

Assessment and Response to the Report of the
Advisory Committee on Activity Centre Boundaries

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this document

This document provides a response to the advice and recommendations of an Advisory Committee appointed pursuant to Section 151 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* to advise on boundaries for activity centres.

1.2 Background

The Government's response to the Audit of *Melbourne 2030 (Planning for All of Melbourne)* announced a number of new implementation initiatives related to activity centres to ensure that the planning and management of growth in activity centres is simpler and more effective.

These initiatives included:

- establishing Development Assessment Committees (DACs) to make decisions on planning permit applications in matters and areas of metropolitan significance, including at Principal Activity Centres (PACs); and
- introducing a new Activity Centre Zone (ACZ) and simple Development Framework as the preferred tool to guide and facilitate development in activity centres.

The Government identified five 'market ready' centres where these initiatives would initially be introduced, and then progressively at remaining Activity Centres. The five 'market ready' centres are:

- Camberwell Junction
- Coburg
- Doncaster Hill
- Central Geelong
- Preston (High Street).

To facilitate introduction of the above initiatives, boundaries need to be established for each of the centres. The final boundaries will define the:

- 'operational area' for a DAC at each centre; and
- area to be generally covered by the new ACZ and accompanying Development Framework.

1.3 Role of the Advisory Committee

On 11 December 2008, an Advisory Committee was appointed pursuant to Section 151 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. The Advisory Committee consisted of five members as follows: Kathy Mitchell (Chair), Lester Townsend, Michael Kirsch, John Kearney and Chris McNeil.

The Advisory Committee's Terms of Reference outline two key tasks to be undertaken:

- Provide advice on a boundary for each of the five identified 'market ready' centres (Camberwell, Coburg, Doncaster Hill, Preston (High Street) and Central Geelong).

- Propose criteria and a methodology suitable to define the boundaries of the remaining Activity Centres.

A full copy of the Terms of Reference for the Advisory Committee is provided at Appendix 1.

The Advisory Committee has submitted its final advice in a report dated 30 April 2009.

1.4 Consultation on proposed boundaries

A program of consultation and information was undertaken throughout the term of the project by the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD). The program of consultation undertaken by DPCD included exhibition of a proposed boundary for each of the five activity centres.

Key elements of DPCD's program of consultation are as summarised by the Advisory Committee in its report (p.11). A total of 53 submissions were received by DPCD (including 12 late submissions). All submissions were referred to the Advisory Committee for consideration.

The Advisory Committee also undertook a program of consultation which is outlined in its report (pp.8-10).

2 Discussion on boundaries for each of the activity centres

The Advisory Committee's discussion and recommendations on the boundaries for each of the five centres are discussed in detail at Chapters 4-8 of its report.

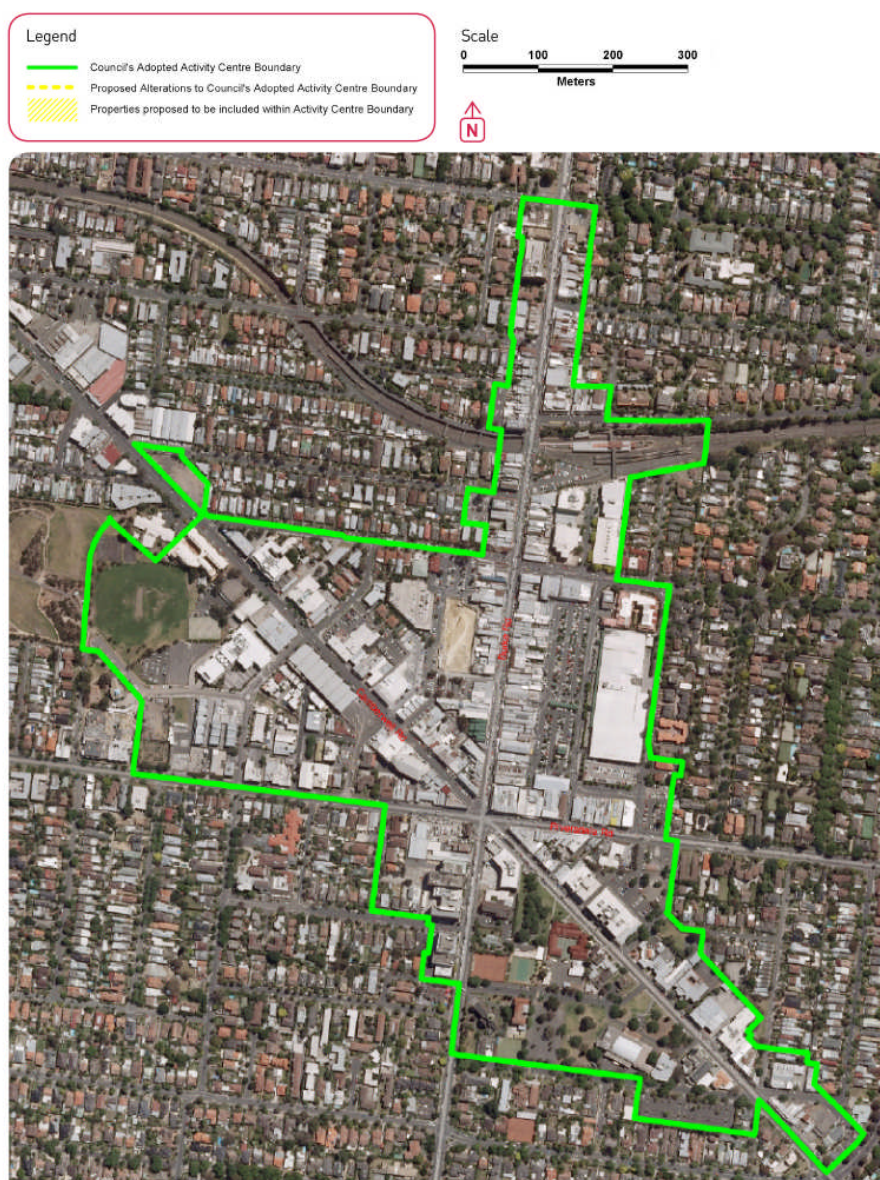
Recommendations of the Advisory Committee are discussed here in greater detail for each centre and summarised with the Minister's response in Chapter 3. The Advisory Committee's recommendations are provided in italics with discussion following.

2.1 Recommendation 1 a) – Camberwell Activity Centre boundary

- a) Modify the exhibited Camberwell Activity Centre boundary to remove Fritz Holzner Park.*

The activity centre boundary exhibited by DPCD for the Camberwell Junction Activity Centre is shown in Figure 1. The boundary exhibited by DPCD was consistent with Council's preferred activity centre boundary.

Figure 1 – Exhibited boundary for Camberwell



Discussion

The Advisory Committee identified the following key issues to be resolved in relation to the boundary for Camberwell Junction:

- The capacity of the Centre to accommodate growth;
- The need to maintain a 'critical mass' of activity; and
- Two locations were suggested as possible reductions in the area included within the boundary:
 - The east side of Fairholm Grove at its southern end; and
 - Fritz Holzner Park.

The Advisory Committee also made the following comments in relation to many of the matters raised in submissions:

Many of the points raised in submissions to the Activity Centre were about broader planning issues ranging from Australia wide population policies through metropolitan strategy, to comments on development proposals and detailed zoning, but did not suggest specific changes to the boundary except as identified above.

These submissions raise issues that are valid planning issues and the Committee has considered how they might inform current decisions on setting the Activity Centre boundary. The Committee could identify no specific changes to boundaries that flow from these considerations.

