



BLACKBURN VILLAGE RESIDENTS GROUP

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BLACKBURN VILLAGE RESIDENTS NEWSLETTER No. 9

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NEW SHOPPING CENTRE PLANS ON EXHIBITION AT BLACKBURN LIBRARY

The plans for the new shopping centre in Blackburn are now being exhibited at the Blackburn Library, as well as at Nunawading Civic Centre and the Ministry (see over). These plans are substantially the same as those presented to the public meeting in Blackburn last March, and endorsed in principle by that meeting conditional upon the satisfactory resolution of certain design, economic and traffic issues.

You should, however, visit the Library and study the plans and the accompanying documents for yourself. On display, you will see the floor plan, elevations and the car park layout, together with the Explanatory Report. You may also inspect a copy of the Agreement between the developer and Council and the developer's supporting submission, which includes the latest traffic proposals, a landscape plan and the arguments used to justify the approaches they have taken.

Other relevant documents referred to in the Explanatory Report are available for inspection at the Civic Centre.

DO THESE PROPOSALS MEET YOUR EXPECTATIONS FOR THE LOCAL SHOPPING CENTRE? HOW DO YOU SEE IT AFFECTING THE AMENITY OF YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD?

These are the questions you should ask yourself as you look through the exhibition.

SOME CONSIDERATIONS

Design

The proposed shopping centre is now a cluster of buildings at ground level, a concept the BVRG recommended as an alternative to the plans rejected by the Minister a year ago. At 4,500 square metres of leasable floor area, the development is a little larger than we should have wished; but this the BVRG, has accepted. The major concern we have is the proposal to link the buildings at roof level with a glass or perspex covering to provide 'climate control'. While some residents – certainly not all – may welcome this in the winter, we have yet to be convinced that the architect has made sufficient provision for the heat of summer. Do you wish an open air shopping centre or an enclosed one? Study the plans on exhibition.

Economic Viability

This is a difficult issue. The BVRG has long been concerned to establish not only the immediate success of a new centre but the long term viability of the new centre itself, the existing shops in the Village, and nearby community centres – particularly Laburnum and Blackburn South. Nobody can guarantee such success. What you should ask yourself is whether the centre proposed is one in which you will be happy to do your everyday shopping, and whether it is designed fundamentally not to compete with the monster centres nearby nor to draw trade from the smaller ones – but to satisfy the needs of the central Blackburn community.

Amenity

A new development is going to change the amenity of many residents, especially those living nearby. It might be the case, for example, that the management of the new centre will opt for all-day trading on Saturdays or late evenings on other days. What effect will an enclosed centre have on vandalism, the prevalence of litter, the noise from delivery vehicles, pedestrian access to the station and so on? The BVRG believes that many of these problems have been addressed. It is up to you to see whether from your point of view anything has been overlooked.

Traffic

Traffic is the issue on which least progress has been made. The traffic in Blackburn Road is still a real problem: with an entrance to and exit from the new centre, this road could become a nightmare and access to South Parade from Central Road would be extremely difficult. Already hazardous intersections at Blackburn Road/ The Avenue and at Main Street/The Avenue would become more so. Whereas there are now many points at which vehicles can access the present car park behind the South Parade shops the new proposal limits them to two – Blackburn Road and Main Street. We believe Gardenia Street is the established and natural entrance to the car park from the South and should be retained.

Think how you use the present streets for access to shops and the station, and how the plans exhibited might force you into other routes. If you live in a street close to the shopping centre, study the projected effects on traffic volumes set out in the supporting documents. These and other traffic problems might be soluble. They are not yet solved.

Nunawading Council's Involvement

Council, as we reported in Newsletter No. 8, has at long last committed itself to a strategic study of the central Blackburn area after two years of lobbying by this Group. We believe this plan will be available in November – not soon enough for the purposes of the shopping centre exhibition, but (we trust) soon enough for it to be taken into account before the Panel convenes to hear the shopping

centre application. We shall be looking to the newly elected Councillors to help ensure that this strategic plan adequately meets the demands that the proposed shopping centre development will impose upon it. Council is now the 'Responsible Authority' which will oversee many aspects of the shopping centre application. It is up to you to ensure that the Council remains responsible not only to the Planning and Environment Act but to you as a member of the Blackburn community.

How to Read the Plans and Documents on Exhibition

Take care when you study the plans and drawings on exhibition in the library. If you are inexperienced and you have built a house or added an extension, you might remember some of the gaps between what you thought you were getting and what you actually got. If you are in any doubt whatsoever, refer to officers of the Council's Strategic Planning Department.

Your Submission

The BVRG has represented the community on the shopping centre issue for nearly three years. But the Group cannot substitute for each member of the community expressing his or her own views on the proposals exhibited. **TO ENSURE YOUR SUBMISSION IS CONSIDERED YOU MUST LODGE IT NO LATER THAN 27 NOVEMBER.** By lodging a submission (which means no more than writing a letter) your views will be taken into account and presented to the independent Panel Hearing which will be set up by the Minister. By lodging a submission you can also ensure your right to present your views to the Panel in person, should you so wish.

Remember . . .

A letter from you carries much more weight than a petition or a form letter with your signature.

You may indicate at the end of your letter that you wish to present your views to the Panel in person. The Council will write to you advising when the Panel will hear your views. (This does not commit you to speaking but preserves your right to do so, or to have a representative speak on your behalf.)

Where other adult members of your household share your views, include their names on your letter, or even better have them write one of their own.

If you wish, make use of the major issues raised earlier in this Newsletter – Traffic, Design, Economic Viability and Amenity – to help you compose your letter.

Address your letter to:

City Manager,
City of Nunawading
Civic Centre, 379 Whitehorse Road,
Nunawading 3131
Dear Sir,

[Proposed Re-Zoning of Land at Blackburn – Amendment RL 125]

I/we wish to make a submission on the application for the re-zoning of land to build a shopping centre at Blackburn (Amendment RL 125).

My/our particular concerns are

I/we wish to reserve the right to be heard on the Panel Hearing.

Funding the Residents' Cause

For nearly three years of our operation the BVRG has relied solely on the financial support of the Blackburn community to fund our newsletters and our research. It is now time to call upon you again to help us serve the community. Without further finance we would not be able to continue the publication of our Newsletters at this important time nor to adequately prepare the Group's submission and presentation.

Plans will be exhibited at Blackburn Branch Library, Nunawading Civic Centre and at the Ministry of Planning and Environment at 447 Little Collins Street, Melbourne and Suite 4, 38-49 Prospect Street, Box Hill.

**LOOK AT THE PLANS – READ THE DOCUMENTS –
LODGE YOUR LETTER BY 27 NOVEMBER**