

**22.09 BLACKBURN AND MEGAMILE (WEST) ACTIVITY CENTRES**14/07/2016  
C177

This policy applies to the Blackburn Neighbourhood Centre and the western portion of the MegaMile Activity Centre as identified on the attached map (Map 3).

**22.09-1 Policy basis**14/07/2016  
C177

The State Planning Policy Framework via Clause 11 *Settlement* encourages a concentration of major retail, residential, commercial, administrative, entertainment and cultural developments into highly accessible activity centres.

Council's commitment to balanced growth is demonstrated in a number of local policies. Clause 21.06 *Housing* seeks an appropriate and sustainable distribution of housing within the municipality, promoting a range of housing types and directing higher density housing to specific areas and in a form consistent with the character of neighbourhoods. Clause 21.07 *Economic Development* outlines Council's aims for a thriving and sustainable local economy, natural environment and quality of life for existing and future residents, as well as enabling appropriate growth within the municipality. Clause 21.07 *Economic Development* reinforces Council's desire to ensure that there is a range of opportunities for various types of office development in the municipality to meet market demand. Clause 22.06 *Activity Centres* reinforces the role that each of Whitehorse's activity centres plays in contributing to the City's economy and meeting the needs of the community.

The Blackburn Neighbourhood Centre (NC), in close proximity to the MegaMile Activity Centre (AC) and the Belgrave/Lilydale train line, has been identified as an appropriate location for residential and commercial development. This growth is directed to the northern part of the activity centre in order to preserve the village feel of areas to the south. Development within the Blackburn NC is expected to be compatible with the role of a neighbourhood activity centre, and reflect the scale, character and environmental values of the local community.

The Nunawading MegaMile AC has been identified as one of Whitehorse's main retail strengths and Council wishes to consolidate its role through appropriate land use and development.

The *MegaMile (west) and Blackburn Activity Centres Urban Design Framework*, adopted by Council in July 2010, outlines the visions for the two activity centres. In summary, the MegaMile (west) AC will strengthen its regional role as a bulky goods retailing destination with consolidation of bulky goods retailing along Whitehorse Road, linking with MegaMile (east) through its consistent streetscape and design themes. The MegaMile (west) AC will accommodate a broader range of uses including commercial activities and a consolidated residential area along the north side of Whitehorse Road in Blackburn.

The Blackburn NC will strengthen its role as an urban village focused around the Blackburn Railway Station and Blackburn Station Shopping Centre, with its strong sense of place and identity as a local shopping village and community meeting place. A suitable mix of retail, office, community and higher density residential uses will add to its vibrancy and activity, as will improved connections between the north and south sides of the railway line and surrounding areas.

Council is committed to providing a high quality transport network for the benefit of all users. Part of this commitment is the need to recognise the special parking needs of the various retail/commercial areas and preparing Parking Precinct Plans for them. Provision of adequate parking, in a manner that does not detract from the pedestrian nature of some areas is also important in adding to the viability of the Blackburn Station Shopping Centre. A parking strategy and management plan has been prepared for the Blackburn Station Shopping Centre to ensure a consistent approach to the special parking needs of the centre while also protecting the amenity of the abutting residential areas. This policy, as it relates to the Blackburn Station Shopping Centre area, seeks to ensure that planning decisions are consistent with the aims of the parking strategy and management plan.

The Queen and Albert Street Area has been identified as an appropriate location for office development as it is part of an existing neighbourhood activity centre, is surrounded by commercial uses and is located on a train line. It is important that this area continues to be a focus for high-quality, medium-scale office development that integrates this precinct with the shopping centre to the south, while at the same time ensuring that the scale of development is compatible with the role of the activity centre.

**22.09-2**14/07/2016  
C177**Objectives**

- To consolidate and strengthen the role of the MegaMile as a key bulky goods retail destination serving a regional catchment.
- To strengthen the local neighbourhood role and continue to support a mix of activities within the Blackburn Neighbourhood Centre as an urban village.
- To ensure that built form is compatible with the function, scale, environmental values and character of the respective centres and that it does not detract from the amenity of nearby residential areas.
- To provide for more housing choice and diversity within the MegaMile and Blackburn Activity Centres.
- To achieve a high-quality landscape design.
- To ensure that future development improves the appearance of the centres, to make them more attractive, inviting and safe, with easy access and circulation throughout.
- To encourage integration of the north and south parts of Blackburn Neighbourhood Centre through compatible design and scale with the existing Blackburn Station Village and improved linkages between the two halves.
- To most efficiently use the limited retail space within the Blackburn Neighbourhood Centre, encouraging the clustering of retail and community services at ground floor on the south side of the railway line, and encouraging office and supporting businesses on the north side of the railway line.
- To facilitate the redevelopment of the Queen and Albert Street Area, as defined in this policy, for medium-sized offices of a high-quality design and finish that achieves a reasonable level of consistency in the scale, design and landscape treatments between individual developments.
- To ensure that inadequately sized lots or residential lots are not isolated between office developments in the Queen and Albert Street Area.
- To encourage integration of the Queen and Albert Street Area office precinct with the other functions of the Blackburn Neighbourhood Centre.
- To allow residential uses on upper levels of commercial developments in the Queen and Albert Street Area. .
- To minimise parking and traffic difficulties in the Blackburn Station Shopping Centre and surrounds, while encouraging appropriate development and redevelopment within the Centre, by ensuring that each change of use or new development provides sufficient parking to meet its own demands in appropriate locations.
- To maximise the supply and usage of parking, by time of day, for customers and employees of the Blackburn Station Shopping Centre.
- To capitalise on shared parking opportunities in Blackburn Station Shopping Centre.

