

BLACKBURN TO MITCHAM TRAIN AND TRAM ZONE ACTIVITY CENTRES PLAN

BLACKBURN | NUNAWADING | MITCHAM

WURUNDJERI WOI-WURRUNG COUNTRY

JUNE 2026



**Authorised by the Victorian Government,
Melbourne**

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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

The Blackburn, Nunawading and Mitcham activity centres are located on the lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People and we acknowledge them as Traditional Owners. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, whose knowledge and wisdom have ensured the continuation of spiritual and cultural practices.

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



Description of artwork

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

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

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



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1 THE PURPOSE

The Activity Centres Plan sets a broad vision for the area, which incorporates the local knowledge of the community and others who visit and work in the place, and informs preparation of new planning controls to enable development over time.





WHY WE'RE PLANNING FOR BLACKBURN TO MITCHAM

Housing is one of the biggest challenges we face in Victoria. By 2051, metropolitan Melbourne will need around an extra 1.8 million homes.

Everyone should have the opportunity to live in a well-designed home, at an affordable price, in a place they can thrive.

That's why we're planning for more homes in and around train and tram zones, encouraging homes to be built close to public transport, jobs and services.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

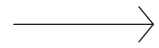
This Train and Tram Zone Activity Centres Plan (the Plan) for Blackburn, Nunawading and Mitcham guides where new homes go, how new development will be shaped and what improvements will enhance the liveability of this place.

The purpose of this Plan is to support clear place-focused planning rules, focusing on built form outcomes such as building heights, to guide where new homes go and provide certainty to community and developers about growth. It also identifies the opportunities for place improvements to support more homes.

This strategic background document should be read alongside the relevant planning schemes and other documentation. This includes the Built Form Overlay schedules, the updated local policy and the Explanatory Report.

2 THE TRAIN AND TRAM ZONE ACTIVITY CENTRES PROGRAM

We're planning for more homes in and around 60 train and tram zone activity centres across Melbourne, encouraging more new homes to be built around public transport, jobs and services by 2051.



STATE STRATEGIC CONTEXT

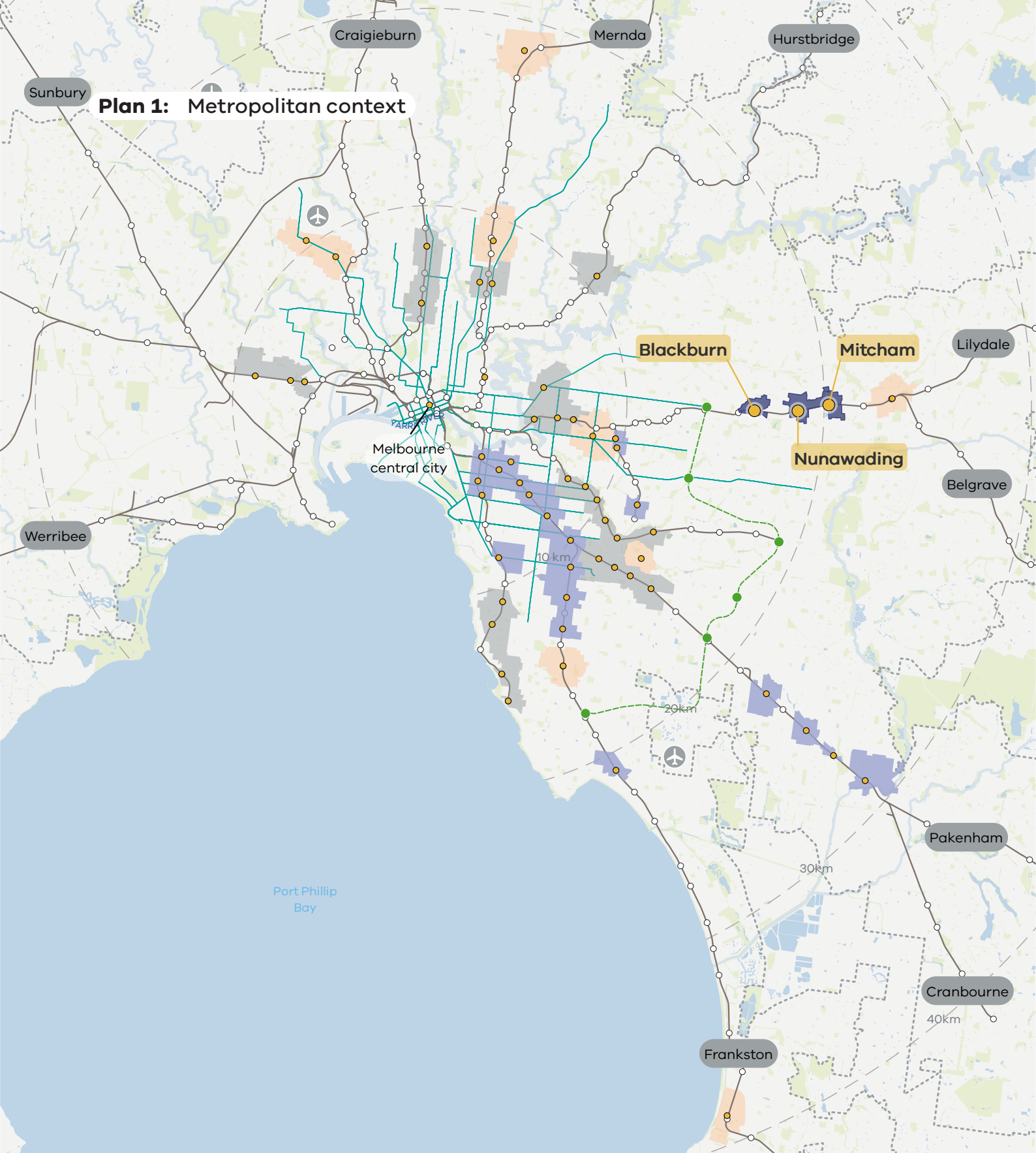
The Train and Tram Zone Activity Centres Program includes 60 train and tram zone activity centres across metropolitan Melbourne where there is good access to public transport, jobs and services. The Program has been rolled out across three stages: the Pilot, Stage 1 and Stage 2. The distribution of the train and tram zones is shown at **Plan 1: Metropolitan context**.

Plan for Victoria sets the vision for how the state will grow to 2050. Structured around five pillars of action, the plan outlines how Victoria will become more vibrant, accessible and connected. *Plan for Victoria* lists the Blackburn to Mitcham activity centres as some of the centres we're planning for under *Pillar 1: Housing for all Victorians*.

The Blackburn to Mitcham activity centres are located within the Whitehorse local government area. *Plan for Victoria* sets the City of Whitehorse the target of 76,500 net additional homes to 2051. The Program creates planning capacity for more homes in these activity centres and their catchments, contributing to this housing target.

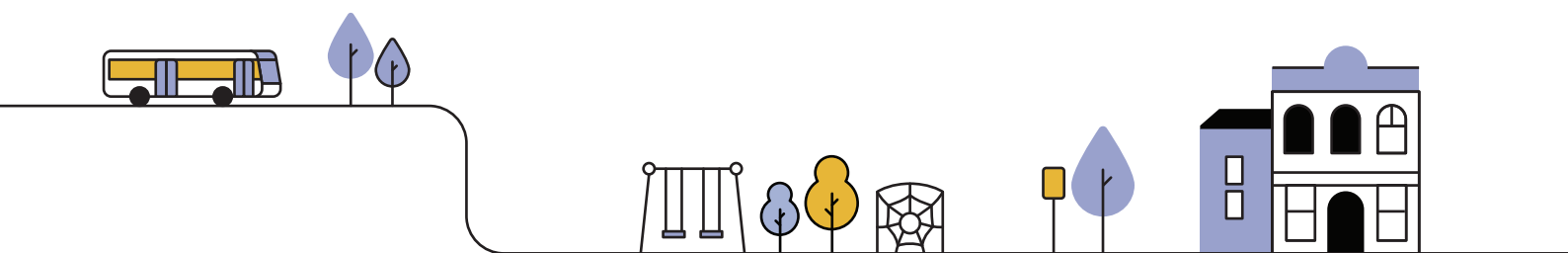
The Program also operates in the context of and alongside the following state policies that support Victorians to live, work, access and enjoy places across Melbourne:

- *Victoria's Bus Plan 2021* sets out the Victorian Government's long-term strategy to deliver a more modern, productive and environmentally sustainable bus network.
- *Victoria's Active Transport Plan 2026* aims to get more Victorians using active transport to get around.
- The *Transport Integration Act 2010* aims to ensure all transport modes work together and that transport planning is aligned with land use planning.
- *Melbourne's Tram Plan 2023* sets out the Victorian Government's long-term approach to delivering a tram network that puts passengers first, connects people to the places they want to go, and is accessible to more people.
- The *Economic Growth Statement Victoria: Open for Business 2024* lays out the actions for a stronger economy that creates more jobs and supports a stronger future for all Victorians.
- The *Healthy Waterways Strategy 2018–2028* sets the long-term vision for managing the health of Melbourne's waterways.
- The *Train and Tram Zone Activity Centres Program Explainer 2026* sets out the objectives for the Program, along with the urban design principles that underpin this work.



- | | |
|---|--|
| ● train and tram zone activity centre | ■ pilot activity centres |
| ■ Blackburn to Mitcham train and tram zone activity centres and catchment | --- urban growth boundary |
| ■ other stage 2 train and tram zone activity centres and catchment | — tram route |
| ■ stage 1 train and tram zone activity centres and catchment | —○— train station & corridor |
| | —●— SRL East station & corridor (indicative) |





HOW WE CONSULTED WITH THE COMMUNITY

We consulted with the community and key stakeholders, including Whitehorse City Council, over two stages to inform this plan. What we heard from consultation and how we addressed it is captured in the sections:

- **Blackburn activity centre core built form**
- **Nunawading activity centre core built form**
- **Mitcham activity centre core built form.**

We heard that the top four themes for Blackburn to Mitcham were:



Preserve and protect existing open space and increase tree canopy cover

This includes excluding the Significant Landscape Overlay Schedule 1, 2, 3 and 4 areas around Blackburn and Mitcham from the catchment. In addition, the Program's controls are tailored to retain sunlight to important open spaces and provide opportunities for urban greening through landscape setbacks and other measures.

Head to **section 4 the activity centre cores and infrastructure investment focus areas** to learn more.



Adjust proposed core heights

Core building heights in Blackburn and Nunawading have been adjusted in response to community feedback, to ensure sun protections for important locations such as Morton Park in Blackburn.

Head to **Blackburn activity centre core built form** and **Nunawading activity centre core built form** to learn more.



Invest in local infrastructure to support growth

An infrastructure contributions plan is being considered for Blackburn to Mitcham. It will intend to fund infrastructure essential to the liveability of the current and future communities in and around these centres.

Head to **section 7 local infrastructure improvement opportunities for Blackburn to Mitcham** to learn more.



Adjust proposed catchment heights

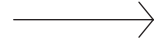
Some areas of the catchment have been adjusted in response to community feedback, to ensure appropriate transitions between the activity centre, the inner catchment and the outer catchment.

Head to **section 5 the activity centre catchments** to learn more.

For further information, see *Blackburn to Mitcham Train and Tram Zones – Stage 2 Phase 2 – Consultation Summary Report* (DTP, 2026).

3 THE STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR BLACKBURN TO MITCHAM

Victorians want more homes close to public transport, jobs and services.





ABOUT BLACKBURN TO MITCHAM

This plan comprises three activity centres:

- Blackburn activity centre
- Nunawading activity centre
- Mitcham activity centre

When we say *Blackburn to Mitcham*, we are referring to all of these centres and their shared catchment areas. The activity centres are shown at **Plan 2: Blackburn to Mitcham context and recent Victorian Government infrastructure**.

Why Blackburn to Mitcham are in the Program

The Program is about creating more opportunities for diverse types of housing in areas close to existing train and tram services that have room to grow now and into the future.

