An introduction to 20 minute neighbourhoods
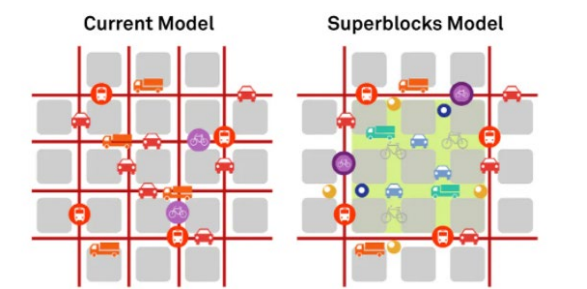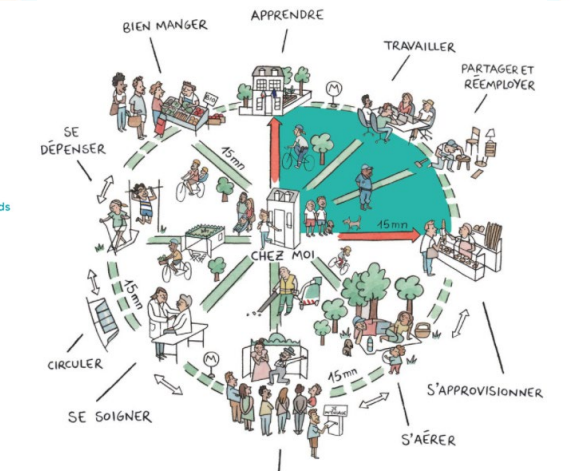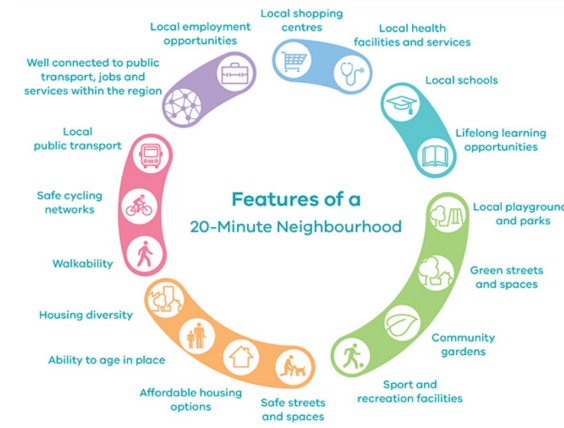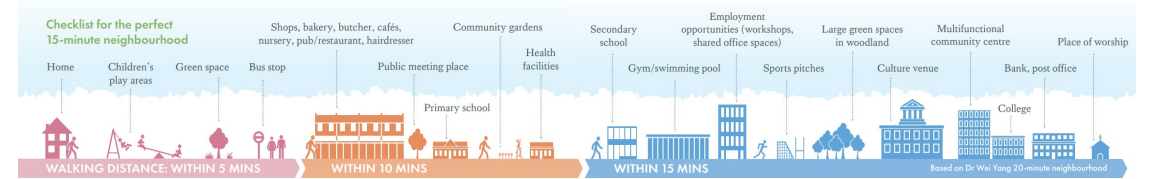
Susan Claris, November 2021

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15 minute city, 20 minute neighbourhood or…?

