ACTIVITY CENTRE – Blackburn, Nunawading and Mitcham

PHASE 2 CONSULTATION – Key Points Categorised

The information below is a synthesis of some of the issues identified by the community and also identified in the Council report.

Use the information to assist in responding to the Online Survey or for preparing a written submission to activity.centres@transport.vic.gov.au

Information is in 3 sections.

- **Summary of key issues**
- **Key Points Categorised.** *(520 words, ~3,480 characters)*
- **Key Issues and Requested Changes** *(522 words, ~3,604 characters)*
- ***Other Matters to consider***

Key issues Summary

General comments on Activity Centre maps and process.

- The community welcomes and endorses the exclusion of SLO's from activity centres, however the recent introduction of SLO11 requires some minor adjustments.
- The community is concerned with the lack of detail provided with the activity centre maps. Council has been provided with more detailed private information but not the community who are being asked to provide genuine feedback without access to critical information.

Key Issues

Infrastructure & Liveability

- No clear or funded plans for schools, parks, libraries, community facilities or utilities.
- Inadequate pedestrian safety and connectivity across major roads and rail.
- Increased stormwater and flooding risk from higher site coverage.
- Reduced parking disadvantages older residents and families.
- No provision for active transport links

Building Height & Residential Interface

- Abrupt height changes at Activity Centre boundaries.
- Overshadowing, loss of privacy and visual dominance of adjoining homes.
- Insufficient setbacks and transition controls.

- Light, shading and wind impacts.

Human-Scale Urban Design

- Uniform “as-of-right” development prioritises yield over liveability.
- Loss of tree canopy reduces walkability, shade and street amenity.
- Limited diversity of dwelling types.

12–16 Storeys & Light Impacts

- Heights inconsistent with village scale of Blackburn, Nunawading and Mitcham.
- Overshadowing of streets, public spaces and neighbouring properties.
- Wind, reflected sound, sun glare and poor microclimate reduce pedestrian and resident comfort.

Requested Changes

Infrastructure & Liveability

- Require infrastructure planning, funding and sequencing before rezoning.
- Mandate safe pedestrian crossings and improved connectivity.
- Strengthen water-sensitive urban design and retain adequate parking.
- High standard active transport links

Building Height & Residential Interface

- Introduce mandatory height transitions at residential boundaries.
- Increase setbacks and reduce site coverage at interfaces.
- Ensure building articulation to reduce reflected sound and light.

Human-Scale Urban Design

- Embed human-scale design, canopy retention and quality public realm standards.
- Require a broader mix of dwelling types, including family-sized housing.

12–16 Storeys & Light Impacts

- Reduce maximum building heights to reflect local character.
- Apply strict overshadowing, sun glare and wind-mitigation controls.

Key Points Categorised.

Key Infrastructure for Safety and Liveability

(schools, parks, community spaces, walking connections, utilities, parking)

- The proposed increase in dwelling density is not supported by clearly articulated or funded infrastructure plans.
- No evidence has been provided demonstrating sufficient capacity for schools, childcare, health services, libraries, community spaces or emergency services to support population growth.
- Established neighbourhoods lack available land for new parks, open space and community facilities, increasing pressure on already constrained assets. Suitable sites not identified.
- Safe pedestrian connectivity is inadequate, particularly across major roads and rail corridors, limiting access to schools, shops, parks and community facilities. Active transport links to, from and through centres are not identified or prioritised including improved walkable streets, separated cycle lanes and Greenstreet's with enhanced streetscape and tree shade planting.
- Increased impervious surfaces will exacerbate stormwater runoff and flood risk in the absence of upgraded sewerage and water-sensitive urban design. Also, urban heating will be exacerbated and canopy planting opportunities reduced.
- No strategies identified to address reduced parking provision Disadvantages older residents, people with mobility limitations and families will continue to rely on car use, undermining safety and ageing-in-place objectives.
- Infrastructure delivery must be planned and sequenced alongside development through a coordinated master-planning approach, rather than retrofitted after growth occurs.
- Outer catchment is abutting the core in the proposed Blackburn plans. The gradual transition outward from the core should be reinstated with reduced heights in the core and the inclusion of an inner catchment.
- Neighbourhood Residential Zone at the north of Mitcham should be excluded and should only interface with the outer catchment.

