

NILLUMBIK FOOTPATH STRATEGY

Aim of the strategy

1. To promote walking as a healthy and safe way of exercising and accessing community services and facilities.
2. To prioritise works to effectively and equitably address 1 above.

Scope

This strategy is concerned with the provision of new footpath on roads that do not currently have a footpath.

The renewal of sections of existing constructed footpath that are at the end of their useful life, in poor condition and need replacing will be considered and prioritised for funding separately. The levels of service that have been set for footpaths are documented in Council's Road Management Plan which sets out conditions such as the acceptable limits for trip hazards and would, therefore, be used to identify where renewal is required.

Footpath hierarchy

Under Council's *Road Management Plan (RMP)*, which was developed in line with the *Road Management Act 2004*, a hierarchy of existing roads and footpaths has been established. Roads are classified as main, link, collector and access, with main roads funded by the State Government. However, any footpaths adjacent to these roads are the responsibility of Council.

The footpath hierarchy is separate, but not excluded, from the hierarchy of roads, with footpaths classified as high, medium or low use, as follows:

Footpath category	Function	Road category
High - all roads	Defined as areas of high use by all pedestrians e.g. shopping precincts, sporting facilities, schools, public transport facilities and public health services.	High – all
Medium – link, collector access	Defined as areas of moderate pedestrian usage e.g. streets that form part of a pedestrian route that provides access to areas of high pedestrian activity.	Medium – main, link, collector, access
Low – link, collector, access	Defined as areas used by pedestrians e.g. streets, courts, isolated areas etc, where the majority of pedestrians are expected to be residents of the immediate area.	Low - main, link, collector, access

Therefore, the RMP recognises that the footpath hierarchy is not necessarily related to the road hierarchy. For example, a footpath that is part of an important route for pedestrians may be located on an access street, which is the lowest category of road in the road hierarchy. Similarly, a footpath of low importance to the wider community and, therefore, classified as a low use footpath, may be located on a major road.

Identification of potential footpaths

A list of potential sections of footpath construction has been developed, which takes the hierarchy of existing footpaths under the RMP as a starting point. Gaps in the network have been identified, in order to develop a 'desired' footpath network. The hierarchy of potential sections of footpath has been assigned on the basis of the links that they will provide between sections of existing footpath, as well as their anticipated strategic importance in the footpath network. For example, a section of proposed path that links existing paths that are classified as high and medium, would also be classified as either high or medium, taking into account the factors identified in the hierarchy table. A section of path that provides an important link for pedestrians, where there are no immediate alternatives, would also be considered as strategically important in the network and, therefore, classified as high or medium.

The list of potential footpaths that has been developed at this stage has focussed on providing links between high and medium use paths, as these are the paths that will provide the greatest benefit to the wider community. Any sections of path requested by Councillors or residents will be included on the priority list, however, such requests may not affect the priority of that request. This is determined on the basis of the footpath and road hierarchies, as explained in the following section.

Funding of footpath construction

Under the previous strategy, Council funded the full cost of footpaths only when they were on main or collector roads that had minimal property access. This did not take into account that there were paths on lower classes of roads that formed important pedestrian links and, therefore, warranted Council funding.

It is now recommended that Council fund 100 per cent of the construction costs of all footpaths and should take into account both the footpath hierarchy as well as the road hierarchy to develop the construction priority list.

The most significant change from the previous strategy is that Council will fund the construction of all footpaths, regardless of which class of footpath they are located on or the road hierarchy allocated. This is in recognition of the purpose that all paths serve for the wider community.

Prioritising footpath construction needs

Once sections of potential footpath construction have been identified, as outlined previously, they need to be prioritised.

This can be done through a combination of the footpath hierarchy and road hierarchy. As well as the position of the identified footpath in the footpath hierarchy, that is, whether it is a high, medium or low use path, it may also be relevant to consider the hierarchy of the road that the path is on. Other factors such as whether the footpath is a part of the Walking School Bus program, connectivity between new developments and existing infrastructure or any proposed project deemed to be of assistance and/or beneficial to public safety.

Footpath design and construction standards

As a guiding principle, roadside footpaths should be provided to a standard that enables them to be used by all potential users. Therefore, a sealed surface is required, such as concrete or asphalt. Other suitable surface treatments are typically more expensive and would only be considered in high profile town centre areas.

For areas of lower priority, crushed rock or granite sand surface may be appropriate in certain locations. These would be assessed under the criteria above and typically be to rectify an immediate safety risk to users.

The minimum width of paths is 1.5 metres. In cases where a path may form part of a shared user pathway that can also be used by cyclists, a minimum width of 2.5 metres shall apply.

Informal paths

There are a number of informal tracks within Road Reserves which have been formed through local use over time. Council does not maintain these and full construction would be assessed on the basis of the criteria outlined in the strategy.

Priority list

An ongoing review process of priorities will be undertaken, based on amended pedestrian counts, as part of the preparation of the annual budget and works program.