

Policy Number:	86 (C)
Name of Policy:	<b>Road Upgrade Policy</b>
Date of Next Review:	April 2026
Date of Approval:	20 April 2021
Responsible Officer:	Asset Management Specialist
Reviewed by:	Coordinator Engineering
Approved by:	Council
Related Documents:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hepburn Shire Council Plan</li> <li>• Asset Management Policy</li> <li>• Road Management Plan</li> <li>• Road Asset Management Plans</li> <li>• Long Term Financial Plan</li> <li>• Risk Management Policy</li> </ul>

### Best Value Principles

Hepburn Shire Council has the responsibility to provide its ratepayers with the best value, with all services provided by Council meeting the expectations in terms of quality and cost. In providing this, all services need to be accessible, responsive to the needs of the community, considerate of the natural environment, and subject to continuous improvement.

To achieve the best over life outcome for Council’s expenditures, which meets quality and service expectations, there will be a periodic review of services against best on offer in both the public and private sectors.

All Council staff members are responsible for supporting the best value principles in their normal day to day actions to ensure services are recognized by the community as delivering the best value.

## 1. Introduction

Hepburn Shire Council maintains a significant road network including approximately 612 km Sealed Road, 844 km Unsealed Road and 82 km Kerb & Channel as on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020. Council acknowledges that it does not necessarily have enough financial resources or receive enough external grants to meet the community expectations in upgrading roads asset. Sealing of unsealed road is one of the most common capital works requests received from the community. This Road Upgrade Policy provides a means of prioritising road upgrade projects across the road network for inclusion in the Council's Capital Works Program (CWP) to address strategic transport needs.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set guidelines for a transparent approach to road assets upgrades which are owned, controlled, and/or managed by the Council to deliver the necessary service to the community by: -

- detailing various evaluation criteria to assess the viability of road upgrades request & providing clear and consistent advice to the community.
- providing a robust and impartial appraisal and priority-based system for capital investment in road upgrade projects.
- ensuring Council Officers have sufficient resources and information available to progress proposals and subsequently implement works.
- Allocating capital in a sustainable manner.

It should be noted that sometimes roads are upgraded and/or sealed as a consequence of other works, such as drainage changes or road safety projects. These works are excluded from this policy as the evaluation is based on separate criteria and considerations.

## 3. Scope

This Policy will apply to future upgrade of a road listed on Council's Public Road Register which is owned, controlled, and/or managed by the Council:

- Non-maintained roads (unsealed): Roads that are not maintained by the Council. They receive no routine grading, drainage maintenance or tree trimming works.
- Maintained tracks (unsealed): Formed-only access ways that receive a low degree of maintenance by Council.
- Unsealed roads: Council roads that are typically gravel surface and may have a formal pavement structure with associated drainage infrastructure.
- Sealed roads: Sealed roads maintained by Council with an existing pavement structure with associated drainage infrastructure.

However, Council investment for the upgrade of roads will be predominantly focused on the upgrading of unsealed roads to sealed roads on a prioritised basis that is determined in the prior financial year and subject to budget allocation.

#### 4. Road Prioritisation and Assessment Process

Requests to Council or a need for Council to provide capital funding towards a proposed project may originate from:

- Requests from Councillors, Council Officers, community-based groups, or residents.
- External partnership proposals.
- Actions within a Council approved Plan, Strategy or Program.
- Asset Management Plan requirements or emergency works.
- Grant or funding opportunities.

To ensure a proposal’s inclusion in the next year’s capital works program, road upgrade requests should be submitted no later than December each year. Council will assess and rank the applications from January to February each year concerning upgrade cost and available funding.

As identified above, these requests can have initial investigations carried out by the Council’s Engineering/Asset Management Team.

#### 5. Key Information in the Road Prioritisation Matrix (RPM)

Completing the RPM involves undertaking an assessment based on a range of benefit evaluation criteria for each segment of the road. To do this the benefit of upgrading a road segment is evaluated against four key benefit criteria. Requests scoring the highest score will get priority. These are:

- Transport
- Safety
- Community
- Financial

##### 5.1 Transport Benefit

Each road section is assessed to determine the level of transport benefit to the community. Table 1 summarises the various evaluation criteria and potential scores based on the assessment of each road segment.

**Table 1 – Transport Evaluation Criteria**

Transport Benefits Evaluation Criteria		Score	Description
<b>Connectivity</b>	Is the road a through road?	5	Yes, it is a Through Road and principal route.

		2	Yes, but no a primary route.
		0	No, it is not Through Road.
<b>Hierarchy</b>	What is the road hierarchy based on Public Road Register Guidelines?	5	Link
		4	Collector
		3	Local Access
		2	Maintained Track
		1	Not Maintained
		<b>Transport Task</b>	What economic drivers about the segment of the road?
3	Primary Producer < =5, but greater than 0		
2	Tourism/manufacturing/construction/ot her		
1	No registered businesses		
<b>Primary Function</b>	What strategic function does the road provide?	5	Regional Strategic Route
		3	Local Strategic Route
		2	Transport Route/Bus Route
		1	Property Access
<b>Bus Route</b>	Is the road a designated bus route as per PTV or a school bus route?	5	PTV Bus Route
		4	School Bus Route
		0	Not a Nominated Bus Route
<b>Traffic Volumes</b>	What is the 5 or 7-day average traffic volume? (Whichever is highest.) Note 1	5	Greater than 501 vehicles per day
		4	Between 251 - 500 vehicles per day
		3	Between 151 – 250 vehicles per day
		2	Between 76 - 150 vehicles per day
		1	Between 26 - 75
		0	Less than 25 vehicles per day
<b>Commercial Vehicle Volumes</b>	What is the overall usage of commercial/heavy vehicles on this road segment? Note 1 (Conversion from % to No.)	5	Greater than 40% or over 50 truck movements per day
		4	Between 30 -40% or up to 50 truck movements per day
		3	Between 21 -30% or up to 35 truck movements per day

