

**PLACE
PARTNERS**

Place Making Consultancy



WENTWORTHVILLE CENTRE REVITALISATION PROJECT 2014 PLACE AUDIT

FINAL

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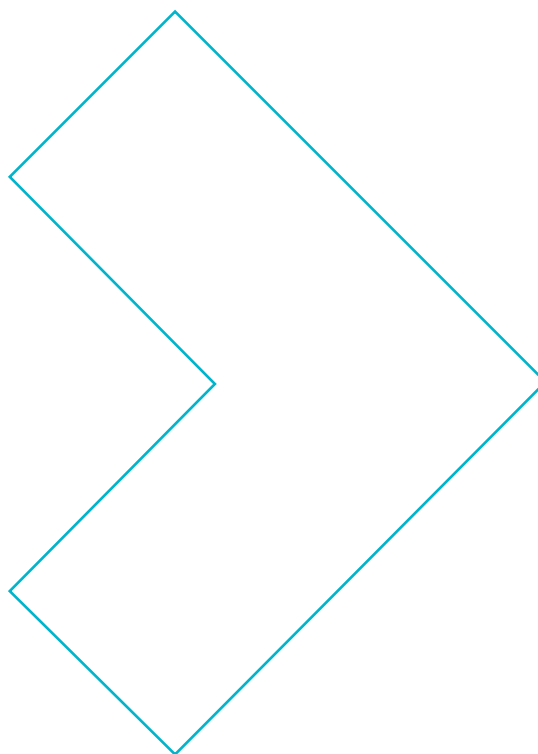
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01 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Place Audit assesses the ‘attractiveness’ of the Wentworthville Centre in terms of being a place that people want to visit and spend time in. It is the combined result of two place assessment tools: an Experience Audit and onsite Observation Studies. It measures key place attributes, and aims to provide a baseline for directing and assessing the benefits, enhancements and activation of the Centre over time.

