In what ways can urban and regional planning contribute towards high levels of social capital and community strengths in new and re-developing communities?
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WHAT IS THE STRONG COMMUNITIES HANDBOOK?

A group of Brisbane planners and practitioners developed the Strong Communities project to explore and articulate ways in which planning can contribute towards building social capital in communities. The aim of the project was to provide a product that can be used by local and State government planners in their program and policy work as well as by community development workers.

It is acknowledged that readers of the Handbook will be familiar with many concepts expressed throughout this text. Similarly, it must be acknowledged that there have been countless texts, journal articles and pieces of research written about all of the topics areas covered in the Handbook. Therefore, the role of the Handbook is not to present an exhaustive literature review of best practice in each topic area, rather it aims to provide a compendium text that is action oriented, outlining good planning practice that contributes towards building strong communities, covering the following planning activity areas:

1. Community Engagement;
2. Planning for Cultural Diversity;
3. Political Engagement in planning;
4. Enhancing Access and Mobility;
5. Urban Design;
6. Housing; and
7. Indicators for use in identifying and measuring community strengths.

This innovative and collaborative project was conducted by the Community Practice Unit of the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) and funded by Department of Communities, the Queensland Council of Social Services (QCOSS), and the Office of Urban Management (OUM). It was overseen by a Steering Committee drawn from these sponsoring organisations, and was composed as follows:

- The OUM; Lisa Pollard and Ian Schmidt;
- QCOSS, Janet Baker, Fiona Caniglia and Jill Lang;
- QUT, Community Practice Unit Coordinator, Associate Professor Phil Heywood; and
- Department of Communities, Simone Cuers (Project Coordinator) and John Beirne.

The Handbook takes a South East Queensland (SEQ) focus due in part to the contributors’ local knowledge of the region and in part to the rapid and forecasted population growth in SEQ, which has placed increased importance on the need to plan for strong communities in the region.

The Handbook was based on a process of action learning, research, presentation and review undertaken in conjunction with 8 lecturers and 34 postgraduate students comprising the Community Planning subject in the Master and Graduate Diploma of Urban and Regional Planning, QUT in Semester 2, 2005. The subject was coordinated by Simone Cuers, coordinator of the overall Strong Communities Project.

Through teaching and assessment in the subject we sought to articulate: In what ways can urban and regional planning identify and contribute towards high levels of social capital and community strengths in new and re-developing communities?

The subject included a series of guest lecturers who presented on various topics relating to the role of planning in contributing towards the creation of strong communities. The lecturers, along with students’ own research, made a significant contribution towards informing students of planning’s role in creating strong communities. The list of lectures are included in Appendix 1.

The assessment for the Community Planning subject provided significant vehicles for learning for the students at the same time as forming the key outcomes for this project. Class assessment included two assignments which required students to research and articulate the role of planning in contributing towards the creation of strong communities. Much of the class’ assignments work was synthesised into this Handbook.

It should be noted that the Community Planning Unit at QUT did not focus on housing in detail as with the other planning activity areas, however housing has been included as a planning activity area in the handbook because it is recognised that housing is fundamental to building strong communities. Therefore for the purpose of this handbook, it was decided to provide a brief overview of the existing housing situation in SEQ and the role of housing in creating strong communities and making reference to other information sources readers can investigate further.

Other activities such as economic development and access to Information, Communication Technology (ICT) are acknowledged as contributors towards building strong communities, but have not been included in the Handbook, as these were outside the scope of the Community Planning subject.

A project team of students from the class, coordinated by Jamaica Hewston, carried out significant editing of the students’ assignments and undertook some additional research to create this handbook, which was then further assessed and edited by an expert review team.

We hope this work will be useful for practitioners, as well as go some way towards creating an increased focus on planning’s role in building strong communities, perhaps enhancing interest in future research work.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- Indra Mertens.

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- Enhancing Access and Mobility; Glen Warner
- Urban Design; Juris Greste
- Housing; Peter Chapman and Stuart Mc Laughlin
- Indicators for use in identifying and measuring community strengths; Doug Baker

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And finally thank you to the students of QUT’s School of Urban Development post graduate subject DBP 411 Community Planning in 2005 for their work in generating much of this material about planning’s role in creating strong communities. Students’ work has been referenced throughout the Handbook.

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1.1 What Is A Community?

The literature over the years has offered many definitions of what constitutes a community as it can be interpreted in a variety of ways both spatially and conceptually. One conceptual definition relates to community formation as the product of shared interests where spatial boundaries are not a prerequisite. Such communities may take the form of wireless web groups, religious organisations, sporting clubs, businesses and charitable groups.

However, the more widely held and used understanding of a community is one defined spatially through a shared geographical region, where individuals are linked by one or more activities or factors. These factors will cover a range of social, environmental and cultural elements and provide a community with a shared identity, which members can use as a reference point from which to interact with the community at large. It is this latter notion of community that is referred to throughout this Handbook.

1.2 What Is A Strong Community?

“High levels of coordination and cooperation for reciprocal and mutual benefit”, is a succinct definition used by Robert Putnam (2000). He goes on to provide empirical data to suggest that in the United States strong communities are associated with:

- Better educational outcomes for children;
- Reduced criminality and a greater sense of personal security;
- Wider job and business opportunities;
- Better health;
- Better governance; and
- More efficient use of public and private resources.

In the Australian context, the Victorian Department of Communities has defined a strong community as:

‘...one that is constituted by people that understand its social, economic and environmental assets and are working towards sustainability. Strong communities also understand and work with their most disadvantaged populations to ensure minimum standards for all. To do these things, members of a strong community need to be engaged, involved, feel capable of working through issues and be supported through external partnerships.’

(2004: 15)

In order to achieve such a community, with an engaged and supportive populace, it is useful to apply a theoretical framework to help describe and define the various attributes of a strong community. A framework that has been developed in this regard is the social capital framework.

1.3 Social Capital: A Framework For Understanding And Building Strong Communities

Social capital has been said to be the, ‘grease that allows the community wheel to advance smoothly’, (Putnam, 2000) and is essentially the development of a network of trust within a community. Deficiencies of social capital in our communities are seen to have real measurable negative impacts on our lives. A World Bank definition goes on to reinforce this claim in defining social capital as:

‘...the institutions, relationships and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society’s social interactions. Increasing evidence shows that social cohesion is critical for societies to prosper economically and for development to be sustainable. Social capital is not just the sum of the institutions that underpin a society it is the glue that holds them together.’

(Woolcock, Renton and Cavaye, 2003, 15)

This definition highlights the importance of the ‘institutions, relationships and norms’ and their role in shaping how communities interact. Social capital also refers to the formal and informal networks that enable people to mobilise resources and achieve common goals as well as placing a collective value on the existence of social networks and the inclinations that arise within these networks to do things for each other. Putnam’s writings on social capital also highlight the importance of the key concepts of civic engagement, norms and trust and effective collective action (Putnam, 1995).
Another important dimension of social capital to consider when looking at the range of ways in which to build strong communities is the notions of bonding, bridging and linking social capital. Briefly they are defined by:

- **bonding capital** = brings together people who already know each other;
- **bridging capital** = connects people or groups who are unlike one another and previously did not interact with one another; and
- **linking capital** = vertical links to people in positions of authority (Putnam, 2004).

Each of these three components of social capital have a role to play in building strong communities, and planners acting in various capacities can contribute towards the formation of each of these types of social capital.

The term social capital has gained prominence in literature most notably through the work of Robert Putnam in his studies of Italian communities (1993). In his subsequent book Bowling Alone (2000) Putnam documented a decline in social capital by referring to analysis of quantitative data, which included the measurement of social connections and community participation. Putnam’s broad finding was that any decline in the level of social capital in a community led to a corresponding decline in the quality of life within that community. This finding is now a common theme that tends to run through the recent and accumulated literature on social capital, which reinforces the relationship between high social capital and strong communities.

An Australian example of the interrelationship between social capital and strong communities is clearly illustrated in Tony Vinson’s recent work in New South Wales and Victoria, ‘Community Adversity and Resilience’, in which he described the significant mediating role that the presence of social cohesion plays in socially disadvantaged communities. (Social cohesion being a key ingredient of social capital as described further below). Specifically Vinson found that within the most socially disadvantaged communities in those two states, social cohesion buffers the negative influence of factors such as limited education, low income, unemployment, and poor work skills (Vinson, 2004).

### 1.3.1 Community Engagement and Participation

Among the many aspects involved in the building of strong communities, none is more essential than fostering individual and group participation in community life and activities. Jordan (1998) has shown how individuals and groups can be drawn into active participation in community life in ways that improve personal self esteem and contribute to wider social solidarity. The Citizen’s Handbook: a Guide for Neighbourhood Organizations (Blasi, 1992) of Portland, Oregon, shows how this can be integrated into community development and resourced by civic governance. Closer to home, the New South Wales Government Public Participation - Community Builders’ Toolkit (2002) also recognises the importance of the issue and suggests ways to foster this crucial community energy and involvement.

### 1.3.2 Impacts of the decline in a sense of community: loss of social capital

However, in the Australian context, Hugh Mackay recently stated, “Australian people are increasingly saying that we don’t have the same society we used to have; ‘neighbourhoods’ are not the same as they used to be; we don’t know our neighbours; we don’t feel safe in our neighbourhoods; and we don’t feel like a community. Our focus and energy is turned inwards to focus upon ourselves”, (Mackay, 2005, in Eddie Koiki Mabo Lecture Series).

Furthermore, it has been argued that, “when we feel we belong our commitment to the common good is greater; if we lose our social connections, we behave badly. It will also cost our community dearly in providing service delivery to respond to problems arising from community dysfunction”, (for example, poor health, crime, illiteracy, homelessness, domestic violence, substance abuse), (Young, 2002). So it would be fair to argue that strong communities have great social and economic benefit but it seems not all is well for our communities as we head into the 21st century.

### 1.3.3 In what ways can urban and regional planning contribute towards building high levels of social capital in communities?

A number of authors have recently that planning has an increasing role in building social capital. Much of a recent Journal of American Planning Association edition (Spring 2004) focused on this topic and one article stated, ‘planners can invest in social capital formation in ways that will improve the well-being of the disadvantaged’, and furthermore that community planners are strategically situated to strengthen social capital (Hutchinson, et al 2004).
will consider in turn. These are as follows: social capital, each of which this handbook is intended to have a direct effect on the formation of strong communities and is therefore an important issue to consider. Furthermore, commitment from all levels of government is required in order to develop strengths in our communities.

Enhancing Access and Mobility
Effective movement systems contribute significantly to the development of strong communities. Combining effective public transport services with improvements in cycling infrastructure and pedestrian access will increase inter and intra-neighbourhood connectivity and provide opportunities for bridging capital, contributing to the development of a stronger, and healthier, community.

Similarly, Arnold (2002) argues that the social networks that are the lifeblood of strong communities are not a natural given, they require investment and energy to build and maintain and there is very good reason for urban developers to participate in this work. Mackay (2005) indicates that the social connectedness is vital to our social and emotional well being, that ‘place and space’ is the key and planning processes need to start with spaces and places for the community and people and build around that.

This role of the planning profession in building social capital reaches across local, state and federal government as well as the private sector. For example, Vinson (2004) argues that social exclusion breeds social alienation along with a plethora of potential social problems such as child abuse and neglect, early school leaving, mental health disorders, substance abuse and crime and that state government expenditures would therefore be more effective in building social cohesion rather than focusing primarily on the above social problems. Woolcock, Renton and Cavaye (2003) go so far as to describe a range of 21 ways in which local government, (planners and others), can influence the formation of social capital, including local area planning, community safety, cultural diversity appreciation, public and open space, accessibility, community engagement and local economic development projects.

Therefore it appears fair to argue that the planning profession has an influential role to play in building strong communities and social capital. This handbook describes seven planning activities which are seen to have a direct effect on the formation of social capital, each of which this handbook will consider in turn. These are as follows:

Community Engagement
Community engagement in planning is a key tool in building social capital. As we saw above, civic engagement, norms and trust and effective collective action are key components of social capital and community engagement progresses all those components. In addition, engaging people in planning and decision making processes is critical to the legitimacy and responsiveness of any government proposal and assists in providing quality public policy, programs and effectiveness of services. Engagement processes that ensure the inclusion of the interests of disadvantaged people are also essential.

Planning for Cultural Diversity
Recognises the strengths of culturally and socially diverse communities to the wider community’s advantage and is an important component in developing social capital. Utilising the strengths of community diversity provides an opportunity to develop greater networks of trust between disparate groups as each bring their own unique social capital assets to the community building process.

Political Engagement
Political engagement in planning can be particularly powerful in facilitating the creation of building bridging and linking social capital in communities and is therefore an important issue to consider. Furthermore, commitment from all levels of government is required in order to develop strengths in our communities.

Enhancing Access and Mobility
Effective movement systems contribute significantly to the development of strong communities. Combining effective public transport services with improvements in cycling infrastructure and pedestrian access will increase inter and intra-neighbourhood connectivity and provide opportunities for bridging capital, contributing to the development of a stronger, and healthier, community.

Urban Design
Developing an urban form that enhances safety, contributes to a sense of place and encourages social interaction is a key tool for building social capital. This can be achieved through making connections between the community, the urban environment and the specific uses for which each urban space is utilised.

Housing
Housing is a fundamental need for individual and community well-being. In the current housing environment where great pressure is being placed on existing housing stock, the question of housing availability, affordability, accessibility and provision requires thorough consideration.

Utilising indicators to identify and measure community strengths
Using indicators to measure and identify community strengths gives community builders an opportunity to establish a benchmark of a level of community strengths against which to measure future change as well as to use along with data about community deficits or problems to assist in strategic planning processes.

Each of these planning activities is of equal importance when considering programs to develop social capital within a community. This handbook has focused on how social capital can be generated through each of the seven planning areas. To support this aim case studies and key performance indicators have been presented in each section to provide further examples of its application and how to measure its effectiveness in implementation. Each of the planning activity area sections was collated by a different member of the project team and therefore each section contains slight variations in writing style and format.
References


Department for Victorian Communities (2004), Indicators of Community Strength in Victoria, Victorian Strategic Policy and Research Division, Melbourne.


2.0 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

2.1 Introduction To Community Engagement

Community engagement relates to the decision-making processes which "encompass a wide variety of government-community interactions ranging from information sharing to community consultation and, in some instances, active participation in government decision-making processes". It may be undertaken on a broad range of policy, program and service issues, both at State and local government levels (Qld Govt: Dept of Premier and Cabinet, 2003: 5).

Engagement allows interested parties to focus on a variety of diverse perspectives and potential solutions that would not ordinarily have been explored (Birkeland, 1999). (From students Buffini et al, 2005)

2.2 Role Of Community Engagement In Creating Strong Communities

The community engagement process can enhance community strength through capacity building, network widening, and building cohesiveness and trust. The process also enables people to better understand planning and assists in building their capacity to participate, thereby developing confidence, skills and knowledge of the subject area. Specifically, community engagement practices can contribute towards building strong communities by:

a) Enhancing the capacities of communities to have more control of the communities in which they live, by providing them with a better basis for independent action through voluntary, social economy or other community-led initiatives (CPTF, 2003);

b) Helping to build social capital by providing feelings of belonging and responsibility;

c) Assisting in the development of trust and bridging capital between sections of the community who usually have no contact;

d) Aiming to achieve the best for the community;

e) Developing trust between community members and key stakeholders; such as developers, politicians, planners and non-governmental organisations; and

f) Bringing about better decisions for community well being. (From students Ludher, 2005 and Stevens, 2005)
2.2.1 Principles that should be adopted in the planning and conducting of these community engagement processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principles</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifying and recognising resources within a community</td>
<td>“No plan, solution or organisation from outside the community can duplicate what is already there”, (Rans, 2005). Available resources may be tangible (such as facilities and services). Others are intangible, such as local knowledge, motivation and energy, but are just as important to consider (Hashagen, 2002).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging inclusion</td>
<td>Certain groups are often marginalised in community engagement processes. These may include groups such as youth and children, older people, or people with a disability, or culturally and linguistically diverse people (Hashagen, 2002). Inclusive community engagement encourages bridging and linking networks between groups, creating higher levels of social capital.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging a sense of community</td>
<td>One of the keys to creating stronger communities is to help members in the community identify with their communities, thus creating an impetus for social involvement. Without a commonly held identity and a broadly shared vision, the hard work of regenerating community is very difficult to sustain (Kretzmann, 1993).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building on community capacities</td>
<td>Include education through participation in reference groups, formation of support groups through community engagement interactions, and increasing capacities of young people by involving them in social governance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging links</td>
<td>Community engagement processes should encourage linking networks within the community, to local institutions, to the physical infrastructure of the community and to the local economy (Hashagen, 2002). The methods discussed in the remainder of this section reveal the diverse ways of encouraging partnerships. These links may be tangible, such as community councils; intangible, such as a future contact, or electronic, through the use of the Internet and websites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging sustainability</td>
<td>Often, new community networks are lost after the formal community engagement process is over. This causes frustration and cynicism amongst those who give their time and energy to community activities (Hashagen, 2002). Community engagement processes that build social capital should encourage self reliance, and practitioners should take responsibility for ensuring sustainability of newly created networks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(from student Ludher, 2005)
2.3 How To Create Strong Communities With Community Engagement

There is no shortage of methods for engaging communities, but not all specifically assist in creating strong communities. Strategies employed need to address the complexity of specific communities, thus it is valuable to follow the process of undertaking stakeholder analysis, identifying levels of engagement, understanding expectations, and choosing appropriate techniques that will achieve the set goals. In every community engagement process, ‘engagers’ should always review their situational context and adjust accordingly (from students Grayson et al, 2005).

2.3.1 Stakeholder analysis

Stakeholder analysis is an important first step for effective community engagement. Identifying existing social capital and working to establish higher levels of social capital not only provides a strong foundation for the process, but further establishes and reinforces social capital in the community of interest. There are many sets of stakeholders for an engagement process, and it is important to analyse demographic and organisational information to identify them, as different stakeholders require different strategies (Elliott & Pollard, 2005).

Stakeholder groups include:
- Residents;
- People experiencing social and economic disadvantage;
- Low income households;
- Community and environmental groups;
- Businesses;
- Cultural groupings;
- Community organisations;
- Service users;
- Service providers; and
- Different levels of government.

2.3.2 Levels of engagement

In a simple framework, there are three main levels of engagement based on the degree of participation from community members (Elliott & Pollard, 2005). These are outlined in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1 Level of Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of engagement</th>
<th>Degree of participation</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information sharing</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Good for capacity building and helping people understand the issues, but the community has no influence over decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Exchange of information and views, sometimes submission-based, gives the ability to provide input on a proposal but not participation in decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active participation (or engagement)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Exchange of information and local knowledge, usually ongoing, enables community participation in decision making</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2.1: Stages of the Community Engagement Process

Figure 2.1 describes the stages of the community engagement process and each stage is discussed in turn below.
Arnstein’s ladder of engagement, described in Figure 2.2, is another framework for describing possible levels of engagement practitioners can utilise to engage communities.

