

Attachments

Council Meeting

Monday 22 May 2023

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10.2 Overview of CROWAG Tree Forum

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10.2 – ATTACHMENT 1. CROWAG Forum Officer Presentation



Urban Forest Strategy

*Whitehorse Urban Forest Strategy and
managing vegetation impacts through the
planning system*

CROWAG – ‘Save our Tree Canopy’ Forum

1 April 2023



Acknowledgement of Country



“Whitehorse City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the traditional owners of the land we are meeting on and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders from communities who may be present today.”



Introduction

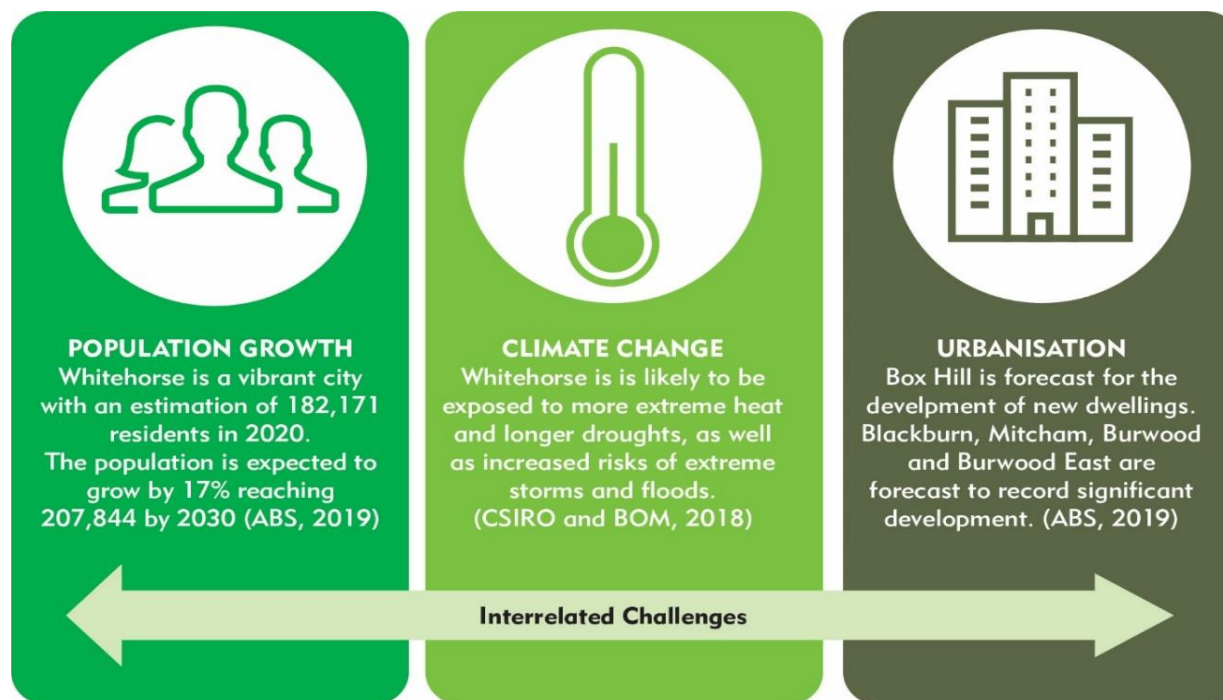
Parks & Natural Environment Department

- Open Space and Park Assets
- Horticultural and Landscape Services
- Sportsfields
- Arbor
- Environment & Bushland
- Natural Environment & Strategy
- Customer Service Requests





Why develop an Urban Forest Strategy?



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What does the Urban Forest Strategy provide?

Vision

A diverse, healthy and resilient urban forest.

Objectives

| | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Protect the urban forest across private and public land. Maximise the health, vigour and condition of Council managed vegetation, while managing risks. Strengthen the legislative framework to protect and renew canopy cover on private property. |
| 2 | Expand the urban forest and adapt to climate change Grow more trees and vegetation across both the public and private realm to build climate resilience. |
| 3 | Enhance Biodiversity Protect native bushland, extend and connect habitat and improve connectivity. |
| 4 | Build community capacity to learn from each other, protect and enhance the urban forest. Provide opportunities and support people to connect with and care for nature. |
| 5 | Build Council's knowledge base Capture information to strengthen our understanding of the urban forest |

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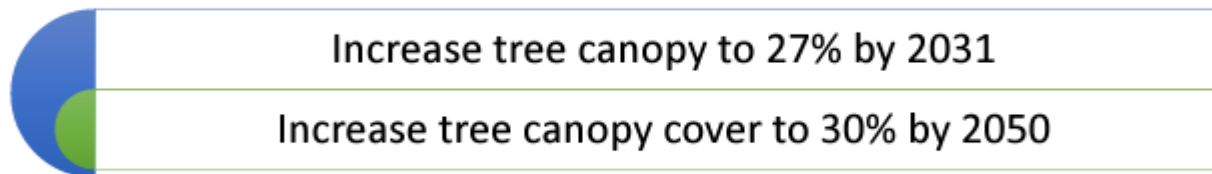


What does the Urban Forest Strategy provide?



