

Summary

This attachment provides information on the proposed amendments to the Road Management Plan 2025, including:

1. Reference to Council Meeting on 12 May 2025
2. Information from Council Meeting on 12 May 2025
3. Information further to Council Meeting

1. Reference to Council Meeting on 12 May 2025

There was a report at the Council Meeting on 12 May 2025 on the proposed amendments to the Road Management Plan.

The Minutes for the meeting are available on Council's website at:

<https://www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/about-council/council-meetings/council-meeting-agendas-minutes>

You can view a recording of the Council Meeting on Council's website at:

<https://webcast.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/>

2. Information from Council Meeting on 12 May 2025

KEY MATTERS

Council is a Road Management Authority under the *Road Management Act 2004*. The Act prescribes the role of Road Management Authorities. For Council to meet its obligations, a Road Management Plan (RMP) is desirable. A RMP details how, and by what standards and priorities, Council will inspect, repair, and maintain its public roads and pathways in the context of available budgetary and other resources. The RMP is most often used as a legal defence in relation to trips on footpaths, followed by the condition of the road pavement.

The RMP has been reviewed every four years, in accordance with the requirements of the *Road Management (General) Regulations 2016*. The RMP was last amended on 17 August 2015.

At its meeting on 28 June 2021, Council adopted the findings and conclusions of the review of the RMP and agreed to amend the RMP. The RMP has not yet been amended since this decision. Council's insurer, MAV Insurance (MAVI) has recently provided a standard template for all councils to use with suggested standards based on benchmarking and legal and insurance advice. The proposed amendments to Council's RMP are substantial enough to require public exhibition inviting submissions.

The draft amended RMP has been endorsed by Council to give public notice and invite public submissions on the proposed amendments. A further report will be

provided to Council on the findings and conclusions of the public consultation process as part of its consideration when adopting an amended RMP.

A draft amended RMP 2025 has been prepared using the MAVI template and the following documents are provided as attachments:

- **Your Say Attach 2** – Draft amended RMP 2025
- **Your Say Attach 3** – Current RMP 27 July 2015

The changes between the current and the proposed version are summarised in the following attachments:

- **Your Say Attach 4** - RMP 2025 amendments - General
- **Your Say Attach 5** - RMP 2025 amendments - Inspection Frequencies
- **Your Say Attach 6** - RMP 2025 amendments – Intervention Levels and Timeframes

The following attachment shows notable differences between the draft RMP 2025 and the MAVI template that was provided:

- **Your Say 7** – RMP 2025 Comparison to MAVI template

The reasons for the differences are provided in **Your Say Attach 7**. Any changes to move towards suggestions by MAVI would require additional employees or additional funding for contracted services.

DISCUSSION, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

The draft RMP 2025 includes standards that can be met within existing allocated resources. Council is to decide standards in the RMP in the context of available budgetary and other resources.

The major proposed changes and discussion points are presented in **Your Say 7** – and summarised below:

Proactive inspection frequencies – lowest category footpaths (Category 3)

- The proactive inspection frequency for the lowest category footpaths (Category 3) is every three years.
- MAVI suggest a range of 12-24 months.
- An inspection frequency of 3 years is considered appropriate considering the typically good ground conditions under the footpaths.

Proactive inspection frequencies – lowest category roads (Category 3)

- The proactive inspection frequency for the lowest category roads (Category 3) is every three years.
- MAVI suggest a range of 12-24 months.
- An inspection frequency of 3 years is considered appropriate considering the high quality of roads in Whitehorse based on typically good ground conditions under the roads.

Vertical displacements of footpaths

- The RMP is most often used as a legal defence in relation to trips on footpaths.
- Current intervention level is 15mm.
- Legal advice and advice from MAVI is that this is too low. A 'reasonable' level of intervention is between 20mm and 30mm.
- It is proposed to change this to 25mm.
- Increasing the intervention level will mean that there will be less defects and therefore the defects will be repaired faster.
- The current standard, proposed standard, and the MAVI suggested standard for footpaths is provided in the following tables:

Current standard:

Defect Type	Description / Intervention Level	Repair timeframes		
		Category 1	Category 2	Category 3
Vertical Displacement	Vertical Displacement >15 mm in height (Note all displacements for all categories of footpath >40 mm repaired within 5 working days)	12 months	12 months	12 months

Proposed standard:

Defect Type	Description / Intervention Level	Repair timeframes		
		Category 1	Category 2	Category 3
Vertical Displacement	Vertical Displacement >25 mm in height (Note all displacements for all categories of footpath >40 mm repaired within 5 working days)	6 months	9 months	12 months

MAVI suggested standard:

Defect Type	Description / Intervention Level	Repair timeframes		
		Category 1	Category 2	Category 3
Vertical Displacement	Vertical Displacement between 20 mm and 30 mm in height (MAVI no reference to a tiered timeframe like greater than 40mm but this can be done)	2 weeks to 1 month		2 weeks to 3 months

Vegetation clearance

- Vegetation clearance for roads and footpaths is suggested by MAVI to be included in the RMP. It is not in the current RMP, not in the draft RMP 2025. This is managed through Council's Urban Forest Strategy, Tree Management Policy, and Community Local Law 2024.