Arnstein states there are three broad levels of engagement; citizen power, tokenism and non participation, with an associated range of variations of how these may be expressed. The level of engagement chosen by practitioners depends heavily on stakeholder types, outcomes required, ability to accommodate change to processes and outcomes, budget etc, and has to be assessed on a case by case basis. All levels of engagement have the potential to strengthen communities, however, the higher the level of engagement and the more influence a community has over a planning outcome, the stronger the potential to build community capacities, including social capital. Thus, it is more desirable from the perspective of building strong communities, to engage communities at the ‘active participation’ and ‘citizen power’ levels, rather than at the ‘information sharing’ or ‘tokenism’ level.

2.3.3 Understanding and managing expectations

It is important to first identify stakeholder expectations, and then to identify which expectations can be met within the engagement process. Identifying expectations of the process allows the engager to establish two things:

- the extent to which the community would like to be engaged, thus choosing the appropriate engagement techniques that would appropriately build social capital; and
- the extent the outcomes are able to change or inform the project, thus not falsely raising the hopes of people, and adversely affecting existing social capital.

This is best achieved by assessing expectations early in consultation, and advising stakeholders of which expectations are likely to be met as part of the engagement process.

It should be noted that rushed, ill-budgeted and inconsistent processes run the risk of leaving ‘disillusioned and un-empowered’ communities behind, and unravelling any forms of capital that may have been built in the process (Burde, 2004). It is vital also that the ‘engager’ show complete transparency in the process, clearly delineating roles, responsibilities, and parameters of outcomes, thus the ‘engager’ should (Elliott & Pollard, 2005):

- Set clear parameters about what engagement can and can’t achieve;
- Ensure that the pronounced view of a minority does not necessarily prevail;
- Clarify roles, responsibilities
- Ensure availability of meaningful information; and
- Ensure transparency of the process, including how input is used, and when decisions will be made.
2.3.4 Suggested process and techniques for information, consultation and active participation

Before embarking on a community engagement process, it is important to undertake a context assessment and network analysis and utilise the findings from this work to map the most appropriate community engagement strategy. Part of this analysis should be to consider the type of community under consideration, the capacity of the community to engage at present and an assessment of what previous planning and community engagement processes have taken place in the area. Taking a broader view, over time, of prior experiences that a community has had in planning processes can provide invaluable information to assist in developing strategies for addressing possible community engagement burn out, gain community interest and ongoing commitment to a planning process (Caniglia, 2006).

Furthermore, the presence of existing community structures should be determined, prior to a planning process commencing as they may be utilised to support community engagement processes. Joining with existing structures and/or using the planning process to invest in structures that will last over time are good community building/strengthening strategies (Caniglia, 2006).

There are many techniques for community engagement, some strengthen communities more than others. Media coverage for example addresses a wide audience and may invite casual comment, but is a one-way information exchange and not of itself sufficient. Some examples of techniques used for community engagement include (Elliott & Pollard, 2005):

- Media – local (including ‘free’ and community media), and where appropriate state and national;
- Hand outs, newsletters, brochures and posters;
- Discussion papers inviting submissions;
- Focus groups to address a specific topic in detail;
- Workshops to consider a range of aspects;
- Public meetings to advise and seek general comment from communities;
- Surveys and questionnaires;
- Information days;
- Fish bowl (holding a group discussion for viewing by the larger group);
- Charette, (a structured and intensive group process);
- Citizen’s Jury (a panel of community members making decisions);
- E-consultation (through email and websites);
- Education and awareness programs to encourage involvement or comment;
- Maintaining ongoing liaison and participatory structures;
- E-voting (expressing a preference via email or the web); and
- Reference groups (ongoing meetings of a representative group).

The strengths-based approach to community engagement calls for an inclusive process that contributes towards building social capital in communities. There is a plethora of creative methods of utilising community engagement in planning to strengthen communities. Below is a brief overview of some generalised models in which communities’ capacities can be built based on the principles previously mentioned. Other creative ways can be found in the many texts and handbooks on community engagement for example, Sarkissian et al (1997 and 2002), Sarkissian (2005), or see www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au. Most state governments in Australia have developed community engagement handbooks that can be accessed on the internet.

Developing a community vision

As mentioned before, communities need to create a sense of identity and vision to sustain their motivation. Community visioning is an activity which involves getting communities to think about questions such as (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993):

- Who are we in this community?
- What do we value most?
- Where would we like our community to go in the next five, ten, twenty years?

Community visioning is an important community engagement tool to encourage, empower and mobilise individuals to move toward making their vision a reality (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993).
Community events

Fairs, festivals and other community events are important tools for encouraging community interaction, organisation and identity. Similar events can be organised for community engagement purposes, such as a SpeakOut, Workfest or Design Fest, that provide a neutral and inclusive atmosphere. These events have to be interactive and informal, preferably with food and drinks served. These could also include activities that encourage children to participate (Sarkissian, 2002).

Partnerships

Taken from Arnstein’s ladder of participation described earlier, partnerships are an important avenue of empowerment and increasing human capital. Partnerships may be made between existing community organisations (bottom up), or by establishing a community group for that purpose, such as reference groups, steering groups, or accountability groups (top down) (Sarkissian, 2005). These are collaborative efforts, and strong emphasis has to be placed on ensuring equality in the relationships of those participating.

Delegated power

Also taken from Arnstein’s ladder of participation, communities are given control (within agreed limits) over certain aspects of service provision and/or and associated budgets (CPTF, 2003). These also include community democracy models, which are an informal community tier of government (Hashagen, 2002).

Citizen control

The highest rung on Arnstein’s ladder of participation, this model allows communities to set their own priorities and have substantial control over service provision and budgets (Hashagen, 2002). A sophisticated model might have their own social economy and revenue raising functions (Hashagen, 2002), such as community co-operatives and housing associations. This process could potentially be a very empowering form of community engagement, but has its own shortcomings, which may include supporting separatism, decreasing efficiencies, and imbalanced political gain. Checks and balances have to be established to avoid the latter and these need to be audited (Arnstein 1969).

Finally, if community input will not be considered in a decision or planning process, practitioners should not consult, but rather advise the community of important proposals and decisions. Attempting to engage is pointless if it really is not possible to change the outcome.

2.4 Breaking Down Barriers To Participation

It is critical to avoid simplistic explanations of why communities may not seem to be interested in engaging in a planning process. A useful process is to assess possible reasons for lack of engagement and to work towards addressing any barriers to engagement. In particular, we need to consider issues relating to the exercise of power and influence in community consultation processes. Jones (1998:117-118) cites Munro-Clark (1992) who outlines research findings indicating that “women, young people, pensioners, industrial and service-sector employees and immigrants are least likely to participate while groups with a direct economic interest in land-use matters are over-represented”. Jones extrapolates to say that the risk is that “those most affected by planning decisions are those least likely to participate” (1998:118).

This issue can be a particular problem if processes rely on participants who self select. Self selection processes raise critical issues about mandate and representation and favour the most resourced and articulate sectors of society (Jones, 1998:118). Munro-Clark (in Jones, 1998:118) puts forward evidence that “processes of participation may offer an avenue of influence for those who are already powerful, while excluding the relatively powerless”. The questions of mandate and representation must be considered in the design of an ongoing model of consultation.
Even when explicit strategies are employed to ensure that people can equitably access consultative processes, dominant societal structures, legislation, policy and the distribution of resources may still fundamentally favour some people and their interests more than others. Even when consultative processes appear to be representative and include the views of people who experience disadvantage for example, they may still in reality have the least impact over actual outcomes because of how societal structures are arranged and because of the true nature and distribution of power in society. A robust model of consultation will be able to analyse and evaluate the extent to which some interests are dominant over others in terms of both the process of consultation and in terms of the decisions that are made and implemented.

It is particularly important to consider the potential barriers that some people experience when attempting to access consultative processes as there can be some significant problems for lay people when engaging with complex local issues and decisions. Before conducting an engagement process it can be useful to undertake an analysis of barriers to engagement. Moss (1996: 41-41 in SANDBAG, 1999) cites the following as significant issues for communities engaged in participation:

- lack of organisational structure leading to ineffectiveness
- no familiarity with the process
- inadequate advice and representation
- inadequate technical understanding
- insufficient time for preparation and presentation
- total ingenuousness
- recognition of the legitimacy of the community as consultative partners

In light of this discussion about issues of power, control and influence in consultative processes, proactive measures need to be embraced that address the particular barriers experienced by some sectors of the community. The risk otherwise is that consultative processes become an additional resource available to sectors in the community who already enjoy relative power and influence compared with others.

In very practical terms, this may include ensuring that resources are available to overcome barriers to participation. These resources must include transport, time of day for meetings, accessible venues, child care, training/education, working with existing community groups, realistic time frames and consultation techniques and styles that reflect a wide variety of social and cultural diversity. There will also be implications for legislative and policy frameworks that must addressed the entrenched barriers experienced by people when trying to influence actual outcomes, (the source of information for much of this section is from unpublished work done by Sandgate and Bracken Ridge Action Group (SANDBAG) in 1999).

2.5 Performance Indicators For Community Engagement

To ensure that a process achieves its goals and to inform future engagement processes, performance measures should be utilised before, during and after the process to assess outcomes. Depending on the intent and duration of the community engagement process, performance measures may include:

- Increase in community members’ leadership;
- Increase in attendance at community engagement events;
- Increase in community understanding of issues;
- Increase in comments and submissions;
- Increase in self reliance;
- Increase in numbers of residents knowing their neighbours;
- Regular holding of community meetings;
- Level of influence on government decision making;
- Increase in trust in politicians and public servants;
- Increase in trust in organisations and their members; and
- Increase in percentage of people from Culturally And Linguistically Diverse groups, older people, younger people and other marginalised groups participating in engagement activities.
2.6 Summary

Community engagement is a process undertaken by governments and organisations to involve communities in relation to a variety of policy, program and service issues. It is an increasingly important process due to expectations of involvement from communities, and also due to the improvement in decision making which results from good engagement. The community engagement process can enhance community strength through capacity building, network widening, linking and trust fostering. Important principles for community engagement include identifying and recognising resources within a community, building on community capacities, and encouraging inclusion, a sense of community, and sustainability. It is vital also that the ‘engager’ show complete transparency in the process, clearly delineating roles, responsibilities, and parameters of outcomes.

There is no shortage of methods for community engagement, but not all specifically assist in creating strong communities so strategies employed need to address the complexity of the community (from student Grayson et al, 2005). To ensure that a process achieves its goals, performance measures can be utilised before, during and after the process. Evaluations can establish a picture of what went right and what went wrong, thus enabling the practitioner to learn from successes and mistakes.

2.7 Case Study: Illustration Of Application Of Community Engagement In Building Strong Communities – Goodna.

Excerpt from QUT DBP411 Community Planning 2005 student group assignment - authors: Buffini, G; Burke, D; Wallace, C and Scriggins, W.

Goodna, a suburb of Ipswich, borders the Brisbane Local Government Area and is rich in history and culture. Although situated along the Brisbane River and along the Ipswich Motorway, Goodna has been perceived to be a disadvantaged community due to its location on the fringe of two local government areas and the concentration of institutions and public housing in the area. By applying some of the concepts described earlier in this section the following community engagement strategies could be utilised to strengthen the Goodna community:

Developing a community vision

Goodna is a historical and multicultural community. Recent trends have caused significant growth and change in the area, resulting in a diversifying community and developing a new community vision through a community engagement process may improve cohesiveness within the community and build networks and links through the process.

Community events

Goodna’s popular Jacaranda Festival has always been a focal point for the community. A well thought out community engagement process could utilise this event to engage a large proportion of the community in consultation at one point in time.

Partnerships

Through the recent Queensland Government Community Renewal initiative, a number of community partnerships were formed. Strategies for supporting and sustaining these partnerships once the Community Renewal program exits Goodna would be invaluable in building community strengths.

More specifically, a range of issues have already been identified within the Goodna community, (by Goodna’s Community Development Officer), which would benefit from a community engagement approach as part of the process of working with the community to address these issues. These include:

- The establishment of a one-stop youth service centre and the provision of youth housing;
- The support and encouragement of a growing culturally diverse community;
- Improvement of safety for residents;
- Identifying innovative economic opportunities;
- Brainstorming on drug use reduction; and
- The provision and creation of accessible green and open space.
In general, the following checklist of objectives could be utilised to strengthen Goodna’s community through community engagement:

- Establish mechanisms for gathering and conveying information from and to the community;
- Ensure that the community is consulted on issues which impact on, or are of concern to the community or to any group within the community;
- Develop a consultation project plan prior to the commencement of the consultation, and include strategies for consulting with groups identified as having particular consultation requirements;
- Identify resources required for each consultation process in advance;
- Convey the purpose of each consultation process clearly and honestly to the community from the beginning, including what the consultation is to achieve, the anticipated outcomes and the role of the community;
- Provide feedback to the community on the outcomes of each consultation process; and
- Undertake an evaluation process upon the completion of all community consultations.

References


Caniglia, F. 2006. Personal communication, 10 April 2006.


3.0 CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Collator: Indra Mertens
Reviewer: Jill Jordan (Please note: The work of Jill Jordan is acknowledged as informing much of the following sections).

3.1 Introduction to Cultural Diversity

“The more Councils understand and incorporate the cultural values of their communities into their planning processes as “core” business, the more our communities will develop as places which are satisfying and rewarding to live in, interesting for our visitors, and reflective of our distinctive culture. They will then truly be communities with hearts” (Local Government Association of Queensland, 1996: 30).

3.1.1 Why plan for cultural diversity?

The incorporation of cultural values of communities in planning processes in the above quote illustrates why we should plan for cultural diversity, but a brief overview of the extent of cultural diversity of Queensland also highlights the importance of this aspect of planning in building strong communities. People in Queensland come from over 150 different countries, 17 per cent were born overseas, seven per cent speak a language other than English at home and we subscribe to more than 40 religions. Our diversity is seen to be one of the state’s strengths, as in business, politics, in sport and the arts, our cultural diversity has paved the way for many great achievements (Queensland Government, 2005). The extent of current cultural diversity in Queensland and the fact that diversity is a continuing trend establishes a clear case for the need to plan for cultural diversity, however this activity is seldom integrated into planning processes and planning for cultural diversity remains a challenge.

This section discusses the concept of cultural diversity and then describes the role of planning for cultural diversity in creating strong communities. This is followed by the description of a framework that can utilised to map and plan for cultural diversity. Finally, some options for evaluation will be discussed so that the process can be assessed and improved.

3.1.2 The concept of cultural diversity

Culture is the “human-made part of the environment” (Chryssochoou, 2004: xx, xxi). It is an “interactive process with two main component processes: the creation of shared activities (cultural practices) and the creation of shared meaning (cultural interpretation)” (Chryssochoou, 2004: xx - xxi). People of a common culture share a similar value system, traditions, beliefs and lifestyles. Furthermore, culture can be seen in language, religion, lifestyle, art, literature, ways of living together, sporting and recreational activity, food, community events, history and heritage, and the design of public buildings and space (from students Ludher et al, 2005, Local Government Association of Queensland, 1996 and from student She, 2005).

Cultures are dynamic systems, especially when international influences of migration touch a culture. Although cultures change constantly, certain elements seem to be consistent, such as a set of values. This stability is very important for people because it helps individuals to define who they are and where they belong (from student Mertens, 2005).

Some of the potential challenges facing culturally diverse communities also need to be mentioned. Cultural absolutism is one such problem and occurs when, fearing to lose their identity, some groups overemphasise their cultural characteristics. Extreme cultures “refuse to recognise the existence of others, the corresponding need for mutual acceptance and an institutional commitment to the values of cultural diversity” (from student She, 2005: 7).
Another process that can occur in culturally diverse communities is voluntary segregation and forced spatial segregation. When people from different cultural systems live in one area, this may result in fear and people separate from each other in order to feel safe. For some, living with people who have the same value system makes it easier for an individual to define his/her identity. A lack of interaction among people from different cultures can be problematic if people are polarised in a world view of “them versus us”, especially as the present and future trends of population growth show increasing cultural diversity amongst new comers to Australia (from student Mertens, 2005, Sandercock, 2003).

This short illustration of possible conflicts among different groups shows some of the potential difficulties associated with culturally diverse communities and suggests a need for a strong planning framework for culturally diverse communities. We suggest a concept of cultural diversity that assumes “respect of freedoms, namely freedom of thought, conscience, religion, opinion, expression, and freedom to participate in the cultural life of one’s choice” (Ludher et al, 2005, 8) is vital. This concept of cultural diversity is a good basis for cultural development. Cultural development is “the process whereby the cultural characteristics of a community are acknowledged, enhanced and developed through a range of strategies which are based on that community’s strengths and needs” (Jordan, 2005); or as Young (2003: 348) states, “social justice in the city requires the realisation of a politics of difference”.

3.2 The Role of Cultural Diversity in Creating Strong Communities

There are numerous and wide ranging benefits in planning for cultural diversity. These benefits all contribute towards creating strong communities, in a social, economic and cultural sense. Social benefits of planning for cultural diversity include:

- the increase in sense of identity for a community;
- community cohesion;
- increase in community self confidence/self esteem;
- increased networks and partnerships (especially amongst those who may not usually work together) and;
- the development of greater skills, (Jordan, 2005)

Other benefits include increased opportunities for economic outcomes, especially between the business sector and the arts and cultural sector. A cultural planning process can also create new income sources, for example, through cultural tourism, place making/beautification and special projects or events. And last but not least, cultural planning can lead to the creation of increased respect and tolerance among different people which results from an increased mutual understanding and a celebration of diversity. Living in a cultural diverse community rewards its inhabitants with an increased value of creative diversity within the community, both in people and in urban design (Jordan, 2005).

“Planning for cultural diversity is not just focussed on disadvantaged communities. …It is important for all types of community, no matter if its inhabitants are rich or poor, young or old, Australian or German, well-educated or less educated” (Jordan, 2005, telephone interview; from student Mertens, 2005, 2).

3.3 How to Create Strong Communities with Cultural Diversity

“Culture change cannot be fully controlled, but it can be influenced in positive directions” (Briggs, 2004, 156). Planning for cultural diversity relies on the collaborative work of all the three government spheres and all relevant stakeholders must be involved, not just those in the arts and cultural sector. In the following, some definitions are provided to set the scene and a framework for cultural mapping and planning is described.

Culture: cultural development, mapping and planning: what are they?

Culture - In using the term culture we are referring to “all of the customs and activities which constitute the lifestyle of a group of people: their sense of identity and heritage” (Jordan, 2005). Culture is a pervasive concept and as such is seen in history and heritage, design of public buildings and space, sporting and recreational activity, language food, community events, the visual and performing arts, and many other forms of creative activity.

