



MOUNT BARKER
DISTRICT COUNCIL

TITLE: SEALING UNSEALED ROADS POLICY

REFERENCE NUMBER:	DOC/19/58251
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER/ DEPARTMENT:	Manager Infrastructure Planning, Infrastructure
APPLICABLE LEGISLATION:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Local Government Act 1999
MOUNT BARKER 2035 – DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN:	The Urban Environment UE 2: Integrated Spaces and Movement UE 2.3 Improve the interface between urban and rural environments and between residential areas and transport corridors. UE 2.5 Apply a strategic, planned and consistent approach to the provision, development and maintenance of roads.
RELATED POLICIES:	Asset Management Policy
SUPPORTING PROCEDURES:	N/A
PREVIOUS REVIEW DATE:	Nil
ENDORSED BY COUNCIL:	3 August 2020
MINUTE RESOLUTION NUMBER:	OM20200803.18
NEXT REVIEW DATE:	1 AUGUST 2023

1. PURPOSE

To give guidance to the decision to upgrade an unsealed road asset by applying a seal.

2. SCOPE

This policy describes the criteria around which the Mount Barker District Council will consider requests for the sealing of unsealed roads.

Technical and financial criteria are considered important with regard to decision making around sealing unsealed roads in the Mt Barker District Council area.

The technical criteria reflect matters that directly contribute to road wear and tear (vehicle numbers, types of vehicles, terrain), the role of the road in the network (local access, tourist movements, freight) and influence that a unsealed road can have on quality of life (dust production, proximity of development).

Where an assessment of a request to seal a road has been carried out using this policy and merit has been established to progress the resultant upgrade, the assessment and scoring undertaken will be used to guide ranking and prioritisation of sealing projects subject to endorsement of a budget request to Council through the annual business planning and budget review process.

This policy is not intended to override other specific strategic objectives of Council. That is, this policy does not preclude Council from advancing a specific strategic project or road improvements to support and encourage an economic development and/or tourism outcome for example.

This policy is not intended to override other means or reasons to seal an unsealed road associated with a development application or assessment process. That is, separate to this policy approach will be conditions of approval on development that recognise that some developments can only proceed if a new road is built or upgraded as part of the conditions of approval. Council will continue to ensure that where deemed appropriate, road improvement and upgrade will be naturally facilitated through the development assessment process.

3. DEFINITIONS

Accident Rates refers to the number of accidents that have been recorded through police reports and collation of that data within the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure data base.

Benefit : Cost ratio (BCR) refers to a technique of assessing the economic efficiency of resource allocation when comparing alternative approaches to, in this case, providing and maintaining an all-weather road.

Commercial Vehicles (CV) refers to any vehicle of a length greater than 8.8m and/or is classified as a Class 3 vehicle or greater as defined by “Austroads 94 Vehicle Classification System”. The proportion of CV in a count is as calculated from formal traffic counter installation.

External Funding refers to financial contribution from a source other than funds raised in the normal course of Council business such as but not limited to a private person, a business operator, a State or Federal grant allocation or fund.

Grading refers to the process of trimming and shaping and unsealed road to correct defects on the road surface.

Patching refers to the process of filling or repairing defects in an unsealed road surface with small quantities of new or reworked road making material and may occur as part of the grading of the road.

Resheeting refers to the spreading, shaping and compaction of an unsealed road with new quarry material to a depth usually of at least 150mm compacted thickness.

Road Geometry refers to the shape of the road alignment through the terrain, the bends in the road and the sharpness of crests.

Road Network refers the network of made roads throughout the Mount Barker District Council area.

Sealed Road refers to a road that has been constructed of a quarried material and is provided with an impervious bituminous wearing surface formed of stone chip or asphaltic concrete.

Traffic Counter refers to device installed by Council or one of its contractors to count traffic volumes and classify the vehicles passing in accordance with a recognised traffic classification system. Traffic count data used in the context of this policy should be no older than 5 years.

Unsealed Road refers to a Local Road or Local Access Road (as defined by the Transport Asset Management Plan) that has been constructed with a quarried material to provide an all-weather trafficable surface.

Vehicles per day is defined as the average number of vehicles that use the road daily as measured through the placement of a traffic counter of not less than 10 days in duration.

Whole of Life Cost in this context refers to the life cycle costs of providing and maintaining an all-weather road.

4. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Council Members/Council:

- Adoption of this policy and any future amendments.
- Adoption of the annual business plan and budget which will have consideration of funding for sealing unsealed roads.

Chief Executive Officer:

- To ensure that sufficient council resource is available to assess requests under this policy.

General Manager, Infrastructure:

- To ensure qualified staff are tasked with the assessment of requests pursuant to this policy area.
- To ensure the policy is regularly reviewed and updated as required.

Employees:

- To ensure that relevant staff are consulted as part of assessing requests under this policy and that each assessment is completed objectively, transparently and in a timely manner.

