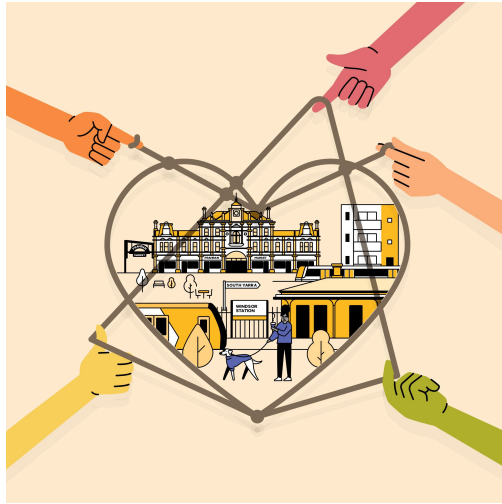




DTP Community Reference Group

STATEMENT OF

ADVICE

Activity Centres

South Yarra to

Windsor

22 March 2026

REMIT

How do we plan for more homes in and around South Yarra, Prahran, and Windsor, while strengthening the things that make these places unique?

1. INTRODUCTION

This Statement of Advice brings together the views of the Community Reference Group on how to plan for more homes in and around South Yarra, Prahran and Windsor, while protecting the qualities that make these activity centres unique. Participants were drawn from the local area voluntarily and selected to best represent three key demographics of the area. Out of the 35 people, 18 reported they use South Yarra, 12 use Prahran and 5 use Windsor stations, in addition to the local tram lines that cross through all these areas. 16 of the participants are female, 18 are male, and 1 are non-binary. The prominent tenure and age range was skewed towards 25-44 year olds (20 out of 24), and 20 out of 35 are home owners, while 7 are tenants and 1 as other.

The study draws on the group's discussions, surveys, and questions to elicit the community's shared values and areas of difference, drawing on what members said they "love and value" about these places. Popular characteristics of the three precincts include the character, vibrancy, walkability, green spaces and inclusive community.

In order for the area to "still feel like this place," it is imperative that these features are respected, retained, and where possible enhanced to address shortcomings in accessibility and inequities in the development of the precincts, while allowing people to live in this convenient and well served area. Key considerations include these include the overdevelopment of South Yarra, at the north end of Chapel street; and accessibility to tram stops and train stations; as well as retention of green spaces. This extends to a clear demand for new development to be mindful of these features and requirements, as well as enhancing the mobility of the area by pedestrians and cyclists. Whilst heritage is being respected and preserved, by new development which both balances density in the Prahran and Windsor catchments; and provides a diversity of dwelling types.

The findings from the research has informed community opinions and passions towards the proposed density and catchments of the planned Activity Centres across the three precincts. Each statement respectively summarises community perspectives on catchment boundaries, building heights and density across the three centres, highlighting local's diverse viewpoints. It also outlines the group's overall comfort with the draft Activity Centre Plans and identifies what would increase their acceptability. Together, these insights provide a community-grounded foundation for shaping future planning in a way that balances growth with liveability, heritage and local identity.

2. WHAT WE LOVE AND VALUE ABOUT THESE ACTIVITY CENTRES

What we love and value

Community, inclusivity, vibrancy and diversity.

Responses refer to an “entertainment mix (bars, restaurants etc.)”, “vibrancy and diversity” and “mixed use”, with areas shaped by different zones and a lively combination of activities. People describe “character and atmosphere”, “streetscapes” and a defined precinct that, reflecting a strong sense of place and local identity.

Open space, green space and heritage protections.

Open spaces such as Fawkner Park, Alma Park and Prahran Square and local green streets are consistently named as essential to daily life. Outdoor sitting, sunlight, tree canopy and access to nature are seen as non-negotiable parts of what makes this area special. Furthermore, responses mention “heritage”, “character of different zones” and built form considerations like “sight lines to sky” as essential contributions to how the area looks and feels.

Walkability, access and transport connections.

Participants describe “walkability”, “accessible walk ways” and “access to transport (all forms)”, including public transport and ease of movement through the area. There are references to an access and movement should an “inclusive community” and “diversity”, with spaces and design that support interaction and a broad mix of people.

What would need to remain for it still to feel like this place?

Maintain the mix of uses and activity

Responses refer to keeping the “mix use of area” and ensuring a continued blend of uses, including activity, hospitality and everyday functions that define how the place operates. New developments should be inclusive and diverse, as well as blended between commercial and residential, including a range of dwelling types and size, not just high-end apartments. Participants refer to “diversity in housing/building” and ensuring a range of built form and uses continue to exist as the area changes.