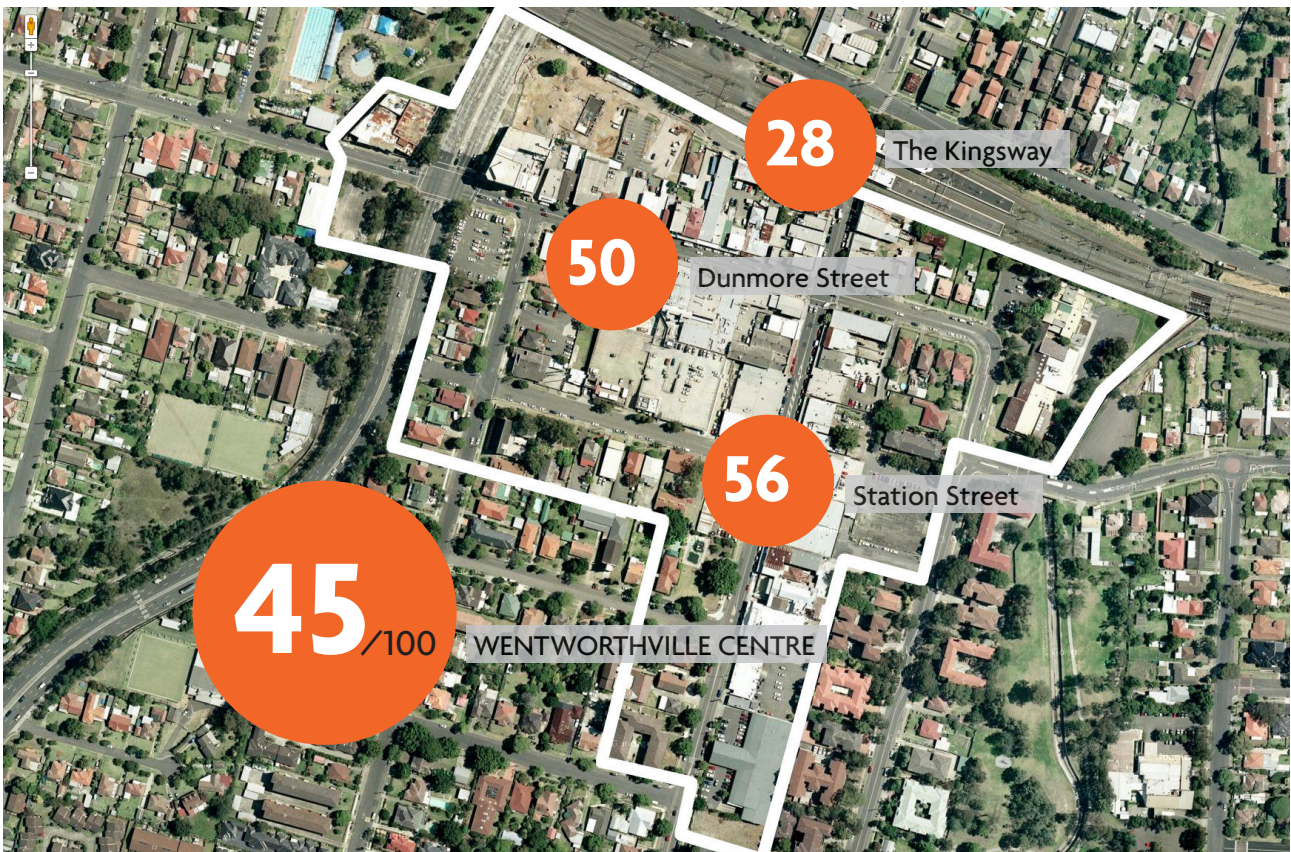
Wentworthville is a suburb of Western Sydney, located 27km west of the Sydney CBD and 3km west of Parramatta CBD. The suburb is split between two local government areas – the City of Holroyd (south side of the railway line) and the City of Parramatta (north side of the railway line). This Place Audit is focused on the Wentworthville Centre (from hereon, ‘the Centre’) south of the Wentworthville Railway Station, in particular across Station Street (between McKern Street and The Kingsway), Dunmore Street (between the Cumberland Highway and corner of Station Street) and the Kingsway (from the carpark to its termination at Station Street).

STRENGTHS OF WENTWORTHVILLE CENTRE

- › The Centre is conveniently located by the Wentworthville train station and offers a combination of shopping, heritage buildings, a library, community and function centres and a park
- › Buildings and infrastructure are in a good functional condition, with some beautiful trees
- › Shopping is affordable, ranging from chain supermarkets, local butchers and bakeries to discount stores and women’s fashion

WEAKNESSES OF WENTWORTHVILLE CENTRE

- › The lack of staying places including a gathering space, comfortable seats and green space, make people rush through rather than spend time in the public realm
- › ‘Defensive elements’ such as metal fencing and barbed wire, and neglected buildings and amenities contribute to the feeling of the place being unsafe
- › The lack of visibility to the inside of stores make people feel uninvited to use them and disconnected from different cultures



Map of Wentworthville Centre and Experience Audit scores for each street and the Centre as a whole

02 METHODOLOGY

The findings in this Place Audit are the result of a range of different assessments conducted on 11 June 2014 including:

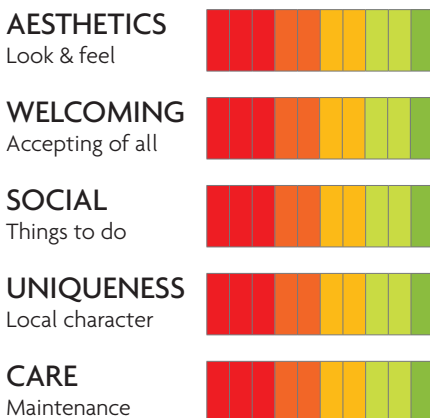
- > Experience Audit (5 assessors ranging in age and background)
- > Behaviour mapping
- > Economic review
- > Physical environment review

EXPERIENCE AUDIT

The Experience Audit was conducted by three Place Partners place makers and two Council officers. Each assessor was asked to rate the different characteristics of the three main streets in Wentworthville Centre: Station Street, Dunmore Street and The Kingsway. The Council officers each rated two streets including Station Street.

