

# Where Should New Housing Go?

## Public Discussion and Book Launch

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THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SYDNEY**



“It's not a house it's a home. A man's home is his castle”

Darryl Kerrigan



Are we debating “Should the suburbs be ‘saved’”?  
**Indeed is there a really a choice (+1m in 10 years)?**

In truth, managing metropolitan Sydney’s future dwelling supply is not a ‘binary’ choice of ‘suburbs v/s high rise’ ...

Medium density living isn’t new ... They are our first forms of housing and remain some of our most precious and indeed expensive suburbs (consider the Rocks, Miller Point, Darlinghurst, Potts Point, Surry Hills, etc etc.)

‘Mainstream media’ vs ‘Property Industry Spruikers’ vs ‘NIMBYs’.

What is needed is a broader discussion on long-term ‘city shaping’ rather than finger pointing about the worst excesses of individual buildings ...

(and they are awful sometimes)...



But back to the debate ....

Continued westward expansion of Sydney is neither environmentally sustainable, socially responsible or economically rational ... there is a place for it but its probably no more than 20% of the housing supply mix.

Planners must also look to:

Metropolitan Centres ... CBD, Parramatta, Aerotropolis (super exciting)..

Strategic Centres ... Macquarie Park, Chatswood, St Leonards, Liverpool, Penrith etc.(a bit exciting)

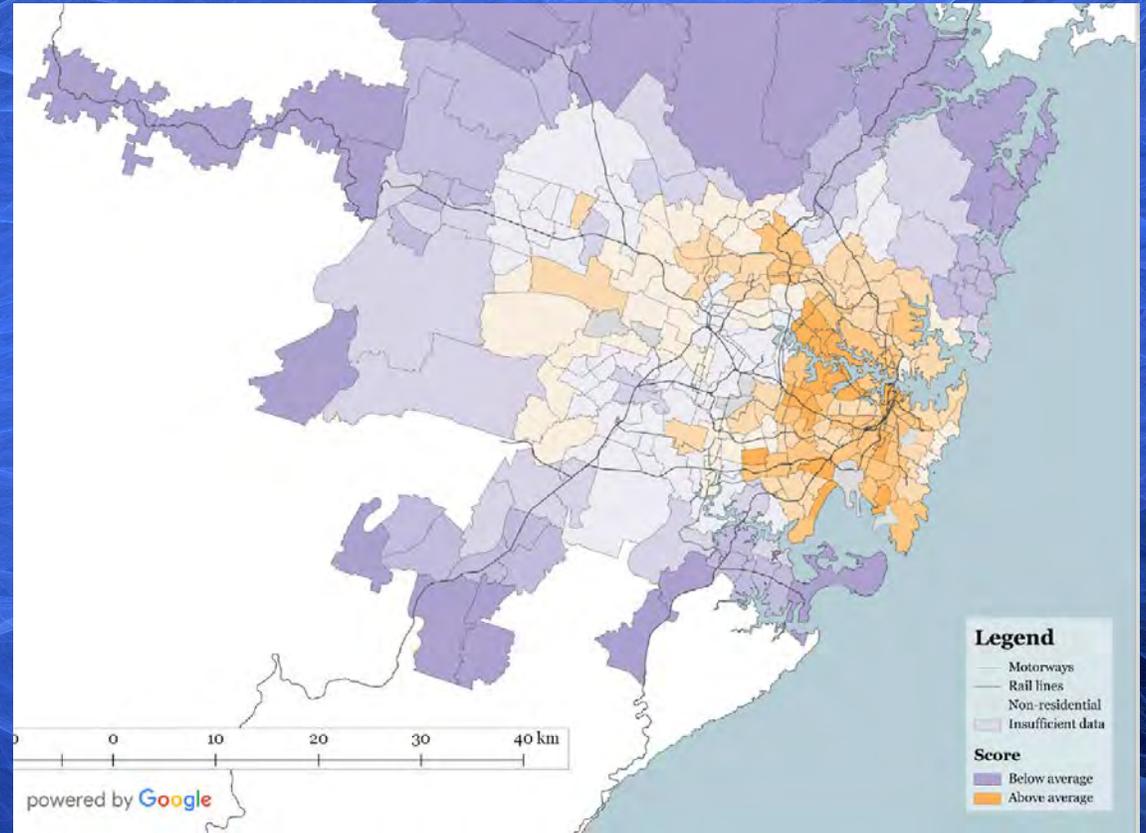
Local Centres (a little exciting)... (and the missing middle)