The Blackburn to Mitcham activity centres are located around the Blackburn, Nunawading and Mitcham train stations. These centres are well-serviced by public transport, linking people to employment, retail, recreation and services.

These centres are serviced by the Belgrave and Lilydale rail lines as well as a network of buses that connect these places to the rest of metropolitan Melbourne, including to the Melbourne city centre and other destinations such as Box Hill, Ringwood, Doncaster and Hawthorn.

The services that support this place

The Blackburn to Mitcham activity centres are located approximately 19 kilometres east of Melbourne's city centre. These are in the suburbs of Blackburn, Nunawading and Mitcham.

In recent years, the Victorian Government has committed to and carried out several community and transport infrastructure projects in and around these centres. The key projects are shown at **Plan 2: Blackburn to Mitcham context and recent Victorian Government infrastructure**.



Public realm and community infrastructure – having great community spaces

Morton Park and Pope Road Playground in Blackburn, Wood Park in Nunawading and Esplanade Reserve in Mitcham are key public open spaces which contribute to creating places which are greener and cooler with more canopy trees.

Community facilities such as the Blackburn Library, the Whitehorse Civic Centre, Nunawading Library, and The Round ensure the community has good access to places that encourage social interaction and provide opportunities for learning and entertainment.

We heard from the community that having enough schools, parks and community facilities is important.

In the Community Reference Group Statement of Advice, we heard the call for community facilities and shared spaces that support a strong sense of belonging.

Transport – facilitating how we get around

Public and active transport are improving in the Blackburn, Nunawading and Mitcham area. Compared to previous years, there are now more weekend bus services in the area and improved riding facilities at Blackburn Station.

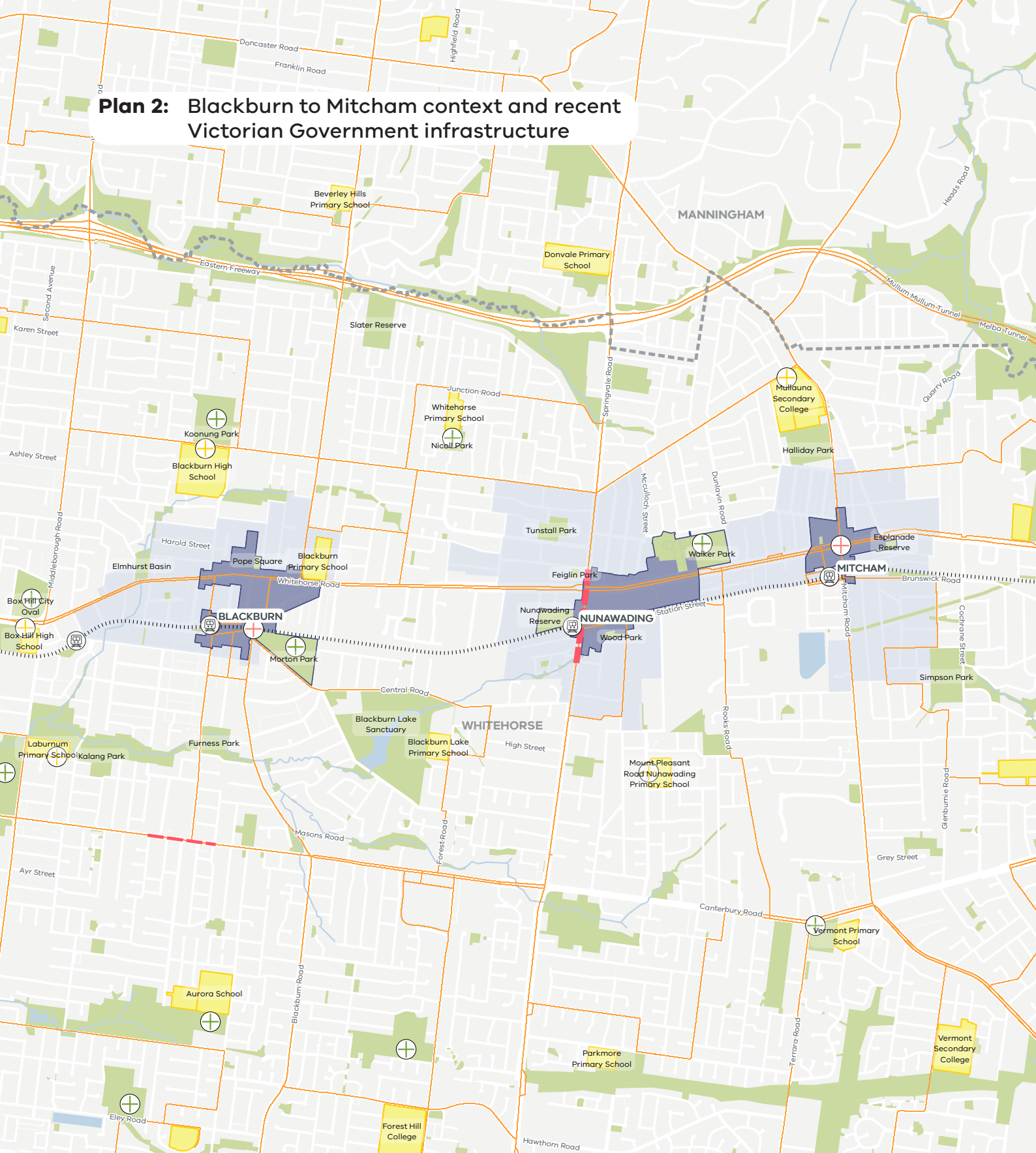
There are also safety improvements as part of the recent Mitcham and Whitehorse Roads intersection improvements.

There are good existing active transport connections, strengthened by the Box Hill to Ringwood shared user path. The path connects Box Hill, Laburnum, Blackburn, Nunawading, Heatherdale and Ringwood train stations, and provides improved connectivity for pedestrians, cyclists, and other users of active transport between the Blackburn to Mitcham activity centres.

We heard from the community that pedestrian crossings on major roads like Whitehorse Road are important.

In the Community Reference Group Statement of Advice, we heard the call for safe walking and cycling connections that join the activity centres together and connect people to services.

Plan 2: Blackburn to Mitcham context and recent Victorian Government infrastructure



- train and tram zone activity centre core
- train and tram zone activity centres catchment
- train station & corridor
- bus route
- municipal boundary
- education (state)
- existing open space

- Recent State Government funded infrastructure projects**
- transport corridor upgrades
 - transport infrastructure upgrades
 - education facility upgrades
 - sporting facility upgrades



TRADITIONAL OWNERS

The Registered Aboriginal Party for the activity centres and catchment areas is the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC).

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation is the Registered Aboriginal Party for and on behalf of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People. Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People are recognised as the Traditional Owners of their lands and waters in Blackburn, Nunawading and Mitcham, and across central–south Victoria.

Traditional Owner groups are the original custodians of the land who share a deep cultural, spiritual and social connection with Country. They have their own unique culture, history, language, customs and laws.

Statement from the Registered Aboriginal Party

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation has provided and consented to the publication of a Statement of Cultural Values for the Blackburn to Mitcham activity centres. This statement is included as part of the Plan for the purposes of sharing information, increasing awareness and understanding of Aboriginal people and their connections to, and understanding of, the place with the broader community.

It is hoped that this statement will spark curiosity and inform the strategic direction for these activity centres, as well as signal to developers, builders and the wider community the cultural significance of these places to Aboriginal people.

Plan for Victoria's pillars of action

Self-determination and caring for Country is one of the five pillars of action in *Plan for Victoria*.

Action 20 provides the opportunity to recognise Traditional Owners' Country in planning schemes and provide Country-specific guidance, where supported by and following ongoing engagement with Traditional Owners.

The Department of Transport and Planning has consulted with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and the Traditional Owners of the land to understand the cultural values and stories that relate to the Country we are planning more homes on.



The Statement of Cultural Values is a condensed statement of documented cultural values.

The statement does not represent the full significance of cultural values of the activity centres, which can only be understood through more detailed Cultural Values Assessments that involve On Country walks and traditional knowledge recording.

WURUNDJERI WOI-WURRUNG WATERWAYS STATEMENT

Water is integral to the formation of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country, and there are many Creation stories for different waterways, including the Birrarung (Yarra River).

As stated by Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders of the WWCHAC Water Program subcommittee (WWCHAC, n.d.):

The waterways are the lifeblood of the land. The veins of Country. We must care for our mother and her veins.

The waterways provide not just for humans, but all living things; all around us, above us and below us. Being respectful of all spiritual and living things connected to waterways is our cultural responsibility. Waterways sustain all animals and plants – all life. Waterways are important for our totemic systems, as they may depend on living and thriving waterways. Ensuring waterways are healthy and thriving contributes to our strong continued connection to Country.

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People are the only cultural authority to speak for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country, therefore, it is paramount that Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People are providing direction on how Country should be cared for and managed. Understanding our lores/laws and our traditional cultural protocols, process, governance and decision-making needs to be respected, supported and resourced to allow proper informed participation.

Speaking to the right people who make decisions is an important space for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People to be in to ensure cultural values for waterways are imbedded and informing policy and planning. Being involved at a high level and at the beginning of processes, lays the foundation for working towards and achieving cultural outcomes for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People, Country and our waterways.

Providing the Elders the space and opportunity to teach and pass knowledge onto the next generation is extremely important. Our voices, stories, history and connections need to be acknowledged and shared. We need to ensure there is the space for the next generation to continue to Care for Country.

Working together is integral to the environmental, spiritual, sustainable and cultural outcomes for Country. A healthy Country contributes to the health and wellbeing of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People.



WURUNDJERI WOI-WURRUNG STATEMENT OF CULTURAL VALUES

The Wurundjeri people have an unbroken relationship with Country, caring for this land, its waterways, its plants, and animals. A core purpose of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Corporation is the protection, preservation and revitalisation of Wurundjeri culture and cultural practices.

– Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
Community Statement, 2025.

The Blackburn, Nunawading and Mitcham Activity Centres have had limited cultural values work completed by WWCHAC's Research Unit Cultural Values Program, and require further research to be completed.

The Wurundjeri-balluk group, were one of smaller, localised clan groups and they once occupied the area around the Activity Centres prior to invasion. The Wurundjeri-balluk group were one of several larger Woi-wurrung speaking groups¹.

Alfred Howitt reconstructs descriptions from Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Ancestor and ngurungaeta William Barak, whose knowledge was passed down to him by his Ancestors, about this group, giving “wurun” meaning the white gum (Manna Gum) tree, “jerri” being the grub found in the tree². Fison, who was a collaborator of Howitt, gave the definition as “the People of the White Gum Country”³.

The headwaters of Kooyong Koot (Gardiners Creek) originate between Blackburn and Nunawading, and immediately flow south-west. From Kooyong Koot (Gardiners Creek) tributaries flow, such as Blackburn Creek and several unnamed waterways⁴.

These waterways have been modified dramatically since the 1880s. Natural creeks have been dammed, banks concreted, and retarding basins implemented to prevent flooding and excess stormwater flowing to Kooyong Koot (Gardiners Creek)⁵. Figure 1 shows early works of a highly modified creek bed; roots of adjacent trees have been exposed and the banks are dusty and vulnerable to erosion.

