

21.13 SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT

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21.13-1 Overview

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There is a growing global awareness for the need to live in a more sustainable manner to preserve our environments for future generations. Council recognises the need to “apply the principles of sustainability in all of its operations and to continually improve the natural environment within the City” (City of Monash Council Plan 2006 - 2010).

The issue of sustainability emerged as one of the key issues of interest during the consultation process for *Monash 2012: A strategy for the future* (2003). Sustainability was identified as being one of the five principles that should be applied in Council decisions, operations and during policy development.

The Monash Conservation and Environment Strategy (City of Monash, 1997) provides an environmental management framework for the City, to ensure the long term sustainable development of the municipality. It aims to protect, enhance and develop the physical environment as a place where people prefer to live, work and conduct business.

This Strategy addresses a wide range of issues including water quality and management, air quality and noise, soils, flora and fauna, open space, waste management, energy use, transport, heritage, urban design and public health and safety. It deals with those matters for which Council has a direct responsibility or interest, setting out objectives and actions aimed at achieving sustainable development.

Monash is also committed to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and the natural environment. Many areas within Monash have identified conservation, landscape, or recreational values, which need to be maintained and managed in response to pressures from development.

Much of the City of Monash was cleared throughout the 1900s for firewood and agricultural activities, yet areas of environmental significance such as Jells Park, Damper Creek, Gardiners Creek, Dandenong Creek and Scotchmans Creek have been retained, revegetated and restored, and are designated accordingly under the Monash Planning Scheme.

Council cares for over 244 hectares of passive open space and 332 hectares of recreational reserves. Many of these sites are ecologically important and significant, including bushland creeks and wetlands which are seeing a return of native fauna to the municipality.

Forty two per cent of Monash (eastern portion) is within the Dandenong Creek catchment whilst 58% (western portion) is within the Yarra River catchment. Consideration of stormwater quality and quantity is vital if these catchments are to maintain their health into the future.

21.13-2 Key issues

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- Water is a precious commodity which is currently undervalued and over used.
- Energy usage in the building and operation of housing, commercial centres and other buildings and structures can be significantly reduced through block layout, design and alignment of the development, the choice of building materials and the application or installation of simple, energy saving measures and appliances.
- Current patterns of transport are not sustainable as emissions from private vehicles are a significant contributor to the emission of greenhouse gases and this mode of travel does little to improve the health of the population.
- Areas developed for urban purposes produce a substantial amount of waste that is required to be collected, transported and disposed of in landfill areas. These landfill

areas generate significant amounts of greenhouse gases, in addition to that generated from the transport of waste.

- Previous work practices, particularly associated with industrial activities, may have resulted in soil or water contamination. Planning procedures should ensure that areas undergoing renewal and redevelopment are investigated for the presence and extent of contamination and appropriate actions taken to remediate the site.
- Waterways are an important environmental asset in the municipality and measures which result in the protection of, or improvement to, water quality will have significant environmental, social and economic benefits for the local and wider community.
- Air quality is adversely affected by exhaust fumes from the high volumes of motor vehicles that use the main roads through Monash.
- Areas of natural bushland provide a refuge for native wildlife and flora. These areas are currently threatened by indirect impacts of adjacent development such as weed infestation, changes in hydrology, predation by domestic animals and other impacts associated with passive recreational use.
- As private open space is reduced in new smaller housing lot sizes, there is likely to be greater demand for quality public open space. Opportunities to expand open space in Monash are limited by a lack of available land and the high cost of large land areas at market prices.

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Objectives, strategies and implementation

Objectives

- To ensure that planning, development and associated infrastructure complies with the principles of economic prosperity, social advancement and environmental protection.
- To minimise energy usage and increase utilisation of alternative energy resources, particularly renewable sources.
- To achieve building design which incorporates accessibility considerations and reduces the need to modify or alter structures in response to future changing needs and/or uses.
- To maintain and enhance biodiversity through the protection and management of areas of native vegetation including flora and fauna species.
- To increase water conservation and recycling, maximise the use of rainwater, stormwater and secondary water, and minimise the use of potable water.
- To reduce the environmental impact of urban development on waterways in the City and the wider catchment through adoption of water sensitive design principles and practices.
- To maximise the potential for drainage systems to contribute to the environmental and recreational qualities of Monash.
- To encourage best practice waste management techniques and recycling, particularly during demolition and construction of buildings, and by the community and industry.
- To minimise the adverse impact on air quality caused by exhaust fumes from motor vehicles using the main roads in Monash by maximising use of alternative modes of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport.
- To ensure that appropriate infrastructure is provided to meet changing community needs.
- To encourage all works in the public domain to sensitively respond to local conditions.

- To ensure that there is incorporation of environmentally sustainable design principles when a new building is being designed.