Retain local character and distinct zones

Participants highlight the “character of different zones” and note that the precinct is defined by diverse peoples of all ages, cultures and identities who come to Chapel Street and it is necessary to retain this eclectic populace by ensuring housing is affordable, inclusive, and mixed use dwelling type for families and non-families. Maintaining heritage elements as part of how people experience the area was considered important, with opportunities for heritage buildings to be publicly accessible. A heritage assessment needs to be conducted to ensure that area data is up to date on the maps.

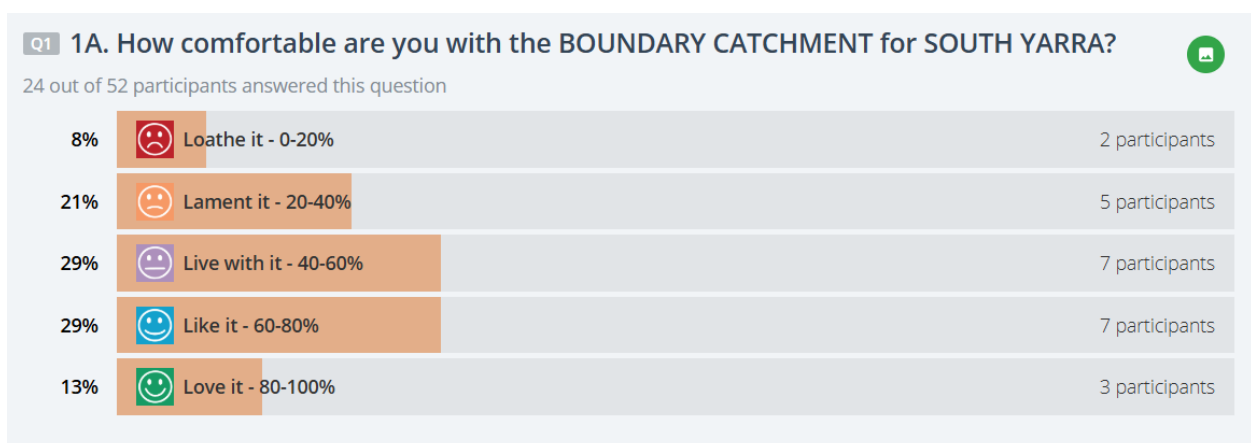
Preserve access and connectivity

Comments include support for good access to different modes of transport, such as public transport through accessible walkways through the area. Inclusive movement infrastructure is seen as a priority including improved footpaths and management of steep areas. There is a clear preference for active modes such as public transport, cycling and walking to be prioritised over on street parking and driver corridors.

Preserve green and open spaces

Open spaces should be protected from overshadowing and retain a genuinely usable public amenity. Access to these open spaces was highlighted as part of what should be enhanced, as well as retention of the “leafy streets”. As density increases, green infrastructure, trees, landscaping and outdoor facilities should grow as well, not be squeezed out.

3A. SOUTH YARRA - KEY CONSIDERATION NO. 1 – THE CATCHMENT BOUNDARIES



Catchment size and coverage

Most respondents felt the catchment boundaries need refinement. The inner catchment was seen as either too large or too small depending on perspective, with several people suggesting it should extend to the east along Toorak Road, Commercial Road and along the Yarra River. A notable gap identified was the absence of a meaningful outer catchment zone. There may be an opportunity to selectively apply the outer catchment within some areas proposed to be inner to help preserve what we value and love.

Other group feedback related to this topic from survey

Height and density concerns

A strong theme emerged around overdevelopment risks, particularly along Chapel Street and the Chapel/Toorak intersection. Concerns centred on 1,000sqm sites permitting 4-10+ storey buildings near heritage areas, loss of sunlight and amenity, and

the risk of developers amalgamating sites to build high-rises in streets with minimal infrastructure.

Heritage and character

Several respondents called for stronger heritage overlays, particularly along Chapel Street, and felt that existing heritage areas are inadequately protected from overshadowing by new development.

Transparency and process

A recurring frustration was the lack of contextual information, respondents felt unable to meaningfully compare existing conditions against proposed changes, and noted that Stonnington Council's own investigations appeared to have been overlooked.

Support for growth

Respondents expressed support, noting the area's potential as an inner-city location well-suited to increased housing density.

