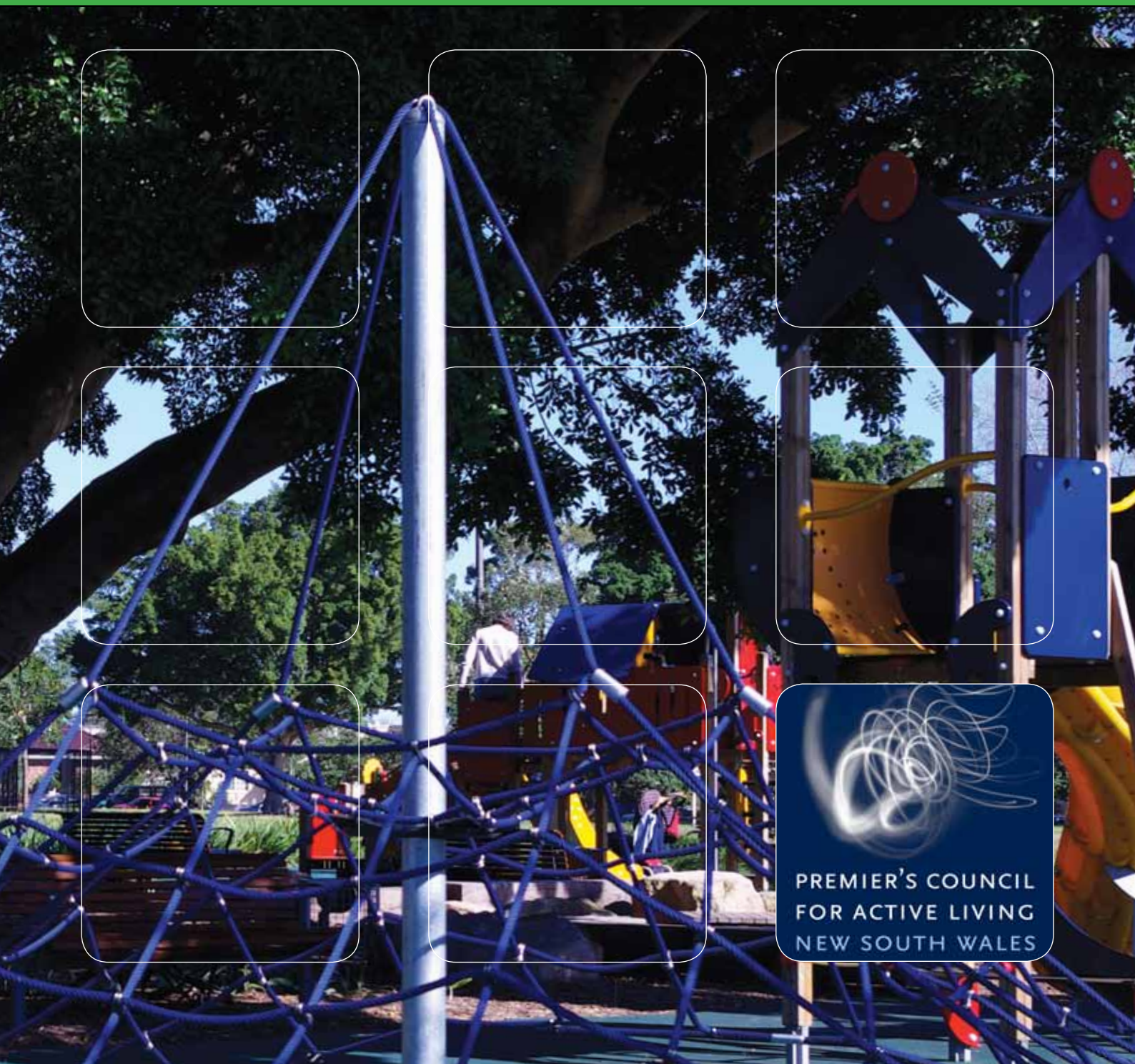
NSW GOVERNMENT

Development & Active Living:

Designing Projects For Active Living

Developer's Checklist with Case Studies



PREMIER'S COUNCIL FOR ACTIVE LIVING NEW SOUTH WALES

Why Active Living?

Active living refers to opportunities for incorporating physical activity into the routines of daily life, as well as for sport and recreation. Examples of Active Living include walking or cycling with children to school; walking, cycling or catching public transport to work; or replacing short car trips to corner shops and parks by walking or cycling.

