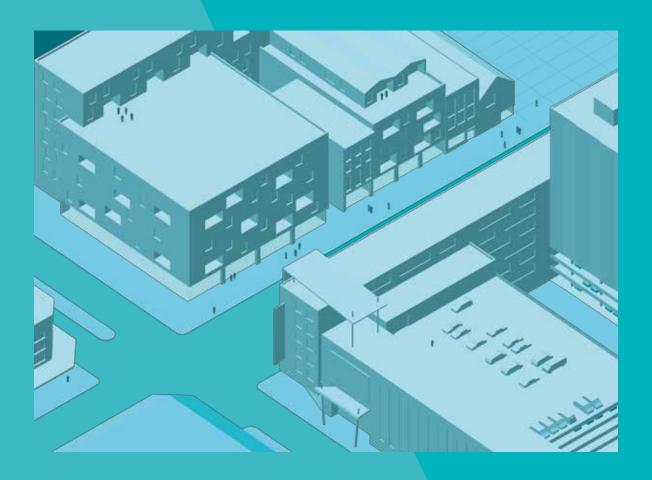
# Element 5 Buildings







### Element 5 Buildings

#### This element covers

#### 5.1 Buildings in activity centres

Larger, more complex buildings located in places with higher concentrations of urban activity.

#### 5.2 Higher density residential buildings

Apartments or flats in a single building of five or more storeys in height.

#### 5.3 Large format retail premises

Large floor area buildings used for retail purposes.

#### 5.4 Car parking structures

Buildings either used solely for car parking or mixed with other uses.



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Part 6 of 8 parts

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#### 5.1 Buildings in activity centres

Buildings in activity centres accommodate a wide range of uses, such as living, working, shopping and services. Buildings in these locations may be larger than those in surrounding neighbourhoods, take up more of the site and be built to the front and side boundaries. They may incorporate a mix of uses that mean people are present at different times of the day.

Depending on the location within the activity centre, a building may be an intense development, it may provide a transition to more sensitive uses, or it may blend in with the surrounding area. Buildings in activity centres often accommodate a variety of uses and over time, these uses may change.

A building's design should consider future changes in use and internal layout.

#### Why is it important?

Buildings, together with the streets and public spaces, form the city. Buildings make a significant contribution to a city's sense of place, and its comfort and liveability. The physical form and character of buildings shape the public spaces of a city. The activities buildings accommodate will have an effect on the surrounding area. Importantly, larger or complex buildings make a significant contribution to their setting. Buildings in activity centres, whether private or public, contribute to the vitality of the street and public spaces.

#### Related guidance

Element 1.2 Activity centre structure
Element 2.2 Pedestrian priority streets
Element 3.2 Street spaces and plazas
Element 4 Public transport environs

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### **Objective 5.1.1** To ensure the building scale and form supports the context and preferred future character of the activity centre

In activity centres, buildings define the street spaces, focus views and provide a sense of enclosure for public spaces.

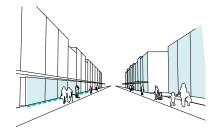
- **5.1.1a** Locate and shape the building to accommodate local topography and natural and cultural features of the site.
- **5.1.1b** Locate and shape the building to protect view corridors from streets and public spaces toward landmarks.
  - → TIP An important function of the public realm is to celebrate elements of value to the community. View corridors from streets and public spaces to significant landmarks, such as a memorial or a natural feature, are highly valued by the community.



- **5.1.1c** Shape the building scale and form to support the existing character or the preferred future character of the area.
  - → **TIP** The building silhouette against the sky can make a significant contribution to the character of the area.
- **5.1.1d** Use the building height and setbacks to frame the street space as a public space.
  - → TIP Building form and placement can effectively widen a narrow street or enclose a wide street. See Element 2.2: Pedestrian priority streets.