Cultural development - “the process whereby the cultural characteristics of a community are acknowledged, enhanced and developed through a range of strategies which are based on that community’s strengths and needs” (Jordan, 2005). Cultural Planning is the tool that is used for cultural development. Its objective is to enhance the opportunities for local people to enjoy a life which is stimulating and rewarding within an environment in which they experience a high degree of community ownership (Jordan, 2005).
Cultural Mapping is a process undertaken by a broad range of community stakeholders that “maps” and records in a creative way a “picture” of that community. In order to find out where a community stands, a cultural mapping process gives important information about available cultural resources and facilities in the community, and current cultural events and activities, (Local Government Association of Queensland, 1996: 25). This process also identifies perceived gaps and a community’s potentials, and its typical and specific characteristics which distinguish them from other neighbourhoods (Forester, 1999: 233, Rohe 2004: 161).

Working with a focus on these strengths can be very powerful in enhancing a community’s spirit and sense of identity and self esteem. Information learned and gathered from the mapping process can be used to inform the cultural planning and can include aspects of:

- the past (history and heritage);
- the present (residents’ perceptions / images of the community, expressions of “themes” which are important to the community); and
- the future (vision / potential directions and projects) (Jordan, 2005).

**Cultural Mapping process**

The process of cultural mapping is implemented in a number of stages and would usually look something like this:

- A decision is made in the community that a cultural mapping process will be a valuable tool;
- Commitment by government, business, and community organisations to commit time and resources (both $ and “in-kind” support) to the process;
- Community get-together to decide the themes of the cultural mapping process, and to select a broad-based community Steering Group;
- The Steering Group works with the community to develop the “projects” relating to the themes which will best map the community, and to decide on appropriate ways of presenting the outputs from these projects; and
- Holding a celebratory event to mark the completion of the mapping process.

An outcome of such a cultural mapping process can be an enhanced community cultural identity, particularly if some “showcase” projects occur which enhance community cultural identity. Examples of showcase projects include an exhibition of photos, a “place-making” project, children’s drawings, a theatre piece or a community cultural festival with a theme drawn from the mapping process.

**The Cultural Planning process**

The framework for cultural planning is similar to the Cultural Mapping process described above, however, in developing a Cultural Plan, there is no focus on “themes” or “projects”. The Cultural Planning focuses on finding out everything about the cultural life of the community, finding what the perceived “gaps” are, and, working from the community’s strengths, developing a Plan which addresses these “gaps”.

Broadly the process for planning for cultural diversity involves the following steps:

- The audit process: where are we now? what cultural skills and resources does the community possess, where are the gaps?
- The visioning or future search process: where does the community want to go, what values does the community want to carry forward?
- The Cultural Action Plan/Strategic Action Plan: how is the community going to get from where it is now to where it wants to go, including a consideration of how to finance the Plan.

The outcomes of a cultural planning process can be a document which can act as a “blueprint” or implementation plan for government and community to follow, including a description of the: What?, How?, Who? By when?, What will it cost? and where the funding will come from to implement the plan? This document can be used by the community to work with government to ensure follow up of any government commitments in the plan and as a spur to government to provide services to their communities.
3.3.1 Governments’ role in cultural planning

Governments at the Federal and State level are increasingly aware of the importance of cultural diversity within communities, and as such, have a vital role to play in promoting this in policy development. Their recognition of cultural diversity in areas such as trade and economic development, infrastructure provision, education, and housing, to name a few, must be reflected in the guidelines and in the provision of funding within these portfolios. Federal and State governments are critical as partners in developing strong culturally diverse communities.

Local Government plays a key role in partnering community stakeholders in developing strong communities through strategies for enhancing cultural diversity. Local Government seeks partnership funding, engages the community in the cultural planning process, and resource strategies arising from the cultural mapping and planning phase of development. Without the understanding from local Councils of the importance of cultural diversity as a strength within communities, and without their support to actively “drive” strategies to enhance cultural diversity, communities will languish. Table 3.1 outlines the responsibilities of various stakeholders in the planning for cultural diversity process.
Consultation/Facilitation in the cultural planning process

In the development of a cultural plan, planners are facilitators and mediators, not decision makers. The residents themselves decide about their community’s future (Forester, 1999: 235; Flyvbjerg, 2002: 364). Planners need to be driven by the community’s values, not by what they think is best for a community (Jordan, 2005, telephone interview).

Before initiating community participation processes in cultural planning, the following aspects should be considered:

- Provide an environment conducive to the enhancement and celebration of community cultural aspirations (Local Government Association of Queensland, 1996: 12).

- Start with specific groups and/or key personalities. Some examples of possible participants:
  - Sporting, recreation and Service clubs;
  - School groups (Parents and Citizens groups);
  - Indigenous people’s groups;
  - Church groups;
  - Multi-cultural groups;
  - Special needs groups;
  - Youth groups; and
  - Senior Citizens groups (Local Government Association of Queensland, 1996: 25).

- Start creating an interest in all neighbourhoods, so a wide range of people have the opportunity to become involved (Jordan, 2005, telephone interview).

- Create a Steering Group, consisting of 12 or 14 key individuals. This group should ideally span a number of networks within and outside the community thereby contributing towards bridging, bonding and linking social capital.

- Develop a vision. The steering group needs to give interested residents a useful tool, which suits the way they work, which gives them self-esteem and which creates an understanding for other groups. “The more active group involvement techniques, such as community visioning strategies, role-playing exercises, trust-building exercises, and negotiation exercises, are more likely to involve residents and keep them involved” (Rohe, 2004, 162). At this step it is important to “identify the kinds of behaviour that undermine, block, or even demolish trust and well-functioning bridges – and to know how to take effective action” (Vidal, 2004: 167)

- Transfer these results into a coherent plan/vision statement which defines the steps through which each aim can be achieved and financed (for possible funding sources see Appendix 2). Possible outcomes include:
  - Place-making projects;
  - New tourist attractions;
  - Art and craft markets;
  - A local newspaper;
  - Service provision;
  - Links with major industry and
  - Educational programs.

Pitfalls to avoid in planning for cultural diversity

A key pitfall in the area of planning is consultation that has not been broad enough - for example either through a lack of publicity or a too narrowly representative steering group. “Very often consultation processes only reach those people who are already active” (Putnam, 2003: 340). This, and/or poor follow-through with the implementation stage, can lead to greater cynicism and resistance within the community to undertake future planning processes (Jordan, 2005).

“Agreement is difficult to reach, but if diversity of opinion is seen as positive rather than a negative, and conflict is effectively managed, we can develop creative solutions that use the best of everybody’s contributions” (Local Government Association of Queensland, 1996: 20).
Charters for Cultural Diversity

Since the 1990s the Federal Government of Australia has developed various instruments to respond to the increasing cultural diversity of Australia. The Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society is a key document to “ensure government programs meet the needs of our culturally and linguistically diverse society. It integrates a set of service delivery principles concerning cultural diversity into the strategic planning, policy development, budget and reporting processes of government service delivery, irrespective of whether these services are provided by government agencies, community organisations or commercial enterprises”. See Appendix 3 for details of the Charter or: http://www.immi.gov.au/annual_report/access04/access-equity-04.pdf, (accessed 25 July 2005).


These kind of documents provide guidance for other governments and stakeholders and show the importance of integrating planning for cultural diversity into decision making processes (from student Hembrow, 2005).

3.4 Performance indicators/checklist for Cultural Diversity

At the end of a planning process, cultural projects should be evaluated to see if the steps articulated in the vision statement have been realised. The following questions could provide a useful guide:

Social
- Responsiveness: Are local services sensitive to special requirements and needs of people from different cultural backgrounds?
- Is cultural diversity a public topic people debate within a community?
- Are kindergartens and schools involved in informing both children and their parents about the importance and positive aspects of cultural diversity?
- How many cross-cultural activities are held in a community and how often?
- Do people celebrate cultural diversity?

Organisation
- Steering groups: Do the steering groups reflect cultural diversity in their composition?
- Network: How strong is the network in this community (number of members, diversity, and number of meetings)? How many different cultures are represented?
- Communication: Is there an information exchange between the stakeholders?
- Effectiveness: How effective is this network?
- Does local government support communities, artists, migrants etc.?

Economy
- Could cultural diversity be used to generate new jobs?
- Did unemployed people report finding a job because of an increased network within or external to the community?

Environment
- Does a cultural diversity management strategy exist? If yes, are the aims achieved? Is cultural diversity manifested through arts?
- Is the community connected with its heritage?
- Are public spaces responsive to a variety of cultures?

3.5 Summary

Although Governments, and especially local governments recognise the importance of Cultural Diversity within their communities, there is still a long way to go. In this section we illustrated how cultural diversity can create strong communities. The creation of mutual trust, networks and the celebration of diversity has positive influence on the economic situation of many residents. Cultural Planning is a complex process because it has implications on all human activities and their environment. A key tool is community consultation as it brings people together and helps create a mutual understanding. Furthermore, people may start feeling proud about their community and may start taking responsibility for community change. Together they develop their future which is informed by a wide range of different cultures. Important too, is a regular evaluation of the project in order to see what has been achieved and what yet needs to be done.
3.6 Case Study: Illustration of application of planning for cultural diversity in building strong communities – Woodridge – an urban area with complex needs.

Excerpt from QUT DBP411 Community Planning 2005 student group assignment – authors: Grayson, M; Head, C; Joffry, F; Everitt, S; She, J; Asnicar, W. (2005)

Woodridge is a suburb located in the Logan City Council Local Government Area, just south of Brisbane. The Woodridge community includes residents from a wide range of cultural backgrounds and nationalities (almost one third of the population is overseas born) and there are a large number of multi-cultural organisations and associations present in the community. Harnessing this diversity through cultural planning would require an integrated and inclusive process of community based cultural mapping and cultural planning.

Woodridge is an interesting case study as some inclusive planning processes have already occurred in the area which have resulted in a Community Action Plan (from the Queensland State Government Community Renewal Program) and a cultural mapping and cultural development plan has been developed by Logan City Council.

First of all, the Community Action Plan was finalised in November 2000 and articulates the community’s vision. Residents have expressed a desire for Woodridge to be a suburb where residents share and observe community values where families can grow, have mutual respect for neighbours, participate in community life, all contributing to a mixed, diverse and inclusive community (Logan City Council online, 2005).

Cultural mapping

Logan City Council has demonstrated an ongoing commitment to the cultural development of its residents. In 1996 and again in 2001, Jackie Ohlin undertook a cultural mapping project. This mapping process provided a snapshot of Logan’s cultural resources that directly contributed to the development of a Cultural Plan. The major finding from the mapping study indicated seven elements needing to be investigated including: multiculturalism, tourism, education, urban and environmental planning, heritage, art and music, and social planning.

These seven elements aim to celebrate the diverse range of cultures and exploring these seven elements could contribute towards a strong and cohesive multi-cultural identity for Woodridge. Multi-cultural festivals, promotion of cultural attractions and historical significant sights could together provide a forum through which local arts and talents could be showcased and shared furthering the positive community exchanges that grow and nurture diversity.

Planning for cultural interaction

Through the seven elements identified above, opportunities exist for nurturing various cultural and community orientated activity in the investment of community infrastructure. A good example is the community neighbourhood centre, providing for a range of mixed uses, many of which relate back to increasing cultural stock. For instance, community centres can showcase local art, school performances, generally providing a strong hub for community interaction.

Place Making

Woodridge had a total allocation of $7.3 million in Community Renewal funding, ending 30 June 2004 through which the community, Logan City Council and the State Government managed 70 community-based projects. A good example of a community based project showcasing local artistic skills and multicultural diversity was the Woodridge Place Making Project. This project included over 100 Year 9 students from Woodridge State High School, involved in redesigning Station Road, one of the main streets in Woodridge. Through murals, banners and artworks reflecting their perceptions of Woodridge and the future, students and local artists were able to apply and share their creative skills in partnership that formed new relationships and built social capital.

In addition to the positive benefits of Place Making projects, they can have the outcome of possible gentrification of areas undergoing such projects. Planners need to be mindful of the positive and negative impacts of this.
References


4.0 POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT IN PLANNING

Collator: David Mepham
Reviewer: Tim Quinn

4.1 Introduction to Political Engagement in Planning

The role of political engagement in planning may seem an unusual topic to include in a Handbook of building strong communities, not so, however, when political engagement in planning is seen in the context of being a major factor in creating opportunities to build bridging and linking social capital. As discussed in the introduction to the Handbook, we are viewing the notion of strong communities within the context of communities that are high in social capital. High in all forms of social capital; both those that create stronger bonds within communities, (bonding social capital), as well as those that create new networks and links between people who may not previously had contact thereby creating opportunities for new networks to develop and new solutions to emerge (linking and bridging social capital). Political engagement in planning can be particularly powerful in facilitating the creation of the latter types of social capital in communities and is therefore an important issue to consider. Furthermore, commitment from all levels of government is required in order to develop strength in our communities. Critical to their effective involvement is the coordination of local and state programs ensuring seamless service provision.

Achieving great community planning outcomes is not dependent solely on engagement with the formal political process. Many major projects have been developed outside it. Consider the great workers’ cooperative movement in Spain or the many other important community and environmental projects achieved in other communities. Nonetheless, there are significant financial and human resources available through government and understanding how these resources can be accessed is fruitful in developing community planning projects.

Opportunities for both vertical and horizontal associations between people and groups and the opportunities to build social capital are evident in the nature of the electorate. Communities are not necessarily defined by lines on a map, but electoral divisions are and they are likely to cover a range of culturally and socially varied communities.

The broad and complex range of concerns across an electorate may provide opportunities for those concerned with community planning, the bridging of social divisions, the forging of ties within and across communities and the resultant building of social capital. Local politicians are well placed to reach across otherwise separate and different communities. They may understand the various concerns and through their contacts, skills and influence, they may have the ability and the commitment to build trust and tolerance and acceptance across and between communities. Local politicians may be able to bring people together to participate in cross community projects enabling high quality horizontal as well as vertical social capital outcomes to be achieved.

The strength of a community is evident in the number and activities of groups that exist. Local politicians can be found in many of these groups, often holding positions and lending to that organisation, the variety of skills and the influence that comes with their position.

Political engagement may pose some barriers but there are many opportunities to develop political support to enable broad reaching community planning projects that are dynamic, inclusive and sustainable and bridging the range of social and cultural distinctions within the broad nature of an electorate.

4.2 The Role of Politicians in Building Strong Communities

A politician is defined as one versed in the theory and the practice of government. The word comes from the Greek, “politicos” with associations to politis, the citizen and polis, the city. Variations on these can be seen in the term “policy”, “police”, “politie” “metro-polis”, and so on.

The political environment has evolved substantially in recent years and community expectations have increased with this. The role of the politician is more complicated and demanding and this is impacting on the qualities of our politicians at all levels.

The profile of today’s politician is changing; they are increasingly drawn from professional or business backgrounds, are likely to have higher education and more females are becoming politicians than ever before. The politician may have been elected to government on the basis of a high level of previous community and or business achievement. They are generally well connected back to their respective communities. It is useful to see politicians as people with influence and with a range of valuable skills that can be bought to community planning and development. The ability to harness these skills adds value to projects and the likelihood of success.

The work of the politician is varied. At the local government level politicians are required to participate in full Council about one day a week when Council is sitting and will take some time to prepare for the debates that take place on matters before it. (At the State and Federal government level this role is more significant). Prior to meeting in Council they usually meet with fellow party or like minded colleagues to discuss issues for the day in Council. They are likely to play a role on various formal standing committees dealing with policy areas such as finance, infrastructure, transport, water, environment, social planning, community development and land-use planning. If the politician is holding
a Chairpersons or Ministerial role then they are likely to have a much greater workload and influence having regular contact with senior managers and officers.

Local elected representatives may also be involved in their respective political party activities attending branch meetings and fulfilling responsibilities related to their various committees. Outside of sitting days Local politicians will perform a variety of roles, dealing with the day-to-day concerns of their constituents and their community. They may be required to play broker, facilitator, advocate, peacemaker or deal-maker and are likely to spend a lot of time after hours participating in their various communities listening, informing, assisting and supporting. As a consequence politicians come in contact with a large range of people and situations.

4.3 How to Create Strong Communities through Political Engagement

4.3.1 Understand Policy

The level of support for an initiative will generally depend on the way it relates to the policy of the government. It is in the policy that the values and the beliefs of the government, and the controlling ruling party, are articulated. Policies reflect desired outcomes and contain the strategies and the resources needed to achieve them.

The key policy framework for the government can be found in the higher level documents such as the corporate plan or its budget papers. Policy sources might include election policy papers, speeches and media. Policy can be found in laws and regulations. At the local government level an important policy document is the planning scheme. The planning scheme may contain local plans for a particular area as well as a range of supporting planning scheme policies.

Planning scheme policies affect the future development of a community and are therefore a useful tool in community development. Local politicians regularly deal with community concerns regarding particular development proposals and can have input into these matters. In some cases, where the development is outside the parameters of what is normally allowed, the public may also have input into these proposals.

There are other mechanisms within planning schemes that enable community involvement but their effectiveness will depend on the ease with which they can be triggered. Planning scheme policies are an example of this and they enable the community or social impact assessment of a development proposal. These are increasingly a feature of planning schemes that enable input into developments where there are concerns about adverse impacts on the community.

Formal plan making schemes and processes are a tool for the delivery of the future vision for the area sought by the broader community. The planning scheme should be able to reflect broader objectives including the long term social, economic, environmental and cultural goals of the community. They should also be able to reflect the principles of open and accountable government with opportunities for consultation and input into land use decisions. The local planning process should be able to reflect the preferences of the community and guide outcomes towards this direction.

Developing an initiative with regard to the policy of the government can be seen as promoting the interests of government as a whole. It is useful to see policy such as land-use planning as an extension of the broader policy of the organisation and to recognise the way in which it may achieve this.

4.3.2 Understand the Role of Policy in Building Strong Communities

Today’s politician operates in a complicated and highly regulated environment. At the local government level in Queensland the requirements of the Local Government Act 1993 or the Electoral Act 1992 must be considered. For the Brisbane City Council there is also the City of Brisbane Act 1924. These Acts set down the rules regarding what Councillors can and can not do. There are also strong legal and ethical standards for Councillors controlling what they can do and say.

Demonstrating accountability is one the key concerns for today’s politician as it is vital that the legislative requirements are complied with. Those who deal with politicians also need to demonstrate an understanding of this environment. For example, applications for funding support for an organisation or a project need to demonstrate a high level of financially accountability.

When presenting an idea or initiative to a politician it is worth considering whether you want to affect the making of the policy or its implementation. It may be worthwhile considering the benefits of the latter.

4.3.3 Understand the Role of Council Officers.

Council officers play an important role in policy and the outcomes of the government. They can directly influence the day-to-day implementation of the policy and are often able to have a strong influence on other officers and directly on politicians.

Senior officers are often experts in their fields and their views are respected. They will understand relevant policies and strategies and are likely to have been involved in the making and the implementation of the relevant policy.
They are often involved in related activities outside of their formal role and may be well connected in their broader professional community.

