



TRAIN AND TRAM ZONE ACTIVITY CENTRES PROGRAM - PROGRAM EXPLAINER

March 2026



Department
of Transport
and Planning

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Victorian Government acknowledges Traditional Owners in Victoria as the custodians of Country. We acknowledge their extraordinary strength and resilience in the face of historical and ongoing social, economic and legal injustices, maintaining their connection to Country.

The train and tram zone activity centres are located on the lands of the Wurundjeri People and Bunurong People and we acknowledge them as Traditional Owners. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, whose knowledge and wisdom have ensured the continuation of spiritual and cultural practices.

We acknowledge that the long-lasting, far-reaching and intergenerational consequences of colonisations and dispossession continue to exist today and continue to cause harm. Colonisation has left entrenched systemic and structural racism and suffering, including through the laws and policies of the Colony of Victoria, which specifically excluded First Peoples and their laws, lores, customs, languages and cultures. The Victorian Government has a responsibility to transform its systems and service delivery so First Peoples have decision-making power over matters that directly affect them.

Description of artwork

Aaron Duggan (Gunaikurnai) 'Movements Between the Five Clans' 2019, acrylic on canvas.

'The tracks are going between the five clans of the Gunaikurnai and the hands are the symbols of my spirit travelling around the campsites.'

This artwork was created through programs provided by the Torch. The Torch provides art, cultural and arts industry support to Indigenous offenders and ex-offenders in Victoria. The Torch aims to reduce the rate of re-offending by encouraging the exploration of identity and culture through art programs to define new pathways upon release.



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1. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

Across Victoria, there are not enough opportunities for people to afford a home close to the people and places they love.

The Train and Tram Zone Activity Centres Program (the program) delivers plans and applies planning tools to streamline planning processes – enabling housing growth to be directed where appropriate as soon as possible. By taking a Melbourne-wide approach the program focusses on the best locations for housing growth, using consistent approaches and planning tools across the city.

This document explains the methodology and strategic approach to the program including how the policy framework has guided implementation.



Create additional capacity for new homes.



Create a replicable planning process.



Focus on areas with access to transport, jobs, opportunities and services.



2. LONG-TERM PLAN FOR VICTORIA

Plan for Victoria and the Train and Tram Zone Activity Centres Program

Plan for Victoria is a long-term plan for the state that's aims to create opportunities for the delivery of more homes, more jobs and great communities. It's the 30-year strategic plan for how Victoria will support a growing population while protecting and improving all that we love about the places we live, work and play.

Plan for Victoria includes 22 actions, one of which is delivering the Train and Tram Zone Activity Centres Program. The program aims to create capacity for more than 300,000 new homes across metropolitan Melbourne.

The Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) has already implemented new planning controls for 10 activity centres as part of the Activity Centres Pilot. Plan for Victoria identified an additional 50 centres (therefore 60 in total) for DTP to implement new planning controls as part of the program.

Local Government Area housing targets

Plan for Victoria sets local government area (LGA) housing targets for every municipality across Victoria. DTP is working with councils to plan and achieve their housing targets, the Train and Tram Zone Activity Centres Program is a key government

led planning initiative that will help relevant councils achieve their targets.

The program will contribute to local government housing targets by:

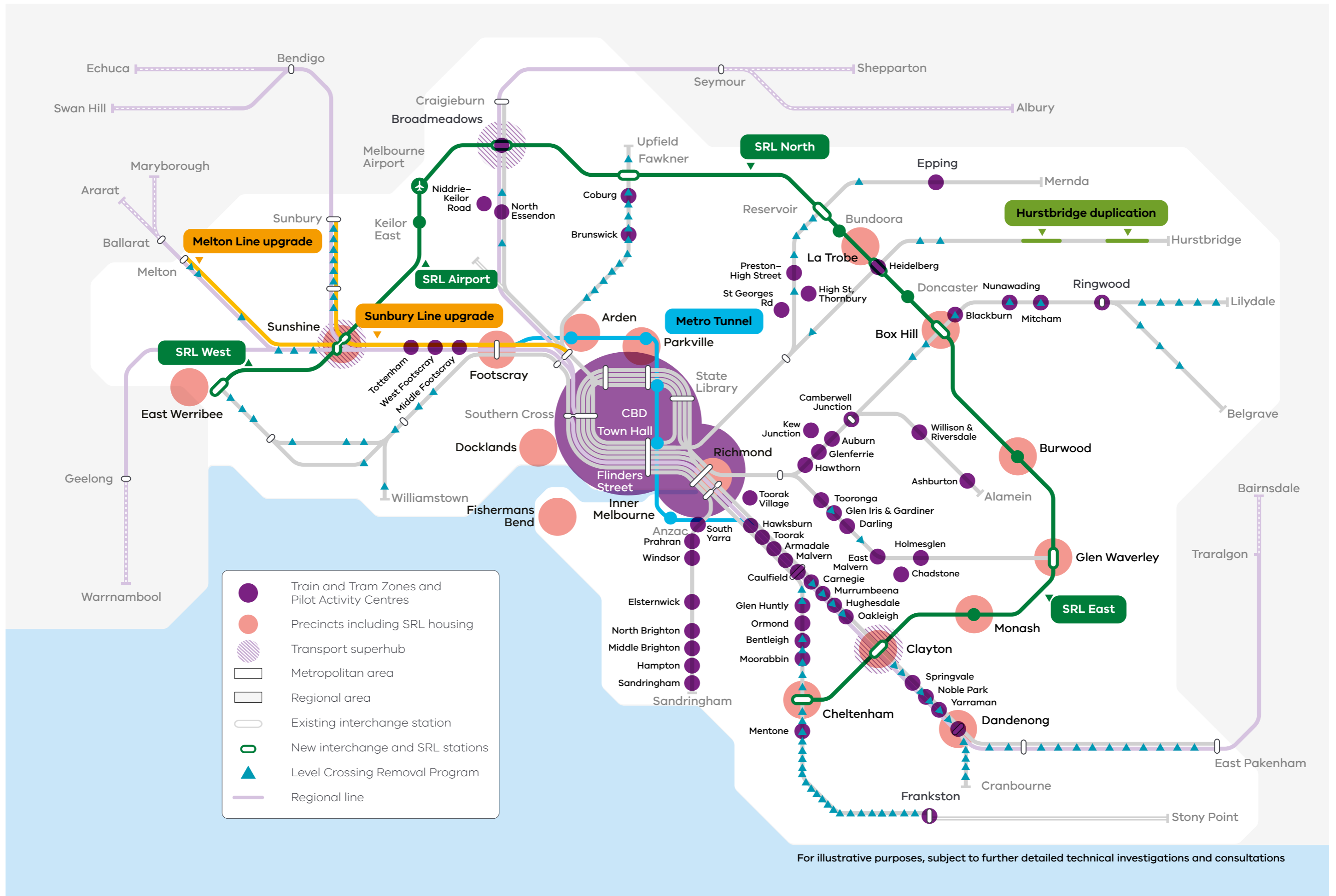
- Identifying the best places for more homes within each municipality in the program.
- Encouraging more homes to be built by setting clear planning rules and streamlining planning processes.

Access to opportunities and services (ATOS)

DTP developed the ATOS tool to map relative access to services and opportunities across Melbourne. ATOS identifies suitable locations for additional housing by assessing which locations have the best access to everyday needs and amenities, including access to transport, community infrastructure, open space and employment.

ATOS is used as an input in Plan for Victoria to identify areas suitable for additional housing. In line with Plan for Victoria, ATOS has also been used as an input in the program to help inform the best locations for more housing and the appropriate level of density in each centre.

Figure 1: Train and Tram Zones and Pilot Activity Centres



Reforming Victoria’s planning system

Several other planning, housing and infrastructure reforms, some identified in Victoria’s Housing Statement (2023 and Progress Update Sept 2024), have been implemented. These reforms complement the objectives of the program by facilitating more homes by streamlining planning processes, ensuring good design, and supporting the delivery of infrastructure (transport, place, community and education).

	More homes	Streamlined planning controls	Good Design	Infrastructure
Train and Tram Zone Activity Centres Program	✓	✓	✓	✓
New Built Form Overlay	✓	✓	✓	
New Housing Choice and Transport Zone	✓	✓		
Codification of residential standards	✓	✓		
Townhouse and Low-rise Code	✓	✓	✓	
Mid-rise Code	✓	✓	✓	
Great Design Fast Track	✓	✓	✓	
Single Homes and Small Second Homes	✓	✓		
Future Homes	✓	✓	✓	
Unlocking strategic sites pathway guidelines	✓	✓	✓	
Plan for Victoria	✓			
Tree Canopy standards		✓	✓	
Pick my Park				✓
Carparking standards ¹		✓	✓	

▲ Table 1: Victorian Government planning reforms

1. Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) is a tool currently used by the Victorian Government to assess access to transport options, including walking time, waiting time and service reliability. PTAL has informed VicPlan mapping categories which indicate where access to public transport is excellent and reduced carparking rates are appropriate.



