

TELECOMMUNICATIONS CONDUIT POLICY

This Policy applies wherever a permit is required for subdivision or to construct a dwelling or other buildings or works in the municipality.

Policy Basis

Demand for telecommunications services, especially broadband services, is rapidly increasing, by businesses and households (for digital video delivery, telecommuting and other roles). There are several options for delivery of these services, including satellite, copper wire cable and optical fibre cable.

Optical fibre has major advantages, as its data carrying capacity is significantly higher than offered by copper infrastructure, but its installation is restrained outside central city areas by the high cost of retrofitting cables, which need to be in conduits, normally underground.

Whittlesea has particular needs for services which support business and industrial activity, including home-based employment. The City also needs enhanced access to information and services for its diverse, developing outer metropolitan community.

The municipality also offers lead-in advantages, as it remains an active urban growth area, where major savings can be achieved in infrastructure development by installation of service capacity at the development stage.

Objective

To ensure provision of conduits for optical fibre cabling, to facilitate future installation of advanced telecommunications services.

Policy

It is policy to:

- Encourage the provision of optical fibre telecommunications services as a means to support business and industry in the City, assist economic and employment growth, improve residents' access to information and services, and do so in a manner which respects the City's visual quality.
- Encourage new subdivision and development to provide conduits at the development stage in order to enable delivery of such services at the earliest practical time.
- Ensure all subdivisions and developments provide conduits in accordance with a Conduit Network Concept Plan, unless concessions are warranted by factors such as remoteness, very low densities, or the minor nature of development or extensions.
- Encourage provision in the form of conduits laid in accordance with the Planning Guidelines for Conduits for Optical Fibre Services. Council may accept cash in lieu of such works in special cases.
- Recognise that construction of conduits may be required to extend beyond the length of adjacent road frontages or other agreed alignments, to link with conduits laid or to be laid by others. To maintain an equitable balance between such contributions:
 - cost sharing arrangements may be agreed where there are shared benefits in links beyond immediate frontages;
 - contributors will not normally be required to contribute to links across other private properties in urban use or with urban development potential, and
 - the extent of links beyond immediate frontages may be limited to the greater of 20 metres or 20% more than the contributor's combined length of conduits on-site and along roads adjacent to the contributor's land.
- Include relevant permit conditions requiring conduits to be protected from damage.

WHITTLESEA PLANNING SCHEME

- Ensure that ownership of the conduits is vested in Council, on the basis that they may be transferred to a telecommunications carrier or similar agency at a later date.
- Ensure that easements are provided where conduits cross private land.

Policy Reference

Planning Guidelines for Conduits for Optical Fibre Services