Council officers are likely to have an excellent understanding of the political machinery and how decisions are made. They are likely to be acutely aware of where their policy and projects sit on the political agenda and which politician might be supportive or opposed to it. Officers will be concerned with the way in which their projects are perceived and need to ensure that their projects are adequately funded in the budget process.

Dealing with Council officers may enhance the success of small projects. Not every decision is made by full Council. Many important day-to-day decisions about policy implementation are by Council officers. With larger initiatives Council officers may provide important advice and support, even championing the idea up to the policy making level for endorsement and funding. Therefore it is useful to progress an idea or initiative through professional officers.

4.3.4 Undertake Consultation

Those experienced in the preparation of good policy can attest to the benefit of quality consultation. Today’s politician is increasingly likely to rely on advice from the community. “Listening Tours” and “Community Cabinets” are events that enable politicians to understand the concerns of the community and to better inform government policy direction. For the general public these events represent opportunities to be heard and to influence issues of importance to them.

Consultation is necessary for a government which needs to be seen to be open and accountable for its actions. But consultation serves other important functions.

Consultation is a process that brings significant benefits to the political process. Importantly, consultation is an effective way to build support within the community or generate more ideas or options, it can be a value adding exercise and improve the quality of the policy.

Strategies for consultation vary and are discussed in detail in an earlier section. The strategy might only be to inform and a media release might be sufficient. Other times consultation might involve a greater level of engagement, targeting approaches to special interest and pressure groups who are in turn able to influence public opinion. Others will approach the government, attempting to swing the policy agenda to their position.

Sometimes, and perhaps more frequently in the modern political environment, there is a desire to invite greater participation of the community and to enable a stronger decision making role for the community. A participative process enables people to learn how to deal with community decision-making processes and to contribute to the notion of building community capital by developing such skills. Participative models are gaining greater recognition in the political arena and can provide excellent outcomes.

There are different approaches to community engagement. One size does not fit all situations. You need to consider what can work, what can be achieved and what fits best in the community you are working for. Remember politicians need to get outcomes since they are what people vote on. While process might be important to you the outcome may be most important to the politician you are dealing with.

One of the key points about consultation is that most politicians will usually be most strongly influenced by those closest to them and those they trust. Therefore it is useful to be mindful about who may hold that confidence. Advisors, support staff, government officers or leading community or business people may be a bridge to the politician that you seek to influence.

4.3.5 Getting Results

In this section we highlight a number of questions that need to be asked about how to initiate and sustain the process of political engagement. Some of these questions include:

How well do you understand the political environment that you need to work in?

The nature of electoral boundaries may be an opportunity for cross community action and subsequent building social capital. Local politicians may be open to ideas that enable them to become more involved with particular communities in their electorate. Governments operate in different ways. Some are dominated by organised political parties and others more by individual personalities, so you should be aware of the political position of the person you are dealing with and know if they are aligned with a political party, and whether the party is in power or in opposition. They may hold other influential positions. They may have a broad range of useful skills and contacts that can be bought to your project.

How well do you understand the policy environment?

There are a number of key documents that can provide an overview of the policy priorities of the government. The corporate plan, budget papers or the planning scheme outline the direction of the organisation. If dealing with a member of a political party then you might check the platform and any commitments given during the last election campaign or any media reporting this news.
Do you need to go through the formal political process?

Council officers may provide expert advice and become a champion for your project. They may also be able to provide opportunities to get started, contacts, advice and the ability to approve some implementation. If you do need to get political support then Council officers can be very effective in opening doors to politicians.

Do you know where your issue sits on the political agenda and which level of government is best able to support and develop your work?

The issues may not be on the agenda at all so it is useful to background check the relevant policy. If the issue is not well known or understood then you might ask how you can make your issue more relevant. You might get supporters together, have an event and invite media. You should consider how will you use your 20 to 30 seconds of attention and the clarity of the message you are promoting. You might invite the Councillor to share the limelight with you.

Look for those that will support your ideas, these are your champions and they can contribute to building a sense of momentum. Get supportive people on board, community or business leaders and supportive politicians. Are you working through the political system with an idea that is looking and sounding like a winner? A great idea does not always translate into a great outcome. You need to get the right people in the right place at the right time. You can be a motivator and get people believing that they can achieve these things as well.

Politicians need security and prefer guarantees of success so it is good if you can show some results or proof of success, either some local easy and achievable wins or where it has been achieved elsewhere. Even if you do not achieve the outcome you originally sought, for example you might not get money but you might achieve commitments to work with you to broker arrangements with other groups or organisations or business. They might advocate on behalf of your issues to those that can help or you might get a letter of support.

4.4 Summary

Successful political engagement can be seen as a natural and productive element of successful community planning and development. Connecting across communities, empowering those involved in the process and drawing in the new expertise and resources are some of the benefits that can be achieved.

Building stronger communities and developing social capital through political engagement may also strengthen the political process at the local level. Building longer term relationships of trust with those able to access government and key community resources ensures that the philosophy of community building are increasingly entrenched in the political decision-making process.

References


Vanessa Fabre, Team Leader Active and Open Spaces Team, Brisbane City Council. Personal Interview, July 2005.

5.0 ACCESS AND MOBILITY

**Collator:** Greg Buffini
**Reviewers:** Glen Warner and Juris Greste

### 5.1 Introduction to Access and Mobility

"Whether it is at a local street or freeway, footpath or bikeway, bus stop or train station, movements systems facilitate exchange and assist in building cohesive communities when applied at a human scale", (from student Wallace 2005: 24).

The basic task of transportation is to allow the movement of people and goods from place to place, including places of residence, employment, retail, commerce, recreation and service provision. Thus movement is a key facilitator of social, economic and reproductive activity within a community. An individual or community’s ability to undertake its desired patterns of movement is generally referred to as it level of mobility. The ability of an individual or a community to reach a desired destination is generally referred to in terms of that destination’s level of accessibility.

It should be noted that while movement is an aspect of access, movement itself is affected by street patterns, terrain and the quality of streets. Thus, movement cannot be seen merely as a consequence of transport, the type and quality of paving can make a route either possible and convenient or inaccessible. These aspects of access and movement are explored in the following section on Urban Design.

To undertake movement safely requires multiple modes and systems of transport, each tailored to the specific transport task. In Queensland most communities are able to access transport networks that satisfy, to a greater or lesser extent, their basic mobility requirements. However, what is of importance to community builders is that:

- The travel choices that people make are shaped by mobility and accessibility as much as by the need to travel. Therefore, the choices available to each respective individual or community in using their particular transport system can shape the way that the community is able to function; and,
- Movement requires space and thus transport can be considered a land use. Like any land use, transport networks interact with their environment, and can shape it to a greater or lesser extent.

In SEQ the dominant mode of travel is the private vehicle. SEQ’s transport system supports nine million trips per day, six million of which are by private vehicle (Queensland Transport, 2001). These private vehicle trips account for 78 per cent of trips with 7 per cent by public transport, 13 per cent by walking and 2 per cent by cycling (Queensland Transport, 2001). The negative impact that this dominance of the private vehicle has had on community interactions in our suburbs, cities and towns has been enormous. This fact is supported by Engwicht (1992: 42) where he says that ‘increasing movement space erodes exchange space which demands the city to spread to compensate for the lost exchange opportunities.’ This reduction of dual movement/exchange space has in turn-reduced amenity and ‘propagated the cycle of deterioration of these spaces.’

Symptomatic of this decline in exchange space has been the effect of lengthening commuter times by private vehicle. Putnam (2000: 213) found that a relationship exists between the length of commuter time and the corresponding involvement that one has in community affairs.

‘the car and the commute... are demonstrably bad for community life. In round numbers the evidence suggests that each additional ten minutes in daily commute time cuts involvement in community affairs by 10 percent -- - fewer public meetings attended, fewer committees chaired, fewer petitions signed, fewer church services attended, less volunteering, and so on. In fact, although commuting time is not quite as powerful an influence on civic involvement as education, it is more important than almost any other demographic factor. And time diary studies suggest that there is a similarly strong negative effect of commuting time on informal social interaction.’

These arguments support the development of truly competitive alternatives to the existing pattern of long trips by private vehicle. Such alternatives seek shorter travel times via more sustainable modes of transport that balance efficiency with community, physical and environmental impacts.

### 5.2 Role of Access and Mobility in Creating Strong Communities

Sustainably increased access and mobility should form an integral part of any community strengthening strategy. Typically, a strategy which addresses transport as a medium to build social capital, will utilise a range of methods to ensure successful transport solutions. The range of options can include ensuring efficient bus services, subsidising taxi travel and creating community based bus services designed by the community. Combining effective public transport services with improvements in cycling infrastructure and pedestrian access, will increase inter and intra-neighbourhood connectivity and provide opportunities for bridging capital, contributing to the development of a stronger, and healthier, community.

Despite the lack of quantitative research, there is evidence that access and mobility plays a key role in the formation and continued development of social capital in communities. Movement networks are an important medium for community interaction, both spontaneous and planned, creating an environment conducive to the development of social capital.
Transport plays a key role in determining accessibility. A major factor in accessibility is the ownership, or conversely, the lack of ownership or access to a private vehicle. It is well documented that those without such an option are particularly disadvantaged. The implications of such disadvantage include increased isolation and dislocation, which can lead to social dysfunction on individual and community levels. The most commonly cited examples of this are that:

- Amongst young people access to a private motor vehicle can significantly increase access to opportunities such as education, training and employment; and, 
- Amongst older people access to transport can increase opportunities for social interaction, thereby reducing the growing issue of socially isolated older people.

In Queensland, coordinated government responses to the transport task are driven by high-level strategic policy documents such as the Queensland Transport Strategic Plan, the Integrated Regional Transport Plan (IRTP: 1997), Transport 2007 (2001), SEQ Regional Plan, Cycle South East, Shaping Up, the Guidelines for Accessible Public Transport, relevant Australian Standards and various other state policy documents. On a local level most of the larger local government authorities (LGAs) have prepared an integrated local transport plan (ILTP) as part of their suites of strategic planning policies. While generally not directly referring to social capital, most, if not all, of these documents do make reference to improving social justice within the transport system.

The IRTP includes the following objectives for transport in SEQ:

- Ensure all members of the community can move around to fulfil basic needs; 
- Transport should be secure safe and affordable; 
- Transport should have minimal impact on peoples lives; 
- Involve the community in the development of the system; and 
- Ensure the costs of transport are shared equitably. (IRTP, 1997: 82)

The recent SEQ Regional Plan includes the following:

- 12.2 - Sustainable Travel and Improved Accessibility: Provide sustainable travel choices to support the accessibility needs of all members of the community 
- 12.2.1 develop a high quality and accessible public transport network linked to regional and sub-regional centres and services, (SEQ Regional Plan 2005, 108).

Despite the lack of direct references to increased social capital, the principles outlined in these documents can be used to promote environments conducive to generating social capital. This lack of direct references to social capital building potentially reflects the difficulty in correlating measurable social capital outcomes with improvements in the transport network, and/or the lack of skills in interpreting such relationships to develop quantitative goal setting in key performance indicators.

Despite this difficulty, the development of transport programs that seek to meet the broad principles espoused in such plans have included a number of successes in creating transport environments that can facilitate the development of strong communities. Examples of these include:

- Queensland Government investment in: Accessible bus program, and accessible bus and rail station infrastructure; 
- Subsidy of accessible taxis; 
- An accessible, high frequency Busway network for Brisbane that can offer rail-like travel benefits to a broader public transport catchment, thus maximising the spread of benefits geographically and socially; and 
- Regional public transport improvements and plans within the draft TransLink Network Plan.

Regional Government Investment in: 
- Brisbane City Council’s community cab system; 
- Footpath and kerb-ramp upgrades on local streets; 
- New cycle and pedestrian end of trip facilities; 
- Local pedestrian network upgrades; and 
- Shade tree programs. 
- State and local government investment in: 
- Active transport such as pedestrian and cycle paths; 
- Urban regeneration programs such as Brisbane City Council’s Suburban Centres Improvements Programs (SCIPs) or Kelvin Grove Urban Village that recognise the value of improved pedestrian environments to community spaces; and 
- Subsidy of BUZ routes that offer high frequency bus services to corridors.

5.3 How to Create Strong Communities with Access and Mobility

There are a variety of methods that can be used within transport planning to help foster the creation of strong communities and these can be applied at a range of levels and intensities. The types and methods of applications discussed below are from a range of government levels and structures and represent a brief summary of the methods that can be used to facilitate the development of social capital through transport planning.
5.3.1 Community transport strategies

The Transport 2007 document released by Queensland Transport in April 2001 documented a range of transport options focused on providing social justice in transport access. Some of the initiatives discussed in the paper are:

- An inter-agency Transport Social Justice working group established by the Brisbane City Council;
- Taxi subsidy scheme for people with disabilities; and
- A travel assistance program established for children with disabilities.

These ideas have been advanced in part by the work of the Victorian government, which produced ‘The Way Forward: Disability Service Organisation Transport System Study’ (2004). This study developed a coordinated and integrated transport model for people with disabilities focussing on the area of community transport. Community Transport as defined in the report:

- The service is provided for passengers who meet the criteria for transport disadvantage. This can include people with a disability who are unable to use conventional transport systems; people who live where conventional transport are not available; and people who need to access community facilities and resources that are not available within the hours when conventional transport systems operate;
- Provided by organisations that are not for profit and/or community based and/or funded by government; and
- Provided in either a car or bus, and generally pre-booked.

Some of the drivers behind the need for the development of community based transport services were identified at the QCOSS Flexible Transport Conference, (Brisbane, June 2003), which are:

- An increasing demand for discretionary and complex trips, due to dispersed urban population and diverse timing and locations of trips;
- Public transport is traditionally ‘disconnected’ from such discretionary needs;
- Consumer choice is for community transport that approximates the flexibility of a car (and other features such as price, reliability, speed and comfort). Clear consumer demand for safe and secure transport options; and
- A gap is therefore emerging between traditional public transport and private models of mobility. This represents opportunities for community transport model development.

Community transport can therefore help meet a part of the transport task within local community areas that is not able to be adequately met with the higher capacity, fixed-route services that form the core of any public transport network.
5.3.2 Bus services – Queensland Transport

Queensland Transport enters into service contracts for passenger services in areas that have a population over 7500 residents. However these residential areas have previously been serviced on the basis of large buses on fixed routes, which can be problematic in terms of providing suitable services at a reasonable cost. Areas with a population under 7500 tend to be neglected, when it comes to public transport. A proposed solution to this has been the introduction of flexible transport services, which are considered by Queensland Transport in areas where there is community need yet the population base cannot provide sufficient demand for a high capacity, fixed-route service.

The role of flexible transport can be expressed diagrammatically as follows:

![Diagram of Flexible Transport Services]

Flexible systems rely on smaller vehicles operating on flexible routes without timetables, and sometimes offering a door-to-door service. Queensland Transport has a number of flexible transport systems in place within Queensland and plans are being developed to expand the services further. See the case study at the end of this section for an example of flexible transport in action.

Some examples of other bus services in SEQ that have been developed through government based funding initiatives, with the involvement of local community groups and service organisations, are described below. The services usually provide connections to local shopping centres, banks, libraries etc. The existing services are summarised as follows:

a) Wynnum Manly – FlexiRide operated by QCOSS with assistance from Connex, Home and Community Care Program and financial contributors from local service clubs and businesses;
b) Caboolture – Flexi-shopper bus service operated by Centacare Caboolture in conjunction with Caboolture bus service;
c) Stafford City – The Stafford City Customer Express is a weekly door to door community bus service that runs to Stafford City shopping centre, who subsidises the service; and
d) Sandgate and Brighton – ‘The Wiz’ community service operates with the assistance of Brisbane City Council and Hornibrook bus lines. Destinations are local communities and facilities in the area.

These projects would have not been possible without assistance from state and local government budgets. The process of developing such a service requires community input from their conception. Other methods that have been successful are the utilisation of local club, RSL and community group buses for subsidised private travel by members of the public. Such a service, partly funded through local government revenue, can provide extra services for residents after-hours and at times outside of regular public transport services.

For further information refer to the Draft TransLink Network Plan which provides a summary of the proposed service improvements to bus services over the next 10 years.

5.3.3 Other transport strategies

Rail Services

Rail services, whilst important in commuter travel, represent a less flexible option to meet more individualised transport needs within a community. Given the high infrastructure costs associated with their development new rail infrastructure is generally most suited to linking major destinations such as a city centre and regional employment nodes. It is also potentially suited to linking high growth green-field development sites, such as those identified in the western corridor in Brisbane, with the existing rail network.

A key opportunity for community builders can be seeking integration of bus or flexible transport feeder services with rail and busway corridors to allow equitable access to metropolitan level transport.
Publicly Funded Private Transport

Publicly funded private transport is useful in areas that do not have sufficient population to support regular bus services. This type of funded community transport can take the form of council rebates on taxi usage to those members of the community in areas with low frequency public transport services.

Person Powered (Active) Transport

The provision of infrastructure supporting walking and cycling in a local area is a key aspect of improving social well-being in terms of improving mobility and promoting opportunities for social interaction. The provision of dedicated cycling and pedestrian paths that are separated from traffic has been shown to increase the number of trips using these modes, suggesting that there is considerable latent demand. An example of this was the introduction of the Goodwill Bridge which carries around 10,000 pedestrian and cycle trips each day, without any real loss to pedestrian and cycle trips across the Victoria Bridge – the closest alternative route. It should also be noted that separation from traffic depends on the type and density of traffic, as separation is not always a prerequisite to increasing cycling and pedestrian activity.

Along with provision of infrastructure, Councils can encourage the formation of community groups such as social walking and cycling groups in an effort to build social trust and civic involvement. One example of encouraging walking within our communities has been the TravelSmart ‘Walking School Bus’ concept.

A Walking School Bus is a group of primary school children who walk to and from school along a safe and enjoyable set route, accompanied by a minimum of two parent driver/supervisors per ‘bus’. One parent ‘drives’ at the front of the bus, while the other parent supervises at the rear. Additional parents may be needed depending on the local requirements. The walking bus picks up ‘passengers’ along the way at designated ‘bus stops’, (TravelSmart 2005).

Figure 5.2 - Walking School Bus

For further information on implementing a Walking Bus Strategy, and other related person powered initiatives, refer to the TravelSmart website http://www.travelsmart.gov.au. Queensland Transport also has a range of grants and subsidies of up to $10,000 for the Safe Walking and Pedalling Program for local schools.
5.3.4 Urban based strategies

Street Reclamation

Street reclamation is one of the ideas presented by David Engwicht (1999:27) that can be used to actively engage communities at a ground roots level. Engwicht noted that the street outside his home, ‘was a very special part of this extended sense of home. It was a place where the chatter and laughter of neighbourhood children could be heard; a place where the elderly sat, a place to sit and watch the drama of life being played out in the faces of both acquaintances and those journeying through; a place of conversation...’ Engwicht (ibid) He says this, ‘spontaneous exchange that once occurred has moved to an increased reliance on planned exchanges’. This has been caused by our streets becoming dominated with vehicular traffic. Streets that are vibrant and full of activity tend to encourage more spontaneous social interactions and social exchange as opposed to those streets, which are lifeless. The deterioration of exchange space within a community caused by vehicles, causes an increased reliance on planned exchanges, as depicted in the figure below.