Targets

The objectives will be measured by targets to:



*By 2031 this represents an overall increase of 9% total tree canopy cover (for trees taller than 3 metres)



What is our current situation?

75,000
street trees

150,000
public trees

Plant
2,500 street
trees p.a

450 public
open space
sites

Nursery
40,000
plants p.a



Overview of UFS current actions



Tree & Urban Forest
Asset Management
Program

Whitehorse Integrated
Water Management
Strategy

Powerline clearance
requirements

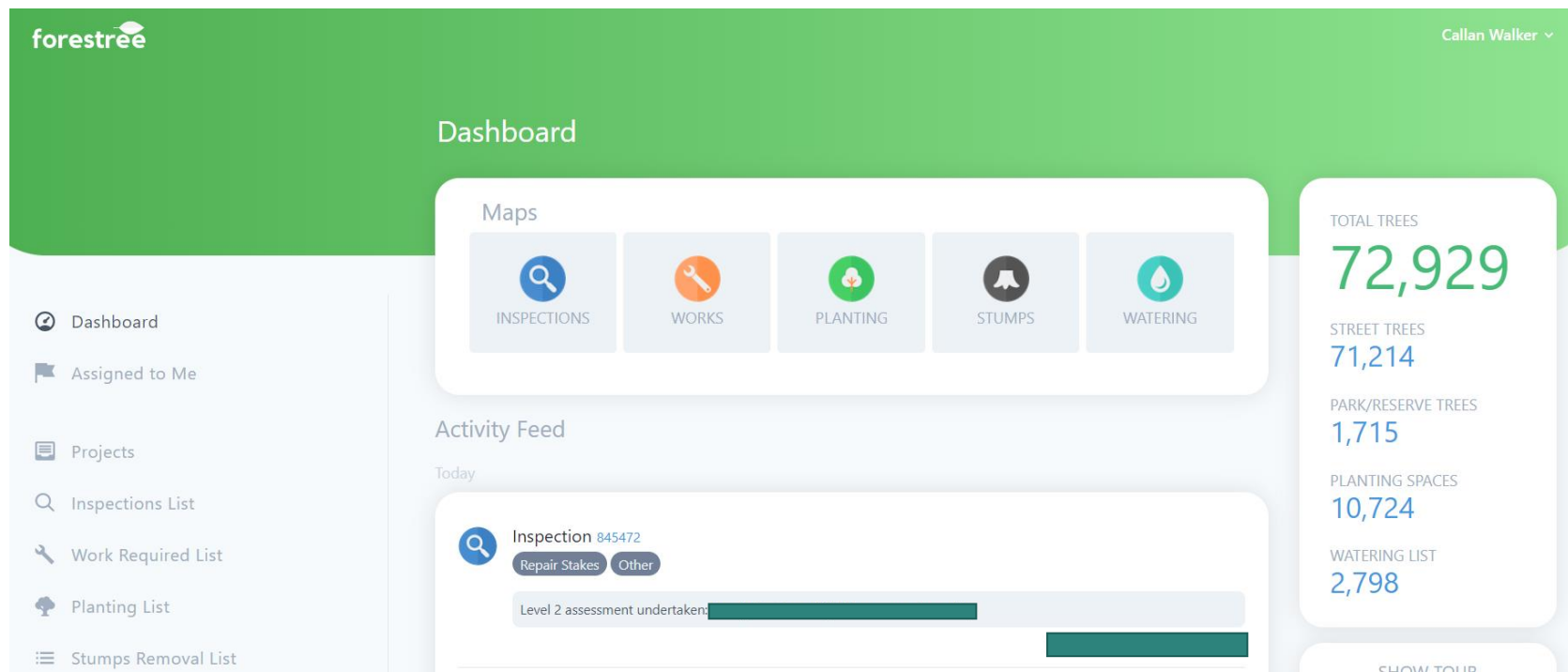
Green corridors
enhancement program

Build capacity to learn
from each other

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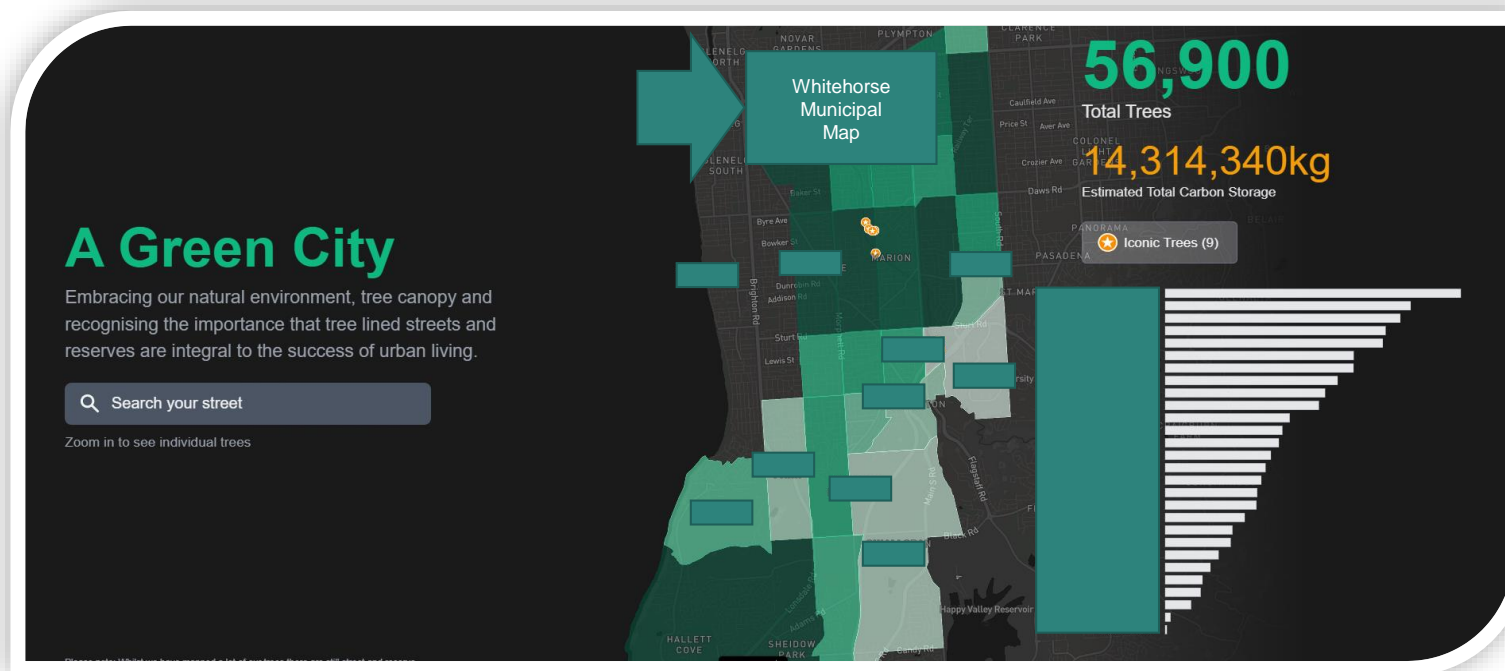


Tree & Urban Forest Asset Management Program





Tree & Urban Forest Asset Management Program



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Whitehorse Integrated Water Management Strategy