Planners must consider whether we grow like we did post WWII (rapid westward sprawl) or whether we consider a range of solutions (20% in SWSGC and NWSGC) and 80% in existing urban areas (govt policy since 1990s).

This is fundamentally tied to the reality of whether we want to be a:

- 1 hour city (to access jobs, services, shopping, hospitals, schools) (status quo for many),
- 2 hour city (grow westwards)
- 30 minute city?

Job distribution in Sydney is very uneven ...  
.... and not changing any time soon



*When we move toward the “30-minute city” we start seeing the reverse. People, freed from the commute, start spending their time budget on other things. They see more friends and spend more time with family. They invest more time on education, leisure or keeping fit. They take the job that makes them feel more satisfied and stimulated. They become more productive. This city, the 30-Minute City, has more social cohesion, stronger social capital and a happier, healthier population.*

*(Committee for Sydney, The Geography of Time, May 2017)*

## Peter Newton, "Becoming More Urban: Attitudes to Medium Density Living Are Changing in Sydney and Melbourne" (26/10/17)

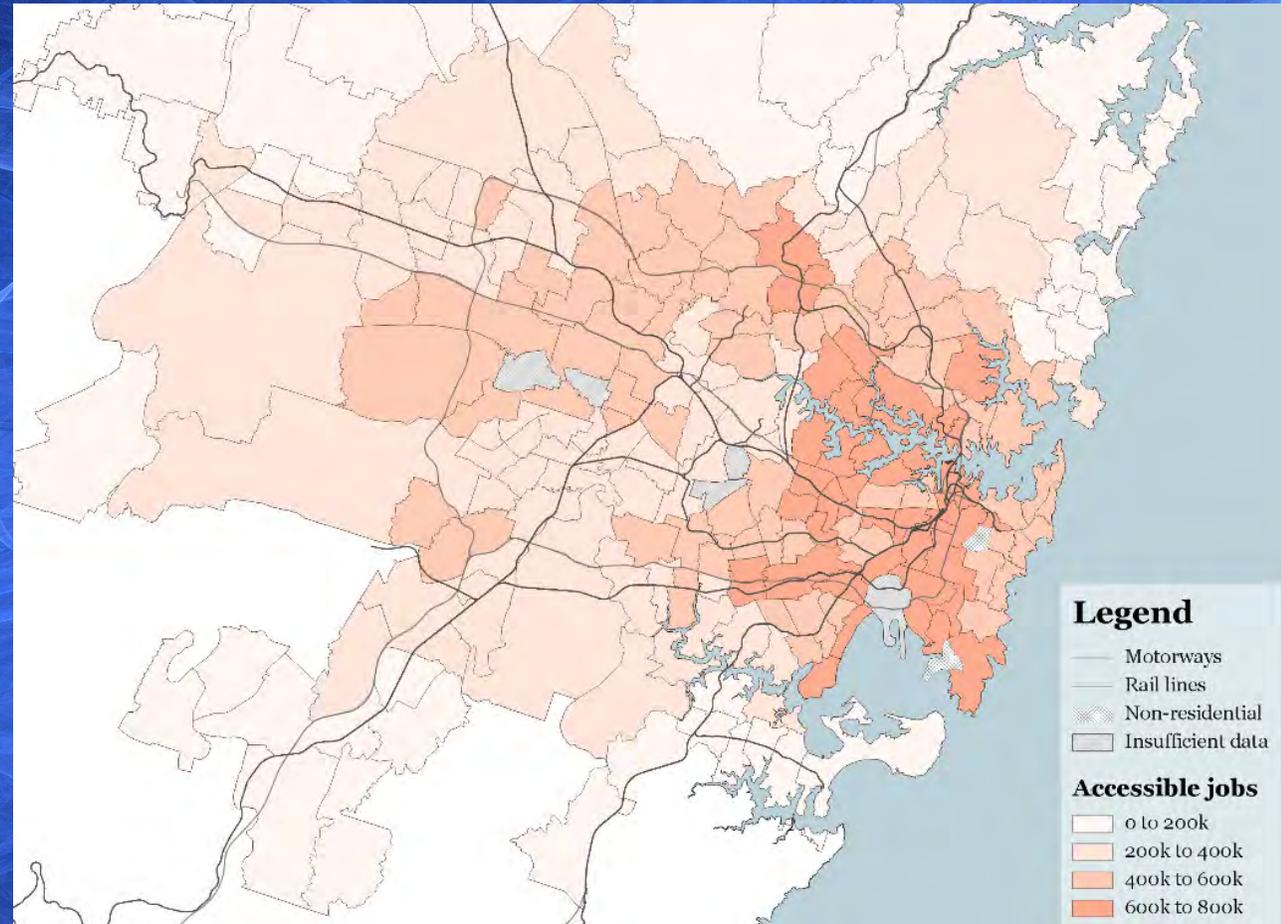
"The populations of Sydney and Melbourne are both expected to exceed 8.5 million by 2061.... Such sprawling cities result in economic (productivity), social (spatial disadvantage) and environmental weaknesses (including a very big ecological footprint)...