3B. PRAHRAN - KEY CONSIDERATION NO. 1 – THE CATCHMENT BOUNDARIES

The overwhelming view is that more homes are needed; Prahran is well serviced and an area people want to live, work, raise families and enjoy retirement. Any further development needs to be done in a way that maintains and improves all the things that make Prahran special.

- **Extension of the core along key arterial roads (Commercial Rd and High St) as a key opportunity for growth.**

Arterial roads present the most obvious opportunity for increased density due to their proximity to core services, connectedness to transport options as well as presenting less negative impact to surrounding neighbourhoods. They also represent an opportunity to increase provided amenities in parallel with delivering more homes.

The two best opportunities for this within the Prahran catchment are along High St and Commercial Rd extending from the current Core zone towards Punt Rd.

As such the suggested advice is to achieve increased density in the area by extending the core activity centre zone along High St and Commercial Rd. This allows development along areas of best amenity, lowest negative impact, whilst delivering increased amenity to the area. This also gives room for the possibility of reducing density in more sensitive suburban environments.

Suggestions were made to extend the catchment across to York St East, using High St and Commercial Road boundary through to Williams Road. Other opportunities mentioned include allocating an outer catchment east of Punt Road between High Street and Commercial Road. Neither of these suggestions achieved consensus.

- **There are mixed views on the appropriate density for more suburban feel areas**

Expressions were put forward regarding the lack of an outer catchment. Some people agreed with the boundaries or suggested extending the catchment due to the residential nature of the area..

Other people considered there is an opportunity to replace the inner catchment for outer catchment considering heritage and public amenity realm are present.

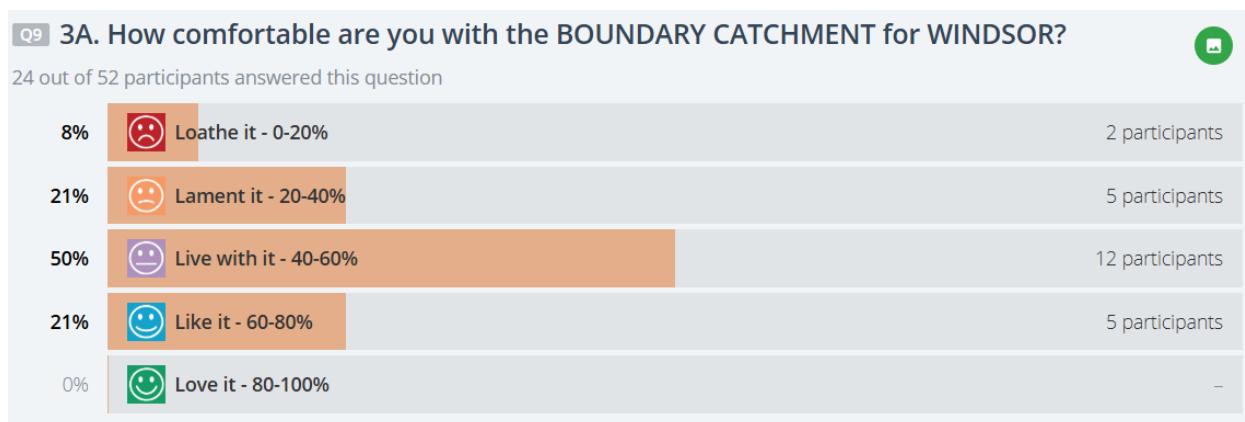
- **There were concerns raised about the impact of new development on heritage / character**

While growth is generally supported, protection of heritage and character is a key consideration..

- **Lack of detail and granularity of information provided and addressed in the plan (broad brush approach)**

Concerns were raised regarding the broad brush approach taken when applying the catchment areas. Consideration of existing conditions and potential impact at a more granular level is suggested. There were very low consultation numbers from Prahran. Views were expressed that there was a lack of knowledge about Prahran.

3C. WINDSOR - KEY CONSIDERATION NO. 1 – THE CATCHMENT BOUNDARIES



Mixed views on whether the catchment is right or needs change

Some of us said it is “appropriate” or “about right,” while others said it is “inaccurate” or “could be bigger.” We suggested using roads like “Williams Road,” “Dandenong Road,” and “Punt Road” as growth corridors beyond these boundaries, including into the Cities of Melbourne and Port Phillip. Rebalancing of catchment zones to include more lower density outer-catchment in favour of inner catchment, including extending into some ‘black spots’ which are not included in the catchment zones.