Utilise alternative water sources for irrigation



Capture and retain rainwater through the use rain gardens and wetlands



Divert storm water to parks and reserves



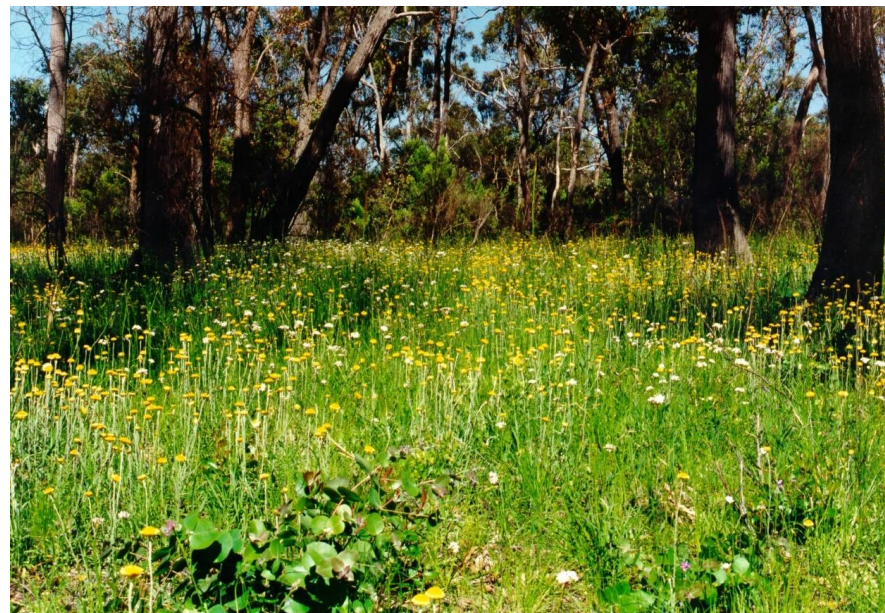
Increase awareness on the impact of pollution and surrounding litter on waterways



Green Corridors Enhancement Program



- Identify suitable locations to increase habitat and canopy
- Prioritises areas for new vegetation to improve connectivity
- Biodiversity also supports stormwater filtration, pollination, nutrient cycling, pest regulation, soil health, seed dispersal and carbon sequestration





Powerline Clearance Requirements

- Power Line Clearances (ESV Electrical Services Victoria) - affects canopy growth
- Preference asymmetrical planting street design
- Investigate opportunities for cable bundling of powerlines





Build capacity to learn from each other



- Council to play a greater role in education
- Proactive engagement - incursions and excursions to pre-schools, schools, tertiary groups and other community groups
- Ongoing support to volunteers and 'Friends of' groups



Advocate for stronger tree protection



Policy Mechanisms protecting our urban forest – Is it enough?

- Whitehorse Planning Scheme
- Significant Landscape Overlay (09)
- Vegetation Protection Overlay
- Interim Urban Forest and Tree management plan
- C219 additional tree protection



Role of Whitehorse Planning Scheme



What role does the Planning Scheme play in protection and enhancement of tree canopy?

- Planning covers a very broad range of issues, but is essentially about the decisions that influence the environmental, economic and social aspects of everyday life.
- Planning Schemes are given their power through the Planning and Environment Act 1987.
- Planning schemes are developed to ensure the protection and conservation of land in Victoria in the present and long-term interests of all Victorians.
- Planning schemes contain planning policies, zones, overlays and other provisions that affect how land can be used and developed.