		2	Between 11 - 20% or up to 20 truck movements per day
		1	Between 6 -10 % or up to 12 truck movements per day
		0	Less than 5% or 6 truck vehicle movements per day

Note 1: Where detailed traffic volume breakdowns are not available or out-of-date, volumes will be interpreted from available data in nearby segments or estimated based on IDM guidelines.

Note 2: AUSTRROADS Class 3 and above vehicle classification.

### 5.2 Safety Criteria

The second group of criteria for use in the prioritization of road segments relates to road safety. Table 2 summarises the various evaluation criteria and potential score based on the assessment of each road segment.

**Table 2 – Road Safety Evaluation Criteria**

Road Safety Benefits Evaluation Criteria			Score	Description
<b>Reported Crash History</b>	<b>Crash</b>	Has there been any reported crashes? Note 3 Note 4	5	Fatality
			3	Serious Injury
			2	Other injuries
			1	None
<b>Road Safety and alignment (Horizontal and Vertical)</b>	<b>and</b>	What is the overall horizontal and vertical road alignment and what impact is this having on road safety? Note 5	5	Overall Poor Alignment
			3	Isolated sections with poor alignment
			0	Generally good alignment
<b>Road Width</b>		What is the current width of the trafficable road width?	5	Less than equal to 5 meters
			3	Isolated sections with width below 5m
			1	Greater than 5 meters

Note 3: Based on 5 year Western Region Road Crash Data

Note 4: Where an area or intersection meets the criteria for the Federal Blackspot program, Council make elect to seek external funding through that grant program before consideration of a 'stand-alone' upgrade

Note 5: Consideration of roadside hazards (such as trees) will not be taken into account as, in general, sealing of a road increases average speeds and has a negative effect on hazard proximity

### 5.3 Community Benefits

The third group of evaluation criteria relates to the level of community benefit. Table 3 summarises the various criteria and potential score based on the assessment of each road segment.

**Table 3 – Community Benefit Criteria**

Community Benefits Evaluation Criteria		Score	Description
<b>Requests received</b>	Requests from abutting residents	3	Yes, request received.
		0	No requests
<b>No of Dwellings</b>	No of occupied dwellings located on the abutting road section	5	Greater than 10
		2	5 or more
		0	Less than 5
<b>Likely Impact from new developments</b>	What level of impact is possible from external future development? <small>Note 6</small>	5	Significant development impact
		2	Possible minor development
		0	No further development impacts
<b>Amenity Impacts</b>	What impacts can be expected by abutting properties	5	Subject to substantial dust/ road and property water runoff impacting structures/dwelling
		0	No impact to amenity for abutting properties
<b>Environmental Impacts to Designated water way</b>	What are the environmental impacts that currently exist?	5	Significant environment impact/proximity to a designated waterway
		0	No environmental impacts
<b>Road Condition Assessment</b>	What is the current pavement condition rating of the section of the road (1 to 10)?	5	Equal or Greater than 8
		2	In between 5 to 7
		0	Equal or Less than 4

Note 6: In general, large developments are required to pay for road upgrades. Officers will determine the likelihood of future development meeting that threshold.

### 5.4 Financial Benefits

The final category of benefits to be assessed for each road segment. Table 4 summarises the various financial benefit evaluation criteria and potential scores.

**Table 4 – Financial Benefits**

Financial Benefits Evaluation Criteria		Score	Description
<b>Cost of Upgrade works</b>	What is the estimated costs of any proposed upgrade works?	5	Costs are less than \$50,000
		3	Costs between \$50,000 and \$200,000
		1	Greater than \$200,000
<b>The gap to Seal Ratio</b>	What is the ratio of the unsealed road section relative to the entire road length?	5	Less than 10% unsealed
		4	Between 11% and 25% unsealed
		3	Between 26% and 50% unsealed
		2	Between 51 and 75% unsealed
		1	Greater than 75% unsealed
<b>Potential external Funding Opportunities</b>	Likelihood of external grants/income?	5	High confidence in Wholly funded through DCP/external funding
		3	High confidence in partial funding through DCP/external funding
		0	Fully funded by Council
<b>Ongoing maintenance Liability</b>	What level of maintenance is required due to existing conditions?  Note 7	10	High ongoing maintenance costs due to current conditions
		5	Medium Maintenance liability due to current conditions
		0	Low maintenance liability due to current conditions

Note 7: Inputs including, historic maintenance and capital costs, longitudinal grades, drainage issues.

### 6. Approved Upgrades

Council officers will use the prioritisation and ranking when considering the nomination of projects within Council’s proposed future Capital Works budget.

### 7. Further Information

Any enquiries about this Road Upgrade Policy should be directed through Customer Service to Council's Engineering Departments.

## **8. Implementation**

The responsibility and implementation of this Policy sits with the Manager Operation.

## **9. Review**

This policy will be reviewed on a 5-year cycle.