In September 2016, the Centre for Urban Transitions surveyed 2,000 Sydney and Melbourne households in established middle-ring suburbs...

Asked "What type of dwelling would you want to live in?", nearly 60% of residents in both cities favoured a detached house and yard. This is down from 90% in the early 1990s. So, in the space of one generation, attitudes have shifted significantly toward embracing higher-density living....

46% favoured medium-density housing when located in established suburbs with good public transport, access to jobs, services. (same proportion as preferred a separate dwelling and garden in a car-dependent suburb)...

“The 30 minute city has more social cohesion, stronger social capital, and a happier and healthier population (Committee for Sydney, The Geography of Time, May 2017)

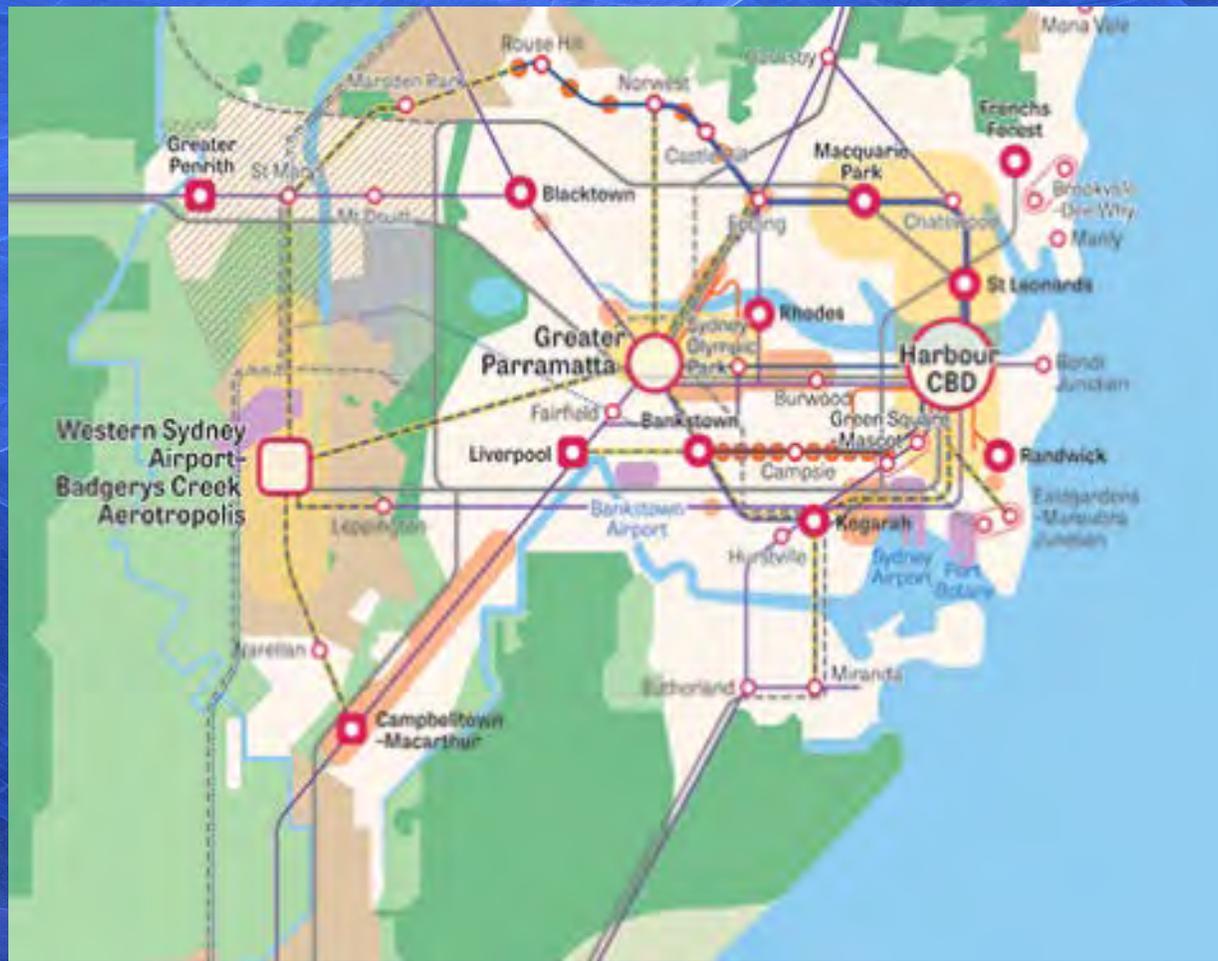


## GSC ... Vision to 2036



# Red circles, yellow smears, red dots, blue lines (exciting for planners)

- Metropolitan City Centre