Building Height Interface with Residential Streets

- Proposed building heights do not provide appropriate transitions to adjoining residential neighbourhoods and limit landscape and amenity options because of minimum setbacks, non-porous surfaces, high street frontages.
- Abrupt height changes at Activity Centre boundaries will result in visual dominance, overshadowing and loss of privacy for existing homes. (Gardinia, Laburnum, John streets and Pope Road Blackburn, West Street Nunawading,

- Insufficient setbacks and increased site coverage intensify impacts, particularly along interfaces with Neighbourhood Residential zones. (Gardinia Street Blackburn, Simpson Street and Sunshine and Reserve Avenue Mitcham)
- Height and scale transitions should be mandatory both at Activity Centre boundaries and between core and catchment areas to respect local context and minimise amenity impacts.
- Over height 12 storey buildings in Blackburn's commercial district will impact on Blackburn's significant landscapes, in particular overshadowing of single dwellings at the southern interface.
- Light spill from high rise buildings will negatively impact the creeklands habitat corridor south of the Balckburn Activity Centre. Nocturnal fauna and birdlife will be affected.

Human-Scale Urban Design for Liveability

- The proposed controls promote uniform, as-of-right development outcomes that prioritise efficiency over liveability.
- Human-scale design principles—such as generous setbacks, articulated facades, active street frontages and meaningful landscaping—are inadequately addressed.
- Loss of mature trees and reduced canopy cover will diminish walkability, increase heat stress and reduce street-level amenity.
- Activity Centres should support a mix of dwelling types, including family-sized apartments and townhouses, to foster diverse, stable and inclusive communities.
- High-quality public realm design is essential to encourage social interaction, safety and long-term community use of Activity Centres.

12–16 Storey Buildings and Shadowing Impacts

- Building heights of 12–16 storeys are excessive in the context of Blackburn, Nunawading and Mitcham and are inconsistent with their established village scale.
- Tall buildings will cause significant overshadowing of streets, public spaces and neighbouring properties, reducing access to daylight.
- Reduced sunlight will negatively affect thermal comfort, vegetation health and the usability of public and private open space.
- Overshadowing, reflected road noise and wind tunnelling through hi rise canyons will undermine pedestrian and residential comfort and discourage walking, particularly for older residents.
- Building heights should be reduced and more responsive to local character, with strict controls to protect sunlight access and microclimate conditions.
- Building towers with large glass areas increase heat and glare load on nearby and adjoining properties impacting amenity and cooling costs.

Key Issues and Requested Changes

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1. Key Infrastructure for Safety and Liveability

Key Issues

- Proposed dwelling increases are not supported by clearly identified or funded infrastructure plans.
- Insufficient capacity planning for schools, childcare, health services, libraries, community spaces including parks and emergency services. Sites for these future services not protected for future use.
- Limited availability of land in established areas for new parks, open space and community facilities. None identified for open space.
- Inadequate safe walking and cycling connections, particularly across major roads and rail corridors.
- Increased site coverage will intensify stormwater runoff and flood risk without corresponding sewerage and water-management upgrades.
- Reduced parking provision disadvantages older residents, families and people with limited mobility, undermining safety and ageing-in-place.
- Infrastructure planning is occurring after zoning decisions, rather than guiding them.

Requested Changes

- Require infrastructure planning and delivery to be clearly identified, funded and sequenced prior to increased development capacity. increased housing density must be supported by clear articulation and adequate provision of infrastructure, including:
    - Transport improvements, open space, community facilities, integrated water management and climate-responsive planning outcomes,
    - State Government funding for major infrastructure items such as a pedestrian/cycling crossing over the railway between Harvey Norman and Home HQ to Station Street in Nunawading.

- Mandate integrated master-planning for Activity Centres, including schools, open space, community facilities and utilities – particularly on large opportunity sites exceeding 5,000 square metres as well as some strategically located smaller sites as detailed in Council's submission. Increase the provision of community infrastructure to support the large / doubling of population proposed - particularly open space/sports facilities, childcare/education, medical/emergency facilities, council facilities like libraries/senior citizens/aged care etc.
- Improve pedestrian safety and accessibility through safe crossings over major roads and rail corridors. Link and make safe walking and "active" access pathways connecting all residential, commercial, industrial and public transport - particularly across major roads such as Whitehorse, Middleborough, Springvale, Mitcham and

Blackburn Roads all of which are major arterial roads that already have heavy traffic loads and will become business once NE Link is finished.