(Advisory Committee Report, p. 43)

As outlined by the Advisory Committee, the boundary for Camberwell Junction has been subject to consultation over many years. The boundary that was exhibited for the centre by DPCD was based on the structure plan boundary that was adopted by the City of Boroondara in 2008.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged that the exhibited boundary represents a long established view held by Council and members of the community as to the location of the boundary.

In its considerations, the Advisory Committee concluded that the properties on the east side of Fairholm Grove, which are currently at-grade car parks, clearly have development potential and should be included within the boundary to provide clear direction as to the appropriate development for the land.

The Advisory Committee identified Fritz Holzner Park as an important area of open space within the centre. However the Advisory Committee considered that as the park is not a development site it should be excluded from the activity centre boundary.

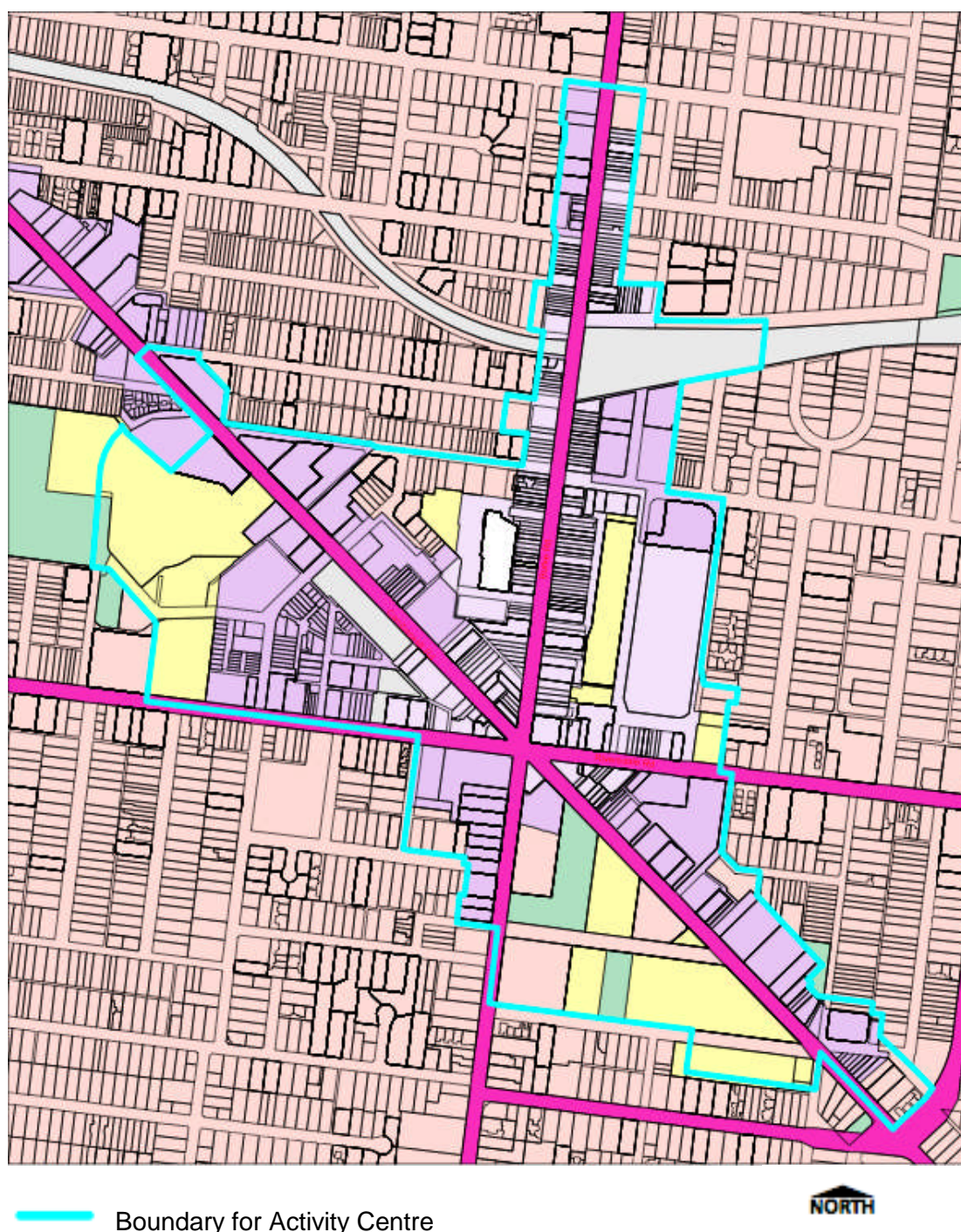
Findings

It is not appropriate to exclude areas of open space from an activity centre on the basis that it offers no significant redevelopment opportunity. Where open space has a strong functional relationship to the activity centre and provides an important community asset and amenity to residents, workers and visitors to the centre – particularly where higher densities are encouraged close by – it should be included within the boundary and managed appropriately. This approach does

not suggest open space in a centre can and should be redeveloped. Appropriate zoning and controls will ensure these areas continue to be adequately protected and enhanced.

On this basis, the recommendation of the Advisory Committee is not accepted. An approach that retains Fritz Holzler Park within the boundary for the Camberwell Junction Activity Centre is supported, noting that it will remain covered by a Public Use Zone. There are significant benefits in retaining this open space area within the activity centre boundary such as strategic planning enhancing pedestrian linkages and to provide improved integration to transport between the centre's residential and commercial areas. The boundary for Camberwell Junction is to be approved as shown by Figure 2 in this report. This is consistent with Council's adopted activity centre boundary.

Figure 2 –Boundary for Camberwell



2.2 Recommendation 1 b) – Central Geelong Activity Centre boundary

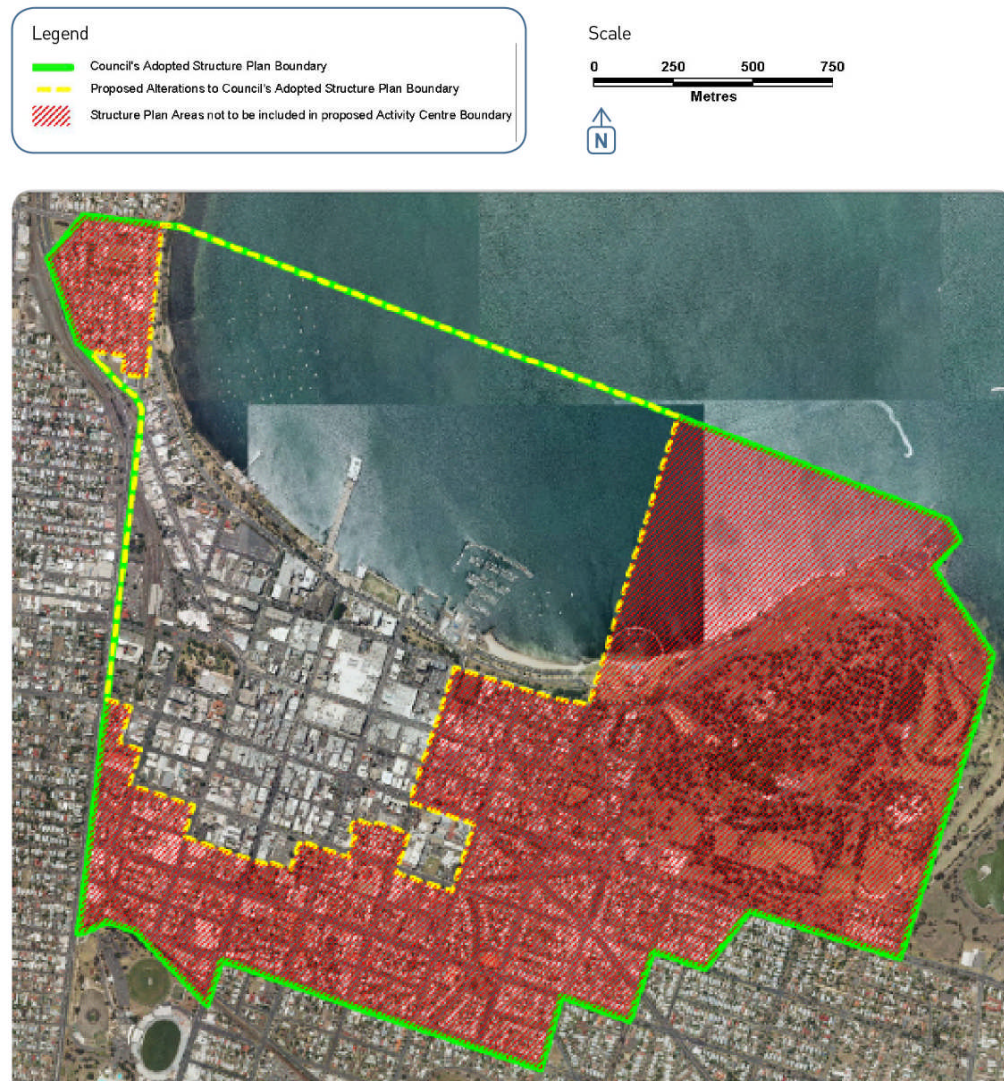
b) Modify the exhibited *Central Geelong Activity Centre* boundary to:

