

4.1 2018 ROAD MANAGEMENT PLAN

(PB:F18-4815)

Responsible Director(Acting): Simon Hill

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Monash City Council is the responsible road authority for approximately 734 kilometres of local roads and 1,600 kilometres of footpaths and shared paths. In accordance with the Road Management (General) Regulations 2016, Council, as a road authority, must conduct a review of its road management plan (RMP) during the same period as it is preparing its Council Plan following a general election.

The Monash RMP details our management systems and performance standards for discharging our role as a road authority and is a public document. In addition, it sets out our obligations for inspection, our standards for maintenance and repair and response times within the framework of Council policy and strategic resource plan.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to:

1. Detail the review process for the RMP;
2. Provide a summary of feedback received from community consultation on the draft RMP;
3. Detail the proposed changes from the existing RMP; and,
4. Present an updated RMP for Council endorsement.

Supporting Attachments for this report are:

- Updated Road Management Plan 2018 (Attachment 1);
- Schedule of proposed changes to the Road Management Plan listed Schedule 4 of the updated Road Management Plan 2018.

Council's endorsement is now sought to adopt the RMP 2018. The changes to the RMP are being proposed after consideration of community feedback on the RMP, engagement with relevant stakeholder groups, benchmarking and peer review with neighbouring councils and VicRoads, as well as consideration from a legal and insurance perspective. The RMP has also been re-written and re-formatted including new and updated diagrams to make the RMP easier to read and more accessible.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS / ISSUES

- Feedback from the engagement process and submissions received.
- All standards detailed in the RMP are benchmarked against other councils RMPs.
- Any changes to the standards detailed in the RMP must be able to be delivered within current resource levels and Council's systems and process must be able to support the changes.

- Legal and insurance consideration
- The revised RMP 2018 to take effect from 1 November 2018.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The current capital works and operational budgets and forward budget projections are sufficient to maintain the standards established in the RMP.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council:

- Approves the amended RMP to take effect from 1 November 2018;
- Note that the amended RMP applies to all roads and classes of road in Council's register of public roads;
- Note that the amended RMP and this report will be available for public inspection.

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RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Approves the amended Road Management Plan (RMP) as presented in accordance with the Road Management Act 2004 and Road Management (General) Regulations 2016.
2. Notes that the amended RMP shall take effect from 1 November 2018.
3. Notes that the amended RMP applies to all roads and classes of road in Council's register of public roads.
4. Notes that the amended RMP and this report will be available for public inspection during normal business hours at the following locations:
 - Civic Centre, 293 Springvale Road, Glen Waverley;
 - Oakleigh Service Centre, 3 Atherton Road, Oakleigh; and
 - On Council's website:- www.monash.vic.gov.au .

INTRODUCTION

Council conducted a full review the Road Management Plan (RMP) in the first half of 2017 in accordance with the Road Management (General) Regulations 2016. The regulations requires Council to conduct reviews during the same period as it is preparing its Council Plan following a general election. On 30 May 2017, Council considered a report on the review of the RMP and adopted a revised RMP.

Minor revisions of the RMP was approved by Council in 2017 in order to comply with regulation, however additional proposed changes were not implemented at this time to enable Council to conduct a program of community consultation. The review report in 2017 also identified a further action was required to reformat the RMP with the community interest in mind with more diagrams, charts and less technical language. As a consequence, a further revision of the RMP has been initiated and an amended version of the RMP for 2018 is proposed, with an implementation date of 1 November 2018.

This 2018 version of the RMP reflects a complete review of every inspection, defect and maintenance response standard. The proposed standards have been benchmarked against the standards of similar councils.

An extensive consultation process has also been conducted with the community and our insurers, which has resulted in a number of changes.

This report outlines the process and the findings and discusses the results of the community consultation. The report recommends the adoption of the amended Monash City Council Road Management Plan.

BACKGROUND

Monash City Council is the responsible road authority for the management of 734 kilometres of local roads and 1,600 kilometres of footpaths and shared paths within the municipality. The roads, paths and related infrastructure in the roads represent the largest asset group managed by Council by quantity and by value.

