

SIA of urban form to enhance social well-being

By

**Nick Taylor
James Baines**

**Taylor Baines & Associates
www.tba.co.nz**

The Problem

- Urban change and planning is often developer driven
- From public perspectives, there is a predominant influence of infrastructure development (roading)
- Planning is largely reactive, with a lack of strategic direction/assessment
- There is poor focus on social (human) well being
- We need to strengthen sustainability outcomes in urban planning and design
- Linking private and public interests should be an important aspect of 'integration' in planning and IA

This Presentation Draws on

- Experience with SIA of retail projects (malls, big box retail – developer driven)
- Social analysis of town centre development
- Input to city retail strategies (centres based approach)
- SIA of urban infrastructure (various)
- Input to metropolitan growth strategies (urban limits)
- The paper we presented last year in Perth on out-of-centre retail development
- A paper in Perth by John Glasson and Graham Wood on urban regeneration, IA and social sustainability

Turning Insight into Foresight

- “The purpose of impact assessment is to turn insight into foresight” ... Helge Lund, at IAIA 2006
- SIA can and should draw on many different angles of insight to fashion foresight around a project, plan or policy
- To do so requires an integrated approach to environment and assessment

The Social Dimension of 'Environment' (NZ RMA)

“environment includes---

- (a) ecosystems and their constituent parts, including **people and communities**; and*
- (b) all natural and physical resources; and*
- (c) **amenity values**; and*
- (d) the **social, economic, aesthetic, and cultural conditions** which affect the matters stated in paragraphs (a) to (c) or which are affected by those matters:”*

s2 RMA

The Meaning of “Effect”

“In this Act ... the term effect includes

- (a) any positive or adverse effect; and*
- (b) any temporary or permanent effect; and*
- (c) any past, present, or future effect; and*
- (d) any cumulative effect which arises over time or in combination with other effects regardless of the scale, intensity, duration, or frequency of the effect, and also includes---*
- (e) any potential effect of high probability; and*
- (f) any potential effect of low probability which has a high potential impact.”*

Elements of Social Wellbeing Underpin an Integrated Approach

- quality of housing, shelter, neighbourhood and living place
- access to goods
- access to services
- physical and mental health
- access to public facilities, transport, communications
- education & lifelong learning
- leisure & recreation - access to quality outdoor/open space

... Elements of Social Wellbeing

- quality of the physical environment
- personal safety, public safety, autonomy & freedom from too much risk
- opportunities for income, employment and the quality of working life
- family life, social attachment, social contact, interaction & support
- participation in community and society

Social Amenity

- The description of social well-being relates to the amenity values of community facilities
- These values derive from their ‘natural or physical qualities and characteristics’ (Section 2 of RMA), **emphasising again the importance of an integrated approach to IA**
- It is, however, important to consider amenity values as derived from more than the functional attributes of a facility

Social Amenity

- The distinction between functional and social amenity draws on case studies of urban planning
- These found a primary function of town centres is to provide convenient access to a range of goods and services in one location
- Often a range of retail and other services co-locate
- The facilities in integrated centres of activity are also an important source of employment
- Thus they provide functional amenity, and
- They also provide an opportunity for social interaction, a sense of place, a sense of community belonging or ownership, and community focus, or social amenity

Nick Taylor, Wayne McClintock and Brigid Buckenham (2003). Social impacts of out-of-centre shopping centres on town centres: a New Zealand case study. *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal*, 21(2):147-154.

Co-location of Retail and Community Facilities - Northcote



Source: Julie Meade Rose,
2008

Households Without Vehicles %

	Outer area	Inner area
• Northcote	7.2	15.6
• Sunnynook	4.2	7.5
• Milford	8.2	10.8
• Highbury	2.8	8.0
• Glenfield	4.4	9.4

