

Managing Residential Growth in Whitehorse

Council finalised the Whitehorse Housing Strategy in 2014 to guide development in the city in line with community aspirations and the needs of the future population. The purpose of the strategy was to assess where and how to direct new development, to define the special and valued characteristics of the municipality and to implement specific planning tools to manage how Whitehorse changes.

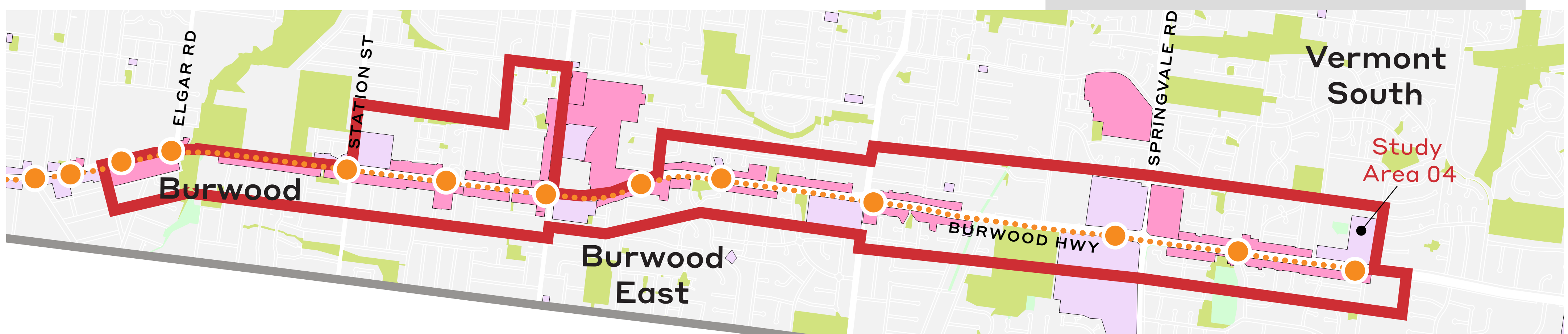
The Whitehorse Housing Strategy 2014 directed growth and change to established areas that are accessible to public transport, shops and other services such as schools, community facilities and infrastructure. The Strategy also recognised that different forms of housing – detached dwellings, townhouses and apartments – are required as the Whitehorse population needs change. The Strategy balanced the community's vision with metropolitan strategies for growth, and provided the basis for the current zones applied across Whitehorse in 2014.

The Key Residential Corridors of Whitehorse are along Whitehorse Road and Burwood Highway. These areas are identified for substantial change in the 2014 Housing Strategy, and land in these areas was included in the Residential Growth zone in 2016. The Study Areas are shown on the maps below.

The Study Area



Whitehorse Road Key Residential Corridor



Burwood Highway Key Residential Corridor

As part of the Housing Strategy, Council identified three housing change areas:

Limited Change areas enable specific characteristics of the neighbourhood, environment or landscape to be protected through greater control over new housing development. These areas represent the lowest degree of intended residential growth in Whitehorse. These areas were generally translated into the Neighbourhood Residential Zone.

Natural Change areas allow for modest housing growth and a variety of housing types, including medium density housing (but not apartments) provided this achieves the preferred future neighbourhood character. These areas were translated into the General Residential Zone.

Substantial Change areas provide for housing growth with increased densities, including in key activity centres on large redevelopment sites, as well as around most train stations, adjoining tram and train routes. Based on the Housing Strategy, Council included land in the Substantial Change areas in the Residential Growth Zone. These areas allow for higher density housing such as apartments.

The Residential Growth Zone land is included in the Residential Corridors. These areas and the land abutting them, as shown above, are the focus of this Study.

