath on the side of the road (Butler-Bowden & Couchman, 2005, 504). Likewise, Melbourne's earliest planned nature strips were probably at Port Melbourne's Garden City housing development in the 1920s (Butler-Bowden & Couchman, 2005, 504). Since the late 19th century, grey infrastructure such as electricity, telecommunications, water, sewerage, and gas has increasingly been included in such street corridors. As early as 1906, complaints were made in Melbourne regarding the poor management of street trees in response to above-ground electricity and telephone wires (Brown-May, 2005b, 691). A century later, such street corridors are increasingly recognised as being vital places to increase green and blue infrastructure, which provides a range of ecosystem services essential for human health, such as thermal comfort, stormwater management, carbon sequestration and pollination, and mitigating key impacts arising from Australian urban living such as the Urban Heat Island effect, the Urban Stream Syndrome (stormwater runoff) and poor soil health. Today, the City of Port Phillip's own documents, including reports that inform the Act and Adapt: Sustainable Environment Strategy 2018-28 (City of Port Phillip, undated i) recognise it as a leader in the development of sustainable environments. Unfortunately, the current draft nature strip guidelines updating the 2013 version released for comment by the City of Port Phillip do not appear to be consistent with the directions identified in various Council documents including <https://chartingtransport.com/2016/05/22/are-melbourne-suburbs-full-of-quarter-acre-blocks/>, accessed 21 January 2022 Version: 1, Version Date: 11/02/2022 Document Set ID: 6235844

Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (Victoria) M: 0422404224 E: vic@aila.org.au W: www.aila.org.au ABN: 84 008 531 851 3 the Move Connect Live Integrated Transport Strategy 2018-2028 (City of Port Phillip, undated ii) or the very recent Places for People: Public Space Strategy 2022-32 (City of Port Phillip, undated iii). Further, the draft Nature Strip Guidelines do not appear to be consistent with tree protection zones outlined in AS4970 (2009). Elevated planting boxes also do not enable the capture and treatment of

urban stormwater. The City of Port Phillip's request for comments on the draft guidelines provides an excellent opportunity to reinforce the need for high-quality collaborative design to achieve the objectives identified in Council's Sustainable Environment Strategy, Integrated Transport Strategy and Public Space Strategy. We see these guidelines as standard defensive rules to be used only in cases of dispute or damage to existing trees or public risk. The City of Port Phillip needs to produce best-practice streetscapes that are attuned to increased sustainability under the pressure of a climate emergency. The guidelines should be used with discretion as necessary with the overall aim of enhanced urban biodiversity and resident participation in the care and maintenance of their local street. Nature strip guidelines should facilitate urban gardening by all its residents. Such guidelines should not be too prescriptive as this can result in inequitable access to gardening nature strips. Prescriptive setbacks in narrow streets are likely to preclude the establishment of a nature strip garden. We suggest that guidelines should not specify setbacks from assets but make it clear that access to assets might result in damage or destruction of the garden and that costs of reinstatement are the responsibility of the resident. Similarly, issues of liability can be clearly addressed. We recommend that these nature strip guidelines be edited to increase discretion on setbacks and then used in the short term to provide general guidance. The role of landscape design is particularly important. Considered, early design of the street landscape is critical: while good design typically costs around 10% of a project, it locks in over 80% of the impacts, good, bad, or otherwise. These guidelines don't address change to street design apart from possible addition of raised planters and changes of treatment from grass (or gravel) and resident-planted shrubs. Ideally, nature strips should be designed as one component of the road reserve. AILA commends the City of Port Phillip for developing its public space strategy Places for People: a Public Space Strategy, 2022-2032 (City of Port Phillip, undated iii). Roads and streets should be designed for both movement and place (Department of Transport 2019). Nature strips, medians and canopy trees contribute strongly to a sense of place. Consequently, the preferences of the residents, whose place it is, must be given priority in the design of their streetscapes. We strongly recommend that the City of Port Phillip review their objective in developing nature strip guidelines and instead implement their strategy Places for People, including the development of landscape masterplans in a co-design process with residents. Version: 1, Version Date: 11/02/2022 Document Set ID: 6235844

Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (Victoria) M: 0422404224 E: vic@aila.org.au W: www.aila.org.au ABN: 84 008 531 851 4 We encourage the City of Port Phillip to commence a precinct-based process of street masterplanning and design that reconsiders the future of each street with the aim of detailing future works that meet the objectives of council's sustainability, transport, public space and WSUD guidelines. This should be a collaborative, all-of-council, process led by landscape architects, but also involving traffic, services and WSUD engineers, horticulturalists, arborists, and communication and community engagement staff. The plans should identify and cost all works that will develop the streets in line with new council policies. These works could be prioritised and staged, with the work being also available for grant applications to

State and Federal government. The aim of each precinct plan should be to reduce the percentage of hard pavement dedicated to vehicle movement and parking and increase space allocated to safe active transport and urban greening. Water retention in each precinct should be increased through changes to surfaces and WSUD techniques. Space given over to gardens in medians and nature strips should be maximised. Undergrounding of overhead services should be explored with priority given in heritage areas and where they limit the healthy development of existing or planned canopy trees. City of Melbourne maintains a running record of street design projects that recover road space in this way. AILA envisages that money invested by council in refitting their streets in this way to enhance their liveability will eventually produce a financial return through rate revenue resulting from enhanced property values. Recommendations In conclusion, AILA (Vic) makes the following recommendations in reviewing the City of Port Phillip's draft nature strip guidelines: 1. The draft nature strip guidelines should be edited to increase discretion on setbacks and used only in the short term to encourage streetscape gardening, by interested residents, that enhances urban biodiversity. 2. The draft nature strip guidelines should provide commentary and evaluation on the benefits of nature strips in urban cooling and meeting council's targets for Urban Heat Island reduction and urban tree canopy increase (%). Version: 1, Version Date: 11/02/2022 Document Set ID: 6235844

Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (Victoria) M: 0422404224 E: vic@aila.org.au W: www.aila.org.au ABN: 84 008 531 8515 3. The City of Port Phillip should commence a precinct-based process of street master planning and design that reconsiders the future of each street with the aim of detailing future work that meet the Council's objectives for sustainability, transport, green infrastructure and public space and WSUD guidelines. The nature strip should be designed as part of the entire street. Residents should be involved in this design process, and nature strip gardenings should be facilitated. 4. The City of Port Phillip should consider how the draft nature strip guidelines can assist in the understanding and assessment of landscape performance. This may consider sustainability metrics, economic evaluation and broader understanding of urban ecologies within the municipality. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue with you further. Yours Faithfully

Submission XXX Draft Nature Strip Guidelines 13.02.2022 Most submissions on Nature Strips are likely to respond to the context for the changes proposed to Council; draft guidelines which are aimed at regulating the possible unforeseen outcomes from those seeking to enhance biodiversity and food production when planting in nature strips. Evidence suggests however that many people in the city will continue to see their nature strips as an opportunity (or not) for a nice green lawn. This submission is aimed at addressing the issues that arise where people continue to want a lawn or may want an alternative ground cover which is as resilient/ practical as a lawn but may also offer the opportunity for biodiversity. This submission is written in the hope that a new set of Guidelines may be written in this context and especially in responding to the need to consider the impact of

Climate Change in all operations of the Council. The opportunity to inform and educate and mandate is lost with the current guidelines for nature strips. The Guidelines have very little to say on the contribution that lawn/turf can offer to the community and the way in which its worst features can be modified and its better features enhanced. Heat Reduction The hierarchy of efficiency in heat reduction by surface type indicate waterways offer the most opportunity of heat reduction followed by dense woody vegetation and irrigated turf whilst dead grass and vegetation exposed soil and unshaded hard surfaces are the worst performers in this regard: Heat mapping of urban areas as well as high resolution thermal infrared imagery of 285 km<sup>2</sup> region of Adelaide's southern suburbs showed that the coolest sites were golf courses, water bodies, dense woody vegetation and irrigated turf, while the hottest areas were generally comprised of buildings, dry agricultural fields, dry/dead grass and vegetation, exposed soil and unshaded hard surfaces [108]. Research into surface temperatures of hard and soft urban landscape elements in Perth, Western Australia, found that areas with grey pavers were the hottest, whilst areas with ground-cover plants were the coolest. In the evenings, grey pavers remained the hottest, whilst decking, soil, and turf grass were the coolest [94].<sup>1</sup> Possibly the worst surface to install from this perspective is artificial lawn. Whilst the guidelines ban its use, they fail to explain why. This should be clearly stated in the guidance as artificial lawns have an adverse impact by way of direct pollution with particle breakdown and the huge differential between the heat mitigating effects of natural turf and the heating effect of artificial grass. There is concern that material used for plastic non-living lawn reduces urban habitat, suppresses soil fauna, pollutes runoff via plastic and synthetic particles and other unknown impacts on the