Across all aspects of their lives, most people are less physically active than they need to be. As well as the burden this places on the health of individuals, a growing body of evidence also demonstrates the social costs are significant – active communities are more likely to be strong and connected communities showing greater participation in activities. [1]

Evidence clearly demonstrates that the built environment of our cities and local neighbourhoods can either facilitate or discourage Active Living.[2] Studies show that communities designed with Active Living-friendly design considerations in mind (e.g. good access to destinations (including public transport), connected street networks, higher residential densities, and access to quality open space) benefit from reduced car trips, increased walking trips [3] and reduced overall housing costs.[4] Active people make their neighbourhoods safer and more liveable. Walking, cycling and public transport provide opportunities for social connection and inclusion.

So designing urban spaces that help us incorporate physical activity into our everyday lives not only helps us, it also helps our environment and our communities. **Increasingly, it is a point of differentiation being sought by new home buyers. Active communities are more sustainable, liveable and desirable places to be.**

Much of what is required is relatively straightforward, being easy to incorporate within most developments. Not just cost-neutral, designing for Active Living can add value to development when done up-front through the planning process.

The advice in this Checklist will assist you to make your development an active one.

For more information see PCAL's "Why Active Living" Statement **(http://bit.ly/PCAL-WhyAL)**.

The PCAL Development & Active Living Resource

This Checklist is a companion document to the Premier's Council for Active Living (PCAL) publication "Development & Active Living: Designing Projects For Active Living – A Development Assessment Resource & Navigational Tool." The PCAL Development & Active Living Resource brings together existing material already available from a wide range of sources and aims to assist councils (and the State Government) address Active Living within their plans and policies (such as Development Control Plans) and provide specific advice on matters for consideration in development assessment that will promote Active Living.

The PCAL Development & Active Living Resource is also a useful reference for the private sector, providing a wealth of more detailed information about the concepts and principles of Active Living. The Development & Active Living Resource also provides a more detailed guide to specific Active Living issues which arise within a wide range of land use types.

The PCAL Development & Active Living Resource can be found at:
http://bit.ly/PCAL-DA

Home Buyers Prefer Liveable Communities

Opinion polls and recent government community consultations have shown consistently that people place great importance on their health, their independence, their happiness and a feeling of wellbeing. People want a sense of community and social connectedness. They want more freedom to move, and places to move in. They want cleaner air, greener streets and a greater sense of well-being.

In October 2009, the Heart Foundation (NSW) commissioned a telephone survey of 1403 randomly selected adults in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth seeking to identify what is important to people in deciding where to live.

The following Active Living features were rated as important or very important -

- being within walking distance to public transport (69%);
- being within easy walking distance to local services such as shops or cafés (64%);
- having a paved or concreted footpath in every street (51%); and
- being within easy walking distance to a local park (46%),

And were all deemed to be higher priorities than:

- having a two-car garage (44%); and
- having a large backyard (39%).

Research from overseas and Australia has concluded **that the provision of open space and access to transport can attract higher housing prices.**[5,6]

Purpose of the Checklist

This tool has been developed by PCAL to advise on urban design factors that will promote active living in your development.

As a best practice resource for developers to self assess their developments, the checklist will be a useful starting point for discussions with Consent Authorities about how Active Living has been incorporated in the formulation of your development proposal. It will also help to demonstrate how your development has responded to the **NSW Department of Planning Position Statement: Planning for Active Living (http://bit.ly/PCAL-DoP).**

This Checklist is not a set of prescriptive requirements, rather it aims to provide a voluntary menu of ideas which can be realistically incorporated by developers into their developments for maximum effect. Not all measures will be able to be achieved in every instance, as this will depend on the nature of the development, the site, and its local context. Responses will vary for example between greenfield and urban renewal sites. Some measures may only apply to large-scale projects. An innovative, rather than prescriptive approach is required.

