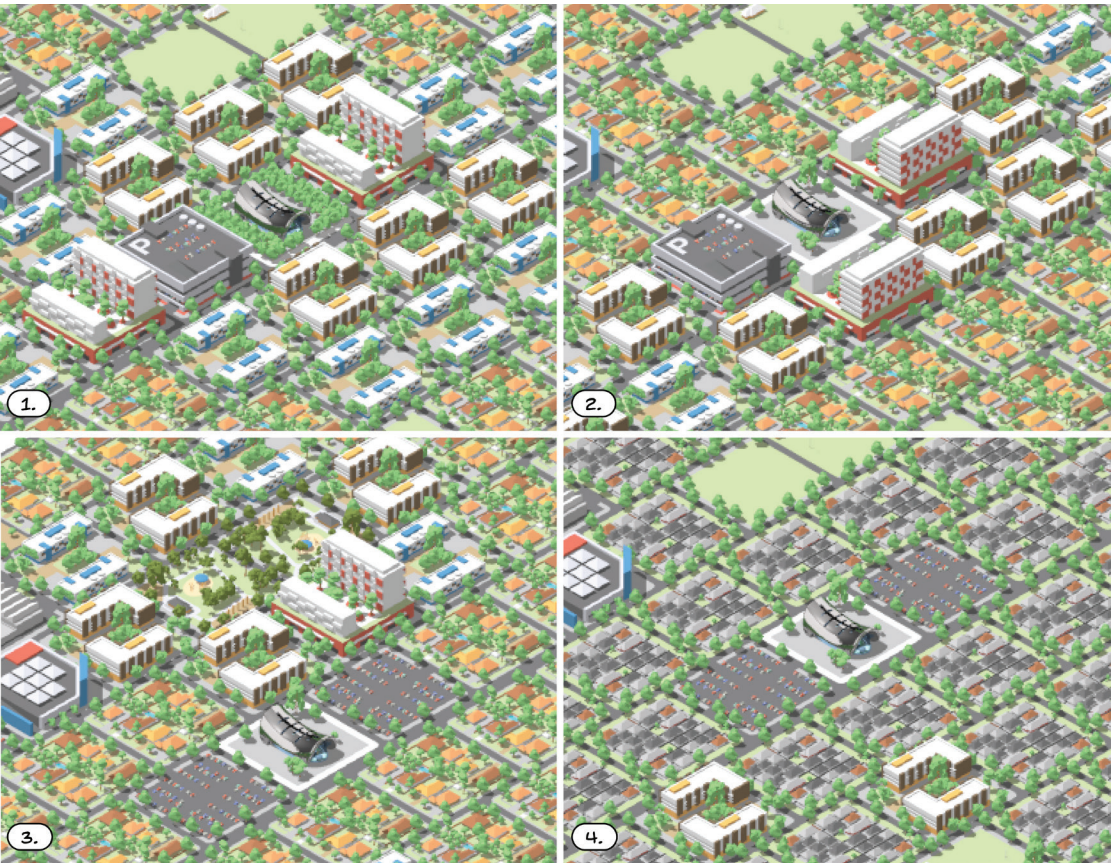


AUDRC Research Note

The 'Density My Way' survey



What models of urban densification do suburban communities support?

Background

- Australian cities are sprawling rapidly and are an extreme case of a global tendency for urban sprawl. If detached housing in greenfield development remains the predominant means of housing surging populations, Australian cities will balloon into what commentators characterise as an unhealthy, stratified, and inefficient form.
- Resistance to urban infill in suburban neighbourhoods is often endemic, hampering the delivery of infill agendas. Policymakers need an accurate and up-to-date understanding of urban densification models with broad community support.

• To address this need, we conducted a survey systematically evaluating the level of community support of densification strategies around a central train station in a suburban setting – based on theories in planning such as Transit-Oriented Development (1), corridor development (2), Greenspace-Oriented Development (3) and background infill (4) approaches. The survey received 800 responses, mainly from Perth.

• This project's original contribution stems from using a hypothetical site that obviates localised issues and interests and allows for a comparatively neutral assessment of different densification approaches.

Key findings

- Resistance to urban densification arises from an often-noisy minority while a majority are quietly supportive.
- Despite general support for urban densification, it is evident that this

support is contingent on its morphology.

- Communities generally support precinct-scale approaches to densification (for example, Transit-Oriented Development).
- Communities are generally hostile to dispersed ad hoc background infill.
- There are significant differences in support for densification models based on gender, with females more supportive of Greenspace-Oriented Development than conventional Transit-Oriented Development.
- Policies enabling ad hoc background infill should be tightened to build impetus behind precinct-led urban densification.
- Policies for Transit Oriented Development have general community support, a rare alignment of community sentiment and urban planning orthodoxy that partly contradict previous research.

Links to related publications

• Bolleter, J., Edwards, N., Cameron, R., & Hooper, P. (2024). Density my way: Community attitudes to neighbourhood densification scenarios. *Cities*, 145, 104596. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2023.104596>

Contact

For further information, publications, media, and presentation opportunities, please get in touch with Dr Julian Bolleter at julian.bolleter@uwa.edu.au.