

An Introduction to Proximity Planning

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“In Walking Cities, destinations can be reached on foot in half an hour on average, and thus rarely are these cities more than five kilometres across (an average trip being 2.5 kilometres).”

- Peter Newman and Jeff Kenworthy, *Sustainability and Cities: Overcoming Automobile Dependence*, 1999

“The shortest distance between two points is moving those points closer together. Every trip from then on is shorter. That’s an efficiency multiplied thousands of times.”

- Richard Register, *Ecocities: Rebuilding Cities in Balance with Nature*, 2006



What is proximity planning?

My working three-part definition (feedback welcome):

proximity planning

noun /prɒk'sɪmɪti/ /'plænɪŋ/

1. A coordinated effort to reduce distances by offering a greater range of amenities within a short distance of a given location or locations, typically residents' homes.
2. An umbrella term for the various initiatives around the world pursuing the objective of (1).
3. A (proposed) field or profession dedicated to (1), usually working in partnership with residents and other actors.



Summary of proximity planning

(per definition 1, from Smarter Travel LIVE! 2017 Abstract)

If accessibility for all and high quality of life are the goals, '**proximity planning**' is far more important than transport or travel planning. We must actually **concentrate destinations and minimise the space devoted to transport**. We must learn from the many fascinating examples of medieval pedestrian cities, which through their urban form encourage a sense of place and a sense of community. We must **understand the physical qualities and principles** that underpin such settlements - and **apply the lessons** in our own communities. More amenities need to be located at neighbourhood level to avoid unnecessary transport. Let's list the amenities that we feel should be within a ten-minute walk of everyone's home – beyond just a primary school and a park – and see how that vision can be achieved. Rather than using vehicle speed to overcome distances, proximity planning would seek to **reduce the physical space between people and their daily destinations**. There will still be the need for transport of course, but why force people to travel far away when in many cases their daily wants and needs could be met close to home? The transformation of our car-based settlements towards a compact, mixed-use, fine-grained urban structure must begin now. - *R Ghent*



Thoughts on possible next steps

1. Make it clearer that the aim not to confine people within a given area, but to increase quality of life by avoiding unnecessary travel and creating a more lively neighbourhood.
2. Accept that some types of employment are incompatible with remaining within a neighbourhood.
3. Seek more solutions that lie outside of urban design and land-use planning.
4. Remember that it's possible to have 'proximity without access' (with both negative and positive examples).
5. Develop and adopt solutions for villages and rural areas.



Presentation (slides 5-26) unchanged from Towards Carfree Cities VIII, June 2008, Portland: 'Rethinking Mobility, Rediscovering Proximity' (conference theme/title also by R Ghent)

Less Mobility, More Proximity

A plea for change in
urban planning priorities

Randall Ghent
World Carfree Network



Step out of your transportation mindset



For 45 minutes
please try to:

- Forget about bikes.
- Forget about cars.
- Forget about mass transit.



Definitions

- **Mobility** is “the quality or state of moving or being moved from place to place.”

Mobility levels can be measured by the distance, speed and frequency of travel. The more mobile we are, the higher the speed we are travelling, the greater the distances travelled, and the less time we spend in any one place.

- **Proximity**, in contrast to mobility, is “the state, quality, sense, or fact of being near or next; closeness.”

It is concerned only with distance, giving preference to the near. It is a minimisation of distance, and therefore an elimination of unnecessary travel.



The current state of affairs



Three problems:

- Distances are too great, and cannot easily be overcome without motorized assistance.
- Our neighborhoods have lost the amenities needed to sustain them, and have become built for and around the automobile.
- We have become a hypermobile society, spending an increasing portion of our time budget on travel, largely unwanted travel.



How spread out are your daily destinations?