What does the planning scheme contain

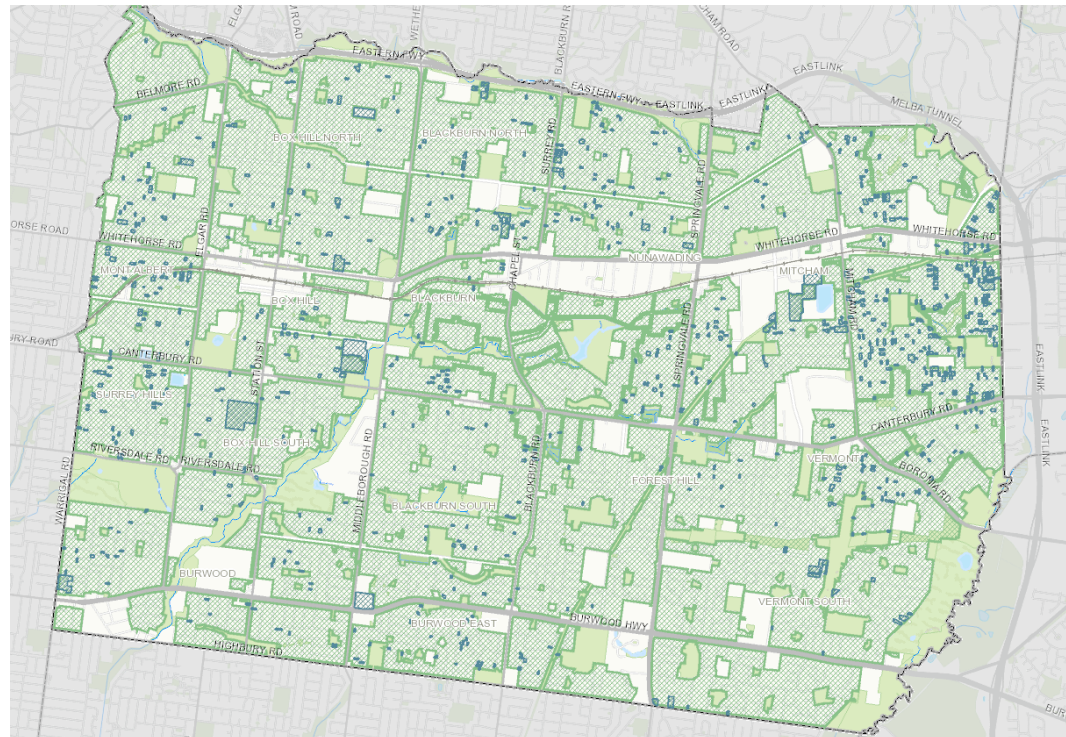


- Tree Conservation Policy – Clause 22.04
- Significant Landscape Overlays
- Vegetation Protection Overlays
- State Planning Provisions - *Environmental And Landscape Values (Cl 12)*
 - “Planning should protect, restore and enhance sites and features of nature conservation, biodiversity, geological or landscape value.”*

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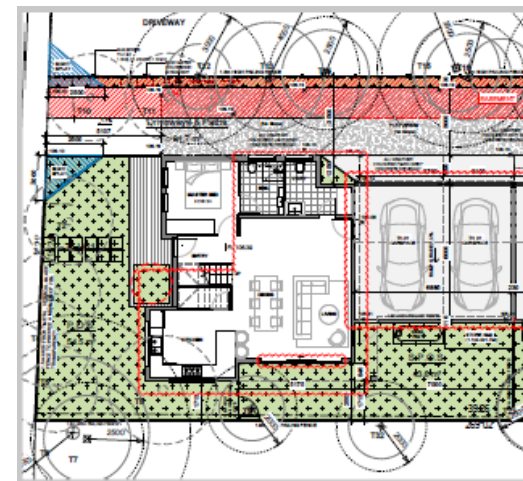
Extent of SLO and VPO





What are the challenges?

- How community and land owners view trees
- Increased land costs
- Growing expectations of how people can use their land
- Changing community need
 - house size, block size, build costs, volume builds
- Whitehorse planning decisions versus VCAT decisions
- Role of statutory planning enforcement

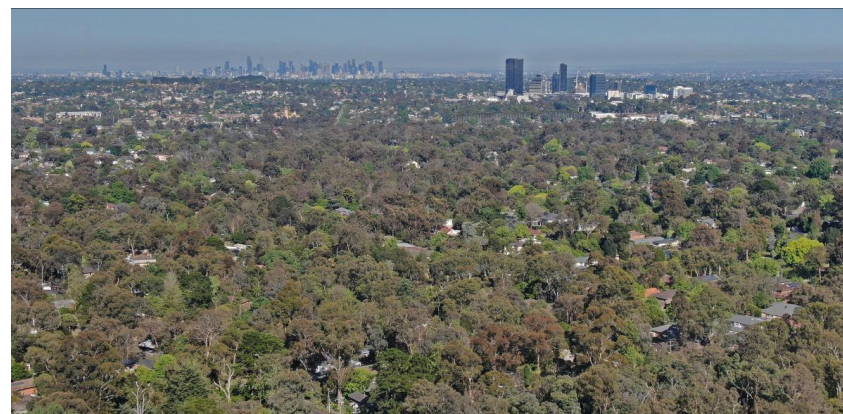




What are we doing to contribute to tree protection?



- Introduction of SLO9
- Advocacy to State Government
- Tree Education Officer role
 - unique to Whitehorse
- Role of arboricultural/horticultural expertise in proactive enforcement



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The Good News.....

Examples Open Space Development



27/09/22

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21 Wattle Valley Road - Mitcham



01/04/23

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Chaucer Street – Box Hill South



01/04/23

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Rowland Street – Mont Albert



01/04/23

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Challenges & Opportunities



Challenges

- Climate and severe weather events
- Community expectations
- Regulatory compliance
- Compliance maintenance
- External collaboration

Opportunities

- Community engagement and consultation
- Planning and design – space for trees
- Species selection
- IWM – improve growing conditions
- Contractor engagement



Community Engagement Opportunities



- <https://yoursay.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/>
- Interim Urban Forest Policy - Tree Management Plan – 2023
- Planning Application Register



10.4 Whitehorse Asset Management Policy (2023)

Attachment 1 Whitehorse Asset Management Policy
(2023)

10.4 – ATTACHMENT 1. Whitehorse Asset Management Policy (2023)



WHITEHORSE ASSET MANAGEMENT POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure comprehensive and effective asset management practices are developed and utilised across all asset classes. This policy is linked with the Asset Plan 2022-2032 and the Asset Management Improvement Plan.