3. TRAIN AND TRAM ZONE ACTIVITY CENTRES PROGRAM

Program objectives

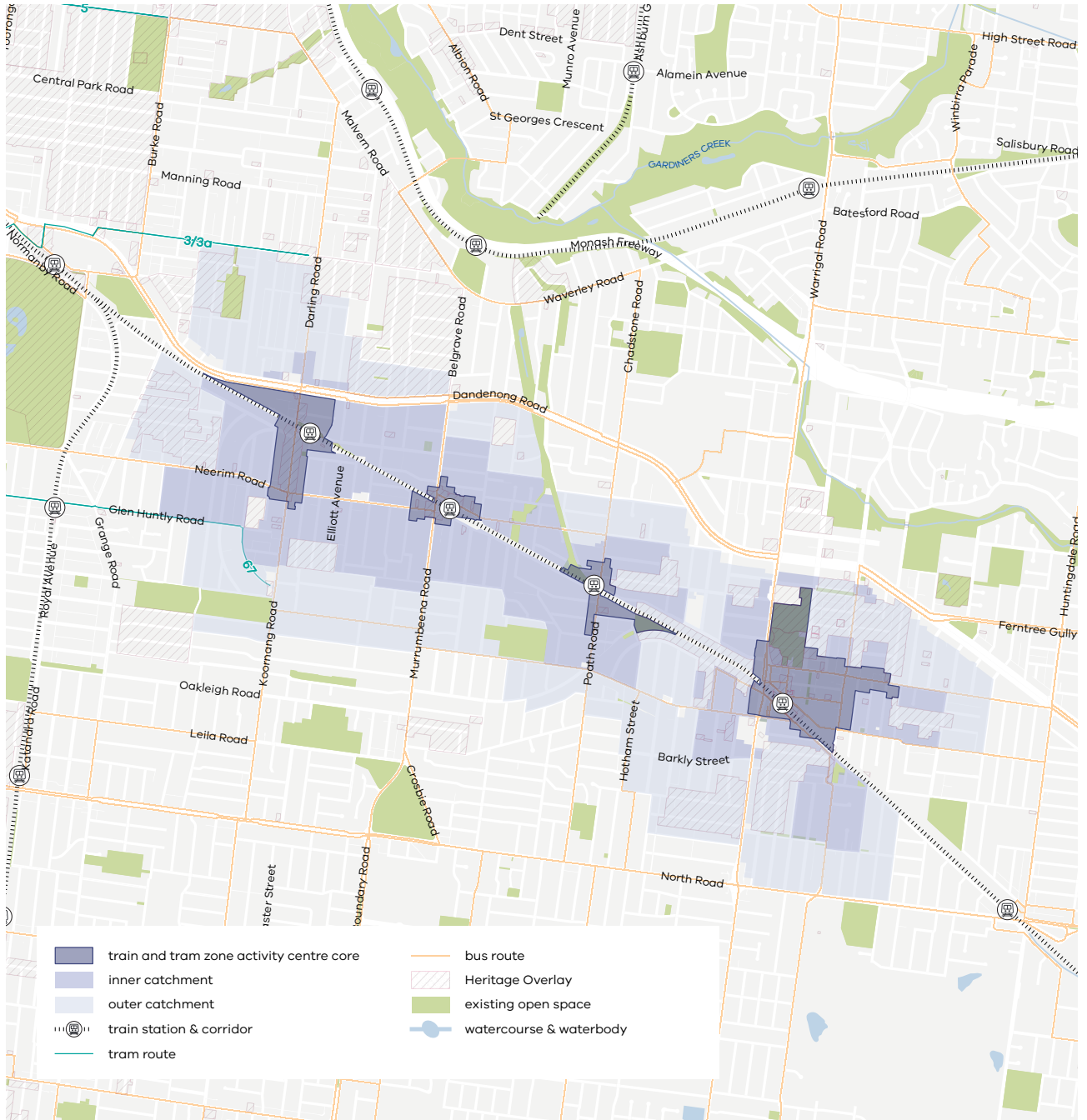
- The program will create additional capacity for over 300,000 new homes with planning controls implemented in the next 50 centres by mid-2026.
- The program provides planning controls and guidance, building on the tools developed in the Activity Centres Pilot.
- It will create a replicable activity centre planning process for councils, ensuring that built form controls can be tailored to suit a range of locations.
- We will use Victorian Government landholdings to showcase new approaches, and deliver housing and services.

The train and tram zone activity centres present opportunities to support more housing with good access to transport, jobs, services and opportunities. These 60 centres have been selected to support housing growth due to a range of factors including:

- Existing and future public transport capacity
 - including opportunities created by Big Build projects, such as the Level Crossing Removal Project and the Metro Tunnel Project.
- Market viability.
- Access to opportunities and services.
- Environmental constraints.

A cluster approach to strategic planning

The train and tram zone activity centres and their surrounding catchments have generally been grouped into clusters, centred along key train and tram corridors. Grouping the train and tram zone activity centres in this way allows an integrated approach to planning where catchment areas often overlap. Activity Centre Plans have been prepared for each cluster.



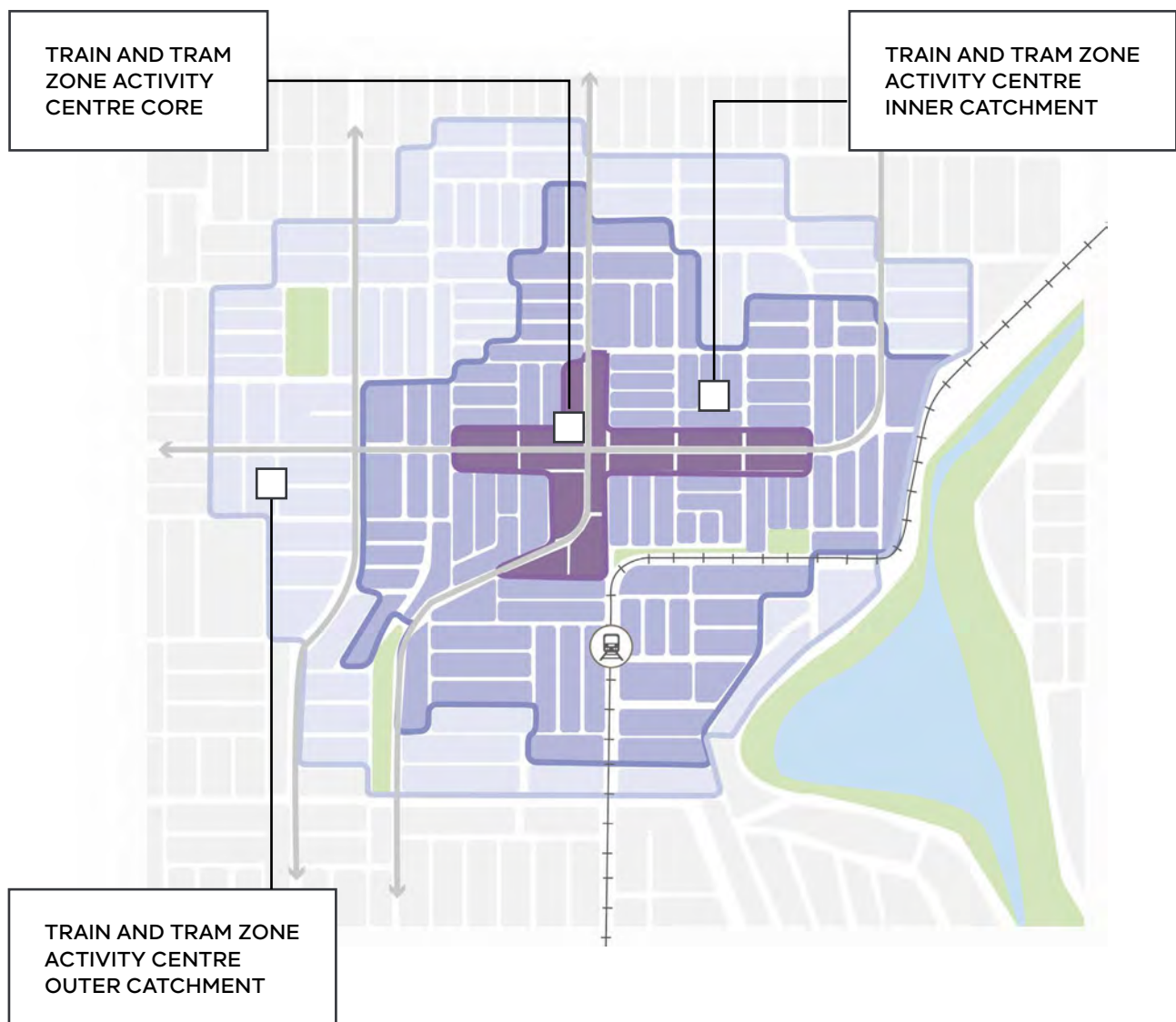
▲ Figure 2: Example of a cluster of train and tram zone activity centres

Areas of change: activity centre core, inner and outer catchment

The program encourages more homes in areas with access to transport, opportunities, services and jobs – such as Melbourne’s fixed rail infrastructure and activity centres. The program focusses on utilising new planning tools, including a Built Form Overlay (BFO) supported by consistent built form standards based on ‘typologies’; and the Housing Choice and Transport Zone (HCTZ) to encourage site consolidation and greater development capacity in the centres. The BFO and HCTZ were developed as part of the Activity Centres Pilot and are used to support the expansion of the program to the next 48 centres across Melbourne. A different approach to create housing capacity is being taken for the remaining local government areas of Melbourne and Yarra.

Relative access to transport, jobs, services and opportunities has informed the areas identified for change, with different scales of development identified based on location. The scale of development needs to respond to the locations accessibility to both local and broader network opportunities, ensuring new homes are located in the best serviced locations.

The three areas of change are referred to as the activity centre core (the core), the inner catchment and the outer catchment (the catchment). Different planning tools have been applied to guide development in these three areas of change. These areas have been applied to each centre with consideration of local conditions and the objectives of the program.



▲ Figure 3: Areas of change

The activity centre core

The core, located in existing activity centres, where mixed use and commercial areas are often located, is where higher built form will be. This area represents excellent access to opportunities, often located within the core itself. Specific planning controls, such as the BFO have been developed to support higher built form in this location.

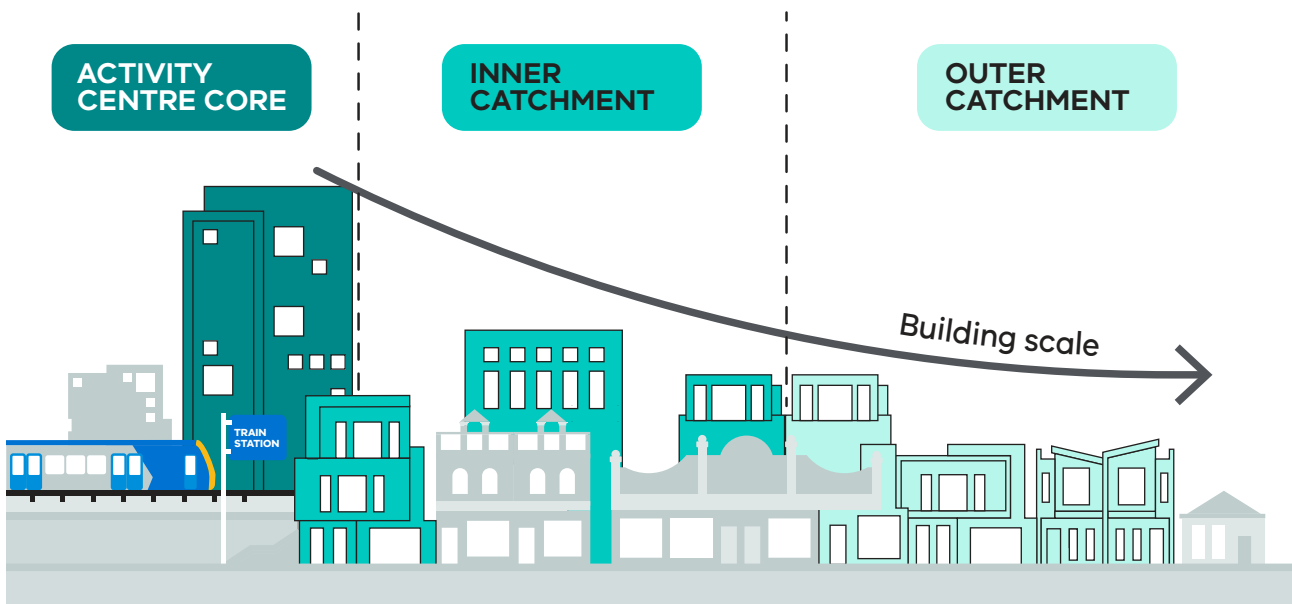
The inner and outer catchment

The catchment surrounds the core and will guide more housing choices to areas within walking distance to transport and services. The catchment provides a transition in built form scale from the higher buildings in the core to the surrounding residential areas. This is the area where the HCTZ will apply to residential land.

