



Summary Notes from The Future of Suburbia One Day Conference 18 April 2018

Keynote Address – Professor Alan Berger, MIT

Alan presented a key note address around his latest book “Infinite Suburbia”.

Alan and his co-authors challenged the urbanism orthodoxy “density fixes everything”. Going up and not out will not, in fact, fix everything.

70% of people in the U.S. live in the suburbs so we are behind the times and need to think of a more holistic approach to planning suburbia.

“everyone is moving to the cities” is FALSE.

“everyone is moving to urban areas” is TRUE.

People are free to move wherever they like so therefore affordability and health advantages are making us re look at suburbia.

Infrastructure spend, and government policy needs to respond to trips originate and terminate – look at flexibility and ride share technology are important – not just more fixed transit lines.

Buy the Book! “Infinite Suburbia”

Lord Mayor Graham Quirk Address.

The Lord Mayor addressed the rapid change in Brisbane’s suburbs.

Issues of affordability, transport and green space need to be addressed.

Technology will drive change and open up opportunities.

Council’s emphasis on transit – the Metro project delivered with the Cross River Rail project and on global precincts – to grow employment and move toward the 30 minute city.

Plenary Panel – Key take aways.

Ross Elliott moderated Raynuha Sinnathamby, Guy Gibson, Don O’Rorke, Todd Rohl and Alan Berger.

Transport solutions – developers constantly trying to stay ahead.

Affordability combined with amenities drives the market.

Developers now looking at employment in the suburbs – future generations want work location flexibility – how do we (and policy makers) encourage business out of their towers and into the suburbs?

People buy for amenity NOT proximity to the office BUT don't want a long commute....

Employers needing to keep workers happy will drive cultural change in the workplace.

Master plans critical to community resilience and sustainability. Melbourne has shown the advantages of bigger Master planned communities.

Sustainable Suburbia – key take aways

Gavan Ranger moderated Alan Berger, Farokh Ghadially, Orlando Harrison and Stephen Smith.

Sustainability and technology and planning go hand in hand.

We need to address two areas – greenfields and existing suburbia in regard to sustainable communities.

Suburbia is “messy” (i.e policy, governance, consultation etc) and technology helps achieve sustainability.

Affordability and lifestyle – this is how to have “rich” life in the suburbs.

Big improvements are needed in measuring sustainability – eg. Metrics including wellbeing and the performance of “green” buildings.

Achieving sustainability is very complex and needs a regional scale to achieve as it can't be done on an individual dwelling level.

Technology will overtake government and what you can do in your home – smart houses and smart energy.

Alan Berger – Suburbs use carbon – intelligent measurement is needed – what energy do households use? Government MUST collect data to get ahead of technology use to improve sustainability.

Use the data for policy change and start NOW>

The Hon. Paul Fletcher, MP Minister for Urban infrastructure and Cities – Address on Suburbia and Urban renewal.

The Federal government has a focus on cities and suburbs.

64% of people live in our five main cities – highest percentage in the world.

South East Queensland – 15% of the jobs are in the inner city and 52% in the suburbs or at home. This second sector is growing so renewal is important and job locations very important.

Transport Infrastructure is shaping our cities and is a policy lever. Need better integration of urban development and transport planning.

Inefficient land use impacts on transport and city efficiency.

Therefore, City Deals is a key policy agenda - working with state and local governments to improve suburbia.

Employment in Suburbia Panel – key take aways.

Chris Mountford moderated Kerriane Meulman, David Borger, John Knaggs, Andrew Newman and Peter Robbie.

Suburbs re vital to our economy. Accessibility and land use vital to the economic health of the suburbs.

Work precincts in suburbs – become part of the suburb and create liveability and eradicate the commute.

23% of job opportunities are in the labour sector and 75% will be millennials. They want collaboration and entrepreneurial opportunities. This will affect where they will work.

Then businesses want affordability – flexibility with premises so the opportunity is to move out of the inner city (Logan is seeing this trend).

Gen Y/ Millennials have different work practices to previous generations – so businesses will have to locate based on workforce needs.

You need critical mass and amenities before technology parks and similar work. Master planning is important too.

Planning for Suburbia Panel – key take aways.

Mark Doonar moderated Jennifer Cunich, Peter Cumming, Kerry Doss, Stewart Pentland, Peter Richards and Alan Berger.

To “save” the best of suburbia we need to save lifestyle and amenity.

Travel patterns – liveability, affordability and the proximity to family and aging in place.

Technology will have a huge impact on how we develop suburbs.

Suburbs formed as a town – successful (e.g. Shorncliffe)

Suburbs not formed as a town – unsuccessful (e.g. Mt Ommaney)

Therefore community, transport, mixed use amenities – all needed, or the suburb starts to struggle.

Co-location of residences and jobs does work.

Keeping up with infrastructure has failed in some centre of South East Queensland.

The planning challenge – not everyone wants to live in the same location or typography and they get to CHOOSE.

Planning needs for the future:

- it's been very prescriptive and now needs flexibility
- It does need rules though
- Master Plans needed.

- planning needs to be government led then developers deliver
- supplying infrastructure to areas in the growth boundary is a huge challenge with limited money.
- managing green boundaries versus amenities too.

In Summary:

The conference could have been called the Future **IS** Suburbia.

- It challenged our wisdom as practitioners
- Are we looking at things the right way?
- Technology will change how we live and work in the suburbs
- Comes down to: People will make their own choices for themselves and their families - and they are choosing the suburbs.
- if we plan against what they want we are doomed to fail....
- **the day changed the way we look at planning going forward.**