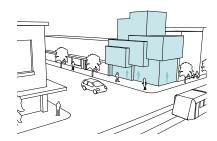


- **5.1.1e** Where the street proportions and character are strongly defined, align the building frontage with existing front setbacks.
  - → TIP Street character may also be defined by heritage buildings and landscape settings.
- **5.1.1f** In retail and commercial mixed-use areas, place the building frontage on the front lot line.

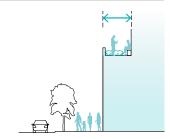


#### 5.1 Buildings in activity centres

- **5.1.1g** Shape the building form and detail to reinforce important street corners.
  - → TIP Not all corners are important. A strategic planning process can identify important corners.

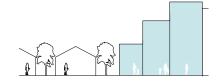


- **5.1.1h** Set back upper levels of tall buildings or use a podium and tower form to create a pedestrian scale at street level.
  - → TIP A podium with a tower set back from the street allows greater daylight access into the street and wider views of the sky and reduces wind turbulence at street level. A strategic planning process or built form analysis can identify appropriate street wall heights.



# **Objective 5.1.2** To ensure the activity centre provides a graduated transition between different building scales and uses

- **5.1.2a** Provide a transition in scale from larger buildings to adjacent areas of smaller scale built form.
  - → TIP A larger building can transition to a lower scale neighbour by placing smaller scale buildings at the interface, or by stepping down the building towards the interface edge.

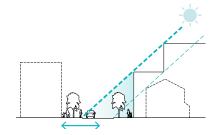


- **5.1.2b** Define the boundary or transition between public space and private space without the need for high fences or barriers.
  - → **TIP** A slight change in building level can provide a boundary definition between public and private space.

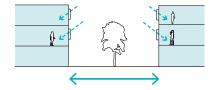


### **Objective 5.1.3** To ensure buildings in activity centres provide equitable access to daylight and sunlight

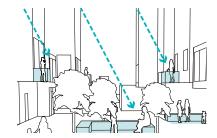
- **5.1.3 a** Locate and arrange the building to allow daylight and winter sun access to key public spaces and key pedestrian street spaces.
  - → **TIP** A strategic planning process can identify and establish key public spaces.



- **5.1.3 b** Allow sufficient distance between buildings to allow access to daylight for neighbouring windows.
  - → TIP The higher the surrounding buildings the further they may need to be separated.

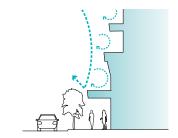


**5.1.3c** Protect daylight and sunlight access to the private and communal open space of adjacent dwellings.

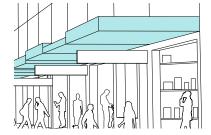


### **Objective 5.1.4** To minimise adverse wind effects caused by buildings in activity centres

- **5.1.4a** Orient large buildings to minimise wind effects at street level and on adjoining properties and public spaces.
  - → TIP Winds from a certain direction (such as the west) may be dominant, so avoid tall wall surfaces which would catch wind and cause down draughts.
- **5.1.4 b** Detail the building façade to minimise wind effects on streets and public spaces.
  - → TIP The shape and surface of a building can reduce wind turbulence at street level. Technical analysis of the wind and turbulence effects of tall buildings on adjacent public spaces can inform building design.

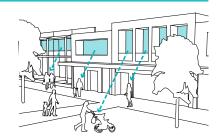


- **5.1.4c** As part of a building's design, install continuous weather protection for pedestrian priority streets and public spaces.
  - → TIP Awnings provide protection from sun, wind and rain at street level. The Building Code of Australia sets out design standards for building projections beyond the street alignment. Where a building projection is over an Arterial Road Reserve, approval from VicRoads is required.

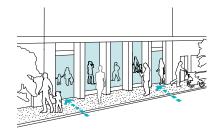


### **Objective 5.1.5** To maximise safety through informal surveillance of streets and public spaces from within buildings in activity centres

**5.1.5a** Arrange windows of buildings to overlook adjacent streets and public spaces.



- **5.1.5 b** Provide building entries and transparent windows to the street frontage.
  - → **TIP** Transparency need not be complete. Privacy and views need to be balanced and be appropriate to the building use.