- Metropolitan City Cluster
- Health and Education Precinct
- Strategic Centre
- Economic Corridor
- Trade Gateway
- Western Sydney Employment Area
- Land Release Area
- Urban Renewal Area
- Transit Oriented Development
- Urban Investigation Area
- ▨ Priority Growth Area Investigation
- Protected Natural Area and Open Space
- Metropolitan Rural Area
- Urban Area
- Waterways



Our suburbs are beige (who chose beige?)



The suburbs remain important .... (yes really)  
Detached housing is where 72% of Australia still lives ...  
The (former?) Great Australian Dream of a detached house and garden ...



Boomburbs: Sydney's urban sprawl seen from above – in pictures  
The Guardian 10/04/18

## Significant advantages of suburban housing ...

Privacy

Space

Land tenure

Gardens

Parking



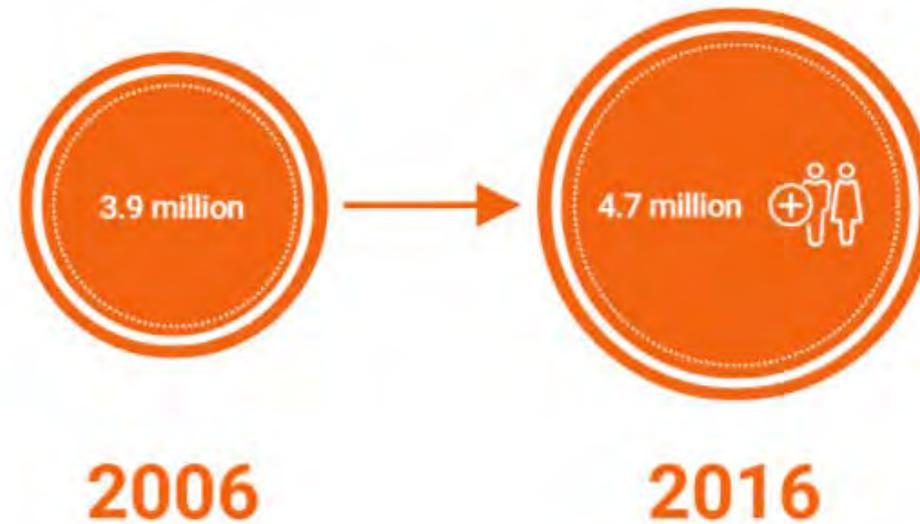
## Disadvantages of suburban housing ...