The catchment is generally divided into the inner catchment and the outer catchment, which is where HCTZ1 and HCTZ2 will apply. Where catchment areas from different centres are located in close proximity – a cluster-based approach to planning has been applied which includes multiple centres in one plan.

Planning for infrastructure, community facilities, open space and public realm

Place-based assessments have informed a range of infrastructure categories that will support residential and urban growth within these areas of change. Public realm opportunities have been identified within the core, with transport, community facilities and open space opportunities identified throughout the core and catchment areas.



Planning control	Built Form Overlay / Activity Centre Zone	Housing Choice and Transport Zone 1	Housing Choice and Transport Zone 2
Height	6 – 16 storeys, or higher on some sites subject to further urban design testing	4 storey maximum (6 storeys on sites over 1000sqm and with a 20m frontage)	3 storey maximum (4 storeys on sites over 1000sqm and with a 20m frontage)

▲ Figure 4: The transition in built form scale from core to catchment

Engagement with community to inform Activity Centre Plans

Engagement has been undertaken with Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs), local government, industry, and the community (including Community Reference Groups for the program).

Key program wide themes were captured during community engagement, these included:

- Investment in local infrastructure.
- Reduction in core heights.
- Plans to be based on local conditions.
- Protection and preservation of heritage.
- Preservation and protection of open space and enhanced tree canopy.
- More opportunities for site consolidation.

Engagement has informed place-based planning approaches incorporated into the Activity Centre Plans including:

- The application of the new planning controls.
- The extent of proposed core and catchment boundaries.
- Site specific opportunities and constraints.
- Areas that may require specific planning responses.
- Restricting overshadowing in important or well-used public spaces including streets and parks.

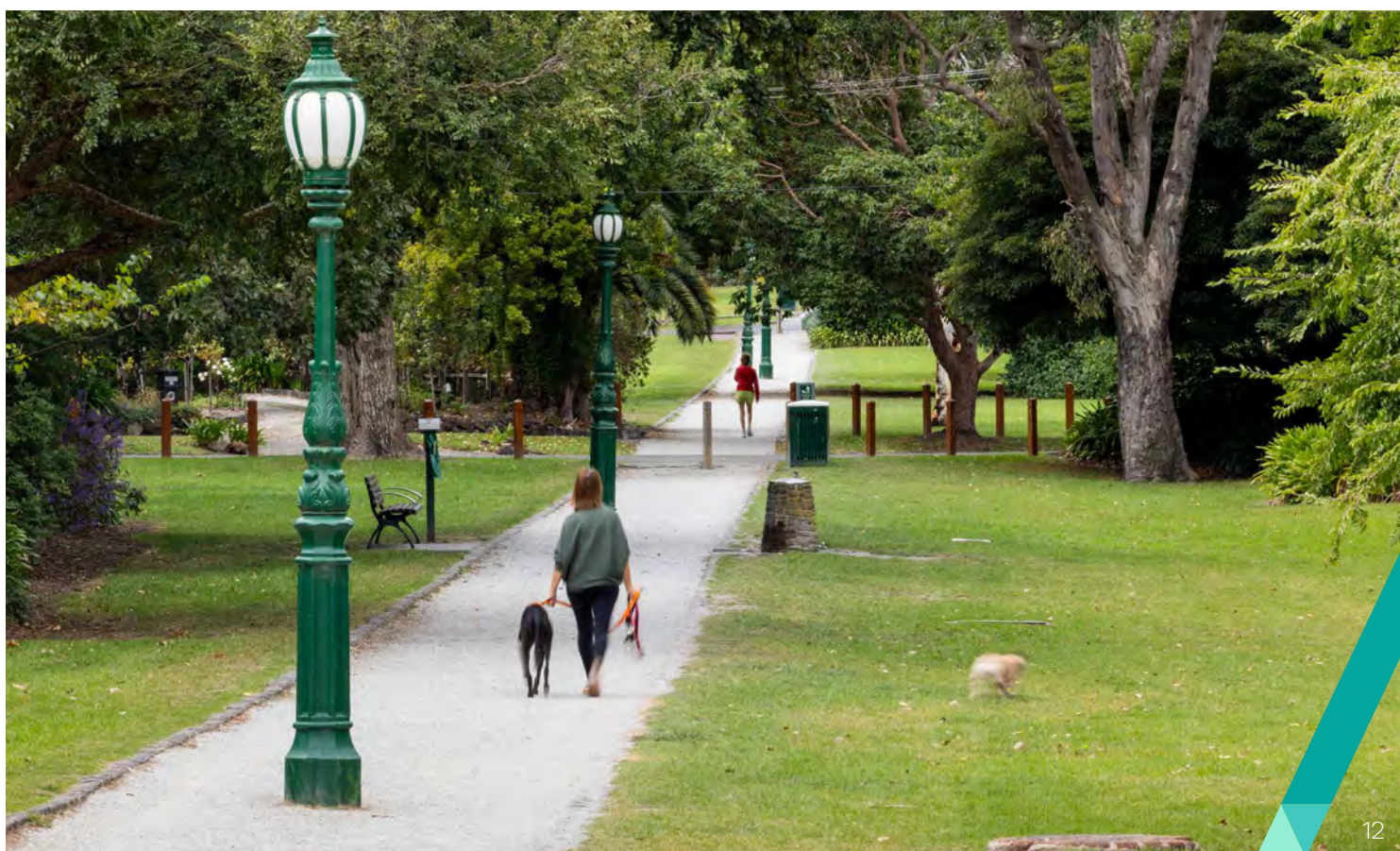
More information can be found in the consultation summary reports.

Traditional Owners

The train and tram zone activity centres are located on the lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People and Bunurong People. The RAPs have provided cultural values statements for each cluster of centres included in the program. The statements will be included in each Activity Centre Plan, to inform the strategic direction for each place, as well as signal to developers, builders and the wider community the cultural significance of these places to Aboriginal people.

We have sought feedback from the relevant RAP regarding:

- The extent of the core and catchment in relation to the application of new zones and overlays.
- Proposed building heights for the core and catchment, opportunities for place based responses to align with traditional owner values.
- Aspirations as well as proposed place improvement opportunities.





4. SUPPORTING CHANGE TO THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

Improved infrastructure and an infrastructure contributions system

The Victorian Government has made significant investments in infrastructure to improve transport efficiencies, for example, through projects such as the Level Crossing Removal Project and the Metro Tunnel Project. This has been a key factor in selecting the centres for the program.

Developers, federal, state and local government all share the responsibility for funding infrastructure. The contribution made by each development should be proportionate to the need it is projected to generate. To support the development of community infrastructure, transport infrastructure, public realm upgrades and open space – the program is developing an infrastructure contributions system, and is considering the types of projects that can be funded.

In addition to this work, the Victorian Government will continue to invest in infrastructure to support ongoing community needs including; health, education and water management infrastructure.

Improving local access opportunities

Through coordinated improvements to train, tram and bus networks, the Victorian Government aims to make public transport simpler, more accessible and more reliable.

An assessment of transport conditions and policy has informed the proposed improvement options for local and regional transport networks. This assessment included a review of state and council strategies and community engagement feedback.

The following transport infrastructure types have been considered in this assessment:

- Safe cycling facilities.
- Improved footpaths.
- New or improved crossings for walking and cycling.
- Bus stop improvements.
- Minor road efficiencies.

This assessment has enabled a range of long-term local improvements to be identified for each centre to support future demand generated by the increased residential and visitor population. These types of infrastructure have been considered in the context of the updated *Movement and Place* classifications.



The following strategies have been developed to support improvements to the transport network including:

- Safe, attractive and connected walking and riding networks that help people meet their everyday needs and move between activity centres.
- Greater choice in travel by improving on-road public transport efficiency and customer experience.
- More efficient road movements for cars and freight.

Opportunities for open space and community facilities

Integrated community infrastructure can support community well-being by embedding schools, health services and community hubs close to where people live. Access to these facilities often supports health and wellbeing, social connection and community development by creating communal places for public gathering, learning and engagement.

An infrastructure contributions system is being developed to help fund infrastructure to support population growth.

For the purposes of the program, an infrastructure contributions system is being developed, it is intended that funding contributes to schools and multi-purpose community facilities including but not limited to meeting rooms, early years education and creative spaces.

Thoughtful planning can ensure that all community members have equal access to infrastructure and resources. This is critical for reducing social disparities and promoting inclusivity.

Enhancing the public realm

A public realm assessment has been undertaken for each activity centre to ensure that current and future residents are supported by a high amenity public realm that promotes safety, health and wellbeing.

The assessment has considered existing state and council strategies, a place-based analysis of each centre, and community and council engagement insights.

The following public realm improvement categories have been considered in this assessment:

- Streetscape improvements.
- Laneway improvements.
- Open space improvements.

A unique set of opportunities have been identified in each centre to respond to place-based assessments and local context.

In addition to these opportunities, the program aims to deliver high quality public realm outcomes in accordance with the built form standards (Appendix 1: Activity Centres Core Built Form Standards).

Preserving heritage in Heritage Overlays and on the Victorian Heritage Register

Many properties in the train and tram activity centres are affected by Heritage Overlays (HO). Some of these properties are of state significance on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR).

The HO is not proposed to change and remains in place for these properties to protect and preserve their heritage significance. The Activity Centre Plans and implementation through the Built Form Overlay (BFO) and Housing Choice and Transport Zone (HCTZ), seek to primarily manage the built form of new buildings and direct housing growth to locations with good access to transport and services. Assessment of planning permit applications will need to consider the provisions of the new controls as well as the heritage significance of the place in the HO.

In the activity centre core the BFO is generally applied and the HO is retained. In the core, the BFO includes additional standards for development of land affected by or abutting the HO to recognise heritage and ensure that new developments appropriately respond to the significance of heritage places. Sites on the VHR will have the BFO applied but will not have a building height assigned to them as part of the program.

In the catchment, the HCTZ is applied and the HO is retained. HCTZ1 is not generally applied to large HO precincts and VHR places. The HCTZ2 is generally applied to large HO precincts; and sites on the VHR.

Planning for better water management

Planning controls that address flooding, including the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO) and Special Building Overlay (SBO), already apply to a number of activity centres and catchments, changes to these overlays are not proposed as part of the program..

Future development will be required to respond to any flood controls in the planning scheme as well as Clause 53.18 *Stormwater Management in Urban Development*, and existing local planning policies that require integrated water management and water sensitive urban design (WSUD).

The BFO also requires consideration of integrated water management as part of a sustainable design assessment and WSUD in relation to landscaping which should be supported by irrigation systems that utilise alternative water sources such as rainwater, stormwater and recycled water.

Melbourne Water is currently working with local councils to update flood risk information across Greater Melbourne. This helps to better understand the risk of current and future flooding to build a safe and resilient city. As part of the program we have been engaging regularly with Melbourne Water to understand these updates and any impacts to the program.