How to Use this Checklist

The Developer's Checklist has summarised **key design outcomes** according to five Active Living Principles outlined within the PCAL Development and Active Living Resource. The principles are:

Walkability & Connectivity

Active Travel Alternatives

Legibility

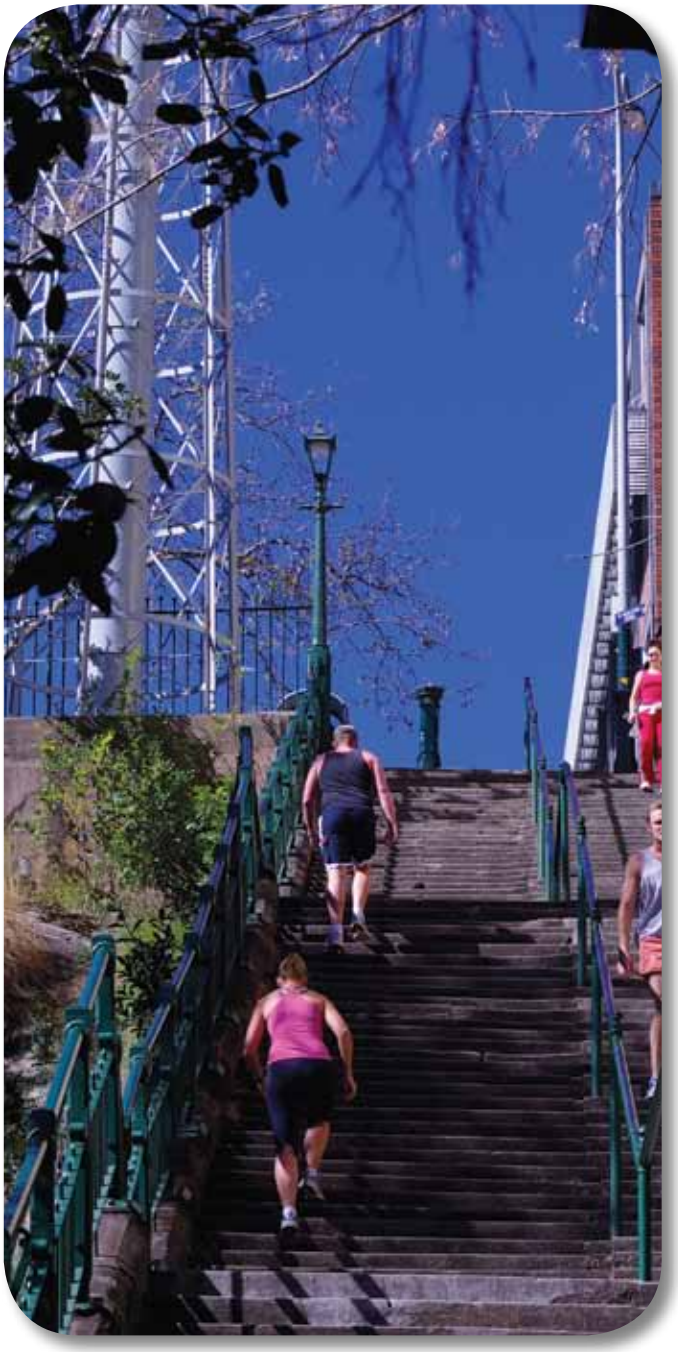
Quality Public Domain

Social Interaction & Inclusion

The Checklist describes key **Outcomes Sought** from developments within each Active Living Principle and provides a number of **Performance Measures** to help demonstrate their application.

While this advice is ordered by Active Living Principle, it is important that the movement framework for a development proposal, prioritising pedestrians, cyclists and public transport, is established early in the design process. This is represented in Figure 1, which indicates how the hierarchy of users should be prioritised throughout the design.

As you work through the Checklist, tick the boxes which you consider your development achieves. Where a measure cannot be achieved, space is provided for justification and comment.



User Hierarchy

Consider First

- Pedestrians
- Cyclists
- Public transport
- Specialist service vehicles, car share, and taxis

Consider Last

- Private motor vehicles

Source: Department for Transport (UK), 2007, "Manual For Streets", Thomas Telford Publishing

Figure 1. User Hierarchy

WALQS are the key Principles that are relevant to development:

Walkability & Connectivity

See PCAL Development & Active Living Resource Pages 11-14

Walkability is how friendly a place is to pedestrians, whether it invites and encourages people to walk. Considering the comfort of walkers during the design and approval process will greatly impact upon the walkability of an area. Carefully designed and equipped spaces along routes to key local destinations, will make walking and cycling attractive, encouraging the community to be active.