- Remove the Residential 1 Zoned land on Western Beach Road.
- Include the existing zoned foreshore land and Cunningham Pier, rather than it extending further out into Corio Bay.

The activity centre boundary exhibited by DPCD for the Central Geelong Activity Centre is shown in Figure 3.

The activity centre boundary exhibited by DPCD differed from Council's by excluding large portions of residential land to the east and south and to a lesser extent in the western periphery.

Figure 3 – Exhibited boundary for Central Geelong



Discussion

The Advisory Committee identified the following key issues to be resolved in relation to the boundary for Central Geelong:

- Residential land on Western Beach Road
- Geelong Hospital Campus
- Geelong Waterfront and Western Beach

Residential land on Western Beach

This lineal strip of residential land is located at the northern-most edge of the exhibited boundary. As the Advisory Committee correctly identifies, it comprises predominantly single or two-storey residential development with some very strong heritage characteristics. There is little opportunity or likelihood for redevelopment in this area.

Findings

This area is most unlikely to be the focus of 'major change' and given its location at the very edge of the exhibited boundary for the centre, should be removed from the boundary.

Geelong Hospital Campus

This site is currently zoned Public Use and is proposed for inclusion within the boundary of the centre. It forms the south-eastern most part of the exhibited boundary. Council's principal reason for objecting to the hospital's inclusion within the boundary was on the basis that it should not be subject to an Activity Centre Zone.

The Advisory Committee has identified that such key land uses within Public Use Zones are usually integral parts of an activity centre. However it concluded that they should not be contemplated for rezoning to an ACZ unless they are intended for a non public use in the future.

The Advisory Committee identifies the hospital as part of an extensive medical precinct, most of which is also included within the boundary. It has concluded that it is logical to include the hospital within the boundary.

In addition, the Advisory Committee has also highlighted other areas around the hospital that should be given additional consideration in the future for possible inclusion within the boundary.

Findings

It is appropriate to retain the hospital within the activity centre boundary and put in place a process to review the boundary in this location at a future time as suggested by the Advisory Committee. The Geelong Hospital is a major regional health facility that will undergo change and redevelopment over time and its function is crucial to the overall role and economy of the activity centre and Geelong. While it is also appropriate that the hospital retains a Public Use Zone and not be rezoned to an ACZ, it is necessary to give additional future consideration to the use of land around the hospital for possible inclusion within the boundary.

Geelong Waterfront and Western Beach

One submission was made in support of the boundary extending over the foreshore and waterfront in this location. The Council submitted that the boundary should follow the coastline on land that is zoned Special Use and including Cunningham Pier.

The Advisory Committee agreed with Council that the activity centre boundary should follow the coastline to align with Cunningham Pier and the land that is zoned Special Use.

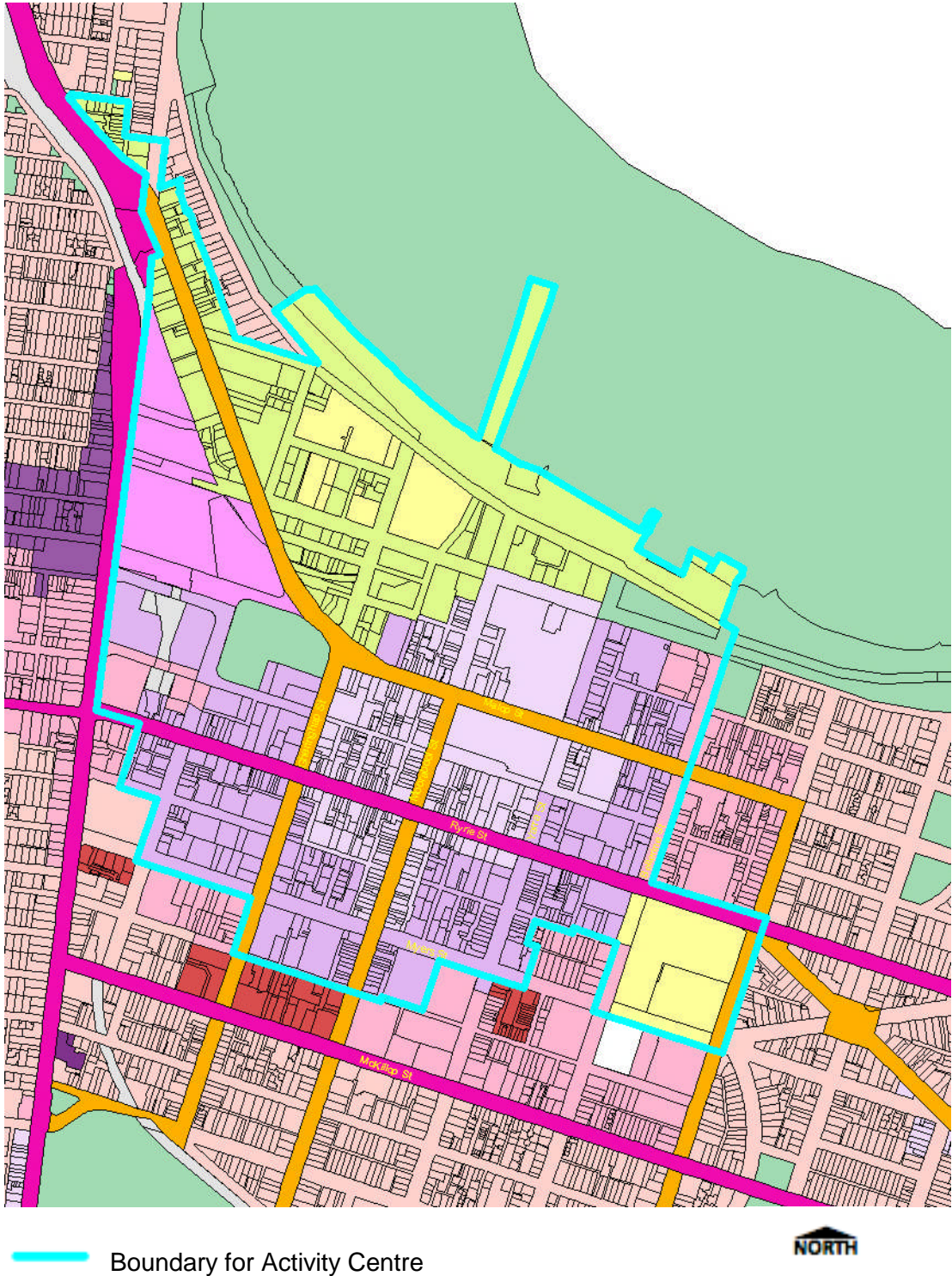
Findings

The original boundary exhibited by DPCD was based on Council's structure plan boundary that defined its "Waterfront" precinct. As the foreshore area will continue to be subject to a Public Park and Recreation Zone, it is reasonable to modify the boundary as recommended by the Advisory Committee in this location to align the boundary with the edge of the Special Use Zone along the foreshore and Cunningham Pier.

