

SCS-067 Road Upgrade Policy

TRIM Reference: D26/121249 Due for Review: February 2031
Responsible Officer: Manager Assets and Engineering

Purpose

This policy provides a framework for the management and improvement of Surf Coast Shire's sealed and unsealed road network. It establishes a consistent and transparent approach to identifying, assessing, determining the appropriate level of improvement, prioritising and delivering of road upgrade projects.

The policy aims to support decisions about when road upgrade works are appropriate, the level of improvement required, and the relative priority of potential upgrade projects having regard to road function, safety, condition, community benefit, environmental considerations and Council's available resources.

Policy Principles

This Policy supports Council's decisions regarding the delivery of road upgrade works by promoting transparent, fair and accountable processes that serve the best interests of the community. Council's approach is guided by principles of good governance, financial responsibility and equitable access to infrastructure.

Council will apply the following principles when considering road upgrade projects:

- **Strategic Alignment** - Road upgrade decisions will align with Council's strategic objectives, asset management priorities, adopted plans and relevant statutory frameworks.
- **Safety** - The safety of all road users will be a fundamental consideration in the assessment, prioritisation and delivery of road upgrades.
- **Consistency and Transparency** - Road upgrade proposals will be assessed using a consistent, transparent and evidence-based approach to support fair and equitable decision-making.
- **Value for Money** - Investment decisions will seek to maximise value for the community by balancing benefits, costs, risks and whole-of-life asset considerations.
- **Community Benefit** - Road upgrades will deliver outcomes that consider the broader needs, benefits and impacts on the community, including affected residents, businesses and road users.
- **Financial Sustainability** - Road upgrade decisions will be made within the context of Council's available funding, resource capacity and competing service and infrastructure priorities.
- **Asset Sustainability** - Road upgrades will support the long-term performance, resilience, maintainability and sustainability of Council's road network, including consideration of future climate impacts and changing environmental conditions.

Scope

This policy provides a strategic framework for the planning, assessment, prioritisation, funding and delivery of road upgrade works undertaken by Council. This includes the sealing of unsealed roads and the upgrade of existing roads where improvements are required to address road condition, safety, functionality, capacity or any other identified service needs.

The policy applies to all roads listed on Council's Register of Public Roads for which Council is responsible for inspection and maintenance in accordance with the Road Management Act 2004.

Policy

Identification and Assessment of Road Upgrades

Council may identify potential road upgrade works through a range of sources, including asset condition inspections and assessments, maintenance and operational information, road safety assessments, traffic data, community requests, development activity, changes in land use, and changes in road network requirements.

Where a potential road upgrade is identified, Council will assess the need, scope and suitability of the proposed works having regard to the principles, objectives and assessment criteria outlined in this Policy.

The identification or assessment of a potential road upgrade does not constitute a commitment by Council to undertake, fund or prioritise the works.

Types of Road Upgrades

Road upgrades may involve a range of works to improve the condition, safety, functionality or service level of a road. The type and extent of works undertaken will be determined having regard to the identified need, road function, existing conditions, applicable standards, available funding and other relevant considerations.

Road upgrade works may include:

- sealing of an unsealed road;
- road reconstruction;
- road widening or changes to road alignment;
- drainage improvements;
- kerb and channel works;
- intersection improvements;
- line marking;
- road surface improvements;
- other works required to improve the performance, safety or functionality of the road.

The most appropriate upgrade treatment will be determined on a case-by-case basis, having regard to the circumstances of the road and the outcomes sought.

When a Road Upgrade is being considered, Council will assess the surrounding area to identify opportunities to coordinate complementary infrastructure improvements. This may include pedestrian crossing upgrades, pathway and cycleway connections, lighting, landscaping, streetscape enhancements, and any other works that improve the accessibility and amenity of the overall network.

Prioritisation

Potential road upgrade projects will be prioritised using a strategic, consistent, transparent and equitable approach.

Prioritisation will have regard to the objectives of the Council Plan, Planning Scheme, relevant Council strategies, asset management priorities and the broader needs of the road network.

The inclusion of a road on a prioritised list does not create an obligation or commitment for Council to undertake the proposed upgrade works. Delivery of works will be subject to Council's financial capacity, resource availability, competing priorities and Council approval.

Prioritisation Criteria

Potential road upgrade projects will be assessed against the following criteria. These criteria provide a consistent and transparent framework for evaluating, comparing and prioritising road upgrade projects across the municipality.