BACKGROUND AND ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

Council's asset network represents a significant investment, made over many generations and provides the foundation for the social, environmental and economic values of the community. Management of these assets is a core Council function. Millions of dollars are spent annually managing and maintaining infrastructure and it is important that Council ensures that infrastructure and services are delivered economically and sustainably.

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires Councils to produce and maintain a 10-year Asset Plan within an integrated planning framework. This Policy provides guidance in infrastructure and asset decision-making, incorporating service planning, to determine the physical asset needs to support delivery of services at defined levels, within a sustainable level of expenditure.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to:

- All assets owned, controlled, managed and/or maintained by Council.
- All staff, Councillors, contractors and other persons involved in the planning, acquisition, operation and maintenance, renewal and disposal of Council assets and to the extent possible, all contracts applicable in these areas.

POLICY

Vision

As custodians of community assets, Council will provide assets to enable a healthy, resilient, prosperous and sustainable community.

Council's assets play an integral part in delivering services to the community and achieving the Whitehorse 2040 Community Vision, especially relating to:

- *Whitehorse is a resilient community where everyone belongs.*
- *We are active citizens who value our natural environment, history and diversity.*
- *We embrace sustainability and innovation.*

A key theme of the Whitehorse 2040 Community Vision is to enrich 'movement and public spaces.'

The Council Plan also identifies the following strategies which relate to this Policy:

- 3.1.9: Support gender equality at Council and in the community.
- 4.1.1: Plan, build, renew and maintain community assets and facilities to meet current and future service needs in an environmentally, financially and socially sustainable way.
- 4.2.1: Review the provision and use of open spaces considering current and future needs for active and passive recreation, safe meeting spaces and wellbeing programs in accessible green open spaces.
- 4.2.3: Maximise the usage of Council and Community facilities to improve community access opportunities.

10.4 – ATTACHMENT 1. Whitehorse Asset Management Policy (2023)

- 4.5.1: Maintain, enhance and advocate for transport accessibility and improved transport routes and modes.
- 5.1.1: We will adapt to climate change and build the resilience of our community, infrastructure and the built environment through relevant Council plans and policies.
- 8.2.2: Ensure responsible financial and resource management to maintain Council's long term financial sustainability within a rate capping environment.

Objectives

- To ensure sustainable management of assets by applying Best Appropriate Practice in Asset Management and adhering to all legislative and statutory requirements applicable to the management and financial reporting of all asset classes.
- To have an Asset Plan and associated Asset Management Plans informed by community engagement and aligned with Whitehorse 2040 Community Vision, Council Plan and other long term plans.
- To ensure plans and decisions that guide the management of Council's assets consider and acknowledge the needs and impacts on Council's diverse communities.
- To give funding priority to asset maintenance and renewal to sustain existing assets.
- To consider upgrades, demand management, innovative and better use solutions when making capital investment decisions, to ensure assets provided by Council provide acceptable levels of service in a financially sustainable manner.
- To use a life-cycle asset management approach and ensure a cost-effective asset base.
- To use effective and affordable maintenance programs aimed at minimising life cycle costs and maximising the service potential of assets.
- To use a risk-based approach to asset management that considers the impacts of climate change, to achieve a desired balance of cost, risk and performance.
- To use an integrated Asset Management System to ensure a common asset data set is available for strategic, operational and financial reporting purposes.
- To lead a culture of cross collaboration, information sharing and accountability for asset management to meet service needs across all Directorates of Council.
- To report to the executive and the community on asset performance outcomes and levels of service delivered.
- To align Council's Asset Management Practices with the International Asset Management Standards; ISO55000, ISO55001, ISO55002, and the National Asset Management Assessment Framework.

Organisational Commitment

This policy is set within the context provided by the Whitehorse 2040 Community Vision, the Council Plan, Financial Plan and other Plans, Policies and Strategies. Council has made a commitment to support and achieve sustainable asset management practices in its Council Plan. This Policy supports Council's commitment towards sustainability and innovation.

DEFINITIONS

ASSET – A physical asset, with a lifespan of 12 months or more, that is owned or managed by Council, enables services to be provided, and/or enables Council to meet its corporate objectives.

ASSET MANAGEMENT – Asset management at Whitehorse City Council is the combination of management, financial, economic and technical practices applied to physical assets. The goal of asset management is to continually meet the prescribed levels of service in the most cost effective and sustainable manner through the management of assets for the benefit of current and future generations.