A further report will be provided to Council about any submissions received as a result of giving public notice, and the final Plan will be recommended for adoption.

3. Information further to Council Meeting

How significant road and footpath damage should be before Council steps in (including potholes).

Timeframes for repairing these issues either reported by the community, or through proactive council monitoring.

Funding allocation for Road Management Plan activities and associated consequences.

The proposed standard for **footpath** defects is:

Defect Type	Description / Intervention Level	Repair timeframes		
		Category 1	Category 2	Category 3
Vertical Displacement	Vertical Displacement >25 mm in height (Note all displacements for all categories of footpath >40 mm repaired within 5 working days)	6 months	9 months	12 months

Vertical displacements in a footpath between 25mm and 40mm in a typical residential street that are identified from an inspection or reported as a customer request will be repaired within 12 months. All defects greater than 40mm will be repaired within 5 working days. In practice, defects will be repaired much quicker than 12 months. 12 months is the standard that cannot be exceeded, and Council commits to repairing 100% of defects that are identified within this timeframe.

The proposed standard that all vertical displacements greater than 40mm are repaired within 5 working days is significantly quicker than most other councils. This is a commitment to get to the high-risk hazards quickly and have a cost-effective method to attend to other smaller defects.

Defects can be identified through a reactive request or programmed inspection. Reactive requests can be reported by a member of the public or Council employee. The proposed standard in the draft amended RMP 2025 is that a defect identified through a reactive request is inspected within 10 working days. The proposed standard is that all footpaths will be inspected at least once every 3 years.

An inspection frequency of 3 years is considered appropriate considering the typically good ground conditions under the footpaths. Typically, defects are due to damage not deterioration. 3 years or even 12 months is too long if there is damage. Damage can be due to tree roots, authority works, or heavy vehicles. Damage is typically picked up in a reactive request.

The risk of maintaining the inspection frequency of 3 years has been discussed with our insurers, and their advice is that all standards set in the Road Management Plan need to consider available budgetary and other constraints. Adding additional resources to increase the frequency of inspections would have little to no effect on the overall condition of footpaths. The overall condition of footpaths is related to how much funding is allocated to the renewal of footpaths (replacement with new footpaths).

The defects that are noticed by residents can be reported and will be attended to as a reactive request and assessed within 10 working days of when the request is received.

In the future, there may be technology-based solutions, with automated inspections of assets, that could be equivalent to a person undertaking the inspections. This needs to be further explored as the technology is available and due to the restricted timeframes is not a consideration for the 2025/26 budget.

An increase in funding for footpath renewal (replacement) will have the impact of improving the overall condition of the footpaths, so there will be less vertical displacements to attend to.

The proposed standard for a **pothole** in the road is:

Defect Type	Description / Intervention Level	Repair timeframes by hierarchy W=Weeks			
		Cat 1	Cat 2	Cat 3	Cat 4
Pothole	Potholes I sealed pavement >70 mm in depth and >300 mm in diameter	2 W	2 W	3 W	3 W

The Road Management Plan includes the intervention standard that if exceeded, Council must act within the required timeframe. The proposed standard is typical for road authorities to adopt. These are the potholes that may cause an incident or damage. It is recommended that Council adopt this standard, and repair within 2 to 3 weeks depending on the classification of the road.

Smaller potholes that are reported to Council will be assessed as a reactive request. The Council officer will use professional judgement around the urgency of the repair. For example, the early repair of a pothole that is less than the intervention standard may be done to prevent further accelerated deterioration of the road pavement. This decision would be made based on the management of the condition of the asset, rather than the risk associated with possible claims of damage or injury.

The timing of how quickly we respond to small pothole requests is subject to what resources are available at the time. There are occasions when staff are on leave, the asphalt truck is being serviced or maintained, the asphalt supply plant may be closed, the weather may not be suitable for asphaltting. Considering the Road Management Plan is predominately to manage risk, not asset condition, and there

are many variables that can impact our capacity to attend to smaller potholes, it is recommended that the standard in the Road Management Plan remain as proposed.

The increase funding in road renewal (resurfacing) will have the impact of improving the overall condition of the roads, so there will be less potholes to attend to.