Practice note no. 02

Issued: March 2014

Footpath provision in residential subdivisions

Example of a great urban street, Hastings Street Noosa

Great streets

Trees and paths

Great streets have two common features: trees and paths; both of which are typically provided in the street verge. Footpaths are desirable in all streets; however their provision gains importance as net residential development densities increase above 30 dwellings per hectare (dw/ha).

Attractive, all-weather paths are required to support neighbourhood walkability and to ensure pedestrians and cyclists are not encouraged or forced to use traffic lanes or carriageways designed primarily for vehicular use.

Footpath provision

PDA Guideline No 6 Street and movement network states that footpaths should:

- be provided on at least one side of all but the lowest order streets and lanes, particularly any street that provides a through route for pedestrian and cyclists
- be provided on both sides of trunk connector streets, streets providing access to centres and other key destinations, and all streets where the adjoining residential density is 30 dwellings per hectare or greater
- generally be a minimum of 1.5 metres wide to allow pedestrians, including those with mobility difficulties or prams, to walk two abreast or comfortably pass each other (a reduced width of 1.2 metres may be acceptable where pedestrian volumes are low).

(See *PDA Guideline No 6 Street and Movement Network*)

Example of a great suburban street, Bulimba

Street character

Suburban and urban streets

The street character varies according to the residential/ development density; typically as follows

Suburban (15-30dw/ha)

- footpath on one side and sometimes both sides of the street
- some trees and turf

Urban (30-50dw/ha)

- footpath on both sides of the street
- more substantial trees and planted areas

Urban+ (50dw/ha+)

- footpath on both sides of the street
- great trees and no turf

Street verges

The landscape design and delivery of footpaths and street trees in the verge varies according to anticipated:

- Numbers of pedestrians and/or cyclists using the footpaths
- Adjoining buildings and timing of building construction
- Vehicular traffic volumes on the adjacent street carriageways
- Location and design of street furniture
- Size and species of trees and other planting
- Location and design of public transport waiting areas
- Adjacent land use, and gathering opportunities (e.g. home based business)
- Utility services.

Suburban street verges

The provision of services has a significant bearing on the location and design of footpaths and landscaping in suburban street (road) reservations. The typical industry response to service requirements in suburban streets has been to locate the footpath 900mm clear of the front property boundary.

To enable ease of maintenance access to services, this 900mm corridor is typically turfed. The pathway is typically located centrally in the verge, with street tree planting areas provided between the footpath and the kerb. A lay-back kerb is usually provided in a suburban street, to allow some informal and infrequent on-street car parking to straddle the kerb and take up some space in the street carriageway and the street verge.

Typical street cross-section to illustrate verge treatment in a typical suburban street.

Urban street verges

To achieve development densities of 50dw/ha and above, means that the majority of lots are serviced from a rear lane, thus opening up the street for increased numbers of trees.

An urban street verge will be dominated by ìhardscapeî, low maintenance planting, and a greater number of significant street trees.

Typical street cross-section to illustrate service and footpath provision in a typical urban street.

Verges in rear lanes

Footpaths are generally not required or needed in rear lanes, as lanes are primarily intended for vehicular access to on-site car parking spaces. Pedestrians and cyclists use the road pavement in rear lanes. The verge in a rear lane will typically be 500mm wide on both sides of a 5.5 metres vehicle carriageway, and services such as street lights will be delivered in the verge.

(See *practice note 12 Rear lane: design and development*)

Footpath construction and street tree planting

The timing of construction of footpaths and planting of street trees are important considerations in developments requiring an integrated and continuous construction process. In newly developing areas early planting of street trees and provision of footpaths provide an immediate established character. However street trees and footpaths are often damaged as a result of building construction activities even at suburban densities.

As a general rule, construction of higher density and integrated developments (which may include short runs of row or terrace houses) should not commence until street and lane carriageways are constructed. It follows that, ideally, the verge should not be finished until after building construction has been completed.

At lower densities where driveways servicing individual lots are also required, a continuous footpath with consistent treatment and grades should take precedence. Driveways should integrate with and match the level of the footpath and should not be cut through the footpath.