Street Reclamation Initiatives

The Brisbane City Council has developed various street reclamation initiatives. Some examples include the community street parties that have been held in key suburban activity areas such as in Darra and in Corinda. These have been successful in particular suburbs in building relationships between members of local communities.

The Brisbane City Council’s (community work group) has shown the advantages of these types of community events. Refer to http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au for more information.

Engwicht also advocates a similar approach of reclaiming the streets. However he attempts to start from a basis of changing communities attitudes towards streets and trying to establish a new culture of respect for the dual role of streets for movement and local activity. Further information on his approaches can be found at www.creative-communities.com.

5.3.5 Urban and transit based strategies

Transit Oriented Developments

At a strategic policy level IRTP and SEQ Regional Plan look at various strategies for increasing the inherent connectedness of communities in SEQ. One of the key implementation strategies to achieve this goal has been the promotion of Transit Oriented Developments (TODs). Featured significantly in the regional plan they seek to achieve higher densities of land use and activity around mass transit nodes. This is approach seeks to provide an environment within a local area that is conducive to increasing walking, cycling, informal social exchange opportunities and self sufficiency. These goals can be seen to contribute to the development of social capital. Some of the other strategies include:

- Maximising access to appropriate social infrastructure for residents in the region (SEQ Regional Plan, 2005: 51);
- Investing in the transport system to maximise community benefit (SEQ Regional Plan, 2005: 109); and
- Supporting a more compact pattern of urban development and promote the self-containment of travel in sub-regions by integrating transport and land use planning (SEQ Regional Plan, 2005: 107).

Figure 5.3 - How traffic erodes exchange space
5.3.6 Initial community intervention strategies

When introducing new transport solutions or services to a community, a process of community engagement and consultation should be undertaken. While this could involve any number of community engagement tools, such as the formation of a community focus groups or the structured soliciting of community feedback, essential to its success is the establishment of a relationship that allows for open and ongoing communication between all parties.

Community engagement about mobility issues can be undertaken separately or as part of broader community programs such as Local Area Planning, Community Renewal or integrated local transport planning. As with any community engagement process, it is important that any communication or consultation is entered into honestly and without preconception of likely feedback. Information must be communicated clearly and in a way that is accessible to the whole community.

A specific challenge to these principles is that transport projects are generally based around more or less linear corridors. This can means that a single project will often be simultaneously engaging with many different and distinct communities that have few shared interests or characteristics. It is not uncommon for conflict to arise between the needs and desires of one community and those of another further along the corridor. This can often place transport agencies in the position of having to trade one community’s views off against another’s. Dealing with this requires the establishment of robust and agreed objectives, and hence evaluation criteria, which include equitably weighted social issues. Initial actions could involve the following:

- Undertaking community accessibility and mobility audits of a local area is critical;
- Undertaking a household travel survey to determine current and potential travel patterns, including suppressed demand for public transport, walking and cycling trips;
- Undertaking a review of public and community transport services in an area;
- Working with government agencies to promote TravelSmart Initiatives;
- Convening community workshops to discuss access and mobility issues in the area;
- Developing a local community Residents Accessibility and Mobility Program (RAMP) highlighting future projects and initiatives for consideration by government; and
- Working with government agencies in promoting community art and expression projects using transport infrastructure as community assets.

After such work has been completed the results from the consultation should be fed back into the planning process to inform future neighbourhood planning. They should also be collated and provided back to the community(ies) to show that their input has been heard and used. Wherever possible it is desirable to link feedback to specific changes or actions recommended for implementation.

5.4 Performance Indicators for Access and Mobility

The main data set collected by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) provides information on how we travel to work. This is supplemented by a variety of other data sets such as household travel surveys, traffic volume studies and public transport ticketing information. However, these indicators alone do not directly provide a measure of social capital and need to be linked to more complex indicators that relate to community behaviours, needs and desires.

The following could be used to measure whether transport initiatives have succeeded in building a stronger community:

- Increased patronage on local bus services;
- Utilisation rates with rebated community services;
- Level of street reclamation – use of local streets for non-movement-related activity (for example, social interaction);
- Level of conflict between vehicles and other street users (accidents/injuries);
- Amount of people in the community commuting to work using public transport;
- Level of observed informal community interaction;
- Measured satisfaction levels with transport services;
- Measured level of fit between community mobility needs/desires and actual behaviours;
- Levels of movement related physical activity (active transport) and community health indicators – for example, fitness, mental health;
- Perceived isolation;
- Decreased growth in private car trips; and
- Increased numbers of people walking and cycling.
5.5 Illustration Of Application Of Mobility And Access In Building Strong Communities

The case study presented below provides a summary of the flexible bus service initiated in Toowoomba early in 2005. (Toowoomba is a diverse regional centre to the west of Brisbane. It is the largest non-coastal city in Queensland, with more than 90,000 residents, and is the social and economic hub of the Darling Downs region).

Since its inception the flexible bus service has recorded a 20 per cent increase in patronage passenger levels from those on fixed route networks. The flexible bus trial operates along Route 3, which services the traditionally low demand Rangeville area of the city. Trip data analysis of Route 3 identified that 73 per cent of the passengers travel on the first 4 kilometres of the route but only 27 per cent of the passengers travel on the outer 8 kilometres of the route. This meant that savings made during periods of low demand could be re-invested into providing a door-to-door service (Queensland Transport, 2005).

Prior to commencing the project extensive research was undertaken which found three key findings that were highly relevant to the proposed model.

a) That technology is required for flexible transport services that operate in mainstream public transport networks;
b) One of the major inhibitors of flexible transport worldwide is the need for passengers to book a return, thereby restricting travelling freedom; and
c) There was no software currently available that was capable of taking on-board bookings and including them into an optimised route as the vehicle travelled. (Queensland Transport, 2005)

In order to make the project feasible the software provider for the majority of Taxi companies in Australia, Raywood Systems was approached to develop a new satellite enabled program. The new technology allows the driver operating the service to add bookings en route. These bookings are added to the route via a GPS based route optimiser and the system will continue to re-optimise the route until a final close-off point. The on-board receiver then guides the driver along the route by voice command.

The trial service travels a fixed route from Toowoomba City Centre to the Range shops via St Vincent’s Hospital. The remainder of the service is completely demand responsive in a roam zone that covers the Rangeville area of Toowoomba. As long as people ring the booking centre up to one hour before they travel they are able to be picked up at their door or as near to as possible. There is no booking required for the homeward journey. Passengers use their telephone number as a client number and the system recognises their address.

The service operates Monday to Saturday during daylight hours. On occasions when the driver collects a passenger en route who is not registered the on board receiver will allow the driver to enter the new passengers details into the system. Passengers will continue to pay the normal bus fare. The receiver is also a mobile telephone that allows voice and text communications. Once fully trialled and tested, the newly developed software and booking arrangements will be used for flexible transport services throughout elsewhere in the state. The next flexible service is planned for the Point Vernon and Eli Waters areas of Hervey Bay.

Into the future this revolutionary new system allows for complete ease of management of the flexible transport systems by Queensland Transport, the booking company and the service provider by providing accessible web based statistics that cover every aspect of the service provided. This means that every stakeholder involved in the service has relevant and up to the moment data available to manage, refine and improve the services being offered. In the not too distant future this system will also allow for real time vehicle location monitoring and real time service information using GPS technology. It is expected that more flexibility in these types of services will result in increases in passenger numbers.
Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Paul Logan from Queensland Transport who provided this summary of the project.

References


By embracing certain principles and qualities outlined below, urban design as an outcome as well as a process has the potential to contribute to the building, support and enhancement of strong communities. Also because urban design focuses on the quality and performance of the public realm, by its very nature it is pluralistic and inclusionary.

6.1 **Urban design and community building – important qualities and elements**

6.1.1 **Connectivity**

Connectivity has at least two dimensions which are helpful in the case of community building.

1. **Physical connectivity.**
   This means well interconnected streets. A place which is well physically interconnected will assist a community to be better integrated within itself. A well interconnected street layout enables more contact and movement choices in a neighbourhood. As people are able to move around more directly and with a choices of routes, a sense of equity can be nurtured and supported. Clear and well defined layouts are more memorable and understandable than random or ‘organic’ patterns. Therefore people will be able to find ways around the place with greater ease and convenience. This is likely to assist with the establishment of an image and understanding of the place and further support a sense of belonging. Connectivity is also an important component of the quality of legibility (referred to later) and the development of the sense of place.

2. **Time connectivity.**
   We have a psychological need also to be connected to our community in the flow of time. We need to be aware of where we have been to be better able to go forward into the future with confidence. Thorough sensitivity and respect for physical context and our built heritage, urban design can strengthen and enhance the links to communities and individuals of the past, thus providing common bonds and links for the present. Connections to previous times and places can be made through visual references to objects (buildings and other physical elements of the built environment), place names and people. Adaptive reuse is another important method of maintaining links with the past.

6.1.2 **Variety**

Urban design recognises that one of the qualities of good urban places is variety. This quality aims to expand and maximise the range of goods, services, activities and opportunities. This quality can provide for a large range of users of urban places and activities. Variety also means attracting a diversity of users over an extended period of the daily as well as seasonal cycle. This approach supports the use of local services and amenities, serves an expanded range of users, thus supporting the community better than a setting with more limited choices and opportunities.

A very important aspect of variety is not only the provision of a range of goods and services but mixing them horizontally and vertically in a fine grained way. This expands and enhances the value of variety in itself. Mixing of uses further enhances other qualities and elements such as safety, adaptability and versatility and enriches the urban experience.

6.1.3 **Access**

Although access and mobility have been referred to earlier, urban design gives this quality additional dimensions in addition to physical access and convenience.

Psychological access. Appropriate urban design approach can ensure that no member of the community feels excluded or rejected because the setting or environment communicates messages to them that they are not welcome or is otherwise experienced as alienating – either through their cultural background, demographic position, economic well being or appearance.

Economic access. An urban design approach, through the implementation and expansion of variety, can minimise the possibility that some members of the community may be excluded because of insufficient means. In practice this means facilitating uses and services such as second hand goods shops and space with low rentals so that the business and commercial sector can better cater for all needs. This approach to access will assist in maintaining community cohesion.
6.1.4 Adaptability and versatilty

Urban design recognises that an adaptable and versatile urban setting is more sustainable than one which is not. Thus, if a place can adapt and change with relative ease and facility, there is likely to be less economic as well as social ‘pain’ and disruption to the community. There will be a greater chance that people and institutions may be able to continue their lives with fewer dislocations. This will clearly support community cohesion. An adaptive building, for example, will be able to continue offering physical, visual, psychological and spiritual links to the past which helps to bind the present community to communities of the past.

6.1.5 Pedestrian focused approach

In the age of the motor car, this quality is being rediscovered as something new, (for example, the street reclamation initiatives discussed in the Access and Mobility section). However, there is a long urban design and place making tradition of basing all decisions around the human scale and experience. This is the quality of urban design which can create a medium for optimum human and social interaction. People need to feel that they can derive physical, personal, psychological, aesthetic, spiritual, cultural and social satisfaction from being in a place. If the idea of community is a social concept, then a strong and healthy community can develop only where good social interaction – passive and active, voluntary or accidental – can occur. This requires skills and a well studied approach to facilitating and maximizing the opportunities for members of a community to firstly want to ‘engage’ with a place and secondly to participate in the social life of public places.

6.1.6 Space making

Urban designers have special skills in the making and furnishing of spaces. Human beings are sensitive to the spatial qualities of our surroundings. Space making may be seen as a subset of pedestrian oriented places. However, if we are to utilise our public spaces to their maximum, then the urban design concern with the creation of high quality urban spaces must be given high value in community development.

6.1.7 Place making

The spirit of place is an elusive concept which nevertheless has been recognised as an experiential quality. While urban designers themselves are division on specifically the necessary attributes which generate the spirit of a place, the quality of comprehensibility or legibility underlies good place making. This is the quality of a place or setting which makes it easy for people to develop an understanding or mental construction of what a part of a city or town is and how it works. While the physical setting itself will not generate a community, an easy understanding, an appreciation of how to use it, its easy ‘imageability’ will assist the community to develop a relationship with it and thus be bound closer together. While there are a number of elements which can be called upon to support comprehensibility, one of the easiest to depend upon is something which has a landmark quality.
6.1.8 Safety

Urban design has much to contribute to making our urban places safe. Unless places are safe and are perceived as being safe, urban design endeavours for the public realm will be diminished. In the first instance we must ensure that we minimise hazards such as protecting changes of level, eliminating ledges and providing non-slip surfaces.

A very considerable amount of knowledge has been assembled under the acronym of CPTED – Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design. This is based on the knowledge that much of crime is opportunistic. If we can design out those conditions which might encourage criminal or antisocial behaviour, crime will be reduced.

Recent research has confirmed that this is in fact the case. The major elements of the CPTED approach are:

- Sight lines and surveillance. This approach endeavours to arrange a setting in a way which enables maximum space to be observed – either actively (by designated persons, cameras etc) or passively by casual passers by or people at windows and doors. Obvious major elements are any barriers, obstructions or features which may offer opportunities for concealment or surprise.

- Activity generators. If a place is unused or unattended for long periods, there may be temptation for undesirable behaviour. Thus, if activities can be arranged in space as well as over time to ensure that a place is or appears inhabited 24 hours every day, criminal behaviour is more likely to be inhibited.

- Territoriality. This is the arrangement of external spaces in such a way which communicates to everyone that all spaces are ‘owned’ or territorially ‘controlled’ by someone. If a place / space appears abandoned or without an ‘owner’, it will be more vulnerable. This is separate from legal ownership. It means implied ownership or some other level of control. It goes hand in hand with the use of sight lines and surveillance. Good maintenance also enhances the perception of territoriality. It signals that there is care and the place has not been abandoned. Poor maintenance encourages vandalism.

- Exterior building design. Not infrequently buildings are designed to almost encourage invasion and intrusion. The extreme example is openings without locks but other steps can be taken to make it difficult for the criminal to gain access. This approach extends to street furniture elements to make them as resistant to vandals as is reasonably possible.

- Lighting. This is the other side of the sight lines coin. Good lighting will not only reduce the risk of crime but make the environment safer to use generally at night or in poor light conditions.

- Way finding. Places and spaces should be so arranged that people do not feel as if they are lost or insecure at any time. This can be facilitated primarily by clear and well distinguished routes, paths and destinations and an easily understood layout. Secondly, way finding can be assisted with well designed and appropriately placed signs and directions.

- Predictable routes and entrapment spots. Care should be taken not to create places of potential victim entrapment at the end of or along known routes such as paths, stairs, underpasses etc. It must also be borne in mind that opportunities for retreat and escape are just as important to the potential offender as for the victim.

6.2 Elements of urban structuring that support and enhance community building and spirit

There are also a number of principles or elements of urban structuring, employed by urban designers, which also collectively are able to support and enhance community building and spirit. These are:-

- Interconnected street layouts (referred to earlier).

- Parks. Well located, distributed, designed and equipped parks are an important social as well as recreational amenity. Among some sections of the residents such as young mothers, a well equipped local park is sometimes the nucleus of lasting and important community relationships. However, provision of the park itself may not be sufficient if it is not appropriately located and equipped.

- Schools. Local schools are greatly undervalued as crucial elements in community building and sustenance. Because urban designers or planners often have little influence on the precise location, size or arrangement of the school, the community enhancement benefits can be diminished. However, careful urban design considerations will guide the siting and arrangement of a school for maximum community building value.

- Local shops and services. This element has already been referred to under the heading of “Variety” above. Providing a large range of shops and services locally will be one of the most effective means of assisting the development of a community identity and spirit. Conversely, the community feeling and cohesion of many towns has been threatened or destroyed with the introduction of a fringe of town major development or a large shopping centre in the adjoining town.
Defined local boundaries. It is often difficult for a community to identify itself in a physical setting if one area merges seamlessly into another adjoining settlement. Urban design skills can be used to develop or enhance a sense of transition or boundary between one place and another.

Public buildings and utilities. Although the number of publicly owned and operated buildings and utilities is diminishing, they do play a major role in providing amenities and facilities which the community can relate to — in a legibility as well as binding and uniting sense. These buildings are schools, places of worship, monuments, civic and public art, galleries and museums, halls, civic centres, police, ambulance and fire stations—all joining us in common ‘ownership’. Urban design recognises that firstly they need to be regarded as important elements of the urban fabric and given publicly prominent and appropriate sites and locations. Secondly, as they are ‘our’ property and thus a reflection of ‘us’, it is therefore highly desirable that they be of the highest possible design quality. They should set benchmarks and be exemplars to the community which can then relate to them with local pride. Today we tend not to regard these buildings and utilities as the heritage of tomorrow.

Street parking. We overlook the value, especially at the very local level, of parking more of our cars in the street. Off street parking has become a culturally accepted dogma. However, when we recognise the way we tend to design the street fronts of our houses where it is possible to come and go without stepping out into the street, we forgo an important opportunity for occasional and informal interaction with our neighbours or passers by. Well managed street parking can be a significant community interaction generator.

6.3 Conclusion

Urban design utilises a range of applied techniques and processes from the professions of design, construction and planning. It is concerned with a holistic approach to design and the development of a public domain that is supportive of community interaction and involvement. It has a key role to play in the development of social capital in our communities as it provides the ‘stage’ upon which our everyday interactions with one another occur. If this platform for community interaction does not support spontaneous gatherings and community exchange the potential exists for negative impacts upon social life to occur.

To foster the development of social capital, urban design must ensure the public domain has sense of place; where community members feel safe to socially interact. Such an environment can be developed with a number of strategies and design guidelines. Some of these include active community involvement in the generation of CPTED programs, increasing legibility and walkability in neighbourhoods and the development community hubs with strong local involvement.

Many factors influence the social life and vitality of urban spaces and it is the manner in which these factors are incorporated into a cohesive design strategy that will determine the effect that the urban environment has on the development of social capital. If an urban environment can be built on such a foundation positive outcomes for communities should result.

6.4 Case study: Illustration of application of urban design in building strong communities – Goodna.

Excerpt from QUT DBP411 Community Planning 2005 student group assignment - authors: Buffini, G; Burke, D; Wallace, C and Scriggins, W.