- Paris 15 minute city

- Melbourne 20 minute neighbourhood

- Waltham Forest 15 minute neighbourhood

- Ipswich 15 minute town

- Barcelona superblocks

- Nordhavn Copenhagen 5 minute city

Meeting all daily needs within a short walk or cycle

Transport

Community facilities

Green space

Leisure and economy

Frequent public transport service

Good quality walk and cycle links

Health and wellbeing services

Green and open space

Childcare

Sports facilities

Place of worship

20 minute neighbourhood

Affordable housing

Shops

Restaurant/Café

Employment opportunities

3
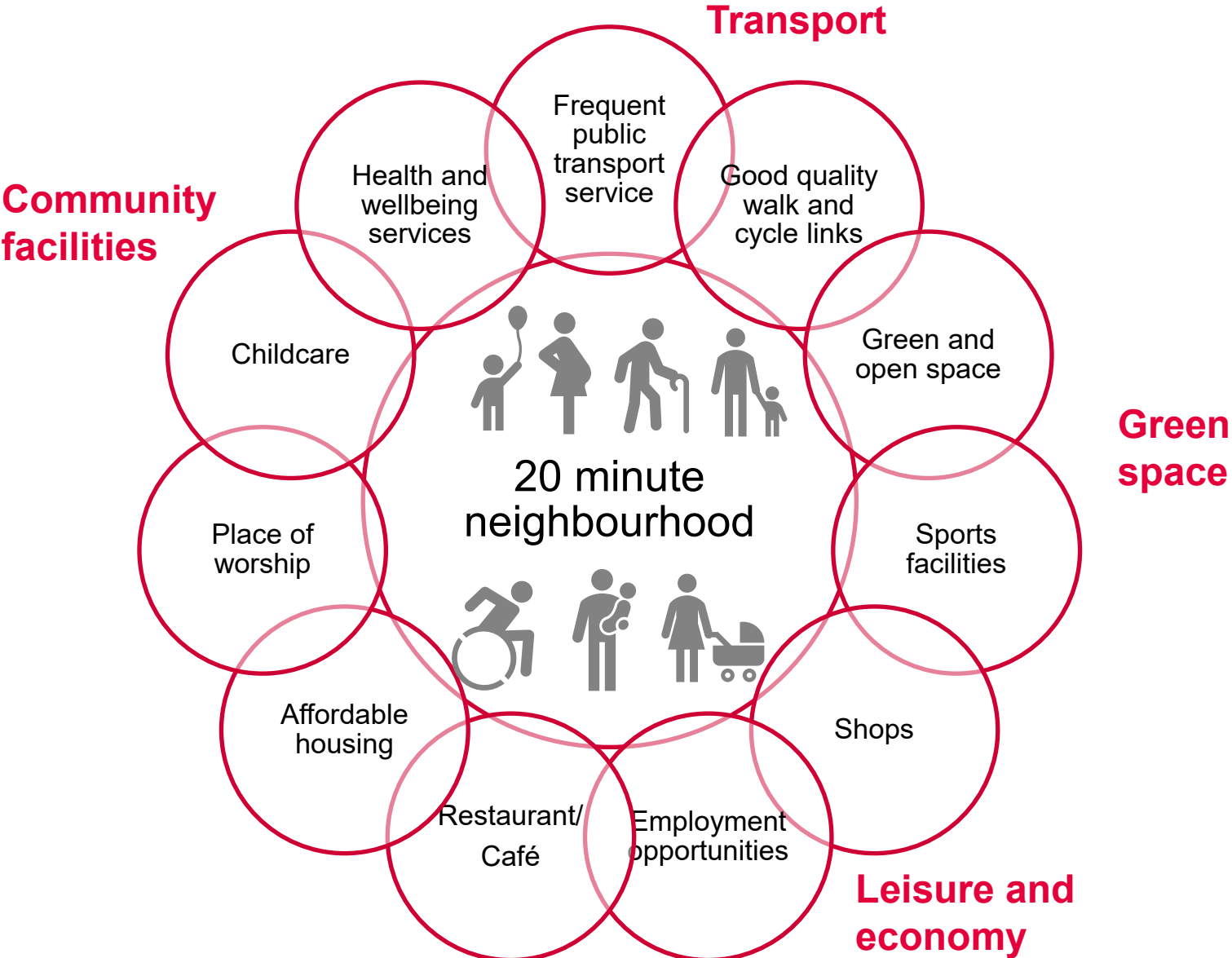
An old idea reinvigorated

The Garden City 1898 UK
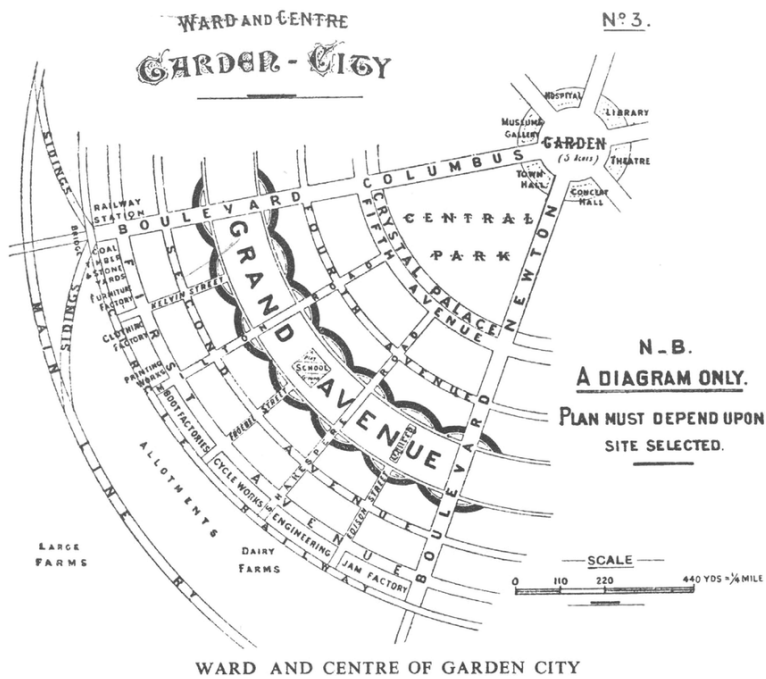
Neighbourhood unit 1929 US
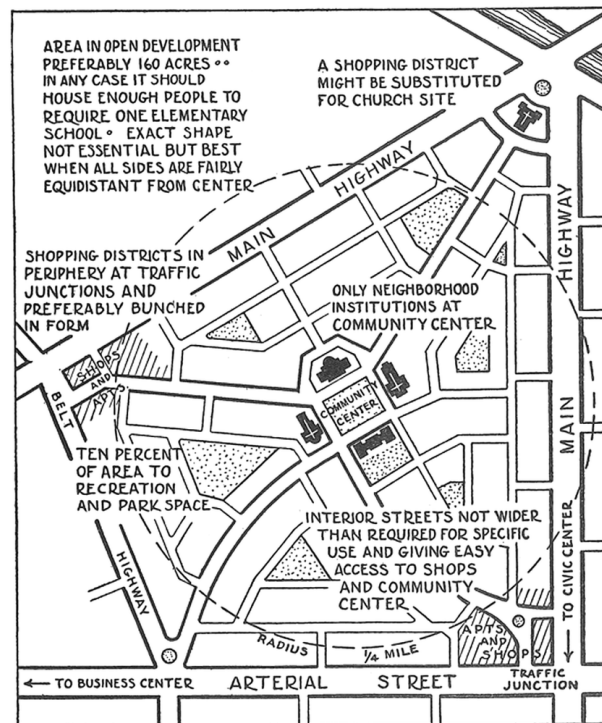
Urban Renaissance 1997 UK
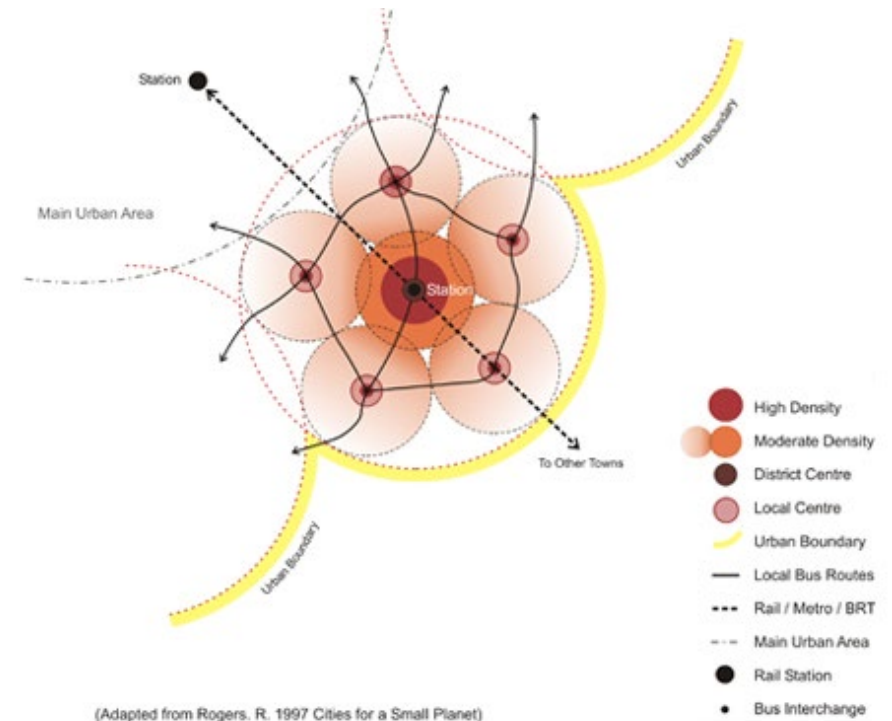
Covid-19 and a return to localism