- **5.1.5 c** Where security covering to windows is needed, install opengrill type shutters.
  - → TIP People prefer to walk along streets where there is activity, visual interest and a perception of being visible from nearby windows. People tend to avoid streets with long blank walls or solid security shutters that contribute no interest or activity at street level.
- **5.1.5 d** Use low-height or semi-transparent front fences to assist informal surveillance of the street.

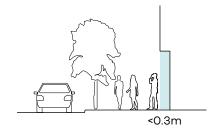


- **5.1.5e** Where front fences are more than one metre in height, provide a minimum of 50 per cent transparency.
  - → TIP Front fences at street level that are low, open or partially transparent also create an impression of openness on the street. Where a fence is needed to minimise noise intrusion, consider using a solid, transparent material.



#### 5.1 Buildings in activity centres

- **5.1.5f** Limit wall recesses along the street edges of buildings to less than 300mm deep to avoid their use as concealment places.
  - ightarrow TIP Wall recesses deeper than 300mm can provide potential hiding places.



- **5.1.5 g** In mixed-use buildings, provide a compatible mix of activities that attract people after business hours.
  - → TIP Mixing uses in buildings, with retail and other commercial uses at street level, and residences on upper floors, provides activity during the day and evening.

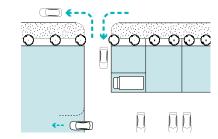


### **Objective 5.1.6** To ensure buildings in activity centres connect to the movement network

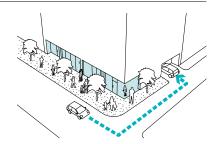
- **5.1.6 a** Locate pedestrian entries to buildings on the pedestrian network.
  - → TIP Entries should be clearly visible from footpaths along the street.
- **5.1.6 b** Emphasise pedestrian entries with prominent design features, signage or landscape treatments.



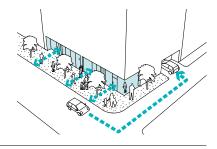
- **5.1.6 c** Provide visitor bicycle parking near to pedestrian entries to buildings.
- **5.1.6 d** Arrange vehicle entries to buildings to allow convenient, safe and efficient vehicle access to the street network.
  - → TIP reducing vehicle crossovers on footpaths, ensuring vehicles can enter and exit in a forward direction and having clear sight lines enhances both pedestrian and driver safety.
- **5.1.6 e** Arrange vehicle entries to minimise the number of vehicle crossovers on pedestrian paths.
  - → **TIP** See Element 5.4 Car parking structures.



- **5.1.6f** Locate vehicle and service access to the rear or side of the building.
  - → TIP Locating vehicle access away from the street frontage supports safe active pedestrian streets. See Element 2.8 Car parking lots and 5.4 Car parking structures.



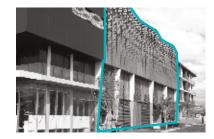
**5.1.6 g** Separate the pedestrian entries from the vehicle entries to buildings.



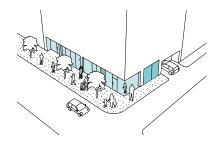
### **Objective 5.1.7** To ensure the building facade detail supports the context or preferred future character of the activity centre.

Larger buildings are more visible from the street and from a distance. Their facades can contribute to the character of the area and reinforce place identity.

- **5.1.7a** Arrange building elements such as roofs, balconies, windows, doorways and cladding materials to contribute to the preferred future character of the area.
  - → TIP An overall façade composition may use, for example, proportion, contrast, repetition, or alignment of the building elements to create an identity for the building.
- **5.1.7 b** Where a building has a solid external wall facing a street or public place, detail the walls to provide an interesting appearance.
  - → TIP Detail on a building's external walls may include, for example, decorative cladding and materials, artwork, signage or graphics.