Melbourne's Growth

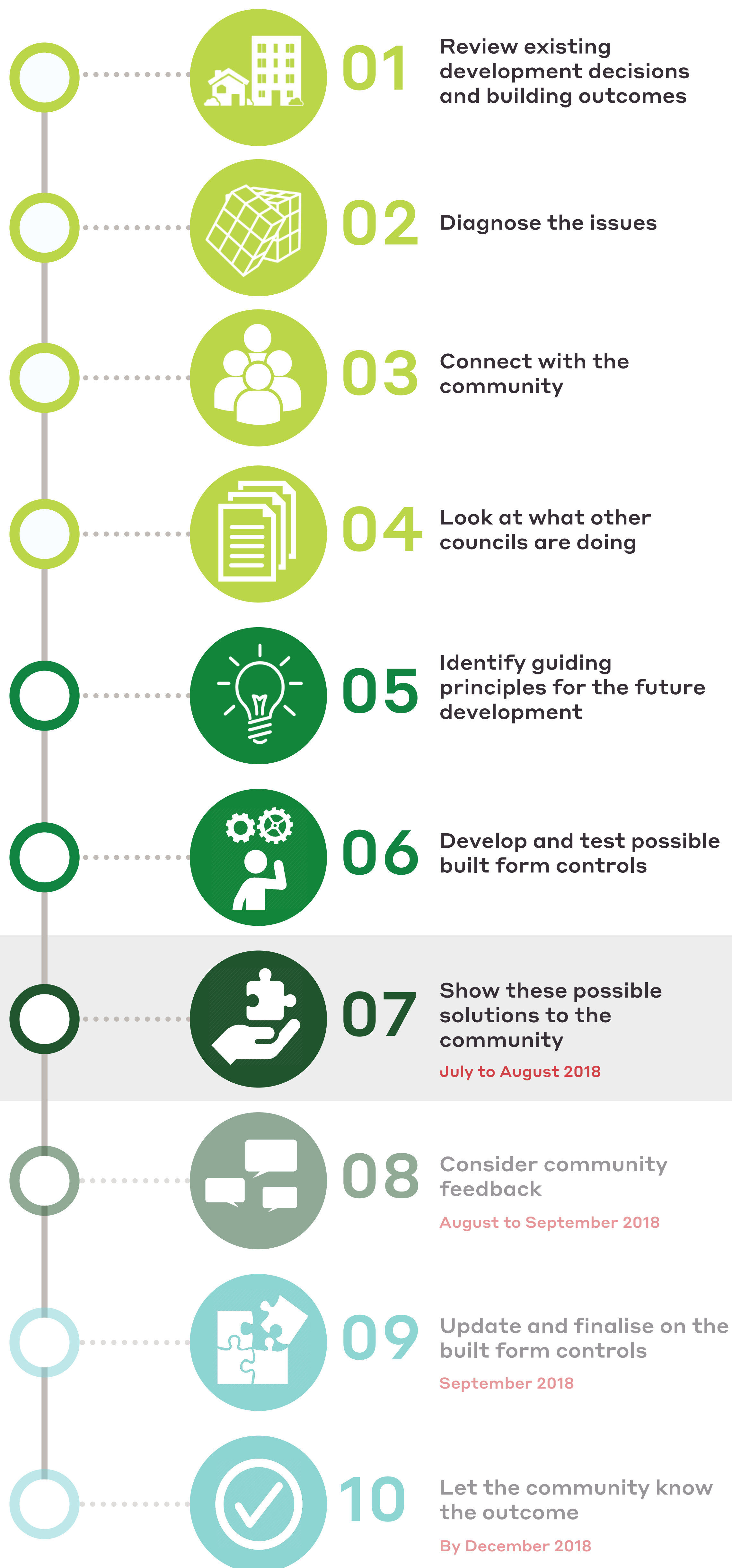
Melbourne is growing rapidly and housing needs are changing. The population of Melbourne is forecast to almost double to over 8 million by 2051.

In Whitehorse, this means an estimated increase of 37,000 people by the year 2036. This will bring Whitehorse's population to a total of approximately 207,424 residents. Of this total population, an estimated 25% will be lone person households.

LEGEND

- City of Whitehorse Boundary
- Key Residential Corridor
- ... Tram Stops & Line
- Train Stations & Line
- Open Space
- Residential Growth Zone
- Commercial Zone

How have we approached the project?



Development

Since implementation of the new residential zones in 2016, a significant amount of new development has occurred in Whitehorse, particularly along the key residential corridors of Whitehorse Road and Burwood Highway and in activity centres. While achieving aims of a greater amount and choice of homes, the Council and the community have become concerned about some aspects of this development, particularly relating to the bulk and height of buildings, and how they relate to the street and adjoining properties.

Council therefore felt it was necessary to undertake the Residential Corridors Built Form Study.

What is the purpose of the project?

The purpose of this project is to undertake a review of existing provisions that guide development along key road corridors, where land is in the Residential Growth Zone (RGZ), and interfaces with land in the adjoining residential zones. The project seeks to develop additional built form guidelines to make sure that land in the RGZ delivers development that interacts well with the street and adjoining properties, while still providing a greater amount of choice of housing. The guidelines will address the bulk and height of buildings, setbacks from the street and adjoining properties and the planting and growth of new vegetation, to reinforce the leafy and treed character of the Whitehorse environment.

In your feedback to date, you let us know:

“Wide footpaths”

“Space around buildings”

“Landscaped streetscapes”

What is important to you?

- Landscaped streetscapes
- Building scale that is consistent with nearby areas
- Space around buildings
- Limit on building height
- Underground parking and traffic managed to avoid on-street parking
- Mature trees to hide the building
- Wide footpaths
- Designs that avoid overlooking neighbouring properties
- Large Trees

“Mature trees to hide the building”

The project was introduced to the community in March 2018, through the circulation of the Residential Corridors Built Form Bulletin #1. This Bulletin provided background information and invited the community to undertake a survey.

The survey was designed to gain an understanding of the key issues important to the community and included two questions:

Q1. When thinking about the design of new development in your neighbourhood, what do you think are the three most important issues to be considered in this review and why?

Q2. Can you think of a good example of a new apartment development in your local area or somewhere nearby? Yes/No and why

We received a great response to the survey!
A total of 397 responses were received.

“Underground parking and traffic managed to avoid off-street parking”

“Large Trees”

“Limit on height”

What do you like about good design?

“Building scale is consistent with nearby areas”

“Lack of car parking”

“Changing the look of the neighbourhood”

What don't you like about existing development along main road corridors?

