

Overview

Community Reference Groups (CRGs) were established for each Activity Centre to provide advice to the Department of Transport and Planning in developing its Activity Centre Plans. The advice was developed over 3 sessions in June 2025.

All Statements of Advice will be released publicly alongside other engagement outcomes during Phase 2 engagement planned for September 2025.

Statement of Advice – Tottenham Station

What we value about the Activity Centre:

A summary of what CRG members believe makes the place unique and worth protecting.

The Tottenham Activity Centre is a place of quiet strength, lived history, and cultural richness. While it faces challenges, the community recognises and values the unique identity, social fabric, and potential of this area. We believe it is a place worthy of care and protection.

Character and Atmosphere

- The Centre has a raw, unpolished quality that reflects its industrial heritage and working-class roots.
- It is seen as underutilised and often overlooked, yet it remains functional and resilient.
- Its character is shaped by working people who go about their lives with purpose and determination.
- Despite visual and physical fragmentation caused by major infrastructure, there is a sense of connection and continuity within the community.
- The lack of greenery and disconnected public spaces is a challenge, but also an opportunity for regeneration and improvement.

Landmarks and Public Spaces

- Historic wool stores such as Westwood and Goldsborough Mort are reminders of Tottenham's economic past and hold significant heritage value.
- The Olex cables site and adjacent railway yards stand out for their distinctive lighting and industrial character.
- The Central West shopping area serves as a central point for everyday needs and activity.
- The Braybrook Community Hub and Library offer important cultural and social services, fostering community interaction and support.

Natural Environment and Open Space

- The environment is heavily urbanised and dominated by hard surfaces, with limited natural features or tree cover.
- Stony Creek is a valued natural corridor offering some ecological and recreational relief.
- Skinner and Hansen Reserves, along with bike paths, provide open space for exercise and connection with nature.
- The strong presence of the railway line disrupts connections between neighbourhoods but also shapes how people navigate and experience the area.

Movement and Accessibility

- Navigating the area can be difficult, particularly around infrastructure like the Terry Bridge underpass, which restricts easy access.
- Public transport plays a critical role in connecting residents to jobs, services, and surrounding areas.
- Divisions between neighbouring suburbs—such as West Footscray, Seddon, and Yarraville—create a sense of fragmentation that affects community cohesion.
- While barriers exist, there is also potential to strengthen pedestrian and cycling links that better connect people and places.

Cultural and Social Significance

- The community is proud of its rich cultural diversity, with people from many backgrounds living and working side by side.
- The area's affordability—particularly in housing and local eateries—supports inclusivity and offers a liveable alternative to more expensive suburbs.
- Its flat topography and mix of industrial landmarks give Tottenham a distinctive identity that feels both accessible and authentic.
- Proximity to central Melbourne adds further value, enabling residents to live affordably while staying connected to broader opportunities.

Tottenham is more than an industrial precinct, it is a living community with deep roots, evolving stories, and potential for renewal. The community values its history, diversity, and identity and seeks thoughtful planning that honours its past while unlocking a more connected and inclusive future.

Our Advice

Part A: General Advice

How do we plan for more homes in and around Tottenham while strengthening the things that make it unique?

- Recognise Tottenham's unique community character: a diverse, active, and multicultural population that values connection, safety, and green spaces.
- Development must enhance—not displace—what makes Tottenham special, with planning that reflects local voices and daily experiences.
- Prioritise well-designed and connected infrastructure to support new homes, especially pathways, green spaces, and community hubs.
- Maintain a focus on quality of life. More homes should mean better amenity—not overcrowding or over-industrialisation.
- Avoid ad-hoc development. Ensure growth is planned with clear integration between housing, transport, and public services.
- Consider community-run spaces and services (especially for youth and marginalised groups) as key elements of the Activity Centre—not just physical infrastructure.
- Rezoning should be part of the discussion, particularly in areas with industrial use that limit broader goals for liveability and connectivity

Part B: Thematic advice across four key areas:

Public and Green Space

Key values and needs:

- People in Tottenham deeply value genuine, accessible green spaces. There is strong resistance to tokenistic measures like "pop-up parks" in place of real investment.
- Connection to nature is important for everyone, especially as population density increases.
- Green spaces must support both passive leisure (e.g. sitting, walking, gardening) and active recreation (e.g. sports courts, dog parks).
- Braybrook Park and Matthews Hill Reserve are held up as successful models: offering a range of leisure options, quality infrastructure, and safety due to proximity to housing

Priorities and suggestions:

- Improve underused green spaces and reserves near the rail line, ensuring they are safe, accessible, and inviting.
- Develop a dedicated team focused on increasing the number and quality of trees throughout the Activity Centre.

