

The background features three overlapping teal-colored geometric shapes: a triangle on the left, a trapezoid in the center, and a large irregular polygon on the right.

**2.0**

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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## 2.0 Community Engagement

### The Process

The community engagement process for this project includes two phases of engagement. The first phase focused on an online survey, with the second phase consisting of two drop-in sessions.

Further detail from the Phase 1 and 2 consultation sessions can be found in Appendix B.

### Phase 1: (March/April 2018)

The objectives for this phase of community engagement were to:

- promote the project and opportunities for community input and feedback;
- build the community's understanding of the planning controls and issues impacting the design of residential corridors located in the RGZ;
- gain insights about what issues the community thinks should be considered in this review and why;
- gain insights about what the community thinks are positive or negative housing development examples; and,
- promote the next steps for the project.

This first phase of community engagement involved two engagement tools: a newsletter

and an online survey. The newsletter that was distributed to all properties within and adjacent to the RGZ corridor. It included information about the project and a web link to the online survey. The online survey was open for four weeks and received a total of 397 responses.

In this Phase, participants identified a number of concerns arising from development and its potential impacts. Principally, the visual appearance and bulk of development occurring in Whitehorse. Respondents indicated that development should be respectful of existing character, and must consider the resulting increased demand on infrastructure and services. The inclusion of adequate green space and parking was also identified as a priority.

### Phase 2: (June/July 2018)

The objectives for this phase of community engagement were to:

- promote the project and opportunities for community input and feedback;
- inform the community about how their feedback has been incorporated into the study; and
- present and test the draft Residential Corridor Built Form guidelines.

Two drop-in sessions were undertaken for this stage of engagement. Each session provided residents with an opportunity to learn more about the project and provide feedback on the draft report. A total of 92 attendees were recorded between the two sessions.

Whitehorse residents were invited to take part in a survey that provided them the opportunity to comment on the draft controls. This survey was available at the drop-in sessions and at Council's online website. A total of 66 survey responses were received.

From this Phase it was evident that the draft principles and controls were able to address some concerns raised in Phase 1. Respondents supported the proposed setbacks and maximum building height, but approximately 30 respondents thought they should be more conservative to further reduce visual bulk, and overlooking/overshadowing concerns persisted. Recommendations for green space and vegetation in setbacks were supported, as were the controls relating to lighting, pedestrian access, wind effects and good design.

## Summary of Community Feedback

Overall, the design and potential impacts of new residential buildings along road corridors is important to residents. While there is not one specific design that new developments should adhere to, it is important to residents that the built form of new structures minimise impacts to nearby properties.

Height limits, quality design, setbacks, vegetation, and attractive streetscapes were identified as important design features that improve residents' perceptions and acceptance of new developments.

According to survey responses, residents are divided in their support for the draft principles. Approximately half of survey respondents support the principles overall and expect they will deliver better built form outcomes for current and future residents. The other half do not believe the draft principles/controls will allow too much medium- and high-density development that will negatively impact the community.

There is strong opinion that new development should not come at the expense of green space or existing character. Respondents want Council to ensure that new developments do not reasonably overshadow adjoining properties, restrict access to natural light, or affect the privacy of existing residences. In this regard, proposed building

setbacks and height limits remain an area of concern. Two-thirds of survey respondents would prefer a height limit of four or fewer storeys.