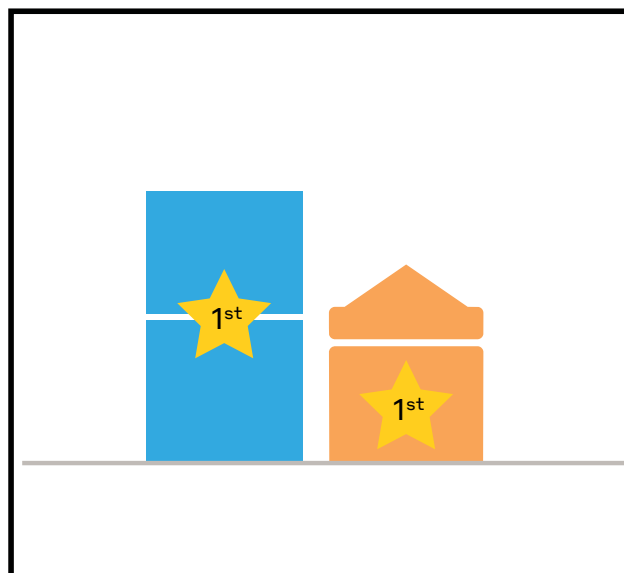
- Lack of car parking
- Poor quality of design and cheap construction materials
- New houses being built on busy road intersections
- Changing the look of the neighbourhood

“Poor quality of design and cheap construction materials”

When we looked at this feedback together, we noticed that a number of key themes emerged. These are broadly grouped as follows:

1. Built form including height of buildings
2. Trees and landscaping
3. Space around buildings
4. Traffic and parking
5. Amenity
6. Quality of design
7. Neighbourhood character.

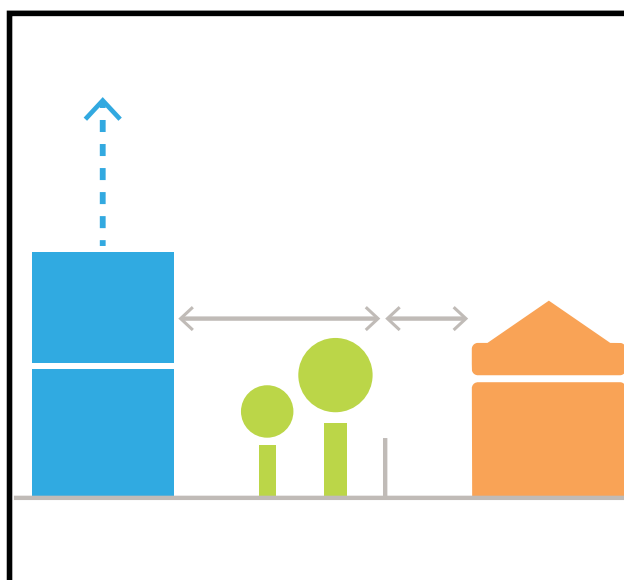
We are proposing the following seven principles for future development in the Residential Corridors:



01

Require Architectural Excellence Across All Developments

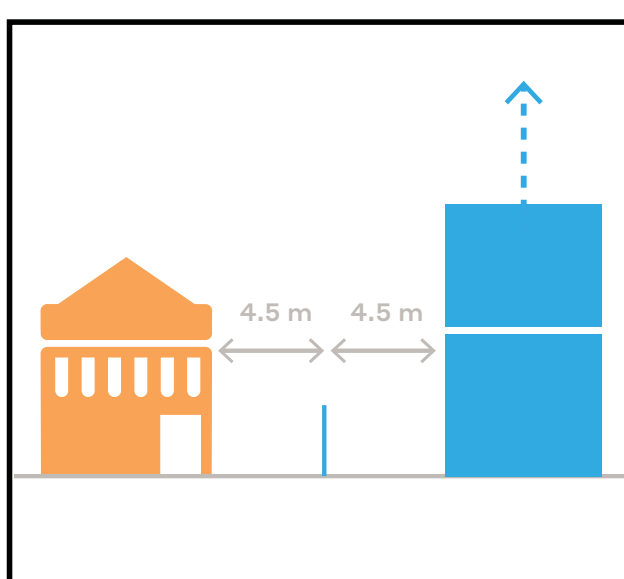
Architectural excellence goes beyond the skin of the building; it is about how the building responds to its context, including the future character of the area, the street, and how it integrates best practice environmentally sustainable design techniques.



02

Respond to Sensitive Interfaces – Residential and Open Space

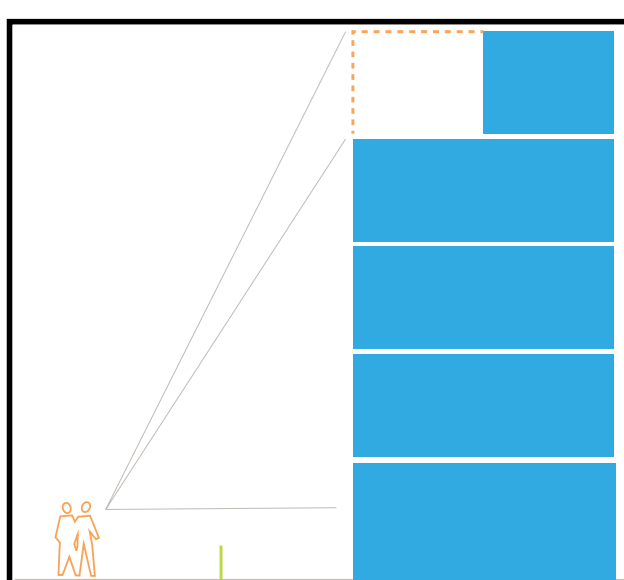
Protecting the amenity of the adjacent existing residential properties and public spaces is required both in the short term but also the long term. A large setback from adjacent residential properties and open space areas is needed to overcome the need for window screening and enable large canopy tree planting.