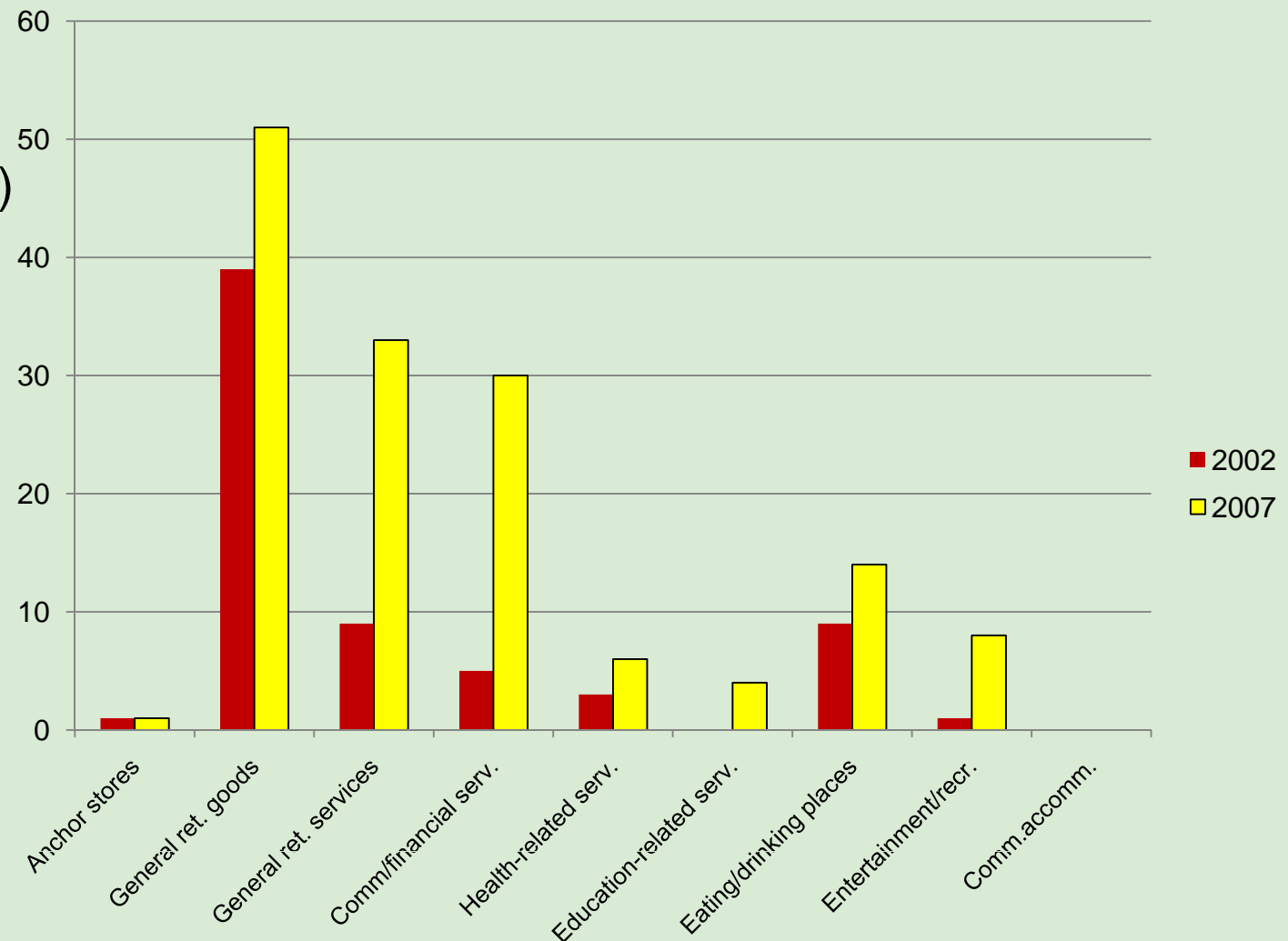
Comparison of nearest meshblocks to retail centre and the wider area (CAUs) less inner area – centres in North Shore City

Features of Northcote

- Classic suburban town centre led by local council
- Strong pedestrian/public transport orientation
- Supermarket anchor
- Mix of retail, other business and services and community facilities
- Some residential intensification adjacent (led by housing agency)
- But potentially undermined by out-of-centre retail close by