It is also appropriate that land held by Deakin University in this precinct retains a Public Use Zone and not be rezoned to an ACZ.

On this basis, the recommendation of the Advisory Committee is accepted. The boundary for Central Geelong is to be modified and approved in accordance with the Advisory Committee's recommendation and as shown by Figure 4 in this report.

Figure 4 – Boundary for Central Geelong



2.3 Recommendation 1 c) – Coburg Activity Centre boundary

- c) *Modify the exhibited Coburg Activity Centre boundary to include the land at 24 Rodda Street.*

The activity centre boundary exhibited by DPCD for the Coburg Activity Centre is shown in Figure 5. This boundary matches Council's adopted activity centre boundary.

Figure 5 – Exhibited boundary for Coburg



Discussion

The Advisory Committee identified the following key issues to be resolved in relation to the boundary for Coburg:

- The extent and shape of the boundary; and
- The exclusion from the boundary of land at 24 Rodda Street.

The Advisory Committee accepted that there may be valid arguments for broadening the overall extent of the activity centre boundary. However it was satisfied that the significant amount of work and community consultation undertaken by Council in establishing its structure plan boundary supported its present location.

The Advisory Committee noted that Council's approach was largely consistent with that of other Councils and the principles identified by the Advisory Committee in Chapter 3.3 of its report.

Land located at 24 Rodda Street, Coburg is at the eastern edge of the activity centre boundary and forms part of the former Coburg High School redevelopment site. As outlined in the Advisory Committee's report, this site has long formed part of the overall response to the redevelopment of the former Coburg High School site. A previous dwelling on the site has been demolished and the site is vacant.

The boundary exhibited by DPCD was based on Council's adopted structure plan boundary. It appears anomalous that the exhibited boundary did not include this site. By not extending the boundary to include this site, future planning for the high school site could be compromised and subject to two separate decision making processes in the future. The site provides an important access to the Coburg High School site and from Rodda Street through to Bridges Reserve. In addition to this the site also incorporates important sub-terrain features as part of the proposed high school redevelopment including a water treatment plant.

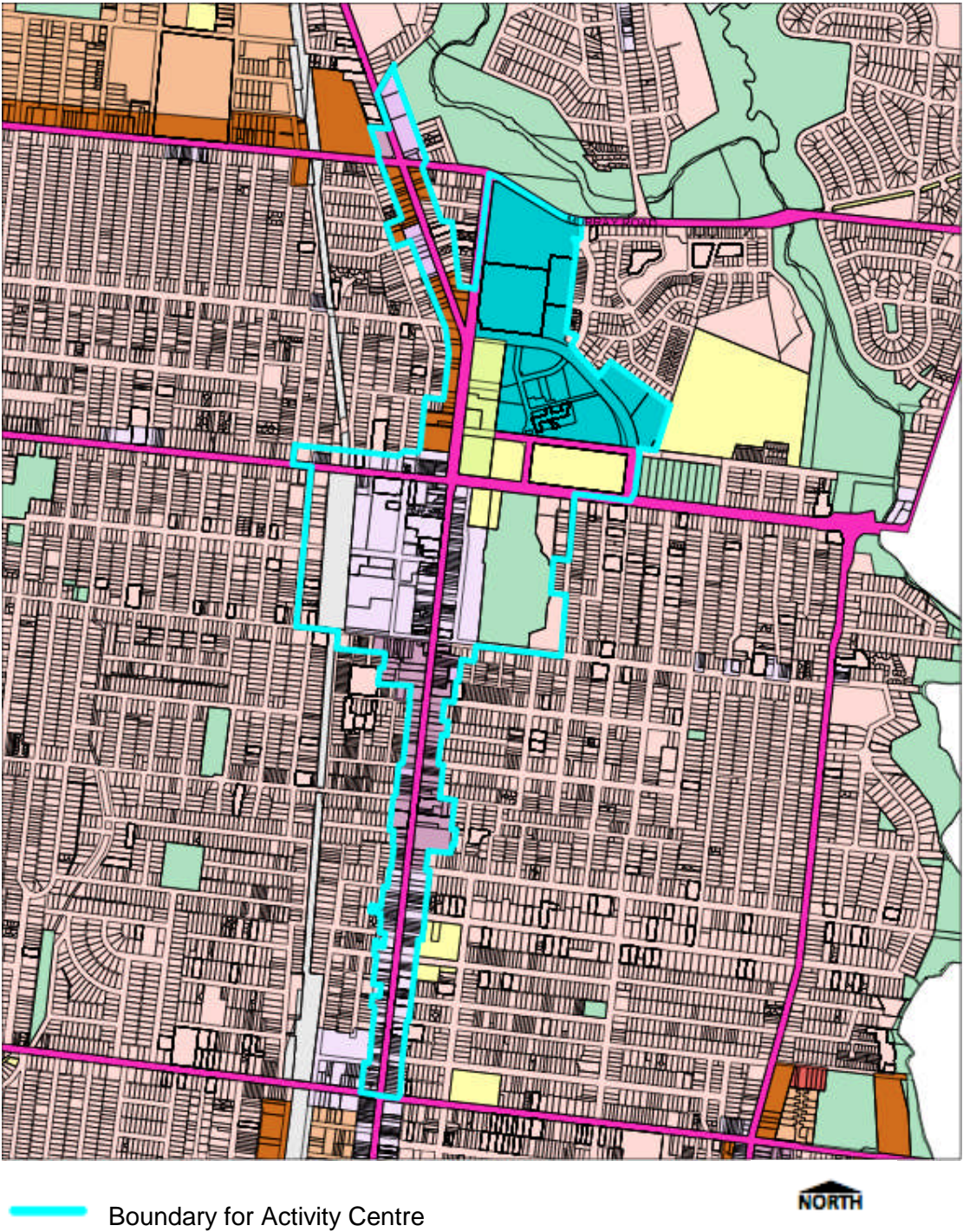
Any future planning scheme amendments or permits for developments at the site will need to have regard to any likely impacts on the amenity of nearby Rodda Street residents regardless of the location of the boundary.

Findings

It is appropriate that the boundary be modified to include 24 Rodda Street as it is an important part of the planning area for the former Coburg High School site.

On this basis, the recommendation of the Advisory Committee is accepted. The boundary for Coburg is to be modified and approved in accordance with the Advisory Committee's recommendation and as shown by Figure 6 in this report.

Figure 6 – Boundary for Coburg



Boundary for Activity Centre



2.4 Recommendation 1 d) – Doncaster Hill Activity Centre boundary

- d) *Modify the exhibited Doncaster Hill Activity Centre boundary to remove the land at 745 – 757 Doncaster Road.*

The activity centre boundary exhibited by DPCD for the Doncaster Hill Activity Centre is shown in Figure 7. This boundary differed from Council's structure plan boundary by including a section of commercial and mixed use land to the east of the Civic Precinct along Doncaster Road.