**22.09-3**

16/05/2013  
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**Policy**

It is policy that use and development of land is consistent with the vision for the centres, the objectives outlined in this policy, and provisions set out in Design and Development Overlay Schedule 8.

**22.09-4**

16/05/2013  
C143

**Policy – Blackburn Station Shopping Centre**

In addition to the provisions of Clause 22.09-3, within the Blackburn Station Shopping Centre as defined in this Clause (Map 1), it is policy that:

**Use**

It is policy to ensure that new uses or extensions to existing uses within the Centre achieve the following objectives:

- The south side of the railway is to comprise the clustering of retailing, personal services and community services at ground floor.
- Other uses on the southern side of the railway line that could undermine its local retail focus are discouraged.
- The north side of the railway line is to comprise commercial office and supporting businesses (business services, cafés, etc) services.
- Other uses on the north side of the railway line that could undermine its focus as an office area, with supporting businesses, are discouraged.
- Residential activity on upper floors of the premises throughout the Centre is encouraged.

**Development**

It is policy to ensure that development in the Centre achieves the following objectives:

- Ensure that the scale of new development on the south side of the Railway does not overwhelm the existing buildings, and any development on the boundaries of the precinct is a similar scale to the residential properties it abuts.
- Enable safe and secure pedestrian access throughout the centre day and night.
- Encourage the maintenance and improvements of building façades throughout the centre.
- Encourage the provision of weather protection and open glazed shop fronts along the major pedestrian routes in the centre.
- Address the interface with adjoining residential areas by:
  - minimising noise and emissions near residential boundaries.
  - minimising use of residential streets for car parking associated with the Centre.
  - establishing and maintaining clear boundaries between the Centre and adjacent residential areas.
  - referring to the standards of Clause 55.04 as appropriate when considering development at the interface between the Centre and residential areas to protect the amenity of adjoining residential properties.
- Encourage the use of native planting as part of any landscaping requirement.
- Ensure that any approvals for development within the public realm reflect a unified image to enhance the centre's image.
- Make maximum use of ground floor space for retail activities and personal services.

- Encourage appropriate retail premises to provide “frontages” onto car park areas as well as street frontages.

The following performance standards are considered to satisfy the policy objectives and statements outlined above:

- All new development is required to blend architecturally with existing structures and be of a high quality design.
- The development should be designed to maintain and promote the prevailing human scale of the Centre.
- No front setbacks and include active frontages and weather protection where possible for non-residential buildings.

### **Car parking**

- It is policy to ensure that dispensation from car parking provision within the Centre achieves the following objectives:
  - Car parking provision on site is appropriate to the demand generated by the use or development. The rates of car parking generally required to satisfy this demand are set out in the attached Table 1, with generated rates having been rounded to the nearest whole number.
  - Requests for a lower rate of car parking than identified in Table 1 require evidence that additional car parking is not required and traffic difficulties in the Centre and surrounds will not be created.
  - In calculating the required amount of car parking required, parking ‘credits’ are allowed against existing floor areas based on use.
  - Where there is an opportunity under a redevelopment proposal to reduce an existing deficit, this will be required.

