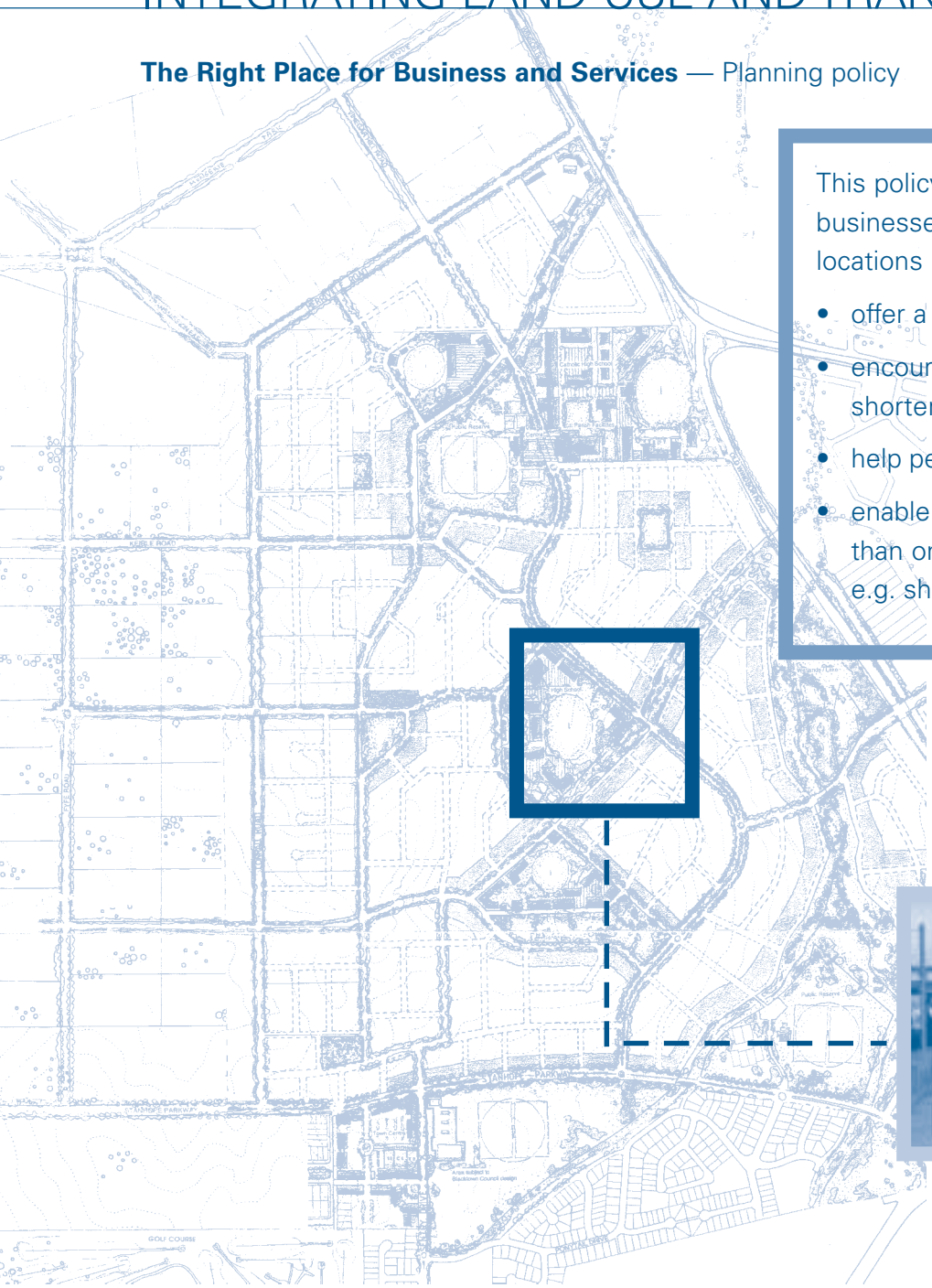
INTEGRATING LAND USE AND TRANSPORT

The Right Place for Business and Services — Planning policy



This policy explains why important businesses and services should be in locations which:

- offer a choice of transport
- encourage people to travel shorter distances
- help people to make fewer trips
- enable people to carry out more than one activity in a single trip, e.g. shop and go to work.

TRANSPORT NSW

Department of
Urban Affairs and Planning

ABOUT THIS POLICY

Providing good access in our cities while ensuring more sustainable and livable urban areas requires a change of thinking. This policy plans for a better arrangement of land uses in support of centres and the transport systems which serve them.