- Step change and an opportunity to think differently

- Highlighted difference in health outcomes depending on physical environment

- Working from home and need for local services

- 100% increase in cycling on weekdays and up to 200% on weekends

- Experienced streets and towns without high levels of traffic

- Invigorated towns and cities to make changes to transport networks and infrastructure.

Liverpool Without Walls Parklets

Benefits of a 20 minute neighbourhood

- Supporting local economies through increased footfall – up to 40% increase in shopping footfall associated with improvements to walking environment (Gear Change)

- Improving health and wellbeing through increased physical activity

- Improved social cohesion and reduced isolation through connected neighbourhoods

- Improving air quality and reducing emissions.

Regular physical activity reduces your risk of…

Dementia by up to 30%

Hip fractures by up to 68%

Depression by up to 30%

Breast cancer by 20%

Colon cancer by 30%

Type 2 diabetes by up to 40%

Cardiovascular disease by up to 35%

All-cause mortality by 30%

Policy shift

Half of all journeys in cities and towns to be walked or cycled by 2030

- Aim to meet net zero emissions by 2050

- 43% of journeys in urban areas under 2 miles and 58% are below 5 miles – a walkable or cyclable distance for most

- Focus on place based solutions through levelling up, reducing congestion, increasing capacity for sustainable transport and improving health and wellbeing

- Transport planning and improvements will need to consider carbon impact and budgets

- Embedding transport decarbonisation in spatial planning.

Policy shift

National Model Design Code Guidance (2021)

- Consider accessibility to public transport

- Multi-function streets, such as pedestrianising high-streets either full time or for certain periods of the week

- Home Zones can be implemented in new or existing developments, with people and vehicles sharing the whole street equally