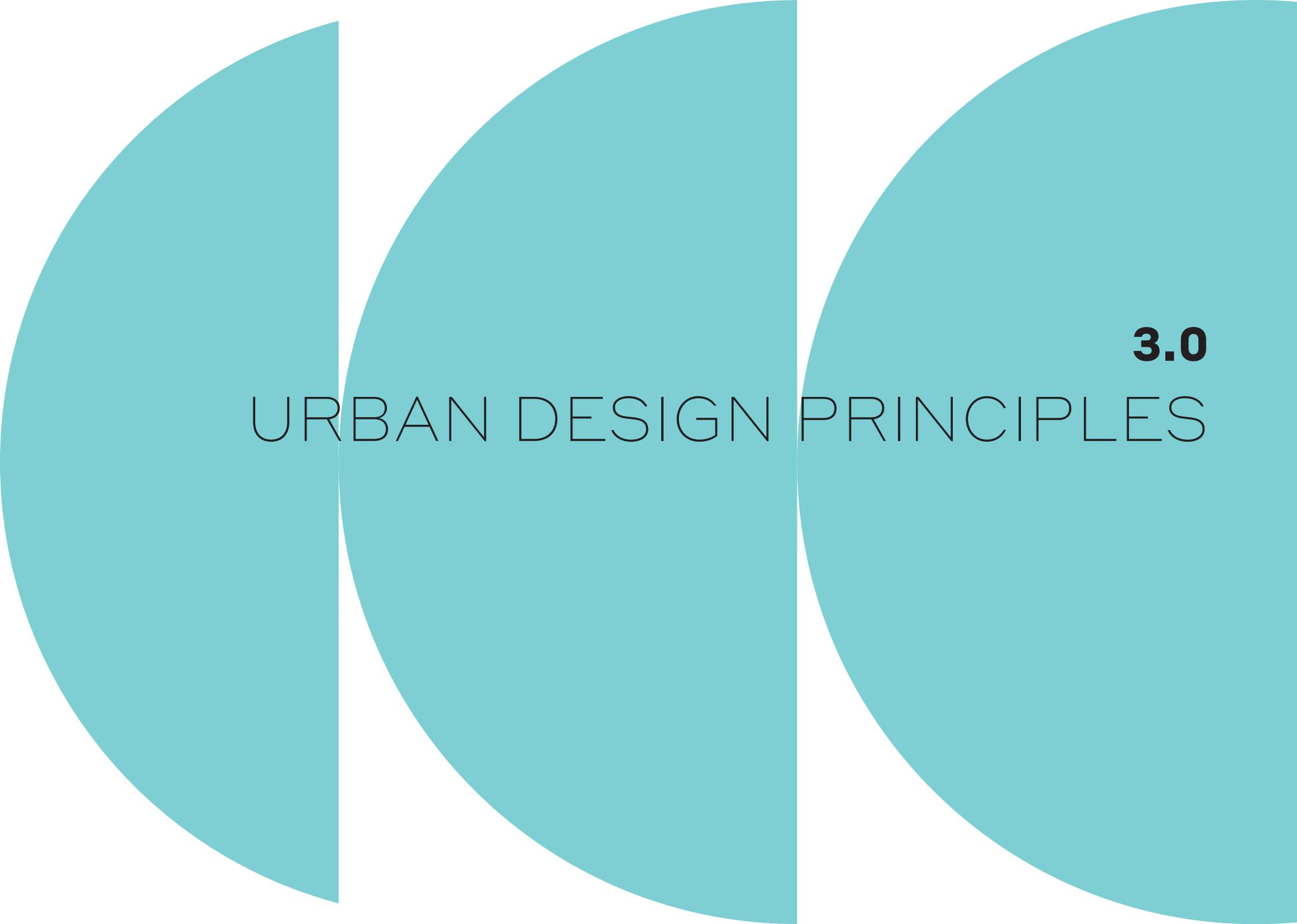
Car parking and management of traffic and access to properties along the road corridors was a popular theme throughout the engagement process. Many respondents want to see more on-site car parking and less overflow to neighbouring streets. Respondents suggested this concern could be more explicitly addressed in the draft controls.

Respondents questioned how Council would enforce built form principles and controls, and whether or not developers will successfully be held to them. Some added that it is especially difficult to enforce controls on landscaping, in particular the maintenance of private gardens.

Respondents expressed the need to link the increase in population growth to additional support infrastructure and services, as well as to balance the needs of existing and new residents. Future work should also consider noise and light pollution, wind effects, and specific locations most appropriate for new development.

The following urban design principles and built form controls have been refined to reflect the feedback received during both Phase 1 and 2 of consultation.





# URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

**3.0**

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## 3.0 Vision and Urban Design Principles

### 3.1 Vision for the Residential Corridors

The following vision draws from the State and Local Planning Frameworks in considering Whitehorse Road and Burwood Highway forming the boulevards of Whitehorse. These corridors are key thoroughfares, acting as exemplars of the City and as gateways to the remainder of the City's residential areas.

**The Residential Corridors along Whitehorse Road and Burwood Highway will showcase the best of contemporary design, reflecting the quality and key landscape attributes of the surrounding suburbs. The interfaces with adjoining residences will be sensitively managed with space for substantial landscaping and careful attention to minimising potential amenity impacts.**

### 3.2 Principles for Corridor Development

The following design principles have informed the development of more detailed recommendations.



#### **Principle 1: Require Architectural Excellence Across All Developments**

Architectural excellence goes beyond the skin of the building; it is critically about how the building responds to its context, including the future character of the area, the street, and how it integrates best practice environmentally sustainable design techniques. It is important that excellence is achieved in some way on all developments, not just those that are in the most prominent location or those that propose the greatest height.

Detailed design objectives and preferred development outcomes are required to ensure architectural excellence is achieved on all development.

#### **Standard**

It is recommended that a professional review of developments is undertaken including referral to the Victorian Design Review Panel for significant developments, and/or engagement with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Design Advisory Service Better Apartments.



## Principle 2: Enhance Sensitive Interfaces – Residential and Open Space

The Residential Corridors interface with adjacent low scale residential areas (which are affected by the General or Neighbourhood Residential Zone). The scale and character of the Whitehorse Road and Burwood Highway corridors being within the Residential Growth Zone allows and encourages apartment developments up to 4 storeys. The permit data analysis demonstrates that based on lots sizes and consolidation, greater heights (5-6 storeys) are being permitted.

The height of buildings in the RGZ where they interface with residential areas in other zones is a key issue in this study, and a key issue of concern to the Whitehorse community. In general, it is considered that a 5-6 storey form can be accommodated in most cases, with sufficient setbacks (discussed below). It is considered a preferred height, less than a mandatory maximum of 6 storeys, would provide a nuanced preferred character adjacent to the residential zones which allow a maximum height of 3 storeys in the General Residential Zone.