W2

Retrofit pedestrian connections to the network which restore route directness (e.g. through-site links). Ensure that newly proposed streets and paths align and link to the surrounding network.

W3

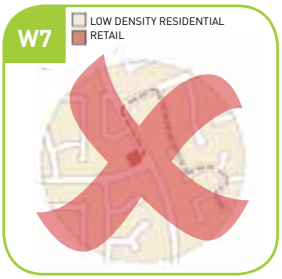
Attractive streetscapes support walking and stimulate a vibrant retail environment. Landscape for shade, comfort and visual interest.

Source: Healthy Spaces & Places, photographer SGS Economics and Planning

W5

Street design which controls traffic speeds, particularly at intersections (for example, narrowing the roadway, not using roundabouts). Shared spaces ("naked streets") are an effective and affordable way to slow traffic. Well designed intersections are also an important part of the pedestrian environment and the walking experience.

W7



A lack of connections discourage walking and cycling reinforcing car use.

Source: Healthy Spaces & Places, TPG Town Planning & Urban Design

W7

A connected street network brings the majority of places within a walkable catchment of 400 metres. Permeable urban blocks with multiple routes for walking and cycling are available.

Source: Healthy Spaces & Places, TPG Town Planning & Urban Design

W9

Provide for the comfort of walkers (e.g. weather protection, places to stop and rest, pedestrian crossings). Shelter can be provided by trees or built form. Seating can be of both a formal and informal nature (such as the integration with planter boxes and other landscape features).

Case Study

Newleaf Bonnyrigg Public Housing Re-development

The Bonnyrigg Living Communities Project (also known as Newleaf) is a NSW Government initiative to redevelop and revitalise a large 1970s public housing estate in Western Sydney. The site is located within the Fairfield Local Government Area.

The redevelopment will transform the existing three to four bedroom townhouses and cottages into a more diverse mix of housing types. The number of dwellings on the site will increase from 933 to 2,332. The new housing mix will be 70% private and 30% community housing.

A key aim of the redevelopment is to enhance connectivity with the surrounding urban area, enabling people to walk or cycle to nearby services, facilities, and public transport. Walking and cycling shareways and pedestrian paths are provided in the Concept Plan, focusing on key routes both within the estate and to surrounding facilities, including schools, shops, bus stops, transitway station, pedestrian crossings and places of worship. The proposed road, pedestrian and shared pedestrian/cycle networks provide for the separation of movements and safe places for pedestrian and cycle crossings at traffic intersections. Key routes are well lit to facilitate safe night-time movement.

http://www.pcal.nsw.gov.au/case_studies/bonnyrigg_living_communities_project

Walkability And Connectivity Checklist

	Performance Measure	Yes	n/a	Justification & Comments
	Outcome Sought: Walking is Convenient, Safe and Attractive			
W1	Footpaths are provided at all street frontages (both sides where possible).	☐	☐	.....
W2	Movement past and through the site is facilitated (including possible through-site connections).	☐	☐	.....
W3	Public facilities are provided for the comfort of walkers (i.e. shade, shelter, seating).	☐	☐	.....
W4	Appropriately located pedestrian entrances (i.e. direct and convenient access from streets and adjacent uses; separated from traffic; prominent and well-lit, with passive surveillance).	☐	☐	....
W5	Speed of vehicles is controlled through the design of the development (for example, narrower road widths, intersections, shorter straight lengths, pedestrian friendly car park entries), rather than by relying on retrofitting traffic calming devices.	☐	☐	....
	Outcome Sought: Streets and Pathways Integrate with the Adjoining Urban Structure to Improve Connectivity and Reduce Local Travel Distances			
W6	Streets and pathways connect logically to existing vehicle, pedestrian and cycle networks and do not simply stop at the site boundary.	☐	☐	....
W7	A choice of routes are provided, leading to local destinations and focal points (such as shops, schools, parks and public transport stops).	☐	☐	....
W8	Routes are unobstructed, continuous and direct.	☐	☐	.....
W9	Safe and easy access across streets is provided (e.g. pedestrian crossings and other aids, close to the direct line of travel).	☐	☐	....

Active Travel Alternatives are modes of transport that involve physical activity, such as walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing/ pooling. Efforts should be made to reduce car reliance and promote such alternatives. The availability and accessibility of 'end-of-trip' facilities (such as cycle parking and showers) can influence and encourage the decision to walk or cycle to work, which can positively impact upon health and well-being.