10.4 – ATTACHMENT 1. Whitehorse Asset Management Policy (2023)

LEVEL OF SERVICE – The defined service quality for a particular activity or service area against which service performance may be measured. Community and technical service levels can relate to quality, quantity, reliability, responsiveness, environmental acceptability and costs of providing the service.

ASSET MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK – The overarching asset management framework which comprises the Asset Plan, Asset Management Policy, Asset Management Improvement Plan, Asset Management Plans and Asset Management Information System.

ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN – An Asset Management Improvement Plan is a short to medium term strategy for the implementation and documentation of improved asset management practices, plans, processes and procedures within the organisation.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Council's vision and goals for Asset Management are to be achieved through the continued implementation of Council's Asset Management Framework as shown in Fig 1 below. The Strategic Asset Steering Committee is responsible for the implementation, monitoring and review of this Asset Management Framework.

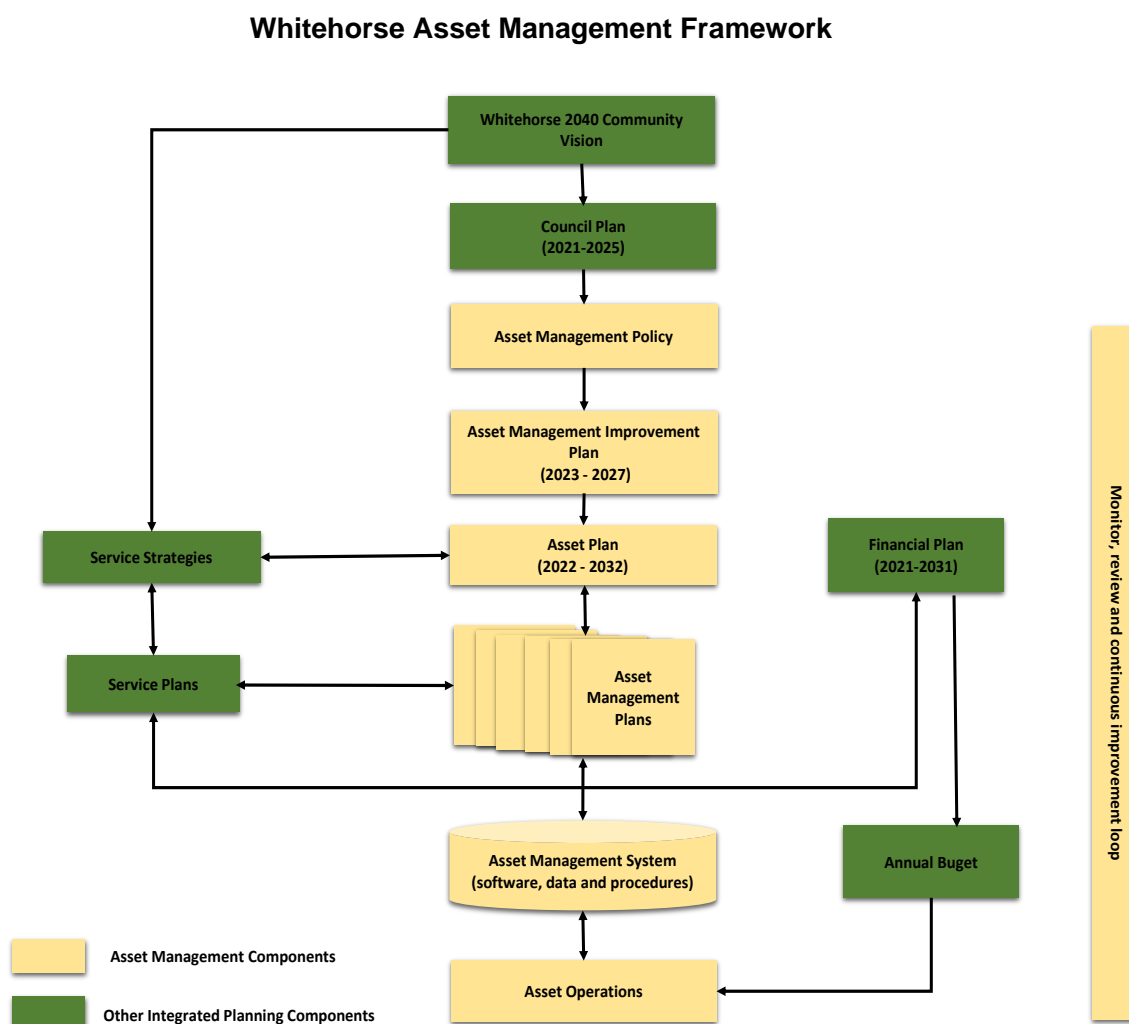


Figure 1. Whitehorse City Council's Asset Management Framework

10.4 – ATTACHMENT 1. Whitehorse Asset Management Policy (2023)

RESPONSIBILITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS

Council's commitment to asset management will be demonstrated by the provision of appropriate training and awareness programs, as included in the development program of each staff member and executive training initiatives. A session on Asset Management will also be held for Councillors following the start of every Council election cycle.