Figure 1: Bridge at Blackburn, 1898

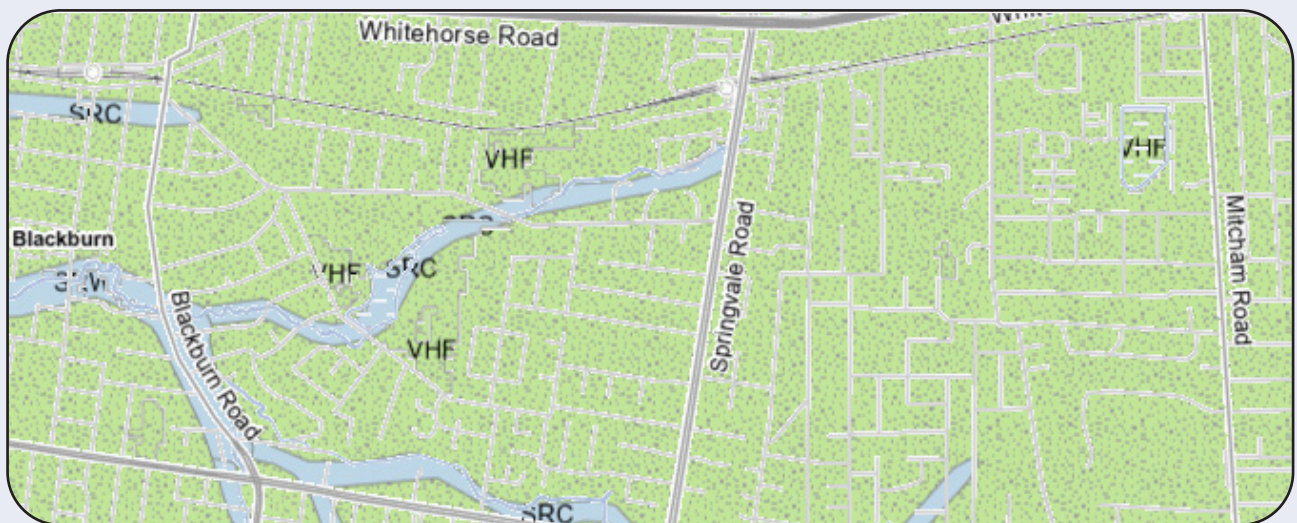


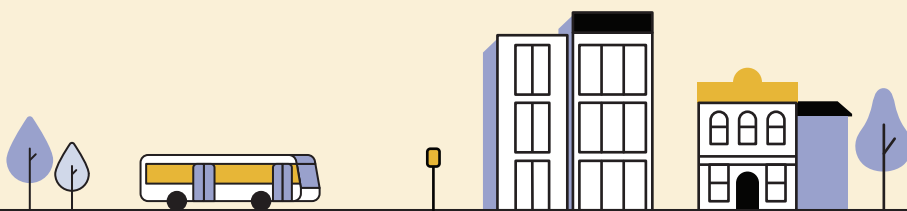
Though Blackburn Lake and its tributaries such as Lake Road Drain, Blackburn South Drain etc were artificially constructed, the broader riparian scrubs or swampy scrubs naturally existed in pre-1750s Ecological Vegetation, as shown in figure 2. Drains are often proximal to flows of ephemeral or unnamed waterways that would have been there prior to urban development. The natural flow of water through Wurundjeri Country was essential to sustaining life; for people, for habitat, for resources, for flora, and for animals.

The cultural significance associated with natural waterways and their tributaries goes beyond any single value. It involves Dreaming, songlines, travel and movement across Country⁶. Connection to Country can be represented through these travel routes for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People, which traditionally followed watercourses and waterways. There are several recognised places around these Activity Centres that hold cultural heritage values and these places are important to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People.

There is obvious cultural significance around Kooyong Koot (Gardiners Creek), which is highlighted in the Tranche 1 Activity Centre Statements. Koonung Koonung Creek is a tributary of the Birrarung (Yarra River) and flows in proximity to these Activity Centres. Creek lines historically have been prioritised as freeway paths due to the 'open country' surroundings, leading to permanent infrastructure being constructed in areas of high cultural significance, desecrating culturally significant waterways⁷.

Figure 2: Pre-1750s Ecological Vegetation Classes around Blackburn Lake





THE VISION FOR BLACKBURN TO MITCHAM

Blackburn activity centre, Nunawading activity centre and Mitcham activity centre are already great places to live, work and spend time.

Our vision is to help these places grow in a way that sustains the features that people love, while providing for more diverse types of homes and making these spaces greener, safer and easier to get around.

The following visions for each of the train and tram zone activity centres are built from the Statement of Advice prepared by the Community Reference Group as well as Whitehorse Council's strategic work and engagement.

Blackburn

Blackburn will continue to be a leafy, family-friendly place with a strong sense of community and thriving local businesses. The vegetation and landscape qualities that it is known for will be sustained and enhanced over time.

Blackburn will grow in a balanced and gradual manner that benefits from the existing local 'village' feel.

The centre will support a wide diversity of housing types and commercial uses, while still maintaining the characteristics of each unique area.

South Parade will continue to be a destination strip with local shops and amenities, while Railway Road will be enhanced as an attractive connection for pedestrians.



Nunawading

Nunawading will continue to be a convenient and functional place to live, strengthened by its civic facilities including The Round and the library.

Most of Nunawading's growth will be focused along Whitehorse Road and Springvale Road in a manner that complements the existing infrastructure and train station.

Nunawading will attract new development to further enhance its day-to-day amenities.

The side streets of Nunawading, such as Wood Street and Mount Pleasant Road, will evolve into key pedestrian accessways supporting connections to local green spaces.



Mitcham

Mitcham will continue to play a significant role as a commuter centre, supported by its public transport connections and access to major retail stores.

Mitcham station will remain a key transport hub, with opportunities for development in the surrounding area, to enhance the integration with Whitehorse Road and Mitcham Road, which serve as key roads.

The centre will be revitalised through improvements to public spaces, better connections between retail areas, more green spaces, and provision of housing close to transport.

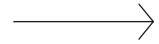
Growth will support local businesses, strengthen community life, and ensure Mitcham remains a convenient and welcoming place for residents and visitors alike.



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4 THE ACTIVITY CENTRE CORES

The activity centre core is the central part of the activity centre, closest to public transport, jobs and services.





EXPECTED CHANGE IN THE ACTIVITY CENTRE CORES

The existing context of the activity centre influences the amount of growth expected. We understand how important it is to protect what makes each place special. Through community engagement, we heard from communities what local characteristics to protect and enhance, as well as what could make these places better.

The activity centre cores are vibrant places where people shop, work, access public transport, connect with family and friends, as well as live. This makes the core the right place for more jobs and housing, including more diverse housing types. More Victorians can live where they want to and closer to the things that matter to them.

Each activity centre core will change gradually over the next few decades, providing the new homes we need between now and 2051.

It is likely that larger and unused blocks of land might be developed first, as they provide the best opportunities to deliver new homes the soonest.

"I strongly support increased density within the Blackburn Activity Centre.

Well-planned urban densification is essential for protecting the unique character of our outer residential streets while ensuring the suburb remains sustainable and accessible."

– Blackburn community member

How we determine appropriate heights

The current size and nature of the activity centre core, including its existing services and infrastructure, influences the growth planned to 2051.

The Housing Growth Framework, as referenced in the *Train and Tram Zone Activity Centres Program Explainer 2026*, gives the activity centre a ranking that determines the possible range of building heights that can be applied.

The building height in the activity centre core is informed by the built form typologies applied – see **Figure 3** below for an example. These are determined by both the level of development a location can accommodate and the types of buildings, homes and businesses already there.

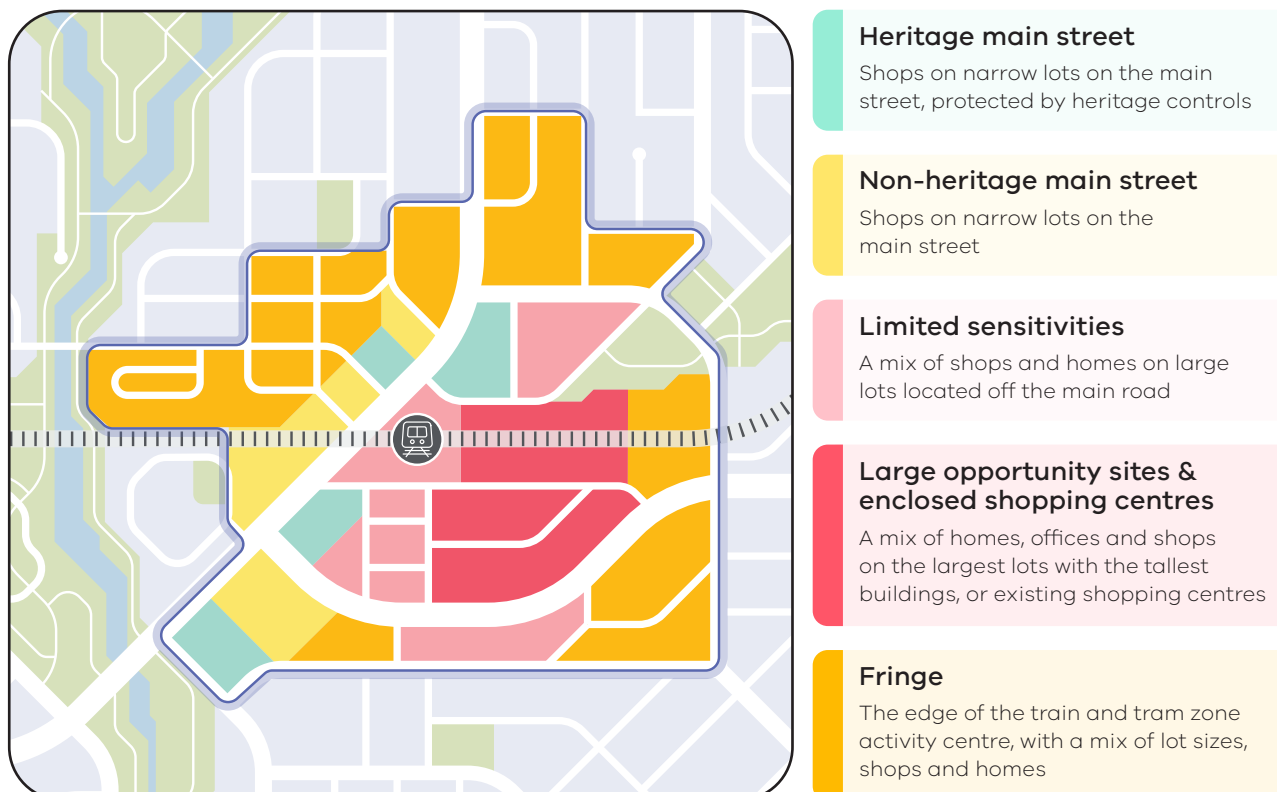
Each typology within the Housing Growth Framework ranking has its own set of standards for heights and setbacks, to allow the right level of development to happen in the right places.

The Built Form Overlay provides consistent planning controls in the activity centre cores based on those typologies and the Housing Growth Framework.

The overlay introduces a streamlined planning pathway known as ‘deemed to comply’. This allows buildings, homes and businesses to be approved faster by clearly outlining standards appropriate for each area.

Deemed to comply standards include building heights, street wall heights and setbacks. If a planning application does not meet these standards, the usual decision-making process and criteria apply to those matters.

Figure 3: Built form typologies (example only)





BUILT FORM OUTCOMES EXPLAINED

We are working with a set of consistent built form standards that support growth while ensuring development responds and contributes positively to its local context.

To understand where we've applied some of these standards to the Blackburn, Nunawading and Mitcham activity centres, please see the following sections:

- **Blackburn activity centre core built form**
- **Nunawading activity centre core built form**
- **Mitcham activity centre core built form.**

Built form testing

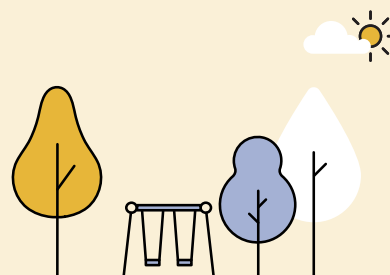
Each place is unique and we have responded to this by carrying out built form testing. Built form testing helped us understand the key qualities of these centres, and to balance allowing more homes with protecting amenity, such as sun access to identified parks and streets, and identified key view lines.

Recommendations from built form testing for these activity centres included changing typologies and building heights as well as changes to protect sun access. Refer to *Activity Centres Program Tranche 2 Local Variations Testing Blackburn to Mitcham Report* (Architectus, April 2026).

Sun access protections

Public and green spaces serve as invaluable public assets. Sunlight plays a vital role in preserving the health of landscaping and trees, as well as providing comfortable conditions for users.

