21.06 ACTIVITY CENTRES

Overview of Key Issues - Activity Centre

Moonee Valley has a number of neighbourhood, major and principal activity centres and each has its own role and function.

Moonee Ponds

- Functions as a regional retail centre and the major centre for professional and financial services in Melbourne’s north west region. Its proximity to key tourism venues, good public transport and a community with a high level of disposable income are significant competitive advantages.
- In 2007, Moonee Ponds was declared one of six “Priority Activity Centres’ in metropolitan Melbourne which are development-ready areas that will benefit from state funding to achieve development outcomes. In this context, a revised Moonee Ponds Structure Plan has been commissioned to address land use, built form, traffic, economic assessment of office and retail space requirements, parking and improving pedestrian amenity and access.

Mount Alexander Road

- A main thoroughfare and a significant entrance route to the City. Mt Alexander Road, south of Puckle Street, provides a link between the Moonee Ponds Activity Centre and the central city, and land uses along the road provide a variety of retail and service functions for the surrounding community.
- As an entrance or gateway route to the municipality, development along the route reflects upon the image of the City as a whole. It is important that this image is coordinated, cohesive and well designed to reflect the economic vitality and built-form character that typifies the City. Built-form guidelines for the road aim to provide the opportunity for change while ensuring that development is consistent in scale and setback, and provides definition to the roadway edge.
- The road provides a link between two highly significant boulevards, Flemington Road and Mount Alexander Road North. It is important that development along this part of Mount Alexander Road does not detract from the grandeur and importance of these boulevards.
- Development along Mount Alexander Road South should reinforce the importance of Moonee Ponds Activity Centre as the major regional centre in this area. Building development along the roadway should not visually dominate this centre, nor should it provide the opportunity for development that would be more appropriately located within this centre, which is well served by public transport and parking facilities.
- Development along this road should also respect the amenity of adjacent residential uses that abut the sites to the rear.
- Development along this road should have regard to any recommendations set out in an activity centre structure plan referred to in this scheme.
- Mt Alexander Road north of Puckle Street is characterised by a small scale mix of commercial and residential precincts. The precincts come together to create a visual rhythm of very distinct commercial areas linked together by predominantly residential areas with strong landscape character.
Contemporary architectural design should be encouraged, but it should emphasise appropriate scale, land use and street tree planting to strengthen the existing character of the road.

North Essendon

- North Essendon is identified in *Melbourne 2030* as a Major Activity Centre. It is part of a network of three inter-connected activity centres, along with Keilor Road and Airport West.
- These centres provide jobs, investment and goods and services for residents and other businesses.
- Local shopping centres that are both active and viable will reduce dependency on private transport.

Keilor Road

- Keilor Road is identified in *Melbourne 2030* as a Major Activity Centre. It should be maintained as a vibrant commercial strip centre which provides community level retail and business services, showrooms and peripheral sales uses and other mixed use activity.
- There are a number of large sites that could be developed to widen the range of mixed use activities.
- The interface between commercial, industrial and adjoining residential areas will be improved though landscaping and the careful location of industrial uses.

Airport West

Airport West is identified in *Melbourne 2030* as a Principal Activity Centre. The Airport West Structure Plan (2008) identifies how Airport West will evolve to the year 2030. The key elements of the Plan are based on land use, built form, mobility and the environment, and specifically include:

- Consolidating the mix of land uses in and around the shopping centre to enhance the strong employment base of Airport West.
- Encouraging new development that contributes positively to the image of the centre by consolidating forms at the gateways and edges and building up around open space and the activity hubs.
- Ensuring the centre is well connected locally and regionally by various modes of transport with the provision of bicycle/walking linkages and a new transport interchange at Dromana Avenue in close proximity to the activity centre focal point.
- Improvements to the landscape and environmental quality of the centre through themed street tree planting, green linkages and public open space improvements.

Union Road & Racecourse Road

- Racecourse Road (Flemington) is identified in *Melbourne 2030* as a Major Activities Area.
- The key elements of the Racecourse Road Major Activities Area Structure Plan (2012) are based on land use, buildings, movement, public spaces and heritage.
- The activities area should be maintained as a vibrant, pedestrian-centric area which provides a diversity of employment generating uses and appropriately located cultural services and facilities.
There are opportunities for new housing, office and mixed uses on large development sites.

Sensitive interfaces between new and existing development will be protected through appropriate setbacks and massing which provide a transition to the scale of low rise residential areas.

**Neighbourhood Centres**

- Both these centres are identified in Melbourne 2030 as Major Activity Centres.
- Further work needs to be developed for each of the centres.

Neighbourhood Centres which currently fulfill a commercial and retail role, and which also have the potential to fulfill a residential role include centres at the Essendon station precinct, McNamara Street, Glass Street Glenbervie, Woodlands Street near Strathmore station, Military and Milleara Roads. Further work needs to be developed for all of these centres.

### 21.06-2 Objectives & Strategies – Activity Centres

**Objective**

- To strengthen and consolidate the role of the Moonee Ponds Activity Centre as the principal shopping and commercial precinct in the City.

**Strategies**

- Improve traffic management, car parking facilities and pedestrian networks within and surrounding the centre.
- To strengthen the centre by facilitating the development of appropriate office complexes and accommodation for businesses in the commercial centre.
- Ensure that buildings and works for residential development do not detract from the viability of existing commercial activity.
- Discourage the expansion of gambling venues or electronic gaming machines within the centre.
- Implement the relevant structure plan for the activity centre.
- Have regard to the relevant structure plan in all decision making.