Employee position descriptions will incorporate asset management responsibilities as required. Asset management responsibilities for key stakeholders are summarised below:

Council

- To set the vision and adopt the Asset Management Policy.
- To act as custodians for community assets.
- To provide sufficient resources to maintain community assets for delivering on agreed levels of service as outlined in this Policy.

Executive Leadership Team

- To lead responsible asset management practices.
- To foster and support a multi-disciplinary Strategic Asset Steering Committee.
- To enable appropriate management arrangements, ownership, control, accountability and reporting requirements for all asset classes under Council's management.
- To review regular reports on asset performance, asset condition and service needs and asset management improvement actions.

Strategic Asset Steering Committee

- To provide a co-ordinated and collaborative approach to asset management and improvements consistent with this policy.
- To provide advice to the executive on strategic decisions related to the major asset classes.
- To promote good asset management practices throughout the organisation and develop corporate guidance with respect to best appropriate asset management practice.
- To review and monitor the development and implementation of the Asset Management Policy, Asset Management Improvement Plan, Asset Plan and individual Asset Management Plans for the major asset classes.
- To oversee periodic review of asset management plans and long-term renewal forecasts for updating the Financial Plan, ensuring that community needs are appropriately reflected in the service levels set for asset performance.
- To monitor and evaluate asset and data management practices and the utilisation of Council's asset management system.
- To provide guidance on the development and implementation of Service Planning throughout the organisation.
- To establish an asset management and performance reporting process for the executive and the community and regularly report on asset management performance and state of the assets.

Project Delivery and Assets Department

- To provide direction and leadership support for the development and implementation of asset management policies, systems and processes across the organisation.
- To integrate the Asset Management Framework within the overarching integrated planning and governance frameworks. To develop sustainable long-term infrastructure plans that reflect agreed levels of service.

10.4 – ATTACHMENT 1. Whitehorse Asset Management Policy (2023)

- To liaise with relevant managers to ensure employees are appropriately trained and skilled to perform the required asset management functions.
- To ensure that accurate and reliable information is presented to Council for decision-making purposes.

Departmental Asset Management Roles and Responsibilities

Every asset type must have the necessary asset accountability roles associated with its management. Council's Asset Management Roles and Responsibilities Matrix outlines the organisational roles and responsibilities across each asset class.

The following principles apply to the Asset Management Roles and Responsibilities Matrix:

1. Every asset is to be actively managed.
2. Roles and responsibilities will be clearly defined with no duplication or ambiguity.
3. Once built or acquired, a consistent approach will be used for the management of like assets, irrespective of location.
4. Asset renewal/disposal decisions will involve those who manage, use and maintain the asset.
5. Ongoing maintenance responsibility will be clearly identified at asset handover on completion of construction or purchase.

The Asset Management Roles and Responsibilities Matrix is to be reviewed as part of the development of each new Asset Management Improvement Plan, typically every four years.

RELATED LEGISLATION, POLICY AND PLANS

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014*
- *Road Management Act 2004*
- *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- Whitehorse 2040 Community Vision
- Council Plan 2021-2025
- Financial Plan 2021-2031
- Asset Plan 2022-2032
- Whitehorse Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2025
- Asset Management Improvement Plan
- Risk Management Policy
- Accounting for Property, Infrastructure, Plant and Equipment Policy
- Major Community Infrastructure Projects Policy
- Community Engagement Policy
- Asset Management Roles and Responsibilities Matrix.

MONITORING AND REVIEW PROCEDURES

The Strategic Asset Steering Committee will monitor this Policy in terms of operational and service needs, along with expectations, corporate goals and targets. Compliance with this Policy will also be reviewed on an ongoing basis and the Policy shall be amended, through Council resolution. The Policy formalises the framework of asset management practices which have been implemented over the past decade and clarifies the roles and responsibilities.

The Asset Management Policy is to be reviewed by June 2026.