Protecting the amenity of the adjacent existing residential properties is required both in the short term and long term.

Clause 55 (Standard B17) of the planning scheme aims to protect residential amenity through its side and rear setback provisions, and overlooking and overshadowing provisions.

Consideration of alternative setbacks is warranted to respond to the changing nature of development including the application of Clause 58 (Apartment Developments) which applies to development of 5 or more storeys, and also the lack of response to the desired landscaping character of the area.

A large rear setback from adjacent residential properties adjoining the RGZ corridor is considered appropriate as it not only overcomes the need for screening of windows as the new development will include setbacks greater than the distance where screening is required, but also enables large canopy planting to this interface with the ability for 12 metre tall canopy trees (as per Clause 58 Standard D10, Landscaping of the Whitehorse Planning Scheme). This also requires deep soil to ensure that the landscaped areas around the development will thrive.

## Standard

It is recommended that in general a preferred maximum height of 5 storeys (with the exception of the areas adjoining the Neighbourhood Residential Zone east of Springvale Road where a preferred maximum height of 4 storeys should apply) and a maximum height of 6 storeys should apply to development within the RGZ in the Study Areas to provide a better interface with adjoining development.

Development proposed greater than the preferred maximum heights should demonstrate excellence in design, compliance with all principles and standards in this report, and methods used to minimise impact on adjoining residences.



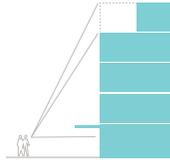
### Principle 3: Provide for Equitable Access to Amenity

Development across the Whitehorse Road and Burwood Highway corridors are likely to be sporadic with potential for new, taller buildings to be located adjacent to existing, low scale buildings for a substantial period of time. It is important to have measures in place to ensure the future development potential of adjoining sites is not compromised by the earlier development.

A key consideration is equitable access to amenity to ensure adjoining buildings within the corridors have sufficient separation, to limit overshadowing and ensure adequate privacy for apartments and access to daylight.

#### Standard

It is recommended that a mandatory minimum separation distance between buildings of 9 metres (achieved with a 4.5 metre setback to common side boundaries and an offset of windows) where the separation does not require the reliance on screening.



### Principle 4: Reinforce the Sense of Human Scale to the Street

The built form along both the Whitehorse Road and Burwood Highway corridors include a mix of low scale detached houses, units and townhouses and the beginnings of widespread apartment developments. The existing character is changing over time, based on recent approved developments, permit applications and planning policies encouraging further intensification of development along these corridors.

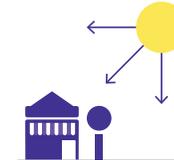
It is important that new, taller buildings are designed in a way that integrates them with existing lower scale dwellings and do not dominate the streetscape. This is possible by providing a lower scale building towards the street and setting taller elements further behind.

A four-storey building height towards the street is recommended as this will reinforce a human scale and also assists in mitigating wind downdraughts.

#### Standard

It is recommended that buildings should be setback 3 metres to the street above 4-storeys in height to reinforce a sense of human scale to the street.

It is also recommended that wind effects are considered for any development over 4 storeys in height.



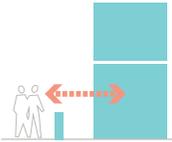
### Principle 5: Maintain Solar Access to Public Open Spaces

Maintaining sunlight to these key spaces support the vitality of the area and the landscaped character of the area.

Sunlight access is usually measured at the equinox (22 September) in Planning Schemes across Victoria. Limiting shadowing to the equinox is also considered to provide a balance between good solar access at key times of the day whilst not unduly limiting development opportunities along the residential corridors.

#### Standard

It is recommended that solar access be measured for shadows cast at the equinox (22 September) to key open spaces between 12pm and 2pm on 22 September.



### Principle 6: Provide for Integrated Frontages

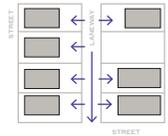
The resolution of the ground floor frontages of new apartment buildings can contribute to a positive pedestrian experience including passive surveillance. Frontages should avoid:

- blank walls,
- car parking areas,
- wide car park entrances,
- services, and
- high fences.

#### Standard

It is recommended that all buildings are constructed with larger floor to ceiling heights at ground floor, capable of supporting home based businesses or retail as allowed for in the Residential Growth zone (subject to permit). This will allow for buildings to be adapted in future as allowable in the zone, and providing passive surveillance of the street.

Additionally, consideration of lower fence heights and landscaping within the front setback will assist in integrating the new buildings with the desired landscaped character of the area.



### Principle 7: Ensure Adequate Servicing of Existing and New Developments

As the Whitehorse Road and Burwood Highway corridors develop, so do the service and access requirements for buildings. This includes access to car parking for residents, access for service vehicles, pedestrian and cycle access, and emergency service and waste collection access.

It is important that new development takes advantage of existing service access arrangements. Where possible, driveway crossovers should be located on secondary frontages and minimised in width.

Another key consideration is ensuring that new development can be accessed adequately by pedestrians and cyclists.

#### Standard

It is recommended that buildings at ground floor resolve vehicle access and services and not dominate the streetscape/public areas.