Contents

The right place for business and services contains:

- reasons why businesses and services which generate transport demand should be in locations that offer a choice of transport, and increase opportunities for people to make fewer and shorter trips
- objectives for the location of development and mixed use centres
- directions on the right location for business and services
- tests for formulating and determining plans and proposals
- guidance on creating and maintaining successful mixed use centres, which encourage multi-purpose trips
- design advice for development
- explanatory notes on applying the policy.

Background

This policy applies to urban areas across the state and is part of a series of policies, guidelines and research which support *Shaping Our Cities*, the planning strategy for the Greater Metropolitan Region.

Shaping our Cities contains strategies to reduce the need for car travel and provide more equitable access to jobs and services. Implementing the strategies outlined in this policy and in *Shaping Our Cities* will:

- help achieve the aims of the government's air quality management plan, *Action for Air*
- enhance the viability of investment in new public transport under the NSW transport plan, *Action for Transport 2010*
- help achieve a range of social, environmental and economic goals including equity, neighbourhood amenity and lower road congestion
- support the NSW Government's commitment to the National Greenhouse Strategy.

This policy will be reviewed after a year in consultation with councils and industry to determine its effectiveness and ease of application. It will be modified to satisfy user needs, if necessary, otherwise it will be amended as the need arises. Register for updates with **metro@duap.nsw.gov.au**.

Some technical terms used in this policy

Managing travel demand — refers to measures which:

- minimise the need to travel and the length of trips, particularly by cars
- direct travel to the most sustainable mode of transport

Mixed use centres — centres containing a variety of services and activities such as businesses, shops, community services and entertainment facilities

Multi-purpose trips — trips taken for more than one purpose, for example, shopping is done on the way home from work

Net community benefit — development which has no detrimental effect on public or private investment in centres and which addresses the assessment criteria in this policy

Trip-generating development — businesses and services that are frequently accessed by many people and create a demand for travel.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

The policy explains why businesses and services which generate transport demand should be in locations that offer a choice of transport and encourage people to make fewer and shorter trips. Dispersed locations cannot be accommodated without significant community and environmental costs.

Aims

This policy aims to encourage a network of vibrant, accessible mixed use centres which are closely aligned with and accessible by public transport, walking and cycling.

Responsive planning, consistent decision making and good design and management are needed to ensure that:

- there are development opportunities in centres for businesses and services
- community investment in infrastructure is protected
- investor confidence in centres is maintained.

Objectives

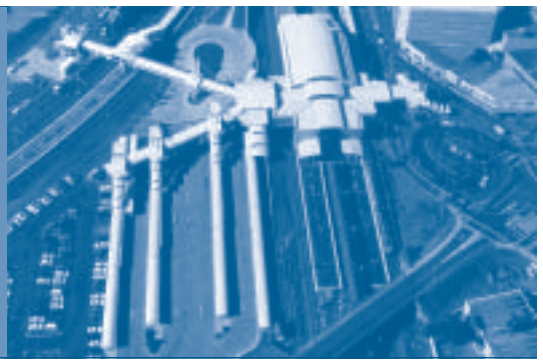
The planning objectives of the policy are to:

- locate trip-generating development which provides important services in places that:
  - help reduce reliance on cars and moderate the demand for car travel
  - encourage multi-purpose trips
  - encourage people to travel on public transport, walk or cycle
  - provide people with equitable and efficient access
- minimise dispersed trip-generating development that can only be accessed by cars
- ensure that a network of viable, mixed use centres closely aligned with the public transport system accommodates and creates opportunities for business growth and service delivery
- protect and maximise community investment in centres, and in transport infrastructure and facilities
- encourage continuing private and public investment in centres, and ensure that they are well designed, managed and maintained
- foster growth, competition, innovation and investment confidence in centres, especially in the retail and entertainment sectors, through consistent and responsive decision making.

Structure

The right place for business and services policy comprises:

- **The right location** — locating trip-generating activities and development in places that optimise accessibility, limit the demand for travel, encourage and facilitate public transport use, and reduce car travel and reliance on cars
- **The right centre** — supporting a viable network of mixed use centres of a variety of sizes and functions to accommodate activities and services, foster the greater use of public transport, walking and cycling, and encourage multi-purpose trips
- **Explanatory notes** — these support the principles outlined in **The right location** and **The right centre**.



Developments to which the policy applies

The policy applies to developments that:

- generate many trips from employees, customers or visitors
- provide important services, and generally have a gross floorspace of 1,000 m^2 or more. Floorspace is a guide only and the policy implications for development will vary according to its location, regional setting and cumulative effects.

Such developments include:

- retailing, which refers to all places where goods are traded to the public including markets, bulky goods warehouses, 'big box' superstores and factory outlets
- leisure and entertainment facilities
- offices (other than those offices ancillary to industrial or non-retail commercial land uses)
- health and education facilities
- community and personal services.

Implemention

To implement the policy, councils will need to incorporate its objectives and advice into local planning strategies and plans to guide development and rezoning decisions.

