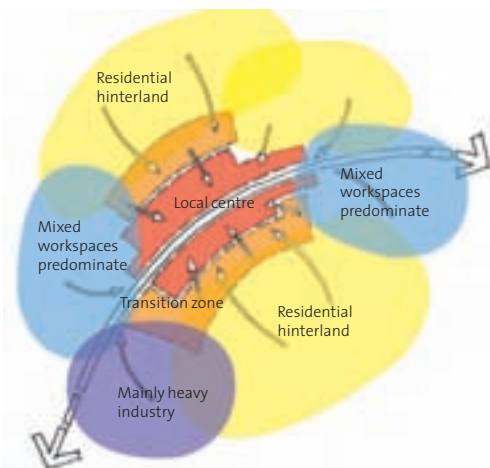


In designing new places, what role is the centre to have when all the potential 'mixed use elements' are sucked to the edge?



Uses are still being zoned and roads designed as strategic routes at the expense of the creation of more local relationships based on walking and cycling.



A more vibrant and sustainable form results from blurring the distinction between uses and designing places that make walking to the local centre, and bus stop or railway station, as convenient and comfortable as possible

Successful communities require a full range of local services and facilities, including commercial, educational, health, spiritual and civic uses. These need to be conveniently sited and connected to residential areas by safe and comfortable routes.

Traditionally, towns have developed around crossroads, centres of activity or stopping places, with the incremental growth of housing, retail, community and employment uses around the original core. Yet despite the virtues of mixed development (see Table 3.1), in modern development it often remains the exception, rather than the rule.

Table 3.1 The benefits of mixed development

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More convenient access to facilities • Travel-to-work congestion is minimised • Greater opportunities for social interaction • Socially diverse communities • Visual stimulation and delight of different buildings within close proximity • A greater feeling of safety, with 'eyes on streets' • Greater energy efficiency and more efficient use of space and buildings • More consumer choice of lifestyle, location and building type • Urban vitality and street life • Increased viability of urban facilities and support for small business (such as corner shops)
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A successful and sustainable local neighbourhood is a product of the distances people have to walk to access daily facilities, the presence of a sufficient range of such facilities to support their needs, and places and spaces where a variety of activities can take place.

These are exemplified by the traditional Victorian and Edwardian suburbs which were built on the assumption that most movement would be pedestrian. Other travel needs were serviced by a suburban rail line - the station providing the focus of retail, commercial and civic activity. Such spatial and use patterns are often difficult to replicate in modern development due to current transport planning regimes, the dispersal of movement patterns facilitated by the car and the trend towards ever-larger retail, educational or healthcare buildings in order to achieve efficiencies of scale.