



Department of **Planning,  
Lands and Heritage**



# draft

## State Planning Policy 4.2

# Activity Centres

August 2020

*Prepared under Part Three of the Planning and Development Act 2005  
by the Western Australian Planning Commission*

The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of this land. We pay our respect to Elders past and present, their descendants who are with us today, and those who will follow in their footsteps.

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## 1 CITATION

This is a State Planning Policy made under Part 3 of the *Planning and Development Act 2005*. This policy may be cited as State Planning Policy 4.2 Activity Centres (SPP 4.2). It replaces State Planning Policy 4.2 Activity Centres for Perth and Peel (2010).

## 2 POLICY INTENT

To ensure planning and development adequately considers the distribution, function and broad land use considerations for activity centres.

## 3 WHAT ARE ACTIVITY CENTRES?

Activity centres are multi-functional community focal points that vary in size and function. They are generally well-served by transport networks with a focus on integrated pedestrian access and walkability, and may include land uses such as commercial, retail, food and hospitality, higher-density housing, entertainment, tourism, civic/community, higher education, and medical services.

## 4 APPLICATION OF THE POLICY

This policy and its Guidelines applies to the preparation and assessment of the relevant components of planning instruments that relate to activity centres within the Metropolitan (Perth), Peel and Greater Bunbury Region Scheme areas, including:

- local, district and regional planning strategies
- local planning schemes, scheme reviews and amendments
- precinct structure plans for activity centres
- standard structure plans where activity centres are proposed in greenfield areas
- subdivision and development applications for major developments within activity centres
- major development of **activity centre uses** outside designated activity centres.

The objectives, outcomes and measures of this policy may be applied outside of the abovementioned region scheme areas, as applicable, to guide the preparation and review of local planning proposals. The application of this policy in such areas shall be at the discretion of the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) and have due regard to any relevant provisions relating to activity centres role, function and hierarchy in the Local Planning Framework and/or Regional Framework.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with (but not limited to):

- the Implementation Guidelines for SPP 4.2
- State Planning Policy 7.0 Design of the Built Environment
- State Planning Policy 7.1 Neighbourhood Design
- State Planning Policy 7.2 Precinct Design

## 5 POLICY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are to:

1. Provide a hierarchy and network of activity centres that meets community need and provides social, economic and environmental benefits to all Western Australians.
2. Enable the distribution of a broad range of goods, services and activities, including retail, commercial and mixed-use developments that do not undermine the hierarchy of activity centres.
3. Ensure consistency and rigour in the planning and development of activity centres.

## 6 POLICY OUTCOMES

The following outcomes specify the role of planning and development in contributing to the overall objectives of this policy. The outcomes can be achieved through compliance with the policy measures. They can be used to guide discretion in policy application and provide a basis for its evaluation.

1. The activity centre network meets different levels of community need and enables employment, goods and services to be accessed efficiently and equitably by the community.
2. The primacy of activity centres is reinforced, and out-of-centre development that undermines the hierarchy of activity centres is discouraged.
3. New activity centres or the expansion and consolidation of existing activity centres does not unreasonably undermine existing centres.



4. Sufficient development intensity and appropriate land use mix is provided, that supports the role and function of activity centres and facilitates a competitive retail and commercial market.
5. The density and diversity of housing in and around activity centres is maximised to improve land efficiency and housing variety, and assist with delivering the objectives and outcomes of the strategic planning framework for the applicable region.
6. Development within activity centres is well-designed, cohesive and functional and that capitalises on the use of existing and planned infrastructure.
7. Access to and within activity centres by walking, cycling and public transport is maximised while private vehicle trips and dependence on parking is reduced.
8. Planning and development of activity centres balances the environmental, social and economic values of activity centres to provide a net positive benefit to local communities.