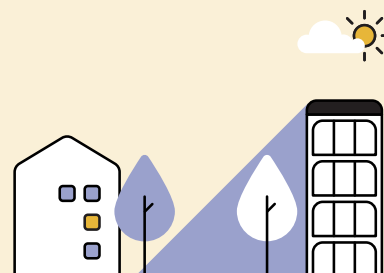
Parks, streets and other public spaces have been identified for different levels of protection based on their significance and use. This will ensure they receive enough direct sun in different seasons.



Pedestrian connections

Pedestrian connections are new or existing walkways between buildings.

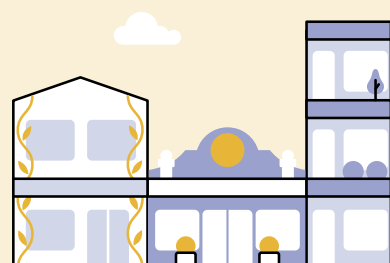
They allow better access to and from the activity centre core.



Active frontages

Active frontages, including multiple entrances and storefront windows at ground level, support a vibrant, active, and safe pedestrian environment.

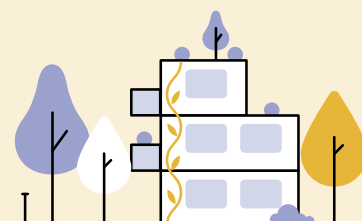
We have identified primary, secondary and tertiary active frontages based on the existing and emerging land uses in different typologies, ensuring new buildings provide opportunities for the right level of activation.



Landscape setbacks

Landscape setbacks are the spaces between the front of the building and the property line, typically front gardens.

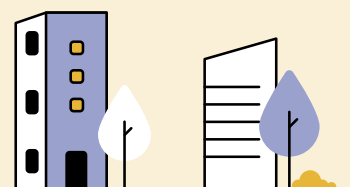
They support urban greening and in particular tree canopy, the softening of edges and ensure an appropriate transition to the public realm.



Sensitive interface setbacks

Setbacks manage the amenity needs of neighbouring properties by providing space between the building and the property line.

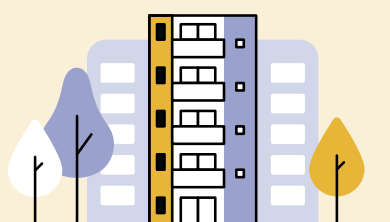
Sensitive interface setbacks are used to respond to the amenity needs of neighbouring properties to the south. These provide additional setbacks to the south boundary to allow sun access to the north-facing areas of properties south of the activity centre core.



Master planning

Master planning is required for larger sites that may be developed with multiple buildings or across several stages. It is also applied to sites with multiple public interfaces or where internal roads or pedestrian connections are needed.

The purpose of the master plan is to ensure co-ordinated, well-considered development across the whole site.





BLACKBURN ACTIVITY CENTRE CORE BUILT FORM

What we understand about the place and how we've addressed it

The greatest heights in Blackburn are in the central part of the activity centre core some distance from the surrounding catchment areas. These heights are often complemented by landscape setbacks or streets that have sun access protection.

South Parade is a distinct neighbourhood destination in Blackburn due to its community-focused spaces, including local shops and cafes with outdoor dining. That's why we have reduced the building heights along the street to eight storeys, and to six storeys for the properties to the south. This also creates a gentler graduation in height to the surrounding catchment areas.

The Community Reference Group noted how important greenery and tree canopy are for maintaining the liveability of Blackburn. Both are important features for the public realm and streetscapes, enhancing the pedestrian experience of the activity centre.

That's why we have planned for landscape setbacks along Albert Street, Chapel Street, Railway Road, and select sections of Whitehorse Road. It is also why we're applying sun access protections to Pope Road Kindergarten and Playground and Morton Park.

We know that it's important to provide sensitive transitions to surrounding catchment areas. That's why the large properties on the north side of Whitehorse Road have been reduced to 12 storeys and have specific master planning requirements to transition heights down to adjacent residential areas.

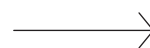
In other locations, like behind South Parade and to properties along the south side of Whitehorse Road, we apply sensitive interface setbacks that respond to the amenity needs of neighbouring properties. These are minimum six metres and ensure sun access and appropriate spacing between developments.

We heard that the community is generally supportive of greater building heights along the railway line and more centrally within the activity centre core, where there are fewer sensitive interfaces to nearby residential areas.

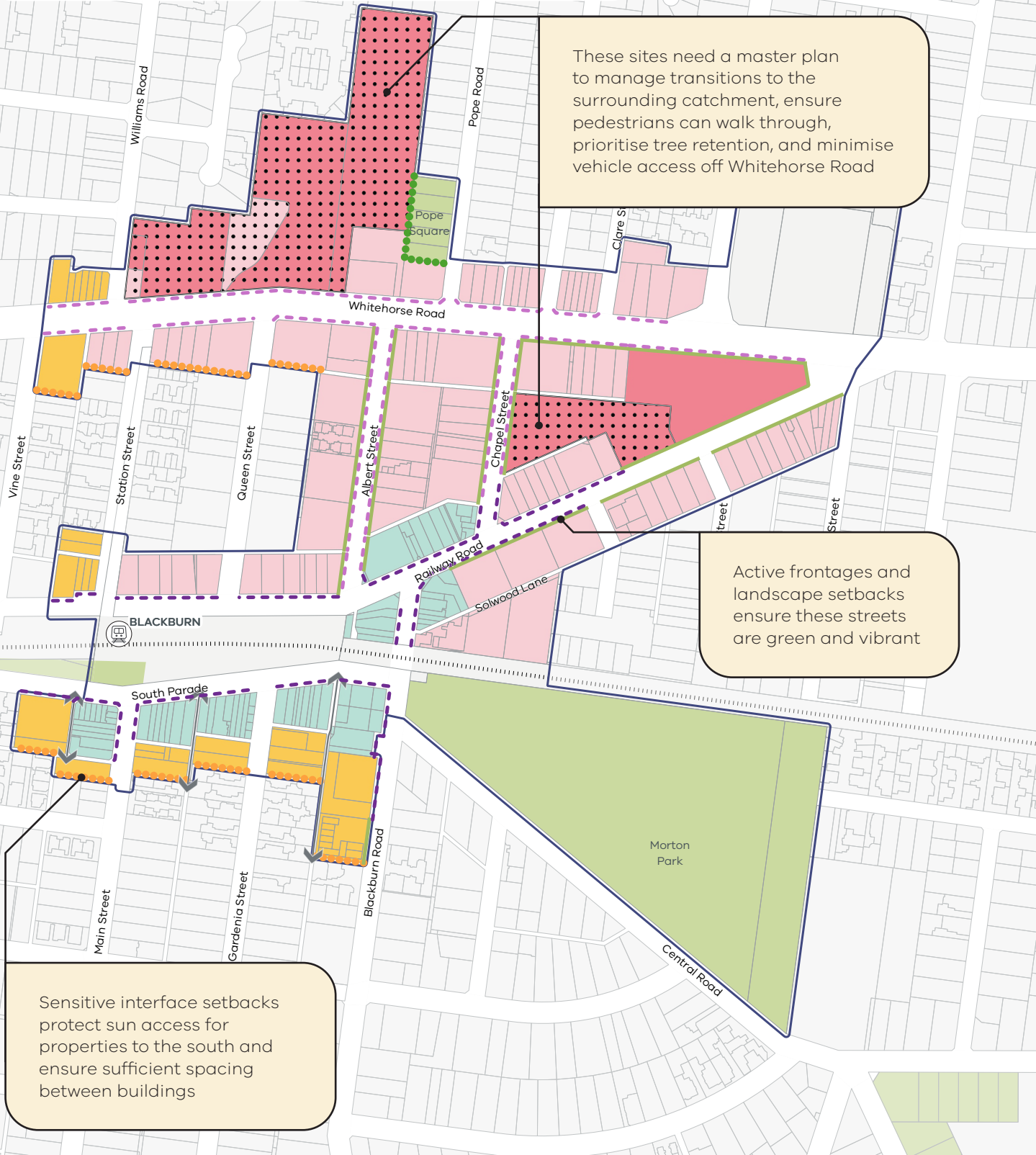
"Increased housing density along the rail corridor at and either side of Blackburn station is more than a chance to provide more housing and help tame urban spread; it's a chance to curate an exciting, modern and dynamic cultural, shopping, recreation and restaurant hub."

– Blackburn community member

Refer to **Plan 3: Blackburn typology, activation and setbacks** and **Plan 4: Blackburn building heights and sun protection** to see the built form outcomes and building heights for the activity centre core.



Plan 3: Blackburn typology, activation and setbacks



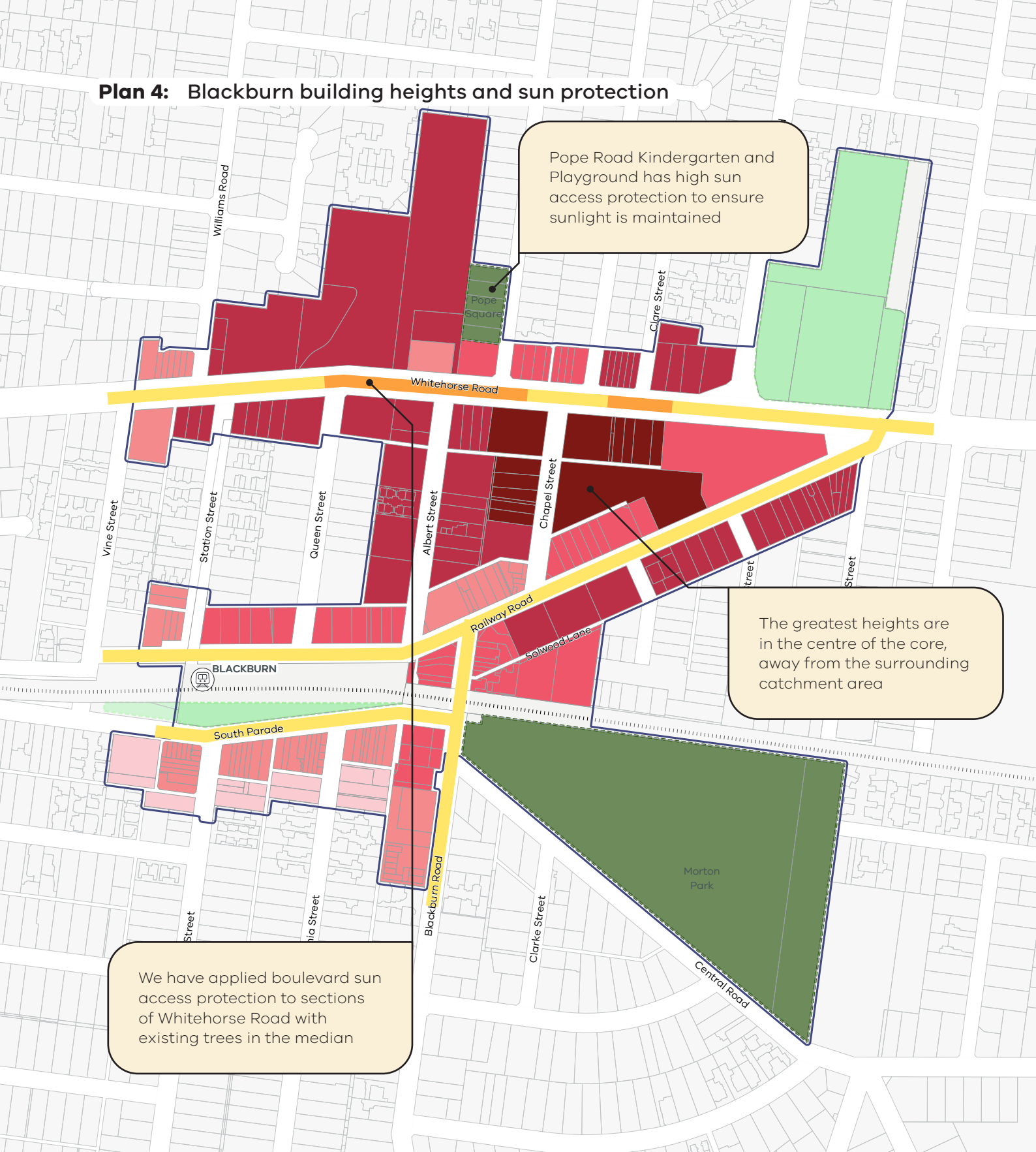
- Blackburn train and tram zone activity centre core
- train station & corridor
- existing open space
- Non-Heritage Main Street Core typology
- Fringe Precinct typology

- Limited Sensitivities typology
- Large Opportunity Sites typology
- master plan site
- primary active frontage
- secondary active frontage

- sensitive interface
- park interface
- landscape setback
- ↔ pedestrian connection (indicative)



Plan 4: Blackburn building heights and sun protection



- Blackburn train and tram zone activity centre core
- train station & corridor
- up to 6 storeys
- up to 8 storeys
- up to 10 storeys
- up to 12 storeys
- up to 16 storeys

Sun protection

- boulevard
- key pedestrian street
- high protection open space
- moderate protection open space



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NUNAWADING ACTIVITY CENTRE CORE BUILT FORM

What we understand about the place and how we've addressed it

Nunawading is known for its mix of old and new and many people in the community support new homes in the area.