Sprawl  
Traffic,  
Environmental impact,  
Social isolation,  
Unwalkable communities



Boomburbs: Sydney's urban sprawl seen from above – in pictures  
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Significant population challenge for Sydney ... not a choice  
(100,000 annually, 30,000 dpa, 20,000 unrelated to migration)



**18% population increase**

730,000 more people than 10 years ago



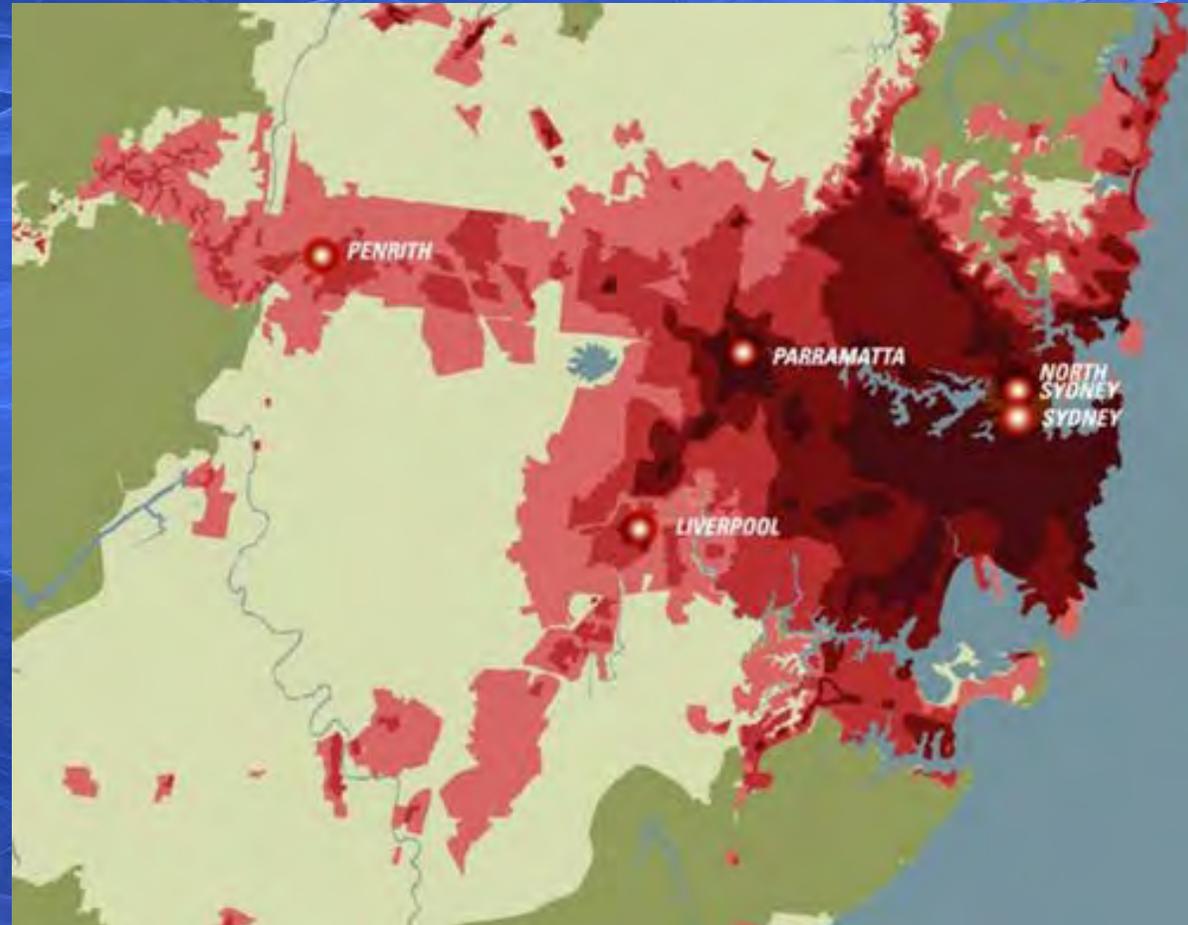
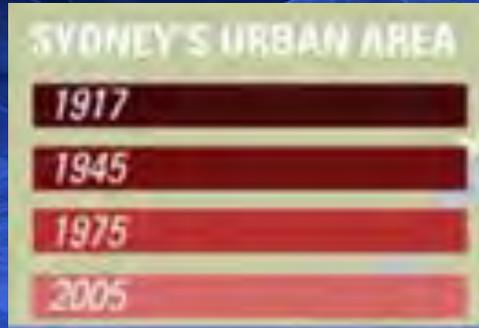
**38% increase in people aged 65+**

