



Department of Transport and Planning

25 October 2024

Sarah Raso
Lead Chair
Activity Centres Standing Advisory Committee
Planning Panels Victoria
planning.panels@transport.vic.gov.au

Dear Sarah,

Referral No. 2: Common matters across activity centres Referral to the Activity Centres Standing Advisory Committee

I refer to planning matters that form part of the Activity Centres Program (ACP), an initiative from *Victoria's Housing Statement, The decade ahead, 2024-2034*.

This referral relates to “common” matters that apply to many of the activity centres within the ACP. Many of these matters were raised as program-wide matters by peak industry bodies.

Background

The Activity Centres Program seeks to deliver an additional 60,000 homes around an initial 10 activity centres across Melbourne. The Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) is leading the Activity Centres Program in partnership with the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA).

The VPA has prepared draft Activity Centre Plans that will form part of the Activity Centre Program amendment package along with new ordinance including a Built Form Overlay schedule. The draft Activity Centre Plan consolidates the strategic work undertaken to prepare new planning controls for activity centres.

On 22 August 2024, the Minister for Planning appointed the Activity Centres Standing Advisory Committee (the Committee) to provide consistent advice for activity centre planning and outcomes in relation to the Activity Centres Program in a transparent, timely and cost-efficient process on any matter referred to it.

Between 22 August and 29 September 2024, DTP and VPA undertook public consultation in relation to the 10 activity centres. The ACP generated significant community interest with a total 1,091 written submissions and 8,801 survey responses received from current and potential future residents, businesses, government agencies, authorities, community groups, members of the development industry and councils. There were also a series of meetings held with community reference groups, councils and other stakeholders as well as in-person pop-ups in activity centre locations where in-person feedback was sought.

A summary of engagement undertaken, analysis of the matters raised by stakeholders and the community, and changes proposed to the draft Activity Centre Plans in response to these submissions, is included in the referral documentation.

Referral

In accordance with Clause 14 of your Terms of Reference (August 2024), and delegation provided to me, I have determined to seek advice and recommendations from the Committee on the proposed activity centre built form standards and other common matters raised in submissions. Only select submissions received during consultation which are relevant to the common matters are being referred to the Committee, and the Committee's advice is only sought on the matters outlined in the table below.

MATTER	ADVICE TO BE PROVIDED
Deemed to comply, mandatory and discretionary controls.	<p>It is proposed that consistent built form standards, including building heights and setbacks, be established for application to activity centres across Victoria, depending on the precinct typology allocated.</p> <p>Given the variety of centres and the importance of contextual response in development, please advise on whether the level of discretion (e.g. deemed to comply, mandatory or discretionary) is appropriate for the following standards in each precinct typology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building height • Street wall/podium height • Front setback above street wall • Side and rear setbacks
Sun Access	<p>It is proposed that the sun access standards vary depending on the type of street or the level of protection required for open parks & space. Please advise whether the level of discretion (e.g. deemed to comply, mandatory or discretionary) is appropriate for the type of street and the level of protection required for parks & open space.</p>
Wind	<p>The proposed standard aims to ensure that the built form, design, and layout of new developments does not generate unacceptable wind impacts within the site or on surrounding areas. Please advise whether the provision is suitably drafted to achieve the provision's intended purpose.</p>
Active Frontage	<p>The proposed standard aims to support a vibrant, active and safe pedestrian environment. It is proposed that active frontages vary depending on whether they are a primary or secondary frontage. Please advise whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the standards are drafted to suitably achieve the intended purpose. • the additional guidance included in the <i>Urban Design Draft Background Summary Report</i> will be beneficial in guiding a responsible authority's decision making.
Heritage	<p>The proposed standards seek to ensure new development appropriately responds to the significance of identified heritage places. Please advise whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the application of discretionary standards are appropriate in this context. • The appropriateness of deemed to comply provisions for sites adjacent to sites on the Victorian Heritage Register, and/or contributory/significant sites.
Large Opportunity Sites and Enclosed Shopping Centres	<p>The proposed standards seek to manage development of sites over 5,000sqm. Please advise whether the following controls are suitable to achieve the intended purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5,000sqm threshold standard • master planning requirement, • tower floor plate size standard, • building separation standard, • deep soil standard,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pedestrian link standard.
Tree canopy	The proposed inclusion of further canopy tree guidance in the <i>Urban Design Draft Background Summary Report</i> seeks to enhance the amenity of established areas. Please advise whether the additional guidance will be beneficial in guiding a responsible authority's decision making.
Catchment boundary and heights	<p>It is proposed that the catchment is the area within walking distance of the local jobs, services and public transport of the Activity Centre. Please advise whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defining the catchment from the edge of the activity centre or from the edge of commercial areas of the activity centre is suitable to achieve the intended purpose. The proposed boundaries respond adequately to station locations, where stations are located outside the activity centre. Other considerations should inform the setting of the boundary. The building heights allowable within the catchment should be graduated by the level of access to activity centres and public transport

In accordance with Clause 12 of your Terms of Reference, the Committee must conduct its work with a view to maximising efficiency and timeliness. As such, I look forward to the Committee providing its report to the Minister for Planning no later than 10 business days from receipt of this referral, in accordance with Clause 18 of the Terms of Reference.

Please find enclosed the supporting documents required by Clause 15 of the terms of reference.

If you have any questions about this matter, please contact Stefan Bettiol, Planning Manager at the Department of Transport and Planning.

Yours sincerely,



Natalie Reiter
Deputy Secretary Strategy & Precincts
Department of Transport and Planning

Encl. The following referral documents have been shared with you electronically:

- Att A: Report addressing key matters
- Att B: Urban Design Draft Background Summary Report
- Att C: Urban Design Draft Background Summary Report (Engagement version)
- Att D: City of Centres Report, Sheppard & Cull
- Att E: Schedule to the Built Form Overlay (example)
- Att F: Submissions
- Att G: Document list.

cc. Stuart Moseley, CEO, VPA
Emily Mottram, Executive Director - Activity Centres, DTP