To ensure Nunawading develops in a considered way, we have applied landscape setbacks, active frontages, sun access protections and sensitive interface setbacks across the core area of this activity centre.

The Community Reference Group noted how important street trees and access to sunny open spaces are for residents and visitors in Nunawading. That's why we have planned for landscape setbacks in Station Street and designated both Wood Street and Mount Pleasant Road as key pedestrian streets as they lead to a key public green space, Wood Park. Wood Park itself is identified as an open space area requiring moderate sun access protection.

We heard that the community is generally supportive of greater building heights near the Whitehorse Road and Springvale Road intersection. The Community Reference Group noted this area as being opportune for urban renewal and added commercial capacity.

This plan includes a select area of the Nunawading activity centre. It does not include the surrounding employment land which is for predominantly non-residential uses.

"The highest building heights should be concentrated within the commercial core areas immediately surrounding the train stations, where infrastructure, transport access, and services are already well-established.

[This] makes the most sense in these locations, as it allows higher density to be supported by public transport, retail, and existing commercial activity.

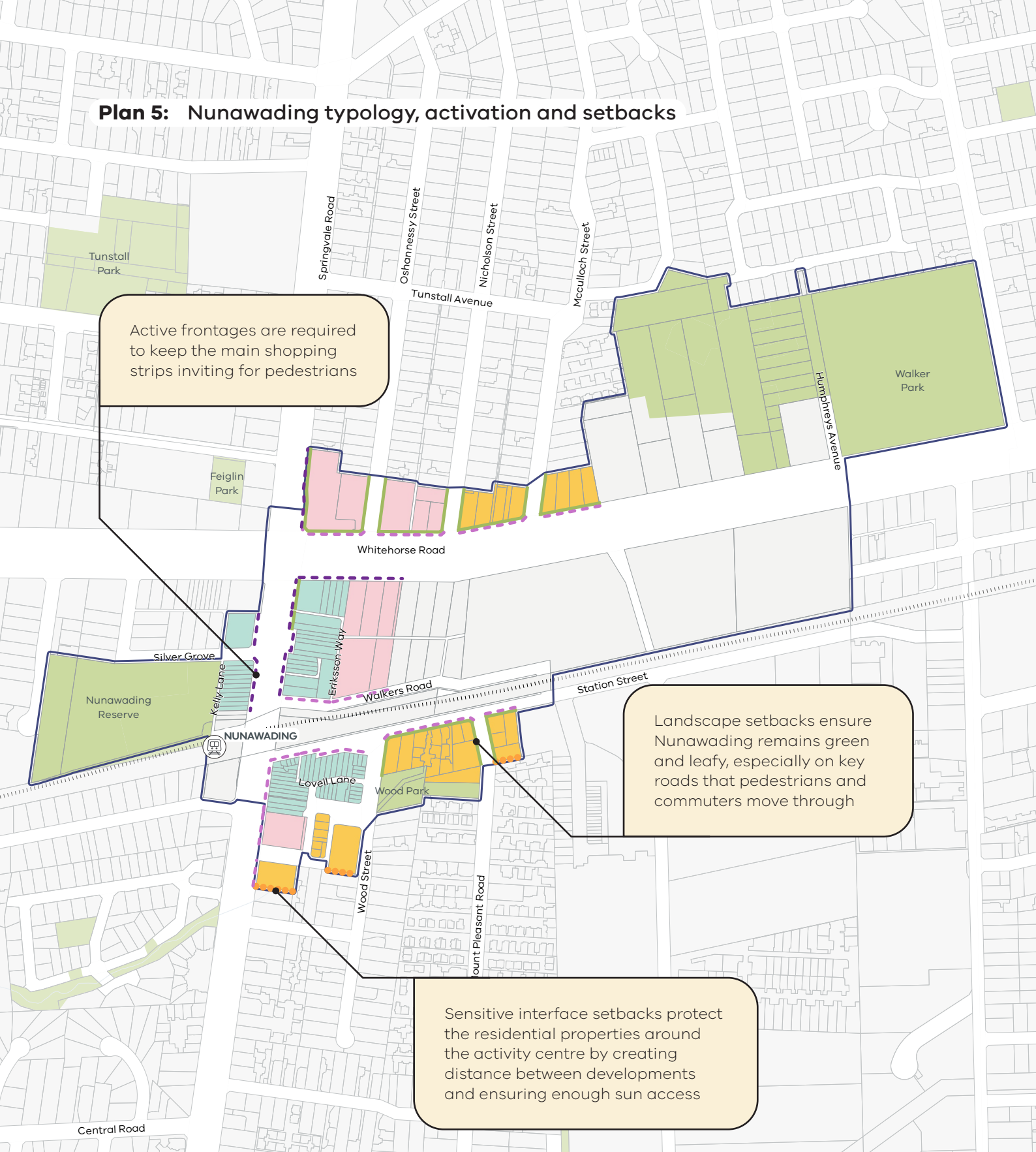
This approach can accommodate growth while improving accessibility and reducing reliance on cars."

– Nunawading community member

Refer to **Plan 5: Nunawading typology, activation and setbacks** and **Plan 6: Nunawading building heights and sun protection** to see the built form outcomes and building heights for the activity centre core.



Plan 5: Nunawading typology, activation and setbacks



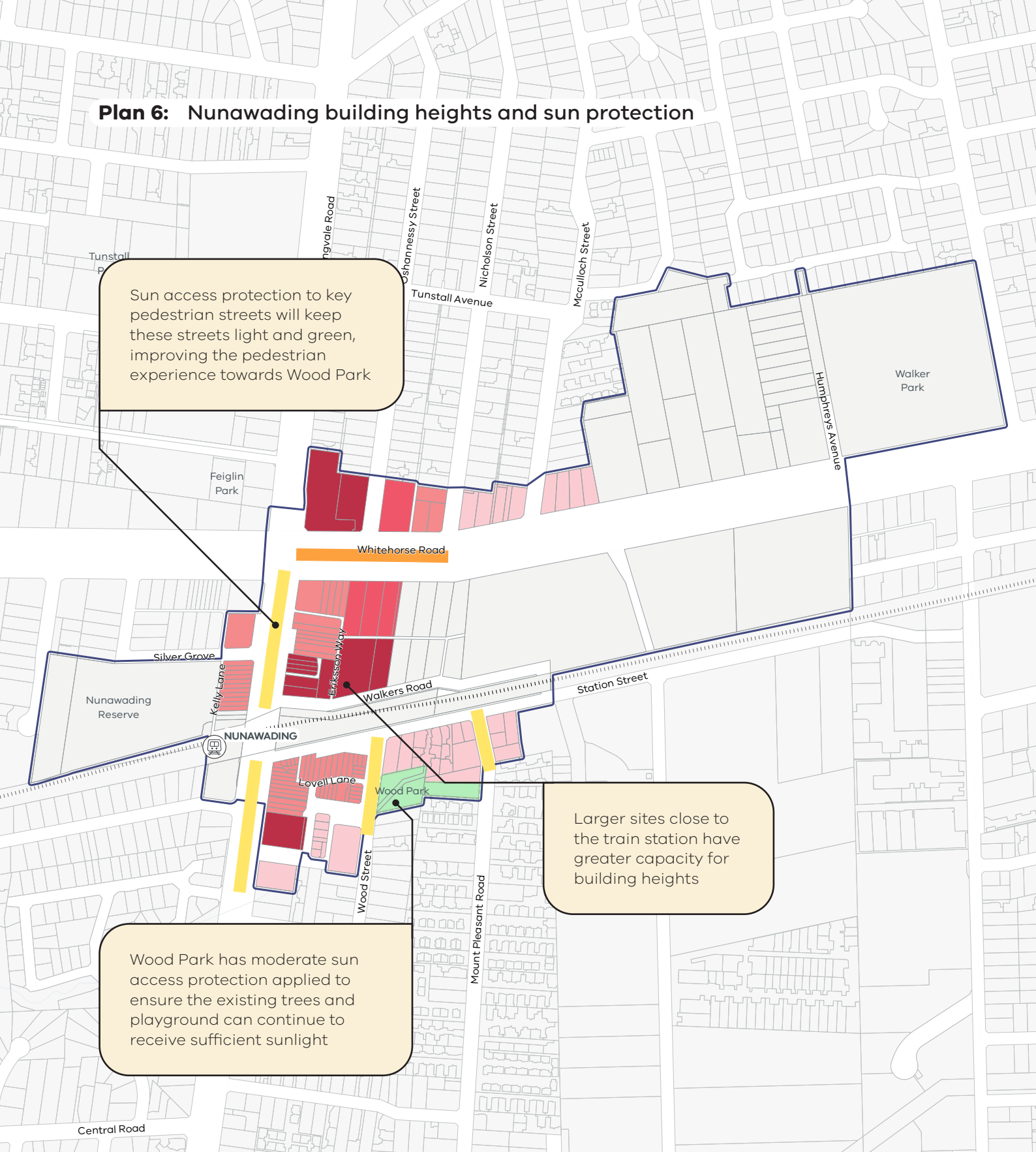
- Nunawading train and tram zone activity centre core
- train station & corridor
- existing open space
- Non-Heritage Main Street Core typology

- Fringe Precinct typology
- Limited Sensitivities typology
- primary active frontage
- secondary active frontage

- sensitive interface
- landscape setback



Plan 6: Nunawading building heights and sun protection



- Nunawading train and tram zone activity centre core
- train station & corridor
- up to 6 storeys
- up to 8 storeys
- up to 10 storeys
- up to 12 storeys

Sun protection

- boulevard
- key pedestrian street
- moderate protection open space





MITCHAM ACTIVITY CENTRE CORE BUILT FORM

What we understand about the place and how we've addressed it

Mitcham Shopping Centre and the adjacent car parking are important destinations for visitors and residents. The Plan has identified it as a large opportunity site capable of greater heights, up to 12 storeys, but we know that it is important to community that this site is sensitive to surrounding development and particularly sensitive to the adjacent residential areas. That's why we have clear master planning requirements, landscape setbacks, and a specific pedestrian connection that extends to the existing and much-loved Britannia Mall.

The Community Reference Group noted how important sun access is to key pedestrian areas. That's why footpaths along Whitehorse Road, as the main shopping strip, have the highest sun access protection. This ensures the existing canopy trees can be maintained, contributing to the valued leafy character of the activity centre.

Mitcham Road, as the main thoroughfare to the train station, is identified as a key pedestrian street for sun access protection. We have also identified Esplanade Reserve as an open space requiring moderate sun access protection, ensuring it gets enough sunlight to remain a desirable destination.