Council's powers and obligations as a road authority are set down in the Road Management Act 2004 and associated regulations. A number of Codes of Practice also guide Council's role as a road authority especially the Code of Practice for Operational Responsibility for Public Roads which outlines the division of responsibilities between council and VicRoads. In accordance with the Road Management (General) Regulations 2016, Council, as a road authority, must conduct a review of its RMP during the same period as it is preparing its Council Plan following a general election. This was completed in 2017.

The RMP has a number of functions:

- Defines, in a Public Road Register, the roads Council considers are required for public use in an integrated network and will be maintained to the defined standards;
- Establishes a management system for the road management functions assigned to City of Monash as the Road Authority for local roads;
- Bases the system on policy and operational objectives within the resources available, and;
- Sets relevant standards for carrying out inspection, repair and maintenance functions for the road infrastructure.

DISCUSSION

Responsibilities

Maintenance and management of Council's civil infrastructure which includes our pathways, roads and road related infrastructure such as bridges and drainage is the responsibility of the Infrastructure directorate and in particular the Strategic Asset Management (SAM), Capital Works (CW) and Engineering departments. Street trees are managed by the Horticulture department as well as vegetation on council properties.

The Community Amenity department administers the local laws that implement some of the powers of a road authority in particular vegetation clearance, obstructing roadways and damaging infrastructure.

2018 RMP Update Background

Following the completion of the amendment process in 2017 there was a range of outstanding issues and potential improvements that required further analysis and consultation. Additionally, a major upgrade of the principal asset and works management system, Confirm, was in progress which offered opportunities for improvement.

2018 RMP Update Process

A series of internal technical workshops were conducted between December 2017 and March 2018 to work through the proposed changes and to consider the benchmark review against similar councils. A detailed review of reported defects and claims was made to identify any particular areas of concern or weakness in the current system.

The results of the most recent Customer Satisfaction Surveys were analysed in detail, including the verbatim comments, to identify areas of community concern.

An updated draft along with the inspection and intervention standards were sent to MAV Insurance for their review. Detailed feedback was received in early April 2018 and many of the suggested changes were incorporated in a public consultation draft.

Public notices were prepared and issued on 20 April 2018 in accordance with the regulations. Three months was allocated for community consultation and engagement including an extended time to receive written responses.

Community Engagement

A Community Engagement Plan was prepared which focused on a number of engagement streams:

- Through available media and Council's website. A total of 343 people viewed the consultation draft of the RMP on-line and two hard copies were provided.
- A personal invitation to review the consultation draft of the RMP was sent to 260 community members who had previously taken part in Customer Satisfaction Surveys.
- Through presentations to focus and project groups. Presentations and workshops were conducted with the Positive Ageing Reference Group and the Youth Ambassadors in 2018. The Child and Young People Friendly City project was also consulted.
- Peer review with other road authorities.

We received 12 responses in writing from the community, which is a relatively significant response rate. We received one detailed, formal submission which we have provided a response directly to the resident

Community Satisfaction Surveys & Direct Feedback

An additional 10 questions relating to the road management plan were included in the 2017 Community Satisfaction survey in addition to the

standard questions regarding the satisfaction with local roads and pathways. The responses and the verbatim comments provided were invaluable in defining the focus for changes in the amended plan.

The 2018 Community Satisfaction Survey results were also analysed in detail. Community satisfaction levels with local roads recorded very good levels of satisfaction at 77 which is significantly higher than the metropolitan average of 66. Compared with metropolitan Melbourne, residents expressed significantly lower levels of concern about roads maintenance and repair. This would tend to indicate that our existing standards and budget for inspection and maintenance for roads is sufficient and sustainable.

However, there is a noticeable level of dissatisfaction with the condition of footpaths even though the general satisfaction level with footpath maintenance and repair is a very good 75. It indicates that for some residents, footpath maintenance and repair is an important issue. The condition of footpaths was also a key theme raised during direct discussions with reference groups. Some of the dissatisfaction is about the design of older footpaths causing accessibility issues for people with reduced mobility and issues around schools and transport hubs. Footpaths are more of an issue to residents in the older suburbs.

Benchmarking & Peer Review

A detailed review of the inspection and intervention standards of 15 similar councils was undertaken by the working group which identified a small number of opportunities for improvement. It showed that for the majority of defects our intervention levels and response times are similar or better than similar councils.