**Objective**

- To promote commercial, retail and residential growth within defined Activity centres.

**Strategies**

- Discourage the expansion of substantial new retail floorspace outside the major centres of Moonee Ponds, Airport West, Keilor Road, Niddrie, Union Road, Ascot Vale or Racecourse Road, Flemington.
- Accommodate new commercial and office development in designated activity centres throughout the City.
- Integrate residential uses with commercial activities in select centres.
- Restrict large scale commercial development to appropriate zones and locations.
- Ensure a core retail function in all activity centres.
- Implement the relevant structure plan for the activity centre.
- Have regard to the relevant structure plan in all decision making.
Objective

- To promote high quality urban design in all Activity Centres.

Strategies

- Promote active ground floor frontages to face onto public spaces, open spaces and public walkways and avoid blank facades.
- Ensure that buildings at gateway locations highlight their position through building detailing, materials differentiation or height, as appropriate to the context.
- Ensure that mixed-uses are vertically separated, generally with retail or office uses at ground and lower levels and residential uses above.
- Ensure built form to the rear of sites is sensitive to adjoining residential land uses.
- Avoid visual intrusion caused by inappropriate siting, massing and appearance of buildings.
- Discourage a front setback in retail or commercial precincts unless a consistent setback can be achieved within a street block.
- Implement the relevant structure plan for the activity centre.
- Have regard to the relevant structure plan in all decision making.

21.06-3 Policy Guidelines – Airport West Activity Centre (also see map)

- Encourage the growth of retail, commercial and community activities at the Airport West Shopping Centre and adjacent mixed use precinct.
- Encourage an increase in residential densities and affordable housing opportunities through development near the Airport West Shopping Centre and Keilor Road.
- Encourage appropriate leisure, recreational and entertainment uses near and within the Airport West Shopping Centre.
- Support commercial uses including an office at the Hood Street and Matthews Avenue gateway where it achieves the desired built form outcome.
- Enhance the image and identity of the centre through changes to the built form.
- Establish an active streetscape to Matthews Avenue by encouraging building which provide articulation and visual interest
- Facilitate increased building heights which provide opportunities for growth and improvement while still considering any residential amenity impacts.
- Enhance the urban structure of the centre through development that emphasises the precinct gateways, landmark sites and important views.
- Ensure built form integrates with the public realm through active frontages, maintaining solar access, preventing negative wind effects and buildings which have a human scale.
- Encourage all new development to incorporate sustainable building practices and water sensitive urban design.
Airport West Structure Plan - Summary

- Encourage the development of Skyways entertainment precinct to between 4 and 5 storeys.
- Ensure that the redevelopment is consistent with the retail and mixed use precincts.

Mixed Use Precinct
- Establish a mixed use precinct east of the Airport West Shopping Centre.
- Encourage two and three storey forms.

Matthews Avenue
- Encourage buildings to abut the street frontage.
- Establish a preferred height limit of three storeys and 12m.
- Locate car parking at the rear of properties utilizing side street access.
- Linear buildings are orientated with entries directly to Matthews Avenue.
- Avoid visible blank side walls to Matthews Avenue and the adjoining side streets.
- Active commercial street frontage.

Develop the gateway intersection of Matthews Ave and Hood St with high quality form and other related commercial uses including the opportunity to accommodate hotel office functions.

Encourage two and three storey medium density residential development adjoining the shopping centre and in proximity to Kellet Rd.

Emphasise the local gateways at Matthews Avenue/Fullerton St with attractive three storey built form.

Airport West Structure Plan

- Airport West Shopping Centre
- Mix of office, industry & commercial uses
- Medium density residential
- Mixed use precinct
- Skyways
- Gateway (3 storey built form)
- Green link
- Park/Reserve

- Consistent building edge to key streets
- Potential Future Transport Hub Investigation Area
21.06-4 **Policy Guidelines – Racecourse Road Activities Area**

- Reinforce the Racecourse Road Activities Area’s local role in providing a diverse and comprehensive range of community and cultural services.
- Improve traffic management, car parking facilities and pedestrian and cycling networks within the activities area.
- Ensure that the scale of new development will not be detrimental to residential areas within and surrounding the activities area.
- Encourage increased housing densities that provide a range of densities and housing types as provided for in the Activity Centre Zone.

21.06-5 **Implementation – Activity Centres**

- Apply Residential 1 Zone to existing residential areas.
- Apply Mixed Use Zone to areas close to activity centres with potential for complementary residential, commercial and industrial activities.
- Apply Business 1 Zone to principal shopping areas.
- Apply Activity Centre Zone to Principal and Major Activity Centres identified through a structure planning process.
- Apply Design and Development Overlay No. 3 on Mount Alexander Road North Essendon to ensure future development is in accordance with the design objectives.
- Apply Design and Development Overlay No. 4 on Mount Alexander Road South to ensure future development is in accordance with the design objectives.

21.06-6 **Further Strategic Work**

- Prepare Essendon Station Activity Centre Structure Plan
- Complete Union Road Activity Centre Structure Plan
- Complete Racecourse Road Activity Centre Structure Plan
- Prepare smaller centre structure plans

21.06-7 **Reference Documents**

- Airport West Activity Centre Structure Plan (2008)
- Racecourse Road Major Activities Area Structure Plan (2012)
- Racecourse Road Urban Design Guidelines (2012)