We heard that the community is generally supportive of a graduation in height within the activity centre, to the inner catchment then the outer catchment and beyond. Within the core, the community prefers higher density housing closer to the train station.

"Mitcham is ideally positioned to accommodate more homes close to transport, retail and employment hubs.

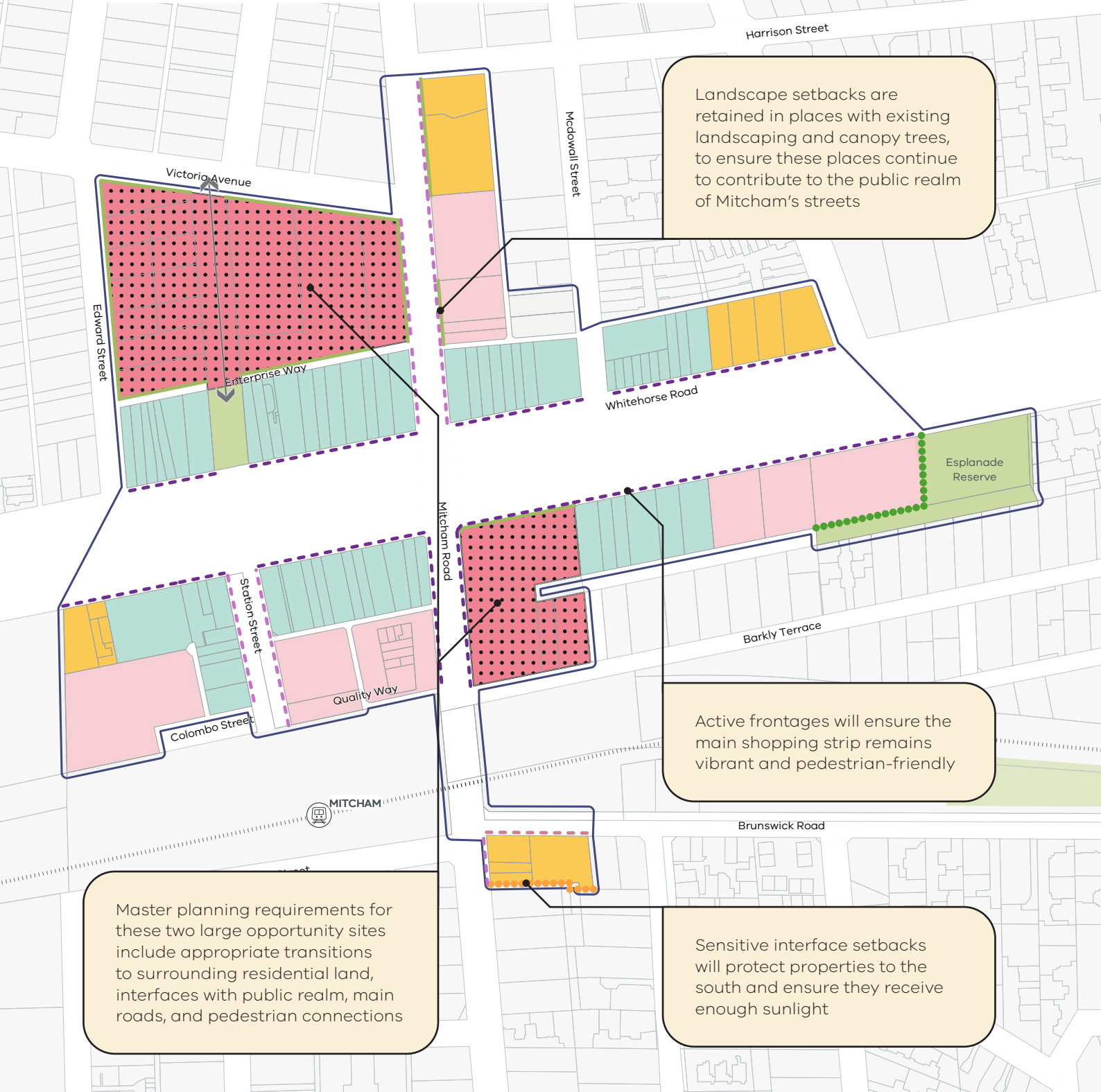
The area already has strong public transport links and community facilities, making it suitable for well-planned medium-density housing that respects neighbourhood character while increasing supply."

– Mitcham community member

Refer to **Plan 7: Mitcham typology, activation and setbacks** and **Plan 8: Mitcham building heights and sun protection** to see the built form outcomes and building heights for the activity centre core.



Plan 7: Mitcham typology, activation and setbacks



- Mitcham train and tram zone activity centre core
- train station & corridor
- existing open space
- Non-Heritage Main Street Core typology
- Fringe Precinct typology

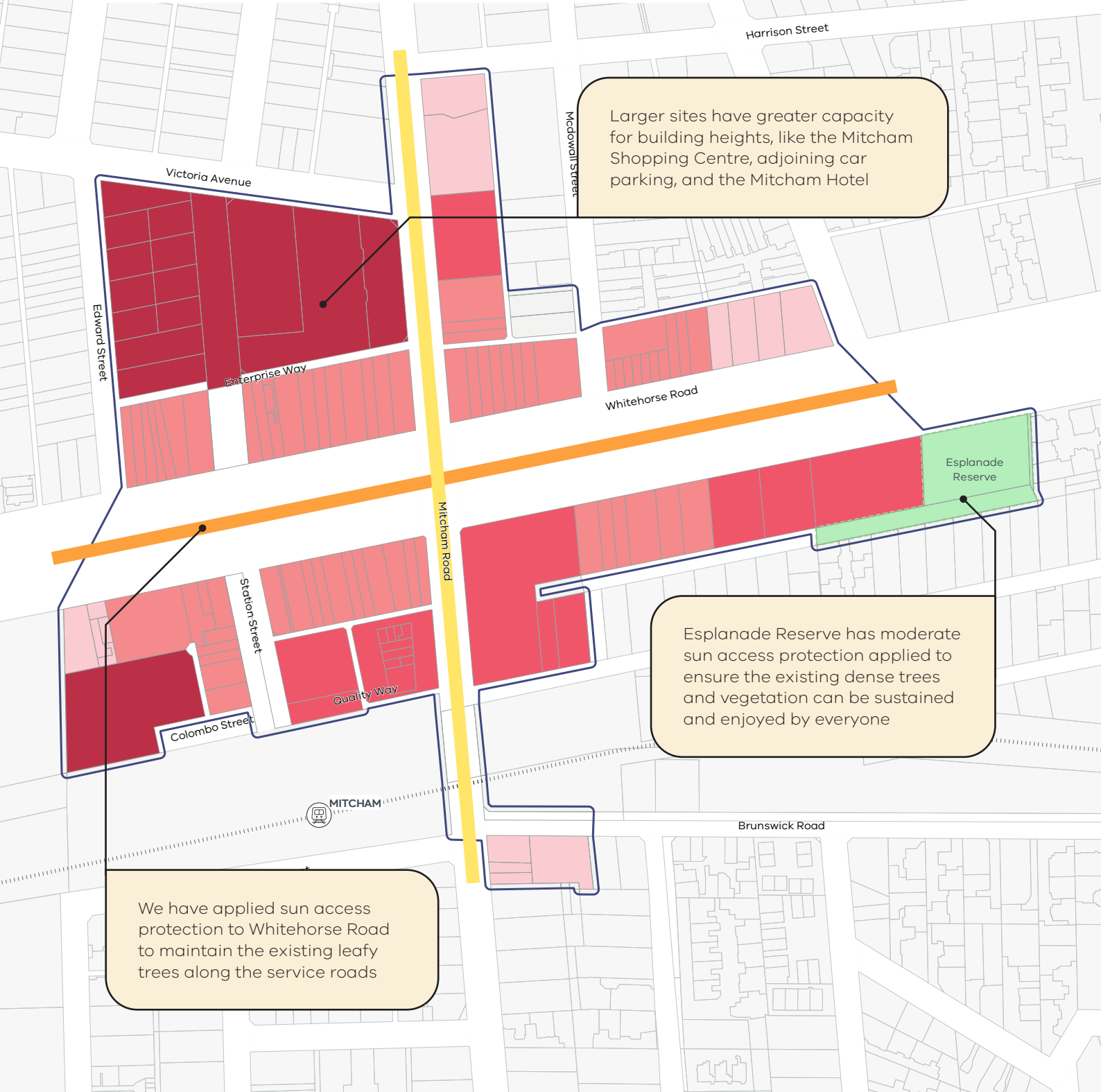
- Limited Sensitivities typology
- Large Opportunity Sites typology
- master plan site
- primary active frontage
- secondary active frontage
- tertiary active frontage

- sensitive interface
- park interface
- landscape setback
- ↔ pedestrian connection (indicative)

0 50 100 150 200 m



Plan 8: Mitcham building heights and sun protection



- Mitcham train and tram zone activity centre core
- train station & corridor
- up to 6 storeys
- up to 8 storeys
- up to 10 storeys
- up to 12 storeys

Sun protection

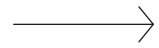
- boulevard
- key pedestrian street
- moderate protection open space



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5 THE ACTIVITY CENTRE CATCHMENTS

The residential area surrounding the activity centre core, called the catchment, provides opportunities to locate more homes close to local destinations such as shops and services, public transport and jobs.



EXPECTED CHANGE IN THE CATCHMENT

The catchment makes sure more homes are in the right places to give Victorians more housing choices with access to local destinations.

The catchment extends approximately 800 metres from the train station and the main commercial areas of the activity centre core and will allow for more housing diversity and choice including small and medium-scale apartment buildings, townhouses and semi-detached houses close to the activity centre.

Defining the catchment in Blackburn to Mitcham

The key features that influenced the catchment boundaries include:

- The residential areas adjacent to Blackburn Creek, Gardiners Creek and the Blackburn Lake Sanctuary and environs
- The Blackburn Early Settlement Neighbourhood Character area
- The Walker Estate special vegetation and landscape areas to the south of Mitcham
- Large areas of industrial and commercial zoned land, which play a role in supporting the local economy
- Key areas of Aboriginal cultural values associated with waterways, both named and unnamed, like Gardiners Creek (Kooyong Koot)
- Heritage Overlay precincts around Mitcham.

To understand where we've applied the inner and outer catchment boundaries, please see **Plan 9: Blackburn to Mitcham catchment**.

Mandatory height controls

Mandatory height controls across the catchment areas are important for several reasons. They provide certainty to residents and the broader community on what level of change to expect in their neighbourhood as the area becomes home to more people.

The mandatory height controls also provide for protection of view lines that extend from or across our activity centres to or between surrounding high points. This is important for recognising the cultural significance of these places to Traditional Owners, supporting ongoing cultural practices and allowing all people to orient themselves across the city.

In Mitcham, new development within the residential catchment area should not obstruct the existing views from publicly accessible vantage points at Agra Street and Lucknow Street toward Mount Corhanwarrabul, Upwey and Ferny Creek.

Changes to zoning in the planning scheme

The Housing Choice and Transport Zone enables a diversity of housing in the catchment, and other well-serviced locations. The Housing Choice and Transport Zone 1 will replace most existing residentially zoned land in the inner catchment. The Housing Choice and Transport Zone 2 will replace most existing residentially zoned land in the outer catchment.

Plan 9: Blackburn to Mitcham catchment shows the high-level vision for the inner and outer catchments.

To see the detailed application of the Housing Choice and Transport Zone, please refer to the *Whitehorse Planning Scheme*.

Transition from the train and tram zone

As you move away from the commercial and community core of the activity centre, the allowable building heights gradually decrease, creating a transition between the activity centre and the surrounding suburb.

As seen in the illustration below, the catchment has been divided into an inner catchment and an outer catchment. To understand how the catchment has been set, refer to the *Train and Tram Zone Activity Centres Program Explainer*, 2026.



The core

The cultural and commercial hub of the community, the activity centre core is thriving and active with shops, community facilities, services and transport options.

