

Principal Strategic Planner
Merri-bek City Council
BRUNSWICK VIC 3056



Dear Merri-bek City Council

I would like to thank Council for the opportunity to comment on Vibrant Brunswick's phase 3 consultation and extend my congratulations to Council on behalf of YIMBY Melbourne for the work it is doing on strategic planning.

YIMBY Melbourne is a collective of Melbourne urbanists working towards housing abundance and walkable streets in our city and is a founding member of **Abundant Housing Network Australia**, campaigning nationally for planning and housing reform.

Many of our members, including myself, are long-time Merri-bek residents.

We advocate for more permissive planning systems that facilitate development, with efficient and low-cost processes so shovels get in the ground fast. Strong strategic planning like Vibrant Brunswick is key to making this a reality.

Communities deserve to have a say over the future of their city, but we know that many planning consultation processes are weaponised by bad faith anti-development activists to delay projects and blow out budgets. This means projects that would build more homes for people to live in either never get off the ground or are forced to make uneconomical changes to their designs.

Most people think about their communities not as a collection of individual developments, but as a holistic urban fabric. As such, neighbourhood-level planning is accessible and approachable, and helps people who otherwise would never engage with planning feel equipped to have their voices heard.

We welcome the changes outlined in the Vibrant Brunswick strategy. We are especially pleased with the new bicycle parking rules.

We commend Council on a plan that retains Brunswick's unique character as a creative and industrial precinct while still delivering strong housing growth.

Preserving employment precincts for industrial uses is important as our city grows, and strong local housing growth needs to be complemented with local jobs growth.

However, we want to see Council go further. Brunswick needs to facilitate larger builds with fewer setbacks along the train line, increased heights along Lygon and Nicholson Streets, and broad upzoning of the Neighbourhood and General Residential Zones between these precincts. This will enable our second streets to develop into the gently dense streetscapes of our high streets, creating a broader, more vibrant community.

We see no reason why anywhere bounded by Brunswick and Moreland Roads, the Upfield train line and Merri Creek – neighbourhoods with some of the highest amenity, access to public transport and proportion of open green space in the city – should not all be upzoned to medium and high density mixed use development over the next few years.

With so many local public transport options and one of the highest proportions of commuter cyclists in the country, Brunswick has an opportunity to build Melbourne's missing middle housing.

Let's build a world-class city where entire neighbourhoods are full of energy. We shouldn't just have towers around train stations and then flat suburbs in between.

Our streets should be mixed-use, dynamic, and exciting – **positively European**.

Once again, we'd like to congratulate Council and your officers on preparing an excellent strategy and we look forward to taking an active part in shaping the next tranche of work on height limits and heritage foreshadowed in the report.

Yours sincerely

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