Clarification of officer remarks re GME Motion 1.. Footpath Safety.

The Agenda for the City of Melville OMC 15 March 2022 contains Officer remarks pertaining to safe location of footpaths within road reserves. Some clarification of those remarks is necessary, as below:

1. A nominal 1.8m wide footpath at the kerb has a clear and effective width of only 1.2m. Kerb ramps reduce the width by 600mm, or 30 percent of the width, for 33 percent to 45 percent of the path length, depending on the property frontage distance, and the crossover width. The repetitive placement of low visibility kerb ramps within the footpath, where keeping left is a common courtesy, presents a danger to pedestrians, and is a disincentive to walk. Every time a pedestrian walking kerbside of the path reaches a kerb ramp, they have to move to the right to avoid the ramp, and are likely to be hit from behind by a bike or eScooter that was not anticipating such a movement across the path by the pedestrian. Austroads Part 6A. recognises and advises against such practice. Austroads advice is that having the edge of the path 1m behind the kerb "provides essential clearance to parked cars. Path avoids kerb returns at driveways." ie. A safe system approach.
2. The officer response states that "The City will continue to assess the location of footpaths in accordance with CP-033 and Australian Standards, Austroads Guidelines, and other recognised industry documentation. It is pleasing to hear that the City will be adopting the practice recommended by Austroads Guidelines, in particular, as outlined in clause 1. above.
3. The minimum 500mm offset of the path from the kerb mentioned by WALGA, and Fig 7 on page 10 of the WALGA guidelines shows the path discontinuing in the kerb ramp offset zone, and the path continuing with a fixed width unaffected by kerb ramps. WALGA goes on to cite Austroads Part 6A advice that paths should be located at least 500mm, and preferably 1m from any significant obstruction or hazard, including the roadway, to provide sufficient separation and safety. To fill the offset area with concrete identical to the footpath introduces a hazard for pedestrians. That is why "soft landscaping/vegetation" is recommended for the offset zone. Austroads Guidelines recommends, on page 26, "It is also important that the edges of paths do not have a drop-off that may cause a pedestrian to slip or trip, or cause a wheelchair to overturn, such as along the back of the kerb. This consideration is critical where minimum path widths are used." Again, a safe system approach. A vegetated zone adjacent to the kerb allows footpath users an area of run-off from the path which provides a buffer and soft fall area away from the carriageway.
4. Table 4.1 of the Austroads Part 6A Guidelines lists factors affecting path location. If a table of factors was provided for paths at an intermediate position in the verge, then this would clearly be chosen as the safest position for the path. Six of the factors listed for a path location adjacent to the kerb are negative for safety, and the accumulation of rubbish bins on the path, not mentioned, is a seventh negative for safety. Considering these factors on a case-by-case basis without a preference to provide a safe path away from the kerb seems somewhat ad-hoc.
5. A plan is needed to forecast where paths are to be located so that light poles, trees, bus stops, drain pits, rubbish bins, kerb ramps, traffic, etc are fully considered and coordinated. That is why the City has a preferred location, "in the middle of the verge" for Distributor roads. However, we can't have both street trees and footpaths in the middle of the verge, so placement needs to be planned and coordinated to achieve the desired outcome for safe footpaths. The photographs in the officer response reflect such need. Photo No 4 would be chosen by most people as a good

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footpath. (I note that the bus shelter is a little close to the path, but this is easily fixed.) This is achieved by having the street trees in the kerbside furniture zone as shown in the Austroads Guidelines.