Public space planning should include:

- Dog-friendly parks and paths
- Free entertainment and leisure options for all ages
- Clear walking paths, seating areas, and shaded zones
- Design features that promote comfort, safety, and inclusivity.

Moving Around

Current barriers and challenges:

- While some bus services are functional, it is confusing and inefficient that none of them stop directly at Tottenham Station.
- Key pedestrian and mobility infrastructure is lacking or poorly designed:
- The Tottenham tunnel is a significant bottleneck and not accessible for people with disabilities.
- The existing ramp at the station is inadequate.
- Streets such as Ashley St are highly unsafe for pedestrians and wheelchair users

Improvements recommended by the community:

- Create a major overpass or underpass that links the southern side of Sunshine Rd with the east and west of Ashley St—without requiring any road crossings. This would:
 - Improve connectivity
 - Reduce safety risks
 - Act as a hub for pedestrians, cyclists, and people with disabilities.
- Improve paths across the Activity Centre:
 - Flat, wide, and smooth pavements are essential
 - Install dedicated pedestrian and bike lanes on key roads (Ashley St, South Rd, Churchill Ave, and Ballarat Rd)
- Implement pedestrian-priority traffic signals, similar to those seen in Sunshine, to improve walkability.
- Extend accessible infrastructure:
 - Ensure all bus stops are covered and have seating (this is already the case in many areas and should be maintained).
 - Reduce minor street speed limits to 30 km/h to enhance safety for all road users

Safety

What supports a sense of safety:

- The area's community diversity is seen as a strength. It contributes to a sense of shared responsibility and neighbourliness.
- Safe movement infrastructure—like bike lanes and well-lit walkways—is vital.
- Covered bus stops and regular public presence in parks and public areas add to perceived safety

Concerns and risks:

- Ashley St is a major concern due to truck traffic, poor lighting, and inadequate pedestrian infrastructure.
- Industrial zoning contributes to traffic issues and limits potential for safer, more community-focused development.
- Lighting remains poor in some key areas, especially on Rochester St and Ashley St.

Community-led safety recommendations:

- Restrict or remove truck access in areas designated for public or residential use.
- Install better lighting in dark or underutilised areas to improve visibility and comfort at night.
- Create safe, inclusive community spaces run by and for local residents—particularly young people and LGBTQ+ community members. These spaces could provide:
 - Advice and job support
 - Sport and entertainment options (both paid and free)
 - A sense of belonging and safety for marginalised groups

Local Infrastructure**Key infrastructure needs:**

- Walkable streets with smooth footpaths and tree cover
- Covered and accessible public transport stops
- Ample bins, seating, and signage in public areas
- Lighting, especially in areas currently underlit or unsafe
- Purpose-built bike lanes and pathways

Major gaps and barriers:

- The area's heavy industrial zoning is a major impediment to creating a more functional, connected, and community-oriented Activity Centre.
- The northwest corner of Tottenham Station is cited as an example of where rezoning could create substantial benefits.
- Without changes to zoning and street use (e.g. trucks on Ashley St), broader goals for public life and housing growth will be difficult to realise

Forward-thinking improvements:

- Advocate for rezoning to allow for residential, mixed-use, or community-oriented development.
- Incorporate infrastructure that supports diverse needs—from families and elderly residents to young people and people with disabilities.
- Integrate nature and sustainability into infrastructure: more trees, green corridors, and accessible gardens.

Key Areas of Agreement and Disagreement**Community-wide agreements:**

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- A connected, walkable, and accessible Activity Centre is essential. Infrastructure must support movement for all ages and abilities.
 - More green space—not less—is required, especially with the addition of new housing. Trees, parks, and proper landscaping are essential.
 - Safety concerns, especially around Ashley St and truck traffic, must be addressed as a priority.
 - Public space is not just aesthetic—it must provide entertainment, sport, and gathering options that are accessible to all income levels.
 - Local, community-run spaces are crucial, especially for youth and marginalised groups.
 - Rezoning industrial areas is necessary for meeting housing and infrastructure goals

Areas of tension or challenge:

- There is strong resistance to “token” solutions—like temporary green installations or minimal changes that fail to address core issues.
- Any development plan that overlooks the need for transport integration (such as buses not connecting to Tottenham Station) is viewed as a missed opportunity.
- Some residents express concern that without clear commitment to rezoning and de-industrialisation in key areas, the Activity Centre’s full potential won’t be achieved.
- There’s a balance to be struck between preserving what makes Tottenham unique (its community, openness, and green space) and modernising it to meet growing demands.

Considerations

Areas where the community was open to acceptable compromises, and areas where compromise was not supported.