- Strengthen water-sensitive urban design and stormwater management requirements. Need to align with Melbourne Water new flood plans.
- Retain adequate parking provision to support accessibility, safety and diverse community needs.
- Recognise and protect the values outside Activity Centres that will be put under pressure due to population increase - particularly green space, outflow of lighting onto sensitive landscapes, overflow parking requirements.
- Improve "village" access/egress so that it improves - community village feel - not splits it - e.g. Blackburn currently with Blackburn road and railway line splitting the village – consider Blackburn station redevelopment with residential and open space above a lowered station.
- Simpson Park needs to stay largely for passive recreation – small value-adding activations such as seating, shade, a playground would be supported– not fencing around the oval or lighting, introduction of hard surfaces for sport etc, as any more than small changes will detract from the community's enjoyment of the passive nature of this park –

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2. Building Height Interface with Residential Streets

Key Issues

- Proposed building heights create abrupt transitions at Activity Centre boundaries.
- Overshadowing, visual bulk and loss of privacy for adjoining residential streets.
- Increased site coverage and reduced setbacks intensify amenity impacts.
- Lack of mandatory height and scale transitions between core and catchment areas.

Requested Changes

- Introduce mandatory height transitions at all interfaces with Neighbourhood Residential zones.
- Require increased setbacks and reduced site coverage at residential boundaries.
- Apply graduated height controls between Activity Centre cores and catchments.
- Ensure interface controls prioritise residential amenity and neighbourhood character.
- Heritage and environmental overlay protections, to consider:
    - Additional planning controls for sensitive interfaces like Laburnum Street in Blackburn and the northern and southern outer catchment in Mitcham to protect the integrity of existing SLOs, Vegetation Protection Overlays (VPOs), Heritage Overlays (HOs) and NRZ areas.
    - Applying the Environmental Audit Overlay (EAO) to parts of the activity centres with current or past industrial uses such as south of Railway Road (east section) and 2 – 4 Central Road in Blackburn.

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3. Human-Scale Urban Design for Liveability

Key Issues

- Uniform, “as-of-right” development outcomes prioritise efficiency over liveability.
- Insufficient emphasis on human-scale design at street level.
- Loss of mature trees and canopy reduces walkability and thermal comfort.
- Limited housing diversity, particularly family-sized and ageing-in-place dwellings.
- Public realm quality is treated as secondary to yield.

Requested Changes

- Embed human-scale urban design principles, including articulated façades, active frontages and meaningful landscaping. Each village should be Max 8 storeys with quality transitions - particularly with setbacks between tall/medium/low level development - minimise shading/overlooking on existing dwellings, optimise access to light for all and reduce wind-tunnelling effects.
- Strengthen tree retention and canopy protection requirements. include more open space particularly protecting and increasing canopy trees for shade/amenity - **as part of all private developments** - use less concrete - more natural materials.
- Require a broader mix of dwelling types, including family-sized apartments and townhouses.
- Embed into the Activity Centre plans high quality public realm treatments that enhances amenity for all:
    - Prioritise high standard active transport connections.
    - Value, respect, preserve and enhance heritage/history/character.
    - Incorporate mandatory intergenerational and affordable/social housing requirements into all major developments to create vibrant and diverse neighbourhoods.
    - Incorporate basic community needs into multi-storey developments - grocery stores, delis, cafes, medical centres etc. as well as enhanced community assets such as meeting places, Blackburn library etc.- see Manningham centres along Doncaster road (i.e.. Manningham City Square 687 Doncaster Road) as an example?
- Ensure all developments / buildings are sustainable and interesting designs (not boxes wall-to-wall) including 6* efficiency - solar, water etc.
- Reclassify Blackburn from Housing Growth Index 3 to Index 2. Index 3 allows much taller buildings. Nunawading and Mitcham are Index 2.
- Review the proposed maximum building heights across the Blackburn Activity Centre core to ensure that future development intensity aligns with infrastructure capacity, local character, and community expectations.
- Balance policy outcomes so that the job creating commercial role is not cannibalised by residential development.