Shop Here

Socialize Here

Be Entertained Here

Work Here

Eat Here

Sleep Here



Consider three possibilities

- 1) The more mobile we are, the less chance we have to enjoy the places where we are...
and the less likely we are to enjoy a sense of place or a sense of community.
- 2) The more urban design encourages mobility, the less possible it is to fulfill our daily wants and needs locally.
- 3) The more that places embrace mobility, the less worthy they are of spending time in.



Or phrased positively...

- 1) The less mobile we are, the more chance we have to enjoy the places where we are...
and the more likely we are to enjoy a sense of place or a sense of community
- 2) The more urban design encourages proximity, the more possible it is to fulfill our daily wants and needs locally.
- 3) The more that places embrace proximity, the more worthy they are of spending time in.



The aims of proximity planning



Three questions:

- How can we **minimize distances**, rather than just overcoming the distances that already exist?
- How can we **concentrate our daily destinations** at the neighborhood level, within a five-minute walk?
- What **population density** is necessary to enable us to achieve this?



Santa Rosa vs. Fes el Bali

Santa Rosa, California

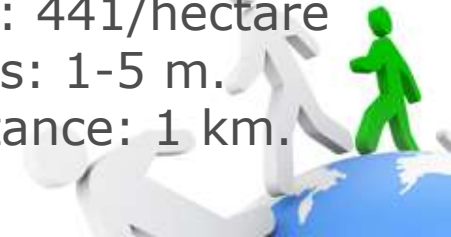


- Population: 156,000
- Area: 104 km² (10,400 hec.)
- Pop. density: 15/hectare
- Street widths: 10-25 m.
- Average distance: 8 km.

Fes el Bali, Morocco



- Population: 156,000
- Area: 3.5 km² (354 hec.)
- Pop. density: 441/hectare
- Street widths: 1-5 m.
- Average distance: 1 km.



Key Characteristics of Settlements

Prioritising Proximity vs. Mobility

<u>Proximity</u>	<u>Mobility</u>
Space efficient	Space inefficient
Compact, high density	Sprawled out
Lively	Lack of liveliness
Relatively quiet	Noisy from vehicle traffic
Low speeds and energy use in transportation	High speeds and energy use in transportation
Active travel	Motorized travel
Space filled with activity	Lots of wasted, dead space
Short distances	Long distances
Human scaled	Oversized; alienating
Narrow, curving streets with passages and alleys	Wide streets, both straight and curving
Streets for interaction as well as movement	Streets almost entirely devoted to movement



Examples of Urban Planning Measures

Prioritising Proximity vs. Mobility

<u>Proximity</u>	<u>Mobility</u>
Pedestrianization	Restricting pedestrian access
Road dieting, depaving	Road widening, road building
Neighbourhood revitalization	No focus on neighbourhood
Urban growth boundary	Facilitation of sprawl
Incentives and support for carfree development	Planning approval of car-based development
Mixed-use zoning	Zoning districts by function
Traffic calming/home zones	Facilitating high-speed traffic
Holding community events	Hosting intl. conferences
Encouraging street vendors	Banning street vendors
Incentives to live near work and to shop locally	Incentives to travel longer distances and by car
Locating new facilities in former car space	Locating new facilities at urban periphery



Proximity visioning



If you had to spend the rest of your life on the street where you live...

- What would you want your street to look like?
- What amenities would you like your street to have?
- How could the street facilitate community interaction?
- How could the street encourage people to linger rather than simply pass through?



Applied proximity

- **What destinations do we want within a five-minute walk of all urban residents?**
 - o Public transportation stop/station
 - o Elementary school
 - o Grocery store(s)
 - o Range of small shops
 - o Cafes and restaurants (at least five)
 - o Park with playground and recreation facilities
 - o Neighborhood center/gathering point
 - o Community gardens
 - o Bank/credit union with ATM
 - o Post office



Applied proximity

- **What destinations do we want within a ten-minute walk of all urban residents?**
 - o Enough places of employment for the neighborhood's working population
 - o Farmers' market
 - o High school and middle school
 - o Public library
 - o Social center
 - o Movie theater and/or concert venue
 - o Doctors' and dentists' offices
 - o Public swimming pool
 - o At least 30 shops and stores
 - o At least 10 cafes and restaurants