“Places are designed for people and the qualities that maintain the vitality and well being of cities are intensity and diversity.” (Jacobs, 1961, p. 121-122)

Enhancing Urban Design in Goodna

Jane Jacobs (1961, p.121-122) says places are designed for people and that the qualities that maintain the vitality and well being of cities are intensity and diversity. The suburb of Goodna does possess a strong sense of diversity. This is bought about through the fusion of people from various ethnic backgrounds and pockets of intensity within strip retail developments. However, in general the pattern of development within Goodna does not contribute to that sense of vitality. In order to achieve this it is necessary to maximise the integration of the physical environment through working collaboratively with stakeholders to create good urban places.

The Urban Design Alliance of Queensland advocates this notion by defining urban design as:

‘making connections between people and places, between public and private space, between the natural and built environment, between movement and urban form, and between the social and economic purposes for which urban space is used’ (Urban Design Alliance of Queensland, 2002: 1).
In looking at urban design attributes of Goodna we can apply the seven key components to creating responsive environments and achieving successful urban design outcomes as defined by Bentley et al. (1985). These being: permeability, variety, legibility, robustness, visual appropriateness, richness, personalisation and linking. These components applied together could make Goodna a more responsive place.

**Urban Design issues**

To achieve good urban design outcomes in Goodna we must first build upon the intrinsic strengths that the Goodna community possesses. We will then investigate areas of improvement that will contribute to building a cohesive community within Goodna. In looking at the strengths within the Goodna community a number of key urban design issues have been identified. Some key strengths of Goodna include: its proximity to Brisbane River and the abundance of Riverside Parkland, direct linkages to a regional transportation corridor as Goodna has a train station located within the suburb. Urban design attributes that need to be addressed in Goodna include:

- Improve connectivity within the suburb due to physical barriers, namely Ipswich Motorway and access to the Goodna train station. Goodna train station and parklands are severed and isolated from the community due to gradient changes and a roadway.
- A defined civic or public space. Goodna lacks a civic heart. St Ives Shopping Centre acts as a ‘de-facto’ gathering and congregation place.
- Enhance the legibility and permeability of footpaths, cycle paths and roadways and improve connectivity between areas within Goodna.
- Enhance lighting provision along highly thorough fared pedestrian and cycle routes and increase interaction and activation of the built form and pathways to surrounding parks and forests.
- Enhanced streetscapes due to little variety in style and type of housing stock due to previous public housing in the area. This includes a high proportion of public housing stock with little to no address to the street.
- Increase Goodna’s sense of identity through application of locally agreed upon key urban design features.

These issues have been raised in the development of the Goodna and Gailes Community Action Plan (CAP) completed in 2000 and more recently in work the QUT’s School of Urban Development has undertaken with the Goodna community in 2005.

**Implementation options for urban design enhancements in Goodna**

To build on social capital within Goodna it is recommended that the following actions be initiated.

- Establish a Goodna Design Charette with stakeholders and the local community to determine what attributes to the existing urban environment within Goodna would like to be enhanced.
- Undertake a Community Safety Audit involving Queensland Police Service (QPS) to determine areas for improvement and current perceived safety issues based on community feedback. Undertake a place making strategy within Goodna using local community members in the development of entrance gateways, banners and community art encompassing the various cultural backgrounds of the Goodna community. Develop incentives for public and private housing beautification programs to enhance the aesthetic appeal and image of housing within the Goodna community.
- Implement a regular community tree-planting day (annually) at parks and along footpaths to lift image of Goodna. Enhance connectivity of the passive space around the Brisbane River to the rest of the community.
- Develop a lighting upgrade and footpath program of works for implementation by Ipswich City Council to improve safety for pedestrians.
- Commence an ongoing public art program with willing participants from within the Goodna community that is, murals on telegraph posts.
References


Some further reading in the urban design field.


7.0 HOUSING

Collator: Jamaica Hewston
Reviewers: Peter Chapman and Stuart Mc Laughlin

7.1 Introduction to Planning for Housing

Access to shelter is a basic human need that allows individuals to lead fulfilling and productive lives. Good outcomes for individuals and communities in the areas of health, education, employment, economic development and social amenity correlate strongly with access to housing that is affordable, appropriate to the needs of its residents, well located and secure. Housing is commonly referred to by economists as a ‘merit good’: something that provides a direct benefit to the individual, and also to society as a whole. Therefore, access to affordable and appropriate housing plays an important role in the development of strong and sustainable communities which are high in social capital.

However the importance of meeting housing needs in the SEQ region is becoming critical due to the rapid population growth currently being experienced and predicted for the future. In addition to population growth, changes in the demographic profile of the region, such as an ageing of the population, and changes in the rates of household formation are also occurring, altering traditional household size, type, price and locational demands. This growth and change is occurring in an environment of increasing housing costs and declining availability of funding for the provision of social housing1 for low income and disadvantaged households.

A number of interrelated issues and areas of opportunity for policy reform have emerged from the review of changes in supply and demand factors. These issues and opportunities can be grouped into the theme areas of affordability, settlement patterns, mix and tenure, design and governance.

7.1.1 Affordability

Access to affordable housing is important, particularly for those on low incomes. Factors that have impacted on affordability in SEQ in recent years include:

- Significant increases in rent and purchase prices;
- Gentrification in urban locations; and
- Labour market restructuring and an increase in the number of casual and part time jobs.

Declining affordability is complicated in some locations by the increasing mismatch between existing dwellings (that is, predominantly detached houses) and the increasingly diverse housing needs of the community. For example, smaller or lone person households may be forced to rent or purchase a large dwelling where more appropriate (and cost effective) housing types are not available. Alternative and innovative solutions to affordable housing provision are essential to the development of strong communities.

7.1.2 Settlement patterns

The location and layout of new housing developments, in terms of their proximity to services, the ability to be supported by public transport and for social networks to develop, has a significant impact on the growth of new communities. The future settlement patterns of the region in terms of land use have been reviewed and revised in the SEQ Regional Plan to encourage transit-oriented development (TOD), increased densities and reduced sprawl. Although changes are currently being made to Local Government Planning Schemes to reflect the patterns depicted in the SEQ Regional Plan, careful monitoring of these settlement patterns will be required to ensure the desired social outcomes of the plan are being achieved. For example, increasing densities alone may not be sufficient without the inclusion of appropriate support services and a mix of housing types and tenures.

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1The term “social housing” refers to housing that is managed either by government or by not-for-profit agencies, for the specific purpose of providing accommodation for households in need, and for social and community benefit. The term encompasses public rental housing, subsidised community-managed housing, supported housing and emergency accommodation.
7.1.3 Mix and tenure

Strong communities are those which offer choice in housing and embrace diversity. The availability of a mix of housing types throughout a particular area, such as boarding houses, detached and multi-unit dwellings, temporary and emergency accommodation, is important to:

- guarantee a healthy social diversity is achieved in the area;
- ensure people are not forced to leave an area as they go through different stages in life; and
- assist people in living where they need or want to.

In addition to a mix of housing types, a mix of land uses within an area, including essential services and recreation and entertainment facilities, is also desirable for the creation of strong communities.

An increasing proportion of the population is being priced out of the housing market in SEQ as the population grows. The long term implications of this on community cohesion are unclear, however the benefits of home ownership include pride of place and stronger involvement in local issues and community life. Therefore, alternative tenure options and mechanisms to facilitate ownership need to be explored if strong communities are to be achieved as the population continues to grow and the demographic mix and rates in household formation continue to change.

7.1.4 Design

Housing design has an important role in building a strong community. Design which is appropriate and adaptable to changing needs (such as the ability for a house to accommodate a person throughout the different stages of their life and the growing preference for home based employment), promotes safety and security and respects the existing character of an area, can influence a person’s sense of pride in their house and neighbourhood, this in turn increases community involvement and social capital creation.

7.1.5 Governance

Communities need to be involved in planning for housing so that they can develop a sense of ownership of the plans and voice their needs and concerns. “To ensure that housing provision continues to meet the needs of those who rely on it, community consultation and participation in planning for housing provision is a fundamental contribution” (Alderson et al. 2004). Effective governance in housing provision involves partnerships between the community and public and private sectors. Moreover, it helps to create strong communities by enhancing accountability and transparency of decision making, thereby building trust and social capital. Crucial to achieving effective governance in housing is the coordination and cooperation of all stakeholders so that equal levels of importance are placed on housing by all stakeholders.

These theme areas represent a framework within which the key stakeholders in housing provision can act. The role of all stakeholders in addressing the housing themes described above will be discussed in further detail while examining the methods of application for housing provision in the sections below.

7.2 Role of Housing in Creating Strong Communities

Housing forms, (such as the detached house or multi unit dwelling), physically define our communities and where people choose to, or can afford to, live will affect where and how they work, travel, access services and facilities, recreate and engage with their surroundings and other people.

Therefore housing’s role in creating strong communities by building relationships, bringing communities together and increasing levels of social capital is of utmost importance for all stakeholders to recognise. Improved housing provision can result in a decreased cost of resolving the social problems created by a lack of affordable, appropriate and safe housing.

7.3 How to Create Strong Communities through Housing Provision
7.3.1 Understand existing stakeholder roles and responsibilities

The roles of the key stakeholders in housing have changed considerably in Australia over the last half century. Responding to the range of issues and opportunities in housing was once primarily the responsibility of the Commonwealth and state governments and whilst still involved, their responsibilities have changed to be focused on addressing housing issues through financial regulations and taxation. Therefore it has been necessary for Local Government and the private and community sectors to take a greater role and responsibility in the delivery of housing and shaping of housing policy.

An opportunity has also arisen for the SEQ regional planning agency, the OUM, to have an important role in the future of housing provision through the implementation of the Proposed State Planning Policy (SPP) for Housing and Residential Development. The outcome sought by the SPP is to ensure the housing and residential development components of planning schemes provide housing options that meet the diverse needs of a local government area, as identified in Local Government Authorities’ housing needs assessments. This SPP has strong links to the SEQ Regional Plan as one of the core matters for SEQ Councils to address in their Local Growth Management Strategies (LGMS) is an assessment of housing needs and diversity to be used to inform their Residential Development Strategy.

This section of the Handbook aims to examine a range of methods or strategies that can be adopted to improve housing provision. However, in order to understand what can be done, and by whom, it is important to understand the existing roles and responsibilities of stakeholders:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Key Role or Responsibility</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth Government</td>
<td>• Macroeconomic policy development (taxation, interest rates, superannuation, financial regulation etc.) that impacts directly and indirectly on housing markets;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Funding for social housing provision through the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Provision of Commonwealth Rent Assistance to low income households in the private rental market; and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Administration of the First Home Owners Grant.</td>
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<tr>
<td>State Government</td>
<td>• Funding, delivering and managing social housing;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Administration and implementation of the Proposed State Planning Policy (SPP) for Housing and Residential Development;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Administration of the land use planning system;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Funding and undertaking housing research and policy development;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Tenancy regulation, consumer protection and dispute resolution; and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Supporting not for profit housing providers (for example, Brisbane Housing Company).</td>
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<tr>
<td>OUM</td>
<td>• Developing and implementing the SEQ Regional Plan which identifies preferred housing outcomes for the SEQ region.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Governments</td>
<td>• Developing and administering land use planning instruments in accordance with the requirements of the Integrated Planning Act 1997;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Implementation of the Proposed State Planning Policy (SPP) for Housing and Residential Development;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Developing and administering local laws; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Engaging with other stakeholders (State Government, community organisations and the private sector) to facilitate and deliver housing for low income households.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private sector</td>
<td>• Delivering housing in response to market demand through land development, housing construction and private rental investment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community sector</td>
<td>• Engaging with other stakeholders (State Government, Local Governments, and the private sector) to facilitate and deliver housing for low income households; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Funding, delivering and managing community housing.</td>
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</table>

Table 7.1 Stakeholder Responsibilities
Housing is a shared responsibility between all of the abovementioned stakeholders. To ensure housing is approached in a coordinated manner, all stakeholders need to:

- Cooperate with each other;
- Be committed to shared values and objectives;
- Communicate effectively; and
- Be flexible to react quickly to change.

For more information on the roles and responsibilities of the public sector agencies please refer the Local Government Housing Resource Kit prepared by the Department of Housing (DOH). Copies of the Kit can be downloaded from the DOH’s website at: http://www.housing.qld.gov.au/initiatives/pdf/housing_resource_kit.pdf

7.3.2 **Examine the components of household growth and undertake research to match housing provision with identified need**

The second consideration of housing’s role in creating strong communities includes three key components of household growth that need to be examined in planning for housing provision:

- “The rate at which overall population growth is occurring. This will entail some consideration of the forces driving this growth;
- The way in which the age structure is changing and the forces which are impinging on it. This is because propensity to form new households varies with age; and
- The way in which age cohorts are changing in their propensity to form new households”, (Hugo, 2005:40).

Acquiring and analysing data to understand how these components are impacting on housing trends within a study area is an important first step in resolving housing issues as it can establish a framework for further research into housing needs and provide the basis for developing a model to plan for the provision of housing. Such a model could be based on the following:

- An examination of the existing demographic profile of an area, including population and age range statistics;
- measuring the data against the existing patterns in household formation in the area to identify gaps in housing and needs; and
- analysing projected population and age profile statistics for the area to identify future needs in housing, such as the need for more one bedroom dwellings.

This type of model will assist matching of housing to future needs and allow for changes in household formation.

Demographic analysis can also assist to inform and convince developers, government agencies and residents of necessary changes in housing policy. The ABS and the Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation’s Planning Information Forecasting Unit and the Office of Economic and Statistical Research within Queensland Treasury and other statistical research agencies are good sources of demographic data. Surveys are valuable sources of primary data.

While the region is a good level at which to analyse demographic data, housing needs are not consistent across the Local Government areas in SEQ, with some Councils facing less growth pressure than others. Therefore, analysis at the Local Government level is critical. “Councils are well placed to understand local housing needs as they are aware of local shifts in population or employment and local pressures such as gentrification or shifts in property values that place pressure on people with low incomes” (DOH 2003:3.3). By understanding the demographic make-up and housing needs of an area, Local Governments can develop a housing strategy to guide future action. Local Government can for instance enable the development of boarding houses in key locations by enlisting them as preferred development types in medium density precincts. The DOH’s Local Government Housing Resource Kit discusses how local governments can identify local issues and trends, such as the changing nature of the local industry or demography and affordability issues, to inform a housing strategy.

Another important first step to address housing needs is to undertake research on international and national best practice models to see if they could be applied to the study area. Research should be undertaken after demographic analysis so the research can be targeted more efficiently.
7.3.3 Strategies to improve housing provision within each theme area

The provision of funding enables access to sustainable, affordable, adequate and available housing which contributes to strong communities. However, with the reduction in funding commitment from Government agencies, alternate methods and sources of funding for delivery are needed to make appropriate housing available and the importance of other stakeholders involvement in housing provision has also increased significantly. The following methods examine a range of alternate methods and identify possible key stakeholders in delivering housing across the themes of affordability, design, governance, mix and tenure and settlement pattern.

7.3.4 Affordability

7.3.4.1 Develop a strategic framework

As it is a complex issue, it is important to approach affordable housing within a strategic framework. “Access to affordable housing is an increasing issue facing individuals and families, with more people suffering after-housing poverty and homelessness than ever before. Taking a strategic rather than reactionary approach can help to avoid or mitigate these issues in a positive way”. (DOH, 2003, 19). The DOH has already established a framework within which affordable housing can be approached. The Affordable Housing in Sustainable Communities Strategic Action Plan, (the Affordable Housing Strategy, DOH, 2001) lists 8 principles for affordable housing provision to assist creating sustainable communities which complement the other themes in this planning area:

- An adequate supply of affordable housing is available for all households including those in the lowest 40 per cent of the income distribution, and those who have particular needs;
- Housing and residential development respond effectively to the changing character of households and housing need;
- A range of dwelling types and tenures is available to meet the needs of a wide range of housing types, and to meet changing life cycle needs and household economic circumstances;
- Housing is well serviced by utilities and communications, and is well located for access to services, facilities, and transport networks; housing may also be incorporated in mixed use developments or in areas that enable people to work from home;
- Housing is safe and secure and is designed and constructed for compatibility with physical environmental conditions and the character of the neighbourhood;
- Housing is designed and managed for cultural appropriateness and flexibility, and is planned and designed with consideration for heritage and community culture;
- Housing incorporates principles of universal design, energy efficiency and resource conservation; and
- Housing and residential development are planned with the participation of the community in partnership with other key stakeholders.

Key Stakeholders: Australian, State and Local Governments, residential development sector, community sector housing providers.

7.3.4.2 Pursue Public Private Partnerships

Public Private Partnerships (PPPs), have proved to be a successful mechanism on obtaining an affordable housing component within larger residential developments. The ‘City Edge Canberra’ development, is one such project which was a partnership between Community Housing Canberra (CHC), a developer and ACT Housing which integrated private, public and community housing throughout a development. “The development has gone to great lengths to ensure that ‘social enclaves’ were not formed and that the social mix is representative of the wider community” (InfoLink 2001). PPPs should be encouraged wherever larger developments are being proposed, especially in infill development or brown field sites close to existing services and public transport. For more information regarding a framework for PPP’s refer to the Department of State Development, Trade and Innovation’s website: http://www.sdi.qld.gov.au/dsdweb/v3/guis/templates/content/gui_cue_cmnhtml.cfm?id=1367

Key Stakeholders: State Government, Local Governments,Private and Community Sectors
7.3.4.3 **Support Community Housing and Not For Profit Housing Associations**

Community housing and not for profit housing associations, that is, Butterfly Housing Association, play a vital role in the affordable housing market. Community housing stock is under constant threat from increasing land prices and decreased commitment to housing funding from government agencies. There are a number of strategies which can be undertaken to increase and retain community housing stock, including:

- Cost offsets;
- Low interest loans;
- Financial incentives;
- Rate reductions; and
- Access to government contractors to assist building and upgrades.

While there are already some examples of banks and other organisations providing these allowances to community housing providers, considerable effort will be required to convince governments to establish policies on these matters. However demographic analysis will assist in convincing governments, as will the growing evidence showing the economic costs to the wider community of not addressing housing crisis. For more information please see the Queensland Community Housing Coalition (2005) website at: http://www.qchc.asn.au/about_com_hsg.htm

Key Stakeholders: Commonwealth, State and Local Governments, Community Housing groups and Housing Associations.

7.3.5 **Design**

7.3.5.1 **Ecologically Sustainable Design (ESD)**

ESD in housing is important to reduce the impact of development by improving the energy efficiency of housing, which also reduces the ongoing financial cost a house presents to its residents. Features of ecologically sustainable houses include:

- North – northeast facing orientation for sunlight and breezes;
- Well placed windows and doors for natural lighting and breezes; and
- Landscape design which moderates temperatures.

The Building Code of Australia and most Local Government Planning Schemes now require these features as a minimum in new housing design. However, further work is required to educated the general public and the development industry about the benefits and true costs of ESD, and the additional measures which can be undertaken to improve the efficiency of housing, such as insulation in walls, floors and roofing and installing energy and water efficient appliances.