03

Provide for Equal Access to Amenity

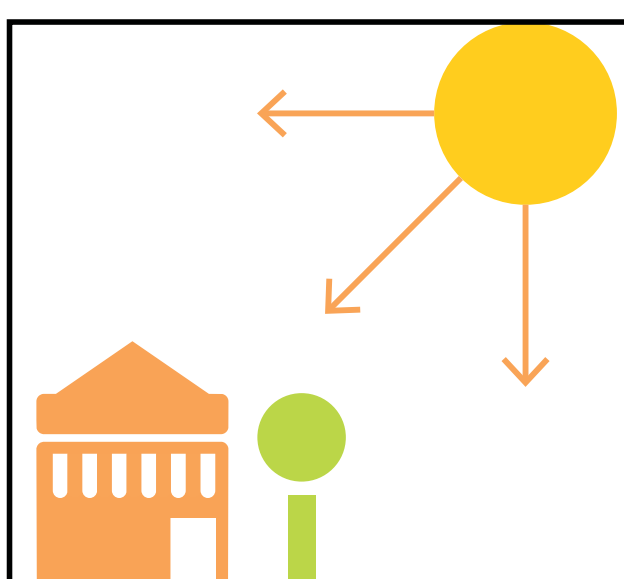
It is important to have measures in place to ensure that existing and future residents of new development are considered. The future development options of adjoining sites should not be compromised by the earlier development. This includes considering issues of overlooking, sunlight access and building separation.



04

Provide a Sense of Human Scale to the Street

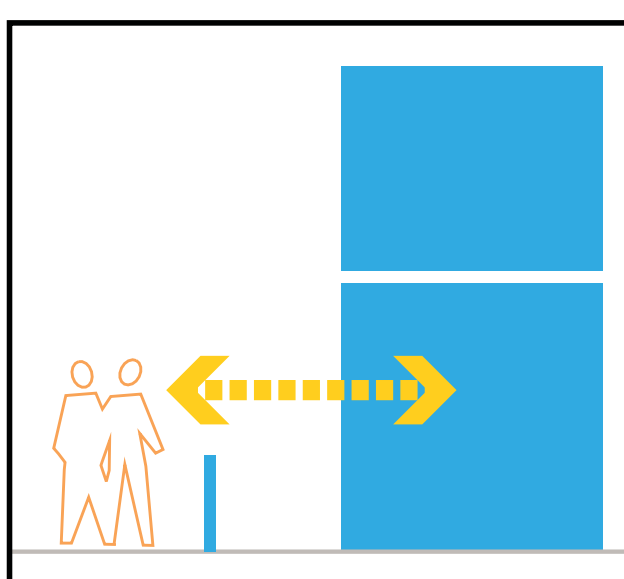
It is important that new, taller buildings are designed to integrate with existing lower scale dwellings and do not dominate the streetscape. This is possible by providing a lower scale building towards the street and setting taller elements further behind.



05

Maintain Solar Access to Public Areas

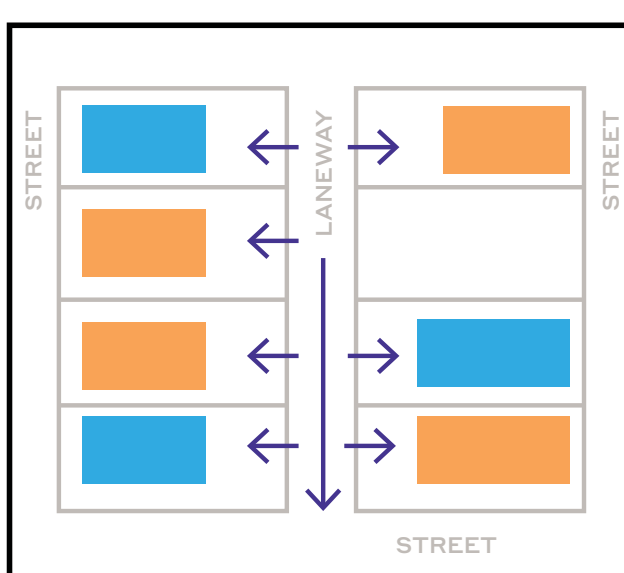
Maintaining sunlight to key public spaces, including footpaths, will support the vitality of the area and the landscaped character of the area. Minimising shadowing at the equinox is considered to provide a balance between good solar access whilst not unduly limiting development opportunities along the residential corridors.



06

Provide for Integrated Frontages

The resolution of the ground floor frontages of new apartment buildings can contribute to a positive pedestrian experience. Frontages to the street need well resolved car parking, services and enhanced passive surveillance with the provision of lower front fences.