Community Safety	The level of risk associated with the road including crash history, road geometry factors, vulnerable road users, and emergency management considerations.
Road Hierarchy	The strategic function of the road within Council's road network.
Traffic Volume	The level and type of traffic using the road, including consideration of local and through traffic movements, school bus routes, cyclists and other regular road users.
Community Benefit	The benefit of the road upgrade to the local community, including access to community facilities, services, and the extent of surrounding development.
Asset Condition and Service Reliability	The condition and performance of the existing road, including maintenance issues, drainage problems, and the ability of the road to provide safe and reliable access during varying weather and seasonal conditions, and whether an upgrade would provide improved long-term service outcomes or reduce whole-of-life maintenance costs.
Design Standards	The extent to which the existing road does not meet relevant design standards for its intended function.
Strategic Alignment	The degree to which the proposed road improvement aligns with the objectives of the Council Plan, Planning Scheme and other relevant Council strategies.
Environmental Impacts	The environmental impacts and benefits associated with the upgrade, including dust suppression, erosion reduction and water quality outcomes.

Criteria Evaluation Process

The prioritisation criteria will be used to evaluate and score individual road segments within Council's Road network. No single criterion will determine the priority of a road for improvement, however Council will apply weighting factors to prioritisation criteria where considered appropriate to reflect strategic priorities and risk considerations. Priority will be based on the overall assessment of all relevant criteria.

The relative priority of roads included on the Road Upgrade Priority List will be determined by their aggregate score against the evaluation criteria.

Excluded Roads

Council may exclude a road from the Road Upgrade Priority List, or defer its consideration, where upgrading the road is not considered appropriate due to potential impacts on the broader road network, surrounding community, or where it conflicts with Council's strategic objectives.

This may include, but is not limited to, circumstances where the proposed upgrade is likely to:

- Encourage inappropriate through traffic or divert traffic through local streets.
- Transfer traffic from higher order roads to lower order roads.
- Increase traffic volumes, vehicle speeds, noise, or safety risks in residential or sensitive areas.
- Undermine the intended function of the road hierarchy.
- Conflict with strategic transport, land use, environmental, or access management objectives.
- Create unreasonable network-wide impacts that outweigh the local benefit of the upgrade.

Where a road is excluded or deferred, Council will document the reason for the decision and may reconsider the road if network conditions, strategic priorities, or surrounding land use materially change.

Program Flexibility

Council may prioritise a lower-ranked road where there are sound operational, financial, strategic or project delivery reasons for doing so.

This may include circumstances where:

- Multiple nearby road segments can be delivered together to achieve efficiencies or economies of scale.
- External funding opportunities, such as government grants may be available for the upgrade of specific roads.
- Property owners support the implementation of a Special Charge Scheme to facilitate upgrade of their road.
- A higher-ranked project cannot proceed due to land acquisition, approvals, design constraints or other project delivery issues.
- Coordinating the works with nearby development or other planned infrastructure works, including road renewal, footpath, drainage works, would improve efficiency, reduce costs or minimise disruption to the community.

Design Standards

The design standards the road will be constructed to will generally follow the *Infrastructure Design Manual* or other relevant standards and guidelines. The design will consider aspects such as the road's function, traffic volumes, surrounding land use, access, safety, and drainage.

Funding

Funding for road upgrade projects may be sourced from one or more of the following:

- Direct Council contribution through the annual Capital Works program.
- External funding, including government grants and other funding programs.
- Developer contributions.
- Property owner contributions, either through a *Special Rate or Charge Scheme* or a *Resident Agreement* process.
- A combination of the above.

Where a proposed road upgrade is not prioritised for Council funding, or where it can be demonstrated that affected properties will derive a special benefit from the proposed road upgrade, Council may consider the implementation of a Special Rate and Charge Scheme in accordance with applicable legislation and Council policy. Generally, this approach will apply to roads with low traffic volumes and/or roads that carry a high proportion of locally generated traffic.

The availability of funding will not determine project priority. Funding decisions will have regard to project rankings, strategic objectives and Council decision-making processes.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

Council will undertake community and stakeholder engagement for proposed road upgrade projects where appropriate, having regard to the nature, scale, complexity and potential impacts of the proposed works. Engagement will be undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy.

Engagement may include affected property owners, local community, road users, relevant government agencies, emergency services and other key stakeholders as appropriate.

The level, scope and timing of engagement will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Delivery and Implementation

Road upgrade projects identified through this Policy will be progressed in accordance with Council's established project planning, budgeting, procurement and project management processes.

The timing and delivery of road upgrade projects will be subject to Council approval, funding, resources, approvals and other relevant project delivery considerations.