Key Stakeholders: Local Government, Private Industry and General Public

7.3.5.2 **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)**

Proper design and effective use of the built environment produces behavioural effects that reduce incidences and fear of crime, thus improving quality of life for residents. It can also improve affordability by reducing expenditure and likelihood of break-ins (Crisp et al 2005:33). Crime prevention design measures include:

- Careful placement of windows and doors to encourage casual surveillance and protect privacy;
- Selection of landscape and streetscape elements to avoid the creation of hiding places;
- Exterior lighting; and
- Neighbourhood watch programs.

A number of planning schemes encourage CPTED in new development, however further industry recognition is also required. For further information about CPTED refer to the Urban Design section of this handbook.

Key Stakeholders: Local Government, Private Industry and General Public

7.3.5.3 **Protection of character and heritage**

The character and heritage of an area are not only important to the identity of a city, but also to the way a person identifies and connects with their neighbourhood. Retention of existing character and heritage is therefore important in any new development. There are a number of ways this can be achieved; including:

- choosing building materials similar or complimentary to those already used in the adjacent buildings;
- designing to reflect the style or period of construction of surrounding houses; and
- building to a similar or complimentary height of adjoining buildings.
Although it should also be noted that preserving character and heritage can also add to costs and so contradict affordability. While important, these factors need to be balanced in some way to ensure desired social outcomes are achieved.

Key Stakeholders: Local Government, Private Industry and General Public

### 7.3.5.4 Appropriateness

The key aspect of appropriateness is the ability of a house to support a person's needs throughout the various stages of their life. "New housing should be constructed according to universal design standards to reduce the need for costly modifications for people with a disability and allow for “aging in place”", (Crisp et al 2005). To be appropriate and respond to changing needs, house design should be easily adaptable, affordable to maintain and include universal design features such as:

- easily traversed floors;
- accessible bathtubs and showers;
- remote control features; and
- variable height counters.

These design features could be regulated through planning and building codes to assist the building of strong communities. For more information on universal design, please refer to the DOH’s Smart Housing web page: www.smarthousing.qld.gov.au.

Key Stakeholders: State and Local Government and Private Sector

#### 7.3.6 Governance

Effective governance in housing provision, which enhances social capital and builds strong communities can be achieved by the following:

-Ensuring public consultation in planning;
-Encouraging community involvement in planning;
-Adopting a whole of government approach to housing provision;
-Monitoring decisions and corresponding impacts on housing; and
-Strengthening the role of community housing providers.

Key Stakeholders: Local Government, Private Industry and Community Sector

#### 7.3.7 Mix and Tenure

Encouraging a mix of housing types and compatible land uses within each neighbourhood should be a standard element of planning schemes. One mechanism which has not yet been embraced by the Government in Queensland is inclusionary zoning. Inclusionary zoning is a planning mechanism being implemented widely in the United States, which "requires builders to include a certain amount of housing for low and moderate income households" (National Association of Realtors 2003). It is a mechanism that could be introduced to Queensland planning schemes, subject to changes to Integrated Planning Act 1997, to ensure affordable and appropriate housing is provided. For more information refer to the National Association of Realtors website: http://www.realtor.org

Key Stakeholders: State and Local Governments, Housing Authorities and other institutions

#### 7.3.8 Settlement Patterns

A well planned settlement pattern, where households are close to services, facilities and places of employment and well serviced by public transport, is fundamental to inclusive and cohesive communities. The following are just some of the development strategies that can establish a sound basis for the creation of strong communities:

#### 7.3.8.1 Transit Oriented Developments (TODs)

TODs are medium-high density, mixed use developments centred on transport nodes and corridors. A well designed TOD, which has proximity to open spaces, can encourage services and places of employment to an area and therefore reduce commuting times for residents.
7.3.8.2 Redevelopment and infill development

Redevelopment and infill development within existing well serviced areas should be encouraged to reduce pressure on greenfield areas on the urban fringe. Mixed use and higher densities should be emphasised and priority areas for redevelopment should be identified within Local Government Planning Schemes. Education campaigns are also needed to demonstrate to the public on the benefits of increased densities in existing well serviced areas.

7.3.8.3 New development areas

There are examples of poorly planned new residential estates in SEQ, which have not produced inclusive and cohesive communities, due to lack of access to services and facilities. These instances coupled with the fact that land supply in SEQ is limited, (which is reflected in the SEQ Regional Plan), demand a tightening of development controls for proposals on the urban fringe. New developments should be orderly, planned around services, transport and other infrastructure and produce greater yields than traditional subdivisions.

Key Stakeholders: OUM, State and Local Governments and Private Sector.

7.4 Performance Indicators for Housing

The following is a list of just some of the performance measures or standards that could be used to understand if housing has been successful in contributing to a strong community (the list is by no means exhaustive):

7.4.1 Affordability

- Housing costs do not exceed 30 per cent of a person’s income;
- There is a sufficient range of affordable housing types present within each community, that matches communities’ income profile;
- There are low levels of homelessness within each town, city and region;
- Planning schemes include housing strategies to support affordable housing provision;
- Revenue is available from the Commonwealth Government for State and Local Governments community housing providers;
- Community housing providers receive adequate assistance from financial and other institutions;
- All levels of government approach housing from a ‘social investment’, rather than ‘assistance’, stance;
- The State Government has a clear direction and policy position on affordable housing;
- Affordable housing integrates well with the rest of the housing in a neighbourhood; and
- Caravan parks, boarding houses, community, public, temporary and emergency housing are protected from redevelopment.

7.4.2 Settlement patterns

- TODs, including medium density living, are provided for around transport nodes and corridors;
- There is a mix of densities, residential and other land uses within each neighbourhood;
- New subdivisions include a variety of lot sizes, from small lots to lots for multi-unit dwellings;
- There is a high level of community awareness about the benefits and necessity of higher density living; and
- There is a high level of interaction and involvement and social integration within the community.

7.4.3 Mix and tenure

- Housing provision matches demographic profile of an area and the predicted future growth and change;
- There is a good range of housing types, sizes and styles available to the community;
- A variety of tenure options exist, catering for the needs of the community;
- Inclusionary zoning is included in local government planning schemes; and
- Shared equity and other schemes facilitate home ownership for low-medium income groups.
7.4.4 Design

- Housing is adaptable to meet the changing needs of the household that is, ‘people can age in place’;
- Housing is responsive to the local environment and incorporates ESD principles;
- There is an overall reduction each house’s resource consumption, which is partly measured by lower water and energy bills;
- Surveys reveal that people feel safe and secure in their neighbourhood;
- Culture and heritage are conserved in each neighbourhood;
- All planning schemes include appropriateness, ESD and CPTED principles; and
- There is a high level of community awareness of the benefits of appropriateness, ESD and CPTED principles.

7.4.5 Governance

- There are high levels of community participation in planning for housing;
- Surveys reveal people feel they play a role in decision making about local housing;
- There is accountable and transparent leadership in each community;
- Community housing providers have a strong role in decision making on planning for housing; and
- There is a whole of government approach to housing.

7.5 Summary

Access to affordable and appropriate housing is integral to the creation and maintenance of strong communities. A growing population and changing housing needs in SEQ has placed increasing importance on the need to plan ahead for housing to ensure accessibility does not diminish.

In order to adequately plan for housing, it is important to firstly identify housing needs by examining existing patterns in household formation and comparing to existing and projected demographic characteristics to identify gaps. Housing needs analysis should be undertaken at the local level, and the recent release of the proposed SPP for Housing and Residential Development goes some way towards achieving this. Affordability, settlement patterns, mix and tenure, design and governance are each important aspects of housing provision which need to be considered once demographic characteristics have been analysed.

Housing performance indicators should be monitored regularly to demonstrate the effectiveness of housing analysis and delivery and the commitment and coordination of all involved stakeholders.

7.6 Illustration of application of housing in building strong communities – Kelvin Grove Urban Village

The Kelvin Grove Urban Village is a mixed use master-planned community currently under construction in Brisbane’s northern inner city area, approximately 2kms from the central business district. The village is a public private partnership between the DOH, QUT and the private sector, which will offer a range of medium density housing types both rented and owner occupied, and include an affordable housing component.

The DOH sold a number of its land holdings in the area to the private sector and transferred a number of its sites to the Brisbane Housing Company. “The Brisbane Housing Company will develop four sites within the Kelvin Grove Urban Village and will deliver around 135 units, to help the growing demand for accommodation in the near city area for people on lower incomes... Rents in BHC properties are set at 75 per cent of the market rate, and most tenants are eligible for Commonwealth Government Rent Assistance”. (State of Queensland (Department of Housing) and Queensland University of Technology 2005).

Profits from land sold to developers will be used to provide public housing at other locations. Seniors’ housing (110 managed units) is also being provided, which will allow older people on lower incomes to live close to the city.

The village represents an infill development which will integrate with the existing community and university campus by ensuring sensitive and appropriate development types. The village is planned around a ‘main street’, which will include a mix of retail, cultural and recreational facilities, restaurants, a supermarket, coffee shops and a health and recreation centre.

A range of stakeholders were consulted and involved in the planning process, including local residents, education and indigenous groups as one of the key aims.
of the master-plan was to engender a strong sense of community. This will also be achieved by encouraging a diverse community, with a range of age groups, backgrounds, lifestyles and incomes and the inclusion of a range of community facilities, such as schools, local hospitals, sporting venues and parks.

Design guidelines were adopted during the master-planning process to guide architectural and landscape design. The design guidelines include ecologically sustainable design and CPTED principles.

The Kelvin Grove Urban Village will provide a range of housing types for social and community benefit and offer the opportunity to live, work and study, without the need to commute large distances between these activities. The master planning for the village addresses all five theme areas discussed in this section. After the village is fully established it would be interesting to assess the strength of that community against some of these performance indicators or measures of community strengths as discussed in the following section.

References


8.0 INDICATORS FOR USE IN IDENTIFYING AND MEASURING COMMUNITY STRENGTHS

Collator:  Elyssa Ludher
Reviewer:  Doug Baker

8.1 Introduction To Utilising Indicators To Identify And Measure Community Strengths

Indicators are useful tools to quantify aspects of interest about a community and measure changes over time. They can provide critical information about selected areas of interest, be monitored at regular intervals, and compared to one or more standards. Indicators also allow us to understand phenomena that may be difficult to discern, particularly within the area of social and community well being.

The absence of indicators can mean that important issues drop off the radar. In the case of community strengthening, the lack of indicators has meant that opportunities have been lost to focus policy debates on community strengthening issues and to open debates to the public (DVC, 2004).

8.1.1 Role of indicators in creating strong communities

The application of indicators in community planning is generally associated with a problem oriented approach to community planning. An indicator such as the index of social disadvantage (as part of the suite of Social and Economic Indexes For Areas (SEIFA) indices) is one of the most commonly used to assess communities’ levels of social disadvantage and utilises a number of statistics, such as Year 12 completion rate, unemployment rate and mortality rate for its calculation.

This section on measures of community strengths is included in this Handbook to encourage planners and community development workers to understand and consider community strengths, not just deficits, in their work with communities.

Community strength is the generation, sustenance and reproduction of the important human relations that people can draw upon for identity, interaction and support (DVC, 2004: 7). It has been acknowledged that the presence of community strength may be the vital ingredient to successful programs and projects carried out by communities, governments and businesses.

One research project that has already demonstrated that community strength has a protective effect for communities is Tony Vinson’s work in New South Wales and Victoria in relation to ‘Community Adversity and Resilience’. Tony Vinson found those communities experiencing social disadvantage that also had high levels of social cohesion were more resilient to social problems than socially disadvantaged communities with low social cohesion (Vinson, 2004). So even communities experiencing high levels of social disadvantage can have strengths that are not visible by only using tools that assess community problems such as the SEIFA index. We therefore suggest that planners and community development workers should, as part of their approach to working with communities, assess the strengths of that community to obtain a more holistic understanding of a community.

Indicators are useful as:

1. A snapshot, offering a picture of community trends in the recent past, telling stories about specific aspects of life and wellbeing in the community;
2. A planning tool, to identify and quantify what a community is seeking to achieve; and
3. An evaluation tool to determine how effective a plan or programme has been in implementing the community’s vision, and to provide a basis for the assessment of the results. (Swain & Hollar, 2003: 793- 798)

Furthermore, specific uses for measures of community strengths could be utilised in such a way that:

- A community organisation could undertake surveys of the local community every two years to monitor the change in the level of the community’s social capital over time, and;
- A community organisation could measure the level of social capital of the local community (or a particular group in the community) before and after the implementation of a major community development project. (Bullen and Onyx, 1998)
Figure 8.1 The application of indicators of community strengths: an example
8.2 The Use Of Indicators Of Community Strengths In Practice

8.2.1 Establishing good indicators

Community strength cannot be measured by only one indicator; rather, a range of indicators measuring various factors have to be taken into account. Indicators must be relevant to the context of the project and those involved (Ryan & English, 2004) and by utilising both qualitative and quantitative indicators, practitioners receive a better rounded picture, (from student Joeffrey, 2005).

Indicators must be relevant (actually represent what they purport to), reliable (based on statistics that can be assembled consistently and accurately), accessible (constructed on a regular and consistent basis), and clear (easy to understand). Robust indicators require the following characteristics to be effective:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Validity</td>
<td>Indicators should measure what they claim to measure. To achieve face validity, an indicator must be shown to be a logically appropriate measure. Because community strength is multi-faceted, no one indicator can adequately assess it (Narayan, 1999).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>Indicators should be capable of being measured over a period of time and in different circumstances and producing results that are comparable over time and space. The various means by which the reliability of indicators can be judged include: Independent assessments; Test/ retest procedures; and Measures of internal reliability (Bullen, 2003).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Applicability</td>
<td>The indicators should, in principle, applicable to all types of communities (Black &amp; Hughes, 2001). This consideration is important if one wishes to compare the relative strength of different types of community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Simplicity</td>
<td>Indicators should be as simple as possible without endangering validity and reliability. In general, the less complex the indicator, the easier it is for people both to understand it and to use it (Koulikov, 2002).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Relevance to public policy</td>
<td>Valid and reliable social indicators can be used to identify communities at risk, to assess the impacts of policy changes or particular programs and to inform debate on policy (Cobb and Rixford, 1998).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.1 Indicator Characteristics (from student Everitt, 2005)

8.2.2 Indicators used to measure community strengths and social capital

Many forms and varieties of measures of community strengths have been developed. The measures described here are a brief overview of some of the options available to the practitioner and is not a comprehensive review of all of such measures. The term ‘measures of community strengths’ used here, is used as a broad umbrella term to describe both specific measures of social capital and broader community well being.

As the theoretical framework underpinning this Handbook’s concept of strong communities is the notion of social capital, measures of social capital developed in Australia and overseas are described here. So too are broader community well being measures that have been developed within Australia. These broader measures focus on social, economic and environmental well being in communities. The aim of this overview is to give the interested practitioner some ideas of a range of tools available to measure community strengths that they may wish to use.
8.2.3 Indicators of community strength: some Australian examples

The Department for Victorian Communities (DVC) and Department for Victorian Human Services (DHS) have developed a set of indicators of community strength which is collected annually in the Victorian Population Health Survey. The community strength questions in the Victorian Population Health Survey (VPHS) were originally adapted from the social capital questionnaire developed by Bullen and Onyx described below. DVC, however reported Bullen and Onyx’ work focussed on bonding social capital and subsequently adapted the VPHS to focus on all aspects of social capital including bonding, bridging and linking social capital. Some examples were a focus beyond a person’s social network and amount of social contacts and a further focus on mentoring, volunteering and partnerships between governments, businesses and communities. The VPHS survey asks individuals questions about social capital and DVC is using the aggregated answers as indicators of community strengths in Victoria.

8.2.4 Key questions relating to community strength from the Victorian Population Health Survey 2003.

(A full list of questions from the survey the can be found in Appendix 5).

1. Can you get help from friends, family or neighbours when you need it?
2. Do you feel safe walking alone down your street after dark?
3. Do you feel valued by society?
4. Do you feel there are opportunities to have a real say on issues that are important to you?
5. Do you help out as a volunteer?
6. Are you a member of an organised group, such as a sports or church group or another community organisation or professional organisation?
7. Have any of these groups you are involved with taken any local action on behalf of your community in the last two years?
8. Have you attended a local community event in the past six months, such as a fete, festival or school concert?
9. Do you think that multiculturalism makes life in your area better?
10. Do you enjoy living amongst people of different lifestyles?
11. Could you raise $2000 within two days in an emergency?

8.3 Broad Community Well Being Measures

The broader community well being measures are discussed briefly here in order to provide practitioner with a sense of other measurement tools available for those interested in assessing broad community well being, for example, focusing on social, economic and environmental well being measures. The work described here was a project led by the Centre for Regional Development in Swinburne University of Technology in collaboration with several local government authorities in outer Eastern Melbourne in Victoria. The aim of the project was to develop a suite of regional “quality of life/community health indicators”. The suite developed consisted of 5 indicators under 7 themes. These are listed in the table 8.2 below.

8.4 Availability of data on social capital in Australian communities

There are several options for accessing data on social capital in Australian communities; questionnaires that can be applied at the local level by practitioners themselves or more broadly applied questionnaires, such as those conducted through the Queensland Household Survey (QHS) every May and November and another is the ABS General Social Survey, first conducted in 2002. These latter measures are conducted at broad, not local, scales and measure only some features of social capital.

8.4.1 A Questionnaire: the Social Capital Scale

The Social Capital Scale is a social capital measurement tool developed by Paul Bullen and Jenny Onyx and has been used to measure social capital in five communities in NSW. The scale provides a reliable and valid indicator of the underlying health of communities and includes questions relating to the following themes:

- Attitudes (value of self)
- Trust/ perceived safety
- Participation in the local community
- Reciprocity
- Personal empowerment
- Diversity/ openness
- Relations within the workplace
- Attitudes to government
- Demographic information.