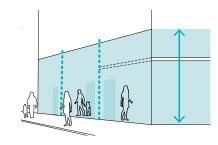


- **5.1.7c** Incorporate lighting of walls facing streets and public spaces to contribute to lighting of streets.
  - → TIP Wall lighting can also show off the building façade at night.
- **5.1.7d** Shield from view or remotely locate mechanical plant, unless it forms an integral part of design.
- **5.1.7e** Locate and arrange utility service installations to minimise their impact on the building's active street frontage.
  - → TIP People prefer to walk along streets where there is activity, visual interest and a perception of being visible from nearby windows. People tend to avoid streets with long blank walls that contribute no interest or activity at street level.



#### **Objective 5.1.8** To achieve sustainable buildings in activity centres

- **5.1.8 a** Use durable, sustainable and attractive materials that will minimise maintenance and contribute to the character of the area.
  - → TIP The use of specific materials should be based on local precedent or functional requirements.
- **5.1.8 b** Adapt and re-use existing buildings, where practical.
- **5.1.8 c** Lay out the building structure and internal spaces to allow future adaptation to other uses.
  - → TIP High ground floor ceiling heights and provision for multiple entry points support flexible re-use of a building. Car parks should also have ceiling heights and flat floors to facilitate future conversion to other uses.



- **5.1.8 d** Collect and use stormwater and recycled water for landscape irrigation, toilet flushing and cleaning.
  - → TIP Water reuse systems need to be planned into a building at an early stage. See Guideline sources and references.
- **5.1.8e** Provide for efficient storage, separation and removal of waste and recycled materials from buildings.
  - → **TIP** For links to advice on waste management and disposal planning, see Guideline sources and references.

### 5.2 Higher density residential buildings

Higher density residential buildings house a number of individual apartment dwellings in a single building, and are five or more storeys in height. They may be residential only or residential combined with other uses such as retail, offices or car parking. They are often located in or close to activity centres, and within walking distance of a wide range of services, employment opportunities and public transport. Higher density residential buildings may include common entrance and circulation spaces. Open space for residents may be provided as private balconies, or as communal open space at ground level or on upper level terraces.

#### Why is it important?

Higher density residential buildings contribute to housing choice and meeting the needs of a growing population. Where located in or near activity centres, they provide residents with easy access to services and facilities. When designed to integrate with their surroundings, they minimise impacts on adjacent lower scale or density residential areas.

Apartment building design needs to take into account the number and diversity of its residents. As people are present 24 hours a day, seven days a week, this type of housing can improve residents' perceptions of personal safety and enhance the viability of nearby businesses.

#### Related guidance

Element 1.4 Higher density residential precinct structure

Element 2.2 Pedestrian priority streets

Element 2.8 Car parking lots

Element 3.4 Communal open spaces

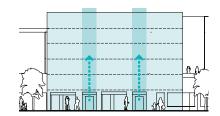
Element 5.1 Buildings in activity centres

Element 5.4 Car parking structures



### **Objective 5.2.1** To create a sense of address for dwellings within higher density residential buildings

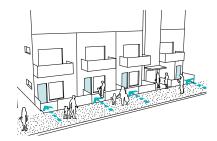
- **5.2.1a** Create multiple building entries that serve smaller groups of dwellings within a building.
  - → TIP By having a smaller number of dwellings sharing a single street entry, each unit or group of units has a greater sense of individual identity and street address. Multiple entries to a residential building also provide more activity and interest to the street.



- **5.2.1b** Arrange building façades to identify individual dwellings.
  - → TIP Façade materials and elements, such as balconies and windows, can reduce the apparent overall building scale, assist individual dwellings to be identified from the street, thus enhancing a sense of ownership for residents.

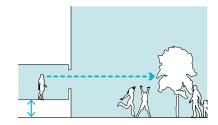


**5.2.1c** Where ground floor dwellings face the street, provide individual entrances to each dwelling.



# **Objective 5.2.2** To enable informal surveillance of streets and public spaces from higher density residential buildings

- **5.2.2a** Elevate ground floor dwellings to provide views to adjacent public spaces and streets.
  - → TIP Elevating dwelling floor levels and balcony spaces slightly above the street level provides both a sense of privacy and better sightlines to streets and public spaces.