Strategies

- Minimise the environmental impact of development on waterways within the catchment through adoption of best practice water sensitive design techniques and systems which result in improved stormwater quality and appropriate water quantities.
- Improve stormwater management and rehabilitation of waterways to help restore natural ecosystems and provide for wildlife and recreational corridors.
- Maintain stormwater flows and quality in such a way that they do not pose a risk to ecological or human health and safety.
- Assist in the protection of groundwater quality in the southern sandbelt area of Monash.
- Promote water conservation and wise use of water.
- Create opportunities for open space linkages which contribute to the drainage system.
- Effectively manage land to cater for active, passive, natural and infrastructure needs.
- Continue to protect and enhance native habitats and reduce the threats to native species caused by excessive clearing, pests and human activity.
- Encourage developers, industry and the community to reduce energy usage and adopt more environmentally friendly energy sources.
- Encourage development that incorporates improved energy efficiency during both building and operation, and minimises production of waste and pollution of the air.
- Educate residents, developers and ratepayers in respect of waste management techniques such as recycling programs, to reduce, re-use and recycle household and construction materials.
- Reduce littering and wastes going to landfill.
- Ensure that soils are not degraded or contaminated and that soil conditions are compatible with intended development and use of sites.
- Improve the public domain of streetscapes and provide open space in new developments.
- Ensure that design takes into account environmental constraints including soil erosion and bushfire risk and incorporates urban water management principles.
- Encourage the development of high rise residential projects within the Glen Waverley Principal and Oakleigh Major Activity Centres that result in integrated housing, office, shopping, recreation and community services and provides a mix and level of activity that attracts people, creates a safe environment, stimulates interaction and provides a lively community focus.
- Enhance the landscape and signage character of the streetscape and improve the safety and amenity of pedestrian networks including cycle ways and public transport access in all activity centres.
- Promote more sustainable transport patterns by ensuring activity centres and residential areas are well serviced by public transport, by encouraging walking and cycling through providing safe and accessible public spaces, and by concentrating activities that generate high numbers of trips in highly accessible locations.
- Ensure that standards of living are not unreasonably affected by noise from traffic, industry or domestic activity.

- Protect local air quality.

Implementation

These strategies will be implemented by:

Policy and exercise of discretion

- Using local policy to implement the above environmental and heritage strategies. (*Residential Development and Character policy, Clause 22.01, Industry and Business Development and Character policy, Clause 22.03, Stormwater Management policy, Clause 22.04 and Tree Conservation policy, Clause 22.05*).
- Using local policy to improve the standard and quality of the design and construction of new developments. (*Residential Development and Character policy, Clause 22.01, Stormwater Management policy, Clause 22.04 and Tree Conservation policy, Clause 22.05, Non-Residential Use and Development in Residential Areas Policy, Clause 22.09 and Environmentally Sustainable Development Policy, Clause 22.13*).
- Applying creative design solutions that enhance the quality of all areas particularly in relation to sustainable development practices, streetscape issues, scale of buildings and provision of open space.
- Ensuring that new development which is likely to impact on the capacity of existing infrastructure contributes to improvements and additions to physical infrastructure, including drainage and public open space.
- Applying the Vegetation Protection Overlay to areas which possess a special leafy character, valued by the community.
- Applying the Environmental Audit Overlay where necessary to ensure that the condition of a development site is appropriate and suitable for residential use.
- Applying the Neighbourhood Character Overlay to identify specific neighbourhood character objectives for special areas.
- Applying the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay and Special Building Overlay to ensure that development does not impact the flow characteristics of a flood event and ensure that the risk to human life and property is within acceptable standards, while protecting environmental values of floodways.
- Applying a Design and Development Overlay or Development Plan Overlay to ensure that the design and development of an area of particular interest achieves the desired goals of Council.

Further strategic work

- Developing performance criteria and design principles for planning and development in the vicinity of activity centres that address the planning, design, siting and construction of buildings.
- Compiling promotional displays and providing educational material to community members and developers regarding sustainable housing design, construction and lifestyle practices.
- Investigating opportunities for improving public open space provision, access and facilities in Monash.
- Developing a Water-Use Management Strategy to reduce water consumption at Council facilities and parks & reserves, including the potential use of reclaimed water for use on Golf Courses and reserves.

- Liaising with Monash University, Melbourne Water and the Environment Protection Agency to develop water quality management plans to maintain the numerous wetlands, lakes, ponds and water features under Council's control.
- Investigating the potential benefits to the Monash community from developing and implementing water sensitive urban design guidelines for urban water management.

Other actions

- Implementing appropriate actions identified in the City of Monash Conservation & Environment Strategy.
- Requiring the clean up of industrial sites prior to redevelopment.
- Continuing to implement energy conservation measures in Council facilities and operations.
- Reducing the need for landfills by removing the renewable resources from the waste stream and investigating options for green power generation at landfill sites.
- Reducing energy and water usage from Council operations and activities.
- Save at least one million litres of mains supply water per year to the Council depot, by substituting it with rainwater collected from roofs on nearby buildings for use through the high volume hose in the vehicle wash bay. (Works Administration Centre Stormwater Reuse System)
- Reduce the amount of household waste going to landfill by directing more material into the recycling stream.

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Reference documents

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Port Phillip and Western Port Regional Catchment Strategy 2004 – 2009. Draft for community consultation. Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority, August 2004.