Responding to climate change and sustainability

The program aims to facilitate the development of new homes within existing urban areas close to services and infrastructure which:

- Encourages a mode shift away from cars and promotes more sustainable forms of transport, reducing private vehicle ownership and greenhouse gas emissions, and improving air quality.
- Reduces the need for development in greenfield growth areas, limiting impacts on biodiversity.
- Are generally in locations which minimise the risk of harm associated with natural hazards and climate change, such as heatwave, drought or bushfire.

The BFO for the activity centre core includes requirements and standards that support climate change resilience and minimisation of carbon emissions.

Development within catchment areas affected by the HCTZ will be required to address sustainability standards of Clause 54 – *One Dwelling on a Lot or a Small Second Dwelling on a Lot*, Clause 55 *Two or More Dwellings on a Lot and Residential Buildings*, Clause 57 *Two or More Dwellings on a Lot and Residential Buildings of Four Storeys*.



5. GUIDING GROWTH IN THE ACTIVITY CENTRE CORE

The activity centre core is the central part of the activity centre, often closest to public transport, containing a mix of jobs and services in a commercial street.

This area is well suited to accommodate more homes. Activity Centre Plans for the core typically allow for a variation in building heights, adjusted to respond to local context and development potential.

Policy principles for the activity centre core

The following principles guide the activity centre core boundary and implementation of planning controls. The boundary refers to that identified in the Activity Centre Plans and may include parks and open space. This is distinct from the boundary of the BFO which does not apply to open spaces.

The activity centre core generally includes:

- Areas supported by council’s strategic work.
- Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z) and Mixed-Use Zone (MUZ), supporting housing growth.
- Large lots with significant development capacity.

- Open space and Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ).
- Public Use Zone (PUZ).
- Landscapes and waterscapes important to Aboriginal cultural heritage within or adjacent commercial areas.

The activity centre core generally excludes:

- Transport Zone (TRZ), except where there is development potential and/ or interfaces need to be managed.
- Commercial 2 Zone (C2Z), except where built form guidance is needed to manage non-residential use buildings.
- Industrial 1 Zone (IN1Z), Industrial 2 Zone (IN2Z), or Industrial 3 Zone (IN3Z), except where new buildings should have regard to the function and built form of industrial land.

Urban design principles

The following principles have informed the built form standards and reflect best practice urban design.



SITE CONSOLIDATION

Facilitate growth



HERITAGE & CHARACTER STREETSCAPES

Respect significant heritage and character streetscapes



SKYLINE

Avoid a 'wall' of taller forms



STREET WALL & HUMAN SCALE

Contribute to an inviting, visually interesting & vibrant public realm at walking pace



SUNNY STREETS

Maintain solar access to main streets



SKY VIEWS

Maintain a relatively open streetscape with sky view between buildings



RESIDENTIAL INTERFACES

Maintain reasonable amenity in adjacent residential areas



ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE & VALUES

Respect Aboriginal cultural heritage and values in improving the health of Country



EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT

Consider development opportunities on adjacent properties



CLIMATE-RESPONSIVE DESIGN

Make room for trees, plants and greenery



EFFICIENT & DURABLE CONSTRUCTION

Design buildings with simple layouts



HIGH QUALITY ARCHITECTURE

Deliver a high quality architectural response

A consistent approach to managing built form

Housing growth framework

Building on the detailed analysis of activity centres across metropolitan Melbourne outlined in the *City of Centres: Development of typology-based built form controls (Sheppard and Cull, 2024)* a new Housing Growth Framework (HGF) has been developed to categorise activity centres. We have categorised centres based on their access to public transport, services and capacity to accommodate development. These categories have been allocated prior to the consideration of local variations, a process which adds further nuance to building heights and built form standards.

ATOS is used to assist in mapping access to jobs, services and opportunities across Melbourne. It has been used to select the prioritised locations in the Plan for Victoria where increased housing capacity is appropriate, including the train and tram zone activity centres.

Activity Centre Housing Growth Framework	Building height range in Activity Centre Plans	Train and tram zone activity centre/train station
4.	TBC	–
3.	Generally up to 16 storeys*	Hampton Station Sandringham Station Oakleigh Station Glenferrie Station Hawthorn Station Auburn Station Kew Junction Brunswick, Anstey and Jewell Stations (Brunswick Train and Tram Zone Activity Centre) Coburg Station
2.	Generally up to 12 storeys	North Brighton Station Middle Brighton Station High Street (Thornbury) Murrumbeena Station Hughesdale Station West Footscray Station Tottenham Station (Braybrook) Tooronga Station Gardiner Station Glen Iris Station Darling Station Holmesglen Station
1.	Generally up to 6 storeys	St Georges Road (Thornbury) East Malvern Station Middle Footscray Station (Seddon)

*Some strategic redevelopment sites have been identified for up to 20 storeys in this category

▲ Table 2: Housing Growth Framework for Tranche 1 centres

Typologies and built form standards

The program has developed 'typical' built form typologies and corresponding built form standards to ensure quality, consistency and replicability across all activity centres. Each typology has its own set of defining attributes, such as location within the activity centre, lot sizes and preferred street activation. Lot size is a key attribute with larger lots able to accommodate taller buildings.

Typologies were informed by development precedents, contemporary planning expectations and high-level feasibility analysis, and respond to the urban design principles. Detailed built form standards have been developed to manage development outcomes, ensure high quality built form is achieved, and public realm amenity is preserved. These standards are intended to guide development and consist of a range of mandatory and discretionary standards.

Appendix 1: Activity Centres Core Built Form Standards provides additional detail on these standards, including:

- Building heights.
- Street/front wall height.
- Front setback above street / front wall.
- Side and rear setbacks.
- Sun access.
- Active frontages.

The typology descriptions below show how different typologies are applied based on a range of attributes. Detailed information on the future character of each typology is available in the BFO schedules for each activity centre.



Heritage Main Street Core

Situated on the main street at the core of the activity centre, this typology is largely protected by heritage controls.

The subdivision pattern is often narrow lots with rear access via a laneway. Buildings are generally built to front and side boundaries with shop fronts at the ground level.

229 SMITH STREET, FITZROY



Non-Heritage Main Street Core

Situated on the main street at the core of the activity centre, this typology contains commercial shop fronts at the ground level.

Lots sizes and existing built form vary in size within the precinct but often contains narrow lots with shopfronts.

750 HIGH STREET, THORNBURY



Fringe Precinct

Located generally at the edge of the activity centre and adjacent to residential areas, this typology precinct contains mixed lot sizes with existing built form providing commercial uses and dwellings.

277 CENTRE ROAD, BENTLEIGH



Limited Sensitivities

This typology precinct tends to have fewer sensitivities as it is not on the main street or adjacent to a low-scale residential area. It typically comprises medium to large lots developed with lower-rise buildings with commercial and light industrial uses and apartment buildings.

16-18 SARGOOD STREET, ALTONA



Large Opportunity Sites & Enclosed Shopping Centres

This typology identifies the largest lot(s) in the centre, with a minimum lot area of 5000sqm. These typologies are combined to simplify built form controls in the BFO. These lots typically comprise remnant industrial and commercial uses and shopping centres in low-scale buildings.

699 PARK STREET, BRUNSWICK



▲ Figure 5: Examples of developments that could emerge in each built form typology

Masterplan Requirements

The BFO requires a masterplan for sites that have particular importance to an activity centre or that have complexities that need to be carefully addressed. The masterplan requirement has been applied to sites that are large and likely to be developed with multiple buildings, sites that are likely to need a staged development approach, sites that have complex or multiple public interfaces requiring special treatment, or that have a need for internal road and pedestrian connections.

Sun access standards

A framework for a consistent approach to managing the solar protection of open space and streets has been used.

Parks and open space are categorised into different levels of protection, with corresponding mandatory and discretionary standards:

- High protection.
- Moderate protection.
- All other open spaces.

A framework for a consistent approach to managing the solar protection of streets has been used. Streets have been categorised with different corresponding solar access standards:

- Boulevard.
- Key Pedestrian Street.
- Other Street.

Climate resilience standards

A consistent approach to ensure climate resilience and minimisation of carbon emissions has been used. Standards include:

- Deep soil requirements to enable and support the growth of canopy trees.
- Landscape setbacks to allow space for a mixture of vegetation and trees.
- Sun access protections to streets and open spaces to sustain the growth of vegetation and trees.
- A building adaptability requirement which will enable building reuse over time, reduce premature demolition and reconstruction, reducing embodied carbon emissions.

Responding to local context

Built form testing has informed place-specific local variations to the built form standards, developed as part of the typology analysis detailed above.

These variations respond to unique site conditions, opportunities and constraints and were informed by analysis which was undertaken with input from council and community feedback.

Local variations have been made where sensitive interfaces, open spaces, key streetscapes, or planned public realm upgrades may require adjustments to building heights, street wall height, setbacks or the initial built form typology assessment.

More information on local variation testing can be found in the *Local Variation Testing Reports (Architectus 2026)*.

A streamlined planning process

The BFO provides a framework for consistent planning controls structured around the built form typologies.

The overlay introduces a streamlined planning pathway to allow permits for buildings, homes and businesses to be approved quickly by outlining clear standards appropriate for each typology area. Deemed to comply standards are often used for building heights, street wall heights and setbacks. If a planning application meets these minimum standards, a permit cannot be refused on the basis of those standards. If a planning application does not meet the standards, the usual discretionary decision-making process and criteria apply.



6. GUIDING GROWTH IN THE CATCHMENT

The residential area adjacent to the activity centre core and/or the train station is referred to as the catchment.

This area supports the growth in the core areas and provides a transition in built form to the surrounding residential areas. This growth will be facilitated using the Housing Choice and Transport Zone (HCTZ), which has been developed to support the development opportunities that this location offers.

Policy principles for catchment boundaries

The catchment area and associated boundaries are guided by principles which will encourage increased housing in the most suitable locations. These principles have been developed to ensure that the definition of catchment boundaries is guided by a consistent approach across the program and that the catchment areas align with the objectives of the program.

Principles to guide the catchment boundaries	Implementation
Locate homes within easy access of public and active transport	With access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Train stations. – Tram stops. – Strategic bus routes. – Principal cycling network.
Locate homes in areas of high amenity and services	With access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The activity centre commercial core and key services. – High quality open space. – High amenity streets and public realm. – Key community infrastructure.
Locate homes in areas with greater capacity for change	Identify opportunities for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Larger sites and opportunities for consolidation. – Non-sensitive interfaces. – Manage growth in areas with local conditions to be considered.

Defining the inner and outer catchment

The catchment generally includes an inner catchment and an outer catchment, the boundary for these areas is based on the above principles, with the intention to allocate the best serviced and highest amenity residential land as the inner catchment. The inner catchment (HCTZ1) supports up to four storeys and up to six storeys on sites over 1000sqm with a minimum 20 metre frontage. The outer catchment supports development up to three storeys and up to four storeys on sites over 1000sqm with a minimum 20 metre frontage.