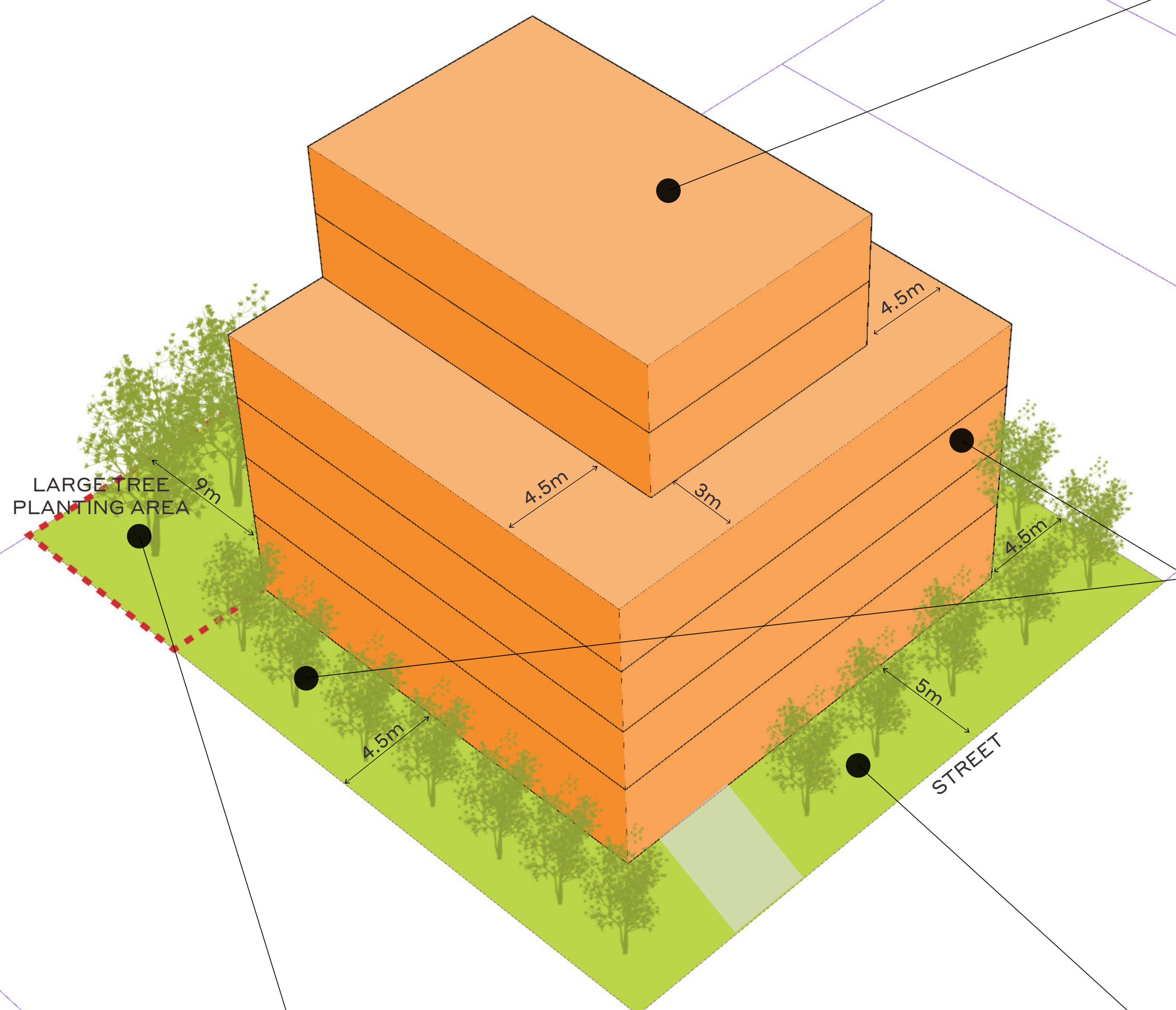
07

Ensure Ability to Service Existing and New Developments

It is important that new development takes advantage of existing service access arrangements. Driveway crossovers should be located to minimise traffic disruptions at intersections and minimised in width. New development should also provide good access for pedestrians and cyclists.

Based on the results of our background analysis, technical work and the views of the community, we are proposing the introduction of further built form controls through the Whitehorse Planning Scheme.

PROPOSED



Rear Setbacks

Proposed Controls

For developments over 4 storeys, a minimum 9 metre setback from the rear boundary - **Mandatory**.

What will this achieve?

- Adequate area for deep soil planting and landscaping.
- Provision of greater separation of existing dwellings from new apartment developments, reducing potential for overlooking, overshadowing, noise and visual impacts.

Height

Proposed Controls

A maximum of 6 storeys/19 metres - **Mandatory**.

What will this achieve?

- Maintains a mid-rise scale of development.
- Enhance the sense of openness, maintain access to expansive sky views.
- Maximise solar access to the low scale residential development on adjacent sites.
- Alleviate visual impact of taller buildings through increased upper level setbacks.

Side Setbacks

Proposed Controls

For buildings over 4 storeys, a minimum of 4.5 metre side setbacks at ground level and an additional 4.5 metres to upper levels above 4 storeys - **Mandatory**.

What will this achieve?

- Greater separation between adjoining buildings, reducing potential for shadowing and privacy, noise and visual impacts.
- Provision of daylight and sunlight to streets.
- Buildings do not appear as a continuous wall at street level or from nearby vantage points.
- Maintains open sky views between buildings through increased upper level setbacks.