**5.2.2b** Locate windows of living areas to overlook streets and other public spaces.

#### 5.2 Higher density residential buildings

# **Objective 5.2.3** To support safe and convenient access and circulation for residents and visitors to higher density residential buildings

- **5.2.3a** Locate the main pedestrian entry to be clearly visible and accessible from the street.
  - → TIP Building entrances help visitors orient themselves. Entries and foyers should be comfortable, sheltered, safe, convenient and visible at all times of day and night.
- **5.2.3 b** Provide shelter and waiting space on the street at pedestrian entries to buildings.
  - → TIP Higher density residential buildings often have secure entries requiring visitors to buildings to wait on the street.



- **5.2.3c** Provide clear sightlines from the building foyer to the street so people can see both in and out when entering or leaving a building.
- **5.2.3d** Lay out building entry areas to achieve direct sightlines from the outside of the entry door to all of the lobby space.
- **5.2.3e** Provide mail boxes and parcel post facilities close to the building entries in an active, well-lit and weather-protected area, with potential for informal surveillance.
  - → TIP For links to advice on post delivery facilities, see Guideline sources and references.

#### 5.2 Higher density residential buildings

### **Objective 5.2.4** To minimise noise reverberation between faces of neighbouring higher density residential buildings

- **5.2.4a** Apply sound diffusing surfaces to walls within light courts, or walls facing onto streets or lanes less than 7.5m wide.
- **5.2.4b** Locate mechanical plant rooms in sound insulated areas.
- **5.2.4c** Shield adjacent dwellings from mechanical plant noise.

# **Objective 5.2.5** To maintain common spaces, services and landscaped areas to ensure residents' safety in higher density residential buildings

- **5.2.5 a** Locate waste bin storage areas away from property boundaries so the bins cannot be used to climb walls and fences.
- **5.2.5 b** Maintain landscaping near higher density residential building entries to remove potential concealment places.

#### **5.3** Large format retail premises

Large format retail premises are mostly free-standing buildings or complexes with a single large building footprint and associated infrastructure. They are often single-level or low-rise buildings and they may include large at-grade car parking lots or car parking structures.

They can be shopping centres, supermarkets, restricted retail premises or department stores. Large format retail premises differ from other large buildings with regard to visitor patterns, goods delivery requirements, and goods display practices. They are often located in high visibility places, for example at major road intersections or adjacent to highways that are highly accessible by car.

#### Why is it important?

Large format retail premises are a part of modern living and contribute to the mix of uses in activity centres. When well integrated physically and functionally into their surrounding area, they draw many customers, enhance the viability of nearby businesses, increase street activity and provide diversity and choice for customers. To achieve this integration they require an adequate level of private vehicle, public transport and pedestrian accessibility, safety and amenity.

#### Related guidance

Element 1.2 Activity centre structure

Element 1.3 Large redevelopment site structure

Element 2.8 Car parking lots

Element 2.3 Pedestrian and bicycle paths

Element 5.1 Buildings in activity centres

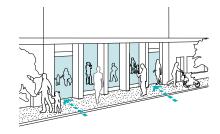
Element 5.4 Car parking structures



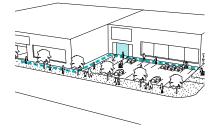
### **Objective 5.3.1** To support an active frontage interface of large format retail premises with the street

The level of active frontage depends on the presence of a pedestrian entry point as well as a level of clear window area. The appropriate level of active frontage will be influenced by the existing or preferred future character of the street. See Glossary: Active frontage.