5. POLICY STATEMENT

A combination of a number of different technical and financial criteria contribute to forming a decision making basis to consider sealing an unsealed road. The following criteria will be used to formulate a procedure to assess the merit for sealing unsealed roads:

5.1 Technical Assessment

Traffic volumes and types of vehicles regularly using the road

High numbers of vehicles and/or a large proportion of commercial vehicles will greatly influence the frequency of the maintenance and renewal cycle of an unsealed road. Larger volumes and types of vehicles will increase the frequency that an unsealed road requires grading, patching and resheeting in order to remain in a satisfactory condition.

Proximity and density of dwellings serviced by the road

A residence generates around 10 car movements per day. When there is a group of relatively closely spaced homes on a road this creates more intense traffic activity, turning movements and road wear and tear. Further, some consideration associated with the nuisance, perceived health and environmental issues that are related to silt washed to waterways and dust production from wind and passing vehicles.

Existing single or sporadically spaced dwellings over a length of road will carry a much lower importance weighting when assessing the merit of a requested seal.

Function of the road within the road network

There may be roads in the District that, through new business and tourism activity or simply incremental growth, play an increased role in the convenient movement of the community through the District. Therefore, as part of the assessment consideration is to be given to the extent of positive impact to the overall road network if the road being considered were sealed. This does not mean encouragement of inappropriate short cuts on very low volume unsealed roads or fire tracks that often may have poor road geometry.

Local terrain considerations and maintenance demand

Steep terrain where all weather traction for normal cars is difficult can be a reason to improve the road surfacing. Similarly, steep roads may also have a greater propensity for loose surface material and as such can be high in maintenance requirement to achieve a safe level of service and all-weather access.

Risk and safety considerations

Poor road geometry, high accident rates and driver unfamiliarity with the road can be reasons to consider upgrading a road surface. A high proportion of tourists/visitors using a road may be a contributing reason to look at a road surface upgrade in conjunction with an assessment of accident records and/or road safety assessment.

5.2 Financial Assessment

Proportion of external funding contribution

An external contribution towards the capital cost of sealing a road will have a positive influence on the financial merit assessment of a request. A higher proportion of contribution will naturally score higher.

Estimated Whole of Life benefit : cost ratio

As part of an assessment, estimate is to be made of the overall whole of life benefit that may be received by sealing the road being assessed. This criteria provides opportunity to estimate the whole of life savings that may be achievable through upgrading to a sealed road.

5.3 Scoring Process

Based on technical and financial assessments of a request, a scoring system will be used to inform annual business plan preparation. The scoring system will adopt weightings that are applied to defined criteria which will be as measurable as possible and hence less prone to subjective interpretation.

The procedure around scoring will be prepared having regard to the policy principles with clear descriptive content that aims to limit subjectivity of factors that are less measurable.

The scoring system is not intended to be definitive but rather to be guiding of the decision making process that informs annual business plan preparation. Weightings and scoring scheme will be reviewed by the Infrastructure Department annually prior to the development of capital programs.

6. GENERAL POLICY PRINCIPLES WITH REGARD UNSEALED ROADS

This policy acknowledges the following fundamental principles related to the status of unsealed roads.

- Unsealed roads are an appropriate means of providing all weather access to occupied properties on low volume roads.
- Road widths and other design considerations will be fit for purpose based on the classification of the road and the nature of the terrain through which the road traverses.
- Adverse terrain, vegetation and geometric conditions of an existing unsealed road may preclude sealing the road to an affordable and satisfactory standard.
- Unsealed road construction materials will be selected that provide a durable, safe driving surface that minimises dust and corrugations.
- Unsealed roads will be patrol inspected and maintained at regular intervals, in accordance with its classification within the Councils Transport Asset Management Plan.

- Unsealed roads treated purely for the purpose of dust suppression will only be applied where the applicant meets the full capital cost of construction, the subject segment of road adjoins an existing sealed road section and/or is at least 150m long.
- Best practice dust suppression on an unsealed road is delivered ideally through the use of either a bitumen or bitumen/emulsion product. Polymer or silica based products are considered best value.
- Council has no obligation to renew a dust suppression treatment at the end of its useful life and adjacent properties will be notified before this treatment is removed.
- Unsealed roads will be assessed for their condition and suitability at an interval of no less than every five years.
- Unmade roads, including fire tracks, will be upgraded when development occurs at the developers cost to a standard that meets Council's requirement.
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7. TRAINING / EDUCATION

An informal procedure will be developed to aid the assessment of a request against the relevant criteria. Council staff will be educated in its application to ensure consistency. The public will be kept informed of any changes to this policy.

8. REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed:

- every three years; or
 - the frequency dictated in legislation, or
 - earlier in the event of changes to legislation or related Policies and Procedures;
- or

if deemed necessary by the Manager Infrastructure Planning.

9. ACCESS TO THE CORPORATE POLICY

This Policy is available for public inspection at the Customer Service Centre, at the Local Government Centre, 6 Dutton Road, Mount Barker South Australia and on the to via Council's website www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au

10. FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information on this Policy please contact:

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