Creating a walking friendly city: innovation and inspiration from around the world

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Presentation outline

- Walking benefits – and barriers
- The case for walking
  - Health
  - Economic
  - Demographic
- Policy and practical responses, from international scale to community interventions
- A future agenda: challenges and opportunities
Excessive focus on long distance movement

Mobility patterns; distribution of trip distances

- Long-distance trips: Distances more than 30 km (7%)
- Middle-range trips: Distances 5 to 30 km (30%)
- Short-distance trips: Walking & cycling Distances up to 5 km (63%)

Perception of importance; allocated resources

- Distribution of financial resources and investments
- Staff in administrations
- Focus of available data
- Number of experts in the field
- Legislative powers
- Financial rewards / punishments for users

Daniel Sauter, Urban Mobility Research, Switzerland
Walking benefits: walking is more than just a mode of transport

- Supports inclusive mobility
- Encourages community cohesion
- Increases personal security
- Provides freedom for children
- Underpins public transport
- Supports more road safety for all users
- Detailed arguments:
  - Health
  - Economic
  - Demographic
"If we don't rein in expenditure on Medicare, Australia will be bankrupt". (Treasurer and Health Ministers, Brisbane Times, March 13th 2014)
The economic case for walking

Good for Business?

- Review for SA Heart Foundation, Nov 2011
- Does a walking- and cycle-friendly main street provide retail and economic benefits?
  - Direct economic benefits?
  - Higher rents or the attraction of new tenants/businesses?
  - Property values?
Good for Business Conclusions

- Walk-in spend for Main Streets is ALWAYS bigger than we think
- More walking increases:
  - Shop rents
  - Property prices
  - Business and the local economy
- Space for people is more important than car parking
- Local businesses benefit most from:
  - Reducing traffic speeds and widening footpaths
  - Making the street more attractive for people to spend time – and therefore money
Case study Acland Street, Port Phillip, Melbourne

Before

Before

Credit: Nigel Flannigan
Acland Street

- City wanted to widen footpaths at the expense of losing some kerbside parking
- Objections from retailers
- City gave retailers money to do their own market research study:
  - Local residents: 85% of the spend
  - 57% of expenditure is ‘walked’ to the centre, 16% cycled/bussed
  - Only 26% of total expenditure driven to the centre
- Result: Retailers petitioned for some parking removal – and 25% of spaces now removed!
Walking is a pre-condition for an economically healthy city

A good walking environment is a good economic environment

The slower we travel, the more we spend
Walking and property prices

- In a typical metropolitan area in the USA, each WalkScore point increase is associated with a $700 to $3000 increase in home values (Alfonso and Leinberger, 2013)
- 10m hits per day
- Walkscore Professional now used by over 30,000 websites
Walkability value in Melbourne August 2013

Average $298 increase per sq m for every 5 point rise in walkscore


Table compiled from ‘Walkscore’ values (http://www.walkscore.com). Median Sales data is from The Department of Sustainability and Environment (http://dse.vic.gov.au)
The Demographic Case for Walking
1. Children walking and health

- Childhood obesity is a growing concern and much of it can be attributed to lack of physical activity.
- Children who walk or cycle to school have higher daily levels of physical activity and better cardiovascular fitness than do children who do not actively commute to school.
Demographic Case for Walking:
2. Ageing of the Boomers

- 65 to 84 year olds to double by 2050; 85 year olds to quadruple
- Walking is highly valued by seniors: improved health, wellbeing, independence, personal mobility and social connectedness
- For people aged 75+, walking comprises 77% of the time spent on physical activity
- Seniors prefer more walkable communities
The Demographic Case for Walking

3. Different transport priorities of Gen Ys

- Driving?
  - USA Generation Y cohort mileage fell 23%, 2001-2009
  - Typical USA 58 year old in 2011 drove 11,607 miles; 28 year old 7,011 miles

- Licence holding?
  - 18 year olds with licences: 80% (1983) down to 66% (2008)
  - 17 year olds down from 75% 1978 to 49% in 2008

- Public transport use?
  - 18-25 year olds are 13% of all Australians aged over 17 years
  - In WA they are 35% of all train users and 40% of all bus users

( Spokesperson from WA’s Public Transport Authority, quoted in the West Australian June 2011)
Different transport priorities of Gen Ys

- Regulation and expense
  - Insurance, licences
- Social factors
  - Living at home longer
  - More living in inner city
- Cultural factors
  - Car not a status symbol
- Environmental concerns
- Impact of new technology
  - Social media
  - Public transport apps
  - Texting
Economic revival of US downtowns

- "A new era of corporate urbanism" (Lauren Weber, Wall St Journal)
- Motorola moved 3000 jobs to downtown Chicago in 2013 from suburbia
  - "There's increasing evidence that this represents a broad trend among large and middle-size companies. Cheap real estate, tax incentives, and easy automobile access once lured companies to the suburbs, but companies now want urban amenities, proximity to public transit and sense of community—the same qualities young workers prize when deciding where to live and work”
- 66% of college – educated US Millennials choose where to live FIRST and THEN look for a job (Speck, 2012)
What responses do we see around the world to the case for walking?