175,000 more people aged 65+ than 10 years ago

Arguably, the suburbs haven't been done well in some time



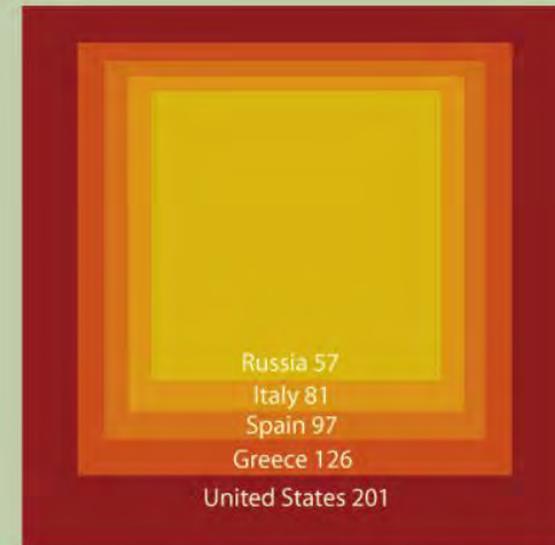
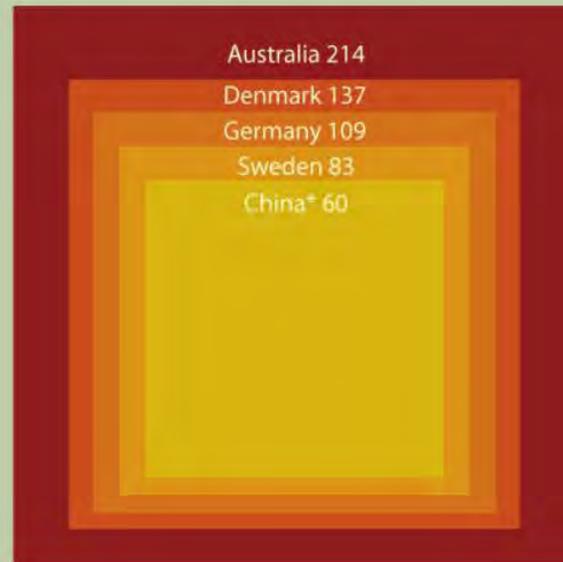
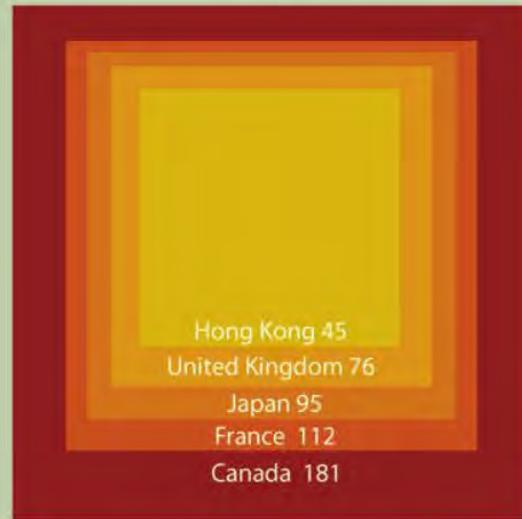
In 1917, the city was compact, walkable, transit oriented ...