1 Lawns in Cities: From a Globalised Urban Green Space Phenomenon to Sustainable Nature-Based Solutions Maria Ignatieva 1,\* , Dagmar Haase 2,3 , Diana Dushkova 2 and Annegret Haase<sup>4</sup> Version: 1, Version Date: 14/02/2022 Document Set ID: 6236344

Submission XXX Draft Nature Strip Guidelines 13.02.2022 environment [18,19,93,110]. Loveday et al. [94] revealed that artificial turf grass can be particularly hot, often more than 30 °C above turf grass.<sup>2</sup> Pollution Reduction and Runoff Control Another recognised ecosystem service of lawn is carbon sequestration. In temperate zones of Europe and the USA, carbon sequestration has been positively associated with carbon accumulating in the soil [42]. However, other recent studies of the northern hemisphere temperate zones have shown that the positive effects of soil carbon sequestration in intensively managed lawns can be negated by greenhouse gas emissions generated by the routine management operations of mowing, fertiliser application and irrigation [22]. In the Newcastle region in Australia domestic lawn-mowers contributed 5.2% and 11.6% of carbon monoxide (CO) and non-methane hydrocarbons emissions (NMHC), respectively [52]<sup>3</sup> I understand that Council officers have been involved in research on the benefits of lawn as a means of filtering contamination and most obviously, stopping or preventing run off of disturbed soil. This information should be made readily available. There is also an obligation for those people with lawns to reduce waterway contamination by recycling lawn clippings, reducing water use by using warm weather grasses and other management practices such as not using fertilizers or Round up. Microbial Benefits: Whilst such benefits are not at the level of

plantings which deliberately concentrate on biodiversity, lawn nevertheless makes a contribution by allowing water to penetrate into the soil sustaining more deeply rooted plants such as trees, as well as generally increasing soil moisture and stopping hydrophobic soils. It also supports microbes in the soil resulting in a number of bird species foraging in lawns such as the magpie, ibis and wagtail birds. Future Directions: It is clear that the Nature Strip Guidelines were not developed bearing in mind a hotter dryer future. The Council is currently revisiting its Urban Forest Strategy which is now 10 years old. This strategy should be speaking to the design and response to all matters bearing on our aspiration for a cooler greener city. Other cities such as Chicago are using their own prairie vegetation to create a whole new landscape. The High line in New York makes use of its indigenous vegetation to enhance this highly regarded elevated street. The Council has experimental work underway for Bothwell Street to look at native plantings which will provide a low-growing canvas requiring less maintenance and suitable for both medians and nature strips. 2 See above 3 See above. Version: 1, Version Date: 14/02/2022 Document Set ID: 6236344

XXX Draft Nature Strip Guidelines 13.02.2022 Encouraging and providing guidance on how we can redesign lawns should be a widely dispersed notion across all parts of the Council rather than one experimental activity in one part of the city. The COPP should be considering a complex hybrid approach as part of its Greening Port Phillip Review as well as the Nature Strip Guidelines under preparation to enhance the urban environment and ensure a greener cooler city. Acting together to protect the CoPP from the worst effects of Climate Change needs coherent action which encourages people to participate rather than making people feel less empowered. Knowledge should be shared to enable this to happen.

Dear Mayor, Councillors and Chief Executive Officer,

I have documented below my concerns with the engagement process to date and its failure to value and hear our contribution. If you don't hear us, how can you develop good policy?

#### **City of Port Phillip Naturestrip Guidelines draft 2021 response**



The major problem with these 'guidelines' is the failure to adequately consult with ratepayers and residents of the City of Port Phillip. They are the stakeholders in this consultation process.

A 2 page guideline from 2013 was rewritten as a 21 page draft citizen contract with a short window to comment leading into Christmas 2021. A community outcry over the failed process of consultation (2 lots of typewritten online q and a) resulted in, thankfully, an extension of consultation to the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2022. However, the new consultation could only be done online as apparently there was too much risk to council staff and the community. Please remember every shop, restaurant and hotel is open for the public including CoPP offices for payment of rates etc. We have also run the Australian Open and a test match at the MCG.