- **5.3.1a** Locate main pedestrian entrances and entry paths in prominent locations where they can be seen from the street.
- **5.3.1b** Where a building is located on the front lotline, provide a level of clear window that allows opportunities for informal surveillance of the street from within the building.
  - → TIP The street frontage of a retail building that has areas of clear window provides opportunities for informal surveillance of the public realm. As well, it allows the public to see the activity within and to see displayed goods.

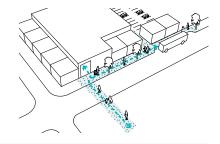


- **5.3.1c** Where a large format retail premises requires a solid external wall or a setback adjacent to the street frontage, maintain a visual connection and a walkable distance from the building entry to the street.
  - → TIP If a wall is set back from the street, allow the future opportunity for smaller scale retail or community activities along the frontage.

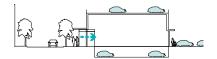


### **Objective 5.3.2** To support safe and direct pedestrian and cyclist access to large format retail premises

- **5.3.2a** Provide convenient and direct pedestrian and cyclist access from a large format retail premises to public transport stops and to the surrounding area.
- **5.3.2b** Locate main pedestrian entrances on direct pedestrian paths from the surrounding area.



- **5.3.2c** Locate access points for loading bays and waste collection, and site storage areas away from pedestrian priority streets, paths and residential areas.
- **5.3.2d** Where a large format retail premises is in an activity centre, locate the main customer car parking facility away from the main street frontage.
  - → TIP Large car parking lots located between the street and a large format retail premises can detract from the amenity of the street and create a barrier to the surrounding area. See Element 2.8 Car parking lots and also Element 5.4 Car parking structures.



# **Objective 5.3.3** To integrate the built form of large format retail premises into activity areas and their surrounding neighbourhoods

- **5.3.3a** Arrange the building form and the facade detail of large format retail premises to respond to the local context and enhance the public realm.
- **5.3.3 b** Where the large format retail premises is adjacent to a lower scale neighbourhood, provide a transition in scale to the surrounding streets and residential areas.
  - → TIP Stepping the building down at the edges can mediate differences in scale between a taller building and its neighbours.



- **5.3.3c** Use landscape treatments to reduce the visual impact of blank walls and large areas of car parking.
  - → TIP Avoid landscaping that blocks views into and out of a building, or across the site, or that provides a concealment opportunity.

### **Objective 5.3.4** To support the safety and amenity of the area around large format retail premises

- **5.3.4a** Maintain windows in the large format retail premises clear of visual obstructions to the outside to enable informal surveillance of the public realm.
- **5.3.4b** Manage landscaping to maintain sightlines into and out of a large format retail premises, and across the site.
  - → TIP Overgrown landscaping can block sightlines and provide concealment opportunities.

### **5.4** Car parking structures

Car parking structures are buildings used solely for car parking or mixed with other uses, and may provide parking for residents and commercial tenants, shoppers and visitors. They can be constructed above or below ground. Car parking structures cater for both vehicle and pedestrian movement, however pedestrians may be required to share paths with vehicles to reach a lift or stairwell, which can be a safety hazard.

#### Why is it important?

Car parking structures provide secure places for shoppers, residents and workers to store cars and are an efficient use of land compared to car parking lots. Well-designed car parking structures provide both efficient access for cars from the street and within the structure, and also provide clear, safe and direct pedestrian circulation within car parking area, and at exits.

#### Related guidance

Element 2 Movement network

Element 5.1 Buildings in activity centres

Element 5.2 Higher density residential buildings

Element 5.3 Large format retail premises

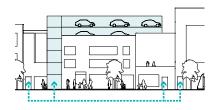
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#### 5.4 Car parking structures

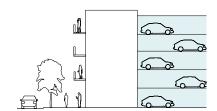
#### **Objective 5.4.1** To provide conveniently located car parking structures

- **5.4.1a** Locate car parking structures in proximity to the activities they support.
- **5.4.1b** Where possible, share the car parking facility between multiple neighbouring uses.
  - → TIP Locating car parking structures a short walking distance from a number of activities encourages walking and extends the hours of use.

