



## Activity Centre planning: opportunities for new models of leisure and open space?

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## Postcards from home:









## Overview

1. The concept of Activity Centres
2. The legacy of 19th century planning
3. What we have now -
  - What is the legacy now
  - What are the leisure / open space issues in high density living
4. What we expect
5. What are some of the likely changes in leisure behaviour?
6. Planning methods
7. Kingston leisure needs 2030 study
8. How AC planning could address open space (including private space) to leave a liveable legacy?
9. Questions?



## 1. The Concept A key plank in Melbourne 2030

Victorian State Government Planning Framework M2030 A plan to manage growth and change in metro Melbourne (1m more people by 2030)

### Activity Centres to be a focus for:

- △ employment and social interaction
- △ public transport networks and connections
- △ retail shopping and education services


### Five types:

- Central Activities District
- Principal
- Major
- Specialised and
- Neighbourhood ACs



## 1. The Concept Activity Centre Policy grounded in Smart growth philosophy

1. Mixed land uses to create more livable communities with less reliance upon the car
2. Compact building design to limit sprawl and reduce cost of services & reduced width of road reservations
3. Create housing choices; not every one wants to maintain a backyard
4. Walkable neighbourhoods; linked networks of footpaths, and trails.
5. Conserving neighbourhood character and open space to foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
6. Preserve open space, farmland, and natural beauty in critical environmental areas



### 1. The concept (cont.)

**Key points:**

- Retail, entertainment, leisure and employment clustered around transport hubs
- Compact living
- Integrated mixed use development
- Community benefits in terms of travel time energy consumptions

**M2030 Design Guidelines: Activity Centres, Higher Density Housing and Safer Design, all contain references to open space, however there is no overall strategic framework that optimizes open space or leisure provision.**



### 2. The legacy of 19th century planning

**In late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century planners inspired by 'City Beautiful' and 'Garden City' movements, to address the problems of overcrowded cities**

- The *City Beautiful* movement
  - △ created an open character that encourages activities such as walking, incidental exercise and social interaction.
  - △ city vistas terminated in hills and parks
  - △ planning grid ensure major civic buildings interspersed with town parks, community gardens, urban squares grand boulevards
- The *Garden City* merge city with the landscape
  - △ containing development by greenbelts and wedges
  - △ nature strips
- One legacy - significant ring of Crown reserves for inner Melbourne



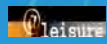
### 3. What is legacy now? Since 1980s:

A concerted effort to increase proportion of residential, and higher density dwellings in urban centres, and focus on consolidation around transport and retail hubs.

The rise in higher density; primarily the result land values and opportunities create by change in government policy

**Key issues and concerns**

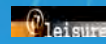
1. Not enough open space
2. Type of open space provided
3. Council can't easy acquire open space in inner city
4. Subdivision issues
5. Design of development impact on leisure provision
6. Urban design issues: amenity, overshadowing, wind turbulence
7. Need to cater for increased demand



### Key issues concerns cont'd

#### 1. Not enough open space: too small

- 30% say not happy
- Open space contributions forgone to create incentives for residential development in 90s
- Balcony size insufficient: as the only private open space
  - △ Commonly used as storage
  - △ Inadequate provision for bikes
- Inadequate provision for pets

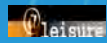


### Key issues concerns cont'd

#### 2. Type of open space/facilities provided

- Small separate communal leisure facilities by developer i.e.

- △ Small landscaped gardens
- △ small gyms, some pools
- △ BBQ areas



### Key issues concerns cont'd

#### 2. Type of open space/facilities provided

- Gated /older adult communities - own space; not public; higher quality than public; located on fringes of AC
- High density-rooftop BBQ, garden, fitness, club, lounge, library; not public
- Issues of functionality and maintenance:
  - Docklands: a Blue Park and mostly water edge - cafes: no real pub facilities too specific demographic targeted



- Beacon Cove highly ornate planting; new beach difficult for councils maintain, not functional for active pursuits



Key issue concerns cont'd

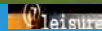
### 3. Council can't easily acquire in central city areas

- Land too expensive
- No obvious land to buy
- Aquatic /leisure centres being built on existing spaces
- Tempted by partnership deals