From a technical perspective there is also inadequate consultation. After a pandemic of eighteen months the best tech that CoPP offered was Jennifer Witheridge (No disrespect to her) typing answers to our type written questions in December 2021. Where was microsoft teams or zoom. We were all using zoom to communicate with family and friends in 2020.

Your CoPP engagement policy talks about **community engagement principles**. Currently according to Dinesh Paneer we couldn't be treated as equals online with the teams meeting as 'We don't have that option on teams'. Teams meeting and zoom is designed essentially to provide a level playing field to engage with a team of people in a fair manner. **This should not have been set up as a teams live event.** Microsoft: **Event attendees are not considered part of the "event group."** Attendees watch the event live or on demand, using DVR controls, either anonymously or authenticated. They can participate in Q&A. This was a poor choice of tech. Teams meetings or zoom would have enabled an equal footing for all participants

What Copp did was to restrict our engagement, muting us so we had to type out our questions before they were put to a moderator to be considered by the council staff. The power imbalance demonstrates **a failure to meet the engagement policy in word and spirit.**

When I asked previously why wasn't the Saturday meeting being recorded the response was 'We hadn't thought to do so.' In fact, the meeting was being recorded but people involved hadn't been told.

Given the intense level of community concern the CoPP should redraft the document and then seek further **deliberative engagement with relevant stakeholders** eg. Heart Gardening Project, other environment and sustainable interest groups and external professionals to provide additional expertise. Below are transcripts of some of the requests on the inadequacy of the engagement process to date.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

Hi Meg.

Thank you so much for getting me up to date with the project.

I am glad that the community feedback has been taken into consideration and a path will be left through the median strip.

As it is one of the very few pieces of public space we have it is definitely important that the space remains usable.

I have done a considerable amount of planting in the street and am doing my best to get rid of as much grass as possible and plant more flowering natives to encourage the local birdlife.



I have a question, I asked Jonathen to remove a Jacaranda tree and replace it with two large gum trees, corner Railway Parade and Gibbs street kind of in front of 30 Gibbs street. The Jacaranda has been cut down and the area mulched and I have planted some grasses and flowering natives, but no new trees have been put in. I was wondering if you could have citywide or whoever you subcontract come and remove the two yucca tree stumps and put two developed gums that will grow tall? The area is perfect for them as there are no overhead wires so it is literally the perfect position for some canopy trees.

As I remember at the very start of this project years ago the whole idea was to create more canopy and less asphalt to bring the temperature down.

If we could get a few big trees put in there it would certainly help with that goal. There is also a spot to the left of Railway parade that has room for another tree, a grass area that has one tree in it already- this could potentially be planted at the same time.

If you could get a few trees put in here it would be greatly appreciated, if not I will just try and source some myself.

I just had a read of the naturestrip planting guidelines, it all seems pretty straight forward, although I feel like there are far too many rules. PortPhillip likes to push the idea that we are greening and environmentally conscious- but then bring out all these rules. Many people wanting to plant their nature strips may read this and just decide it is too hard. I understand council has to cover it's ass with insurance and such but rules such as no swings, community libraries, birdhouses, paths etc are not only disheartening but also quite gross, these things are the exact installations that help to build a better community and make a much nicer area. I feel it would be much better if the guidelines were a bit looser without so many rules, we just had 2 years of nothing but rules and I think you will find that whether or not someone puts a community library or seat in a nice garden they plant really doesn't affect the council that much, anyway just my two cents.

■

11 January 2022

To: ■

Team Leader Local Laws

City of Port Phillip

Re: Nature Strip Garden at ■

I refer to the *DRAFT NATURE STRIP GUIDELINES, v1 Oct 2021*.

The following issues arise when referring to the new Nature Strip Garden (NSG) at ■.

Recently

replanted after year long construction window. We are the ■ neighbour at ■.