A1

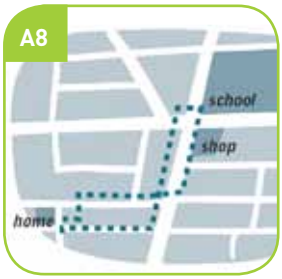
Provide appropriate walking and cycling infrastructure.

A3

End-of-trip facilities facilitate walking and cycling.

Source: Brisbane City Council and Queensland Transport , City2City (C2C) Initiative.

A8



The location of convenience shopping facilities, workplaces, and community facilities in close proximity to residences reduces car trips and promotes walking.

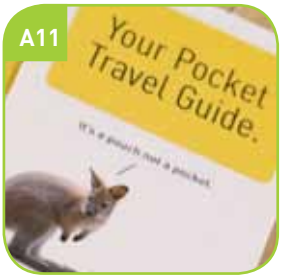
Source: NSW Government (2004), Planning Guidelines for Walking and Cycling.

A9

Residential densities near public transport corridors and service nodes should be maximised appropriately. The integration of mixed land uses such as residential, open space and neighbourhood commercial outlets into a compact subdivision allows people to walk and cycle shorter distances and undertake multiple activities within the one trip.

Source: NSW Government (2004), Planning Guidelines for Walking and Cycling.

A11



Travel Plans promote the use of sustainable transport options and can be prepared for most development types, commonly workplaces, but also schools, residential developments, stations, stadia and hospitals. They involve the preparation of a Transport Access Guide.

(Image courtesy of Optus).

A12

Car pooling options should be incorporated within parking areas.

Case Study

Optus Relocation

How do you get over 6,500 people to work at a new site in a suburban business park with 2,002 employee car parking spaces?

Driven by the relocation of Optus employees from nine sites across Sydney to one newly built campus in Macquarie Park, the Optus Sustainable Transport Strategy was designed to increase employees commuting travel choices, with an emphasis on improving access by sustainable modes of transport. Key initiatives include:

- additional on-site infrastructure.
- pedestrian audits of local streets.
- staff engagement and consultation.
- communication and information dissemination via traditional (e.g. newsletters, pocket guides) and non-traditional channels (e.g. SMS mobile alerts, online journey planners and travel 'clinics').
- Partnering with public transport providers to tailor services.
- Car Parking Policies which manage demand for parking spaces (e.g. parking fees, ride share scheme).
- Reducing the need to travel, by locating a childcare centre, gym and a convenience store on site. Best practice remote and flexible working policies are a cornerstone of reducing the need to travel.

As a result, approximately 40% of Optus employees commute by public transport, walking or cycling compared to 10% of all other employees in the local area.

http://www.pcal.nsw.gov.au/case_studies/optus

(Image courtesy of Optus).

Active Travel Alternatives Checklist

	Performance Measure	Yes	n/a	Justification & Comments
	Outcome Sought: Walking and Cycling is Supported and Promoted			
A1	Appropriate walking and cycling infrastructure is provided. This includes: • Walking and cycling pathways provided to all building entrances. • Shared paths are carefully designed, with sufficient width, adequate sightlines, gentle gradients and turns, and marked centrelines. • Space provided on streets for cyclists, with appropriate signage and road markings where dedicated cycle lanes aren't provided.	☐	☐	.....
A2	Design reduces conflict with traffic. This includes: • Treatment of building entrances. • Roundabouts are minimised as an intersection treatment. • Dedicated cycle lanes provided on high volume roads.	☐	☐	.....
A3	Provision of conveniently located, safe bicycle parking areas which satisfies the rate of provision specified in NSW Guidelines.[7]	☐	☐	.....
A4	Provision of amenities (e.g. changing rooms and showers) for men and women.	☐	☐	.....
	Outcome Sought: Public Transport is Available and Accessible			
A5	Pathways directly link to the nearest public transport stops. Ideally public transport stops should be located within walking distance (i.e. 400 metres along a connected pathway) of all dwellings, workplaces, and businesses.	☐	☐	.....
A6	Where the development proposes new streets, major streets are designed to accommodate bus access.	☐	☐	.....
A7	Where the development is located adjacent to a bus route, bus stops are provided or upgraded along the street frontage (i.e. shelter and seating).	☐	☐	.....
	Outcome Sought: Reduce the Need to Travel by Car			
A8	Trip generating land uses which meet local need are incorporated in the development (e.g. convenience shopping facilities, workplaces, and community facilities).	☐	☐	.....
A9	Residential densities near public transport corridors and service nodes are maximised appropriately.	☐	☐	.....
A10	Prioritisation of pedestrians and cyclists over vehicular access routes.	☐	☐	.....
A11	TMAP / Travel Plan / Transport Access Guide prepared to encourage the use of alternative forms of transport.	☐	☐	.....
A12	Priority parking provided for car pooling and car sharing.	☐	☐	.....
A13	Car parking levels provided are appropriate to the location and nature of the development and its accessibility to public transport.	☐	☐	.....