Pedestrian Safety and Connectivity

- Strong community support for redeveloping the Tottenham station underpass to be safer and more accessible for pedestrians.
- Desire for a pedestrian bridge to better connect the north and south sides of the tracks.
- Improve pedestrian crossings, especially on Rupert Street and near Ashley Street.

Transport and Traffic

- Support for limiting heavy truck traffic on Ashley Street and introducing traffic calming measures (e.g., speed bumps, one-way roads).
- Community interest in a local bus route that directly services Tottenham Station.
- Mixed views on widening Ashley Street—some believe it improves flow; others fear it encourages car use and divides the community.

Land Use and Housing

- Broad support for rezoning underutilised industrial land, especially west of Ashley Street and north of the station (e.g., John Holland site), for higher-density housing.
- Support for development on currently vacant or temporary use land (e.g., carpark north of the station).
- Strong opposition to additional dense housing south of the station due to existing overdevelopment and small block sizes.

Community Infrastructure

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- A shared call for investment in infrastructure (transport, green space, and services) before or alongside new housing.
 - Desire for better planning accountability and mechanisms to ensure government follows through on infrastructure delivery.
 - Importance placed on developer contributions being spent locally and transparently.

Character and Heritage

- Desire to preserve and enhance tree coverage and green spaces.
- Strong support for protecting heritage-listed industrial buildings, especially south of Sunshine Road.
- Emphasis on maintaining diversity in the community and promoting mixed-use developments, including cafes and community spaces.

Key Areas of Agreement and Disagreement

Areas of Agreement:

- Support for Redevelopment of Underutilised Land - Agreement that sites like the John Holland site and temporary carpark north of the station are well-suited for higher-density housing.
- Infrastructure Before Growth - Consensus that infrastructure (public transport, green space, traffic management) must precede or coincide with housing growth.
- Pedestrian-Friendly Design - Shared vision for better pedestrian connectivity and safety measures, particularly around the station and major roads.
- Diverse and Liveable Housing - Agreement on the need for a variety of housing sizes, affordable options, and liveable standards (e.g., adequate bedroom sizes).
- Preservation of Green and Heritage Assets - United support for maintaining and enhancing green areas and protecting character-defining features like heritage buildings.

Areas of Disagreement:

- Widening of Ashley Street - Some support the idea for improved traffic flow; others oppose it due to concerns about increased traffic and pedestrian barriers.
- Location of New Housing - Strong opposition to additional housing south of the station due to overdevelopment concerns.
- Differences in views on acceptable building heights and forms in various parts of the centre.

Compromise Positions:

- Housing Height and Location - Some openness to buildings of 6–8 storeys near the station or on Sunshine Road, if accompanied by good infrastructure and design.
- Traffic Solutions - Willingness to accept changes like one-way roads and speed bumps to manage vehicle flow rather than full street widening.

Non-Negotiables:

- No Further Intensification South of Station - Strong resistance to additional housing in already congested and overdeveloped southern areas. - Infrastructure Delivery as a Precondition
- Unwavering demand that infrastructure improvements occur before or alongside any major housing growth.

Key Messages for Planners – Tottenham Station

Final key messages the group would like to leave with decision-makers.

1. Preserve and Strengthen Tottenham’s Unique Community Identity

- Tottenham is a resilient, multicultural community with deep roots and a strong working-class heritage.
- Planning should protect what makes Tottenham distinctive—its diversity, affordability, and authentic industrial character.
- Development must reflect the lived experiences and values of local people, not displace them.

2. Plan for Housing with Infrastructure First, Not After

- There is broad support for new housing on underutilised land, especially around the station and west of Ashley Street.
- However, this growth must be accompanied—if not preceded—by improved public transport, green spaces, and community services.
- No further intensification should occur south of the station, where the community already feels overburdened.

3. Prioritise Walkability, Safety, and Access for All

- Movement around the area is difficult, particularly for people with disabilities, due to poor infrastructure.
- Key actions include redesigning the Tottenham tunnel, improving pedestrian crossings, and creating safe bike and walking paths.
- Lower speed limits, better lighting, and pedestrian-priority signals are urgently needed.

4. Deliver Real, Usable Green Spaces—Not Token Efforts

- The community values meaningful, permanent green spaces over short-term fixes like pop-up parks.
- There is a strong call for dog parks, community gardens, sports facilities, and shaded paths that support both active and passive recreation.
- Green spaces should be safe, inclusive, and located near homes to foster everyday use.

5. Rezone Thoughtfully to Support a Connected, Liveable Future

- Industrial zoning—particularly near Ashley Street—is a major barrier to community-focused development.
- Strategic rezoning can unlock opportunities for housing, public spaces, and mixed-use areas that better reflect community needs.
- Planners must ensure that rezoning aligns with a vision for an integrated, people-first Activity Centre.