Relationship to other policies

The right place for business and services supersedes:

- the Draft Retail Policy 1996
- all references to bulky goods in the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning's Circular C11 for the Greater Metropolitan Region.

THE RIGHT LOCATION

The policy objectives can be most effectively achieved by locating trip-generating development in and adjoining accessible mixed use centres.

A mix of land uses will help maximise single multi-purpose trips, while accessibility can be optimised in the following circumstances for:

- retail, cinemas, services and the like – accessibility is optimised when their service catchment or customer trade area matches the capacity and radial extent of the centre's public transport network
- major office development – accessibility for employees is maximised when offices are concentrated in major urban centres to maximise mode share to public transport
- other office development – accessibility is maximised when it is located on mass transit routes, especially rail. (This is not applicable to office development ancillary to industrial or other land uses.)

Matching trade areas or service catchments to the public transport network is the key to maximising accessibility.

Trip-generating development cannot always be located within these parameters because of urban structure, redevelopment opportunities or local circumstances. Development on isolated, stand-alone sites is generally not acceptable. However, alternatives may be acceptable when a **net community benefit** can be clearly established. That is, proposals must ensure that there will be no detrimental effect on public investment in centres and that private investment certainty in centres is maintained. They should also be able to provide the same performance as a centre, with suitable accessibility to:

- manage travel demand
- utilise public transport
- moderate car use.

Net community benefit assessment criteria

In determining the net community benefit or cost, the following **assessment criteria** must be considered:

- the degree to which the policy and its objectives can be satisfied
- the proposed level of accessibility to the catchment of the development by public transport, walking and cycling
- the likely effect on trip patterns, travel demand and car use
- the likely impact on the economic performance and viability of existing centres (including the confidence of future investment in centres and the likely effects of any oversupply in commercial or office space on centres — *see section B of the explanatory notes*)
- the amount of use of public infrastructure and facilities in centres, and the direct and indirect cost of the proposal to the public sector
- the practicality of alternative locations which may better achieve the outcomes the policy is seeking
- the ability of the proposal to adapt its format or design to more likely secure a site within or adjoining a centre or in a better location.

Any proposal to rezone land for trip-generating businesses or services should conform to a local strategy which incorporates the policy objectives.

A relevant draft Local Environmental Plan (LEP), therefore should only be submitted by council to the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning with a strategic justification in terms of this policy and the net community benefit assessment criteria.

The decision trees in section E of the explanatory notes summarise the application of the policy to land use and development decision making.

Locating development

Directions for specific land uses are provided below. Consult the explanatory notes in Part 3 for more detailed information in relation to retail formats and competition.

Retail

Retail is essential to the activity and viability of most centres because of its dominance of economic activity and relationship with personal and other services. Shops typically generate high trip levels and those serving more than a neighbourhood catchment should always be located in centres and be provided with pedestrian, cycling and public transport access. Retailers often prefer locations on main roads which afford high exposure. These locations should make the best use of road and public transport infrastructure.

Supermarkets and large specialist and department stores have an important role in anchoring a broad range of shopping and other services and thereby allow single multi-purpose trips. Retail proposals should be accommodated in centres to allow choice and free pedestrian movement. Ideally, a single retail property should not comprise the whole centre so as to allow for new market entrants and competition and avoid the unnecessary creation of new centres. It is particularly important for decision-makers to be consistent and fair because of the competitive nature of the industry.

Refer to the explanatory notes for pointers on retail formats including 'big box' factory outlets and markets.

Assessment of net community benefit may highlight the need to provide a **Transport Management and Accessibility Plan** for a proposal. Such a plan should address the willingness of the proponent to put in place travel demand management measures.

Bulky goods outlets

Bulky goods outlets have a physical need for space to display and handle large goods, however, they can be located in centres.

When it is not realistic for bulky goods outlets to be in centres, they should be located in one or two regional clusters to help moderate travel demand and allow for public transport accessibility. Existing clusters should be reinforced. If justified, new clusters should be in areas that would indirectly support major centres and link to public transport corridors.

To determine whether a new cluster is justified or a development proposal is suitable for a cluster location, the following issues, additional to the net community benefit criteria, must be assessed:

- the economic and social impact on existing and planned centres
- the demand for the amount of floor space for trading bulky goods and the potential impact any oversupply would have on existing centres
- the degree and potential of short- and long-term accessibility by public transport
- the effect on the demand for travel and impact of increased traffic to the arterial road network
- where industrial areas are proposed to be used, the operational and access needs of existing and future industry and the impact on property prices for industrial development.

Retail and main roads

We need to make the best use of road space and public transport infrastructure. Where there is conflict of use, this outweighs the desires of retailers who seek exposure along roads and at other high profile locations.