The catchment areas have been defined based on the principles and place-based assessment that aim to guide the location of homes to the most appropriate locations. A summary of the methodology used to define the inner and outer catchment boundaries is outlined in the steps below;

1. Definition of the planning

investigation area: an approximate 800metre radial distance from the core and the train station/ tram stops is drawn to define areas that will be further investigated. Tram stops are also considered where access to the core is provided.

APPROXIMATELY
800M DISTANCE FOR
INVESTIGATION

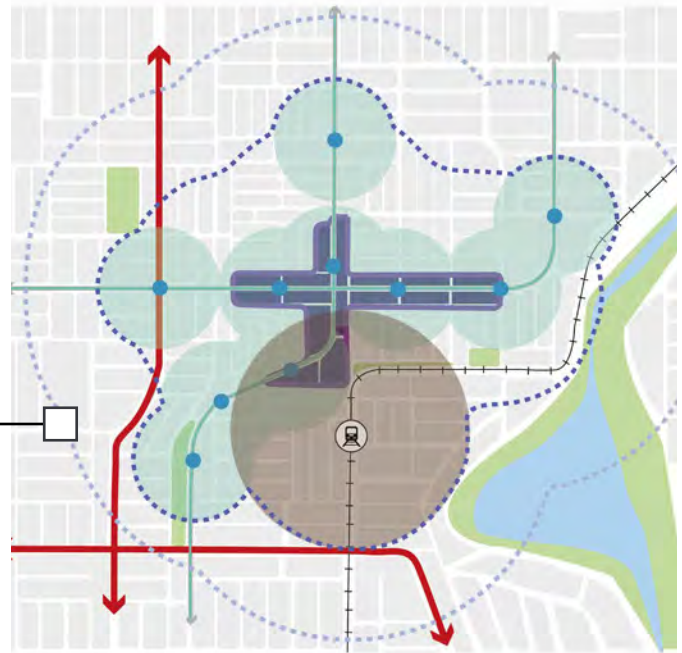


Diagram for illustrative purposes only

2. Definition of primary accessibility catchment: accessibility within the planning investigation area is further assessed, elements which enable good access include proximity to infrastructure (including rail) and access to opportunities and services assessed.

PROXIMITY TO
TRAM STOPS

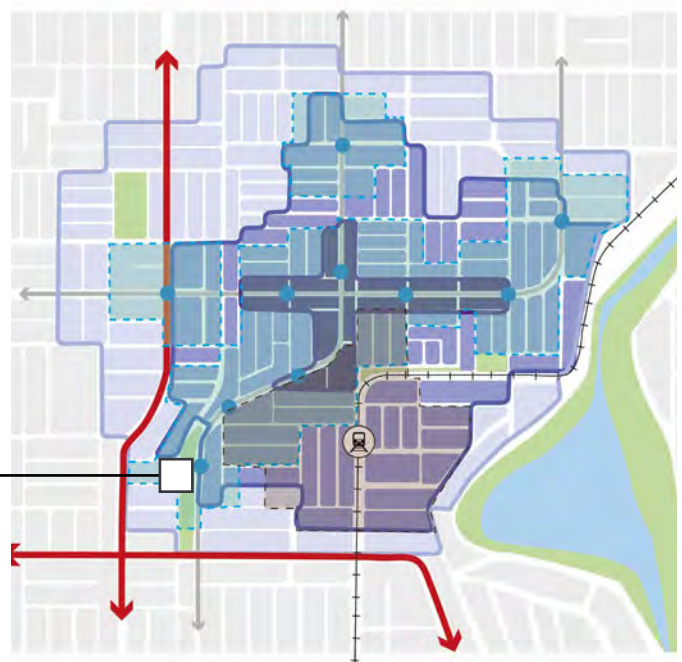


Diagram for illustrative purposes only

3. Local accessibility assessment and application: a place-based assessment and engagement feedback identify key destinations and local access routes within the planning investigation area. Open space, key services, local pedestrian and cycle networks and access to the bus network are considered. These high amenity areas are where the inner catchment should apply.

LOCAL ACCESS ROUTES

LOCAL DESTINATIONS

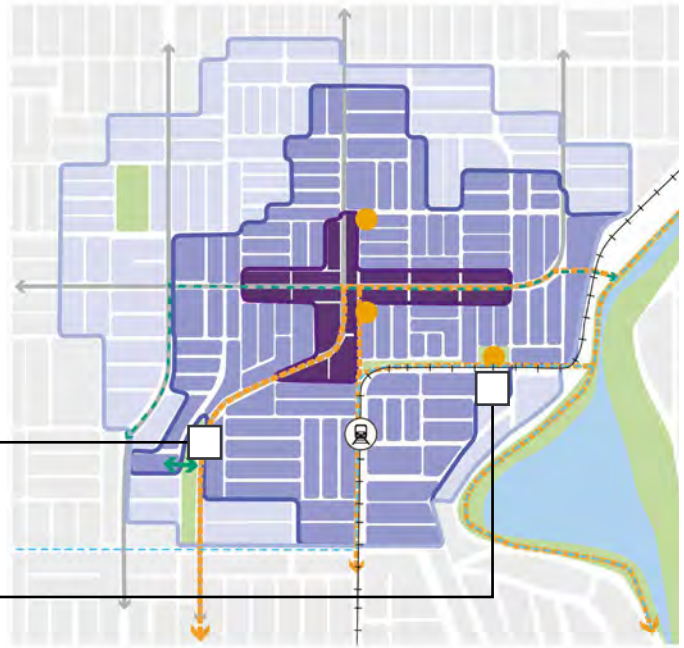


Diagram for illustrative purposes only

4. Local conditions assessment and application: a place-based assessment and engagement feedback inform the areas that may not be suitable to include in the inner catchment area. Conditions such as heritage protection under the Heritage Overlay and areas of adverse amenity are designated as outer catchment. Consultation with Registered Aboriginal Parties to understand areas of landscape and environmental significance are considered and influence the extent of catchment boundaries.

LARGE HO PRECINCT

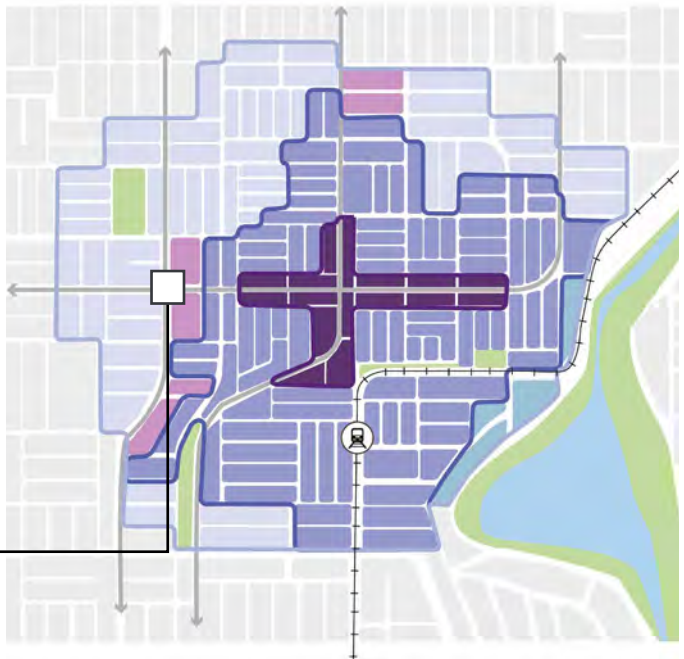


Diagram for illustrative purposes only

Applying the Housing Choice and Transport Zone to the catchment

Re-zoning areas identified as the catchment from their existing zone to the HCTZ will facilitate opportunities for more homes in these locations. This zone will be applied according to the designation of the area as inner catchment (HCTZ1) or outer catchment (HCTZ2).

Recent planning reforms such as the Townhouse and Low-rise Code and the Mid-rise Code will help to guide planning and built form outcomes in these areas.

Existing overlays in the catchment areas

Many of the catchment areas have existing overlays in place. A program-wide assessment has determined the most appropriate response to these overlays.

- Heritage Overlays (HO) will be retained to maintain planning controls which respond to local conditions.
- Large precincts with a HO in place or sites on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) have generally been allocated as outer catchment to ensure heritage character is retained. A large precinct in the inner catchment is usually defined as:
 - Greater than 10 lots.
 - Greater than 5,000sqm.
 - Greater than four contiguous lots if located close to the outer catchment.
 - Greater than 2000sqm if located close to the outer catchment.
- Where overlays are not considered compatible with the HCTZ, such as some Design and Development Overlays (DDO) they have been removed or adjusted to align with the program objectives.

Glossary

ATOS	Access to Transport, Opportunities and Services
BFO	Built Form Overlay
C1Z C2Z C3Z	Commercial Zone 1 Commercial Zone 2 Commercial Zone 3
HCTZ	Housing Choice and Transport Zone
HO	Heritage Overlay
HGF	Housing Growth Framework
IN1Z IN2Z IN3Z	Industrial Zone 1 Industrial Zone 2 Industrial Zone 3
LGA	Local Government Area
MUZ	Mixed Use Zone
NCO	Neighbourhood Character Overlay
PPRZ	Public Park and Recreation Zone
PUZ	Public Use Zone
TRZ	Transport Zone



7. APPENDIX 1 – ACTIVITY CENTRES CORE BUILT FORM STANDARDS

Using a built form typology approach (as discussed in Chapter 5), a set of built form and design standards are developed to manage and guide growth in activity centre cores.

The built form and design controls are prepared in line with the urban design principles (Chapter 5). This creates a starting point for a replicable process to develop centre-specific and site-specific controls to guide future development outcomes.

The built form standards identify building height, street/front wall height, front setback above the street/front wall, side and rear setbacks, sun access as well as other standards discussed in this appendix. The standards seek to ensure best practice outcomes in terms of the public realm and amenity as well as protecting and enhancing heritage and character.

Built form standards and deemed to comply

The built form controls to be introduced will include standards that are:

- **Mandatory (standards that must be met)**
Mandatory standards are developed to manage matters that are essential to protecting amenity to key areas in the activity centres. Therefore, they generally relate to managing sun access and adverse wind impacts. Mandatory standards must be measurable and prescriptive.

- **Discretionary (standards that should be met)**
Discretionary standards allow for variation to a standard provided the outcome is still achieved. For example, an application that varies the active frontage standard but still ensures streets achieve adequate surveillance or activity is appropriate to support.

Using deemed to comply

Proposals in the activity centres may be assessed against a 'deemed to comply' pathway for some discretionary standards identified in the Built Form Overlay (BFO) schedules. Under the deemed to comply pathway, if an application meets the discretionary deemed to comply standard, then an application cannot be refused based on that standard.

Deemed to comply controls provide developers and the community with greater certainty about the likely expected scale and intensity of future development, while still allowing for a more innovative design response on a case-by-case basis if the deemed to comply standards are not met.

A deemed to comply pathway is limited to built form standards and may be specified as a range. For example, buildings that are above or below a specified height range will not be deemed to comply.

