

# RURAL ROAD NETWORK PROCEDURE



## 1 Scope

This procedure applies to the opening of previously unrecognised and unconstructed rural roads and the upgrading of rural roads identified on Rockhampton Regional Council's Road Register and under the jurisdiction of Council.

This policy does not apply to development works approved under the *Planning Act 2016* or other legislation that requires the approval of works within the Council Road Reserve.

## 2 Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to establish processes and scoring criteria for assessing requests for the opening of unconstructed rural roads, the upgrading of rural roads to a higher standard and intermittent sealing of unsealed roads.

## 3 Related Documents

### 3.1 Primary

Rural Road Network Policy

### 3.2 Secondary

*Human Rights Act 2019*

*Local Government Act 2009*

*Local Law No. 1 (Administration) 2011*

*Subordinate Local Law No. 1.1 (Alteration or Improvement to Local Government Controlled Areas and Roads) 2011*

*Subordinate Local Law No. 1.16 (Carrying out Works on a Road or Interfering with a Road or its Operation) 2011*

ARRB – Unsealed Roads Manual – Guidelines to Good Practice

Capricorn Municipal Development Guidelines

Design Standards for Rural Roads Guideline

Road Reserve Works Permit Application Form

## 4 Definitions

To assist in interpretation, the following definitions apply:

AADT	Annual Average Daily Traffic
Council	Rockhampton Regional Council
Habitable Dwelling	A building or structure which has been approved for use as a habitable building or structure.

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Property	A collection of parcels of rural land, typified by having adjacent boundaries or that would be adjacent but for a road or other public reserve and operated collectively for farming or primary production.
Road	As defined in section 59(2) of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> .
Road Register	A register of roads containing details as listed in section 74 of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> .
Rural Road	A road classified as either a rural arterial, rural major collector, rural minor collector or rural access road in Council's adopted Road Hierarchy.
Unsealed Road	A road that has no bitumen based or concrete sealed surface.

## 5 Procedure

This procedure sets out the actions to be performed to achieve the intent of the Rural Road Network Policy.

### 5.1 Opening of Unconstructed Roads

Unconstructed rural roads may be considered for opening and addition to Council's Road Register in accordance with the following assessment framework.

#### 5.1.1 Assessment Framework

The suitability for an unconstructed rural road to be opened is assessed in accordance with the following assessment method.

Table 1: Assessment Method	
Criteria	Notes
Is there an occupied habitable dwelling on the property?	Council's principal purpose for the management of the rural road network is to provide road access to properties containing habitable dwellings to a defined standard and level of service. The definition of a property has been included to clarify that where a collection of individual parcels of land are being operated collectively for farming or primary production as one property, then it is the overall collection of the parcels of land (property) that is to be serviced and not the individual parcels of land. These properties can be typified by being under either one ownership or co-ownership between related parties and may appear as a single rates assessment in Council's rates records. The habitable dwelling is to be occupied or in the process of being occupied to justify the ongoing expense of maintaining road access to it. Opening of an unconstructed road for extension of the Council road network to service rural property operations' such as cattle yards or improved pasture is not supported. It is acceptable where servicing rural operations happens as a consequence of servicing an occupied habitable dwelling. In all other cases an unconstructed road can be opened as a property road or driveway access where the maintenance responsibility remains with the property owner.
Does the property already have legal and practical access available via another constructed road?	It is a legitimate consideration if the property already has legal and practical access from another constructed road maintained by Council that Council would not support the increased maintenance and renewal costs of a second access road. If the opening of the new road is proposed in conjunction with the closure and removal from the Road Register of the existing road access, and this can be done without detriment to other property owners or the network in general, then Council may consider this.

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<b>Table 1: Assessment Method</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Can the road be constructed to the standard required in the Design Standards for Rural Roads Guideline without any significant environmental impacts?	The road must be able to be constructed within the existing road reserve and to the design standards in the Design Standards for Rural Roads Guideline. The assessor determines the functional and operational class of the proposed road. Particular note must be taken that the appropriate formation width and reasonable gradients can be attained and vertical/horizontal alignment and sight distance will not compromise safety. Adequate longitudinal and cross drainage must be able to be provided. Environmental considerations include the removal of protected or significant vegetation including marine vegetation, potential for significant and ongoing scouring or soil erosion, loss of pavement due to frequent inundation and potential dust complaints from nearby habitable dwellings.
Will the opening of the road lead to undesirable effects on the road network which may require that the proposed road be constructed now or in the future to a higher standard than originally anticipated?	Consideration is given to the potential impact of opening of the unconstructed road on the whole network. The potential of the newly opened road providing a more convenient route for traffic, particularly in relation to the diversion of heavy vehicles, needs to be balanced against what investment Council has made elsewhere in the network to cater for that traffic.
Are there any further legal or statutory obligations, and environmental obligations required to be met prior to the opening of the road?	Consideration is given to native title, cultural heritage and any environmental obligations such as requirements for vegetation clearing permits.
Are there any other site specific issues that may arise from works at this site?	This is to assess whether there are any issues that are particular or peculiar to the site of the proposed road opening that may work in favour or work against supporting the application.