Out-of-centre locations are not automatically necessary for **bulky goods** outlets and locational decisions depend on the regional setting.

See section C of the explanatory notes.

Leisure and entertainment

Leisure and entertainment facilities include cinemas, theatres, bowling alleys, gymnasiums, clubs, hotels and amusement centres. They support the viability of centres, extend their hours of activity and generate high trip levels. They should always be located in centres with suitable accessibility.

The definition of 'places of assembly' in the Environmental Planning and Assesment Model Provisions 1980 includes cinemas and the like. Where an industrial zone permits 'places of assembly', that instrument should be changed to ensure that extensive entertainment facilities such as cinema multiplexes are prohibited in that zone. A proposal for an entertainment facility adjoining a centre or located with an existing major facility may be appropriate, subject to the net community benefit assessment criteria.

Offices

Offices, where not ancillary to industry, should be located in existing centres where they can benefit from proximity to services, be accessible by public transport and provide for more equitable access to employment opportunities.

Major office facilities must be aligned with the existing or committed future metropolitan transport system to ensure that a reasonable mode share to public transport and non-car modes can be achieved and be concentrated in major centres — see The right centre.

Smaller office proposals, including business parks and freestanding offices on employment or other lands located beyond walking distances of an existing (or committed future) CityRail station (or equivalent transport interchange) are not encouraged. Offices such as those that accommodate micro or small businesses and district level services can be located in smaller centres.

Community, health and education facilities

Community, health and education facilities include government services, colleges and universities, libraries and hospitals that serve many people and needs. They must be easily available to the whole community so, wherever possible, they should be located in centres that can be accessed by a choice of transport.

Higher order establishments such as main university campuses and regional hospitals that require very large sites may not be feasibly located within centres. These should be located close to regional centres and link with them using local transport corridors.

There can be opportunities for retail and personal services development in higher order establishments in circumstances where:

- they are accessible to public transport
- the level of public transport use, walking and cycling is equivalent to comparable centres
- they have a net community benefit.

Existing isolated commercial developments

Poorly located trip-generating developments exist throughout the metropolitan area, many of which would not be approved today. Often circumstances surrounding these are unique so a single policy response to their future is not possible. However, given that most commercial operations need to change over time, decision makers are faced with the following planning options:

- allow for change and growth conditional on improvements to manage travel demand and improve access by public transport
- plan for the commercial operation's evolution into an appropriate mixed use centre with suitable social and transport infrastructure
- limit any expansion, and plan for an orderly and fair phasing out of the land use.

The net community benefit should guide the most appropriate response, while the considerations described for different types of development in this section should be applied when making a development decision.

THE RIGHT CENTRE

Successful centres contain different activities, are accessible by public transport, walking and cycling, and are supported by government, business and the community. The size, status and functions of a centre should ideally correspond to its level of accessibility by various means of transport and its level of community investment.

Preferred locations for centres

Sydney CBD (including North Sydney), Parramatta, Newcastle and Wollongong are the primary commercial and institutional hubs in the Greater Metropolitan Region. They are also the preferred locations for activities which cater to large numbers of people.

Major urban centres with relatively high levels of accessibility and community investment in infrastructure and public services are listed below. They are the preferred locations for large-scale suburban office development (floorspace typically 5000 m^2 — guide only) and higher order retail, entertainment, commercial and public facilities.

Centres serving districts are important as they meet the local demand for retail facilities (especially supermarkets, discount department stores and the like) and other services.

Suitable patterns for lower order centres will differ from place to place, requiring councils to interpret policies in this document depending on local circumstances. The role of the neighbourhood shop or cluster in accessible locations is also recognised as having an important role in reducing the need for car trips.

New centres are required in expanding urban areas, and they may also be needed in existing areas because of significant population growth or social trends. The assessment criteria outlined under Locating Development should be used as a basis for evaluating the need for a new centre.

Major urban centres— Greater Metropolitan Region

Sydney		
Bankstown	Blacktown	Bondi Junction
Burwood	Camden	Campbelltown
Castle Hill	Chatswood	Dee Why/Brookvale*
Fairfield/Cabramatta*	Hornsby	Hurstville
Liverpool	Macquarie Park	Mount Druitt
Rouse Hill**	North Sydney	Penrith
Pyrmont	Richmond/Windsor	St Leonards
Sutherland/Miranda*		
Newcastle		
Charlestown	Glendale	Kotara
Maitland		
Central Coast		
Gosford/Erina*	Wyong/Tuggerah*	
Wollongong		
Warrawong	Dapto	Shellharbour Square

* *Nearby centres that combine to provide a range of higher order services*

** *Planned future centre*

Planning successful centres

As successful centres satisfy community and market expectations, their size, status and functions should correspond to their level of accessibility by various means of transport and their level of community investment.