Setback to Street

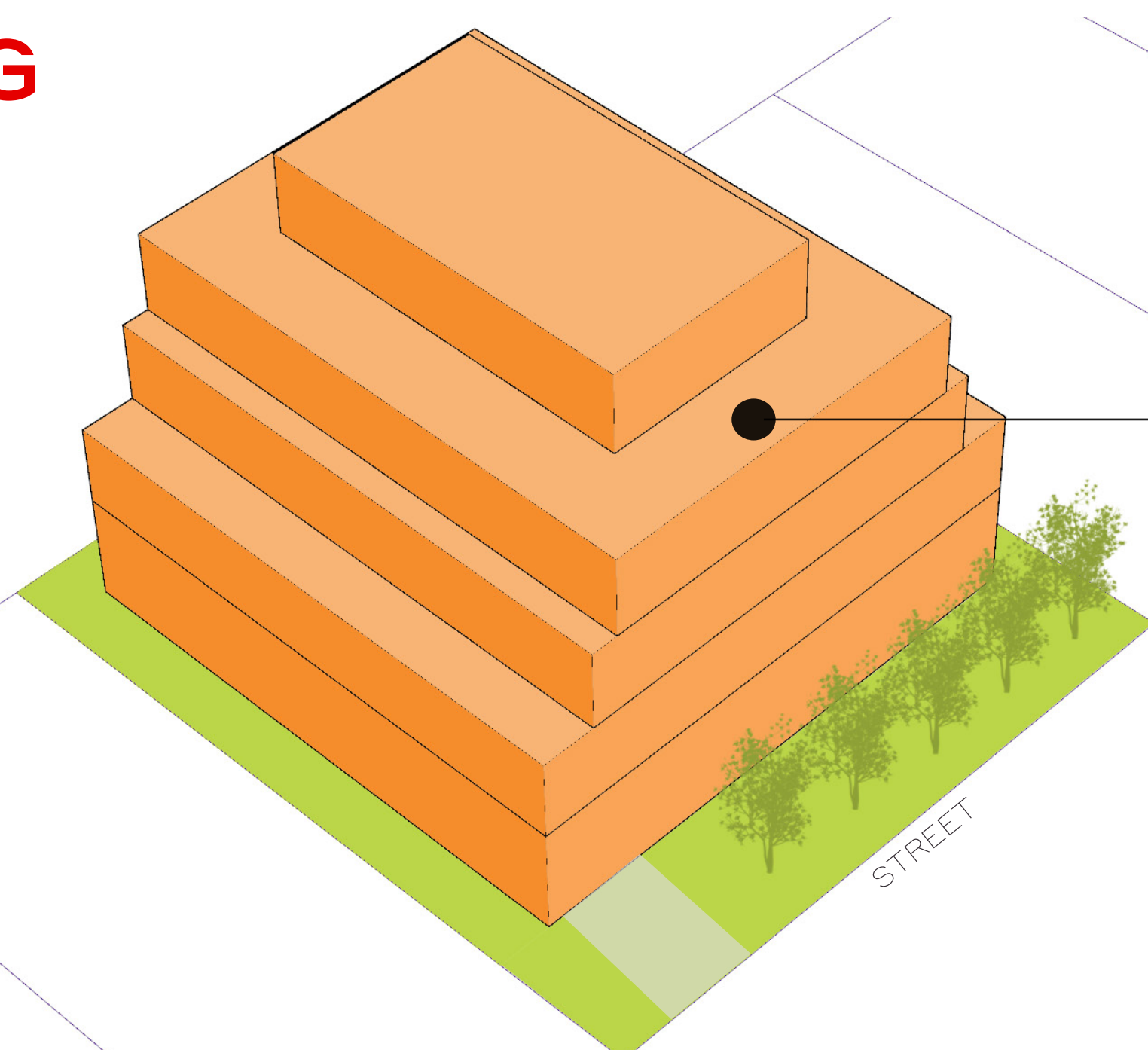
Proposed Controls

A minimum 5 metre setback from the front boundary and an additional 3 metre setback to upper levels above 4 storeys (excluding services) - **Mandatory**.

What will this achieve?

- Reduced visual dominance of the streetscape
- Increased sun penetration at street level

EXISTING



Existing controls encourage a 'wedding cake' building design. The 'wedding cake' features a tiered layering of levels, and results in a number of challenges. The side and rear setbacks are minimal, and the overall design can look messy and less resolved architecturally.

A key benefit of moving away from this type of design is to free up more space at the ground level to provide for trees and other planting. By reducing site cover in this way, buildings are also setback a further distance from neighbours, so that long, deep buildings that receive limited natural daylight or air circulation are less likely.