6. The City has about 500 km of roads and 500 km of footpaths. This means that to eventually have a footpath each side of all streets, another 500km of footpaths are needed. A plan is needed for the placement of items in the furniture zone, and the location of the future footpath is kept clear for a safe and comfortable footpath.. Approval of crossover design would take account of future path location, amongst other things such as trees and light poles, etc.
7. I have noted when walking, that footpaths at the kerb are in a generally poor condition, with cracked slabs quite prevalent. Cars and trucks park with two wheels on the path, so with the footpath slabs being only 100mm thick, and unreinforced, this becomes a significant maintenance issue for a long-term asset. If the footpaths were away from the kerb then maintenance would be reduced, and the paths would remain safer for longer.
8. If a footpath is located away from the kerb, then its construction becomes somewhat independent of the kerb. If we consider, for example, a road such as Moorhouse Street in Willagee, which was re-kerbed, resurfaced, and has a new footpath (with kerb ramps embedded in the path) then if the footpath had been constructed away from the kerb, savings may have been possible by:
    a. Not replacing the kerb.
    b. Not resurfacing the road.
    c. Less expensive traffic management.
    d. Less ongoing maintenance.
    e. No rubbish bins on the path.

    This suggests that footpaths away from the kerb, as well as being safer like the City preference with Distributor roads, may be more cost effective over the life of the asset. Additionally, a path with a full effective width of 1800mm, rather than one reduced to an effective 1200mm due to kerb ramps, would be achieved.

9. Many Distributor roads throughout the City have a posted speed of 50 km/h, the same as Local Access roads. This is a valid reason to treat both Distributors and Local Access roads the same, and avoid the kerb ramps, drop-offs, and uncomfortable closeness to traffic. After all, this is what the experts, Austroads, DoT, DPLH, PTA, MRWA, WALGA, IPEWA, RAC, Disability Services, all have endorsed with the WA Government's Planning and Designing for Pedestrians: Guidelines, 2016. Page 85 of this Guide articulates the following: "Wider path widths should be provided where possible, rather than simply designing for the minimum through-route width. 1.2m is the absolute minimum through-route width allowing passage for a single wheelchair (this minimum width should only be used for a short distance in constrained environments)."
10. Education of the public and waste truck operators with the placement and return of bins away from the path is a good idea from a duty of care perspective. However, this does not negate the preference to have paths away from the kerb, consistent with a safe system approach.

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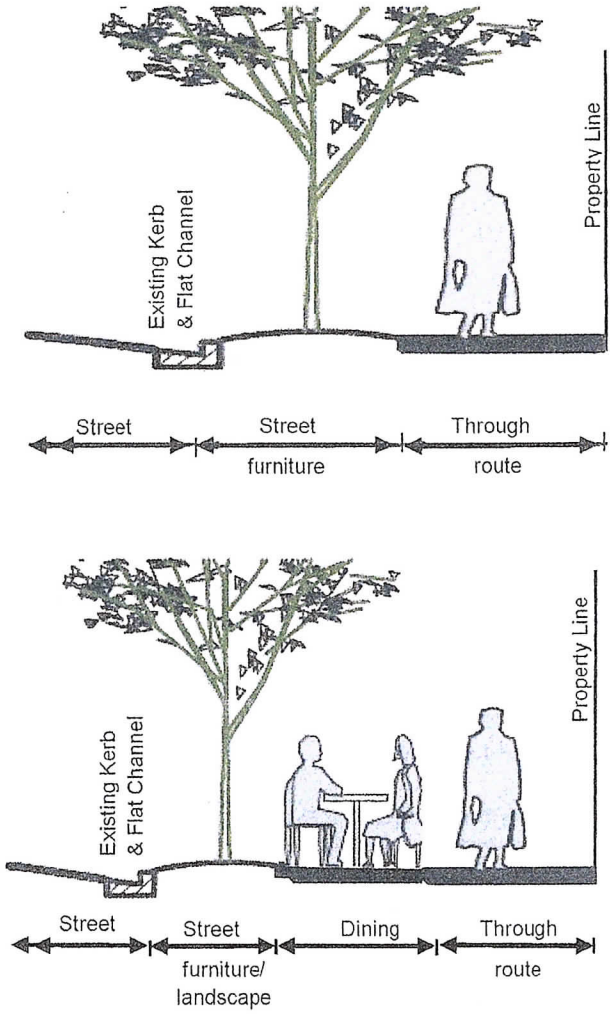
Regards, Max FitzGibbon
1 March 2022

An example of a good design is shown in the **Figure 6** which illustrates consistent crossover design with priority pedestrian access.