A centre should contain some of these elements:

- **diverse uses** that help maintain economic activity and viability, and extend centre use into the evening and weekends
- **employment opportunities** maximising the use of public transport and convenience for workers and visitors
- **attractive, lively, safe and secure places** with an active, accessible public area
- **transport infrastructure and management** that prioritise pedestrian movement and public transport access
- **flexibility to adapt to changing community and commercial needs** to remain places of personal and business opportunity
- **a recognisable character and a focus for interaction** valued by the community and businesses.

Ensuring the success of centres

Centres need the support and cooperation of councils, state agencies and industry.

Local government have the major responsibility for ensuring the success of centres. They should:

- anticipate and plan strategically to accommodate growth, change and continuing investment in centres while implementing measures for centres at risk of decline
- effectively manage and promote centres and respond to public investment in centres, particularly the transport infrastructure outlined in *Action for Transport 2010*
- provide detailed design directions to guide development
- develop policies on parking, public transport, cycling and walking, and provide information on access
- provide a consistent approach to decision making to foster investment confidence by industry and state agencies.

State government agencies should help councils plan and manage centres and participate in the strategic planning of major centres. To more directly support centres, agencies should:

- program and provide required transport and other infrastructure wherever priority is established
- use opportunities through government policies and programs
- locate services, facilities and government offices in suitable centres
- consider the design and commercial implications of public works and initiatives on the activity and viability of centres.

Industry can greatly assist through using good urban design and taking more responsibility for reducing travel demand and reliance on cars. In return, industry can gain commercial benefits from better investment certainty as well as better efficiency from well-managed centres.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

These explanatory notes deal with reducing the demand for car use and encouraging the accessibility of mixed use centres by walking, cycling and public transport. The notes provide background to the policy, design pointers, as well as clarifications of how the policy is applied in plan making and development assessment.

A. Shops, cinemas and transport

The issues of trip generation and equitable access to facilities should direct the location of retail and cinema proposals.

Most people use a car for most of their travel needs including shopping and entertainment. However, it is not appropriate to rely solely on car use when planning the location and design of trip-generating developments because:

- it will further encourage car use or exclude other transport choices, leading to excessive demand for car use and traffic congestion
- the current growth in car use is unsustainable, requiring moderation through measures that include greater use of other means of transport
- many trips, to shops for example, are still undertaken by other means of transport modes other than the car
- the potential for multi-purpose trips helps minimise travel demand but requires activities to be grouped together
- not everyone has access to a car for travel and certain groups in the community such as older or young people can be particularly disadvantaged.

Additionally, community and commercial services sectors are major employers, e.g. one in eight of all jobs in the Greater Metropolitan Region (GMR) are in the retail sector alone. The journey to work for these employees comprises a large share of travel demand. Many of these employees as thay are less well paid, are less able to afford a car.

Encouraging as many businesses as possible to locate in centres accessible by public transport will help better manage the journey to work and provide more equitable access to job opportunities. In addition, the potential for multi-purpose trips in mixed use centres mean people working in these areas will be able to use their journey to and from work to access other services and activities.

Statistics on trips for shopping in the Greater Metropolitan Region

- In 1997, 11% of weekday trips and 14% of weekend trips comprised going to a shop.
- Between 1991 and 1997 the number of trips to shops increased by 4% and the length of trips (in distance) increased by 13%.
- While use of the private car for shopping has grown steadily, in 1997 other modes of transport (public transport, walking and cycling) still accounted for around 37% of all trips to shops.
- In 1996, 16% of all households had no vehicle, rising to about 28% in the inner region.
- In 1996 the retail trade sector employed 13% of the total GMR workforce, comprising a sizeable share of the journey to work.

Source: ABS 1996 — Journey to Work and NSW Transport Data Centre 1999 Household Travel Survey.

B. Competition, planning and formats

Retailing and other commercial sectors operate in very competitive environments that benefit consumers and the economic efficiency of the region. By locating commercial development in centres where the proximity of other businesses facilitates comparison and direct competition, all consumers can benefit.

A centre should not be commercially threatened by competition from a new retail proposal, however. Community facilities (including public infrastructure and shopping convenience) must not be placed in jeopardy by the new development. This important legal principle was established by the High Court (see Stephen J, paragraph 17, Kentucky Fried Chicken Pty Ltd v Gantidis (1979) 140 CLR 675) and is most relevant in considering new centre or out-of-centre proposals.

Retail and other commercial sectors often favour innovative new formats that reflect changes in consumer preferences, marketing techniques or economic circumstances. It is not appropriate to create special planning rules for different retail, entertainment or other formats as these interfere with fair competition and encourage contrived formats that attempt to beat the regulations. Also, a new format has generally the same social and economic importance for the activity and viability of centres and generates the same transport demands as a traditional one. New formats must therefore satisfy the same locational and design requirements as existing formats.