### 4. Subdivision issues

- Subdivision of individual levels prevents easy redevelopment in long-term
- Strata title has some issues as strata age
- No open space contribution required - but demand may have significantly increased
- Contribution can't be used on streetscapes



Key issue concerns cont'd

### 5. Design of development that impact on leisure provision

- Building developments can discourage street activity, impact on sense of security etc.
- Dual driveways/ access to underground car parking impact on parking, street trees and path design
- Loss of trees and amenity value with no or small private open space
- No bicycle storage
- Privatisation of small street and public space
- "renewals/regeneration scheme"
- traditional rights of way replaced by "policed public realm arrangements"
- Approval of separate development without a structure plan- no service provision + sense of community



Key issue concerns cont'd

### 6. Urban design issues: amenity of remaining open space lost due to:

- Overshadowing, wind turbulence
- Close proximity to sports facilities making them unviable
- No planning controls protecting amenity of existing open space i.e. sports fields!



Key issue concerns cont'd

### 7 Need to cater for increased demand

May not be existing facilities or spaces if mixed use

- △ Existing spaces used more intensively and in different ways:
  - Touch football in Treasury Gardens
- △ Some activities not catered for especially within walking distance:
  - Shared trails
  - Pets
  - Skate facilities
  - Aquatics
  - Large green spaces
- △ Shops, community facilities and schools may not be present, and available to share with



### 4. What we expect: by 2030

- Increasing proportion of the population living in medium and high density apartments
- 50% will be multi level dwellings (about 1/3 of stock in Melbourne- 2001)
- 90% of new households will be one or two people
- Existing residents (older adults or adult children) will generate most demand for new, smaller households



### 4. What we expect:

#### Who are we planning for?

- A high proportion of high density are investors
- High proportion of lone persons, students and empty nesters
- High proportion of people who have lived overseas
- Typically small size of dwelling
- Sea changers
- Young single people attracted by the City
- High turnover of residents (56% in 5 years compared to 26% for single dwellings) due to:
  - being short term residents/ students
  - design of dwelling ie small, dog policy etc
  - noise and
  - lack of a sense of community



## 5. What are some of the likely changes in leisure behaviour?

- Decrease in incidental exercise and play, making and fixing things
- High demand to go out
- High bike ownership
- Pet ownership relative consistent with population
- Social and physical activity close to home
- Social club membership, sport (but less routine commitment)
- Wellbeing/ fitness classes
- Increased use by young people in City hanging out
- Not high take up of small gyms tennis courts on the roof etc.
- May be some implications of Unis not providing as much sports
- Leisure services and the quality of the immediate neighbourhood more important than in-house facilities
- Demand for community and cultural events and festivals
- Private balconies, courtyards and gardens in apartments



## 6. Planning methods

### 1. Inform developers, be prepared & informed

In order for councils to **cost effectively** + systematic deliver appropriate level and qualities of open space/leisure it is desirable for them to have:

- open space objectives and principles, and include in MSSs
- local inventories and an open space layer in GIS
- assess existing supply and potential use and benefits of land not reserved for that purpose
- undertake rigorous demand assessment (and to inform any local service requirements or standards)
- prepare strategic open space plans with costed implementation schedules
- include local open space policies and contribution levels into the local planning schemes
- develop strategies to enhance functionality and carrying capacity of existing spaces



## 6. Planning methods (con't) Optimal provision

Optimal open space provision only results when:

- △ the specific model for open space provision matches the settlement type (ie. ACs different to suburbs)
- △ base line provision for future residential land by area- not specific development
- △ demand and supply assessments determine the specific nature, range and distribution of open space functions and setting types
- Take into account:
  - △ ultimate densities
  - △ the relationship with private provision
  - △ the equity and viability of provision
  - △ leisure potential, suitability and capability of sites, incl. streetscapes, easements, schools, other public land
  - △ carrying capacity



## 7. Kingston leisure needs 2030

Investigate the potential impact of M2030 on leisure choices

Assess the capability of facilities and services to cater for projected population

Review Activity Centre planning in other municipalities

Provide recommendations and a future leisure planning framework

What we did:

- A review of policies and strategies
- A review of other activity centre strategies and structure plans
- A recreation activity demand analysis (conducted by Prof. A.J Veal, UTS) based on projected population
- Household survey of residents in ACs
- Community forums (one in each AC)
- Stakeholder interviews
- An analysis of facility and service provision within each AC
- For each type of facility determined a recommended level and standards of provision
- Identified key issues and actions overall



## Household survey

Main leisure activities undertaken: *walking, swimming, cycling and movies/ cinema*

Most regularly used facilities: *restaurants/ cafes, beach/ foreshore, cinema, walking/ cycling trails and local parks*

Most highly valued leisure facilities: *local parks, beach/ foreshore, restaurants/ cafes and libraries.*

Leisure activities people would like to do: *tai chi/ yoga/ pilates, gym, cycle, tennis and swimming.*



## Kingston 2030

Clear messages:

- importance of open space and neighbourhood character
- some benefits of more viable facilities
- concern about building bulk, loss of amenity, double curb access to garages, car parking, heights etc.
- wanted to ensure facilities are community not developers- or spread between too many developments

Issues

- How can demand for activities be accommodated?
- Affordability
- Locational & provision criteria
- Planning controls?
- Consistent types of facilities found in each; bowling clubs, senior cits, library, town park tennis etc.
- Enhance connectivity, permeability and access to the beach
- Create green streetscapes to capitalise on healthy living benefits while maximising what is achievable on small sites



## Desirables

- public social/ family recreation spaces, off road trails in walking distance in preference to communal private spaces
  - modest scale multi-purpose facilities
  - diversification of services in traditional community centres-
  - must be accessible and cater to wider range of people
  - opportunities for free social interaction/seating and exercise in all facilities, and public domain
  - a street focus for shopping and social activity
  - each activity centre has a core leisure provision and then a specialisation that differentiates it from another
- support of not-for-profit organisations and clubs for social connection
  - facilitating commercial leisure providers to meeting activity provision objectives
  - structure planning consider landscape and built form's impact on microclimate, views, accessibility, amenity and leisure
  - information within activity centres to direct people to appropriate opportunities
  - promoting interaction between leisure, education and transport sectors



## Strategies: Planning controls and core service provision

### Planning controls

- single drive way
- allow gym and fitness on shop tops
- protect and provide pedestrian access, and views onto to the beach
- encouraging a range of good sized and north facing private spaces courtyards, balconies and gardens) and those suitable for pets
- increase footpath width
- provide bicycle storage

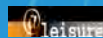
### Core service provision

- 1 Access to clubs providing leisure opportunities
2. Street based opportunities
3. Open space
4. Indoor centre that can be used for leisure
5. Information hub
6. Entertainment
7. Facilities to target specific markets
8. Exercise /access circuits



## Other strategies

- **Matrix: who responsible and where**
- **Different strategies according to different housing policy area**
- **Different strategy to acquire open space depending on nature of deficiency**
- **Future development sites to meet needs**
- **Substitute for parks: perception of green space/ off road trails circuit through centre etc, nature strips mature street trees**
- **Colocation of community / leisure service**
- **Roof or shop tops?**
- **Increasing carrying capacity**
- **Brown field sites**
- **Models will be different according to the context**



## 10. How planning could address open space in A Cs to leave a liveable legacy?

- **Starting point: include leisure and open space planning: demand and supply assessment at onset**
- **Everything has a place - everything in its place**
- **We can estimate demand by:**
  - Determining the benefits sought from open space and provide specific types of spaces that reflect these
  - Projecting the activities likely to be undertaken
  - Anticipating the population's response to supply
- **Not just a numbers game**
  - As if planning roads
  - Rabbits are a myth
  - Demographics; not too specific: visitor, worker and resident population
  - Good bones- facelift later
  - Balance public and private
  - Palette: green, blue, ochre



Where I started this presentation was to talk about different models of provision ....

where I want to end is - instead, to say the process... is most important and will determine the model that falls out!

.. Depending on local supply, demand and density, and the nature of involvement by the private sector.



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Fewer smaller private yards  
 Greater demand to get out and higher use of public space  
 Potentially higher urban induced stress - noise, lack of privacy, loneliness  
 Lack of flexibility to respond to change  
 No space for incidental play and physical exercise  
 Limited space for trees and vegetation in private space  
 More social opportunities for children's play