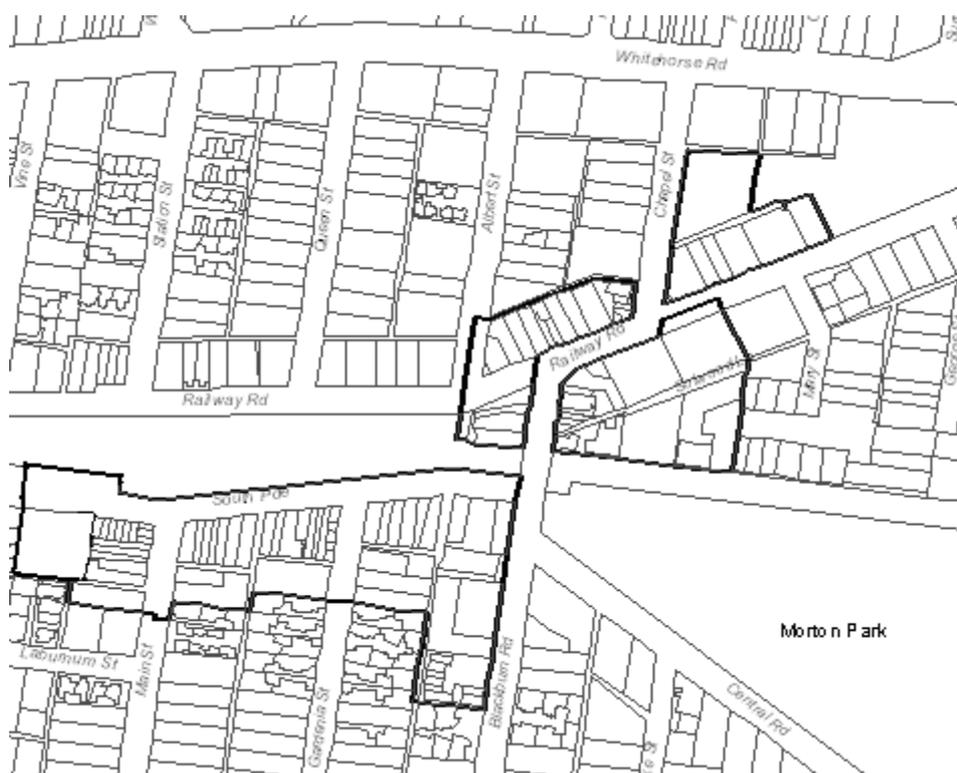
Requests for car parking dispensation to rates lower than in Table 1 will be tested against the following requirements, as applicable:

- The new use will not generate additional parking demand when compared with the parking demand generated by the current/former use.
- There is a reduction in car parking demand due to efficiencies gained from mixed use development.
- Sufficient evidence is shown regarding available and accessible car parking within the Centre to determine that there is adequate parking for the proposed use and development, without increasing impact to the surrounding residential properties.

Provision of off-site parking is deemed satisfactory, subject to the following conditions:

- The size or shape of the subject area is not suitable to provide parking on the land.
- The off-site parking area is within a 100 metre walk of the subject site.
- Convenient and safe pedestrian access exists between the subject site and the off-site parking area.
- Signs are located on the off-site parking area that clearly identifies it as being associated with the use and managed so as to be continuously and freely available for the use.
- The owner/s of the subject site, the owner/s of the site to be used for off-site parking and the responsible authority enter into an agreement under Section 173 of the Planning and Environment Act, or similar, to ensure the off-site car park will be freely available, directly linked to and extends for the life of the use at the subject site.

**Map 1 Blackburn Station Shopping Centre**



**Table 1 Parking provision rates**

Land Use	Parking Generation Rate*
Office (excluding medical centre)	3.5 car spaces to each 100 sq m of net floor area for new office or increase in floor area of at least 20 percent of the original floor area  1.5 car spaces to each 100 sq m of net floor area of additional office area, up to an increase in floor area of no more than 20 percent of the original floor area
Café or Restaurant	0.45 car spaces to each seat made available to the public, if open after 5pm  0.25 car spaces to each seat made available to the public, if closed by 5pm
Hotel or tavern	20 car spaces to each 100 sq m of bar floor area and lounge floor area available to the public
Dwelling	1.0 occupant car space + 0.2 visitor spaces (1 or 2 bedroom unit)  2.0 occupant car spaces + 0.2 visitor spaces (3+ bedroom unit)
Shop (excluding convenience shop)	4.5 car spaces to each 100 sq m of leasable floor area  2.5 car spaces to each 100 sq m of additional leasable floor area up to an increase in floor area of no more than 20 percent of the original floor area
Restricted retail premises	2.5 car spaces to each 100 sq m of leasable floor area

\* All parking generation rates are to be rounded to the nearest whole number.

**22.09-5**16/05/2013  
C143**Policy – Queen and Albert Street Area**

In addition to the provisions of Clause 22.09-3, within the Queen and Albert Street Area as defined in this Clause (Map 2), it is policy that:

**Layout and lot size**

- Each lot be of an adequate size to facilitate the desired scale of office development and to ensure that residential properties are not isolated between non-residential developments.
- Subdivision and consolidation of lots be encouraged where this will ensure that remnant residential sites are not isolated by non-residential uses.
- The pattern of consolidation be such that all remaining undeveloped sites can support development in accordance with this policy.
- Sites abutting the north/south right-of-way between Chapel and Albert Streets be encouraged to incorporate this right-of-way into new development to provide a landscape buffer.