C. Retail outlets

The following types of retail outlets can be challenging for planners, especially when they try to respond to market innovation while remaining fair to market interests.

Retailing is carried out in a wide range of formats that constantly change and are often difficult to define. Providing special rules for different outlets is often unproductive and unfair – see Section B. Competition, planning and formats above. The following information should help planners make responsible decisions.

Bulky goods outlets

Bulky goods outlets need space to display and handle large goods. Where centre locations are not feasible they are sometimes permitted in out-of-centre locations. This approach represents a balance between retailer and consumer needs and the community cost of dispersed commercial activity.

Regulation of the format is often required to stop bulky goods outlets selling non-bulky goods. This practice impacts on centres and raises community costs beyond any benefit. Where such concerns exist, councils are encouraged to apply floorspace limits or restrictions on the types of goods for sale. This is a fair restriction in return for the cost and locational advantages not available to other retail outlets.

Out-of-centre clusters are not automatically necessary for bulky goods outlets. Some larger and most new centres can accommodate bulky goods outlets. Lower order centres in need of investment may also be suitable. The need for car access for loading bulky goods is not an adequate basis for justifying out-of-centre locations. In many instances the goods sold are not immediately available or capable of being transported anyway.

'Big Box' formats

'Big Box' retail formats have recently emerged in Australia and include 'superstores' and 'category killers'. Retailers choose these large floor area formats for commercial reasons rather than physical necessity to display and handle large goods.

'Big Box' refers to the size and shape of buildings designed to provide cheap and large floor areas — it does not refer to the size of the goods sold and should not be confused with bulky goods outlets.

Out-of-centre Big Box formats can enjoy unfair market advantages and severely impact on the viability of centre-based competitors, putting community facilities at risk. These formats should be treated similarly to other retail outlets and be located in or adjacent to existing centres. Development on isolated, stand alone sites is not acceptable.

Warehouses

Warehouses or distribution centres are, by definition, limited to the supply of goods to retailers only and also in bulk to industrial, institutional and commercial users. They are therefore suitable for industrial land locations.

Warehouses are perceived as offering cheap goods and sometimes operate as retail outlets appealing to specific market segments. However, 'warehouse' or 'cash-and-carry' outlets sell direct to the public, generating the same social and transport needs as retailing, and should therefore be located in or near centres.

Factory outlets

These comprise sales of manufactured goods often described as 'seconds' or 'surplus', usually at discounted prices. These should be treated like normal retailing outlets unless they are genuinely ancillary to on-site manufacturing and used only occasionally. Other forms of factory outlets are simply shops seeking low rents and could be encouraged to agglomerate in existing declining centres where they can play a positive role in their revitalisation.

Markets

Permanent and occasional markets consisting of stalls selling a wide range of products should locate within or adjoining existing centres especially where they offer comparable products to other retail outlets. This need not apply to proposals like occasional school or church markets, or specialist or 'events' markets (e.g. antique fairs).

Service stations and fast food outlets

When a service station is isolated from a centre, the sale of convenience goods should be restricted by controls on the area of floorspace used for this purpose. Large fast food outlets, usually part of a chain, should not necessarily be given advantaged locations that are not available to smaller outlets. Sites within and peripheral to centres are often available to satisfy commercial locational needs.

D. The right design

Well-designed development and public spaces maintain and improve the quality and attractiveness of centres, which in turn help their level of activity and commercial viability.

Good design is responsive to community expectations, business needs and local character and helps create safer environments and the integration of land uses with transport.

Design pointers for centres

- Avoid blank frontages to streets and public spaces.
- Locate car parking to not impede pedestrian movement between facilities and the street.
- Plan for the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and commercial vehicles.

- Provide good lighting for pedestrian paths and public spaces.
- Plan for sightlines so people can see what is around.
- Avoid entrapment spots and provide routes for pedestrians.
- Maximise surveillance through windows overlooking streets, and constant pedestrian and vehicular movement.
- Design convenient and safe transitions with public transport interchanges.

Design guidelines

For detailed design guidance refer to ***Mixed Use in Urban Centres*** (Urban Design Advisory Service 2000) and ***Urban Design Guidelines with Young People in Mind*** (Urban Design Advisory Service 1999) both available from the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning. (Also refer below regarding safety and security design guidelines.)

Public realm

Design elements should relate to and support street activity and the maintenance and usefulness of the public realm. They should also develop and enhance local character where appropriate.

Integrating shopping and other activities into existing streets offers the opportunity to satisfy consumers' preferences for human scale and a unique sense of place.

