

Rapid Canopy – Frequently Asked Questions



What is the Rapid Canopy project?

The Rapid Canopy project is an exciting Darebin City Council initiative to further improve the value and amenity of Darebin's streetscapes. Council's goal is to plant an additional 6,000 trees on nature strips throughout the municipality where suitable space exists.

Why move ahead with this during a pandemic?

It is important that Darebin City Council continues with planned projects where it is safe and possible. All employees on this project will still be required to follow social distancing guidelines to protect themselves and the community.

Why is Council planting a tree on the nature strip at the front of my property?

Trees provide many valuable benefits to the local community. Council is committed to providing residents with avenues of trees where possible. Established trees provide invaluable shade for streets, significantly improve the look and feel of streetscapes and have been found to assist with increased property value on many occasions.

How does this project benefit me and my community?

Trees don't only provide an improved aesthetic to suburban streets; they also have ecological impacts that improve the lives of all Darebin residents – human or otherwise. By providing habitat for our local wildlife, we can help reverse the impact that increased urbanisation has had on wildlife. Trees can also improve the climate of our streets, keeping them cooler during summer and drier during winter. Additionally, research has shown that tree lined streets have a traffic calming effect, encouraging drivers to travel at slower speeds, making our streets safer for all users.

How long will this take?

Rapid Canopy will commence July 2020 and wrap up at the end of October 2021 – The aim is to plant 6,000 new trees by the end of next planting season. Those areas identified as highest priority will be first to receive new trees as part of the program.

I prefer not to have a new tree – Is this an option?

Given the benefits of trees and the importance of providing a safe, healthy and sustainable city for the future, Council is looking to plant a tree in all suitable locations. Individual circumstances will be considered if required, however the following reasons are not considered justification to not plant street trees:

- 🌳 I don't want a tree
- 🌳 Tree may block sunlight
- 🌳 All the trees are too big
- 🌳 It may overshadow my garden
- 🌳 Makes mowing the lawn difficult
- 🌳 Trees will create mess
- 🌳 Can't grow lawn underneath
- 🌳 Trees attract birds
- 🌳 Leaves may block gutters/drains
- 🌳 Bird droppings on vehicles
- 🌳 Haven't had a tree for years
- 🌳 May impact parking spaces
- 🌳 May impact overhead wires
- 🌳 Flowers may attract bees



What If I prefer a different species of tree than the one being planted?

In line with Council's [GreenStreets Streetscape Strategy](#), the species being planted in your street will be consistent with the existing species theme. The long-term goal is to provide consistent and uniformed streetscapes throughout the municipality. If your street has no obvious suitable species theme, a suitable native option will be chosen, helping further to increase native species diversity throughout Darebin.

Will Council maintain the tree?

All new trees are maintained by Council contractors for the first two years after planting. As part of this establishment phase, the tree will be regularly watered using recycled water, mulched, staked and weed maintenance undertaken. Residents are welcome to provide some additional water to the new trees during the warmer months if they wish to however residents are not expected to maintain the new trees.

Why isn't the tree at the front of my house being removed and replaced?

The primary focus of the Rapid Canopy Project is to significantly increase the canopy coverage of Darebin's streetscapes. All suitable vacant locations have been identified, with healthy existing trees to be maintained as per Council Policy. If you have any concerns with your existing tree, please feel free to contact Council to arrange an inspection.

Why are Council only planting one tree when there is space for two?

Several site considerations are factored into new tree planting locations – nature strip size, overhead powerlines, driveway, pedestrian sightlines, tree size etc. New trees are generally planted six to eight metres apart to allow for mature height and spread. Council will plant more than one tree if there is space for two or more.

If the tree dies or is vandalised will Council replace it?

Council replaces dead or vandalised trees as soon as possible. Trees are replaced during the planting season (May-October). Most dead or vandalised trees are reported to Council by Council's maintenance contractors, however if residents want to report dead or vandalised trees, they can do so by contacting Council's customer service on 8470 8888.

Do I need to do anything?

All planting and maintenance works are undertaken by Darebin City Council and specialist contractors. No access is required to any private property and residents do not need to be home on the day of planting. To assist with the planting works, it is helpful if vacant nature strips are left clean of rubbish and parked vehicles.

What happens if I disagree with Council's decision to plant a tree?

In instances where a resident disagrees with the decisions of Council officers regarding the suitability of tree planting, they shall be referred to the Rapid Canopy Appeals Panel. All appeals to the panel must be made in writing. The panel will assess the process, context, and nature of the request to determine whether correct procedure was followed and in line with Council policy and customer service standards. The decision of the appeals panel will be final.

All written appeals can be emailed to rapidcanopy@darebin.vic.gov.au

If you have any questions or concerns please call 8470 8888 or email rapidcanopy@darebin.vic.gov.au



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