## 7 POLICY MEASURES

### 7.1 Activity Centre function and hierarchy

The activity centre functions and land use guidance at **Appendix 1** and activity centre hierarchy at **Appendix 2** of this policy shall be used to coordinate the location, function and measures relating to individual activity centres. This includes:

- a) Preparation and review of regional, district and local planning strategies and local planning schemes, including the application of appropriate zonings.
- b) Preparation of long-term capital investment programs, and promotion and coordination of private and public investment.
- c) Evidence-based planning to identify sufficient development intensity and appropriate land use mix to support the functions of the activity centre, and contribute to the achievement of the sub-regional employment self-sufficiency and housing objectives from the relevant regional and sub-regional planning frameworks.

The responsible authority is to consider the main role and attributes for each activity centre with guidance provided in **Appendix 1**.

Precinct structure plans and development proposals should be consistent with the classification of the activity centre in both function and hierarchy.

The responsible authority should ensure precinct structure plans and development proposals support the established and planned activity centre hierarchy. For region scheme areas, refer to **Appendix 2** for guidance on activity centre hierarchy.

Proposals to depart from the hierarchy and for new activity centres must demonstrate:

- the need for the departure from the hierarchy and/or new activity centre, based on population forecasts and a Needs Assessment
- any new activity centre being serviced by high-frequency public transport and
- meeting the objectives and outcomes of SPP4.2

### 7.2 Requirement for precinct structure plans

A precinct structure plan is to be prepared for strategic, secondary, district and specialised activity centres.

Precinct structure plans should be endorsed by the WAPC prior to a **major development** being approved to ensure the development of the activity centre is integrated, cohesive and accessible. Major development may be considered in the absence of an endorsed precinct structure plan where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified. Any major development must satisfy relevant requirements of State Planning Policy 7.2 Precinct Design and Precinct Design Guidelines.

Exceptional circumstances may include (but are not limited to) the following:

- an immediate and demonstrated local need for the proposed land uses
- the development would enable infrastructure needed by the community
- the proposal delivers significant community benefit not identified in current and emerging plans..



Neighbourhood and local activity centres may require either a precinct structure plan or local development plan, at the discretion of the decision-maker and if so must be in accordance with the requirements of State Planning Policy 7.2 Precinct Design and Precinct Design Guidelines.

### 7.3 Assessment

When considering local planning strategies, local planning schemes, precinct structure plans, standard structure plans and amendments to these planning instruments or **major development** proposals, the responsible authority must consider the main role and attributes for each activity centre type outlined in **Appendix 1**.

A proposal meets the objectives and outcomes of this policy if it:

- supports the overall precinct design objectives, as outlined within the applicable precinct structure plan
- delivers net **community benefit** and does not lead to a loss of service to the community and
- for **major development** proposals, any impact test (where applied) demonstrates that the proposal will not unreasonably impact upon existing, committed and planned public and private investment.

### 7.4 Land uses

This policy encourages the development of multi-functional activity centres that can cater for a wide range of office, commercial, retail, food and hospitality, entertainment, education, leisure, cultural/tourist, residential and mixed-use land uses. Local planning

schemes should ensure that desired activity centre uses are located within activity centres through appropriate zoning and use class permissibility.

High trip-generating land uses should be located within or adjacent to activity centres to maximise opportunities to use public transport and reduce the need for travel between places of residence, employment and recreation.

The inclusion of a mix of land uses in precinct structure plans for activity centres shall be encouraged. The diversity ratio (**Table 1**) in the Implementation Guidelines shall be used as a guide, having regard to factors such as the extent of land in common ownership, the existing land use mix, the proposed scale of development and the extent to which the activity centre and its catchment have already developed.

Higher-density housing should be incorporated within and immediately adjacent to activity centres to support the non-residential functions of the activity centre, establish a sense of community and increase activity outside normal business hours. Residential density targets are provided with **Appendix 1** for some activity centres. These targets are intended as a guide to inform further detailed, evidence-based planning for each activity centre. Housing supply in specialised centres (with the exception of Perth and Jandakot airports) should be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

### 7.5 Employment

Activity centres are priority locations for employment-generating activities and should contribute towards the achievement of the relevant regional and sub-regional employment objectives.

