Attachment 4: City of Melbourne (2015) extracts from 'Places for People'
Places for People 2015 is a longitudinal research study that investigates the urban conditions of central Melbourne. This is the third edition of the study, which was originally published in 1994 and again in 2005.

Places for People has enabled us to track the built environment and public life of our city over time, and in doing so has provided us with a substantial data and evidence base.

Over the last three decades, City of Melbourne strategies and programs have worked towards creating a city that attracts people. These have been profoundly successful in reversing a long-term exodus of residents, workers and shoppers to the suburbs, which had seen the centre of Melbourne abandoned after work hours by the 1980s.

Melbourne is now experiencing rapid growth and change, which has generated new challenges for the city, particularly relating to the quality of life it supports for people. For example, how can Melbourne be sustained and improved while population densities increase, and relatively homogenous residential tower and podium development models dominate?

To enable us to respond to these challenges and plan for the future, the City of Melbourne has undertaken a complementary study to Places for People. The Local Liveability 2015 Study expands the approach to investigating Melbourne to capture some of the more complex elements and nuanced relationships with the city to better understand the conditions that enrich or compromise its liveability. The Local Liveability 2015 Study provides a new platform of evidence to facilitate an assessment framework that enables an integrated, more equitable and performance-based approach to urban planning and design.

Places for People 2015 applies a traditional urban research lens to build understanding of urban changes over time and at the district level. The Local Liveability 2015 Study adds an integrated and dynamic approach to reveal the local, contemporary Melbourne. It poses new questions and challenges our thinking about planning and design to enable Melbourne to continue its growth and development as a resilient and accessible city. It will inform thinking, planning and design to improve the quality of life in our city.
2. BACKGROUND

The premise of Places for People is that people are drawn to places of high-quality design that feature attractions and other people. A growing number of people over time is an indicator of success. Since 1993, Places for People has collected information for each decade to produce longitudinal data to monitor use and qualities of urban space.

Places for People measures particular urban conditions over time, documenting how the city is changing. The first Places for People (published 1994) focused on attracting people back to the city after a long-term exodus of residents, workers and shoppers to the expanding suburbs, which was compounded by the economic recession at this time. A decade after this, Places for People 2005 documented the city’s revitalisation as it redefined its regional and global identity and functions, attracting people back through residential, commercial and retail development and with regional attractions.

Places for People has traditionally measured the extraordinary rather than the ordinary - the special rather than the everyday and the regional rather than the local. Urban surveys have concentrated on prominent streets and public spaces in the retail core, followed by the commercial district and Southgate, and later extended to the growth areas of Southbank and Docklands.

While it remains valid to measure and monitor the city’s public environment and public life, the challenge of a declining population has now reversed, with substantial population growth projected to continue. Measuring success simply on the number of people who live in, work in and visit the municipality is no longer enough. Ensuring that Melbourne remains a functional city that performs for all is now vital.

A different set of issues demand a different method of urban investigation. The Local Liveability 2015 Study has developed a socio-spatial investigation to generate meaningful and current data to guide the city’s future growth and development. This study expands beyond the traditional focus on the public realm and considers how the city has rapidly changed in its urban form and structure, and the impact these changes have on the daily lives of Melbourne’s people. It aims to provide a ‘reality check’ of some aspects of the city’s functionality and to generate a fresh baseline that reflects actual conditions and how they inter-relate.

Together, Places for People 2015 and the Local Liveability 2015 study provide a substantial set of data on the city’s condition and over time they will offer important new insights into the city and city life that will be vital for planning its growth and development.
This section outlines the project premise and details the urban components researched to test that premise at a district scale according to the traditional Places for People method.

The scope and complexity of Places for People was expanded to investigate those urban conditions considered essential to the quality of the public realm as well as the quality of daily life (the latter more fully investigated in the Local Liveability 2015 Study).

