20 Minute neighbourhoods a case of wishful thinking?

Stuart Hay

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THE VOICE OF PEOPLE ON FOOT

“...in view of the serious danger of motor traffic today an Association be formed for the defence of public rights, especially of pedestrians.”

The purpose of the Pedestrians Association, as outlined in August 1929
Solving a problem 60 years in the making

http://www.trafficintowns.org/
Planning policy from another century?

“There is also significant scope to influence travel through land use change at the destination end of trips. The location of major travel-generating uses are critical to the number and length of trips, particularly for shopping, industry, offices and leisure. The ability to control such developments, by locating them in places well served by public transport, especially town centres, and by restricting associated car parking, should gradually have an effect on traffic growth.”

Scotland Office NPPG 17 Transport and Planning 1999
1. Street design **must consider** place before movement.
2. Street design guidance, as set out in this document, **can be a material consideration** in determining planning applications and appeals.
3. Street **design should** meet the six qualities of successful places, as set out in *Designing Places*.
4. Street **design should** be based on balanced decision-making and must adopt a **multidisciplinary collaborative approach**.

*Designing streets 2010*
All the policies we need for decades?

… need to reduce our carbon emissions through widening travel choices. Fundamental to this aim is the need to encourage more travel by foot and bicycle and a move away from the reliance on private cars.

Neighbourhoods which are compact and well-connected give residents additional options, allowing them to choose to use sustainable modes of transport to reach their destination. In this way, the development of, and enhancement of, walkable neighbourhoods has the potential to reduce the significant greenhouse gas emissions related to everyday journeys.

Designing Places 2013
The planning system **should** support development that will contribute to the creation of walkable, liveable and thriving places that provide and encourage sustainable travel options, provide communities with local access to the wide range of facilities, services, work and opportunities for socialising, leisure and play activities that they need to support a healthier and flourishing community.

NPF4 2021

Bill Murray, with Punxsutawney Phil, plays a cynical weatherman in the 1993 film “Groundhog Day.” Credit...Columbia Pictures
What no pavements!
Commissioned by Carplus Bikeplus and Living Streets Scotland and funded by Transport Scotland

‘Progress on low car neighbourhoods in Scotland’ March 2018

‘Sustainable Transport Choices in New Housing’ January 2020
We asked planners whether Scottish planning policy promote sustainable travel choices?

- Yes: 25%
- Maybe: 58%
- No: 17%
Facilities to support sustainable travel choices

“...needing shops as ice cream van doesn’t sell everything and Tesco is too much of a walk for disabled and elderly”
Designing Low Car Neighborhoods

Car Centered Planning

People Centered Planning
Place Standard Analysis Comparison

Chapelton

Winchburgh

Planning Failure

Planning Failure
Promoting sustainable choices?

Winchburgh

• “Winchburgh Village is ideally located for those commuting to work with Edinburgh Park and Livingston, Edinburgh City centre only an 8 mile drive and 14 miles away and Falkirk 15 miles up the road. For those international jet setters or London commuters Edinburgh Airport is only 7 miles away.

• But for those commuting, as the song goes, things can only get better – Winchburgh Village has conditional planning permission for a rail station, park and ride and dual Motorway junctions allowing you to readily head east or west.”

Chapelton

• “Designed to be pedestrian friendly with an open sign free environment and with garages to the rear, there is nevertheless great road links into Aberdeen and to the south. Set between the A90 to the East and the AWPR Fastlink to the West there is a regular bus service. Aberdeen and Dundee buses stop at Chapelton’s Park and Choose and residents can take advantage of a free Dial-a-Ride service.

• We are developing an integrated public transport operation for residents. A Park and Choose facility will provide early residents of Chapelton, as well as those living in neighbouring communities, with regular sustainable transport by bus to Aberdeen and Stonehaven.”
CREATING PLACES FOR WALKING OR DRIVING

New Housing
Edinburgh
2020
1970s – 2020s THE ENDURANCE OF CAR COMMUTING SUBURBS
1970s or 2020s Infrastructure?
For People or for Cars?
Edinburgh's Sherffhall roundabout upgrade 'crucial to cope with new housing developments'

Plea to MSPs to press for go-ahead

By Ian Swanson
Scottish Planning Policy For Health Communities

PLANNING GREEN LIGHT
Glasgow Burger King and Starbucks drive thrus have planning permission
10th September 2021

https://www.glasgowtimes.co.uk/news/19571674.glasgow-burger-king-starbucks-drive-thrus-planning-permission/
Other forms of development are available
Some 20 Minute neighbours in part, some places?

**FIGURE 14 – Durations it would actually take to walk**

- **The nearest public transport link**: Less than 10 minutes - 67%, 11-20 minutes - 18%, More than half an hour - 7%. Average minutes: 13, Prepared to walk: 11.
- **The nearest shop that sells everyday ‘necessities’**: Less than 10 minutes - 62%, 11-20 minutes - 24%, More than half an hour - 6%. Average minutes: 13, Prepared to walk: 11.
- **The nearest primary school**: Less than 10 minutes - 53%, 11-20 minutes - 28%, More than half an hour - 9%. Average minutes: 15, Prepared to walk: 12.
- **The nearest urban ‘green space’**: Less than 10 minutes - 52%, 11-20 minutes - 25%, More than half an hour - 13%. Average minutes: 16, Prepared to walk: 17.
- **Other clusters of shops**: Less than 10 minutes - 30%, 11-20 minutes - 33%, More than half an hour - 20%. Average minutes: 23, Prepared to walk: 18.
- **The nearest GP surgery**: Less than 10 minutes - 28%, 11-20 minutes - 29%, More than half an hour - 19%. Average minutes: 26, Prepared to walk: 18.
- **The nearest secondary school**: Less than 10 minutes - 22%, 11-20 minutes - 28%, More than half an hour - 20%. Average minutes: 31, Prepared to walk: 20.
- **The place where you work**: Less than 10 minutes - 18%, 11-20 minutes - 15%, More than half an hour - 13%. Average minutes: 48, Prepared to walk: 28.

Q011. Roughly how long would it actually take you to walk from home to each of the following places? (All respondents excluding Don’t Know/Not applicable responses)
Developers and planners delivering what people want?

**FIGURE 21 – Factors which would be important when choosing where to live**

- **Able to walk to:**
  - Local shops & facilities: 74%
  - Regular bus service: 64%
  - Train station: 44%
  - Place of work or study: 31%

- **Convenient to drive to:**
  - Nearest town centre: 33%
  - Place of work or study: 27%
  - Retail parks: 26%

- Safe routes for cycling: 23%

Q019. Finally, imagine you were moving house to a different area. In this imaginary situation how important would each of the following be in your choice of where to live? (All respondents N=1,001)
A very inconvenient truth

“Every system is perfectly designed to get the result it gets”
Donald Berwick

An important function of almost every system is to ensure its perpetuation”
“Donella H Meadows
Actual Scottish Planning Policy in practice an honest appraisal

Source: RCEP 2007
Missing the bigger picture?

Policy ‘should’ be working by now?
Starting to plan for behaviour change away from car use

Restrict vehicles

Change attitudes to place and mobility

Twenty minute neighbourhood narrowly defined
But if all else fails:

Apply the pandemic 20-minute neighborhood test.
“If you plan cities for cars and traffic, you get cars and traffic. If you plan for people and places, you get people and places.”

Fred Kent
Thank you

Low car neighbourhoods


Buses and walking