The assessment criteria is used to identify whether there are any fatal flaws associated with the proposed road opening and if not, then on balance across all the criteria, whether the proposed road opening may be supported or not.

## 5.2 Upgrading Rural Roads to a Higher Standard Procedure

Rural roads are considered for upgrading on a priority basis in accordance with the following assessment framework. Roads are ranked in priority order according to their score prior to submission for consideration for inclusion in the capital works program. Submission for inclusion in the capital works program does not guarantee inclusion into a budget.

### 5.2.1 Assessment Framework

The suitability for a rural road to be upgraded is assessed in accordance with the following scoring and assessment method.

<b>Table 2: Scoring and Assessment Method</b>		
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Scoring Points</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
Traffic volumes (AADT)	Traffic volumes should be established through a formal traffic count preferably where traffic volume and class are able to be established. In the absence of this data the assessor is to assume six vehicles per day per habitable dwelling serviced by the road with a maximum of 10% Commercial Vehicle.	1

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**Table 2: Scoring and Assessment Method**

Criteria	Scoring Points	Weighting
	Add 1 point for every vehicle Additional 1 point for every commercial vehicle (max of 20% of AADT) Additional 25 points if road is a school bus route	
Strategic significance	Strategic significance relates to the function the road plays in the rural road network where typically the higher order roads or local roads of regional significance play a stronger role in supporting the economic and social needs of the rural areas. Access to tourism, environmental or cultural uses should also be considered.	5
	Nil      0 – Rural access with no additional strategic uses	
	Low      2 – Rural access with additional strategic uses	
	Medium      4 – Rural collector or above with no additional strategic uses	
High      6 – Rural collector or above with additional strategic uses		
Costs incurred in maintaining or renewing the road	This criteria reflects a qualitative assessment of the possible long term cost savings to Council if the road is upgraded. The premise is that where a section of road is easily serviceable from a Council depot, has access to a source of good gravel paving material and water then it is currently less costly to maintain the road.	10
	Low      1 – Close to depots, suitable gravel and water	
	Medium      2 – Two of the above	
	High      5 – None of the above	
Geometric design and safety features of unsealed road	This criteria takes into account the standard of the current geometric design of the road and constructed width. Geometry includes vertical/horizontal alignment and curve radius etc. Safety features of the road include available sight distance, potential roadside hazards, recorded or anecdotal accident history. Available road width is considered on the premise that roads with a greater existing road width will be less expensive to upgrade which allows more works to be completed under Council's budget allocations.	10
	0 – Poor geometry and safety features and width < or = 5m 1 – Good geometry and safety features and poor width < or = 5m 2 – Poor geometry and safety features and width from 5 to 6.5m 4 – Good geometry and safety features and width from 5 to 6.5m 6 – Good geometry and safety features and width ≥ 6.5m	
Pavement subject to inundation and road side drainage	If the road has poor drainage or is subject to frequent inundation then pavement failures or flood damage maintenance and restoration costs will be high.	5
	2 – Frequent inundation and poor cross and/or longitudinal drainage 3 – Frequent inundation and good cross and/or longitudinal drainage 5 – Infrequent inundation and poor cross and/or longitudinal drainage 6 – Inundation unlikely and poor cross and/or longitudinal drainage 7 – Infrequent inundation and good cross and/or longitudinal drainage 8 – Inundation unlikely and good cross and longitudinal drainage	

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**Table 2: Scoring and Assessment Method**

Criteria	Scoring Points	Weighting
Any other site specific issues that may arise from works at the site	The Assessor should document any other site specific issues that are relevant and have influenced the decision that has been arrived at, particularly if the recommended action sits outside of the Assessment Outcome derived in Table 3 below.	Not Applicable

The assessment score is derived by multiplying each criteria rating by the criteria weighting and summing the resulting score for criteria. The outcome of the assessment is determined in accordance with Table 3.