Please see RED text for comments.

from page 10, NSG v1

### **Safety and accessibility**

Safety and accessibility must be maintained on all streets. The following clearances and plant heights are

required so that:

- everyone can safely travel on the footpath. Adults, Children, Pets cannot travel safely besides this garden, there are many incidents where the Owner will 'rage', against families and pets who venture too close to the garden particularly on weekends when families are enjoying the pub and kids are playing in the area. The previous neighbour on the [REDACTED] has actually sold and moved over a year ago to get away from this harassment. Further evidence can be provided as requested. The Owners have installed CCTV now to view the NSG and maintain a constant and menacing impact on this area.
- people driving can see people walking and cycling.
- people can get out of a car parked on the street, The NSG takes up full width and depth of the nature strip area, extending over the boundary in front of the East neighbour ([REDACTED]) by approximately 1m. Therefore NO people can use this space to get out of a parked car. It is noted that this area is a Council designated Loading Zone that runs adjacent to the NSG. This hinders the correct use of the loading zone. Side loading and unloading of delivery vehicles is not possible due to the NSG. Some delivery vehicles are forced to park nose into the zone in order to access both vehicle doors which is a safety issue as they are exposed to ongoing traffic exiting the roundabout as the rear of vehicle, and the worker, are exposed to the main road. This is an unacceptable and documentable effect of the NSG - it poses a significant and real WHS issue for Commerical operators that need to correctly access the loading zone for their daily operations.
- workers can safely access service pits. The Service Pit is within the Garden and cannot be accessed without walking over the Garden. (see photos) therefore the 1.5m access space around the Service Pit is not available.
- there is space for bins and rubbish collection,. There is NO space for Rubbish Bins and Collection, again pushing the bin collection points to neighbours nature strips.
- a safe street environment that maintains good surveillance

**Other comments in relation to new Draft Guidelines for the NSG at [REDACTED]**

The Garden abuts the Kerb ie there is no 1.0m set back from the Kerb.

The Garden does not allow 1.5m around Telstra Service Pit.

**In conclusion,**

I understand the DRAFT NATURE STRIP GUIDELINES are not enforceable at this stage, and the final

version of the Laws need to be passed within Council. I welcome these laws in this instance, to manage a

difficult situation that has arisen from the lack of oversight on Council Land.

Yours Sincerely

[REDACTED]

Hello Ladies,

Thank you for providing and setting me up last nights for Q&A session.

Two aspects to this email -(a) Feedback on the process of the Q&A

(b) Actual nature strip guideline matters

**(a) Feedback on the process of the Q&A**

-I sent through several question as "anonymous" as the system only allowed me to participate as such (I am registered with MS Teams and have used it previously).

- Greg from COPP in the session alluded to MS teams and possible alternatives so I won't labour this point- except to ask whilst you had 29 registered for the session how many in the end attended- and could any short fall be attributed to MS Teams?

(possibly unanswerable).

Overall for me as the system dropped off several times initially (being agile and nimble) - I got the gist of the session- thank you.

**(b) Actual nature strip guideline matters**

(i) is there a current nature strip guideline in place - or is this the first attempt for implementation- if there is an existing guideline, is it possible to forward it to me for

comparison?

(ii) I "anonymous" posted the question of indigenous plants replacing lawns which property owners may find difficult to maintain- due to any number of reasons.

I'm sure indigenous plantings aligns to the greening of COPP somehow- birdlife, insects and connection to a natural low maintenance open space.

By way of example I voluntarily hire a lawn mower for 9 properties either side of me - space to store a smelly petrol noisy or even an electric mower item has limitation in single fronted abodes.

- the opportunity may exist now due to extensive high pressure gas pipe works replacing old underground gas pipes within COPP as lawns are being dug up in many instances and then just reseeded.

(iii) In noting Raised planter box criteria (page 13 of proposed guidelines) beyond plants- forms of trellis, stakes, plant trainers, and traditional white Australian artefacts material securely placed like garden gnomes and pink flamingos are permissible- Yes? (serious question- with extreme examples - *to some people*).

(iv) Have you received any response from your ARTS people- or would St.Kilda Festival be drawing their current time? This matter bends in with open space- sustainability of recycling constant hard rubbish- creativity- community engagement.

Nice dealing with you

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Jennifer,

If the Guidelines are adopted unamended do you anticipate existing non compliant gardens will require removal?

Regards,

[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

Report Number: [REDACTED] Authority: City of Port Phillip Incident Type: Accessibility When: Tuesday,  
December 7th 2021, 2:13:09 pm AEDT Location: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

144.9731903076172 what3words:///vase.limes.transmitted Notes: Structures on nature strip making it  
difficult for access from vehicles, particularly for disabled access. This is also making less space for  
rubbish bins. Triage: Images: 1