Recognition that Windsor varies in scale and should be treated differently

Our view is that Windsor is “lower in scale” in parts and inner catchment is extended too far in some directions. Specifically, narrow roads, small blocks and limited footpaths aren’t able to support inner catchment levels of growth and density. There is an imbalance between inner and outer catchment, so these lower scale streets need to consider appropriate and proportional development, such as west of Upton Road and east of The Avenue. It is important to retain greenery, pedestrianisation and improve cycle paths of these zones, in favour of on street parking.

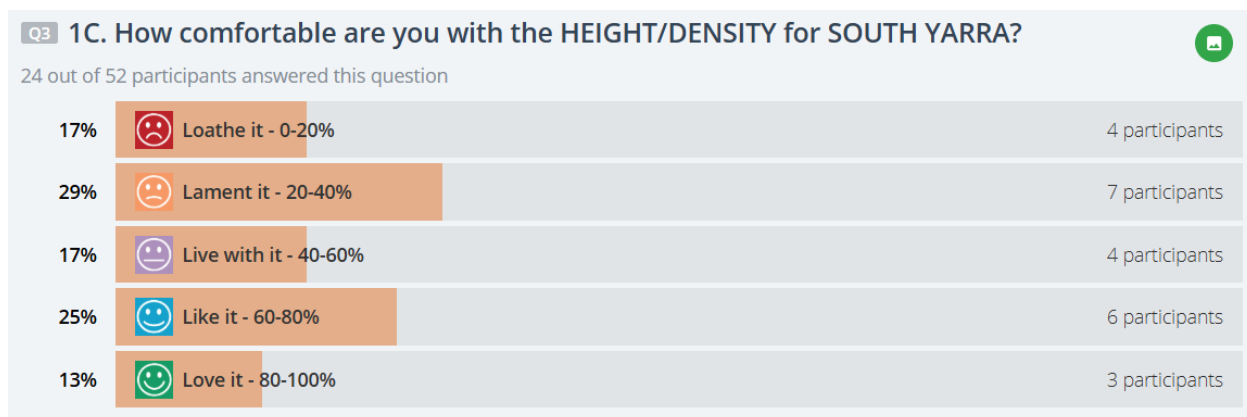
Missed areas with access to transport and activity

We pointed out places near stations, tram lines, and main roads that are not included but “have access” and could support growth. Some of us felt these are more appropriate than current inclusions. What isn’t considered in a lot of the outer catchment is the accessibility to amenities, particularly supermarkets and transport. These may not be in close proximity to a train station, but have great access to trams which when aligned with accessibility standards will be bigger, more frequent and more accessible than the train stations.

Lack of detail and difficulty assessing the proposal

We said there is “not enough context” and limited ability to compare current and proposed conditions, making it “hard to assess and give feedback.”

4A. SOUTH YARRA KEY CONSIDERATION No. 2 – BUILDING HEIGHTS AND DENSITY



Strong concern about heights impacting amenity and character

We said there are already “too many buildings” causing “overshadowing” and loss of light. A prominent example is Chapel St north of Toorak Rd, which people would not like to be repeated in other main corridors such as Toorak Rd and Chapel St (e.g. Toorak Rd between William and Chapel streets, Chapel St between Toorak Rd and Grosvenor St). Many of us felt buildings taller than 6 storeys on Chapel St and Toorak Rd would further impact amenity and heritage character.

Preference for moderate, controlled heights

We often pointed to “4–6 storeys” or even “4–5 storeys” as a reasonable limit. Some of us said lower heights are needed in smaller or heritage-adjacent sites. There doesn’t seem to be enough outer catchment, as here is almost none. Participants would like to see a more comprehensive outer catchment area, which would affect density outside the core. Thoughts on the second day (post it notes) indicate a desire to take Stonnington’s recommendation of 5 storeys along Toorak Rd and Chapel St.

Tension between supporting growth and protecting the area’s feel

We recognised the need for more housing and said South Yarra “can handle more,” but also said it is already “highly developed” and further change risks losing its character. It was also mentioned that ground floor activation is essential to maintain the area’s feel, walkability and integration with the community, as some have noted areas with poor ground floor activation (north end of Chapel St) are unpleasant stray away from the desired feel.

Variation across the area means one height approach doesn’t fit all

We said some locations “do not support this level of height,” while others along main roads could accommodate more. We called for more tailored, place-based controls. This arises from a lack of sufficient data to make informed recommendations, since we don’t have a map of current density, nor a map of density delta (current vs proposed).