One area for improvement identified from benchmarking was related to our cycles for inspection. As a consequence, it is proposed to inspect more frequently in general.

Council will maintain its response time even though external agencies suggested that some of our response times may be onerous. All reported defects for example require a response to the customer within 5 days. However, the working group worked through each suggestion to modify some standards but generally recommended keeping the higher standards which have been achievable.

General Changes

The current RMP was first prepared in 2004 and while it has undergone regular updates, the format has not changed. The proposed 2018 RMP is a complete rewrite of the plan and aims to make the document more readable and accessible through clearer language and more diagrams. The new format of the RMP has been well received by the peer reference group.

A number of proposed changes have a significant impact on workload. These have been balanced against other changes to ensure our workload fits within our available inspection and maintenance resources.

Proposed Changes - Footpaths

In recognition of the importance of paths to the community, it is proposed to make a number of changes in this area. The hierarchy of footpaths is to now be based on pedestrian usage rather than materials. This means that areas around shops, schools and transport hubs will be elevated in priority and will be inspected more frequently. The high priority areas around activity centres will also be expanded based on pedestrian usage. Areas with segmental pavers will be inspected on a 3 month cycle instead of a 1 month cycle to accommodate the increased areas of High and Medium priority which is expected to double. Otherwise intervention standards will remain the same.

Constructed shared paths that are not on roads are to be included in the Road Register for the first time.

It is expected that these changes will give more focus to paths.

Proposed Changes – Customer Service

One of the key changes is the realignment of all initial response times to 5 working days which is the same as Council's customer service guarantee. This is achievable due to the successful implementation of the Rapid Response Team and associated systems and procedures. This standard is notably shorter than many other councils.

Proposed Changes – Road Inspection Frequencies

Although our roads score well in both customer satisfaction and technical condition, it was noted by MAV Insurance that our inspection frequencies were not in line with other councils and have been subsequently amended to be more frequent.

Local roads will now be inspected every 24 months. All assets in local roads including the road surface, kerbs and channel, drainage and footpaths will now be inspected at the same time providing a measure of process improvement.

Proposed Changes - Intervention Standards

Intervention standards (the point at which size or extent of a defect requires action) have remained mostly unchanged however response times have been generally reduced. Our intervention standards are higher than most other Councils.

Proposed Changes – Road Register

The current road register implementation was reviewed and was also the subject of a number comments during community consultation. The road

register map is to be made available to the community via Monash Maps and a list of roads and paths in the road register is to be made available on Council's website.

Proposed Changes – Performance Data

A number of community members raised the issue of transparency of Council's performance in meeting the standards established in the RMP. The working group recommends that annual performance statistics be made publicly available.

Other Community Issues

During the community engagement process a number of issues were raised which are related to road management but are not specifically part of the RMP. These issues included:

- The management of nature strip maintenance. While the nature strip is specifically excluded in the Road Management Act, the condition of the roadside in some locations is a community concern.
- The relationship between road safety and road maintenance. There is an opportunity to further explain our engineering design process in relation to capital improvement of roads and paths.
- Damage and repair of community assets by building or utility works. There is an opportunity to explain our permit management processes and how the community can assist.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The proposed RMP is consistent with Council's social outcomes in particular the standards for roads and pathways that meet the community's walking, cycling and transport needs and also promotes a level of resilience and safety for members of the community with mobility issues.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

The implications of this report have been assessed and are not considered likely to breach or infringe upon, the human rights contained in the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

CONSULTATION

A community engagement plan was implemented as discussed above.

An internal working team reviewed each part of the RMP and approved the changes made.

MAV Insurance reviewed the initial and final drafts of the RMP and provided direct feedback and suggestions that were generally implemented. Other councils and VicRoads provided general feedback. The final draft and the process was reviewed by Council's solicitors.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The current capital works and operational budgets and forward budget projections are sufficient to maintain the standards established in the RMP.

CONCLUSION

The proposed RMP works within the current budget and resource constraints to deliver inspection and maintenance services that are on par with similar councils and reflect resident concerns.

It is recommended that the 2018 amendments to the Road Management Plan are accepted with an implementation date of 1 November 2018.