Figure 7 – Exhibited boundary for Doncaster Hill



Discussion

The Advisory Committee identified the following key issues to be resolved in relation to the Doncaster Hill boundary:

- Inclusion of 745-757 Doncaster Road;
- Extent of the area identified for future development;
- Impacts of the topography and street layout on accessibility; and
- Inclusion of Schramms Reserve.

745-757 Doncaster Road

The boundary exhibited by DPCD proposed to include a small group of shops and a vacant parcel of land at the eastern edge of the centre on Doncaster Road. While these properties allow for commercial uses, they have never formed part of Council's planning area for Doncaster Hill and sit outside of Council's adopted boundary for the centre.

As the Advisory Committee outlines, planning for Doncaster Hill has been a continuing and comprehensive process over many years subject to extensive consultation. This planning provides the basis for a suite of implementation tools and other actions by Council.

Findings

The properties at 745-757 Doncaster Road offer limited redevelopment opportunity and significant redevelopment in this location would be inconsistent with Council's current policies for the centre. It is agreed that this is not a significant issue and that these properties need not form part of the boundary for the activity centre at this time.

Areas identified for future development and impacts of topography on accessibility

The Advisory Committee acknowledged the challenges the topography and local road network present in delivering a highly walkable and accessible centre. However, the Advisory Committee is satisfied that the areas within the boundary are within reasonable proximity to Westfield and the Civic precinct and that improved road and pedestrian works will improve accessibility.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged that the rate and level of development envisaged by the Doncaster Hill Strategy have not yet been realised. However, it concluded that none of these matters provided a basis on which to modify the boundary.

Schramms Reserve

The Advisory Committee expressed some reservations about the inclusion of this reserve within the boundary for the activity centre. It identifies that the reserve is distant from the core commercial area of the centre being located north of the Civic precinct. Despite these reservations, the Advisory Committee did not recommend deleting the reserve from the activity centre stating that:

- there is little to be gained by tampering with the adopted boundary, bearing in mind the extensive and exhaustive processes undertaken by Council thus far; and
- the issues associated with Schramms Reserve have been raised in order to inform the development of boundaries in 'plan ready' and 'brief ready' centres.

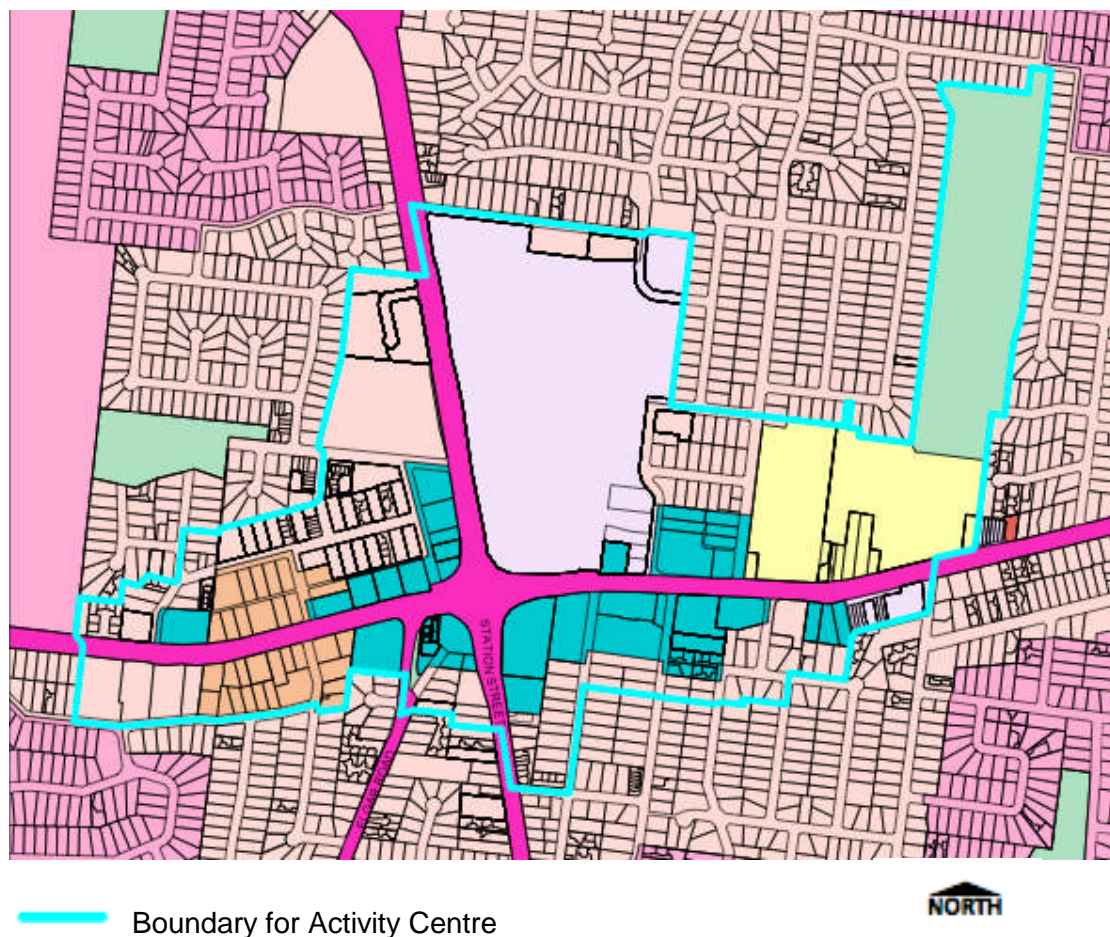
Findings

As discussed in relation to Fritz Holzier Park at Camberwell, it is not appropriate to exclude areas of open space, such as Schramms Reserve, from an activity centre solely on the basis that the open space areas offer no significant redevelopment opportunities.

Council's impending planning for Schramms Reserve is intended to improve accessibility to and from the reserve and provide improved sporting facilities. Council's ability to achieve these outcomes will be improved if undertaken in the context of the broader activity centre and by recognising it as an important community asset and amenity to residents, workers and visitors to the centre – particularly where higher densities are encouraged close by. Schramms Reserve should be retained within the boundary for the centre.

On this basis, the recommendation of the Advisory Committee is accepted. The boundary for Doncaster Hill is to be modified and approved in accordance with the Advisory Committee's recommendation and as shown by Figure 8 in this report.

Figure 8 – Boundary for Doncaster Hill



2.5 Recommendation 1 e) – Preston (High Street) Activity Centre boundary

- e) *Modify the exhibited Preston (High Street) Activity Centre boundary to align it with the PDZ1 and PDZ2 zone boundaries as identified in the approved Amendment C67 and the adopted Amendment C68.*

The activity centre boundary exhibited by DPCD for the Preston (High Street) Activity Centre is shown in Figure 9. The activity centre boundary exhibited by DPCD differed from Council's structure plan boundary by excluding large portions of residential land to the east, west and south-west.

Figure 9 – Exhibited boundary for Preston (High Street)



Discussion

The Advisory Committee identified the following key issues to be resolved in relation to the boundary for Preston (High Street):

- Should the Activity Centre be confined to the 'commercial' type zone boundary of the Priority Development Zone (PDZ1 and proposed PDZ2)?
- If so, is there enough development potential and redevelopment potential within Preston?
- What of the residential areas within a Heritage Overlay?
- What of the residential areas outside the Heritage Overlay?
- What of the land west of St. Georges Road including NMIT?