While the project premise was founded on international best practice, Places for People research was tailored to capture the Melbourne condition relating to how the city has changed and how it currently performs.
Research Evolution

The research direction of the 2015 Places for People study was refined through a review of literature to identify relevant urban trends, their impacts, and best practice for addressing them. Six urban components or 'lenses' were identified as being significant for understanding Melbourne’s performance as a liveable, productive and resilient place for people, both through time and for the contemporary city (Fig. 1):

- Population
- Urban Structure
- Built Form
- Land Uses
- Public Space
- Movement

These lenses played a critical role in further defining and guiding the research, particularly in the analysis of data collected through the traditional methods of the Places for People study at the district level, to provide a sophisticated understanding of performance that goes beyond the public environment to consider other components of the city that shape everyday life.

In the formative period of research development, these urban lenses were defined in the following way:

Population

What is It?

The focus of the Places for People research is Melbourne’s communities, being those existing groups of people connected by place and/or social, cultural and economic networks of exchange, and which may include residents, workers, students and frequent visitors.

Why is it Important?

Places for People has always been a study about the city’s human dimension. Cities only exist because of people and so our urban environments should be assessed to consider population catchments and their needs. The number of residents, workers and daily visitors (including students) allows us to estimate the likely quantum and type of city users throughout the day and week, and the nature of their needs when in the city.

Urban Structure

What is It?

Urban structure is the spatial arrangement of a city’s primary organising components: the street blocks, street network, land parcels, and natural physical features such as rivers, floodplains and topography. Other aspects of the city, including the built form and land uses, contribute to and influence a city’s urban structure.

Why is it Important?

An investigation of urban structure is critical to understanding a city spatially. The scale and arrangement of a city’s urban structure will fundamentally influence the scale and arrangement of buildings, land uses and public space, and so ultimately determine how walkable and legible a city is.
Built Form

What is It?

Built form is the physical shape and scale of building volume in terms of height, width and depth, and how the building is articulated in regards to architectural details. The ‘skyline’ created by a group of buildings is also considered to be built form, but this is not the focus of Places for People. Rather, the relationship between buildings and public space, and how they shape people’s experiences of the city, is the focus of research.

Why is it Important?

Built form has a significant influence on people’s everyday experiences in public space. Where the built form is small-scale, rich in land uses and details, and presents many independent entrances to public space, it offers more variety of places to attract people. A range of different land uses also provide opportunities for social and economic exchange, and a purpose for walking. When buildings are designed to accommodate the car their form is profoundly different; large scale with few, if any, pedestrian entrances and a homogenous land use. The building presents a negative interface with the street that is unable to attract or sustain city life.

Public Space

What is It?

Public space is communal social space that is accessible to all people. It may include:

- Streets and malls (e.g. Bourke Street and Bourke Street Mall)
- Laneways and alleys (e.g. Hosier Lane)
- Urban squares and plazas (e.g. City Square)
- Parks and gardens (e.g. Fitzroy Gardens)
- River ways and promenades (e.g. Southgate).

Why is it Important?

Public space offers outdoor settings for city life beyond the privatised realm of buildings (Wall & Waterman 2010:52). The design and activities within public space are generally interpreted by the community as expressing a city or district’s culture, values or history. Promenades, streets and lanes function to channel pedestrians but also provide places to pause where there are seats. Squares, parks and gardens offer communal places for people to socialise or find respite, exercise or to rest. Where public space features planting, it may function as ecological space and provide city dwellers and workers with a connection to nature. Public spaces associated with a vast range of land uses or attractions provide destinations for visitors and locals. Public places designed for the car tend to devalue the space for people. This has ongoing implications, as people go where people are.

Land Uses

What is It?

Land uses are those activities that occur inside buildings.

Why is it Important?

The variety and type of land uses are considered fundamental to giving purpose to walking, and have a critical impact on providing access to everyday needs. Of particular importance is creating locally-based opportunities for exchange and reciprocation, are those primary land uses that meet daily needs and generate production (as opposed to consumption).

Movement

What is It?

Places for People focuses on walking as the primary mode of transport in the city. The traditional study considered the design of public space, its built form edges and the connectivity of the pedestrian network as principal determinants for walkability. Places for People 2015 also considers the presence of land uses to provide a purpose for walking, and believes this condition is fundamental to determining if the city is walkable.

Why is it Important?

The degree of walkability is critical for determining a district’s ability to attract and support public life in the street, as well as its environmental and economic resilience in facilitating walking rather than car dependency.