View that development is already at or near capacity

Some of us said the area is “already developed to the max” or that “we already have

what you are seeking,” questioning the need for further uplift. This maximal capacity is also expressed by lack of pocket parks, one mentioning it causing dog dropping to be a noticeable hindrance along many streets (while others agreed).

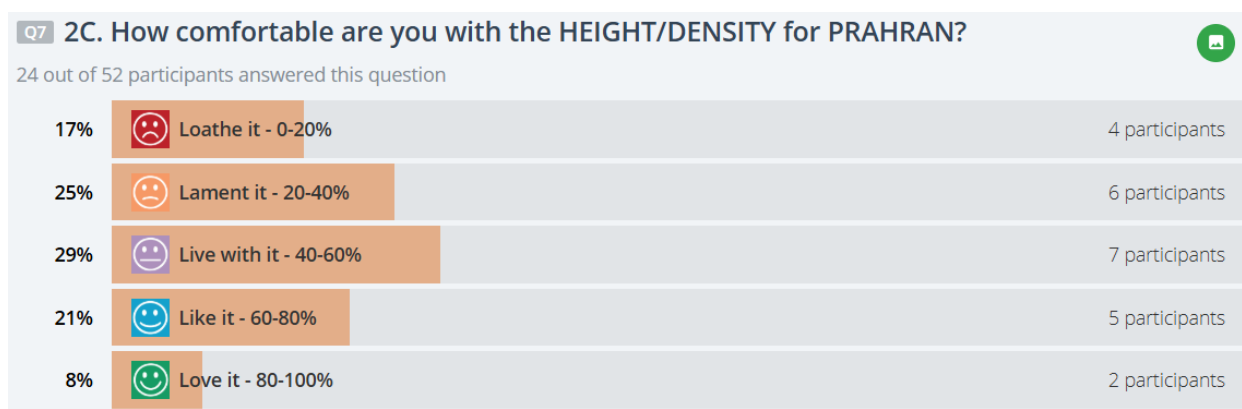
Support for targeted increases in specific locations

Where we supported change, it was focused on places like Chapel Street or main roads, with suggestions to increase heights there while protecting surrounding residential areas. Infrastructure has to be considered before changing density for those specific locations.

Lack of detail makes it hard to assess impacts

We said there is “not enough context” and limited clarity on what changes mean in practice, making it difficult to properly evaluate height proposals. Some complained about high traffic congestion in main roads and increased density will further aggravate that, with suggestions to lower speed limits. The discussion around it were hindered by lack of data for traffic congestion and existing/suggested speed limits.

4B. PRAHRAN KEY CONSIDERATION No. 2 – BUILDING HEIGHTS AND DENSITY



We broke down the main concerns and feedback into a few core areas such as the local experience of the suburb, opportunity to diversify heights into different areas, and concerns around heritage and fitting in denser housing options while maintaining neighbourhood feel.

Heights and Density:

- Opportunity for increased heights around rail line to west of Prahran station
- Increase core to include Commercial Rd & High streets– tram corridors
- Opportunity to split the proposed inner catchment classification to inner vs outer to gradient out density allowing for more diversity of property types & heights
- Allows for less overwhelming feeling of density over entire neighbourhood

Height restrictions / recommendations:

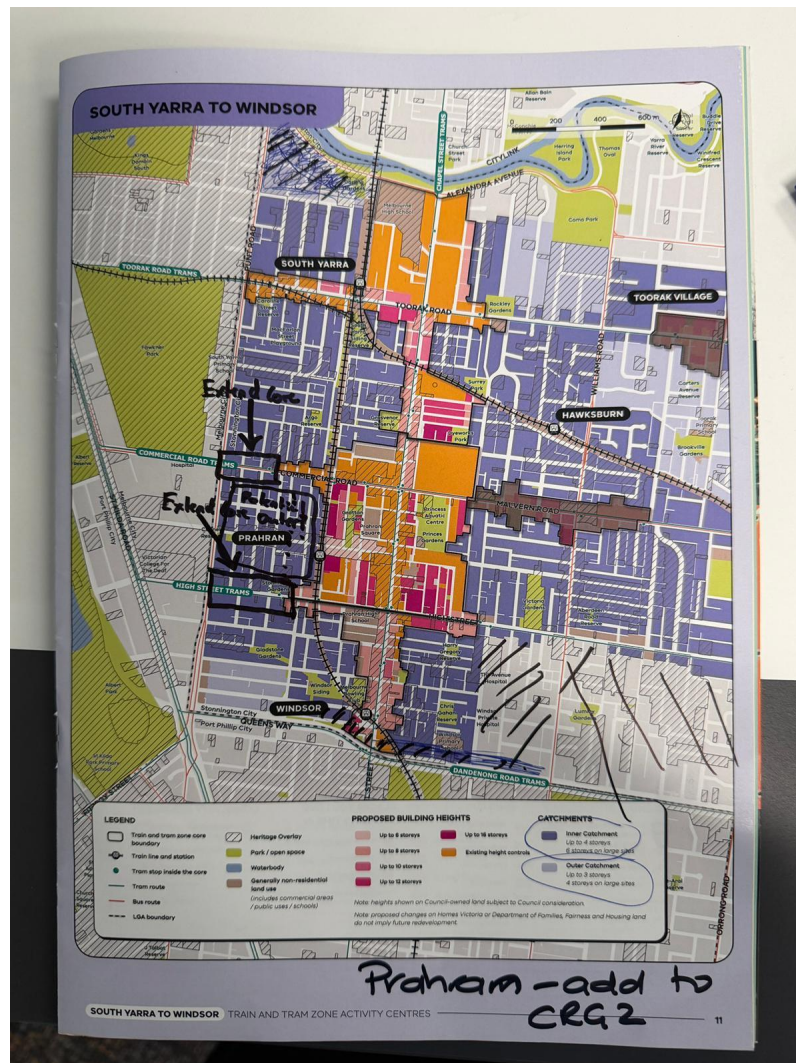
- Chapel Street: up to 10 floors max
- High Street: most existing dwellings sit at up to 12 floors already. Recommend capping at 12 floors
- Inner catchment areas: recommend 4 to 6 floors max with larger minimum block size (~ 1,500sqm) to achieve the higher height; middle minimum area of 500sqm to allow 3 to 4 floors
- It should be noted the maps capture a lot of pre-existing dwellings of 10+ floors.

Heritage Overlay and Character:

- Maintain heritage listing precincts and ensure character of area is maintained alongside uplift in housing and density
- Setbacks & podiums utilised to maintain green space/heritage/pathways

Supporting the above feedback, the following factors are recommended for consideration and maintained.

- **Feel of the Precinct/Experience of living, working here:**
 - Quirky
 - Diverse
 - Everything on doorstep
 - Retail/dining/basics/unique and unusual shops/prahran market, Greville St, Cato Square, Aquatic Centre, Skate Park, Basketball Court
- **Accessibility & inclusion**
 - Access to a wealth of public transport options but accessibility to public transport remains barrier and needs to be improved upon for a growing population in the area
 - Very walkable but needs to maintain and improve pathways with new developments and ensure accessibility for all users
 - Consideration to uplift key connecting tram stops to accessible stops



4C. WINDSOR KEY CONSIDERATION No. 2 – BUILDING HEIGHTS AND DENSITY

1. Chapel Street and Dandenong Road Can Take More Height , Residential Streets Cannot

Multiple participants drew a hard line between the commercial corridors and the residential hinterland. The corner of Chapel and Dandenong Road was specifically identified as suitable for 8+ storey buildings because taller buildings there “*would not overshadow any other residential buildings, just the freeway.*”

Dandenong Road (particularly east of Chapel Street) was cited as having capacity for inner-catchment density with bigger sites available for 8-storey development. Conversely, the streets west and east of Windsor station were described as having “*beautiful tree-lined and peaceful streets, pocket parks*” where heights of up to 6 storeys on large sites are “*simply too high.*” These areas should be limited to 1–3 level townhouses within existing single-level home sites, with taller development concentrated closer to Chapel Street.

2. Lot Size Must Dictate Height, Not Just Location

One of the most detailed responses proposed a specific lot-size threshold framework: in the inner catchment, 5 storeys only on sites of 1,500 sqm or more, 4 storeys on sites of 500 sqm, and 3 storeys otherwise. For the outer catchment: 3 storeys on 500 sqm sites, 4 storeys on 1,500 sqm, and 2 storeys otherwise. This reflects a practical recognition that Windsor has “*a lot of small tight streets*” where blanket height limits ignore site-specific constraints. The current plan’s failure to tie height to lot size was a clear frustration.