Legibility is a measure of how well the surrounding environment promotes an awareness of relative location, allowing people to orientate themselves in their physical environment and navigate from one place to another. Places which are perceived as being safe, welcoming and enjoyable through effective wayfinding systems are likely to be used more frequently. For example, knowledge of the local environment can provide the confidence to walk or cycle.

L3

Wayfinding elements can be delivered through architectural design as well as visual, audible and tactile communication elements. (eg. a street map represented in the footpath)

L3

A clearly defined route marked by design features.

Source: Healthy Spaces & Places, photographer TPG Town Planning & Urban Design.

L4

Directional signage provided within larger developments. (eg. Maps of larger developments)

L5

Localities, pathways and junctions should be well signposted.

L5

Royal North Shore Hospital – Before and after the implementation of a signage strategy.

Source: NSW Health, (2009), Technical 2 Series "Wayfinding for Health Facilities", published 25 June 2009.

Case Study

Chippendale, Sydney

The inner city suburb of Chippendale is an example of a street environment that encourages walking and cycling. Careful planning and management of the public domain, particularly with regard to traffic calming measures, has created a highly pedestrianised and community-friendly neighbourhood island amidst busy arterial roads and major land uses.

Preservation of the grid street layout and laneways provides a connected and legible street network that maximises convenience for pedestrians. Road closures and footpath extensions are used to create more public open space, deter through and fast travelling traffic, and establish car-free short-cuts for pedestrians and cyclists. Trees and planting, including garden beds maintained by residents, provide a sense of ownership and a pleasant environment for walking around. Footpaths have been widened at a number of street corners, creating space for trees and other planting, including garden beds tended by residents. Attention to footpath detailing gives an impression that pedestrians matter and enhances local heritage, community amenity and sense of place.

http://www.pcal.nsw.gov.au/case_studies/chippendale

Legibility Checklist

	Performance Measure	Yes	n/a	Justification & Comments
	Outcome Sought: Streetscape and Pedestrian Environment are Recognisable and Coherent			
L1	Design encourages user familiarity (e.g. the development's design statement defines a coherent local identity and character; consistent themes are embraced).	☐	☐	....
L2	Legible street and pathway layout proposed (i.e. streets are of a modified grid layout, with a regular, permeable block structure and smaller block sizes).	☐	☐	....
L3	Orientation features (such as landmarks and key sites) incorporated into public domain planning (e.g. streets and pathways).	☐	☐	....
	Outcome Sought: Residents, Employees and Visitors are Informed			
L4	Localities, pathways and junctions are well signposted. Directional signage provided to key points, such as bus stops and cycle routes.	☐	☐	....
L5	Way Finding Strategy proposed for larger scale development. Wayfinding incorporates the processes of knowing where you are, where you are going to, the best way to get there, recognising when you have arrived at your destination and knowing how to leave the area.	☐	☐	....

Most physical activity takes place in the public domain, on streets and in parks. Places which are welcoming, activated and stimulating are more likely to be used. Successful places are safe, comfortable and engaging, providing a setting for socialisation as well as physical activity. They are adequately serviced by appropriate infrastructure, adaptable to a variety of uses, are activated by activity generating uses, accessible to all, connected to local destinations, and engage multiple senses of their users.

Q1

Attractive and welcoming building frontages, which address the street. Building form which contributes to the character of the streetscape.

Q5

Landscaping plays a significant role in creating an attractive and welcoming place with a distinct identity (via street trees, landscape elements and street furniture).