Quality spaces should be created where people can relax, interact or simply observe the street scene, and where intrusion from car parking is minimised. Opportunities for youth recreation should also be provided.

Safety and security

Poor design or inappropriate materials may lead to problems of safety and security for shoppers, visitors and employees. Adequate lighting and layouts which allow for easy public and private surveillance should always be provided. Development proposals should take into account crime risk, particularly the transport and delivery of cash and valuables.

For detailed advice on security in design refer to the NSW Government's ***Crime Prevention Resource Manual*** and the recent Department of Urban Affairs and Planning and NSW Police guidelines, ***Crime Prevention and the Assessment of Development Applications***.

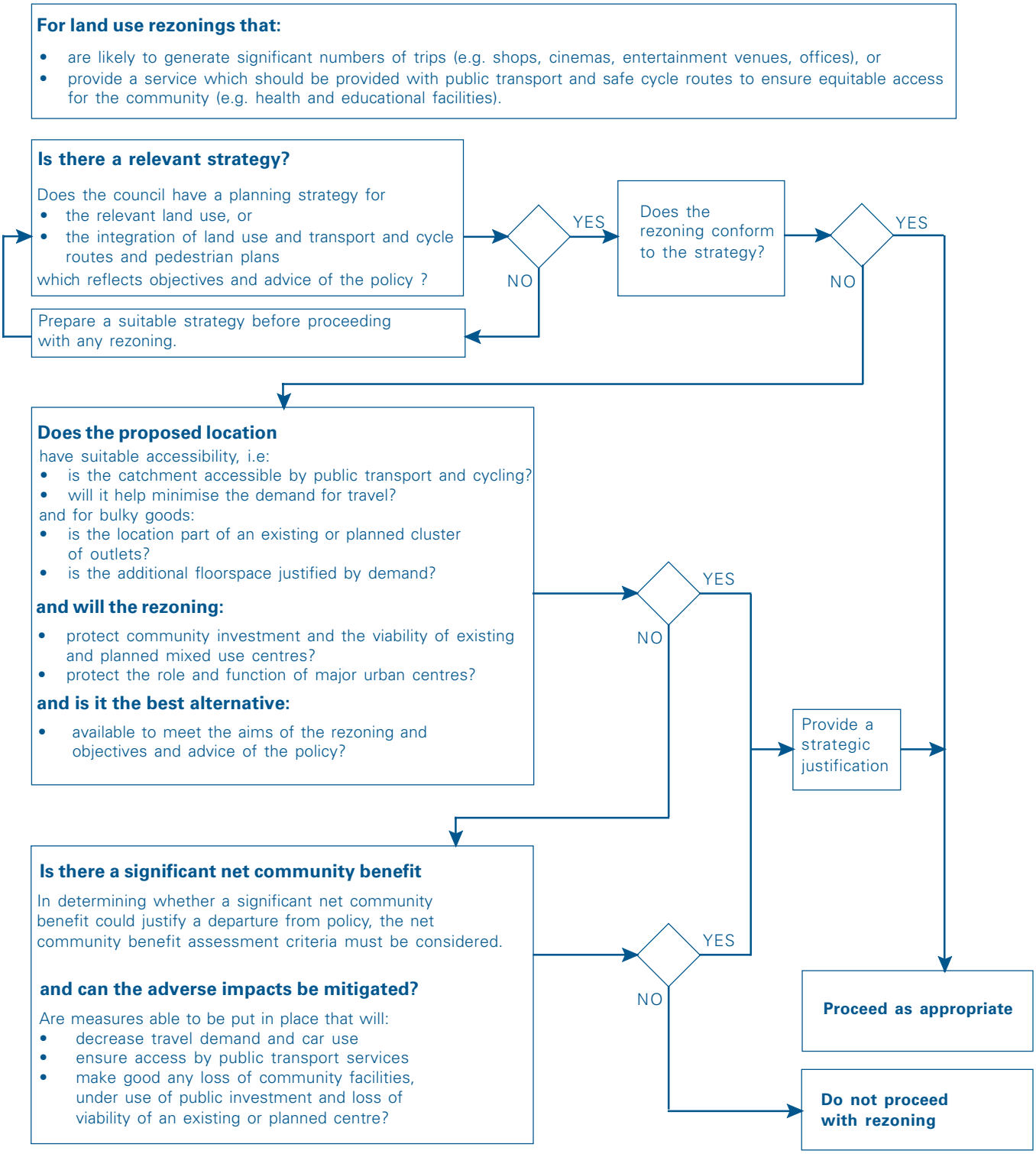
Transport integration and choice

Accessibility has a major impact on the viability of centres. Optimum transport choice and unrestricted pedestrian flow between activities maximise public transport use and multi-purpose single trips. Shops and other activities should have safe and attractive access for pedestrians and should not be isolated from public transport interchanges, public spaces and the streets, especially through the location of car parking areas.

