

22.06 ACTIVITY CENTRES

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This policy applies to all Activity Centres. The structure planning and/or urban design framework processes are used to provide more detailed guidance on land use, built form and neighbourhood character expectations for larger activity centres, and to include stakeholders and the community in the planning process.

22.06-1 Policy basis

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The metropolitan planning strategy *Plan Melbourne* places emphasis on the need to support a network of activity centres. The development of Metropolitan Activity Centres is to be supported to serve their sub-regional catchment, Major Activity Centres are to be recognised for their role in providing services, employment and housing, and Neighbourhood Activity Centres support the concept of '20-minute neighbourhoods' which enable good local access to a range of services and facilities.

Within the City of Whitehorse, Box Hill is nominated as a Metropolitan Activity Centre. Planning objectives for the Box Hill Central Activities Area are addressed through Clause 22.07 of the Whitehorse Planning Scheme.

Major Activity Centres in the City of Whitehorse are Forest Hill, Nunawading/MegaMile, Burwood Heights and Burwood East-Tally Ho. One of the City's main retail strengths is the Whitehorse Road MegaMile strip which Council wishes to consolidate through appropriate land use and development.

There are 60 Neighbourhood Activity Centres within the municipality. These make an important contribution to local service provision, vibrant local economies and provide opportunities for a greater diversity of housing choices.

Each of the City's activity centres makes a significant contribution to the City's economy and plays a role in meeting the needs of the community. Clause 21.07 Economic Development outlines Council's aim to assist activity centres in responding to changing trends and demands, whilst improving their amenity. It is essential that these centres provide for appropriate community services and facilities consistent with their role and scale and become a focus for social interaction. It is important to ensure that any new development assists Council's aim to improve the amenity and visual appearance of each centre.

22.06-2 Objectives

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- To ensure that land use and development in activity centres reinforce, and are appropriate to, the role of the centre.
- To ensure that each centre responds to the needs of the community.
- To ensure that new retail floorspace reflects retail demand and considers the impact on the retail hierarchy and the planned role and function of other activity centres.
- To maintain and enhance the role of activity centres as a community focus.
- To improve the appearance and amenity of all activity centres.

22.06-3 Policy

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It is policy that:

Whitehorse Road MegaMile shopping strip

- Whitehorse Road, generally between Blackburn and Rooks Roads, be the primary location in the City for homemaker retailing, supplemented by a significant motor vehicle retailing sector.
- Development be of a high-quality design that enhances the streetscape.

- New use and development should have regard to the vision and principles of the *Nunawading/MegaMile Major Activity Centre and Mitcham Neighbourhood Activity Centre Structure Plan* (this policy statement does not apply after 31 January 2014).
- New use and development should have regard to the *Megamile (west) and Blackburn Activity Centres Urban Design Framework, July 2010*.

Forest Hill Chase

- Forest Hill Chase Shopping Centre continue as part of a Major Activity Centre primarily providing convenience and comparison retail facilities, a cinema complex and entertainment facilities.

Burwood Heights

- Burwood Heights includes a large vacant strategic development site. It offers a potential to be developed into an activity centre of a form envisaged by *Melbourne 2030*. A structure plan has been prepared to guide future development and improvement of Burwood Heights.

Neighbourhood centres

- Large neighbourhood centres continue to focus on providing convenience retailing with limited comparison retailing for the weekly shopping needs of the local community.
- Smaller neighbourhood centres continue to focus on providing limited convenience retailing.
- The redevelopment and renovation of existing buildings and shop fronts, and other works, be encouraged to improve the visual amenity and streetscape of these centres and respond to the character of the surrounding residential area.
- Office and residential uses be encouraged in appropriate centres where the retailing function is declining.
- Adjoining Neighbourhood Activity Centres provide a supporting role to the Whitehorse Road MegaMile Major Activity Centre.
- New use and development should have regard to the vision and principles of the *Nunawading/MegaMile Major Activity Centre and Mitcham Neighbourhood Activity Centre Structure Plan and Megamile (west) and Blackburn Activity Centres Urban Design Framework, July 2010*.

Expansion of Major Activity Centres and Neighbourhood Activity Centres

An Amendment to the Planning Scheme or change to a strategic framework plan approved under the Planning Scheme to facilitate expansion in shop floorspace above 3000m² leasable floor area in a Major Activity Centre or 2000m² leasable floor area in a Neighbourhood Activity Centre must be accompanied by a Retail Sustainability Assessment (RSA).

The Retail Sustainability Assessment must be prepared by a suitably qualified person and include the following:

- *The defined Main Trade Area (MTA), from which approximately 80% of anticipated expenditure will be sourced. This should comprise a Primary Trade Area (PTA) accounting for approximately 60% of expenditure, and a Secondary Trade Area (STA) accounting for approximately 20% of expenditure.*
- *Calculation of the total retail expenditure pool generated by the catchment and the retained expenditure that is expected 'pre' and 'post' development.*
- *Assessment of whether the volume of retail expenditure that is expected to be retained in the catchment 'post' development is consistent with the centre's position in the retail hierarchy.*

- *Why the expected retail turnover per m² has been chosen for a proposed retail format and compare it to State and National benchmarks. Variations in performance between the proposed retail tenancies and benchmark standards should be explained.*
- *Clear reporting on the market share that is expected for retail floorspace across key retail categories in the Primary and Secondary trade areas including food and 'non-food' retail floorspace.*
- *Clear indications of where additional trade is expected to be sourced.*
- *Expected trading impacts on existing and proposed centres for each stage of the development.*
- *Calculation of employment impacts and impacts on the unemployment rate in the region based on the volume of jobs the centre is expected to support.*

22.06-4 Decision guidelines

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In assessing an application to amend the Planning Scheme or amend a strategic framework plan approved under the planning scheme the Responsible Authority will consider:

- The extent to which the use and development meets the objectives and requirements of this policy.
- The impact of new retail floorspace on the hierarchy and role of activity centres within the City of Whitehorse, and the findings of the Retail Sustainability Assessment if applicable.

22.06-5 Further strategic work

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- Prepare Structure Plans for Specialised and Neighbourhood Activity Centres as required.
- Prepare Business Plans for Activity Centres.

22.06-6 Policy references

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Whitehorse Road Economic and Enterprise Development Strategy, 1996
Nunawading/MegaMile Major Activity Centre and Mitcham Neighbourhood Activity Centre Structure Plan, April 2008 (this policy reference does not apply after 31 January 2014)
Burwood Heights Activity Centre Structure Plan, June 2006
Burwood Village Neighbourhood Activity Centre, Looking Towards the Future, May 2008
MegaMile (west) and Blackburn Activity Centres Urban Design Framework, July 2010
City of Whitehorse Retail Strategy Review, October 2010
Neighbourhood Activity Centre Urban Design Guidelines, 2014