Figure 6 Example of Design Showing Path Priority

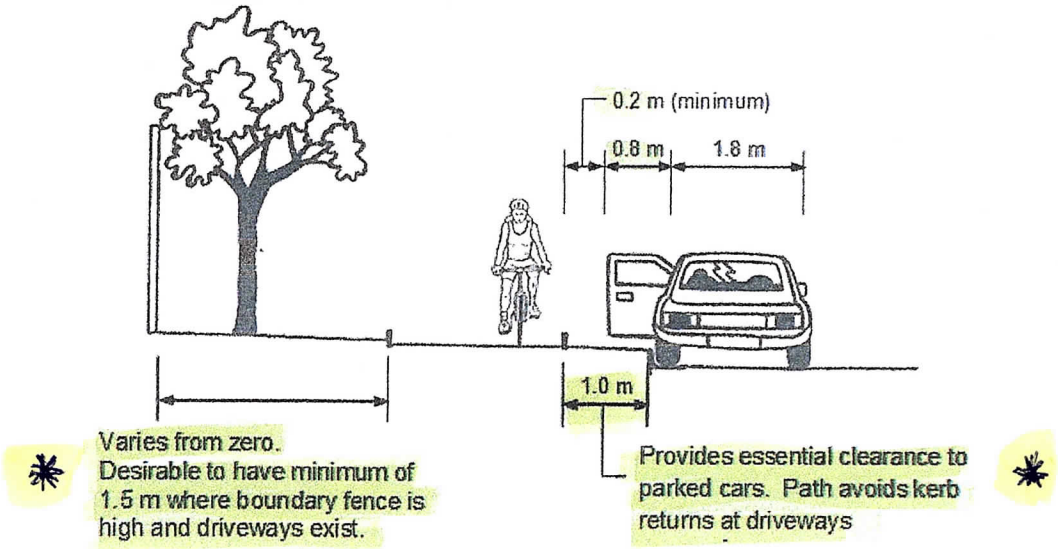
Figure 2.1: **Examples of pedestrian path zones**



Note: In residential areas the pedestrian path may be offset from the property boundary to facilitate the path alignment and safety. Designers should refer to the local road agency for their requirements.

Source: Adapted from NZ Transport Agency (2009).

Figure 5.8: **Location of path in road reserve**



2 Path Design

The intent is to provide for paths that:

- Meet the City's Path Policy
- Meets the City's Duty of Care
- Provide for safe, connected and accessible paths

2.1 General Requirements

The slope of the road from the bottom of the kerb to the top of the crown should be no more than 3%.

A general requirement for paths is specifically requested in the community aspirations for *Sustainable and Connected Transport* and *Healthy Lifestyles*, as identified in the City's Strategic Community Plan.

2.2 Path Position

The position may be varied according to the type of path, safety, accessibility or other considerations. The table below shows the preferred (●) and the optional (○) alignment.

Type	Kerb Line	Kerb Line with Offset	Middle of Verge	Property Boundary
Access (Up to 3,000 VPD)	● (New)		○	○
Local Distributor (Up to 6,000 VPD)		○	●	v
District Distributor B (Up to 15,000 VPD)		○	●	v
District Distributor A (Above 15,000 VPD)		○	●	○
Arterial Roads		○	●	○
Shared Paths		v	●	

The path position will vary to avoid obstructions in the road verge (e.g. trees, poles) so as to keep the required width. See Section 2.5.

Where a path connects to other paths along a road, by default, the new path position will be on the same side as the existing path.

See Guidelines for Pedestrians 7.1.3 for a discussion and the reasoning behind path widths.

2.3 Verge impacts and Crossover cut throughs

Where required to prevent retaining walls/drops along the edge of the path, the City shall re-grade a verge to the extent that is required to prevent the wall/drop. The City will cover the costs of re-grading