Planning decision-making shall facilitate:

- a) employment opportunities in activity centres by maximising the density and range of activities to improve access to jobs
- b) low-impact service industries locating in activity centres close to residential areas
- c) education and training, health and other specialist facilities in activity centres
- d) co-locating retail, residential, commercial, entertainment and other compatible uses with tertiary education, health and other suitable uses in specialised activity centres.

### 7.6 Urban form

Activity centres shall incorporate a network of streets and public spaces in a compact urban form defined by a pedestrian-dominant streetscape where the primary focus of activity is on key public streets.

The urban form of an activity centre may change over time depending on the existing development pattern and the type of development that occurs. The existing and future urban form and function of an activity centre should be investigated and considered when preparing a precinct structure plan for an activity centre.

All precinct structure plans for activity centres must satisfy relevant requirements of *State Planning Policy 7.2 Precinct Design and Precinct Design Guidelines*.

### 7.7 Movement and access

The physical organisation of the activity centre network and individual activity centres needs to support, and be supported by, a balanced access and movement network that makes it convenient and practical for residents,



employees and visitors to maximise travel by walking, cycling and public transport, while minimising the need to travel by private car. The planning for activity centres should seek to:

- a) Reduce private vehicle dependence, particularly for commuter trips, and manage the impacts of vehicle movements and parking.
- b) Enable a range of transport choices that meet the access needs of residents, employees and visitors.
- c) Promote a balanced movement network that prioritises walking, cycling, public transport, and shared mobility.

For parking in strategic metropolitan and specialised activity centres, the responsible authority should:

- d) Establish mode share targets promoting a shift away from private vehicle use to the maximum extent possible based on the current and planned capacity of the movement network and access needs of the centre.
- e) Establish a parking cap to constrain private vehicle trip generation and promote mode shift.
- f) Develop a parking plan outlining how public parking will be supplied and managed across the whole activity centre to prioritise use and availability between different user groups.
- g) Require major development to prepare and implement travel plans and parking supply & management plans that support the mode share target.

All precinct structure plans for activity centres must satisfy relevant requirements of **Design Element 3: Movement** in *State Planning Policy 7.2 Precinct Design and Precinct Design Guidelines*.

## 7.8 Needs Assessment

A Needs Assessment provides an information base to support decision-making by including an assessment of projected land use needs of communities in a local government area and its surrounds.

A Needs Assessment may be prepared in support of a:

- local planning strategy
- local planning scheme/scheme amendment
- precinct structure plan
- standard structure plan at the district or local level.

A Needs Assessment should be prepared where a major development for an activity centre(s) is proposed. Once proposed floorspace and/or land requirements are identified, this information should be shown spatially within the planning document being prepared and include an indicative range of land use activity per activity centre. Once proposed floorspace and/or land requirements are identified, this information should be shown spatially within the planning document being prepared and include an indicative range of land use activity per activity centre.

A Needs Assessment shall be prepared in accordance with the methodology provided within the Implementation Guidelines

## 7.9 Impact Test

An Impact Test (previously known as a Retail Sustainability Assessment) shall be prepared where a major development is proposed.

The Impact Test must demonstrate that the proposal will:

- not unreasonably impact upon existing, committed and planned public and private investment

- not unreasonably impact the activity centre hierarchy or their existing or planned activity centre functions and
- deliver net community benefits and not reduce the level of service to the community.

An Impact Test is to be prepared by the proponent in accordance with the methodology provided within the Implementation Guidelines.

Where an endorsed local planning strategy, district, standard or precinct structure plan includes an indicative amount of **activity centre uses** derived from a Needs Assessment, an Impact Test is only required where a significant increase (refer to **major development** definition for guidance) to this **activity centre use** floorspace is proposed.

Perth Capital City and strategic activity centres are exempt from the requirement for an Impact Test.