**Table 3: Assessment Outcome**

Score	Outcome
<250	Scores less than 250 do not justify sealing. Consideration is given to any identified need from the assessment to upgrade the road in part or in full to a higher unsealed standard in accordance with Council's Design Standards for Rural Roads Guideline.
250 – 500	Scores between 250 and 500 should be considered for a minimum standard seal in accordance with design standards for Category 1 – minimum standard seal in Council's Design Standards for Rural Roads Guideline.
>500	Scores in excess of 500 should be considered for a full design standard seal in accordance with Design Standards for Category 2 – Full Road Design in Council's Design Standards for Rural Roads Guideline.

### 5.3 Intermittent (Dust) Sealing of Unsealed Rural Roads Procedure

Sections of rural roads may be considered for an intermittent seal in accordance with the following assessment framework. The maximum length of an intermittent seal is 200 metres. Intermittent seals are carried out at the applicant's cost.

#### 5.3.1 Assessment Framework

The suitability for a section of rural road to be approved for an intermittent seal is assessed in accordance with the following scoring and assessment method.

**Table 4: Scoring and Assessment Method**

Criteria	Points	Weighting
Traffic volumes	A road is not considered for an intermittent seal if there is less than 30 AADT, unless there are significant issues shown in the assessment score. A road that has an AADT greater than 150 may require a minimum standard seal along its entire length. Traffic volumes should be established through a formal traffic count preferably where traffic volume and class are able to be established. In the absence of this data the assessor is to assume six vehicles per day per habitable dwelling serviced by the road with a maximum of 10% commercial vehicles.	1
	0 – AADT 0-30 20 – AADT 31-49 40 – AADT 50-74 70 – AADT 75-99 AADT ≥100, 1 point for every vehicle Additional 1 point for every commercial vehicle (max of 20% of AADT)	

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<b>Table 4: Scoring and Assessment Method</b>		
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
Proximity of a dwelling to the road and prevailing winds	Measurement may be taken from Geocortex aerial photography if available and is measured from the road reserve boundary to first habitable dwelling.	10
	0 – Dwelling >100m from road frontage 1 – Dwelling 70-100m from road frontage 3 – Dwelling 51-69m from road frontage 6 – Dwelling 31-50m from road frontage 9 – Dwelling 16-30m from road frontage 10 – Dwelling 0-15m from road frontage	
Geometric and constructed standard and safety features of existing road	The road must have: (a) The ability to be easily upgraded to the appropriate formation and seal width of 5.5 metres; (b) Reasonable gradients, vertical/horizontal alignment and sight distance that will not compromise safety if sealed; and (c) A solid, well compacted road base that is able to support the proposed overlay for the expected traffic loads to minimise future pavement failures if the road is sealed.  If the unsealed road has a poor longitudinal drainage system then every effort should be made to provide adequate longitudinal drainage to minimise future pavement failures.	5
	0 – Poor geometry, pavement and safety features and width ≤5m 1 – Good geometry, pavement and safety features and poor width ≤5m 2 – Poor geometry, pavement and safety features and width from 5 to 6.5m 4 – Good geometry, pavement and safety features and width from 5 to 6.5m 6 – Good geometry, pavement and safety features and width ≥6.5m	
Operating Speed environment	This criteria reflects the presumption that the greater the predominant travel speeds on the road, the more dust is generated.	10
	1 – Operating speed ≤50km/h 3 – Operating speed 51-99km/h 4 – Operating speed ≥100km/h	
Any other site specific issues that may arise from works at the site	The Assessor should document any other site specific issues that are relevant and have influenced the decision that has been arrived at, particularly if the recommended action sits outside of the Assessment Outcome derived in Table 5 below.	Not Applicable

The assessment score is derived by multiplying each criteria rating by the criteria weighting and summing the resulting score for criteria.

The outcome of the assessment is determined in accordance with Table 5.

<b>Table 5: Assessment Outcome</b>	
<b>Score</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<150	Scores less than 150 do not justify intermittent sealing unless there are site specific issues or extenuating circumstances that provide additional justification.

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Table 5: Assessment Outcome	
Score	Outcome
>150	Scores in excess of 150 should be considered for an intermittent seal in accordance with Design Standards for Category 3 – Intermittent Seal Standard in Council's Design Standards for Rural Roads Guideline.

## 6 Review Timelines

This procedure is reviewed when any of the following occur:

- (a) The related information is amended or replaced; or
- (b) Other circumstances as determined from time to time by the General Manager Regional Services.

## 7 Document Management

Sponsor	Chief Executive Officer
Business Owner	General Manager Regional Services
Policy Owner	Manager Civil Operations
Policy Quality Control	Legal and Governance



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