- International developments
- National level
- Advocacy
- Local level
International Charter for Walking

Creating healthy, efficient and sustainable communities
where people choose to walk

Eight Principles supported by 34 actions

Provides a framework and benchmark for local policy and investment

Launched 2006: thousands of communities around the world have signed
An explosion of interest around the world in walking

The Walk21 Conference Series

  - Confirmed importance of walking issues
  - Provided an international platform
  - Highlighted best practice
  - Identified research, networking and funding opportunities

- Then Perth, San Sebastian, Portland, Copenhagen, Zurich, Melbourne, Toronto, Barcelona, New York City, The Hague, Vancouver, Mexico City, Munich
Walk21 Sydney, October 2014
www.walk21sydney.com
National scale developments: New guidance in Australia

- Walking, Riding and Access to Public Transport
  Supporting active travel in Australian communities
  Ministerial Statement, July 2013

- Guide Information for Pedestrian Facilities
  Austroads Research report, 2013
Advocacy resources

1. Healthy by Design
   A guide to planning and designing environments for active living in Tasmania

2. HEALTHY SPACES & PLACES
   A national guide to designing places for healthy living

3. Blueprint for an active Australia
   Key government and community actions needed to boost population levels of physical activity in Australia: 2010 to 2013

4. Creating Healthy Neighbourhoods
   Consumer preferences for healthy development

5. Neighbourhood Walkability Checklist
   How walkable is your community?
Local scale developments

- Complete Streets
- Flexible streets
- Shared Streets
- Open Streets
- Plazas
- Toolkits
- Intersection repair
- Parklets
- Pop-Ups
- Legibility
- Local behaviour change programmes
Tactical urbanism

- Park(ing) Day, 2005
  - Art and design studio in San Francisco, turned a downtown parking spot into a miniature park.

- Now thousands of officially designated parklets around the world.

- Tactical urbanism phrase coined by Mike Lydon in 2011:
  - “a deliberate, phased approach to instigating change, local in scale, short term in duration, and low in risk, but if successful it suggests the possibility of something larger and more lasting”.
Progress in walkability across the world….and urgent tasks

- Huge increase in capacity since 2000
  - Professional skills
  - Political understanding of value of walkability
  - Public awareness and advocacy movements

- Required action
  - National scale: responding to Peak Car
  - Local scale: 5 key issues
Action at the Macro-level: Responding to Peak Car

- Car use down in many countries e.g. USA, Australia
  - In 2011 Americans drove 6% fewer miles than they did in 2004
  - The number of cars driven to work in the City of Sydney dropped by 9% 2006-11, despite 9% more workers

- Car ownership levels falling in developed countries
  - London’s population has risen by 603,000 since 2000, but car ownership down by 117,000
USA: "The driving boom is over"

- "The Driving Boom — a six decade long period of steady increases in per-capita driving in the United States — is over”
- "The unique combination of conditions that fuelled the Driving Boom — from cheap gas prices to the rapid expansion of the workforce during the Baby Boom generation — no longer exists”

A new vision for transportation policy should:
- Plan for uncertainty
- Support the Millennials and others in their desire to drive less
- Revisit plans for new or expanded highways
- Remove barriers to non-driving transportation options

A New Direction: Our Changing Relationship with Driving and the Implications for America’s Future, Dutzik and Baxandall, 2013
Action at the local level: five key issues for the future

- Stick with the evidence on the parking issue: in main streets space for people is more important for economic vitality than car parking
- Allocate resources to make it happen
  - Value for money of active travel schemes
  - On average, cost benefit of 13:1 across the world
- Develop behaviour change programmes
  - These lock in the benefits of infrastructure improvement e.g. workplace travel programmes, car share, travel to school
- Use demonstration projects
  - To show how good it can be
  - To raise capacity
  - To alleviate anxiety about change
- Recognise the co-benefits of partnership working
Thank you!

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