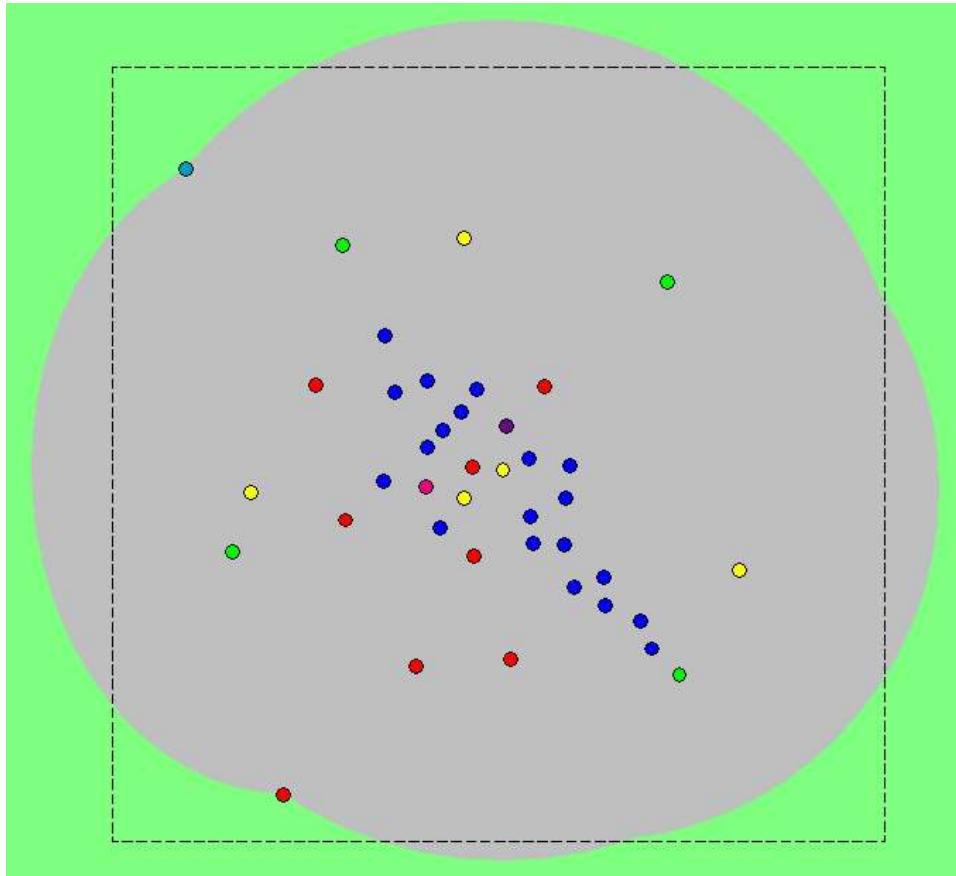


Applied proximity

- **What destinations do we want within a 30-minute walk of all urban residents?**
 - o City or town center
 - o Train station
 - o Public open space
 - o Community college or university
 - o Cultural centers, galleries, museums
 - o Hospital
 - o Large daily market of local products
 - o Bike station
 - o At least 150 shops and stores
 - o At least 50 cafes and restaurants