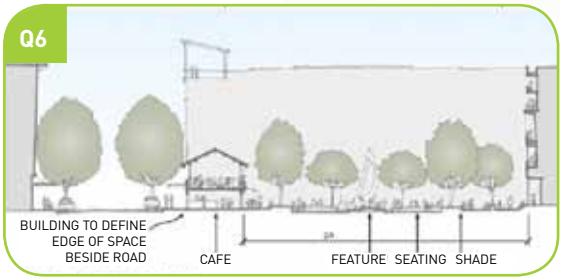
Source: Healthy Spaces & Places, photographer TPG Town Planning & Urban Design.

Q9

Provide generous, purposeful and well-defined public spaces. Quality is more important than simple size however.

Source: Landcom Open Space Design Guidelines, page 33.

Q6



People are more likely to use an area, including as a route to a destination or for active recreation and leisure, if they feel safe. Safety is encouraged through adherence to crime prevention (CPTED) principles, such as an effective land use mix which promotes casual surveillance. Active use of boundaries encourages people to frequent an area.

Source: Healthy Spaces & Places, TPG Town Planning & Urban Design.

Q10

Provision of well-designed and maintained facilities to encourage both active and passive use of public open space.

Case Study

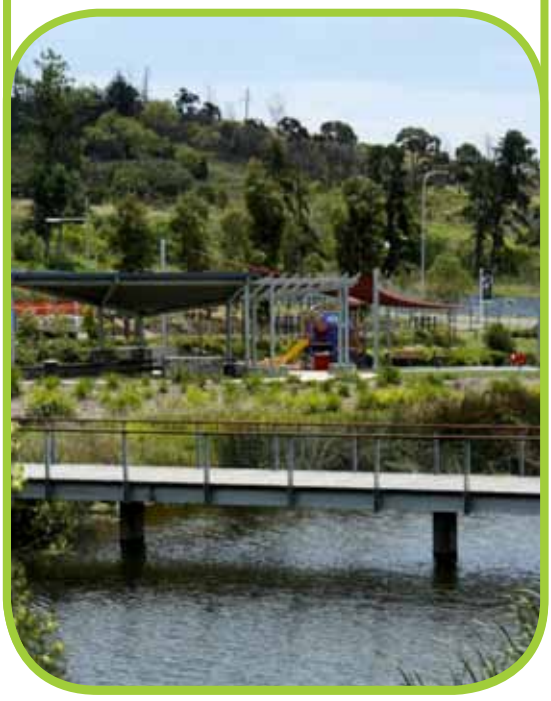
Nelson's Ridge

Nelson's Ridge is a masterplanned mixed use development of 1,575 homes in Western Sydney. The development is notable for the large amount and variety of high quality public open space that is provided, with 40% of the site dedicated to open space. Over five kilometres of walking and cycling trails link homes to a wide range of passive and active recreation facilities, including regional infrastructure beyond the site.

It also incorporates many recreational facilities that provide opportunities for social interaction and activity, such as a barbecue or picnic. These facilities are located adjacent to children's playgrounds, providing community gathering spaces for people of different ages.

With a more grid-like street pattern, oriented towards key activities, the street and path network of Nelsons Ridge has been designed to ensure permeability and walkability. Pedestrian footpaths are provided on each side of all residential streets.

http://www.pcal.nsw.gov.au/case_studies/nelsons_ridge



Quality Public Domain Checklist

	Performance Measure	Yes	n/a	Justification & Comments
	Outcome Sought: Places which are Welcoming, Activated and Stimulating			
Q1	Attractive and welcoming building frontages proposed, which address the street.	☐	☐	.....
Q2	Building form contributes to the character of the streetscape.	☐	☐	.....
Q3	Active frontages incorporated where possible. Non-residential land uses are co-located in focal points at places of high accessibility.	☐	☐	....
Q4	Preparation of/ contribution to a Public Domain Plan.	☐	☐	.....
Q5	Landscape design creates an attractive and distinct identity (via street trees, landscape elements and street furniture).	☐	☐	....
	Outcome Sought: Places which are Safe			
Q6	Adherence to Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, demonstrated by Crime Risk Assessment (i.e. surveillance, territorial reinforcement, access control and space management).	☐	☐	....
Q7	Design minimises conflict between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. For example, cyclists and pedestrians are separated on major routes.	☐	☐	....
Q8	Public domain is well-lit.	☐	☐	.....
	Outcome Sought: Access to Usable Open Space, with Facilities for different Ages, Abilities and Ethnicities			
Q9	Adequate levels of usable open / communal space located in prominent and accessible locations.	☐	☐	.....
Q10	The size, layout and facilities within open / communal space provide for socialisation and activity and are capable of accommodating a variety of uses which reflect the likely demography and social needs of residents.	☐	☐	....