Should the Activity Centre be confined to the 'commercial' type zone boundary

As outlined by the Advisory Committee, Council now supports a more confined boundary for the centre based on its commercial types zones and defined by its approved and proposed Priority Development Zone areas (PDZ1 and PDZ2). Council's position is based on a view that this planning for Preston clearly identifies the centre as a 'go-go' area and provides sufficient opportunity for Council to fulfil its *Melbourne 2030* obligations.

The Advisory Committee has recommended that the boundary for Preston (High Street) be modified so as to align it with the PDZ1 and PDZ2 zone boundaries as identified by Council's approved Amendment C67 and adopted Amendment C68.

Findings

It appears that this approach diverges from the approach taken by the Advisory Committee at other centres – particularly in relation to areas identified for public uses and public open space. It is also contrary to the general approach adopted by DPCD over many years in encouraging councils to take a wider view of an activity centre beyond just commercial areas.

The Advisory Committee's recommended approach would remove significant public assets that clearly form part of the centre and provide key attractors and employment to the area such as the Preston Railway Station, Preston Oval and Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE (NMIT).

The approach recommended by the Advisory Committee to define the boundary for Preston (High Street) is not supported.

Development potential and redevelopment potential within Preston

The Advisory Committee was satisfied that there is adequate provision for redevelopment identified through Council's Structure Plan and existing on the ground development.

Findings

This point is not contested at this time, however the adequacy of development opportunities alone should not be the basis on which to define a boundary for a centre. While *Melbourne 2030* identifies that activity centres will be the focus of major change, it also identifies that they will offer a wide range of services and facilities benefiting the whole community, and offer substantial employment, and a wide variety of recreation and community facilities. There will be circumstances

where a wider boundary beyond that required to cater for redevelopment is warranted.

Restricting the boundary of an activity centre to areas where the greatest redevelopment potential exists does not adequately recognise the actual extent of the centre and is not supported.

Residential areas within Heritage Overlays

The Advisory Committee identifies that residential areas covered by Heritage Overlays are constrained for redevelopment and have only modest opportunity for redevelopment. As such, these areas are unlikely to be the focus of 'major change'. On this basis the Advisory Committee recommended the exclusion of such areas from the boundary.

Findings

It is not disputed that Heritage Overlay areas offer limited opportunities, however the application of Heritage Overlays is not sufficient reason to exclude areas from being included within the boundary of an activity centre. These areas may still be subject to Heritage Overlays and a higher level of control, but they are still considered part of the activity centre, particularly where they are so closely related to the core functions of the centre or amongst such uses. These areas may not be likely to offer significant redevelopment opportunities, but they do form an intrinsic part of the activity centre and play a role in its functioning, accessibility, character and providing linkages between different areas of the centre.

Residential areas outside the Heritage Overlay

The Advisory Committee has acknowledged that residential areas outside the Heritage Overlay provide potential for change and suggests that they would be better suited for inclusion in the proposed new 'substantial change' zone.

The ACZ will be able to be fully tailored, through an accompanying Development Framework, to suit the needs of each centre. The Development Framework will be informed by Council's structure plan and will be able to provide direction on the scale, including height, of future development appropriate for each area of the centre. Specifically, fully tailored policies and controls will be available through the ACZ to precisely guide and adequately protect residential precincts that are part of the centre.

Residential areas should not be excluded from the boundary of a centre due to concern about application of an ACZ as appropriate controls for these precincts will be available.

Land west of St. Georges Road including NMIT

The Advisory Committee states that land west of St Georges Road *"is relatively remote from the Activity Centre and is physically separated by a main road and by the train line. Access points from this area to the centre are problematic. Much of the land is consumed by NMIT which is within a Public Use Zone and the Education Department already looks after its own functions adequately without the need for planning permits which might be required by another zone."* (p.78).

However, Council has identified NMIT as the biggest generator of rail trips to Preston (High Street) and a key land use, along with Preston Oval, within the centre. It is an important anchor for the centre, attracting hundreds of visits per day, and is a major provider of relatively low cost tertiary education to the broader northern region.

Council has identified that access to this area is inhibited somewhat by the train line and St Georges Road. Through its structure planning, Council is seeking to better integrate NMIT with the heart of the activity centre by enhancing safety, legibility and convenience of the pedestrian routes between the centre and NMIT.

Findings

The area is within easy walk of the Preston Railway Station and is located on the Principal Public Transport Network being serviced by a SmartBus route along St Georges Road (Route 903 Altona to Mordialloc). As a key anchor to the centre well served by public transport this area should be included in the boundary for the centre.

Other matters not identified by the Advisory Committee in relation to Preston

In addition to matters identified and discussed by the Advisory Committee, a number of additional properties have been identified following exhibition of the proposed boundary that are currently associated with existing commercial uses. These include:

- The car park to the Preston Hotel (currently with a residential zoning).
- A vacant industrial factory located at 27 West Street (currently with an industrial zoning).
- A commercial property attached to development at 30-34 Wurruk Avenue immediately east of 24 Wurruk Avenue (currently with a residential zoning).

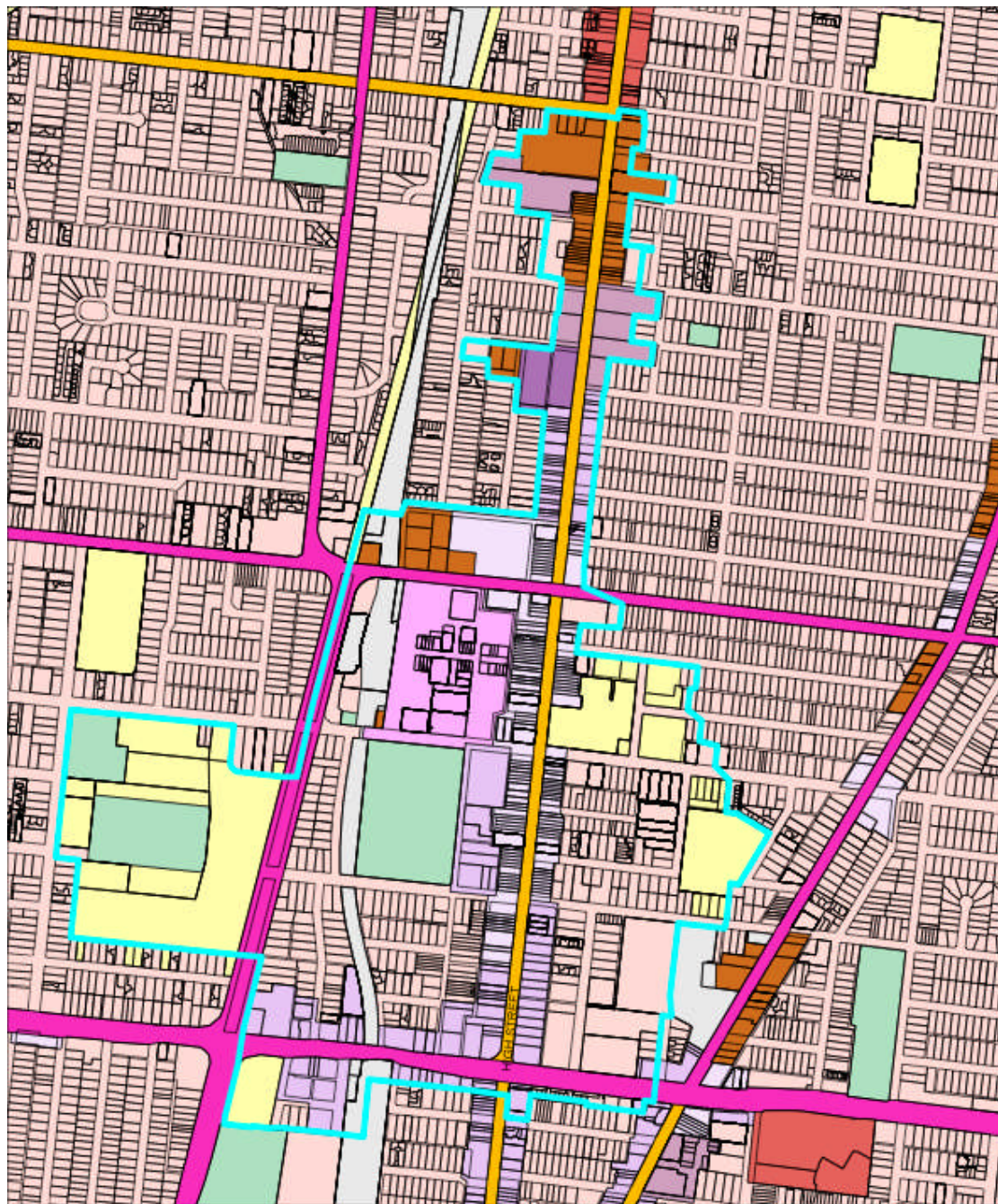
Site inspections of these properties have recently been undertaken by DPCD to verify existing conditions and uses at these properties.


