Have your say

Better Neighbourhoods, Better Homes

Fact sheet for residents

We've listened to what the community would like to see within our suburbs, including more trees, well-designed homes, and new development that fits in with existing neighbourhoods.

The City wants infill development and grouped dwellings (ie, units) to have a positive impact on neighbourhoods, and to result in quality, well-designed homes that people want to live in. To achieve this, the City is proposing a new approach through changes to Local Planning Policy 1.2 Residential Design Guidelines, and Scheme Amendment No. 149.

Go to comment.cockburn.wa.gov.au to take a short survey to tell us what you love about your neighbourhood, and to find out more information about 'Better Neighbourhoods, Better Homes'.

What are the proposed changes?

Scheme Amendment No. 149 proposes to introduce the requirement for grouped dwellings to provide a $9m^2$ garden area (minimum dimension of 3m) to fit a small-medium tree. This requirement would be in addition to other open space and outdoor living area requirements. The purpose of this is to protect the green leafy character of neighbourhoods; provide shade and create a pleasant street environment; and to replace loss of trees and landscaping from development and reduce the heat island effect.

Modified Local Planning Policy 1.2 Residential Design Guidelines **-** Proposed changes include design guidance requiring new grouped dwellings to:

- Include features of interest, so regardless of their style they are a compatible addition to the streetscape
- Ensure driveways, access and parking do not dominate
- Are well designed, comfortable homes, including meeting key internal layout standards now required for apartments (eg. minimum sizes for bedrooms so they are functional).
- Are sustainable, considering solar orientation; daylight; shading and glare control; natural ventilation.

What is the current issue with the planning framework for grouped dwellings (ie. unit/villa developments)?

Currently in Western Australia grouped dwellings are controlled by the State Planning Policy 7.3 'Residential Design Codes – Volume 1' (R-Codes). The R-Codes sets out key requirements for grouped dwellings, and one of the key issues is that the 'open space' requirement includes driveways and parking areas which has often resulted in extensive hardscaping/paving and limited areas for gardens or trees.

What is the City doing to improve infill development and get better grouped dwelling outcomes?

The City has firstly identified the current valued neighbourhood character, taking into consideration ongoing community feedback, and feedback received through the revitalisation strategies and other planning projects.

The community have told us they highly value the greenery in their suburb, and the leafy streetscapes. The proposed changes seek to ensure this character is protected by infill development.

This initiative will also complement the City's Urban Forest Plan aims to increase its street tree tally by 15,000 over the next decade, taking it to more than 53,000.

Why has a garden area of $9m^2$ (3m x 3m) been chosen?

Based on arborist advice, an area of $9m^2$ will allow for the viable planting of a small-medium tree if sited appropriately. Draft LPP 1.2 sets out guidance for the siting of this area. In proposing this size the City has been mindful of the following:

- Ensuring the garden area is large enough to accommodate a tree of a size appropriate to be sited within close proximity to grouped dwellings, recognising that large trees often on larger properties are not necessarily suitable on smaller strata lots.
- Not impacting on the potential lot yield – ie. if a lot has the potential for three grouped dwellings currently then the proposed requirement of dedicating a $9m^2$ to a garden area for each dwelling will not reduce that potential, and it will still allow single storey development if that is the preference.

Why is the City not requiring retention of mature trees on development sites; or offering an incentive for them to be retained?

This matter has been given careful consideration, and realistically the likelihood that a mature tree is an appropriate species and located in an appropriate location to be retained on an infill grouped dwelling is very low. Such a requirement may also result in early clearing of site upfront to avoid the requirement.

In terms of providing an incentive for retaining mature trees, trees have a limited lifespan therefore using retention as an incentive is difficult as it is impossible to guarantee their ongoing survival. This is why the City is proposing an approach that instead ensures provision of garden areas large enough to accommodate the right type of tree in the right location for each dwelling. Trees with heritage significance can be protected on the 'Significant Tree' list.

Will the requirements apply to apartments/multiple dwellings?

The requirements will apply to any multiple dwellings in areas coded R30 or lower, however in areas coded over R30 the new SPP 7.3 (Vol 2 Apartments) will apply. This includes requirements for 'deep soil zones' for trees.

Why aren't the requirements proposed to also apply to single houses?

In the majority of circumstances single houses do not require planning approval therefore there would be no opportunity to impose the new requirements. While it is noted that new single houses (particularly on smaller lots) can also result in loss of trees and landscaping, and reduced open space, the impact is typically much less due to the site coverage.

How can you provide feedback?

Further information can be found at comment.cockburn.wa.gov.au or at the City's administration centre between 8.30 a.m. and 4.30 p.m. Should you wish to make a submission please do so online or in writing addressed to the Chief Executive Officer; or via Email stratplanning@cockburn.wa.gov.au on or before **9 April 2020.**

Please be aware that should you make a submission, Council requires a Schedule of Submissions to be prepared which includes a submitters name and address. This forms part of a Council Agenda report, which is available for public viewing (published in hard copy and on the City's website). Please clearly state in your submission if you want your details to be kept confidential in the Council Report.

What happens next?

Consultation ends 9 April 2020, and all submissions will be collated and presented to Council for consideration. Council will then make a decision regarding the proposed modifications to LPP 1.2 Residential Design Guidelines; and If adopted by Council Scheme Amendment will then be forwarded to the Minister for Planning for a final decision.