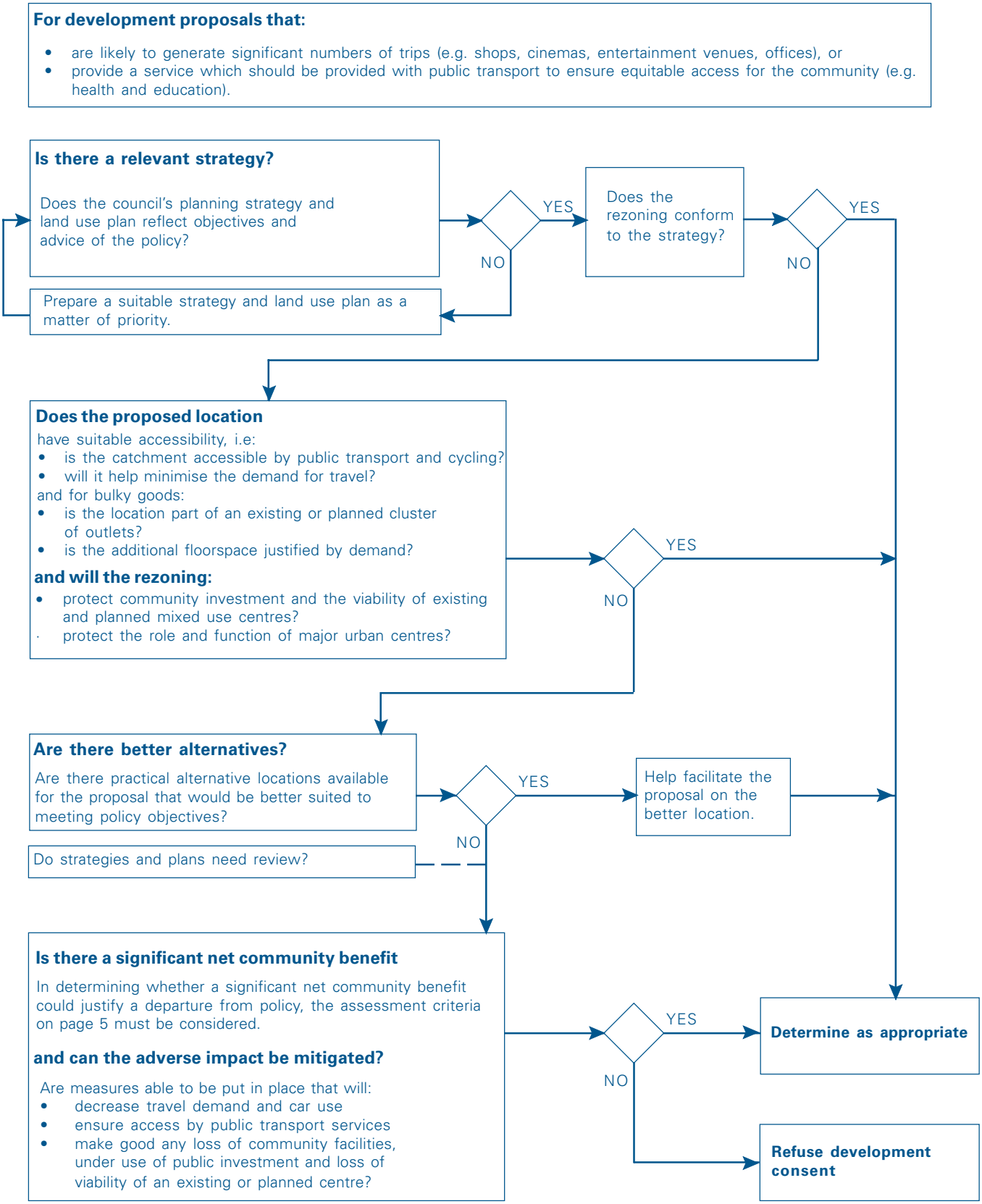
The provision, pricing and location of parking should take account of available public transport to help moderate car use. Transport authorities should be consulted on proposals with substantial public transport impacts and on the preparation of transport management plans for centres and communities.

E. Application of the Policy to Rezoning and Development Assessment

Decision tree 1. Policy test for proposals to rezone land



Decision Tree 2. Policy test for development applications



How do I find out more?

For more information on the package go to www.duap.nsw.gov.au/transportchoice

To obtain the package:

- email information@duap.nsw.gov.au
- phone (02) 9391 2222 or 9391 2223.

For more information on the policies:

- email metro@duap.nsw.gov.au
- phone (02) 9391 2195 or 9391 2201
- fax (02) 9391 2399.

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