Composition of Commercial Activities, Ferrymead 2002 and 2007

Data collected
(2002) and (2007)
by on-ground
survey



Features of Ferrymead

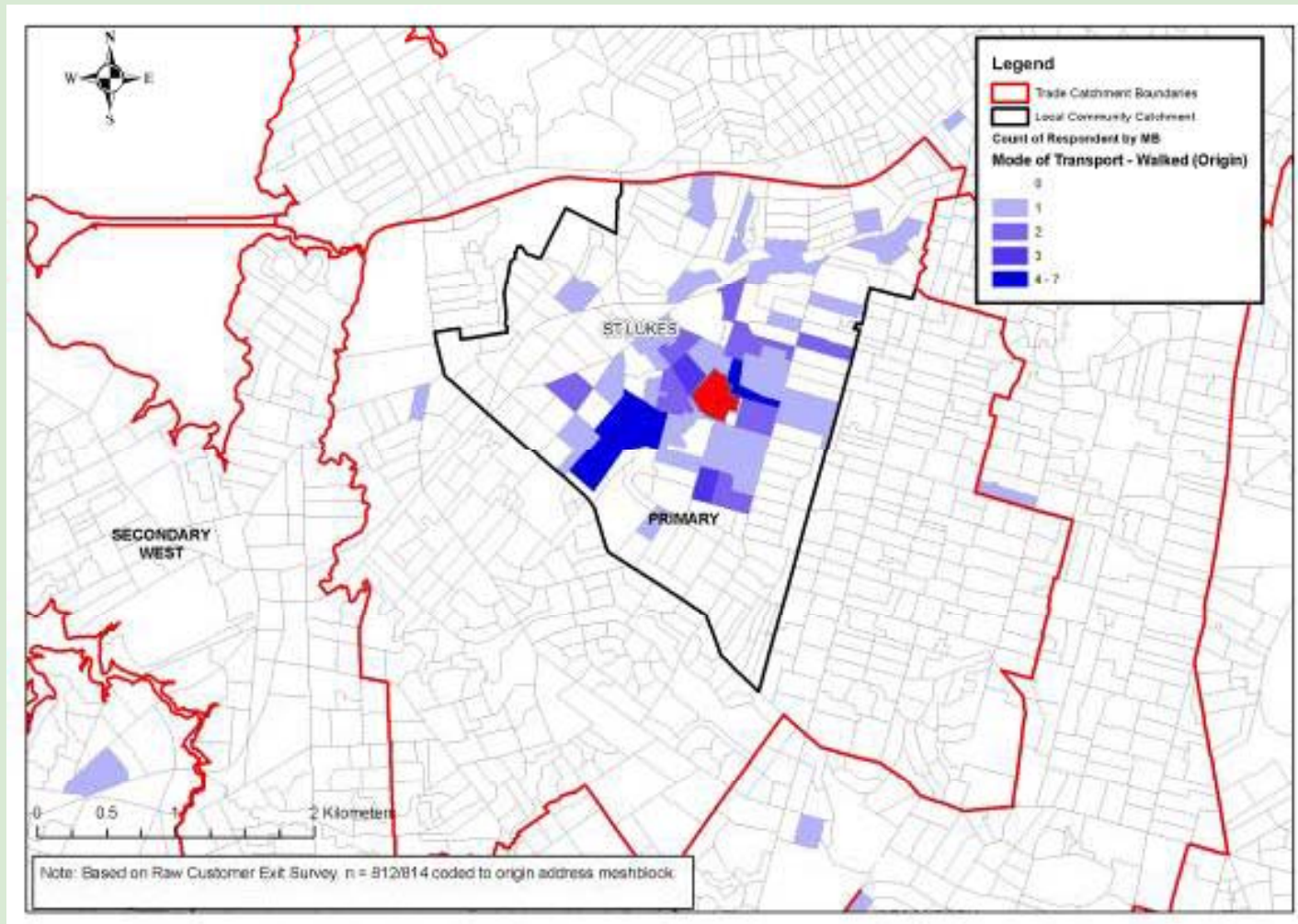
- Developer led - around new supermarket anchor store
- Mix of other business and activities
- Responds to suburban residential growth
- Very poor internal linkages and no overall design process
- Some residential intensification happening close by

St Lukes Centre

A regional mall
Auckland City
Co-located:
Services
Business areas
Public transport
Residential
intensification
Suburban areas



St Lukes Staff Walking to Work



Survey data mapped by mesh block

Features of St Lukes Town Centre

- The developer led regional mall serves local and wider areas
- SIA (focus on mall) found diverse cultural backgrounds and social needs – strong amenity values of the mall
- But poor integration of the centre as a whole and need to develop an urban plan to meet local and wider needs

Issues for SIA – What's New?

- Early application of SIA
- SIA applied at the strategic (policy and plan) level not just for projects
- Integrate SIA with other technical assessments (eg traffic/transport, health, design/visual)
- Assess cumulative effects
- Fuller (better informed), more even, community involvement throughout
- Improve capability in IA/SIA – national to local

Time for a paradigm shift ...

- Establish SIA as an integral part of urban planning and design (the creative process)
- Establish SIA processes as a focal point for integration
- Use SIA processes as a vehicle for integrating private and public development interests
- Consider the potential mediating role of SIA in urban planning and design process
- Develop **integrative** tools such as metro CEA, multi-layered GIS, and **interactive** tools to support scenario development (visualisation) for community consultation
- Document social (human) wellbeing outcomes from integrated planning and design with sustainability objectives (research base required)