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1 Production is the degree to which these land uses contribute to productive networks of exchange, and are generally the antithesis to land uses that generate consumption (e.g. retail).
Built Form: Towers (Mid 2010s)

(Places for People 2015 Study Area)

Within the 2015 study area, there are 186 sites that feature towers (buildings 18 storeys or over), of which 128 (69%) have been constructed since 1985 (Fig. 29). According to the City of Melbourne’s Development Activity Monitor (August 2014), there are 145 towers proposed for the study area, likely to be constructed in the next five years (2014-2019). Of these proposed towers:

- 14% are over 60 storeys (at least 180m tall)
- 95 have been granted planning permits
- 50 are under consideration by the Planning Minister

Between the mid-1950s, when the first tower was built (ICI House) and 2013, an average of 3.3 towers were constructed per year. If all 145 proposed towers are constructed within the next five years (2014-2019), there will be 29 towers constructed annually. This represents an increased growth rate in tower construction by 779%.

The increase in the number of towers is significant for impacts to local areas. A comparison of three blocks, one each from the central city, Docklands and Southbank, demonstrates compelling evidence that towers generally, and podium towers in particular, lead to a poorer interface between building and public environment, both in the number and type of doors, and quality of street level and upper level facades (Figs. 30-33).

Podium towers also restrict the potential for land uses. By accommodating onsite car parking at street and upper levels, these buildings offer few land uses for locals, and without internal occupation by people, they provide no passive surveillance in the critical first several building storeys where people in the street and building occupants can see each other (Fig. 33).
FIG. 28. The trajectory of tower development in Melbourne, over time.

FIG. 29. Existing and proposed towers (buildings 18 storeys or over).
FIG. 30. The location of the three blocks for comparison in built form, occupants and land uses.

Fig. 31. Three block comparison of central city, Docklands and Southbank, showing the relationship between building type and interface with the public environment.
Fig. 32. Three block comparison of central city, Docklands and Southbank, showing the relationship between building type and interface with the public environment, where ‘A’ is the highest quality and ‘C’ the poorest.
Towers and Podium Towers

BUILDINGS WITHIN THE 40m height limit
E.G. CENTRAL CITY

RETAIL
MIXED USE
(Including retail, commercial, medical, residential...)
RESIDENTIAL
CAR PARKING

40m Height limit
Threshold for people to engage between building and street

Towers are 18 storeys (approx. 54m) or more

RESIDENTIAL TOWERS
E.G. SOUTHBANK

FIG. 33. A comparison between the podium tower and building within the central city’s 40m height limit, which shows the differences between degree of interaction with the public environment, and the types of land uses that occupy different levels.
Built Form: Street Level Facades (1993-2013)

(Places for People 2015 Study Area)

The survey of street level facades since 1993 demonstrates the importance of development scale and intricacy of land uses to produce animated streets. The quality of street level facades has improved in the central city, in particular the western portion (Fig. 36). This may be attributed to Council policy for improving the pedestrian appeal of facades at ground level, but also due to a maturing city that is acquiring greater complexity through smaller ground floor tenancies. However, there are redevelopment projects that diminish rather than contribute to a more vibrant and animated city, by demolishing small scaled tenancies with large scaled and internalised buildings (Figs. 34 & 35).

In Docklands, a pattern is evolving for ground floor tenancies that front onto the water or main streets, and with this, richer and more permeable street facades compared to the ‘back-of-house’ that accommodate car park entries and services. This ‘front-of-house’ vs. ‘back-of-house’ dichotomy is particularly pronounced in Victoria Harbour and Waterfront City, creating two extremes of engagement and disengagement (Fig. 32).

In Southbank, the primary form of development is podium towers with few land uses at street level. The fact that so many towers have a limited interface with the street, creates not only a dormant urban form, but a place with little passive surveillance that is critical to people’s sense of safety and security (Figs. 32 & 33).

**FIG. 34.** In Caledonian Lane, the recently developed Emporium with “back-of-house” loading and services (right) has replaced multiple small shop fronts (above).


**FIG. 35.** Examples of the difference in ‘A’ to ‘C’ graded street level facades, according to the Places for People survey method.