3. 6 Storeys Is the Ceiling for Main Street Character

Several participants converged on 6 storeys as the right scale for Chapel Street through Windsor. This was described as “*ideal for this type of main street to allow for human scale, activity and daylight access.*” Anything above this risks creating the “*unpleasant canyon*” effect already visible on Chapel Street north of Toorak Road. There was conditional support for exceeding 6 storeys on Chapel Street only where site depth and width can absorb upper-level setbacks without degrading the pedestrian experience.

4. Stonnington Council's Work Should Be Adopted, Not Overridden

Two separate responses made the same pointed argument: Stonnington Council's Activity Centre plan *"took into account the intricacies of each area and delivers the required number of homes"* and their recommendations should simply be adopted. The Council *"work with us every day and are the experts when it comes to the amenity and opportunity for growth."* This reflects distrust of the State Government's top-down approach and a demand that local knowledge be given genuine weight.

5. The Proposal Lacks Context, People Cannot Give Informed Consent

A recurring frustration was the absence of comparative information. Participants said there is *"not enough context to properly compare existing and proposed conditions"* and no opportunity to see which sites have already been developed versus where tangible change is proposed. Without this, *"it makes it really hard to assess and give feedback."* The summary report itself acknowledged that the *"lack of detail makes it hard to assess proposals."* This is a process failure that undermines the legitimacy of the comfort ratings.

6. Design Quality Is Non-Negotiable

Multiple responses conditioned their acceptance on design outcomes. Heights were acceptable only if development is *"done tastefully, gradually and without sacrificing too much solar access."* Design guidelines were called *"critical"* and heritage protection *"strict."* The concern is that the plan sets height limits but does not guarantee design quality, and without mandatory controls on setbacks, materials, and solar performance, the resulting buildings will degrade Windsor's character regardless of their height.

7. Lower Density Around Parks

Suggesting lower heights adjacent to parks to preserve sunlight access across the day. Noting that many of these parks are small in size.

Statement: Windsor Heights and Density

The CRG accepts the principle of increased density at Windsor but rejects a uniform height blanket across the precinct. The workshop data demands a place-based, site-responsive approach with the following specifics:

- **Chapel Street/Dandenong Road intersection and eastward to the freeway:** up to 8–12 storeys on large consolidated sites (2,000+ sqm). These sites can absorb height without residential overshadowing.

- **Chapel Street (High Street to Dandenong Road):** maximum 6 storeys with mandatory upper-level setbacks of 6m+ above a 2–3 storey street wall. Human scale, daylight, and heritage shopfront rhythm must be preserved.

- **Dandenong Road corridor (excluding Chapel Street corner):** inner catchment treatment, up to 8 storeys on sites exceeding 1,500 sqm. Transition to 4–6 storeys on smaller sites.

- **Residential streets west and east of Windsor station:**

Inner catchment - maximum 3 storeys as of right, 4 storeys on lots over 500 sqm, 5 storeys only on lots over 1,500 sqm. Outer catchment - No 6-storey development in tree-lined residential streets. Townhouse-scale infill preferred over apartment blocks.

Outer catchment: 2 storeys as of right, 3 storeys on 500+ sqm lots, 4 storeys only on 1,500+ sqm lots. Punt Road fronting sites have existing council controls for increased density.

- **Heritage interfaces:** Heights need to consider heritage-constrained sites nearby, with strict design guidelines ensuring complementary materials, setbacks, and scale transitions.

- **Design controls must be mandatory, not discretionary:** solar access, setbacks, active frontages, and heritage response. Without enforceability, height limits alone mean nothing.

- **Adopt Stonnington Council’s Activity Centre plan as the baseline:** it was developed with local expertise and community input. The State plan should build on it, not replace it. The existing plan from Stonnington is similar in scope and already covers many aspects in greater detail.

Conclusion

Windsor can take more housing but has lower access to amenities and a more village feel. The CRG is not opposed to growth. But the current proposal treats Windsor as a single zone when it is clearly two places: a commercial corridor that can absorb significant height, and a residential hinterland that cannot. The 46% who said they could “*live with it*” were not endorsing the plan, they were signalling that the direction is acceptable *if the detail is right*. The detail is not yet right. Heights must be tied to lot size, not just proximity to a station. Design quality must be guaranteed through mandatory controls. And the community must be given enough context, before-and-after

comparisons, site-specific analysis, shadow diagrams, to give genuinely informed feedback, not the blind trust this process currently demands.

5. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

- Summary of CRG overarching comfort level with the draft Activity Centre PlanS
- Raw output aligned to CRG comfort levels and responding to what would increase their level of acceptability for the draft plan overall
- Raw outputs of 'how comfortable are you with the Statement of Advice?'

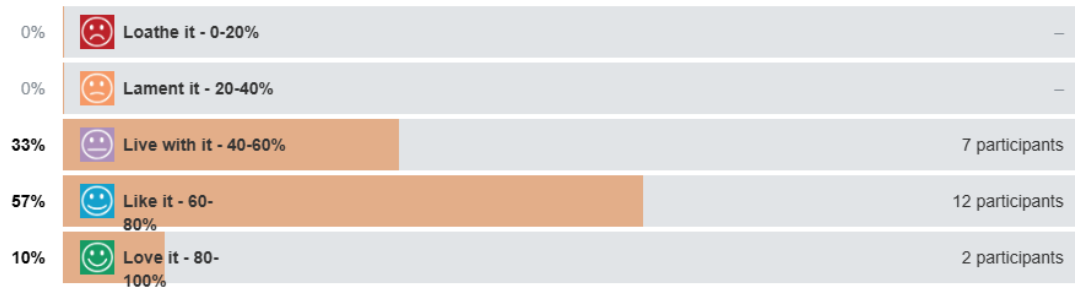
6. APPENDIX

- Raw output of 'what we love about the activity centre' (both questions)
- Raw output for consideration no. 1 rationales
- Raw output for consideration no. 2 rationales

- Raw outputs of 'how comfortable are you with the Statement of Advice?'

Q1 How comfortable are you with your Statement of Advice as its written?

21 out of 98 participants answered this question



Q2 Why did you choose this level of comfort?

21 out of 98 participants answered this question

All suggested changes bring the presented plan into a state that better reflects the liveability desires and delivers on the increased home numbers. The only thing that would make it better would be more adoption of Stonningtons work where they have spent a large amount of time on the ground and doing in depth research into how best to achieve the desired increase in homes whilst preserving what we all know and love about the area with live in, work and enjoy our downtime!

With the provisions of a reduced core and the inclusion of an outer catchment it will help the SY-W area stay the place we love and why we have chosen to be there.

With this I'm still questioning why South yarra is included as we already have what you want in a housing target and density.

Please review the Stonnington's planning scheme for the area as this have the local knowledge the area.

I think it broadly represented the views of different community memebbers.

I think better specific briefing prior to the CRG could have created more meaningful response and better understanding of complex issues for the broad cross section of the community. Also additional information on "Orange zones"

Reflects the sentiment and overall conversations that we heard and read over the last couple of days. Unfortunately the structure of the report doesn't give opportunity to raise or discuss other relevant/related points that would have been great to capture, as it was so heavily focused on boundaries and density, rather than the context that shows the real life impact and nuances on the ground.

Given the parameters of the process, including the low level of community involvement in Prahran etc, the process has provided opportunity for clarification and excellent teamwork and discussion.

I feel that the report collated the feedback and sentiment of the group as well as can expected for the format and focus of the questions.

I felt the process worked for getting the groups consolidated input - it went through enough iterations to give due consideration and capture the feedback.

The group is generally supportive of growth and the report reflects that. There are some strong views against growth that were included in the report without reaching consensus.

We should build as many well-designed homes in such a convenient area. The quality of the neighbourhood will depend on the design and how this is enforced, not about the height or catchments.

Lack of DTP consultation : it would have been much more useful and courteous if the DTP had held an online session with each CRG to take us through the proposal and the context behind it, rather than us having to stumble our way through it.

Ultimately there was nothing I want to add and I believe there was little, if any bias introduced to the summaries of raw data.

It captures most of the topics discovered but can't give it full marks as we simply did not have enough time to peer review our statements that made up the whole document.

Totally satisfied

Some sections are awesome, some are a bit "average"

I think the report is the best we could have had, but it could have been a lot better had we gotten the data we needed and were guided towards focusing on what matters and how the data we submit will be used in future steps.

I think the report is the best we could get it with the limited time we had to prepare it.

It's not cohesively written, there are sections that say very little and some that say more than the data provided. Last minute changes to Windsor Heights section is concerning.

I felt that the report included and represented my input

It is well written and has been consultative, although could have had more time to ensure quality.

Not content with the Windsor heights and density section as I don't believe it's reflective of the data

While the experience and opportunity has been welcomed, the report writing process has been rushed with little detail to support our input

Most of the things were captured