**Scale of development**

- Larger-scale commercial development be located on sites fronting Whitehorse Road with the remainder of the area accommodating smaller-scale commercial development.

**Urban design**

- This precinct provides for high-quality development of a consistent scale and based on clear design principles.
- Building design avoid box-like structures through the provision of articulation, the use of glazing, variation in colours/textures/materials and the use of architectural features to ensure that the streetscape is not dominated by the built form.
- Building facades be stepped, offset and staggered to break up long continuous alignments.
- Adequate setback areas be provided and the inclusion of courtyard spaces be encouraged to allow for the planting of upper-canopy trees to complement the treed character of Blackburn.
- If positioned on a sloping site, the built form be stepped down to follow the natural fall of the land.
- New development be of a consistent scale that achieves a continuity in design and complements existing development.
- For those sites with a residential abuttal, particular attention be paid to ensuring that building design and scale relate to that of the abutting residential buildings.
- Buildings fronting Whitehorse Road be designed to fulfil a 'landmark' role with building entry points that provide a strong sense of address and provide active frontages with all-weather protection where possible.
- Buildings should utilise sustainable technologies and designs to minimise energy consumption.

**Preferred land use**

- The primary land use of the area is for office and commercial development.
- Residential uses can be considered at upper levels of commercial development.
- Core retail uses and bulky goods are strongly discouraged.

### **Traffic circulation and parking**

- Primary access be from Whitehorse Road and the impacts of traffic and parking on abutting residential streets be minimised.
- Access to office sites from the east/west rights-of-way be encouraged where road safety and efficiency improvements are achieved and the amenity of residential areas is preserved.
- Use of the north/south right-of-way between Queen and Albert Streets for access be discouraged due to the potential impacts on the amenity of neighbouring residential properties.
- Car parking areas be designed and landscaped to minimise their visual impact.

### **Interface with abutting residential areas**

- New commercial development be carefully planned to ensure that there is minimal impact from noise, visual intrusion, overshadowing and overlooking on residential properties.
- The height and building bulk of offices be minimised where there is an interface with residential properties.
- Appropriate landscaping and screening treatments be provided where there is a direct residential abuttal.
- Advertising signs be discouraged if they would be visually prominent from residential areas.
- Air conditioning and other similar machinery be designed and located to minimise noise and visual impacts on residential areas.

### **Landscaping**

- Landscaping provide a variety of upper-canopy trees that complement the landscaping theme of the Blackburn area.
- The use of indigenous trees and shrubs be strongly encouraged to complement the predominance of indigenous vegetation in the area.
- The landscaping theme between developments be complementary to ensure that the presentation to the streetscape is consistent throughout the office precinct.
- Landscaping of front setbacks incorporating environmentally sustainable development principles, including water sensitive urban design (WSUD).

### **Performance standards**

The following performance standards are considered to satisfy the policy objectives and statements outlined above:

#### **Layout and lot size**

- Lots a minimum size of:
  - 1,600 m<sup>2</sup> for sites fronting Whitehorse Road.
  - 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> for sites fronting Chapel and Albert Streets.
- The north/south right-of-way between Chapel and Albert Streets incorporated into developments which abut this right-of-way and used to provide a landscape buffer between developments.

#### **Scale of development**

- Offices on sites fronting Whitehorse Road with a leasable floor area of between 3,000 and 4,000 m<sup>2</sup>.

- Offices on sites fronting other streets with a leasable floor area of between 1,500 and 3,000 m<sup>2</sup>.

#### **Urban design**

- Minimum setbacks provided as follows:
  - Frontage - 3 metres.
  - Side streets - an average of 4 metres with a minimum of 3 metres.
  - Side and rear boundaries - 3 metres.
  - No front setbacks for development on Whitehorse and Railway Roads where appropriate.

#### **Traffic circulation and parking**

- Primary access from Whitehorse Road if possible.
- Car parking located underground or, if this is not achievable, then parking provided to the rear and not in the front setback and visually screened from the street.

#### **Landscaping**

- A variety of upper-canopy trees that will grow to a height of 7 to 12 metres, mixed with low shrubs and ground covers.
- Landscaping using predominantly indigenous species.
- A minimum of two thirds of the front setback set aside for landscaping.
- Linkages provided with courtyards and open spaces of abutting development.
- Landscaping using similar species to adjoining sites.

**Map 2 Queen and Albert Street Area**



**22.09-6**

**Reference documents**

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- MegaMile [west] & Blackburn Activity Centres Urban Design Framework, July 2010*
- Blackburn Station Shopping Centre Parking Strategy and Management Plan, March 2001*
- Queen and Albert Street Office Policy, March 1994*
- Urban Design Strategy – Queen and Albert Street Area.*

Map 3 Blackburn Neighbourhood Centre and MegaMile (west) Activity Centre