## 7.10 Out of centre developments

A proposal for an **activity centre use** located outside of a designated activity centre must be assessed in line with this policy and will require an Impact Test if:

- the proposed development includes Shop Retail floorspace greater than 500m<sup>2</sup> NLA or
- the proposed development is considered likely to impact the activity centre hierarchy, in the opinion of the WAPC and in consultation with the local authority.

Where out of centre development is considered necessary and appropriate, it should be located to support the success of activity centres, minimise negative impacts to activity centres, be supported by public transport and minimise the need for individual private vehicle trips.



## 8 IMPLEMENTATION

The **Activity Centre Implementation Guidelines** provides guidance on how to implement this policy.

## 9 DEFINITIONS

### Activity centre

An activity centre within the hierarchy provided at **Appendix 2**, land zoned 'Centre' or equivalent under the applicable local planning framework or land otherwise agreed to be an activity centre by the WAPC.

### Activity centre use(s)

Includes (but not limited to) the following:

- Retail development: Shop, Bulky Goods Showroom, Liquor Store – Small, Liquor Store – Large, Market and Restricted Premises.
- Entertainment, Education and Leisure facilities: Amusement Parlour, Educational Establishment, Nightclub, Place of Worship, Recreation – Private, Restaurant / Café, Small Bar, Tavern.
- Commercial uses: Office, Medical Centre, Consulting Rooms.
- Services: Small scale automotive services and recycling services.
- Cultural / Tourism Uses: Art Gallery, Cinema / Theatre, Hotel Tourist Development.

### Bulky goods retail or showroom

As defined in the Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015.

### Established centre

There are existing activity centre uses (or use) within the activity centre.

### High trip generating land uses

**Educational establishment** – >100 students

**Restaurant, tavern etc.** – >1000 persons (seats) or >2000m<sup>2</sup> gross floor area

**Fast food outlet** – >500m<sup>2</sup> gross floor area

**Shop** – >1000m<sup>2</sup> gross floor area

**Non-food retail** – >2500m<sup>2</sup> gross floor area

**Offices** – >5000m<sup>2</sup> gross floor area

### Major development

A proposal is considered a major development if the net additional floorspace for an **activity centre use** (or uses) is greater than the thresholds in Table 2.

Note – residential floor space is excluded from the calculation.

Table 2: Major activity centre use floorspace thresholds

Activity Centre Hierarchy	Established Centre (m <sup>2</sup> NLA)	New Centre (m <sup>2</sup> NLA)
Secondary	10,000	10,000
District	5,000	10,000
Specialised	5,000	10,000
Neighbourhood	3,000	5,000
Local	1,000	1,500

### Shop/retail (shopping or shop)

The land use activities included in "Planning land use category 5: Shop/retail" as defined by the WAPC's Perth and Peel Land Use and Employment Survey (as amended).

### Supermarket

A self-service shop/retail establishment selling food and grocery items.

### Walkable catchment

Derived from application of the 'ped-shed' technique to the existing or proposed street network in the boundaries of the activity centre. i.e. The:

- extent of the walkable catchment is either 200m, 400m or 800m depending on activity centre type (outlined in **Appendix 1**) and
- walkable catchment is measured from an agreed upon central point located within the activity centre such as a town square, rail stations, major bus transfer stations or stops located on high-frequency bus routes.





