
Shopping Precincts

Introduction

Shopping precincts provide essential goods and services for the community and are important places for social interaction. Shopping precincts can range in scale from a small local centre to a regional centre. Shopping precincts are often part of a mixed use activity centre.

Regardless of size, a range of design features in and around shopping precincts can encourage a variety of options for accessing the centre as well as supporting social interaction within the centre. As an example of the importance of shopping precincts, medical services are sometimes available and this may be the only supply of fresh food in the area.



Seating, shade and social interaction in
Main Street – Dubbo, NSW
Photo: SGS Economics and Planning

Consideration should be given to:

- siting new shopping precincts where they have the best access to the community they service and are co-located with compatible uses
- providing safe and direct access to the centre for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and vehicles
- providing facilities within and around the centre to encourage social interaction
- ensuring access and interaction is suitable for all members of the community especially the elderly, young people and carers with young children
- promoting centres that have an interaction or frontage with the street so that the community can control and modify spaces to suit evolving needs and also have the potential for 24 hours access to an area, and
- controlling the location and management of parking to ensure that the comfort and safety of pedestrians is not undermined by excessive expanses of parking areas.

Health & Planning Fact

Because shopping precincts provide essential services to the local and broader community, they are important destinations and are often within walking distance for many Australians.

Physical inactivity is a major burden on the health system, costing the economy an avoidable \$1.5 Billion a year (Medibank, 2007).

Encouraging walking and cycling to shopping precincts is one of the ways to address these preventable health issues. For local shopping precincts this generally means having a neighborhood radius of around 400-500 metres or a five minute walk for the surrounding residents (Liveable Neighbourhoods, 2007).

As shopping precincts are important locations for social interaction there need to be facilities within and to the centre for a range of users, including youth and older people. Research has indicated that the features of the built environment that can promote physical activity for older people include proximity to shops, particularly medical services, shady streets and footpaths (National Ageing Research Institute, 2003).

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The following design elements can support a range of active transport modes to the shopping precinct and also social interaction within the centre.

Spatial Location

- Centrally locate for the residential catchment of the shopping precinct.
- Ensure it is accessible for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and vehicles.

Structure

- Preferably configure the shopping precinct to have an active frontage to the street environment.



Seating, shade and social interaction
Main street shopping – Berry, NSW
Photo: SGS Economics and Planning

- Minimise areas of at grade parking between the street and shop fronts to avoid conflicts between pedestrians and cars.
- Where practicable integrate new shopping precincts near complementary uses such as community uses, recreation areas and medium to high residential development.

Transport Network and Design

- Provide safe access to the shopping precinct for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and vehicles.
- The pedestrian and cycling access should be part of a broader network connecting to residential areas and other adjoining uses, such as recreation areas and schools.
- Where relevant, safe bicycle facilities, including lock up areas, should be provided.
- Footpaths should be provided to provide safe movement.

Social Interaction

- Provide support facilities to encourage interaction and useability, such as seating, water fountains, shelter, public toilets and signage.
- Ensure the shopping precinct creates a safe environment such as by having traffic calmed streets and lighting to ensure safety.



Safe and direct pedestrian access, around shopping precinct - Bateman's Bay, NSW
Source: SGS Economics and Planning

PRACTICE ADVICE

Good Practice

- Provide a range of options to access the shopping precinct including by walking, cycling, vehicular and public transport.
- Integrate and link new shopping precincts with surrounding land uses.
- Include facilities for cyclists.
- Include well-designed car parks with safe access between car parks and shops.

Optimum Practice

- Integrate new shopping precincts with complementary uses.
- Provide appropriate facilities to encourage social interaction at the centre.

Avoid

- Catering solely for vehicular access rather than the full range of access options.
- Excluding or not welcoming a range of people at the shopping precinct.
- Fortress type shopping precincts that do not relate to the surrounding neighbourhood or permit access except by roads.



Seating and shade in Hastings Street,
Noosa, Qld
Source: SGS Economics and Planning

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