Smart Urban Futures - 22 March 2019
Creating Walkable Communities: Constraints & Opportunities
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Property developers

MR. GREEDY
by Roger Hargreaves

[Image of a cartoon figure]

[Image of a building on fire]

[Image of a car]

[Image of sardines in a can]

[Image of Donald Trump speaking]
We create new places
Private development
About Intrapac
What happened?

• “Suburban dream”
• Personal vs mass transit
• Inefficient & unsustainable
• Disconnected

The dream is no longer reality – but the public doesn’t know it (yet)
Benefits of walkable communities

• Healthier
• Safer
• Better connected
• More sustainable
• More interesting
• More local
• More equitable

More valuable
What can we do about it?

The way we plan and develop suburbs needs to change

• Mixed uses
• Localisation
• People focus
• Viable alternatives to car travel
Key design principles

- Focus on users
- Pedestrians -> active transport -> public transport -> car
- “Complete streets”
- Density & variety
- Places to go
- Fine-grained scale

“Will this place be fun?”
Constraints & challenges

1. Infrastructure
2. Status quo
3. Local politics
4. Design controls
5. Planning hierarchy
6. Affordability
Challenges – Infrastructure

- Population projected to increase by 11.8 million to 2046
- Population growth is not the issue; failure to plan properly is the issue
- Roads still high priority
  - Induced demand
- Wrong sort of public transport?
- Polycentric/localised cities

Walkability is a huge part of the solution
Challenges – The Status Quo

- Used to driving everywhere
  - People are lazy! Give them somewhere to walk
- Still want the big house
- Housing choice should not be diminished
  - Trade off between size, type & location
  - Cost per m²
Challenges – Local Politics

- Planning decisions
  - Many Councillors elected on anti-development platforms

- NIMBYism
  - No incentive to consider the needs of future residents
  - Much easier to appease existing voters focused on “status quo”
  - Density/height
  - “Undesirables”

If too hard we take the path of least resistance or nothing gets built
Challenges – Design Controls

• Focused on wrong things:
  • No cross roads
  • “Privacy”
  • “Amenity”
  • “Neighbourhood character”
  • Setbacks
  • Maintenance

• Lack of consistency
Challenges – Design Controls

• Street trees/shade
• Attractive streets & laneways
• Walking/cycling connectivity
• Flexibility
• The right density
Challenge – Max’s hierarchy™

- People
- Outcome focused
- Transport & opportunity
- Walkability
- Great new places
- Variety & density
- Mixed use
Challenges – Affordability

• Despite benefits, community opposition to development at a high
  • Younger/new households bear the brunt
  • RBA estimates effect of zoning restrictions as 29-42% of land value\(^1\)

• Other effects on viability
  • Planning uncertainty
  • Gold plating/standards
  • High density vs low density costs
  • Time value of money/interest

Affordability is more than the price you pay for a house.
Walkability is part of the solution

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The biggest challenge is still consumers

- Preferences ≠ “logical”
  - “Status quo”
- Trade-offs/priorities
  - Size
  - Price
  - Show-off factor
- Sustainability does not rate highly

Changing, but slowly
#1 opportunity to enhance walkability is to teach the public about the benefits
Real life examples - Aureus

- Ballina Council
- Adjacent to Sharpes Beach
- Surrounded by low-density residential
- < 1% of housing lots in Ballina Shire under 450m²
- Residential zoning w/ small B1 zone
Real life examples - Aureus
Applying the principles @ Aureus
Applying the principles @ Aureus
Real life examples - Kinley
Applying the principles @ Kinley
Applying the principles @ Kinley
Applying the principles @ Kinley
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