

Urban Roads and Drainage Improvement Policy 2019

Bass Coast Shire Council manages an extensive network of infrastructure including roads, pathways and stormwater drains. Prior to the implementation of the Town and Country Planning Act 1961, Council's had no authority to ensure developers considered community needs and wellbeing as part of development. As a result, Bass Coast Shire's road network comprises approximately 125 kilometres of unmade roads and insufficient drainage, which do not meet Infrastructure Design Manual standards required by Council Policy for urban areas.

To address this legacy, and work towards improved conditions for all its residents and visitors, Bass Coast Shire Council adopted the Urban Streets Improvement Policy in 1996. Subsequently, this has become the Urban Roads and Drainage Improvement Policy.

Policy objectives

This policy outlines how Council will endeavour to deliver improved road, pathway and drainage infrastructure, by identifying and prioritising under-developed urban areas to be considered for inclusion in Council's Capital Works Program.

It provides the strategic context for ensuring Council's investment in urban roads and drainage infrastructure is delivered in an integrated manner to address strategic service delivery needs.

The objectives of this policy are to:

- ✓ Establish Council's commitment to:
 - improve the liveability of the built and natural environment by endeavouring to provide effective upgrades in urban infrastructure that meet the needs of an increasing population;
 - enhance economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of the community and ensure increasing community expectations are considered in decision making;
- ✓ Ensure that infrastructure upgrades aid the achievement of the Council Plan, Planning Scheme and related Asset Management Plan objectives;
- ✓ Enable and ensure the effective planning and implementation of urban road and drainage infrastructure upgrade projects by defining the principles to be applied.

Intended outcomes

This policy is based on sound asset management principles and provides guidance to Councillors and staff involved in urban road and drainage improvement projects to ensure appropriate rigour is applied in the decision making process.

This policy is designed to:

- ✓ Enable a robust and impartial priority based system for allocating finite Council resources for investment in urban road and drainage improvement projects;
- ✓ Ensure that investment is undertaken in a financially sustainable manner and with the wellbeing of the Bass Coast community in mind; and
- ✓ Enhance transparency and public confidence in Council's decision making process surrounding urban road and drainage improvement projects.

More detail on the practical application of this Policy is provided in the supporting documentation outlined in the 'Reference to Other Documents' Section below.

Policy principles

This policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- ✓ The upgrade of road, pathway and stormwater drainage infrastructure within urban residential, commercial or industrial areas across the municipality shall be funded in a fair and equitable manner for all current and future ratepayers.
- ✓ Council may pursue the implementation of a special rate or charge, where it can be demonstrated that properties will receive special benefit from a potential road and drainage improvement.
- ✓ Delivery of any identified infrastructure requirement will be consistent with the objectives of the Council Plan and Planning Scheme.

Details of Policy

Prioritisation of urban areas for upgrade

The Urban Upgrade Evaluation List (Evaluation List) identifies all under-developed or un-serviced urban road and drainage areas throughout the Shire requiring improvement to bring them up to standard with contemporary planning requirements. These are referred to as designated project areas.

Recognising the quantum of infrastructure works and the finite resources available to deliver the Evaluation List, an Urban Upgrade Priority Program (Priority Program) for the upgrade of urban areas has been adopted based on prioritisation in accordance with the Evaluation List.

As well as ensuring alignment with Council's Asset Management Plans and strategies, the Priority Program has been developed in line with community service levels adopted to reflect the sentiments of Bass Coast residents and visitors. More specifically, decisions made under this policy should be informed by the criteria established around:

- ✓ enhancing Liveability, Health and Wellbeing through:
 - ✓ providing access to safe road, pathway and drainage infrastructure that meets current and future community needs
 - ✓ improving the safety and utility of all road users through urban road and drainage improvement projects
 - ✓ improving the amenity and enjoyment of overall streetscape of identified areas
- ✓ promoting Economic Development, through:
 - ✓ improved connectivity of safe paths and tracks providing separation of vehicular and pedestrian traffic as well as linkages to open space

- ✓ ensuring best practice investment in identified areas, considering whole-of-life cycle costs and value for money infrastructure
- ✓ maintaining and protecting the natural environment, through:
- ✓ enhancing the amenity of overall streetscape while minimising the existing net impact on the natural environment
- ✓ effectively managing stormwater and drainage control.

More information on the application of these criteria to the road and drainage improvement program is provided in the supporting documentation to this policy.

Urban road and drainage improvement works falling within the scope of this policy will be undertaken with extensive community engagement in line with the formal legislative process outlined in what is currently the *Local Government Act 1989*.

Program funding and reprioritisation

The funding mechanism for each designated project area shall be adopted through Council resolution. Funding sources may include:

- ✓ direct Council contribution;
- ✓ external grants, funding or contributions;
- ✓ A special rate or charge in accordance with Section 163 of the *Local Government Act 1989*; and / or
- ✓ a combination of the above.

The delivery of the individual projects included in the Priority Program is dependent on Council's financial capacity, resource allocation and budgetary decisions and the approximate value of each designated project area. The relative ranking of all other projects identified in the Evaluation List will be reviewed at a frequency nominated and adopted by Council resolution.

The calculation of Council's contribution may vary for each project and will be based on factors specific to each designated project area. These factors consider existing and potential external traffic volumes, Council owned land and the extent to which the criteria outlined above (liveability, health and wellbeing, economic development and environment) are met/unmet.

Council will consider reprioritising an urban road and drainage infrastructure improvement project for a specific designated project area only where the project is identified within the existing Evaluation List, but does *not* form part of the current Urban Upgrade Priority Program.

Council will consider including projects outside of the adopted Urban Upgrade Priority Program only if an approved percentage of property owners included within that project area actively support the project. The percentage of community support required for the project to be included in the Program, currently 70 per cent or more, can be set and altered by Council resolution only. In this instance the project will be funded through 'user pays' principles in accordance with Council's Special Rates and Charges Policy.

In the case of a community-supported project being included in the adopted Urban Upgrade Priority Program, the project will become an addition to the adopted Priority Program through Council resolution only, and will not impact delivery of the current adopted Priority Program.

Additional supporting documents

The following documents accompany, and should be read in conjunction with, this Policy:

- Urban Upgrade Evaluation List
- Urban Upgrade Priority Program
- Urban Road and Drainage Improvement Framework including Project Plan Timelines

Reference to other documents

The following documents inform and support this Policy:

- *Road Management Act 2004*
- *Local Government Act 1989*
- Special Rates and Charges Ministerial Guidelines 2004
- Bass Coast Shire Council – Council Plan 2017-21
- Bass Coast Shire Council – Planning Scheme
- Bass Coast Shire Council – Asset Management Policy
- Bass Coast Shire Council – Road Asset Management Plan 2019
- Bass Coast Shire Council – Drainage Services Asset Management Plan 2015
- Bass Coast Shire Council – Community Engagement Policy
- Bass Coast Shire Council – Debt Management Policy
- Bass Coast Shire Council – Stormwater Management Plan 2003
- Infrastructure Design Manual

Review accountability and review

The Policy, and accompanying Urban Upgrade Evaluation List will be reviewed at no more than five year intervals.

Accountability for the effective administration and implementation of the Policy rests with the General Manager Infrastructure and Environment.

Approval

Approved by Council at its meeting held on 20 March 2019

Signed by the Mayor (Cr Brett Tessari)