Local facilities that should be accessible in all neighbourhoods

1. Cultural and community facilities
2. Local shops
3. Pubs/cafes
4. Medical facilities
5. Places of worship
6. Homeworking hubs
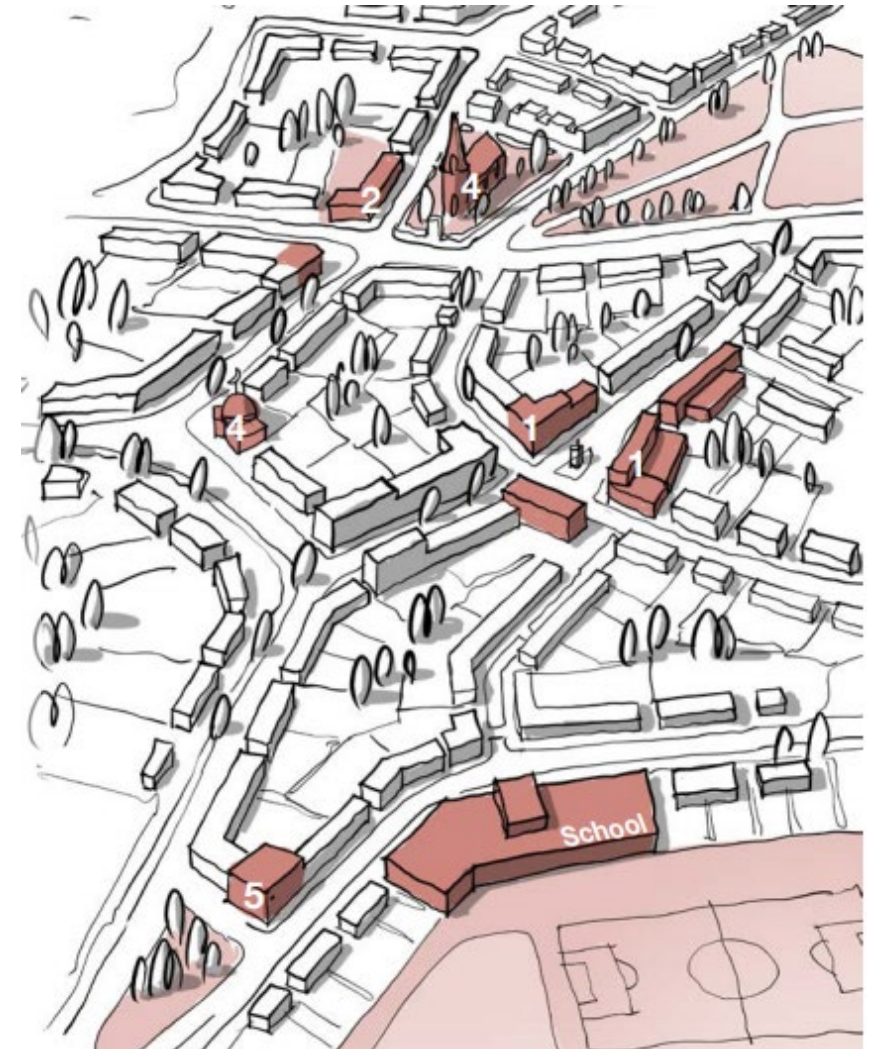
CASE STUDIES

Case studies

Portland, Oregon Complete Neighbourhoods (2013)

- Goal for 80% of residents to be able to access all basic daily non work needs by foot or bike

- Mapped existing access to services and facilities needed to meet daily needs

- Focussed funding on walking and cycling routes

- Provided share bikes, 26% of trips would previously have been driven

- Implemented 100 miles of neighbourhood greenways with low-traffic and low-speed environments, where people walking and cycling are prioritised.
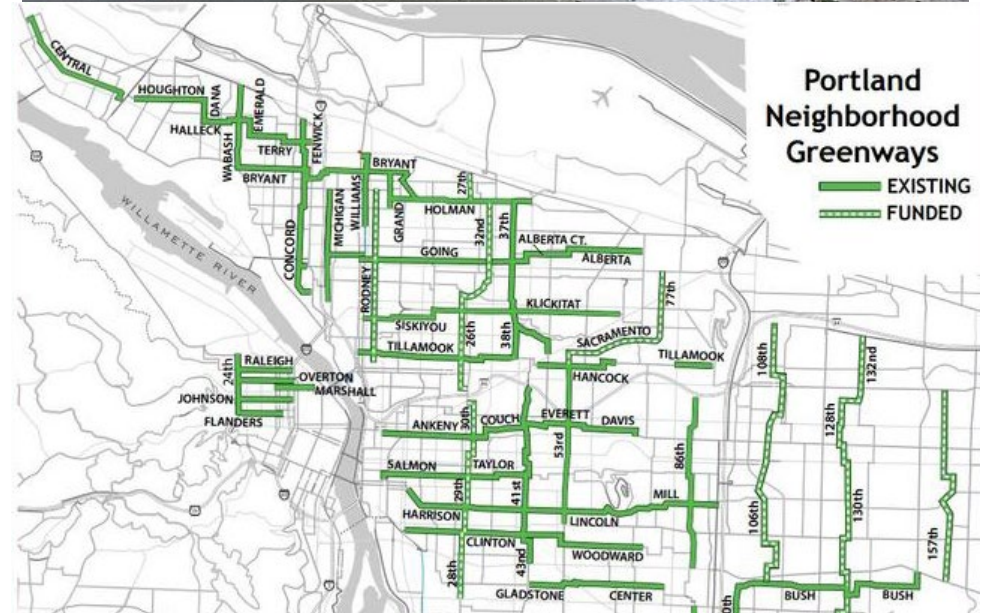
Case studies