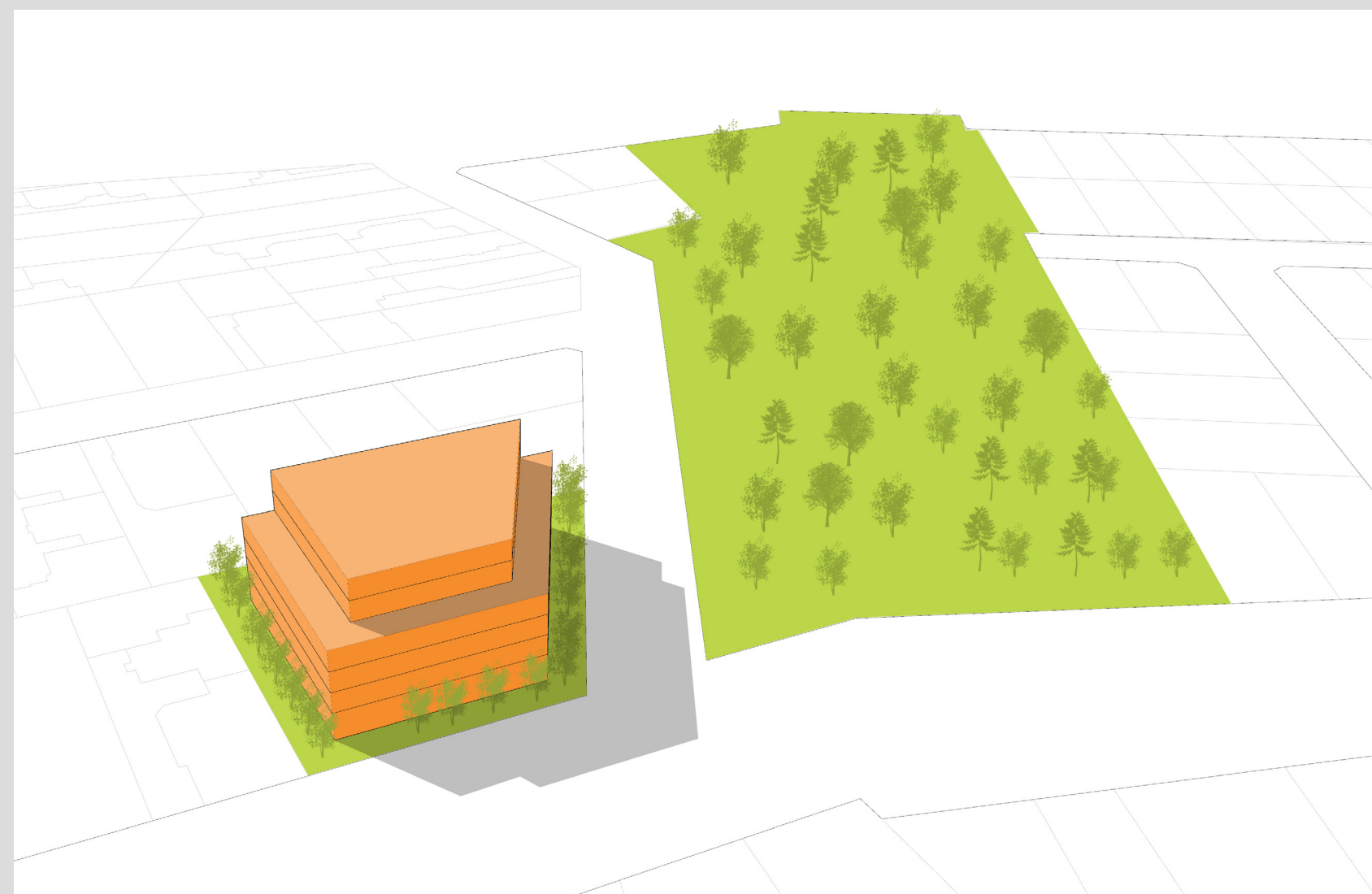
Shadowing of Public Open Space

Proposed Controls

No significant shadowing effects to adjacent public open space between 11.00am and 2.00pm on 22 September - Variable

What will this achieve? What is the outcome?

- Consideration of the impact of additional overshadowing
- Any adverse impact on existing landscaping, including trees and lawn or turf surfaces in public areas will be assessed.
- Assessment as to the impact of additional overshadowing on the existing and future use, quality and amenity of the public space.



