

22.10 RIVER RED GUM PROTECTION POLICY

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C221

This policy applies to River Red Gum trees throughout the City of Whittlesea.

Policy Basis

Mature River Red Gums in an open plains grassland environment are generally recognised as the most important visual and environmental feature of this municipality. Many of the River Red Gums within the urban areas have been estimated to be between 200-800 years of age.

Existing and future urban areas such as Mill Park, South Morang, Mernda/Doreen and Wollert contain significant River Red Gum trees and associated habitat. Council's experience has been that without proper planning and careful site assessment at the very start of the process of urban development very few of the original River Red Gums survive the encroachment of urban development. It is therefore essential that existing River Red Gum trees are properly assessed and treated as an integral part of a development's design.

This policy provides guidance to applicants in the design of development proposals to ensure that River Red Gums are retained and protected by being sensitively incorporated into development design.

Objective

To ensure that the development of existing and future urban and rural areas takes into account the presence of and plans for the retention, enhancement and long term viability of River Red Gum trees.

Policy

It is policy to:

- Recognise the intrinsic value of River Red Gum trees in establishing a character and identity especially for areas undergoing conversion to urban but also in existing rural areas.
- Request a comprehensive site analysis and arborist's report with any planning proposal for development on land which contains one or more remnant River Red Gum trees.
- Maximise as a priority the retention, protection and incorporation of mature River Red Gums into the design of any development or subdivision.
- Recognise that juvenile River Red Gum trees have an important role to play in the preservation of mature specimens.
- Ensure that River Red Gum trees proposed for retention should be sited in public open space reserves and/or road reserves, unless a suitable alternative development design outcome can be demonstrated.
- Ensure that, where it is necessary for a River Red Gum tree to be located in a lot, the lot is large enough to accommodate a suitable development envelope that does not threaten the safe useful life expectancy of the tree and the lot design is such so as to not create subsequent pressure for removal through concerns in relation to the safety or perceived safety of the tree.
- Ensure that, where feasible, areas of significant River Red Gum regeneration are protected in any development proposal.
- Where it is necessary to remove a Mature River Red Gum tree, encourage the tree removal to be limited to only those trees independently assessed as presenting a danger to people and property.

- Appropriately protect trees identified for retention during the construction phase, and thereafter ensure that their health is regularly monitored by an appropriate environmental consultant where located on public land.
- Ensure that any tree nominated on a development and/or subdivision plan for protection in any part of the municipality is located within a tree protection zone which is in accordance with the City of Whittlesea Tree Protection Zone Standards contained within the Wollert Precinct Structure Plan.
- Ensure that any planning permit for subdivision which contains a protected tree on a lot includes a requirement that the tree, the tree protection zone , development envelope and any conditions relating to those matters be given continuing effect by being contained in an instrument which runs with the title to the land.

Policy Reference

City of Whittlesea Tree Protection Zone Standards, November 2014.