100 years of sprawl .... some of the world's largest houses,  
... and some of the lowest densities.

## How big is a house?

Average new home size around the globe in m<sup>2</sup>



Note: data for 2009 builds, \* China figures urban only

Sources: CommSec, RBA, UN, US Census  
[shrinkthatfootprint.com](http://shrinkthatfootprint.com)



Boomburbs: Sydney's Urban Sprawl Seen from Above – In Pictures  
The Guardian 10/04/18

Dual Occ / \_Bruce Eeles / EelesTreleaseArchitects



TH\_WIN\_BridieGough\_PlatformArchitects.jpg



With 75 % of all housing in Sydney still detached housing, is it in need of 'saving'?

I would suggest it's disingenuous to suggest as much.

The real debate is not about 'saving our suburbs'.

It's a fake argument designed to oppose change and quite necessary increases in housing supply.

There is a real crisis in the lack of housing diversity and a real lack of housing affordability.

The real debate should be where the change is to occur (not if) and how it is to be most appropriately designed .....





**LOW-MEDIUM DENSITY**

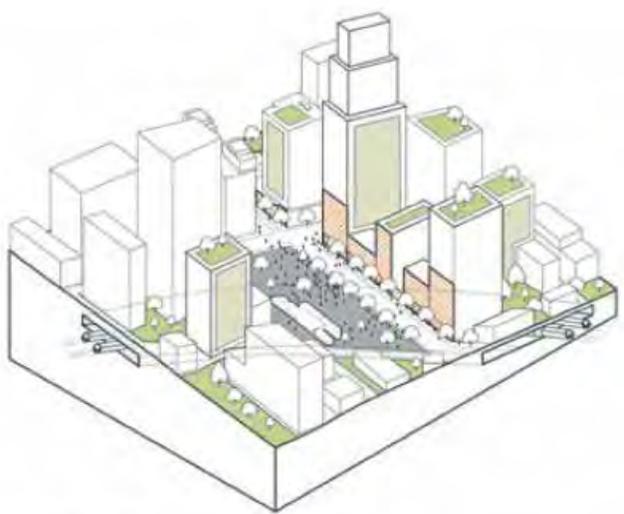
- **Education:** A public school in the suburb
- **Health:** A Local GP
- **Transport:** Primarily car, with some bus access
- **Open space:** Primarily private
- **Employment:** Some main street retail and small business offices



**MEDIUM DENSITY**

- **Education:** Multiple schools and childcare within the local area
- **Health:** Hospital locally accessible
- **Transport:** Bus or light rail and cycling, with some walking
- **Open space:** Mostly consolidated communal green space
- **Employment:** Ground floor commercial, co-working areas and retail

Source: Arup and Grimshaw Architects



**HIGH DENSITY**

- **Education:** Multiple schools and higher education within the local area
- **Health:** Specialist medical care locally accessible
- **Transport:** Integrated public transport with high cycling and walking use
- **Open space:** Communal, hard and soft with high quality amenities
- **Employment:** Business hub with global reach and supporting services

**AMENITY INCREASES AS DENSITY INCREASES**  
 Density done well means that we accommodate more people and homes in the space that we have, while at the same time improving liveability. As the images below show, the benefit of higher densities is that they allow us to create communities where more amenities of a more specialised nature are within close access to our homes. Higher densities can also sustain better transport connectivity and high quality public spaces.

**MAKING GREAT PLACES DENSITY DONE WELL**