(Bullen and Onyx, 1998)

A list of some of the questions used in this scale are available in Appendix 4 and further details of this scale and Bullen and Onyx’ work is available on: www.mapl.com.au/A2.htm
### Theme Indicators

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
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<tr>
<td>An Active Healthy Community</td>
<td>Safety in the community: perceptions of safety in the home</td>
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<td>Safety in the community - incidence of violent offences</td>
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<td>Safety: Incidence of residential burglaries</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Health issues: life expectancy</td>
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<td>Health: alcohol and drug use</td>
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<td>Health: incidence of mental illness in the community</td>
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<td>Social connectedness: volunteers in the community</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Quality of life / happiness</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Income: people living below the poverty line</td>
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<td>Income: wealth</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Income: household income spent on housing (rent or mortgage)</td>
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<tr>
<td>An Accessible Community</td>
<td>Transport: perceptions of public transport safety</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transport: residents who use public transport on a regular basis</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Accessibility: disability access to public transport and service</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Health and Well Being: access to key local services</td>
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<td>A Prosperous Community</td>
<td>Education and Employment</td>
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<td>Employment: local jobs</td>
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<td>A prosperous community: business confidence</td>
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<td>Economic Health: retained retail spending</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Economics: knowledge driven growth potential</td>
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<td>A Community That Protects and Enhances the Environment</td>
<td>Environment: native vegetation cover</td>
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<td>Environment: total waste generation</td>
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<td>Environment: recycling</td>
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<td>Environment: vehicle emission levels from main roads</td>
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<td>Environment: air pollution</td>
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<td>Environment: energy consumption</td>
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<td>Environment: condition of natural streams and waterways</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Environment: water consumption levels in the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Well Designed and Well Built Community</td>
<td>Urban Design: balance of passive open space, active open space, natural diversity open space and developed space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Housing: Dwelling structure and dwelling by tenure type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Learning Community</td>
<td>Education: school retention rates (Years 7-12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education: life-long learning</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education: participation in post compulsory formal education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access to information: number of library memberships and residential internet connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Culturally Rich Community</td>
<td>Participation: number of residents participating in leisure activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arts and culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Queensland Household Survey

The Queensland Household Survey (QHS) commenced in November 2000 and is conducted every May and November. Interviews are conducted with randomly selected usual household residents, aged 18 years or over, using computer assisted telephone interviewing.

Approximately 600 surveys are completed in the Brisbane region and 300 surveys completed for each of the remaining 9 regions throughout Queensland, (the regions coincide with statistical divisions with some western divisions combined).

Standard demographic information is collected; age, sex, postcode, country of birth, language spoken at home, highest educational qualification, employment status, marital status, household type, indigenous status, disability and personal income and (Office of Economic and Statistical Research) accepts requests for questions to be included in the Survey from state and local government.

Some, but not all, of the Surveys have contained questions about social capital, a recent example being the May 2004 QHS which included questions about participation in community activities, acceptance of cultural diversity and participation in voluntary work.

8.4.3 The Australian Bureau of Statistics – General Social Survey

In 2002 the ABS conducted a new multi-topic social survey that collected information from 15,500 people aged 18 years and over across all states and territories of Australia. It is planned to repeat the survey at four-yearly intervals.

Information was collected about both the individuals being interviewed and about the households in which they lived and ranged across:

- Personal characteristics;
- Characteristics of the household to which the selected person belongs;
- Support for children living outside the household;
- Community involvement;
- Personal stressors;
- Social activities;
- Financial stress;
- Information technology;
- Sport, culture and leisure;
- Transport access; and
- Crime and safety.

For further information see: http://datahub.govnet.qld.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nfs/525a1b40141235ca2568200146abc/d46c54a04050376ca256df007bd6e8?OpenDocument

8.5 Social Capital Measures Developed In International Communities

8.5.1 The social capital community benchmark survey

This survey was developed under the leadership of Putman at the Saguaro Seminar on Civic Engagement in America in 2003. It is a telephone survey that addresses 70 items. Its reliance on telephone data restricts the measurement of community institutional infrastructure and it should be used in combination with other data collection methods (Rohe, 2004: 61). For more information see: http://www.cfsv.org/communitysurvey/results.html

8.5.2 The Social Capital Assessment Tool (SCAT)

This tool was developed by the World Bank and combines both quantitative and qualitative methods (Rohe, 2004: 161). Based on research from 26 studies over 15 countries, the SCAT is divided into three components, (Krishna & Shrader, 1999: 8):

1. A community profile which integrates data from participatory qualitative methods and community survey instruments to assess community level social capital. Community assets, collective action, solidarity, conflict resolution, community governance and decision making, institutional networks and organisational density etc are measured, (Krishna & Shrader, 1999: 8);
2. A household survey which includes 39 questions on structural social capital and 21 questions on cognitive social capital. The questions relating to structural social capital included organisational density and characteristics, networks and mutual support organisations exclusion, collective action and conflict resolution. The questions relating to cognitive social capital included solidarity, trust, reciprocity and cooperation, (Krishna & Shrader, 1999: 8-12); and
3. An organisational profile designed to determine the relationships and networks in existence among formal and informal groups, (Krishna & Shrader, 1999: 8).

The SCAT was designed to provide World Bank task managers with a research tool that is accessible and appropriate to measure social capital for use in the design, implementation and evaluation of World Bank projects. It created social capital indicators that can be validated and measured together with other development indicators in the areas of poverty alleviation, inequality reduction and economic growth (Krishna & Shrader, 1999: 12). It was suggested that this tool covers the primary issues of social capital but that it is still underdeveloped in the areas of measuring social networks and the power dynamics in organisations (Rohe, 2004: 162) - (from student Naylon, 2005).

8.6 Indicator Constraints

A few considerations must be taken into account in utilising indicators. When designing indicators for measuring social capital, it must be realised that indicators are not objective; they are selected based on values derived from reams of available data, under the direction of organisations with a specific purpose in mind. Consequently, developing and disseminating indicators is laden with values because certain items of information/data are selected from among many as being “important” to share and understand than others (Swain & Hollar, 2003: 801).

Community-involvement in indicator development has an advantage of grounding the indicators in the community’s social context. This approach is based, however, on the community sharing a common set of values at the vision level that, if articulated, would represent a consensus view of community members (Swain & Hollar, 2003: 802). The existence of different measurement indicators based on contextual differences is justified,
Goodna, a suburb of Ipswich, borders the Brisbane Local Government Area and is rich in history and culture. Although situated along the Brisbane River and along the Ipswich Motorway, Goodna has been perceived to be a disadvantaged community due to its location on the fringe of two local government areas and the concentration of institutions and public housing in the area.

With respect to Goodna, a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the levels of community participation and social capital, carried out through both formal and informal methods should involve coverage of the following indicators, (Rohe, 2004):

- Community Engagement – horizontal and vertical;
- Extent of Social Networks;
- Community Trust; and
- Organisational Infrastructure.

These components will deliver an overall picture of where Goodna stands in relation to levels of community trust and its respective strengths and weaknesses. Whilst a full study involving coverage of all the above indicators is outside the scope of this handbook, based on our research to date, the following areas are of particular interest:

- Levels of linking or bridging capital – A key indicator given the need for Goodna to seek outside sources of social capital to further develop skill sets within the population;
- Levels of trust – The level of community trust between individuals may reflect an improving level of trust, (coming from a low base), in response to recent Community Renewal initiatives;
- Level Participation; and
- Extent of Social networks – may show a good level of networking given Goodna’s multi-cultural nature.

Formal Measurement

The measurement of the indicators as listed above could be carried out through systematic ABS data analysis combined with the application of specific questionnaires, for example such as that described in Rohe, (2004), that describes measures of engagement, social networks and organisational infrastructure.

Informal Measurement

Informal measurement allows the input of qualitative information into the data gathering process. It is an important component as it allows contextual placement of certain indicators and affords the measurement of somewhat intangible elements such as community trust and the extent of social networks.

Evaluation

Documenting the existing strengths of the Goodna community will provide a snapshot of its relative community well-being. At this stage it would then be possible to perform an evaluation of how well existing programs such as Community Renewal have performed in building a stronger community in Goodna. Evaluation could be based on the following objectives  (Hutchinson & Vidal, 2004) that represent some of the positive outcomes from increased social capital:

- Improved standards of living resulting in changes to civic behaviour;
- Acquisition of new civic skills by members of the community;
- An expansion of the sphere of activity and social exposure for Goodna increasing opportunities for the community; and
- The development of new social norms.

The evaluation when combined with both the formal and informal measurement approaches should provide an adequate database that can inform future and existing social policy and programs.
Strategies and Objectives
Table 8.3 below provides a brief summary of the actions required to measure and act upon a range of social and participatory indicators that can be used for evaluation and for forward planning in Goodna.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify Community Strengths and Weaknesses</td>
<td>Undertake formal and informal community assessment through data, survey and face-to-face contact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate database of information to determine any trends in recovery or decline in social factors.</td>
<td>Comparison of historic data. Contact existing agencies to confirm identified trends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure results inform all relevant government social plans and policies.</td>
<td>Provide data availability to relevant agencies and identify opportunities for future programs and development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.3 Measurements techniques and outcomes
References


Dept of Victorian Communities (DVC) 2004. Indicators of Community Strength in Victoria. Strategic Policy and Research Division, Department for Victorian Communities: Melbourne.


## APPENDIX 1: **LECTURERS IN DBP411 COMMUNITY PLANNING, QUT, SEMESTER 1, 2005**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>PRESENTED BY</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section One: Theoretical frameworks and community planning models</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>1/3/05  What is Community Planning?</td>
<td>Phil Heywood, Simone Cuers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>8/3/05  Community development as a community planning model</td>
<td>Fiona Caniglia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>15/3/05 Problem solving model of community planning</td>
<td>Laurel Johnson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>22/3/05 Strength based approach to community planning: building social, cultural and human capital</td>
<td>Simone Cuers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section Two: Community planning techniques</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>5/4/05  Taking a positive turn: focussing on indicators of community strengths</td>
<td>Liz Upham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>12/4/05 Getting around: access and mobility</td>
<td>David Engwicht</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>19/4/05 Community renewal: working with communities with many and complex needs</td>
<td>Peter Walsh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>26/4/05 Cultural planning and mapping</td>
<td>Jill Jordan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>3/5/05  People, planning and politics</td>
<td>Paul Summers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>10/5/05 Shaping the built environment to enhance community well being</td>
<td>John Byrne</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>17/5/05 Community engagement in planning; techniques, pitfalls and examples.</td>
<td>Dee Elliot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>24/5/05 Community Planning in practice (visioning etc.)</td>
<td>Gary White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 13</td>
<td>31/5/05 Synthesis – bringing it all together</td>
<td>Phil Heywood, Simone Cuers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 2: POSSIBLE FUNDERS OF CULTURAL PLANNING

(from Local Government Association of Queensland (1996, p. 41 & 42). This list is indicative only as this information was developed sometime ago.

The Commonwealth Government: The Australia Council
The Australia Council allocates over $1 million annually in funding to Local Government clients. It offers support through:

- The community Cultural Development Board of the Australia Council. Its Community, Environment, Art and Design (CEAD) provides funding support for artists, designers and communities to collaborate in the planning and design of public places.
- The Visual Arts/Craft Unit, the Performing Arts unit, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts unit and the Literature Unit.
- Partnership initiatives with the Australian Local Government Association related to cultural development and planning.

Other Commonwealth Agencies
The Department of Communication and the Arts (DOCA) offers funding assistance through:

- Festivals Australia (focussed mainly towards the support of regional cultural festivals);
- Visions Australia (supporting the touring of exhibitions of art and heritage collections); and
- The DOCA Heritage Branch, for programs which preserve and present significant heritage collections.

The State Government
State Library of Queensland
The State Library of Queensland provides:

- The full range of library resources and services to smaller Local Governments through the State, and operates a comprehensive inter-library loan system.
- Local Government with finance for bookstock purchases; and
- Professional consultancy services and training programs to Local Government Councillors and staff.

Queensland Office of Arts and Cultural Development
Arts Queensland aims to build a strong Queensland arts and film industry and promote Queensland’s cultural distinctiveness to the world. It provides support and advice to the Minister for the Arts, and financial support for:

- Professional arts organisations (e.g. The Queensland Ballet);
- Service delivery organisations (e.g. Queensland Artsworkers Alliance);
- Major cultural events (e.g. the Brisbane International film Festival);
- Individual artists and arts workers.

Various Arts Queensland grant programs are enumerated in Appendix D on LGAQNet.

Development Plan for Museums
Department of Environment and Heritage Cultural Heritage, a subprogram of the Department’s Conservation Division, is responsible for cultural heritage protection throughout the State. Its role includes:

- Assisting Councils to establish heritage advisory services to guide property owners in conserving heritage places. In 1995-95 advisers worked in Ipswich, Townsville, Charters Towers, Maryborough, Mackay and Toowoomba.
- Administering the Queensland Heritage Grants Program and National Estate Grants Program. Councils have been offered grants to undertake local heritage studies, conservation plans and physical conservation works.
- Providing professional management and coordination for identifying, recording and assessing Queensland’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-indigenous cultural heritage place.
- Administering heritage legislation and processing development applications in relation to places in the Heritage Register.

Other Associations, Institutions:

- Regional Galleries Association of Queensland
- Griffith University Institute of Cultural Studies
- Queensland Community Arts Network
- The Queensland Community Arts Network (QCAN) provides professional support including training, information and publications to communities and community arts workers. The Network is also a major advocate for community arts and cultural development
- Arts Training Queensland
Arts Training Queensland (ATQ) advises the State Government on the education and training issues of the arts, entertainment, media and heritage industries in Queensland. ATQ is part of a national network of arts industry training councils and its primary focus is to ensure that available training corresponds with industry needs. The industries which ATQ covers include:

- Film, television and video
- Visual arts, craft and photography
- Performing arts and music
- Libraries and information services
- Writing and publishing
- Community arts and community cultural development
- Design
- Heritage and museums
- Radio
- Architecture

Some occupations from the above industries are aligned with the Local Government sector. These include library and information resource centre workers, community arts or cultural development officers, arts consultants who develop cultural planning or mapping projects, designers commissioned to develop art works for public spaces, public art gallery and museum staff, and musicians and performing artists employed for local production.

APPENDIX 3: THE ‘CHARTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE IN A CULTURALLY DIVERSE SOCIETY’

The Charter is the key document guiding the Access and Equity strategy in Australia. It helps to ensure government programs meet the needs of our culturally and linguistically diverse society. It integrates a set of service delivery principles concerning cultural diversity into the strategic planning, policy development, budget and reporting processes of government service delivery, irrespective of whether these services are provided by government agencies, community organisations or commercial enterprises.

These principles are:

- **Access** – Government services should be available to everyone who is entitled to them and should be free of any form of discrimination irrespective of a person’s country of birth, language, culture, race or religion.
- **Equity** – Government services should be developed and delivered on the basis of fair treatment of clients who are eligible to receive them.
- **Communication** – Government service providers should use strategies to inform eligible clients of services and their entitlements and how they can obtain them. Providers should also consult with their clients regularly about the adequacy, design and standard of government services.
- **Responsiveness** – Government services should be sensitive to the needs and requirements of clients from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and responsive as far as practicable to the particular circumstances of individuals.
- **Effectiveness** – Government service providers should be ‘results oriented’ focussed on meeting the needs of clients from all backgrounds.
- **Efficiency** – Government service providers should optimise the use of available public resources through a user-responsive approach to service delivery which meets the needs of clients.
- **Accountability** – Government service providers should have a reporting mechanism in place which ensures they are accountable for implementing Charter objectives for clients.

APPENDIX 4: SOME QUESTIONS FROM THE SOCIAL CAPITAL SCALE

The Social Capital Scale developed by Paul Bullen and Jenny Onyx used to measure social capital in five communities in NSW, (Bullen and Onyx (1998). Further details of this scale and Bullen and Onyx’ work is available on: www.mapl.com.au/A2.htm, an overview of the questions in the SCS are listed below, illustrating the key themes in the questionnaire:

A. Participation in the Local Community

1. Do you help out a local group as a volunteer? (16)
2. Have you attended a local community event in the past 6 months (for example, church fete, school concert, craft exhibition)? (29)
3. Are you an active member of a local organisation or club (for example, sport, craft, social club)? (31)
4. Are you on a management committee or organising committee for any local group or organisation? (44)
5. In the past 3 years, have you ever joined a local community action to deal with an emergency? (46)

B. Proactivity in a social context

1. Have you ever picked up other people’s rubbish in a public place? (14)
2. Do you go outside your local community to visit your family? (37)
3. If you need information to make a life decision, do you know where to find that information? (41)
4. If you disagree with what everyone else agreed on, would you feel free to speak out? (54)

5. If you have a dispute with your neighbours (for example, over fences or dogs) are you willing to seek mediation? (56)
6. At work do you take the initiative to do what needs to be done even if no one asks you to? (65) (This question was only asked of those in paid employment)

C. Feelings of Trust and Safety

1. Do you feel safe walking down your street after dark? (17)
2. Do you agree that most people can be trusted? (18)
3. If someone’s car breaks down outside your house, do you invite them into your home to use the phone? (19)
4. Does your area have a reputation for being a safe place? (24)
5. Does your local community feel like home? (33)

D. Neighbourhood Connections

1. Can you get help from friends when you need it? (21)
2. If you were caring for a child and needed to go out for a while, would you ask a neighbour for help? (26)
3. Have you visited a neighbour in the past week? (28)
4. When you go shopping in your local area are you likely to run into friends and acquaintances? (39)
5. In the past 6 months, have you done a favour for a sick neighbour? (45)

E. Family and Friends Connection

1. In the past week, how many phone conversations have you had with friends? (54)
2. How many people did you talk to yesterday? (35)
3. Over the weekend do you have lunch/dinner with other people outside your household? (38)

F. Tolerance of Diversity

1. Do you think that multiculturalism makes life in your area better? (57)
2. Do you enjoy living among people of different life styles? (59)

G. Value of Life

1. Do you feel valued by society? (1)
2. If you were to die tomorrow, would you be satisfied with what your life has meant? (3)

H. Work Connections

Note: These questions were only asked of people in paid employment.

1. Do you feel part of the local geographic community where you work? (61)
2. Are your workmates also your friends? (62)
3. Do you feel part of a team at work? (63)

(The numbers in brackets indicate the question number in the original questionnaire.)

1. How many relatives outside your home do you have contact with (face-to-face, telephone, email, mail) at least once a month?
2. How many of these relatives live in your local area/local government or council area?
3. How many friends do you have contact with (face-to-face, telephone, email, mail) at least once a month?
4. How many of these friends live in your local area/local government or council area?
5. How many people did you talk to yesterday?
6. Can you get help from friends when you need it?
7. Can you get help from family members when you need it?
8. Can you get help from neighbours when you need it?
9. Can you get access to community service or resources when you need them?
10. Do you help out a local group as a volunteer?
11. Do you feel safe walking alone down your street after dark?
12. Do you agree that most people can be trusted?
13. Do you enjoy living among people of different lifestyles?
14. Do you think that multiculturalism makes life in your area better?
15. Do you feel valued by society?
16. Do you feel there are opportunities to have a real say on issues that are important to you?
17. Could you raise $2,000 within two days in an emergency?
18. Are you a member of a sports group?
19. Are you a member of a church group?
20. Are you a member of a school group?
21. Are you a member of any other community group?
22. Are you a member of a professional group or academic society?
23. If you needed to find a job, could you get one through a contact in one of these groups? (Of persons who belonged to any of the groups.)
24. Have any of these groups you are involved with taken any local action on behalf of your community in the last 12 months? (Of persons who belong to any of the groups.)
25. Do you get any help from any volunteer-based organisations?
26. Have you been to any support group meetings over the last two years?
27. Could one of your relatives or friends care for you or your children in an emergency?
28. Have you attended a local community event in the past six months (e.g., church fete, school concert or craft exhibition?)
29. If you needed to find a job, could you get one through a relative or friend?