It is appropriate that these properties be included within the boundary in view of their current use and development being commercial in nature. It is considered unnecessary to undertake any further consultation prior to including these properties within the boundary for the centre. The continued use of these properties for commercial purposes reflects existing circumstances and the strategic directions of the structure plan. Their location within the activity centre boundary will not change these existing conditions.

Preston Conclusions

On this basis, the recommendation of the Advisory Committee is not accepted. An approach that extends beyond the commercial areas and includes key recreational and educational areas as well as residential areas is supported. The boundary for Preston (High Street) is to be approved as shown by Figure 10 in this report.

Figure 10 – Boundary for Preston (High Street)



 Boundary for Activity Centre



3 Response to Advisory Committee's recommendations

The Advisory Committee's recommendations are reproduced in italics with the response by the Minister for Planning shown in the breakout boxes.

3.1 Recommendation 1 – Exhibited Activity Centre Boundaries

- a) *Modify the exhibited Camberwell Activity Centre boundary to remove Fritz Holzier Park.*
- b) *Modify the exhibited Central Geelong Activity Centre boundary to:*
 - *Remove the Residential 1 Zoned land on Western Beach Road.*
 - *Include the existing zoned foreshore land and Cunningham Pier, rather than it extending further out into Corio Bay.*
- c) *Modify the exhibited Coburg Activity Centre boundary to include the land at 24 Rodda Street.*
- d) *Modify the exhibited Doncaster Hill Activity Centre boundary to remove the land at 745 – 757 Doncaster Road.*
- e) *Modify the exhibited Preston (High Street) Activity Centre boundary to align it with the PDZ1 and PDZ2 zone boundaries as identified in the approved Amendment C67 and the adopted Amendment C68.*

Minister's Response

Accepted in part.

It is my assessment that Recommendations 1 b), 1 c) and 1d) be accepted and the activity centre boundaries for Central Geelong, Coburg and Doncaster Hill are modified and approved in accordance with the Advisory Committee's recommendations.

It is my assessment that Recommendation 1 a) not be accepted and the Camberwell Activity Centre boundary shown in this report at Figure 2 be approved.

It is my assessment that Recommendation 1 e) not be accepted and the Preston (High Street) Activity Centre boundary shown in this report at Figure 10 be approved.

More detailed discussion of these matters is contained in Chapter 2.

3.2 Recommendation 2 – Future Boundary Review

Review the boundaries of each of the nominated Activity Centres within a five year period, and in doing so, take into account the recommended criteria as outlined below.

Minister's Response

Accepted.

It is my response that the approved boundaries should be reviewed within five years. This review will take into account approved Activity Centre Boundary Criteria.

Further, a review of the boundary for Central Geelong should commence within one year to investigate areas adjacent to the Geelong Hospital as suggested by the Advisory Committee.

3.3 Recommendation 3 – Structure Plan Methodology

Prepare structure plans for Activity Centres based on strategic planning work that identifies (among other things) the following:

Needs analysis:

- *Commercial land and floor area requirements.*
- *Housing needs for the municipality based on adopted housing strategies.*
- *Any specific local needs for civic, institutional or community uses.*

Opportunity assessment:

- *Public transport facilities and opportunities.*
- *Redevelopment sites.*
- *Above ground potential.*
- *Public acquisition opportunities.*

Constraints assessment:

- *Environmental constraints.*
- *Physical barriers.*
- *Infrastructure limitations.*
- *Public areas unlikely to be redeveloped.*
- *Private land unlikely to be developed owing to heritage constraints and other restrictions.*

Minister's Response

Accepted.

The proposed methodology complements the review being conducted by the Department of Planning and Community Development into the Activity Centre Structure Planning Practice Note. This methodology, amongst other considerations, will be factored into a revised Practice Note.

3.4 Recommendation 4 – Activity Centre Boundary Criteria

a) *Consider the following issues in determining the potential location of an Activity Centre boundary:*

- *Commercial and residential needs.*
- *Environmental constraints.*
- *Heritage constraints.*
- *Availability of strategic redevelopment sites.*
- *Consideration of physical barriers.*
- *Proximity to public transport, especially fixed rail (train or tram).*
- *Walkability - within 400 to 800 metres from the core of the centre (depending on topography and connectivity).*
- *Consistency with State policy.*
- *Consistency with local policy and MSS.*
- *Impacts of the boundary on other Activity Centre boundaries.*

- b) *In setting a boundary for an Activity Centre, include:*
- *Sufficient land to provide for the commercial (retailing, office, fringe retailing and support activities such as entertainment) activities needed over a 15 to 20 year time frame.*
 - *Residential land that is unencumbered by significant constraints and where significant density increases or redevelopment based on the proximity to the Activity Centre is contemplated.*
 - *Key public land uses that are intended for a non public use in the future and/or have a strong functional inter-relationship with the Activity Centre.*
 - *Public open space areas where they display significant redevelopment potential and/or have a strong functional inter-relationship with the Activity Centre.*
- c) *In setting a boundary for an Activity Centre, generally exclude:*
- *Residential land encumbered by significant constraints (such as Heritage Overlays).*
 - *Residential land where significant density increases or commercial redevelopment is not contemplated.*
 - *Public open space areas or public uses where there is no strong functional inter-relationship with the Activity Centre.*

Minister's Response

Accepted in part.

The criteria recommended by the Advisory Committee largely support the criteria outlined in its Terms of Reference.

However, I do not support an approach that excludes areas that are not contemplated for significant redevelopment – especially where they are key attractors or features of the centre or are surrounded by other uses appropriate for inclusion within the centre.

I support including residential areas and land identified for public open space or public uses as part of the broader activity centre and being included within a boundary for the centre.

Residential areas, whether or not they are affected by Heritage Overlays, still form part of an activity centre, particularly where they are so closely related to the core functions of the centre. Such areas may not be likely to offer significant redevelopment opportunities, but they do form an intrinsic part of the activity centre and play a role in its functioning, accessibility, character and providing linkages between different areas of the centre.

It is not appropriate to exclude areas of open space from an activity centre on the basis that such areas offer no significant redevelopment opportunity. Where open space has a strong functional relationship to the activity centre and provides an important community asset and amenity to residents, workers and visitors to the centre – particularly where higher densities are encouraged close by – it should be included within the boundary and managed appropriately.

This approach does not suggest open space in a centre can and should be redeveloped. Appropriate zoning and controls will ensure these areas continue to be adequately protected and enhanced. There are significant benefits in retaining open space areas in an activity centre boundary particularly in providing enhanced pedestrian linkages throughout the centre and providing improved integration to transport and between the centre's residential, commercial and public areas.