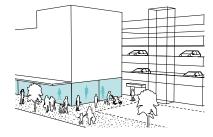


### **Objective 5.4.2** To ensure car parking structures support an active and safe interface with the street

- **5.4.2a** Where practical, locate larger car parking structures below ground or within buildings or wrap them in a residential or commercial use.
  - → TIP Locating car parking structures above or below ground provides opportunities for other active uses such as shops or dwellings at street level.



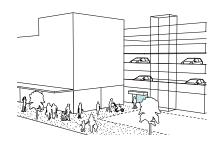
**5.4.2b** Incorporate active uses into the building frontage of car parking structures.



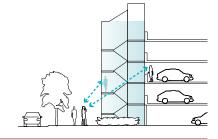
- **5.4.2c** On the principal street façades of the car parking structure, detail the walls to provide an interesting appearance.
  - → TIP Detail on a car parking structure's external walls may include, for example, decorative cladding, artwork, signage or graphics.
- **5.4.2d** Protect sensitive adjacent uses from vehicle noise, vibrations and emissions.

### **Objective 5.4.3** To maximise informal surveillance opportunities within car parking structures

- **5.4.3a** Locate pedestrian entrances to car parking structures in convenient and visible locations at ground level on an active street frontage.
  - → TIP Ground level shops or attended cashier stations provide opportunities for informal surveillance, while aboveground entries (bridges or overpasses) or underground (underpasses) can reduce the level of passing pedestrian traffic.



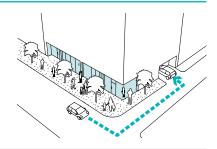
- **5.4.3b** Minimise the number of pedestrian entry and exit points to multi-level car parks.
  - → TIP Multiple entry and exit points result in dispersed pedestrian traffic. Concentrating the pedestrian movement at a single exit allows for greater informal surveillance and facilitates way-finding.
- **5.4.3c** Locate pedestrian ramps, stairs and lift entrances in areas that are easily seen from internal pedestrian paths.
- **5.4.3d** Locate stairwells and lifts at the perimeter of the car park and clad walls with transparent materials.
  - → TIP Transparent external walls can improve safety levels by creating opportunities for informal surveillance of people in the car park and in the stairwell.



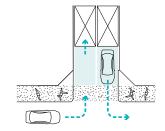
### **Objective 5.4.4** To ensure safe and convenient pedestrian movement around and within car parking structures

See Guideline sources and references for link to Standards Australia technical guidance on car parking and access ways.

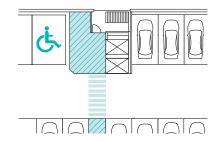
- **5.4.4a** Locate vehicle entrances to car parking structures away from pedestrian priority streets and public transport routes.
  - → TIP Locating vehicle entrances and service access to car parking structures to the rear or side of the building will minimise crossovers on pedestrian priority streets, and avoid vehicles queuing across public transport lanes.



- **5.4.4b** Arrange vehicle exits so that vehicles leave car parking structures in a forward direction and do not block pedestrian paths when exiting.
- **5.4.4c** Where car lifts are employed, provide sufficient space for car queuing off the street and away from pedestrian paths.
  - → TIP Vehicles queuing across pedestrian paths pose a hazard and inconvenience to pedestrians.



- **5.4.4d** Provide and locate bicycle parking close to vehicle entry points, with easy access to the public area of the car parking structure.
  - → TIP Minimising the distance bicycles need to travel within the car parking structure reduces cyclists' exposure to moving vehicles. (Refer to detailed guidance in Victoria Planning Provisions Clause 52.34 Bicycle Facilities)
- **5.4.4e** Locate visitor and disabled parking close to the vehicle entry and with easy access to pedestrian paths and the public area of the car parking structure.
- **5.4.4f** Provide dedicated and marked pedestrian paths in busy areas within car parking structures.



**5.4.4g** Use colours, lighting and numbers as part of a way-finding system within the car parking structure.