Melbourne, 20-minute neighbourhood

- Tested in 3 suburbs with populations 4,000 – 44,000

- 20 minute scorecard used to identify opportunities and monitor progress

- Survey to understand existing liveability and community priorities for improvement
  - Public open space including parks and playgrounds – street side parklets and pop-up parks
  - Walking safety and crossings – painted crossings
  - Streetscape and town centre vitality, including lighting, art, benches, shop front improvements and traffic calming
  - Cycle lanes and parking
  - Safer walking routes to schools

Features of a 20-Minute Neighbourhood

Local employment opportunities · Local shopping centres · Local health facilities and services · Local schools · Lifelong learning opportunities · Local playgrounds and parks · Green streets and spaces · Community gardens · Sport and recreation facilities · Safe streets and spaces · Affordable housing options · Ability to age in place · Housing diversity · Walkability · Safe cycling networks · Local public transport · Well connected to public transport, jobs and services within the region

Safer crossings

Traffic calming

Temporary road closure

Case studies

Waltham Forest Mini-Hollands, Outer London

- Mini-Holland programme £27m to invest in improving walking and cycling since 2015
  - 37 modal filters
  - 26km segregated cycle lanes
  - 104 improved road crossings
  - 31 pocket parks
  - 660 new trees
  - speed limits reduced to 20mph
  - 395 bike hangars
  - Free cycle training to over 10,000

- Residents walking an extra 37 minutes a week and cycling an extra 9 minutes

- Seven month increase in life expectancy (over a decade)

Example before

After

Case studies

Ipswich, 15 minute town

- £25m towns fund funding

- Using Covid-19 as catalyst to revitalise town centre with mixed-uses and increased housing

- Plan to encourage people to live and stay locally with more schools, music venues, outdoor gyms, green areas

- Improve walking and cycling routes to enable a connected town

Case studies

Hailsham, East Sussex, 10 minute town (2021)

- Market town in rural Wealden District

- 20,000 population

- Town suffered from vehicle dominance, likely to worsen with proposed development

- Changes to enable all ages to access services they need, and build social networks and community

- Focus on improving connections and safety for people walking and cycling

- Strengthen retail uses, provide new facilities and improve public realm.

Case studies

The Knab, Lerwick, Scotland

- Masterplan for 140 new homes in Lerwick, population 7,000

- Focus on existing accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport

- Designing a permeable layout with multiple access points with good links to town centre (10-15 minute walk)

- Scotland embedding 20 minute neighbourhoods across cities, towns and rural areas as part of shift towards sustainable travel.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

What's needed

- Continuous and safe walking and cycling routes suitable for all ages and abilities

- Connect residential areas to different facilities (e.g. grocery shops, doctors surgery, primary schools)

- Reduced vehicle dominance and intimidation

- Secure and safe cycle parking at homes and destinations

- Improved design quality and lighting to support safety

- Access to cycle hire scheme

- Ensure new developments are permeable and connected to active travel infrastructure.

Challenges of implementation

- No one sized fits all approach need to understand community needs and concerns

- Currently low walk and cycle use

- Ingrained preference for car use and objection to change, residents and businesses need to be shown benefits

- Free parking (e.g. on high streets) encourages driving

- Physical limitations on existing streets

- Possible gentrification associated with improvements

- Challenging to enforce policy and design requirements if they are not adopted and made mandatory.