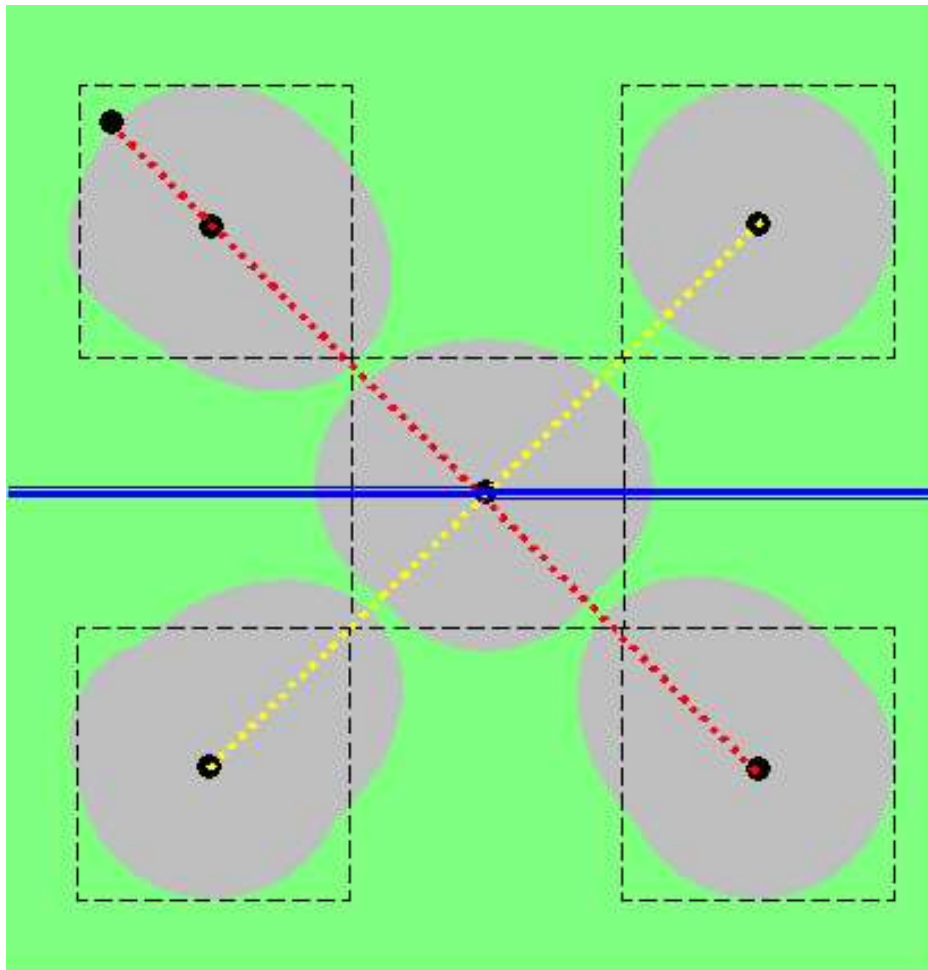
Neighborhood proximity



- Neighborhood of 1 km² with population of approx. 3,000.
- All destinations in neighborhood within 10-minute walk, with the center not more than a 5-minute walk.
- The dots represent types of destinations, each color being a different type.



District-level proximity



- Five neighborhoods, each with population of approx. 3,000 and an area of 1 km²
- Together they form a district, fitting within a 9 km² square.
- Transport along two corridors of 3 km each.
- Central neighborhood more lively, busy and entertainment-oriented.



Cities by population density

Mumbai	29,650
Lyon District 1	17,800
Bogota	13,500
Prague District 2	12,200
Barcelona	4,850
Manchester/Leeds	4,000
Paris	3,550
Vienna	3,400
Rome	3,000
Los Angeles	2,750





Proximity-Mobility Table: Travel

Speed (M)

