



BLACKBURN VILLAGE RESIDENTS GROUP

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NEW BLACKBURN RETAIL ACTION PLAN ON DISPLAY

A new draft plan has been formulated. Council invites public comment on it. Copies now displayed are available from the Blackburn Library and several local shops.

The plan includes a number of possible measures for revitalising the Blackburn Retail Centre with the aim of increasing patronage from within the existing catchment area by better meeting residents needs.

The Chamber of Commerce and Blackburn Tree Preservation Society are to be commended for initiating a study of ways to enhance the Blackburn Station gardens, which Council subsequently included as one of a number of proposals for upgrading the entire retail precinct - North and South of the line. In the last few weeks they engaged consultants to incorporate some of these suggested changes into a concept plan.

At our urging, the BVRG was able to participate in several of the most recent of a series of meetings at which these concepts have been discussed. Your Committee supports the general thrust of the plan, including improvements in landscapes and streetscapes, refurbishment of shops (front and rear) and pedestrian safety.

But we do have concerns about future retail development of the former Fallon Winds site, now reduced in size by residential redevelopment in Gardenia Street. It is premature to go into detail and base plans on retail usage before firm and funded proposals are submitted. (It is our belief that no potential supermarket tenant has ever seriously contemplated locating on that site and it is extremely unlikely that finance would be available in the foreseeable future for some smaller retail development).

Moreover, it is inappropriate to promote possible closure, or partial closure, of Gardenia Street before there are acceptable alternatives for the safe and convenient access and circulation of traffic.

You are urged to study the concept plans and possible actions and to comment, in writing to Council by 18 October c/o Mr Ian Stewart (262 6349).

For instance, if you feel it is out of place for Blackburn to have a clocktower icon now is the time to say so!

A copy of your written submission (sent to us c/o the above address) would be appreciated.

MULTI UNIT HOUSING POLICY

Concerned with the possible repercussions on the special residential character of Blackburn we made numerous submissions to Council on their multi unit policy, now adopted, and to the Minister and various MP's on proposed changes to Vic Code 2 which narrow the options for recognition of local differences.

The Minister has not yet announced his decision on changes to the Code.

BLACKBURN OFFICE ZONE AND RESIDENTIAL PRECINCT

Following B V R G recommendations to Council on the Office Zone Amendment and on a policy for the adjoining Residential Precinct the latter was adopted and the Amendment referred to the Minister.

While awaiting the Minister's decision we can only reiterate our grave doubts about the viability of office development on this scale and concerns that any contribution it might bring would be unlikely to compensate for the disruptive and dramatic change it would bring to the centre.

ROUNDABOUTS AND CIRCUMLOCUTION

Over seven years after Council approved a roundabout at The Avenue / Main Street intersection the decision has been implemented.

It has been the subject of confusing Council pronouncements over the years, giving various reasons for not proceeding. The most recent, in June this year, advised that it had been rescheduled for construction after the development of the proposed Bus Interchange (whenever that might be). The reason advanced was that a larger roundabout was now preferred and this would inhibit Southbound Main Street buses from turning left into The Avenue.

It appears that Council has now reverted to the smaller type of roundabout previously exhibited at a Public Hearing and discussed with adjoining landholders. And it is finally under construction.

WATCH THIS SPACE.....

We plan to arrange a social function later in the year - and hope you can join us. Look out for an invitation.