Building height

The building height standard is based on the activity centre's Housing Growth Framework (HGF) category, as well as the built form typology.

What has informed the standard?

The building height varies depending on the HGF allocated to each activity centre. The discretionary and deemed to comply maximum building heights range from 21 metres (six storeys) for HGF Type One centres, up to 16 storeys, or higher on some sites subject to further urban design testing for HGF Type Four centres (Table 1).

In most areas of the activity centres, commercial uses are expected on the ground floor or podium with residential towers on top, and building heights are calculated based on the deemed to comply maximum floor-to-floor heights of:

- Commercial ground floor 4.5 metres.
- Commercial upper floor 4 metres.
- Residential all floors 3.2 metres.

The building heights have been applied to ensure activity centres can accommodate an appropriate level of density. For instance, greater growth opportunities are considered for activity centres with the highest level of access to jobs, services and public transport, while also managing off-site amenity impacts such as overshadowing.

The discretionary deemed to comply minimum building height standards are established to discourage underdevelopment (Table 2).

Typology / Precinct	Maximum building height				Discretionary or mandatory	Deemed to comply
	1	2	3	4		
Activity Centre Housing Growth Framework						
Heritage Main Street Core	21m		27m		Discretionary	Yes
Non-Heritage Main Street Core	21m	27m	40m		Discretionary	Yes
Fringe	21m		27m		Discretionary	Yes
Limited Sensitivities	27m	27m or 34m or 40m	40m or 53m and some sites could be greater height subject to urban design testing		Discretionary	Yes
Large Opportunity Sites and Enclosed Shopping Centres	27m	27m or 34m or 40m	40m or 53m and some sites could be greater height subject to urban design testing	53m and some sites could be greater height subject to urban design testing	Discretionary	No

▲ Table 1: Maximum building height

How does the standard achieve a good outcome?

The building heights are determined by the hierarchy and ranking of each centre, considering both existing built form and appropriate future growth (using the typology approach). This ensures good outcomes are achieved with respect to on- and off-site amenity impacts (Table 1).

Additional built form standards such as the ones addressed in the following sections of this appendix will further guide development outcomes to ensure suitable street character and human scale are achieved where appropriate, while still facilitating growth.

The maximum building heights set out in Table 1 can only be reached where other provisions (for example, sun access and side and rear setbacks) are also met. Consolidation of smaller lots will typically be required to achieve these heights.

The discretionary deemed to comply minimum building height standards are established to discourage underdevelopment (Table 2).

Why is the standard mandatory, discretionary or deemed to comply?

To provide greater certainty for all stakeholders in the development process and make the approvals process more efficient, the building height standard is discretionary, deemed to comply for most standards of most typologies: Heritage Main Street Core, Non-Heritage Main Street Core, Fringe and Limited Sensitivities. A discretionary, deemed to comply standard for building height is appropriate for these typologies, because the built form outcome is expected to be similar across different activity centres.

The building height standard is discretionary for Large Opportunity Sites and Enclosed Shopping Centres. The built form outcome for these typologies is often required to be more bespoke due to the size of the site, therefore a discretionary control is more appropriate to allow flexibility.

Are there any exceptions to the standard?

There are no exceptions to this standard.

Precinct	Minimum building height				Discretionary or mandatory	Deemed to comply
Activity Centre Housing Growth Framework	1	2	3	4		
Heritage Main Street Core	10m		13m		Discretionary	Yes
Non-Heritage Main Street Core	10m	13m	21m		Discretionary	Yes
Fringe	10m		13m		Discretionary	Yes
Limited Sensitivities	13m	13m	21m		Discretionary	Yes
Large Opportunity Sites and Enclosed Shopping Centres	None specified				Not applicable	No

▲ Table 2: Minimum building height

Street/front wall height

Street wall height standards ensure that buildings contribute positively to the streetscape, maintain a human scale where appropriate and do not overwhelm the public realm. The maximum street wall height is based on typology.

What has informed the standard?

In the typologies of Heritage Main Street and Non-Heritage Main Street, there is usually an established streetscape character of consistent street wall height. In these precincts, the existing character has informed the street wall height of 11 metres (Table 3).

In the typologies of Fringe, Limited Sensitivities, Large Opportunity Sites and Enclosed Shopping Centres, where there is usually a lack of consistent streetscape character, there is an opportunity to create a new character based on creating a comfortable public realm by relating the street/front wall height to the width of the street. In these typologies, the street/front wall height is the same as the road width or 21 metres, whichever is lesser. Capping the height of the street wall at 21 metres minimises the risk of adverse public realm outcomes in typologies where streets are considerably wide (Table 3).

In Type 1 and Type 2 HGFs, where the maximum height of Fringe typology is 21 metres, the street wall height is established to allow apartments that do not follow a typical podium tower-built form. In these centres, the Fringe typology can create a new character.

How does the standard achieve a good outcome?

The maximum street/front wall height standard protects the established streetscape character or creates a consistent streetscape outcome in centres with no uniform character. The standard ensures a comfortable and human-scaled environment for pedestrians and works in conjunction with complementary standards for maintaining sun access to footpaths (discussed in the following sections).

The maximum street/front wall height also helps to minimise adverse wind effects caused by taller built form and enhances pedestrian comfort. It ensures that a relatively open streetscape with sky views between buildings is maintained.

The street/front wall height can only be maximised where other provisions (for example, sun access) are also met.

Why is the standard mandatory, discretionary or deemed to comply?

To provide greater certainty for all stakeholders in the development process and make the approvals process more efficient, the street/front wall height standard is discretionary and deemed to comply for most typologies: Heritage Main Street Core, Non-Heritage Main Street Core, Fringe and Limited Sensitivities. A discretionary and deemed to comply standard for street wall height is appropriate for these typologies, because the built form outcome is expected to be similar across different activity centres.

Precinct	Maximum Street Wall/ Front wall height	Discretionary or Mandatory	Deemed to comply
Heritage Main Street Core	11m	Discretionary	Yes
Non-Heritage Main Street Core	11m	Discretionary	Yes
Fringe	1:1 ratio of road width to street wall height or 21m whichever is lesser	Discretionary	Yes
Limited Sensitivities	1:1 ratio of road width to street wall height or 21m whichever is lesser	Discretionary	Yes
Large Opportunity Sites and Enclosed Shopping Centres	1:1 ratio of road width to street wall height or 21m whichever is lesser	Discretionary	No

▲ Table 3: Street/front wall height

The street/front wall height standard is to be discretionary for Large Opportunity Sites and Enclosed Shopping Centres. The built form outcome for these typologies is often required to be more bespoke due to the size of the site, therefore a discretionary control is more appropriate to allow flexibility.

In areas where the maximum street/front wall and the building height is the same, some buildings may not have a podium and tower form, and this is considered appropriate aiming to create a new character of mid-rise apartment blocks in these areas.

Are there any exceptions to the standard?

To protect and enhance areas, sites, and buildings with heritage value, an additional suite of standards guides the maximum street /front wall for sites under a Heritage Overlay (HO) or adjacent to a HO. More information about these standards is included in the following sections.

In some sites, a front or landscape setback is required to create opportunities for landscaping or outdoor activities, while protecting and maintaining the existing streetscape. The front/landscape setback requirement for each activity centre is specified in the relevant activity centre built form overlay schedule.

Front setback above street/front wall

Similar to the street wall, the upper-level front setback standard manages the scale and impact of taller buildings on the public realm, maintaining a pedestrian-friendly environment and the streetscape character. The minimum front setback above street/front wall is based on the typology.

What has informed the standard?

The minimum front setbacks above street/front wall have been determined to maintain an inviting public realm at the street level, respect heritage values where they prevail, and provide for greater densities that align with the desired density level of the activity centre.

In areas with heritage or character values (for example, Heritage and Non-Heritage Main Street Typologies), a more dominant street wall with a visually recessive upper form is established. In areas where a higher density is sought (for example, Limited Sensitivities Typology), a low-rise podium with towers above that are set back from the street and separated from each other is supported (Table 4).

Upper-level setbacks are limited to a single step in the façade to support efficient floor plans and limit unnecessary building complexity.

Typology	Part of the building	Minimum setback	Discretionary or mandatory	Deemed to comply
Heritage Main Street Core	Above the proposed street/front wall	6m	Discretionary	Yes
Non-Heritage Main Street Core		5m	Discretionary	Yes
Fringe		3m if building height below and including 8 storeys 5m if building height above 8 storeys	Discretionary	Yes
Limited Sensitivities			Discretionary	Yes
Large Opportunity Sites and Enclosed Shopping Centres			Discretionary	No
	Discretionary	No		

▲ Table 4: Minimum front setback above street/front wall

How does the standard achieve a good outcome?

The minimum front setback above the street wall helps to maintain a pedestrian-friendly environment, while protecting or enhancing the streetscape character. With additional standards such as sun access (discussed in the following sections), it also minimises the overshadowing of opposite footpaths, contributing to a more enjoyable public realm (Table 4).

Upper-level setback standards have been established to ensure main streets have a human scale for all centre types and upper levels are appropriately set back from the street/front wall.

Why is the standard mandatory, discretionary or deemed to comply?

To provide greater certainty for all stakeholders in the development process and make the approvals process more efficient, the minimum front setback above the street/front wall is discretionary, deemed to comply for all typologies except for Large Opportunity Sites and Enclosed Shopping Centres. A discretionary, deemed to comply standard for minimum front setback is appropriate because the built form outcome is expected to be similar across different activity centres

The minimum front setback above street/front wall for Large Opportunity Sites and Enclosed Shopping Centres is a discretionary standard. The built form outcome for these typologies is often required to be more bespoke due to the size of the site, therefore a discretionary control is more appropriate to allow flexibility.

In areas where the maximum street wall and the building height is the same, some buildings may not have a podium and tower form and this is considered appropriate aiming to create a new character of mid-rise apartment blocks in these areas. In this type of development no upper-level setback is required.

Are there any exceptions to the standard?

To protect and enhance areas, sites, and buildings with heritage value, an additional suite of standards guides the minimum front setback above street/front wall for sites under a HO or adjacent to a HO. More information about these standards is included in the following sections.

Side and rear setbacks

Side and rear setback standards are established to ensure there is adequate space between buildings to provide light and air access, maintain privacy, and reduce the impact of development on neighbouring properties and public realm.

What has informed the standard?

The same side and rear setback standards are to be applied to buildings in all typologies except at sensitive interfaces or where a wall on boundary is proposed.

As height increases, required minimum setbacks increase, ensuring adequate separation between upper built forms.

A new building not on or within 200mm of a boundary should be set back from side or rear boundaries according to Table 5, except where a site adjoins a sensitive interface shown on the activity centres built form schedules.

A maximum of two side and rear setbacks should be incorporated above the street wall or podium to avoid an overly tiered built form.