10 <small>>270 kph</small>	PM 11	PM 12	PM 13	PM 14	PM 15	PM 16	PM 17	PM 18	PM 19	PM 20
9 <small>191-270 kph</small>	PM 10	PM 11	PM 12	PM 13	PM 14	PM 15	PM 16	PM 17	PM 18	PM 19
8 <small>136-190 kph</small>	PM9	PM 10	PM 11	PM 12	PM 13	PM 14	PM 15	PM 16	PM 17	PM 18
7 <small>106-135 kph</small>	PM8	PM9	PM 10	PM 11	PM 12	PM 13	PM 14	PM 15	PM 16	PM 17
6 <small>76-105 kph</small>	PM7	PM8	PM9	PM 10	PM 11	PM 12	PM 13	PM 14	PM 15	PM 16
5 <small>51-75 kph</small>	PM6	PM7	PM8	PM9	PM 10	PM 11	PM 12	PM 13	PM 14	PM 15
4 <small>31-50 kph</small>	PM5	PM6	PM7	PM8	PM9	PM 10	PM 11	PM 12	PM 13	PM 14
3 <small>16-30 kph</small>	PM4	PM5	PM6	PM7	PM8	PM9	PM 10	PM 11	PM 12	PM 13
2 <small>6-15 kph</small>	PM3	PM4	PM5	PM6	PM7	PM8	PM9	PM 10	PM 11	PM 12
1 <small>1-5 kph</small>	PM1/ PM2	PM3	PM4	PM5	PM6	PM7	PM8	PM9	PM 10	PM 11
PM0	1 <small><500 m</small>	2 <small>0.5-2.5 km</small>	3 <small>2.6-10 km</small>	4 <small>11-50 km</small>	5 <small>51-250 km</small>	6 <small>251-500 km</small>	7 <small>501-1,000 km</small>	8 <small>1,001-2,000 km</small>	9 <small>2,001-5,000 km</small>	10 <small>>5,000 km</small>

Distance (P)



Proximity-Mobility Table: Urban Form											
Speeds accommodated/achieved (M)	10 <small>1-90 kph</small>	PM 11	PM 12	PM 13	PM 14	PM 15	PM 16	PM 17	PM 18	PM 19	PM 20
	9 <small>1-80 kph</small>	PM 10	PM 11	PM 12	PM 13	PM 14	PM 15	PM 16	PM 17	PM 18	PM 19
	8 <small>1-70 kph</small>	PM9	PM 10	PM 11	PM 12	PM 13	PM 14	PM 15	PM 16	PM 17	PM 18
	7 <small>1-60 kph</small>	PM8	PM9	PM 10	PM 11	PM 12	PM 13	PM 14	PM 15	PM 16	PM 17
	6 <small>1-50 kph</small>	PM7	PM8	PM9	PM 10	PM 11	PM 12	PM 13	PM 14	PM 15	PM 16
	5 <small>1-40 kph</small>	PM6	PM7	PM8	PM9	PM 10	PM 11	PM 12	PM 13	PM 14	PM 15
	4 <small>1-30 kph</small>	PM5	PM6	PM7	PM8	PM9	PM 10	PM 11	PM 12	PM 13	PM 14
	3 <small>1-20 kph</small>	PM4	PM5	PM6	PM7	PM8	PM9	PM 10	PM 11	PM 12	PM 13
	2 <small>1-10 kph</small>	PM3	PM4	PM5	PM6	PM7	PM8	PM9	PM 10	PM 11	PM 12
	1 <small>1-5 kph</small>	PM1/ PM2	PM3	PM4	PM5	PM6	PM7	PM8	PM9	PM 10	PM 11
	PM0	1 <small>91-100+/ hectare</small>	2 <small>81-90/ hectare</small>	3 <small>71-80/ hectare</small>	4 <small>61-70/ hectare</small>	5 <small>51-60/ hectare</small>	6 <small>41-50/ hectare</small>	7 <small>31-40/ hectare</small>	8 <small>21-30/ hectare</small>	9 <small>11-20/ hectare</small>	10 <small>0-10/ hectare</small>
Density of non-residential destinations (P)											

Conclusions

- It's not enough to promote softer, slower, less polluting transportation modes.
- We can reduce traffic and increase liveability by implementing measures based on proximity planning.
- This will result in shorter distances, more free time, less stress, a greater sense of community and sense of place, less pollution, livelier streets and friendlier neighborhoods.
- Many proximity projects can be implemented by small groups of individuals or organizations, rather than waiting for the planners to solve things for us.