FIG. 36. ‘A’ to ‘C’ graded street level facades, according to the Places for People survey method.

NB:
• This map is a summary of the 1993 fieldwork.
• The laneways were not surveyed in 1993.

NB:
• This map is a summary of the 2013 fieldwork.
• The laneways were surveyed in 2013.
Built Form: Upper Level Facades (2013)

(Places for People 2015 Study Area)

The survey of upper level facades is new to the Places for People 2015 study, introduced to capture the first few building storeys that are critical for people in the street to engage with internal activities and occupants, and vice versa (Figs. 33 & 37).

This survey has revealed a similar relationship as to street level facades: the scale of tenancies and the number and mix of land uses is generally associated with the quality of facades. The presence of podium towers with onsite car parking has a diminishing affect on the quality of facades (Figs. 32 & 33 and Figs. 37 & 38). Where buildings have tenancies for people rather than cars, the quality of the upper facade is higher.
FIG. 37. Examples of the difference in ‘A’ to ‘C’ graded upper level facades, according to the Places for People survey method.

(SOURCES - City of Melbourne, 2013)

FIG. 38. Quality of upper level facades in 2013.

2013

- ‘A’ Grade
- ‘B’ Grade
- ‘C’ Grade

FIG. 38. Quality of upper level facades in 2013.
Places for People 2015 expands beyond the traditional focus of the public realm and highlights the congruencies between private development and connected local living. The comparative block studies reveal the impact of built form on land use, urban structure and walkability in three different locations within the study area: the central city, Southbank and Docklands (Fig. 30 and Fig. 49).

Significant observations were made in relation to the podium tower blocks in Southbank and Docklands. The large-scale building footprints of the podium tower blocks generated a coarsely grained urban structure. Above-ground car parking discourages walkability and increases car dependence. Large occupancies for businesses provide few entrances onto the public realm where there are low levels of social interaction (low pedestrian counts). The large floor plate dimensions with towers above impose a reliance on mechanical systems for ventilation, cooling and lighting. There is a prevalence of tall towers on top of podiums offering only a homogenous housing ‘choice’ aimed at a narrow purchaser market, and so limiting the diversity of occupants. These typologies avail themselves to limited adaptability to suit peoples’ changing needs. The height of towers and their set back from the street diminishes peoples’ sense of connectedness to the street, and passive surveillance of the public realm.

The central city block consists of smaller-scale buildings with a finer-grain urban structure. This enables a more diverse and higher quantity of land uses around small-scale streets and laneways, favouring a range of small to medium businesses with multiple entrances, giving more purpose and interest to walking. There is no car parking in the central city block. The central city buildings feature narrow floor plates and higher floor-to-ceiling heights that are adaptable to changing land uses over time.

FIG. 49 (pp. 67-69). Three block comparison of central city, Docklands and Southbank, showing the relationship between building type, occupants and land uses.

CENTRAL CITY

Towers and Podium Towers

0 TOWERS

Residents

129 RESIDENTS

Business Occupants

511 BUSINESS OCCUPANTS

DOCKLANDS

Towers and Podium Towers

4 TOWERS

Residents

2229 RESIDENTS

(SITES INCLUDED BEYOND THE STUDY BLOCK)

Business Occupants

178 BUSINESS OCCUPANTS

SOUTH BANK

Towers and Podium Towers

5 TOWERS

Residents

1561 RESIDENTS

Business Occupants

23 BUSINESS OCCUPANTS

0-100  201-300  401-500  1001-2000
101-200  301-400  501-1000  NO DATA
2001+
CENTRAL CITY

Onsite Carparking

0 ONSITE CAR PARKS

Essential Land Uses

68 ESSENTIAL LAND USES

DOCKLANDS

Onsite Carparking

1100 ONSITE CAR PARKS

Essential Land Uses

3 ESSENTIAL LAND USES

- Arts, Culture and Religion
- Community Services and Facilities
- Education
- Health, Fitness and Beauty
- Retail Goods
- Hospitality and Entertainment
- Medical

SOUTHBank

Onsite Carparking

1292 ONSITE CAR PARKS

Essential Land Uses

1 ESSENTIAL LAND USE