On this basis, I approve the modified criteria as set out in Appendix 2.

4 Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference for Advisory Committee to report on Activity Centre Boundaries

Attachment 1

Advisory Committee appointed pursuant to Part 7, Section 151 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* to report on Metropolitan Activity Centre / central Geelong Boundaries

Advisory Committee - Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Advisory Committee is to review and advise on the boundaries of the five activity centres where Development Assessment Committees (DACs) are to operate initially (5 DAC centres) and based on the experience of these five centres, identify criteria and a methodology suitable to define the boundaries of further Activity Centres.

The review will be guided by the policy criteria included in Melbourne 2030 and relevant strategic work for each centre, and consultation with Councils and local communities.

2. Background

The Melbourne 2030 Audit Expert Group (AEG) recommended that the State Government establish a new entity or new administrative arrangements to facilitate the rapid and focused development of a small number of selected Activity Centres, and consider revised planning responsibilities for these centres (AEG Recommendation 3.2.3)

As one of the priority actions for Managing Urban Growth and Change (action 4), *Planning for All of Melbourne*, the Victorian Government's response to the Audit of Melbourne 2030 stated that the Government will:

Introduce a new Activity Centre Zone and simple Development Frameworks to provide greater certainty for communities and developers about the scale of development, public realm improvements, uses, and to identify the boundaries of Activity Centres.

Activity Centres and strategic redevelopment sites need to accommodate significant levels of residential development, to address our growing population and household needs. They need to also provide opportunities for jobs and services easily accessible to surrounding populations by public transport, walking and cycling.

A range of zones, overlays and controls are currently used in activity centres. It is proposed (through separate processes) to simplify planning in activity centres through the application of an Activity Centre Zone and Development Frameworks and the introduction of Development Assessment Committees. An activity centre boundary will inform the introduction of these reforms.

3. Tasks

Task 1: The Advisory Committee is to provide advice on a boundary for each of the four Activity Centres and central Geelong as follows:

- Camberwell;
- Coburg;
- Doncaster Hill;
- Preston (High Street); and
- Central Geelong.

In providing advice on the boundary of the five centres, the Advisory Committee is to take account of, and give consideration to, the following criteria:

- a) Victorian Government policy (eg. Melbourne 2030, Melbourne @ 5 million, The Victorian Transport Plan)
- b) The location of existing commercial areas and land uses;
- c) The location of existing government and institutional areas and land uses;
- d) The location of existing transport infrastructure including train stations, tramways, bus routes, modal interchanges and car parking areas;
- e) The location of existing and potential redevelopment sites;
- f) The location of residential areas, including whether they provide significant redevelopment opportunities or constraints for the centre;
- g) The appropriateness of any current or proposed centre boundaries;
- h) The opportunity to provide for a walkable catchment of 400-800 metres from the centre;
- i) The need for activity centres to accommodate significant urban growth and change over the next 20 – 30 years;
- j) The location of any development constraints; and
- k) Any other matter the Advisory Committee considers relevant.

Task 2: Based on the experience of the five centres identified in Task 1, the Advisory Committee is to propose criteria and a methodology suitable to define the boundaries of the remaining Activity Centres.

4. Process

In preparing its advice, the Advisory Committee must:

- a) Undertake background research related to the strategic planning undertaken for the 5 DAC centres;
- b) Test the 5 centre boundaries determined through approved or draft structure plans against the criteria in task 1;
- c) Determine whether the centre boundaries are adequate or require any change(s), identifying any additional areas for further investigation;
- d) Consider submissions in full received by the Department of Planning and Community Development's Priority Activity Centres Taskforce through its community engagement and consultations being undertaken in February and March 2009;
- e) Consider submissions in full from DPCD and the five relevant Councils, namely the five cities of Darebin, Manningham, Moreland, Boroondara and Greater Geelong (the five Councils).
- f) Consult with the five Councils and DPCD to inform the identification of a boundary for each of the 5 DAC centres;
- g) Provide criteria and a methodology to identify suitable boundaries for the remaining Activity Centres; and,
- h) Provide a final report to the Minister by 30 April 2009.

It is expected that each of the five Councils will nominate a senior representative to work directly with the members of the Advisory Committee. This will enable an interactive and consultative process and will provide the Advisory Committee with relevant work done in relation to the centre to date, as well as a written and pictorial response to each of the matters listed.

The Advisory Committee must consult with the five Councils and the Department of Planning and Community Development. The Advisory Committee may consult with other stakeholders as it deems necessary to inform its deliberations and advice. The Advisory Committee may also meet stakeholders or submitters as it deems appropriate. Members of the Advisory Committee can meet with stakeholders individually or as a group. No quorum is required for the Advisory Committee to undertake its work. The proceedings of the Advisory Committee will be in the form of consultations, rather than public hearings and the Advisory Committee must consider all submissions provided to it by the Department of Planning and Community Development's

Priority Activity Centres Taskforce through its community engagement and consultations being undertaken in February and March 2009.

5. Required Output

The required output from the Advisory Committee is a report providing its full response to Tasks 1 and 2 by 30 April 2009.

6. Timing

The review will commence from the date of appointment of the Advisory Committee, with the final report submitted to the Minister by the 30 April 2009.

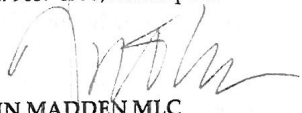
7. Fee

The fee for the Advisory Committee will be set at the current rate for a Panel appointed under Part 8 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

8. Project Manager

Day to day liaison for the review will be with:

Paul Buxton
Assistant Director, Activity Centres Unit
Department of Planning and Community Development
Phone: 9637 8995, Email: paul.buxton@dpcd.vic.gov.au



JUSTIN MADDEN MLC
Minister for Planning

Date: 11/12/2008

5 Appendix 2 – Activity Centre Boundary Criteria

Approved Activity Centre Boundary Criteria

- a) Consider the following issues in determining the potential location of an Activity Centre boundary:
- The location of existing commercial areas and land uses.
 - The location of existing government and institutional areas and land uses.
 - The location of existing areas of public open space.
 - Commercial and residential needs.
 - Environmental and flooding constraints.
 - Heritage constraints.
 - Availability of strategic redevelopment sites, both existing and potential.
 - The location of residential areas, including whether they provide significant redevelopment opportunities or constraints for the centre.
 - Consideration of physical barriers and opportunities for their improvement.
 - Proximity to public transport, especially fixed rail (train or tram).
 - The location of existing and potential transport infrastructure including fixed rail, buses, bicycle paths, car parking areas and modal interchanges
 - Walkability – opportunities to provide for and improve walkability within 400 to 800 metres from the core of the centre (depending on topography and connectivity).
 - Consistency with State policy.
 - Consistency with local policy and MSS.
 - Impacts of the boundary on other Activity Centre boundaries.
- b) In setting a boundary for an Activity Centre, include:
- Sufficient land to provide for the commercial (retailing, office, fringe retailing and support activities such as entertainment) activities needed over a 15 to 20 year time frame and then into the 30-year horizon.
 - Residential areas that are integrated into the Activity Centre or surrounded by other uses that have a strong functional inter-relationship with the Activity Centre even where limited development opportunities exist.
 - Key public land uses that have or are intended to have a strong functional inter-relationship with the Activity Centre even where there are no or limited redevelopment opportunities.
 - Public open space areas that have or are intended to have a strong functional inter-relationship with the Activity Centre.
- c) In setting a boundary for an Activity Centre, generally exclude:
- Residential land encumbered by significant constraints (such as Heritage Overlays) located at the edge of the Activity Centre.