

13. COMMERCIAL CENTRES

13.01 Regional Overview

The intended role of the Region's commercial centres, which refer generally to what people call their 'shopping' and 'community' centres, is to provide an appropriate range of retail and commercial services - together with community and social facilities - to meet the needs of residents and visitors. This role is supported by State Government policies for metropolitan 'activity' centres, which encourage the clustering and integrated planning of activities in preferred centres.

Major centres in the northern sector of the Region include the Lilydale Town Centre, and the Chirnside Park Shopping Centre. These main regional centres are augmented by other major shopping centres, including Kilsyth, Mooroolbark, Mt. Evelyn, Seville, Yarra Junction, Warburton, Healesville and Yarra Glen.

The main centres in the southern sector are Belgrave, Monbulk and Upwey, most of which are on Burwood Highway. There is no regional centre comparable to Lilydale or Chirnside Park within the southern sector.

The policies of the Regional Strategy Plan provide a flexible and goal-oriented approach to commercial centre planning. They have been developed in recognition of a number of premises, including:

- that despite the growth in population and associated demand for services, the previously anticipated level of growth in retail and commercial floorspace has not occurred, resulting in an under supply in some locations;
- the growth of significant 'regional' shopping centres outside the Region, especially at Ringwood, Croydon and Knox City, has been to some extent based on the population growth within the Region;
- changes in employment location preferences and settlement patterns and the need to decrease the high level of escape retail spending that currently leaks from the Region; and
- the need to provide more adequately for the Region's population growth, and to plan more effectively for commercial centre development within the Region.

A substantial expansion of the Lilydale Town Centre is an important element in the Strategy Plan's commercial centre policies. Lilydale is seen as the Region's most suitable location for major commercial centre development. It has good access to major roads and public transport, is an established administrative, community and commercial focus for the Region and is close to large areas of open space (including the Lilydale Lake). Its choice for this major role should not preclude any expansion of the Chirnside Park Shopping Centre which would complement Lilydale's expanded role.

Peripheral retailing is occurring in the western parts of the Region. Most of the floorspace is currently located in industrial zones. Peripheral retailing opportunities should be provided in appropriate locations, preferably within the western part of the Region.

13.02 Primary Purpose

The primary purpose for the commercial centre policies is to ensure that the future provision of retail and commercial services in the Region achieves a balance between improving consumer choice and convenience, maximising benefits to the retail and commercial industry, conservation of the Region's environmental qualities, the enhancement of the amenity of living and working environments, improving the retailers' ability to compete, and increasing employment opportunities within the Region.

13.03 Objectives for all Commercial Centres

The planning and development of any retail or commercial centre, must not prejudice the designated role of that centre and must seek to:

Land Use

- Encourage the effective use of land and buildings within each centre.
- Optimise the attractiveness of the centre to appropriate land uses and development.
- Encourage the clustering of compatible and complementary land uses into defined zones.
- Develop optimum continuity of shopping activity at street frontages in the core area.
- Provide sensitive and attractive landscaping within each centre.
- Be consistent with the centre's projected future roles and the characteristics of its trading area, and to meet the needs of its catchment population.
- Provide for sensitive township design and for appropriate landscaping of individual developments.

Pedestrian and traffic movement and parking

- Improve traffic access, capacity, circulation and movement within and around the core area, and to ensure that traffic problems are not created away from the centre, and between local and through traffic.
- Ensure that the amount and location of parking provided is consistent with the role and function of the centre and the capacity of streets within and adjacent to the centre.
- Develop a system of pedestrian linkages and pedestrian priority areas, that minimise conflict between pedestrian and vehicular traffic.
- Recognise the importance of public transport access to each centre, in the development of any traffic management proposal.

Character

- Conserve and enhance the unique character of each centre by: encouraging retention of existing worthy older buildings; encouraging renovation and re-use of older buildings; ensuring that the design and height of any new development within each centre is sympathetic to existing buildings, and ensuring that advertisements and signs are consistent with or enhance the character of each centre.
- Ensure that buildings harmonise in character and appearance with adjacent buildings and with the character of the area.

Conservation

- Ensure retention and preservation of architecturally or historically significant buildings and features in each centre.
- Encourage restoration, protection and appropriate utilisation of significant buildings as identified by Councils, the Historic Buildings Council, or the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), and to ensure that such restoration is in character with the original style of the buildings.
- Promote the restoration of appropriate verandas and shopfronts on commercial premises.

Amenity

- Achieve a pleasing physical environment in each centre by encouraging a high standard of architecture, landscaping and township design.
- Encourage improvement to pedestrian and shopper amenity through such facilities as open and sheltered rest areas and meeting places, crossing facilities, pedestrian links to car parks and pedestrian weather protection.

13.04 Centres of Regional Significance

The designation of a commercial centre as a Centre of Regional Significance does not necessarily imply a centre with large scale growth or function criteria.