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4. Overshadowing and light impacts - 12–16 Storey Buildings.

Key Issues

- Building heights of 12–16 storeys are inconsistent with the village scale of Blackburn, Nunawading and Mitcham.
- Significant overshadowing, light reflectivity and glint into streets, public spaces and neighbouring properties.
- Reduced access to daylight impacts vegetation health, thermal comfort and public space usability.
- Wind turbulence and tunnelling and poor microclimate conditions reduce pedestrian and resident comfort and safety.
- Street and residential noise impacts through reflected road noise.

Requested Changes

- Reduce maximum building heights to reflect local character and scale.
- Introduce strict overshadowing and glazing controls to protect sunlight access to streets and open spaces.
- Require wind and microclimate mitigation measures for all multi-storey development.
- Ensure building envelopes support daylight, thermal comfort and street-level amenity.
- Ensure adequate front, side and rear setbacks for landscaping and building articulation to minimise reflected light and noise.
- Better consideration/alignment with Whitehorse Council Megamile/BB Village Neighbourhood Activity centre plan which incorporates more consistent development along Whitehorse road between all Activity Centres. Reducing max heights in Blackburn and reducing "spread" of HCTZ's - i.e. consolidate along major arteries and existing growth zones, whilst reducing Activity Centre footprint
- Overshadowing and solar access protections, including:
    - High level protection for existing and future open space with mandatory sun access (no additional overshadowing) between 10 am - 3 pm on June 21.
    - Solar protection of key public realm such as Britannia Mall, Mitcham between 10am -2pm, 22 September 2026
- Reduce heights of buildings so as to reduce impact of light on sensitive wildlife habitats.

Other matters to consider.

Lack of Consideration of alternative sites for development

- To cater for reduced maximum heights in villages - consider other alternatives for community village development e.g.:
  - Join villages together better along the Megamile.
  - Cover trainline where possible to build open space/community facilities and linkages.
  - Rethink Blackburn Road as Arterial vs local road?
  - Consider rezoning underutilized industrial areas close to public transport - e.g. Solwood lane Blackburn, Silver Grove and ex-Holeproof factory in Nunawading.
- Support Council's rezoning of Silver Grove in Nunawading. to get mutually beneficial outcome with the State Government – this could be a test case / example of the State and a Council working together to develop an underutilised large site right next to a station in an Activity Centre for the benefit of all. Currently the windfall gains tax makes any development unfeasible.

Boundary Change Suggestions

- Expand the Nunawading activity centre core boundary to include the new public open space and the Mixed-Use Zone (MUZ) located in the northern portion of 56–74 Station Street, Nunawading (former Daniel Robertson Brickworks) within the core boundary.
- Exclude the following sensitive areas from the catchment boundary:
  - a. Candlebark Estate in Nunawading which is affected by SLO11.
  - b. Gillies/Deakin/Fellows/Haines Street, the area north of Burnett Street to William Street and the area west of Simpson Park, Mitcham in the Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ).
  - c. the Thomas Street heritage precinct in Mitcham
  - Blocks impacted by SL011 on east side of Springvale Road close to West Street.
  - Area of North of a line joining John and Fir Street in Blackburn that splits Cootamundra walk – should be zoned for future Public Open Space to link 2 sections of Cootamundra walk.
- High rise development (Core) should stop on the north side of Brunswick Road on Mitcham Road due to the steep terrain of the area to the southeast and the fact this is at the very top of the hill, falling off to the east.
- The area bounded by Simpson Street and Garden Avenue, Simpson Park and Creek Road should be removed from the Activity Centre project area totally. This is more than 1,200m from the core and it is disingenuous to say this is well serviced by transport i.e. buses, as there no service over weekends and they only run 5 times a day during the week.
- Apply the Outer Catchment to:
  - a. the Percy Street/Creek Road area and to the interface with the Thomas Street heritage precinct in Mitcham
  - b. Laughlin Avenue in Nunawading
  - c. Laburnum Street/South Parade area, Broomhill Avenue and the area north of O'Hara Street in Blackburn.