Council may coordinate road upgrade works with other planned infrastructure works or nearby development where the opportunity presents to improve efficiency, reduce costs or minimise disruption to the local community.

The delivery of a road upgrade may be staged where appropriate, having regard to funding availability, project scope, construction requirements and the broader road network.

Responsibility

The Assets and Engineering team is responsible for administering this Policy and ensuring that proposed road upgrade projects are assessed and prioritised in accordance with the Policy.

In fulfilling this responsibility, the Assets and Engineering department will:

- Develop and review the Road Upgrade Priority List.
- Assess and prioritise road upgrade projects in accordance with this Policy.
- Identify and evaluate funding and delivery options for road upgrade projects.
- Facilitate the planning and implementation of approved road upgrade projects.

Council is responsible for:

- Adopting and periodically reviewing the Policy.
- Determining funding allocations for road upgrade projects through the annual budget process,
- Considering and determining appropriate funding and delivery mechanisms, including direct Council funding, external grant funding, and Special Charge Schemes, where applicable.
- Endorsing the progression and delivery of road upgrade projects in accordance with Council priorities and available resources.

Review Period

The Road Upgrade Priority List will generally be reviewed every four years to ensure priorities are current.

Council may undertake an interim review of individual roads where significant changes to network conditions, strategic priorities, development patterns, funding opportunities or other changes in circumstances has occurred that may materially affect the road's assessment against the prioritisation criteria.

Local Government Act 2020 Principles

Principles	Applicable to policy	If yes, provide details
Governance Principles (Consideration of the Governance Principles under s.9 of LGA 2020)	Yes	The Policy establishes a consistent, transparent and equitable framework to guide decision making regarding road sealing and upgrade priorities.
Community Engagement (Consideration of Community Engagement Principles under s.56 LGA 2020)	Yes	Community requests and feedback may inform the assessment of roads.
Public Transparency (Consideration of Public Transparency Principles under s.58 of LGA 2020)	Yes	The Policy supports transparent and accountable decision making by establishing clear, consistent and documented criteria for assessing and prioritising road upgrade needs.
Strategies and Plans (Consideration of Strategic Planning Principles under s.89 of LGA 2020)	Yes	Road improvement priorities are assessed having regard to the Council Plan, Planning Scheme and other relevant Council Strategies.
Financial Management (Consideration of Financial Management Principles under s.101 of LGA 2020)	Yes	The policy recognises the need to balance infrastructure improvements with Council's financial capacity, available resources, and long-term asset management considerations.
Service Performance (Consideration of Service Performance Principles under s.106 of LGA 2020)	Yes	The policy supports the efficient allocation of resources by prioritising road improvements based on a consistent assessment framework.

Definitions

Road Upgrade	Improvement works undertaken to enhance the condition, safety, functionality or service level of a road. This may include road sealing, reconstruction, widening, drainage, alignment, pavement or safety improvements
Unsealed Road	Road without a sealed pavement surface, such as gravel or crushed rock.
Road Segment	A discrete section of road assessed independently for the purposes of evaluation, prioritisation and planning.
Excluded Road	Roads that are not considered suitable for inclusion on the Roads Upgrade Priority List due to potential impacts on the broader road network, surrounding community, Council's strategic objectives, or because they already meet the desired service standard.
Desired Service Standard	The level of service Council determines is appropriate for a road having regard to its function, hierarchy, traffic volumes and surrounding land use.
Council's Register of Public Roads	The register of public roads for which Council is responsible under the Road Management Act.
Special Rate and Charge Scheme	A funding mechanism under the Local Government Act, where benefited properties may contribute to infrastructure works.
Road Upgrade Priority List	Council's ranked list of road segments assessed and prioritised for potential upgrade works in accordance with this Policy.
Road Hierarchy	Classification of roads based on their transport function and role in the network.
Whole-of-life Cost	The total cost of an asset over its life, including planning, design, construction, operation, maintenance, renewal, and disposal costs.

Design Standards	Relevant engineering standards, guidelines or manuals used to guide road design, such as the Infrastructure Design Manual.
Infrastructure Design Manual (IDM)	A Set of engineering design standards and guidelines used to inform the planning, design and construction of civil infrastructure, including roads, drainage and associated assets.

Related Procedure

No related procedure.

References

Local Government Act 1989
 Local Government Act 2020
 Road Management Act 2004
 Infrastructure Design Manual
 Council Plan 2025-2029
 Asset Management Strategy
 SCS-005 Strategic Asset Management Policy
 SCS-009 Infrastructure Special Rate and Charge Scheme Policy
 SCS-017 Community Engagement Policy

Document History

Version	Document History	Approved by – Date