## APPENDIX 1: ACTIVITY CENTRE FUNCTIONS AND LAND USE GUIDANCE

Classification	Main role and typical attributes	Residential density target - dwellings per gross urban zone hectare within the walkable catchment
<b>Capital City</b>	Perth Capital City is the largest of the activity centres, providing the most intensely concentrated development in the Perth, Peel and Bunbury regions. It has the greatest range of high order services and jobs, and the largest commercial component of any activity centre. It is generally comprised of the highest density residential and commercial buildings, has excellent multi-modal public transport connections and is the centre for cultural and entertainment facilities.	<b>NA</b>
<b>Strategic Centres</b>	Strategic centres are the main regional activity centres. They are multipurpose centres that provide a diversity of uses. These centres provide the full range of economic and community services necessary for the communities in their catchments. These centres are expected to service substantial populations, providing health, community and social services, be integrated with public transport and provide opportunities for business agglomeration. Access is a priority for these centres.	<b>50+ (800m)</b>
<b>Secondary Centres</b>	Secondary centres share similar characteristics with strategic centres but serve smaller catchments and offer a more limited range of services, facilities and employment opportunities. They perform an important role in the regional economy, and provide essential services to their catchments.	<b>40+ (800m)</b>
<b>District Centres</b>	District centres have a greater focus on servicing the daily and weekly needs of residents. Their relatively smaller scale catchment enables them to have a greater local community focus and provide services, facilities and job opportunities that reflect the needs of their catchments.	<b>30+ (400m)</b>
<b>Specialised Centres</b>	Specialised centres focus on regionally significant economic and institutional activities, such as logistics based businesses for airports or knowledge-based for health and tertiary education precincts.  Planning for these centres should aim to protect the primary land use while improving the growth and clustering of business activity of State and regional significance, particularly in knowledge-based or logistics-based industries. These areas are to be developed as places with a concentration of linked businesses and institutions providing a major contribution to the economy, with excellent transport links and potential to accommodate significant future growth in jobs and in some instances housing.	<b>NA</b>
<b>Neighbourhood Centres</b>	Neighbourhood centres are important local focal points that provide for daily to weekly household shopping needs, community facilities and a small range of other convenience services. They are also a focus for medium density housing. These centres play an important role in providing walkable access to services and facilities for local communities.	<b>25+ (200m)</b>
<b>Local Centres</b>	Local centres provide for the day to day needs of local communities. These centres provide an important role in providing walkable access to services and facilities for local communities.	<b>25+ (200m)</b>





## APPENDIX 2: Activity Centre Hierarchy

Region	Capital City	Strategic Centres	Secondary Centres	District Centres			Specialised Centres	Neighbourhood and Local Centres
Perth and Peel	Perth Northbridge East Perth West Perth	Armadale Cannington Fremantle Joondalup Mandurah Midland Morley Rockingham Stirling Yanchep	Alkimos Belmont Booragoon Claremont Clarkson Cockburn Ellenbrook Karrinyup Kwinana Leederville Maddington Mirrabooka Pinjarra Subiaco Two Rocks North Victoria Park Wanneroo Warwick Whitfordsxx	<b>Peel Sub-Region</b> Falcon Halls Head Lakelands Waroona Ravenswood (Riverfront)*	<b>Central Sub-Region</b> Ashfield Bayswater Cottesloe Highgate Wembley/Jolimont Mount Hawthorn North Fremantle Oats Street South Perth West Leederville East Victoria Park Livingston Bassendean Inglewood Bentley Bullcreek Burswood Canning Bridge Dianella Dog Swamp Kardinya Fitzgerald Street Floreat Glendalough Main Street Melville Northlands Maylands Mount Lawley Petra Street Risely Street Riverton Scarborough Southlands Stirling Central	<b>North West Sub-Region</b> Alexander Heights Butler (Brighton)* Currambine Girrawheen Greenwood Madeley Neerabup Sorrento Woodvale Eglington* Yanchep* <b>North East Sub-Region</b> Forrestfield Kalamunda Mundaring Albion <b>South West Sub-Region</b> Baldivis Cockburn Coast Karnup* Secret Harbour Spearwood Warnbro Wandi* <b>South East Sub-Region</b> Byford Forrest Lakes Gosnells Kelmescott Wungong Mundijong* Thornlie	UWA/QE2 Bentley/Curtin ECU Mount Lawley Murdoch Perth Airport Jandakot Airport	As defined in the Local Planning Strategy for that locality
Greater Bunbury		Bunbury CBD		Bunbury Forum Dalyellup Eaton Fair Parks Centre Trendale			Bunbury Regional and St John of God Hospitals Edith Cowan University South West Institute of Technology	As defined in the Local Planning Strategy for that locality

\* denotes emerging centre