The inner catchment

The inner catchment includes residential land with direct access to the activity centre core, open spaces, local destinations, and public and active transport.

The inner catchment generally allows for building heights up to four storeys. Where lots are larger and meet specified criteria, it allows buildings of up to six storeys.

The outer catchment

The remainder of the catchment generally allows for building heights up to three storeys.

Where lots are larger and meet the criteria, it allows buildings of up to four storeys.

To understand where we've applied the inner and outer catchment, please see **Plan 9: Blackburn to Mitcham catchment**



Plan 9: Blackburn to Mitcham catchment

Blackburn

We've applied **inner catchment** near the Blackburn and Laburnum train stations, and along Whitehorse Road, which the community identified as a preferred location for more homes.

We've applied **outer catchment** to areas furthest from the train station.

We responded to community feedback by removing the sensitive and unique areas affected by Significant Landscape Overlay Schedules 1, 2 and 4 from the catchment to the south.

Nunawading

We've applied **inner catchment** along Springvale Road and to key development areas such as the Tunstall Village Site.

We've applied **outer catchment** around key open spaces such as Tunstall Park to the north and Erskine Walk to the south.

Any new development in the part of the catchment covered by the Gardiners Creek Significant Landscape Overlay will have additional design requirements.

Mitcham

We've applied **inner catchment** along the key streets, such as Whitehorse Road.

We've applied **outer catchment** to back streets and areas of high community importance, such as the area between Victoria Avenue, Gillies Street, Ormond Avenue and Mitcham Road.

We've responded to community feedback by applying the outer catchment between William Street and Burnett Street.

We also removed the area affected by Significant Landscape Overlay Schedule 3 from the catchment to the south.

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|-------------------------|
|  | train and tram zone activity centre core |  | bus route |
|  | inner catchment |  | Heritage Overlay |
|  | outer catchment |  | existing open space |
|  | train station & corridor |  | watercourse & waterbody |



CHANGES TO THE WHITEHORSE PLANNING SCHEME

Changes to local policy

We have amended some local policies in the *Whitehorse Planning Scheme* to more closely align with our objectives in the Train and Tram Zone Activity Centres Program.

Changes to the overlays in the planning scheme

The Built Form Overlay guides built form for medium-scale apartments and higher-scale apartments, as well as for retail, office and other uses in the core.

To have these kinds of homes close to services, jobs and public transport, we need to amend some of the existing overlays that have built form elements. This includes:

- Design and Development Overlay 8 for Blackburn Activity Centre.
- Design and Development Overlay 11 for Nunawading Activity Centre.

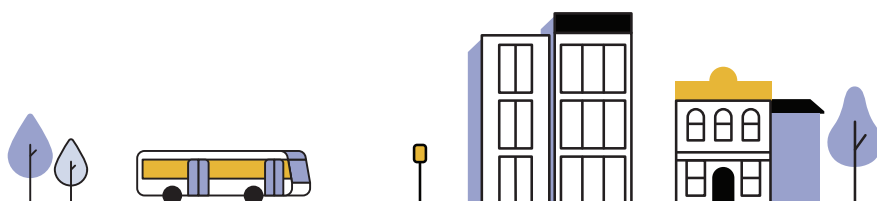
We need to remove some of the existing overlays that have built form elements. This includes:

- Design and Development Overlay 5 for Mitcham Activity Centre.

Changes to zoning in the planning scheme

To have the kinds of places set out in this Plan, we need to rezone some areas that have conflicting land use and built form controls. This includes:

- Changing some areas of Residential Growth Zone to Mixed Use Zone in Nunawading Activity Centre.
- Changing some areas of Residential Growth Zone to Commercial 1 Zone in Mitcham Activity Centre.
- Changing some areas of General Residential Zone to Commercial 1 Zone in Mitcham Activity Centre.



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6 INFRASTRUCTURE

The Blackburn to Mitcham activity centres were chosen for their access to public transport networks, community facilities, services and other important infrastructure.





PLANNING FOR FUTURE GROWTH

The quality of the places we live in affects all aspects of our lives, from our health and wellbeing to our impact on nature.

Though there has already been significant investment in Blackburn to Mitcham (refer to **Plan 2: Blackburn to Mitcham context and recent Victorian Government infrastructure**) we know that as more people move in, there will be greater demand for infrastructure and services.

The Victorian Government, alongside councils and other infrastructure delivery partners, is continuing to plan for future growth, to help deliver the infrastructure people in train and tram zone activity centres will benefit from into the future.



Transport improvements

The Victorian Government plans and manages transport at a system level, balancing all modes together. Through co-ordinated improvements to train, tram and bus networks, we're seeking to make public transport simpler, more accessible and more reliable.

We are also looking to facilitate improvements in walking and cycling (known as active transport) and have committed to a target of 25 per cent of all trips being by active transport by 2030. These improvements provide people with more options to travel and encourage more people to leave the car at home.

Road network improvements are planned across Victoria to improve the efficiency, safety and resilience of the road network, balancing the needs of all road users.



Education capacity

The Victorian Government continues to consider the need for additional government primary and secondary school provision to serve the growing community.

We are also monitoring the need for new and/or expanded public, not-for-profit and for-profit kindergarten provision to serve the community.



Health services

The Victorian Government continues to consider the development of health services and infrastructure priorities to support the health system.

Future investment will seek to respond to growth and ageing infrastructure pressures and will also consider opportunities to promote new care models and how to make best use of existing infrastructure.



Integrated water management

To improve the liveability, biodiversity and climate resilience of these centres, the Victorian Government continues to investigate place-based integrated water management interventions including alternative water supplies that can be delivered for non-potable uses. The interventions aim to integrate innovative flood mitigation measures that not only reduce local flooding and build climate resilience, but also contribute to water supply security, enhance public amenity, support urban cooling, and nurture biodiversity.

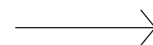
In line with *Plan for Victoria*, new guidance is also being prepared on how to appropriately build in areas subject to flooding. As part of this, Melbourne Water is in the process of updating its flood modelling through the Greater Melbourne Flood Information Program to provide more in-depth information about known hazards. This new flood modelling information could be used by councils when considering permits for housing in areas subject to flooding and to inform the design of future flood and drainage mitigation infrastructure.

The opportunities for public realm upgrades could include consideration of water security, water sensitive urban design and nature-based approaches as part of upgrades to streetscapes and open spaces. This could contribute to reducing flood risk, having an urban form that is climate adaptive and improving amenity.

The Victorian Government has announced the development of a new risk based flood hazard rating system and is preparing new planning and building controls to guide the types of uses and development that are appropriate in areas subject to flooding.

These new planning and building controls will assist in identifying where to build, what to build and also how to build to ensure flood risks are addressed.

7 LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR BLACKBURN TO MITCHAM





INVESTING IN BLACKBURN TO MITCHAM'S INFRASTRUCTURE

We have heard through community engagement on the Train and Tram Zone Activity Centres Program and *Plan for Victoria* that communities value access to high quality parks and open spaces, and walking and cycling infrastructure, and want to see more investment in these.

The Victorian Government is developing an infrastructure funding system to ensure that developers contribute to improving the infrastructure, so these centres remain great places to live.

Under the system, developers may be expected to pay a standardised contribution for each new home they deliver and for each square metre of new commercial or industrial space they deliver.

This system will provide direct contributions to councils and the Victorian Government to help deliver the essential infrastructure each activity centre needs to thrive.

Developers, local government, state agencies and other stakeholders including the Federal Government all share responsibility for funding infrastructure, and the new system will aim to be one component of a broad infrastructure funding strategy to ensure communities receive the infrastructure they need.

Infrastructure investment focus areas



Inclusive, community-centred design

Improving your streets, public spaces and local public facilities, such as libraries and community centres, to ensure communities can meet daily needs close to home.



Accessible public transport and active transport

Investing in safe and direct walking and riding networks that help people to get around and enhance the community's liveability. Upgrading public transport infrastructure to be universally accessible, safe and comfortable.



Green spaces that are great places

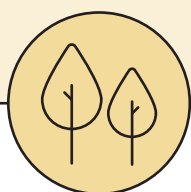
Contributing to greener and cooler parks, streets and public places with more vegetation and street trees.

STRATEGIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The strategies and opportunities below provide an insight into how the new infrastructure funding mechanism could be used to support the future population of the activity centre and catchment area.

While the reference to specific places and locations are indicative only and are subject to change, they indicate that contributions received are intended to be spent locally on things that are valuable and serve the community.

Examples of potential locations are included below and in **Plan 10: Indicative Blackburn to Mitcham place improvement opportunities**. This plan shows the indicative improvement opportunities to the transport network, open spaces and community infrastructure at a broader network scale, which could occur over time.



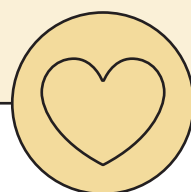
Support improved opportunities for play and recreation, maximising use, access, and enjoyment of public space by everyone.

- Upgrade public spaces (passive open space, pedestrian malls, plazas and forecourts), such as Esplanade Reserve and Elmhurst Basin Reserve. Works could include, but not be limited to, tree planting and landscaping, playground and exercise equipment and integrated water management.
- Increase the capacity and/or capability of active recreation reserves, such as Morton Park. Works could include, but not be limited to, improved playing surfaces, lighting, pavilions or integrated water management.



Support safer, attractive and connected walking and riding networks for most people to meet their everyday needs and move between activity centres.

- Provide safer and attractive riding facilities on strategic and priority corridors, such as Blackburn Road, Williams Road, and Springfield Road.
- Provide attractive walking routes through safe and attractive crossing opportunities and continuous footpath treatments in the activity centre cores, around train stations and roads, such as Blackburn Road, Railway Road and Station Street.



Support initiatives that encourage increased social participation and activity, where places are designed so people are safe and welcome to shop, socialise and dine.

- Upgrade streetscapes in activity centre cores and commercial areas, such as South Parade and Whitehorse Road (Maroondah Highway). Works could include, but not be limited to, street tree planting and landscaping, street furniture, pedestrian priority crossings, water sensitive urban design, and footpath improvements and/or widening.
- Improve laneways, side roads supporting key streetscapes, and other local roads in activity centre cores and catchments such as at the rear of commercial properties along Whitehorse Road (Maroondah Highway) and South Parade. Works could include, but not be limited to, street tree planting and landscaping, lighting and footpath improvements and/or widening.

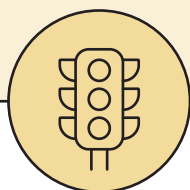
The place improvement plans listed below for the core show the local infrastructure improvement opportunities for the specific activity centres and immediate surrounds, not the broader transport network opportunities identified in **Plan 10**.

- **Plan 11: Blackburn activity centre core place improvement**
- **Plan 12: Nunawading activity centre core place improvement**
- **Plan 13: Mitcham activity centre core place improvement.**



Support greater choice in travel by improving on-road public transport efficiency and passenger experience.

- Improve the safety, comfort and passenger experience of bus stop facilities, including shelters, seating, tactiles, information displays and wayfinding.
- Provide safer access to bus stops by aligning these with pedestrian crossings.
- Improve bus efficiency and reliability, including intersection changes, and on-road priority.



Support more efficient road movements for cars and freight.

- Continue to review ways to improve traffic flow for cars and freight along roads such as Whitehorse Road (Maroondah Highway) and Springvale Road, through interventions such as, but not limited to, intersection changes.



Support improvements to existing community infrastructure and identify opportunities for new infrastructure to support a growing community.

- Improve community facilities such as the Nunawading Community Hub and Blackburn Library. Works could include, but not be limited to, libraries, maternal and child health centres, early childhood education and community centres.