Commercial centres have been identified as having regional significance on the basis of one or more of the following criteria:

- being centres with significant cross-municipal or cross-regional influences;
- providing significant levels of services and facilities for tourists, having environmental sensitivity, or having major highway/road exposure, and
- the possibility of needing protection from intrusive growth of other nearby centres outside the Region.

The following centres are identified as Centres of Regional Significance:

- The Lilydale Town Centre, together with adjacent commercial, industrial and peripheral retail areas, which is designated as the major commercial and community centre for the Region.

- Chirnside Park Shopping Centre, Kilsyth, Mooroolbark, Healesville, Belgrave, Monbulk, Yarra Junction, and Warburton.

13.05 Function and role of Centres of Regional Significance

The requirement to perform a full weekly shopping role does not apply to all commercial centres. However, where applicable, the components of such a role could include Junior Discount Department Store, improved supermarket facilities, small markets and an expanded range of specialty stores.

Development within Centres of Regional Significance must be in accordance with the general function directions given in the following table:

Regional Centre	Role	Implications for Expansion/ Control
Lilydale Township	Major Regional Commercial and Community Centre	Opportunity for substantial retail expansion including a department store and discount department store(s) and commercial office development.
Chirnside Park Shopping Centre	Regional Retail Centre	Limited expansion of existing retail and other services.
Kilsyth	Neighbourhood Centre	Perform full weekly shopping role.
Mooroolbark	Neighbourhood Centre	Perform full weekly shopping role.
Monbulk	Neighbourhood Centre	Perform full weekly shopping role, also provide services and facilities for tourists.
Belgrave	Community Centre	Consolidation as primary business and administrative centre, also provides services and facilities for tourists. Perform full weekly shopping role.
Yarra Junction	Community Centre	Expansion and consolidation as primary retail, commercial and administrative centre.
Warburton	Neighbourhood Centre	Perform full weekly shopping role, also provide services and facilities for tourists.
Healesville	Community Centre	Expansion and consolidation as primary retail, commercial and administrative centre, also services and facilities for tourists.

13.06 Deficiencies in Centres of Regional Significance

Where there are identified significant deficiencies in services and facilities which should be addressed within Centres of Regional Significance, the Planning Authority may provide for those deficiencies, in the most suitable locations for the provision of such services and facilities.

Retail development proposals will be favoured which increase the proportion of Regional residents' household income, available for retail purchases, spent within the Region.

13.07 Employment within Centres of Regional Significance

Retail, commercial and community service uses, which provide employment opportunities for the Region's residents, will be encouraged to locate within appropriate Centres of Regional Significance.

13.08 Designation of Local Centres

All retail, commercial and community service centres not designated as a Centre of Regional Significance will be designated as Local Centres.

13.09 Management policies for Local Centres

Local Centres must fulfil the primary role of providing for daily convenience needs within neighbourhoods, and in some cases serving the needs of tourists and other visitors. They will generally have a floorspace of less than 2,500 sq.m., and some be preferred locations for community facilities and services.

Planning of, and development within, local centres must protect and enhance pedestrian and environmental aspects, and minimise any adverse impacts on adjacent residential areas and local traffic movements.

Proposals for use or development within local centres must seek to:

- improve the range of opportunities for the local community in areas of identified need and in accordance with the primary function of the centre;
- protect and enhance environmentally sensitive areas;
- provide convenient access and parking for motor vehicles and public transport, and not generate traffic or parking problems;
- retain and improve historically or culturally important buildings and features;
- provide a safe and attractive environment for the centre's users;
- support the viability of the centre, and
- not conflict with the role of adjoining community centres.

13.10 Peripheral Retailing

Peripheral retailing opportunities should be provided within the Region, however those opportunities must be within strategically placed locations (preferably within the western parts of the Region).

In considering the establishment, adaptation or expansion of any zone to provide for peripheral retailing, regard must be had to:

- the ability to provide high exposure to passing traffic, convenient road access which allows good traffic movement and the separation of traffic using this zone from residential streets;
- sites which are large enough to provide adequate on-site parking, and
- performance standards for environmental protection and enhancement, landscaping and signage.

13.11 Other Commercial Use and Development

In Rural and Landscape Living Policy Areas, commercial use and development may only be established outside commercial centres where:

- it is demonstrated that the use provides a recreation or tourist facility or is ancillary to a tourist accommodation establishment;
- the use is associated with and ancillary to primary production carried out on the land;
- the use is a convenience shop or a general store.

Any proposal to establish a commercial use or development of land in a Rural or Landscape Living Policy Area must:

- be consistent with the objectives and policies of the Regional Strategy Plan and the relevant policy area; and
- not have any adverse effects on the amenity of adjoining residential areas, the surrounding natural environment or on the landscape of the area.