Shadow Diagram: 6 storey development - no adverse impact on existing open space

Wind Effects

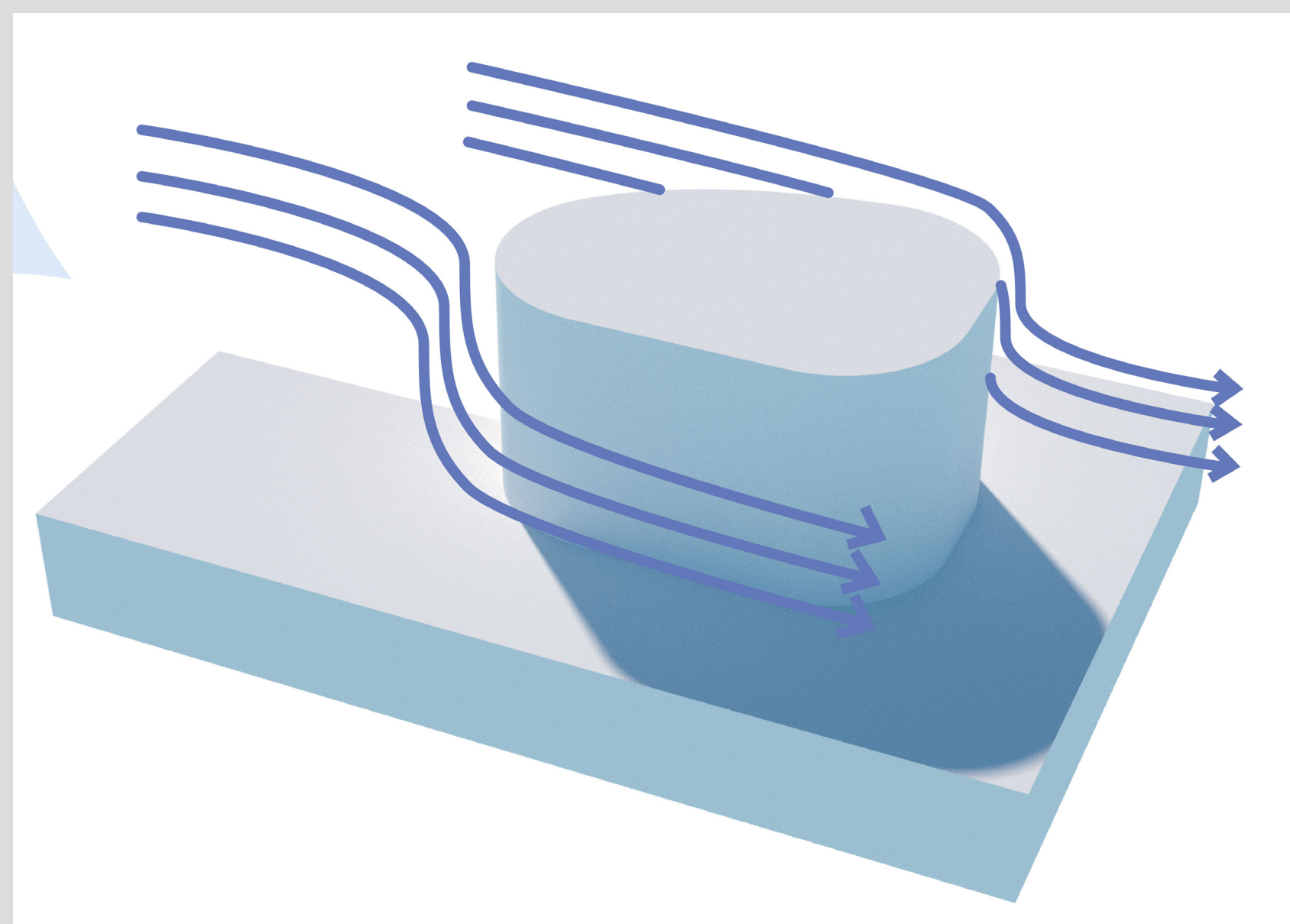
Proposed Controls

Developments over 4 storeys must be accompanied by a wind tunnel assessment to determine that the development would not cause excessive wind conditions in public areas, including adjoining streets.

What will this achieve? What is the outcome?

The wind analysis report must:

- Explain the effect of the proposed development on the wind conditions in public areas
- At a minimum, model the wind effects of the proposed development and its surrounding buildings (existing and proposed) using wind tunnel testing
- Identify the principal role of each portion of the public areas for sitting, standing or walking purposes
- Not rely on street trees or any other element such as screens, within public areas for wind mitigation



Wind Impact Modelling Diagram

Pedestrian Interfaces

Proposed Controls

At the ground floor level fronting streets, buildings must present as attractive frontages for pedestrians which adequately provide vehicle access and services and not dominate the streetscape and public areas.

What will this achieve? What is the outcome?

- Ground floor frontages that add visual interest and contribute to the street.
- Access to car parking and service areas that minimises impact on street frontages.
- Windows at ground level to provide maximum passive surveillance of the street.
- Visible service areas (and other utility requirements) should be integrated into the overall building design and fully screened from public areas.



Jacques Apartments Richmond: visually interesting material design and landscaping, with services and car parking access appropriately screened

The challenge of height

The Council prepared Amendment C160 to the Whitehorse Planning Scheme in 2014 which proposed maximum heights in the Residential Growth Zone of 3 storeys (11 metres) or 4 storeys (13 metres), depending on the location of the land in the municipality.

However, the Minister for Planning did not approve these proposed heights, and they were not included in the Whitehorse Planning Scheme.

The State Government has a strong desire to enable housing growth and change in the Residential Growth Zone to deliver a greater amount and choice of homes across metropolitan Melbourne, with taller buildings as being critical to delivering this outcome.

Since that time, the State Government has applied a variable maximum height of 13.5 metres (4 storeys) in the Residential Growth Zone and allowed councils to introduce an alternative mandatory maximum height.

However, the State Government requires that any fixed maximum height must be at least 13.5 metres (4 storeys). If a mandatory provision is proposed, the State Government will have a close look at the reasons for the proposed building height, including the location of the proposed change. In general, the State Government does not support widespread adoption of mandatory height controls, as they provide no scope for variation based on individual cases and design (noting that performance based assessment, is a key feature of Victoria's planning system).

What about traffic and parking?

Traffic and parking is controlled by a range of existing planning policy. For larger developments, car parking is to be provided underground, and needs to meet a number of design standards such as location of vehicle crossovers and width of parking bays.

VicRoads also sets requirements that impact on where access (driveways) to a site can be located. For example, where a site has two road frontages and one access is a main road such as the Burwood Highway, VicRoads will require that site access be obtained from the secondary road (side street).



Five storey residential development in Oakeigh featuring upper level setbacks, reducing visual bulk.



Residential development with underground car parking, accessed from the street frontage via single crossover.



Proposed residential development with car parking access via secondary street (WH 2015/505 Ascui & CO, Architects).



Talk to us

We want to hear from you!

Q. What do you think of the proposed built form controls?

Q. Is there something that we have missed?



How can you give feedback?

You have until **Sunday 12th August 2018** to give us your feedback. The best way to do this is by visiting

<http://www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/Residential-Corridor-Study.html>

and filling out a feedback form. Alternatively if you prefer, please feel free to take away a hard copy of the feedback form, complete it and drop it off to Council by post or hand as follows:

By post:

Strategic Planning Unit
Whitehorse City Council
Locked Bag 2
Nunawading VIC 3131

In person:

Whitehorse Civic Centre
379-397 Whitehorse Road Nunawading

You can also drop your feedback off at our Box Hill or Forest Hill Chase Service Centres. Check our website for details on opening times and locations.

If posting or dropping off, we just ask that you clearly mark the document "Residential Corridors Study, Strategic Planning Unit".



What happens next?

Once this stage of community engagement closes, we will review all feedback received. This will be used to refine the Draft Guidelines and develop a final set of built form controls. Council is aiming to release the final built form controls later this year.



Further information

For further information on this project or to speak to a Council officer, please contact council on **9262 6303** or drop in to one of Council's service centres during business hours.