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Introduction

Successful places are those where a community, made up of a range of people, can meet their daily needs within an easy walking distance.

To achieve this, design decisions regarding where to locate different activities, such as shops, parks and houses, are crucial. Subdivision design must consider where future activities will be located, and the interconnections between them, from the earliest point in the design and development process. An important factor that must be prioritised is where and at what density will people (and their houses) be located, so to use density to support the commercial, retail, education and other facilities, including public transport, that will subsequently be provided.

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Mixed Communities

Design Outcome

Subdivisions have a mix of useable section types, sizes, uses and activities, which facilitate diversity and adaptability

The most efficient and productive use of land is that which allows more people to undertake more activities.

Subdivisions that provide for a range of different living and housing opportunities create multiple benefits, including:

- enabling people to move around within their neighbourhood, staying in the same community over time as their lifestyle needs change
- making subdivisions less susceptible to market shocks that can affect the demand from particular demographics (such as young families, empty nesters, or large families)
- reducing the likelihood of crime, due to various residents being at home at different times, collectively keeping an eye on things at all hours of the day.

In addition, allowing for logical future changes provides further choice and future efficiencies for all.

Better Design Practice

- Subdivision design should focus on the quality of lots, i.e. their suitability for intended use, not the number of lots.
- Subdivisions should provide for a variety of land uses (residential and non-residential) and land use types.
- Where residential development is located next to other activities (e.g. commercial or industrial), visual and amenity buffers should be used along the boundaries between sites, with buffers located mainly on the lowest value side of the boundary and accommodated through additional lot size.
- Access to open spaces, views, and outlook areas are especially important for smaller lots, where there are less on-site alternatives.
- Aim for a range of lot prices, types and sizes in all subdivisions, and ensure a range within any subdivision of 10 or more lots.
- Subdivision design should consider how lots could be changed in the future (either combined or further subdivided).

Rules of Thumb

1. Consider how lots bigger than approximately 650m² could be designed to allow for further subdivision in the future.

In particular, consider the ability to provide for building platforms, access, privacy and neighbour amenity.

2. There should be a range of at least 20 per cent either side of the median lot area within a subdivision.

I.e. if the median lot size is 500m², then the subdivision should provide a range of lot sizes from 400m² to 600m².

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Identify current and future intensification

Design Outcome

Subdivisions are located in areas that can accommodate current and future intensification

Intensification and infill can often be problematic if not designed for from the outset. This is because windows, outdoor spaces, and driveways on adjacent sections can limit the opportunity for a future dwelling to be accommodated without creating use conflicts and nuisances such as noise and overlooking.

Where a subdivision is proposed in a part of Auckland that could support future intensification (e.g. areas that are close to a town centre), consideration should be given to how any future redevelopment could be undertaken as easily as possible. This could be accommodated in lot sizes, the location of landscaping areas or building platforms, and wherever possible the provision for future vehicle access and private infrastructure pipes in ways that will serve multiple lots.

Better Design Practice

- Density should be carefully integrated with open spaces, views, and outlook.
- Specify building platforms, vehicle crossings and outdoor living spaces so that future development can be accommodated successfully, for both existing and future residents.
- Locate the highest density of properties in areas of highest amenity.

Rules of Thumb

1. Locate the smallest lots close to open spaces and other amenities, which could include views or outlook opportunity.

This means lots with smaller private open space benefit from the public spaces and amenities.

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Placement and integration of amenities

Design Outcome

Subdivision design locates amenities where they have maximum exposure and accessibility

Good access to amenities like parks or local shops increases the likelihood that amenities and the routes to them will be used more, and users will feel safer.

This maximises the social and economic return on the community's investment in those amenities through: • higher property values, • a stronger sense of local identity • more public use of expensive infrastructure like parks and playground equipment.

Better Design Practice

- Connections between important amenities and features should be highlighted through street layout, street trees and other prompts.
- Locate amenities and exemplar development on prominent sites. For example at intersections or on sites that are highly visible.
- Integrate amenities and routes to them into the subdivision by maximising their road frontage, and planning for future land uses to overlook the amenities. Landscaping should also be used to emphasise the presence of features in the subdivision.

Rules of Thumb

1. Aim to have public street fronts (or the fronts of dwellings) for at least two thirds of all open spaces and retained natural features, except habitat or ecological spaces not intended for recreational use or human access.

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Open space provision

Design Outcome

Within a subdivision, consider the location, type, and amount of open space and other public amenities provided. Enhance existing networks and provide a variety of open spaces for different uses.

Not all open spaces are the same. Large fields allow for informal and organised sports play. Smaller and more intimate areas allow neighbours to meet and supervise children's play, while longer and varied spaces connect places and provide for recreational walks.

Streets are our most important public spaces as people gain enjoyment from a pleasant and safe street with many activities and buildings occurring along it. Very small pocket parks (other than within road reserves) can also be very valuable to locals. However, these are typically more

successful when provided as communal open spaces, rather than as public space, as this allows much greater flexibility in location and design.

Better Design Practice

- Consider the type of open space and recreational activities that will benefit future residents the most.
- Try to physically connect to, expand on or compliment existing open space networks, rather than creating similar open spaces to those that already exist.
- Locate public open spaces for recreation on flat, usable land in accessible and obvious locations.
- Locate public open spaces for ecological or habitat protection so that they can be seen by people, but are not exposed to interference.

Rules of Thumb

1. Identify and assess the quality of existing open space and public accessible areas in the surrounding area before determining and designing such areas within a new subdivision.

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Public access

Design Outcome

Streets provide public movement and access throughout a subdivision

Irrespective of ownership, streets should be thought of as the public domain, where people can meet, congregate, move and linger.

Better Design Practice

- All streets should have public access rights, even when privately owned.
- The standard of street design and performance should be the same whether the street is planned for future public or private ownership.