Building height	Minimum setback to boundary line	Mandatory or discretionary	Deemed to comply
Up to 21m (six storeys)	4.5m	Discretionary	Large Opportunity Sites and Enclosed Shopping Centres) – No All other sites – Yes
Above 21m (six storeys) to 40m (12 storeys)	6m	Discretionary	
Above 40m (12 storeys)	10m	Discretionary	

▲ Table 5: Minimum side and rear setbacks except where the allotment boundary adjoins a sensitive interface or a wall on boundary is proposed

Wall on boundary

On sites below 1500sqm in size, a new wall constructed on or within 200mm of a **rear boundary** of a lot should not exceed 11 metres in height. Sites above 1500sqm should setback from rear according to table 5.

A new wall constructed on or within 200mm of a **side boundary** of a lot should not exceed 11 metres in height unless:

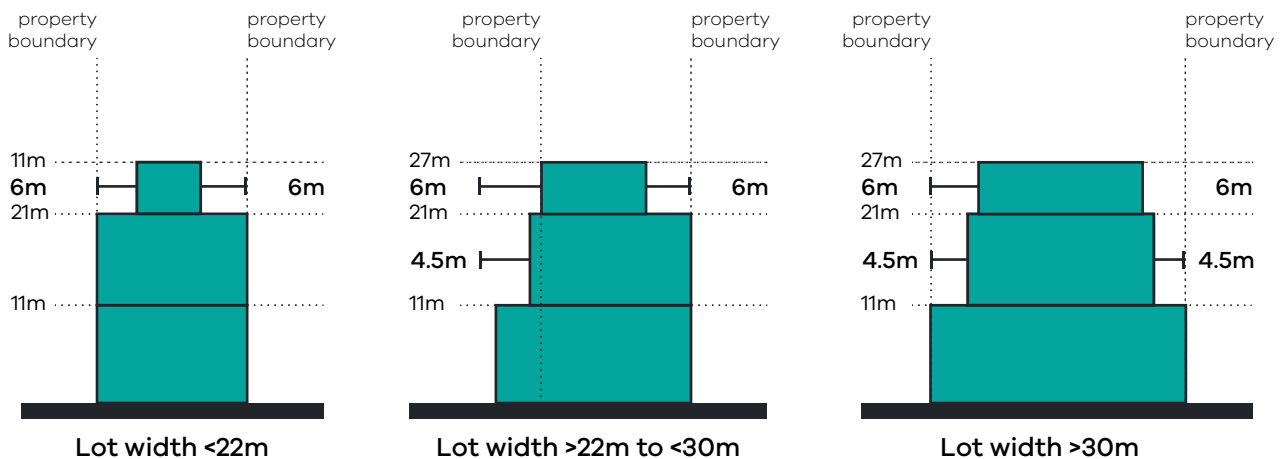
- The lot width is less than 22 metres wide*, whereby a new wall constructed on or within 200mm of a **side boundary** should not exceed 21 metres in height.
- The lot width is equal to or greater than 22 metres wide* and less than 30 metres wide*, whereby a new wall may only be constructed on or within 200mm of **one side boundary** and should not exceed 21 metres in height.

*Note: Site width is measured as the site's average width, measured parallel to the frontage.

This standard is deemed to comply for all sites except Large Opportunity Sites and Enclosed Shopping Centres.

Where a wall constructed on or within 200mm of a boundary is proposed, the side and rear setbacks at Table 5 apply above the proposed wall on boundary.

The setback standard on party walls varies based on the width of the site at the frontage, providing feasible development opportunities for smaller properties, while also managing equitable development opportunities for neighbouring properties. In wider sites (wider than 30 metres), setbacks are required from both sides to allow for adequate separation between upper forms in the streetscape. Figure 1 shows the side and rear setbacks (and party wall) for sites of varied widths.



▲ Figure 1 Front elevation showing side setbacks for lots of different widths

Sensitive interfaces (as mapped in the activity centre plans)

A different approach to the setback standards is established to respect the residential character and respond to the amenity need for neighbouring properties to the south of the interface (Table 6). Further setback to the south boundary allows sun access to the north facing windows of properties abutting to the south boundary of the activity centres' core.

How does the standard achieve a good outcome?

Minimum side and rear setbacks are required to ensure a balance between density and amenity. Setbacks reduce the potential for windows and balconies to directly overlook neighbouring properties. Additionally, setbacks also facilitate natural light access and air circulation for internal amenity. Setbacks assist in moderating the bulk and scale of buildings, complementing other standards such as building height.

Why is the standard mandatory, discretionary or deemed to comply?

To provide greater certainty for all stakeholders in the development process and make the approvals process more efficient, the minimum side and rear setback standard is discretionary, deemed to comply for all typologies except for Large Opportunity Sites and Enclosed Shopping Centres. A discretionary, deemed to comply standard for side and rear setbacks is appropriate because the built form outcome is expected to be similar across different activity centres.

Discretionary, deemed to comply standards are not considered appropriate for larger sites due to the risk of inappropriate outcomes. The minimum side and rear setbacks for Large Opportunity Sites and Enclosed Shopping Centres are discretionary. The built form outcome for these typologies is often required to be more bespoke due to the size of the site, therefore a discretionary control is more appropriate to allow flexibility.

Are there any exceptions to the standard?

There are no exceptions to this standard.

Building height	Minimum Setback to boundary line (If Boundary is to the south side of the building)
Up to and including 11m	6m
Above 11m and up to and including 21m	12m
Above 21m	15m

▲ Table 6: Side and rear setbacks to Sensitive Interfaces

Any part of the building	Minimum separation
Up to and including 21m	9m
Above 21 m and up to and including 40m	12m
Above 40m	20m

▲ Table 7: Building separation distance for buildings within a site

Sun access

Public and green spaces serve as invaluable public assets. Sunlight plays a vital role in preserving the health of landscaping and trees, as well as in facilitating thermal comfort for users. This section discusses the standards that protect sun access to public spaces.

What has informed the standard?

Parks and other public spaces, such as plazas have been categorised based on their significance and use, as well as consideration of existing overshadowing from development around them. Parks that are not heavily impacted by overshadowing from existing development are to have the highest level of protection. The standard ensures that parks receive sunlight for a minimum of four hours at the winter solstice (21 June).

Streets have been categorised based on the *Movement and Place Framework*² and their different purpose and use. The streets with the highest pedestrian activity have been identified as requiring the highest level of protection from additional overshadowing. The standard ensures footpaths receive sunlight for a minimum of five hours at the spring equinox (22 September).

This standard supports the health of existing landscapes and ecosystems providing thermal comfort for users in colder months, as well as providing opportunities to linger in the public realm (Table 8).

Building separation

Buildings above the established street/front wall should provide a minimum preferred separation distance, as outlined in Table 7.

How does the standard achieve a good outcome?

The sun access standard complements the building height, street wall height, and setback standards to ensure that sun access to key public and green spaces is maintained. This standard supports the health of existing landscapes and ecosystems providing thermal comfort for users in colder months, as well as providing opportunities to linger in the public realm (Table 8).

Why is the standard mandatory, discretionary or deemed to comply?

A mix of mandatory, discretionary and deemed to comply standards have been established based on the significance of parks, open spaces, and streets. The mandatory standards provide development certainty, while ensuring significant parks are protected from excessive overshadowing. The discretionary standards provide flexibility where solar access outcomes can be achieved.

Are there any exceptions to the standard?

There are no exceptions to this standard.

² State Government of Victoria (Department of Transport), *Movement and Place in Victoria*, 2019

SUN ACCESS

Types	Sun access standards – streets	Mandatory or discretionary	Deemed to comply
Boulevards	No additional overshadowing beyond the centreline of the boulevard between 10am and 2pm on 22 September.	Discretionary	Yes
Key pedestrian streets	No additional overshadowing to the opposite footpath measured at least 5m from the property boundary between 10am and 2pm on 22 September.	Discretionary	Yes
All other streets	No additional overshadowing of opposite footpaths beyond the theoretical shadow cast by the maximum building envelope in Standard BF02 and BF05 between 10am and 2pm on 22 September.	Discretionary	No
Sun Access standards – parks & open spaces			
High protection	No additional overshadowing between 10am and 3pm on 21 June.	Mandatory	Yes
Moderate protection	No additional overshadowing beyond the theoretical shadow cast by the maximum building podium envelope in Standard BF05 and Standard BF06 between 10am and 3pm on 21 June.	Mandatory	Yes
All other parks and open spaces (including waterways, any future parks and open spaces)	No additional overshadowing beyond the theoretical shadow cast by the maximum building envelope in Standard BF02, Standard BF05, and Standard BF06 between 10am and 3pm on 21 June.	Discretionary	No

▲ Table 8: Sun access

Sun access

Types	Mandatory or discretionary	Justification
Boulevards	Discretionary	This discretionary standard ensures there is sufficient sunlight to the central median of boulevards for canopy planting. Given the lack of pedestrian activity in central medians, this control is established as discretionary to enable the responsible authorities' discretion based on contextual nuances.
Key pedestrian streets/green streets	Discretionary	Key pedestrian streets are identified based on the Movement and Place in Victoria framework. These streets are anticipated to accommodate a high level of pedestrian and lingering activities. This standard is discretionary to ensure sun access to footpaths are protected to support canopy planting on nature strips and provide sufficient sunlight to lingering activities such as outdoor dining as well as pedestrians when required.
All other streets	Discretionary	<p>This standard is discretionary and only applicable to developments that does not meet specific discretionary, deemed to comply standards.</p> <p>This standard ensures proposed developments that go beyond the deemed to comply envelop do not overshadow the opposite footpath beyond the overshadowing caused by existing developments.</p> <p>This discretionary standard provide flexibility where sun access outcomes can be achieved.</p>
Sun Access standards – parks & open spaces		
High protection	Mandatory	<p>Parks that are not heavily impacted by overshadowing from existing development have the highest level of protection. This mandatory standard ensures five hours of sun access to these parks in the winter solstice to support healthy canopy planting as well as active and passive activities in parks.</p> <p>Existing parks and open spaces will need to support the population growth in the activity centres and surrounding catchment areas. This mandatory standard is to ensure the health of these parks' ecosystem and enable future planting by sufficient access to sunlight.</p>
Moderate protection	Mandatory	Parks that are already overshadowed by existing developments are identified for moderate protection. This mandatory standard protects sun access to these parks beyond shadow cast by the proposed street/front wall to ensure some sun access that support the health of the parks' eco system and activities in parks.
All other parks and open spaces (including waterways, any future parks and open spaces)	Discretionary	<p>This standard is discretionary and only applicable to developments that does not meet specific discretionary, deemed to comply standards.</p> <p>This standard ensures sun protection to future parks and open spaces beyond the extent of overshadowing by existing developments. The discretionary standards provide flexibility where solar access outcomes can be achieved.</p>

▲ Table 9: Mandatory and discretionary sun access standards

Active frontages

Active frontages support a vibrant, active, and safe pedestrian environment. A variety of techniques and approaches can be employed to activate streetscapes, recognising differences in typologies and land use.