Social Interaction & Inclusion

See PCAL Development & Active Living Resource Pages 29-32

Social Interaction refers to people meeting together. Physical environments should encourage this by the provision of such opportunities, which are inclusive of all ages, ethnicities and ability levels. Social interaction (and safety) is promoted by active frontages which openly address the street. Private open or public space provisions are shrinking and lifestyles are changing, with less time available to access public open space. On-site or communal open space is a critical component of residential developments, providing opportunities for residents to engage in active lifestyles, either formally or informally, whether provided at ground level, on a podium or roof.

S1

Provide an on-site focus for recreation & social interaction (e.g. communal open space, meeting room, communal garden (possibly roof-top/ podium)).

S1

Include elements which are engaging, encouraging and convenient for use. Unusual and stimulating items added to the streetscape can encourage active play by children of varying ages.

Source: Healthy Spaces & Places, photographer Planning Institute of Australia.

S3

Provide visually interesting, safe places to stop and rest - internally and along frontages in the public domain.

Source: Healthy Spaces & Places, photographer Planning Institute of Australia.

S6

Upgrade pathways to enable access by users of different ages and levels of mobility. Footpath ramps facilitate access for wheelchairs, walking frames and scooters.

Case Study

Rouse Hill

Rouse Hill Town Centre is a new mixed use development on a greenfield site in Sydney's North West. It has been planned to be a major hub of one of the fastest growing areas of the city. The town centre design, which is planned to encourage active living, is an innovative mix of a traditional open air 'main street' layout blended with contemporary but relatively small-scale mall style retail and commercial facilities. The town centre development will be complemented by a ring of medium and low density residential development and open space oriented towards the centre.

The development as a whole is designed to provide residents with employment, retail and recreational opportunities that are close to their homes. Rouse Hill incorporates health and medical facilities, a library and a community centre, bus interchange, and a residential component as shop-top housing. The mixed uses encourage people to make multi-purpose trips. Children in particular are well catered for, with musical play areas, an environmental education trail, and a 'secret garden'.

http://www.pcal.nsw.gov.au/case_studies/rouse_hill

Social Interaction & Inclusion Checklist

	Performance Measure	Yes	n/a	Justification & Comments
	Outcome Sought: Opportunities to Interact			
S1	Provision of an on-site focus for social interaction (e.g. communal open space, meeting room, communal garden (possibly roof-top/ podium)).	☐	☐	....
S2	For larger scale development, access provided to facilities which satisfy residents' social, cultural, recreation and health needs (on-site where possible).	☐	☐	....
S3	Provision of visually interesting, safe places to stop and rest - internally and along frontages in the public domain.	☐	☐	.....
S4	Provision of a new residents' "Welcome Pack".	☐	☐	.....
S5	Promotes a street focus (e.g. active land uses, building addresses the street).	☐	☐	.....
	Outcome Sought: Barrier Free Movement and Entry			
S6	Compliance with Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) requirements and local accessibility standards, demonstrated by an Accessibility Assessment.	☐	☐	....

References

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Need Advice?

www.pcal.nsw.gov.au

The Premier's Council for Active Living (PCAL) aims to build and strengthen the physical and social environments in which communities engage in active living.

It comprises senior representatives from across government, industry and the community sector. It was established in 2004 and follows on from the NSW Physical Activity Taskforce, which met between 1996 and 2002.

Acknowledgements

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Copies of this document are available at http://www.pcal.nsw.gov.au/

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Notes

NSW PREMIER'S COUNCIL FOR ACTIVE LIVING
MEMBER AGENCIES

Communities NSW - Commission for Children and Young People

Communities NSW - Sport and Recreation

Department of Education and Training

Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water

NSW Health

Department of Human Services - Ageing, Disability and Home Care

Department of Human Services - Housing NSW

Department of Planning

Department of Premier and Cabinet

Department of Premier & Cabinet - Division of Local Government

Transport NSW

Roads and Traffic Authority