Plan 10: Indicative Blackburn to Mitcham place improvement opportunities

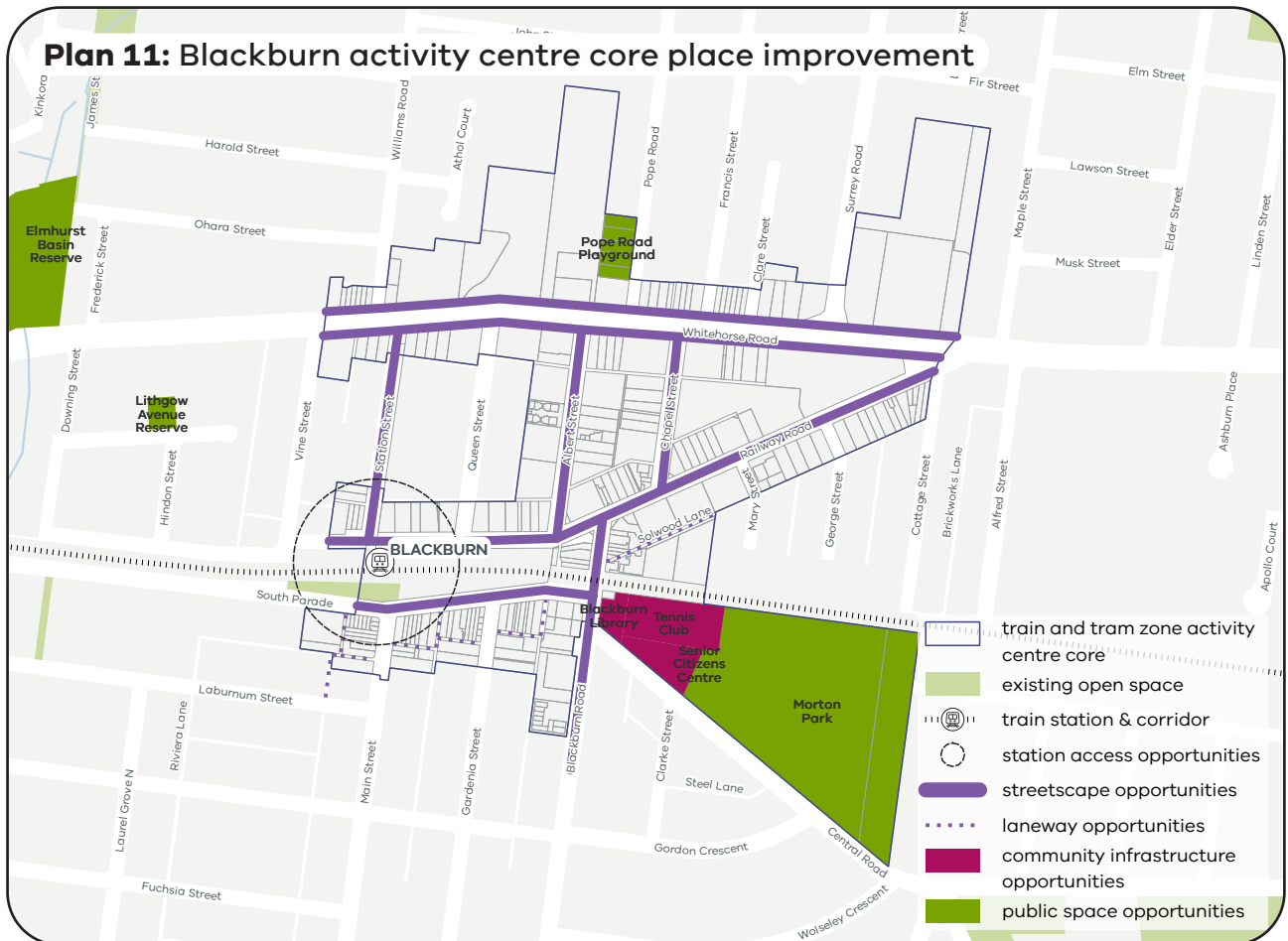


- train and tram zone activity centre core
- train and tram zone activity centres catchment
- train station & corridor
- existing open space
- watercourse & waterbody
- active transport opportunities
- public transport infrastructure opportunities
- road opportunities
- community infrastructure opportunities
- public space opportunities

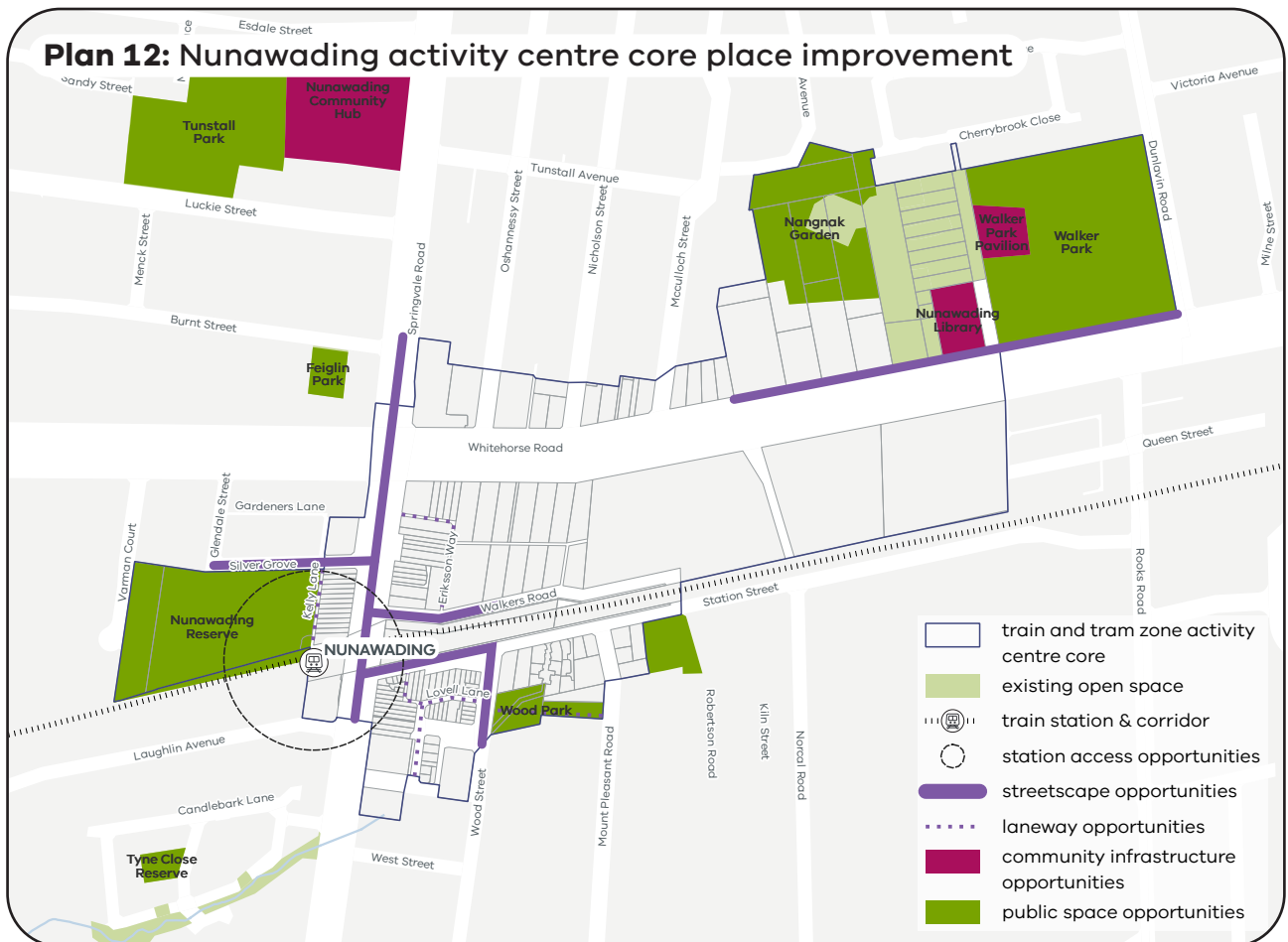
NOTE: This map indicates potential opportunities for future infrastructure delivery and does not present specific projects.



Plan 11: Blackburn activity centre core place improvement



Plan 12: Nunawading activity centre core place improvement



Plan 13: Mitcham activity centre core place improvement



8 REFERENCES

Endnotes

- 1 Barwick, (1984), p. 122.
- 2 Howitt, (1904), p. 70.
- 3 Fison, (1890), p. 49.
- 4 Office of Lands and Survey, James B. Philp, (1864) Parish of Nunawading, County of Bourke [cartographic material], State Library Victoria, accessed 19 January 2026.
- 5 Blackburn Lake Sanctury, Water, accessed 19 January 2026.
- 6 Extent Heritage, (2025), p. 103.
- 7 E.F. Borrie, (1954), Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme 1954, p. 99.

Images

Daniel, M.J. (1898), Bridge at Blackburn [picture], State Library Victoria, accessed 22 January 2026.

Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), NatureKit, accessed 28 January 2026.

All site photography by Charlie Kinross (2025) unless otherwise indicated.

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9 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Refer to *Train and Tram Zone Activity Centres Program Explainer 2026* for further detail.

A

- active frontages** Active frontages allow for unobstructed views into and out of the ground floor of buildings and can be a combination of elements such as windows, shop/building entries and commercial activities.
- active transport** Active transport refers to any form of human-powered movement, such as walking and riding, as well as using e-scooters or personal mobility devices. It involves transport for purposes such as running errands, commuting or accessing public transport, rather than just for recreation.

B

- Built Form Overlay (BFO)** An overlay is a state-standard provision, forming part of a suite of provisions in the Victoria Planning Provisions (VPP). The BFO provides a framework for consistent planning controls structured around built form typologies.

C

- Community Reference Group (CRG)** Community Reference Groups formed a key component of the Train and Tram Zone Activity Centres consultation program.
- CRG members came together on a voluntary basis to provide input, feedback and local perspectives to ensure a balanced and broad representation of local voices. The CRG was tasked with responding to a central remit and developing Statement(s) of Advice for the DTP planners preparing the Activity Centre plans.

H

- Housing Choice and Transport Zone (HCTZ)** A planning zone that seeks to facilitate a diversity of housing at increased densities in locations around identified activity centres and other well-served locations with convenient access to jobs, public transport and services.
- Housing Growth Framework** A tool that has been developed to categorise activity centres based on their access to public transport, services and capacity to accommodate development; and which provides the basis for built form controls including setbacks and heights.

I

- infrastructure** Basic facilities and networks (e.g. roads, libraries and utilities) needed for the functioning of a local community or broader society. Infrastructure can be provided by the private sector (e.g. local roads, childcare, shopping centres), or by Government (e.g. hospitals, schools, railways).
- Infrastructure Contributions Plan (ICP)** A statutory document incorporated into a planning scheme that sets out the charges developers must pay to help fund essential public infrastructure—such as traffic signals, parks, and community facilities—needed to support new or growing communities.
- Integrated Water Management (IWM)** An approach to planning that brings together all facets of the water cycle including sewage management, water supply, stormwater management and water treatment, ensuring environmental, economic and social benefits.

M

main street

A main street generally contains the greatest concentration of activity in the centre with a retail focus and higher pedestrian activity. A main street typically consists of a mix of uses and building types, where shopfront buildings have dwellings and/or office spaces above.

master plan

A master plan serves as a guiding document or blueprint for a large-scale project or development that coordinates all elements — such as land use, built form, access and staging — to ensure cohesive and organised execution over time, particularly if a project is developed in stages.

O

open space

Land that provides outdoor recreation, leisure and/or environmental benefits and/or visual amenity.

P

public realm

Incorporates all areas freely accessible to the public, including parks, plazas, streets and laneways.

R

responsible authority

The decision maker on planning permit applications – usually the relevant Council but in some situations, it could be the Minister for Planning.

S

solar access

Ability of a property, street or open space to receive sunlight.

T

Traditional Owners

People who, through membership of a descent group or clan, are responsible for caring for particular Country. A Traditional Owner is authorised to speak for Country and its heritage as a senior Traditional Owner, an Elder or, in more recent times, a registered native title claimant.

typology

Typology refers to the classification of areas within activity centres into distinct types, based on their common site and context attributes, where each type shares similar development opportunities and requires specific planning settings to guide appropriate built form outcomes.



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