Active frontages can be facilitated by a combination of glazing, entries, and commercial activities such as dining areas. Retail typically plays a key role in street activation. However, other land uses will also contribute, including eateries with street dining, residential developments with balconies overlooking the street, and other uses that provide passive surveillance, such as gyms, banks, and post offices.

What has informed the standard?

The standard for primary, secondary and tertiary active frontages is based on the existing and emerging lands uses in different typologies, ensuring new developments provide opportunities for a high level of activation. Developments should incorporate clear glazing as specified in Table 10 for the streets and areas identified in the activity centre plans.

How does the standard achieve a good outcome?

At street level, clear and unobstructed views into and out of buildings enhance the urban experience for both pedestrians and occupants.

Transparency in the building facade adds visual interest, enhances streetscape vibrancy, and improves public realm safety through passive surveillance. A high degree of visual and physical connection, including multiple entrances and storefront windows at ground level, supports active, street-related commercial and retail activity.

The standard is applied across different typologies, ensuring new development in main streets or other key pedestrian streets deliver the highest level of activation. The applied level of activation should also respond to the land use provisions.

Why is the standard mandatory, discretionary or deemed to comply?

Active frontage standards are discretionary. The provision of active frontages does not considerably impact the building envelope and a deemed to comply approach does not warrant development certainty. The standard is therefore discretionary to allow for variations, while the activation outcome is still achieved.

Are there any exceptions to the standard?

There are no exceptions to this standard.

Streets or areas identified in activity centre plans	Minimum entry or window percentage	Mandatory or discretionary	Deemed to comply
Primary active frontages	A preferred minimum 80% entry or window percentage along the ground level frontage to a height of 2.5m, excluding any solid plinth or base	Discretionary	No
Secondary active frontages	A preferred minimum 60% entry or window percentage along the ground level frontage to a height of 2.5m, excluding any solid plinth or base	Discretionary	No
Tertiary active frontages	A preferred minimum 40% entry or window percentage along the ground level frontage to a height of 2.5m, excluding any solid plinth or base	Discretionary	No

▲ Table 10: Active frontages

Other standards

Heritage

Additional standards in relation to properties under the HO or abutting a site under the HO has been introduced in order to retain, preserve, and protect the heritage sites and buildings and to ensure that new developments appropriately respond to the significance of these heritage places.

Different standards have been established based on the level of significance (contributory or non-contributory) of heritage sites and buildings under the HO, as well consideration of neighbouring properties. Minimum street setbacks, maximum street/front wall heights, and minimum setbacks above the street/front wall are to retain significant heritage fabric and the three-dimensional form of heritage buildings beyond their facades (Table 11).

Establishing setbacks for developments above heritage buildings and neighbouring sites will ensure the heritage fabric is protected by preserving the three-dimensional aspects of these buildings, avoiding facadism, while allowing for appropriately scaled growth and development.

Heritage types	Minimum street setback	Maximum street/front wall height	Minimum setback above street/front wall	Mandatory or discretionary	Deemed to comply
Type 1 Heritage (Victorian Heritage Register)	None specified	None specified	None specified	Discretionary	No
Type 2 Heritage (contributory/significant)	Street setback is to be generally equal to the street setback of the heritage building.	Street/front wall heights is to be equal or less than the street wall height of the heritage building	6m minimum setback above the street wall	Discretionary	No
Type 3 Heritage (Non-contributory)		11m or three storeys, whichever is lesser		Discretionary	No
For sites adjacent to Type 1/Type 2 Heritage		The street wall is to match the parapet height of the adjoining heritage building, for a minimum length of 6m from the adjoining heritage building (VHR sites and Type 2 Heritage)	Setback above street walls are specified at Table 5 - Front setback above the street/front wall height standards	Discretionary	No

▲ Table 11: Heritage standards

Deep soil requirements

Providing adequate space for deep soil planting for canopy trees at the ground level will enhance the public realm's amenity and help reduce the urban heat island effect.

Deep soil standards for facilitating tree planting in apartment developments are already addressed by standards in the planning scheme under Standard D10 Landscaping (Clause 58.03-5). This additional standard is established for properties where clause 58 does not apply.

Development should provide the minimum deep soil extent at ground level outlined in Table 12 below.

Development on all sites 1,501sqm or greater, other than Apartment Developments, should provide:

- At least two trees with a minimum canopy and height at maturity of 8 metres, with each tree having a minimum deep soil area of 49sqm (min. plan dimension 4.5 metres); or
- At least one tree with a minimum canopy and height at maturity of 12 metres, within a minimum deep soil area of 121sqm (min. plan dimension 6.5 metres).

Development on all sites should ensure deep soil is not located above basements or other infrastructure.

Tower floor plate size

Residential apartment development above the maximum street wall height should have a maximum floorplate size of no more than 900sqm per tower.

The preferred maximum tower floor plate size, in combination with building separation creates architectural interest and visually reduces the overall scale of the building's mass. This approach minimises the loss of sky views from the public realm and facilitates natural light penetration into interior spaces. It also minimises shadow impacts and adverse wind conditions on surrounding streets, parks, open space and properties.

The preferred maximum tower floorplate was informed by studying recent precedents, as well as an understanding of relevant design guidelines for apartments, building codes, buildings recognised for design quality (high quality architecture), and general commercial viability.

A minimum floor plate is not established for non-residential towers to allow flexibility for different size floor plates informed by the land use needs.

Site size	Deep soil extent at ground level	Mandatory or discretionary	Deemed to comply
Below 1,500sqm	0%	Discretionary	Yes
1,501–5,000sqm	10%	Discretionary	Yes
Above 5,001sqm	15%	Discretionary	No

▲ Table 12: Deep soil requirements at ground floor

Large Opportunity Sites and Enclosed Shopping Centres

In addition to the planning standards discussed, it is recognised that sites over 5,000sqm may require additional provisions to manage the built form outcome.

Master planning

For some Large Opportunity Sites and Enclosed Shopping Centres identified in the BFO schedules, a master plan is required. The master plan should address matters such as (but not limited to):

- Site constraints, such as flood hazard.
- Scale of development.
- Siting and orientation of buildings.
- Any open space, canopy trees or pedestrian links required.
- Key interfaces.
- Internal street network and layout if applicable.
- Indicative vehicle (including for waste, loading or other service vehicles), pedestrian and cycling entries, if relevant.
- The proposed land use and floor area of each building.
- Green infrastructure and alternative water sources/treatments if applicable.

How does the standard achieve a good outcome?

The master planning process can provide certainty regarding the nature of use and development proposal. It ensures that permits granted are generally in accordance with the master plan. Additionally, it provides an opportunity for local councils and developers to align on the holistic vision and different aspects of the development, thereby avoiding a lengthy and resource-intensive application process and reduce VCAT appeals.

Are there any exceptions to the standard?

Master planning is only recommended for some large sites that may need internal roads, and smaller sites with specific complexities (e.g. unusual shape and or interfaces) that can benefit from a master plan prior to preparing a planning permit application. Sites identified as potentially benefiting from a master plan are identified in the built form overlay schedules. Generally, government or council-owned sites have not been identified as specifically requiring a master plan as this would generally be part of the government or council process.

Changes made to the Activity Centres Pilot global standard

This section discusses the changes made to the Activity Centres Pilot built form standards based on the further analysis and built form testing undertaken for Train and Tram Zone Activity Centres Program.

Building height

The heights in Heritage Main Street Core, Non-Heritage Main Street Core and Fringe are the same as in the Activity Centres Pilot.

In Limited Sensitives typology (Type 3), we have simplified the heights by specifying heights without reference to the street width.

On Limited Sensitives, Large Opportunity Sites and Enclosed Shopping Centres (Type 2,3 and 4), there is now an opportunity to specify a height from a range to recognise that these are sites with the highest opportunity. For these sites, opportunities (e.g. rear laneway access, dual street frontage and insensitive interfaces), and constraints (e.g. abutting a Heritage Overlay, direct abuttal to a residential site to the south and narrow road width) are considered to identify the appropriate height within the proposed range in Table 1. For some of these sites, the proposed building height is determined based on site-specific built form testing.

Street/front wall height

There have been no changes to the street/front wall standard from the Activity Centres Pilot standards.

Front setback above street/front wall

The front setback above street/front wall standard has been simplified to enable more efficient building design, reduce building complexity and cost and improve sustainability outcomes.

Upper-level setbacks are limited to a single step in the façade whereas in the Activity Centres Pilot standards a maximum of two steps was deemed to comply.

Side and rear setbacks, Sensitive interfaces (as mapped in BFO schedules) and Building separation

There have been minor changes to setback related standards compared to the Activity Centres Pilot. In Table 5 and 7, the height bracket for six metre setback and 12 metre separation has been lowered from 27 metres to 21 metres to provide better design outcomes and further internal amenity and access to sunlight at the lower levels. This also aligns with the 21 metre street/front wall height for Fringe, Limited Sensitivities, Large Opportunity Sites and Enclosed Shopping Centres enabling more efficient buildings.

Wall on boundary height on side boundaries is also reduced from 27 metres to 21 metres to further enable sunlight to streets by providing gaps above the street wall as well as providing further internal amenity by access to daylight.

Wall on **a rear boundary** is now only acceptable on sites smaller than 1500sqm. Larger sites should ensure that a minimum setback condition is maintained in all instances to the rear boundary to encourage co-location of deep soil, canopy planting and building outlook into a location that can produce an incremental, collective amenity over time.

The sensitive interface standard is also refined to ensure there is sufficient access to sunlight for north facing windows in neighbouring properties in the catchment area.

Sun access

There have been no changes to sun access standard compared to the Pilot Program standards.

Active frontages

There have been minor changes to the active frontage standard in comparison to the Pilot Program standard. Clear glazing is replaced by the minimum entry or window percentage to enable a more variety of activation at the ground floor. Additionally, a tertiary level of 40% has been added to the categories to support some activation in areas that are not suitable to be classified as primary or secondary.

Heritage

In the Activity Centres Pilot, all standards are discretionary and not deemed to comply if land is in a HO, or adjoining a HO. In addition to this approach, new standards on front setback, street/front wall height and setback above street/front wall is introduced to in order to retain, preserve, and protect the heritage sites and buildings and to ensure that new developments appropriately respond to the significance of these heritage places.

Deep soil requirements

The Pilot Program had a requirement for 10% deep soil planting at the ground floor for all development types (residential and non-residential) in Large Opportunity Sites and Enclosed Shopping Centres. The additional deep soil standard for all non-residential sites larger than 1500sqm aim to provide additional landscape amenity spaces on site for residents and users as well as neighbourhood scale amenity.

Tower floor plate size

The maximum floor plate size in the Pilot Program standard was 1000sqm and is reduced to 900sqm to enable buildings that respond to their context and skyline.

A maximum floor plate size of 900sqm supports up to 10 apartments and compliance with Standard D7 and B49 of BADS, requiring 40% natural ventilation (this also supports minimum escape distances).

Master planning in Large Opportunity Sites and Enclosed Shopping Centres

There have been no changes to the master planning requirements compared to the Pilot Program standards.



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