The Place Score for Wentworthville Centre is the result of combining the Place Scores for each individual street. The individual street Place Scores are also provided within this report.

A Place Score is determined by the assessment of five characteristics that measure the user experience. Each place characteristic can receive a rating between 0-10 and the overall Place Score is out of 100. The ratings for each characteristic are provided as bar charts as shown below.



AESTHETICS

The multisensory response to the overall 'look and feel' of the place.

SENSE OF WELCOME

How physically, financially or psychologically accessible the place is to a range of people i.e 'Is there something that says I am welcome here?'

SOCIAL OFFERINGS

Is there a diverse range of opportunities for socialisation, spending time, gathering, celebration etc. Are there things to do?

UNIQUENESS

How special is the place as a whole and in its individual parts? What does it have that no one else does or that can not be replicated?

CARE

How well is the place managed, maintained and looked after? Does it feel like the community is involved?

Each characteristic is rated on site by a mixture of professional place makers and local assessors. The scores are then combined, averaged and weighted against similar places that have been rated previously. The result is a combined Place Score out of 100.

Comparison Places

Cities are made up of diverse types of places, each catering to different audiences and fulfilling a different role in the city. Before finalising the Place Score the audited location is compared to similar places and the final score weighted to reflect its position in the city hierarchy, audience and role.

The four categories of places are:

A: International destinations e.g. Opera House Forecourt, Federation Square, Bondi Beach etc

B: National or regional destination e.g. South Bank Brisbane, Martin Place Sydney

C: City or state attraction e.g. Crown Street Sydney, Oxford Street Sydney

D: Local neighbourhood centre e.g. Granville, Merrylands

Wentworthville is categorised as being part of Group D.

OBSERVATION STUDIES

In addition to the Experience Audit three quantitative site analysis tools were used to produce this Place Audit. The observation studies focused on streets with most economic/people activity and most potential to develop as the core of the Centre: The Kingsway, Dunmore Street and Station Street.

BEHAVIOUR MAPPING

Behaviour mapping involves studying who is using the place and what they are doing while there.

Data regarding pedestrians and their activities was captured at three locations at three different times of the day. The purpose of the Behaviour Mapping is to provide quantitative data on the number and mix of people using the Centre and what they are doing there at different times of the day. People were observed and their behaviours categorised as either moving (walking through), staying (sitting down) or interacting (outdoor dining, shopping, playing in groups).

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT REVIEW

This review involves assessing all the physical elements of a place to identify how they may affect the people using the place.

ECONOMIC REVIEW

This review considers place function, mix of businesses, anchors, unique traders and vacancies.



Experience Audit and Behaviour Mapping data collection points: each site was visited 3 times, in the morning, at lunch and in the afternoon. Data was collected on the number of people, group size and primary activities being undertaken

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03 WENTWORTHVILLE CENTRE PLACE AUDIT

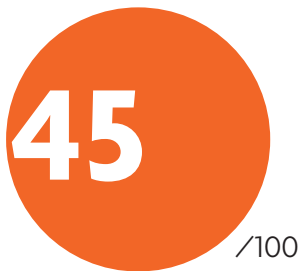


Wentworthville Train Station

PLACE SUMMARY

The Centre primarily comprises of two storey, contiguous shop buildings, built between the 1920s and the 1970s. The primary activity is shopping, with the Centre anchored by Wentworthville Station, Wentworthville Mall (which includes a Supa IGA), the Big Apple fruit & vegetable shop and the Udaya Supermart (an Indian supermarket). Smaller retailers including restaurants, cafes, hairdressers, clothing stores and discount stores dot the streets. Demographically, the suburb is a home to a high percentage of Indian, Sri Lankan and Chinese-born residents (17%, 7%, 5% respectively) that is reflected by the high proportion of Asian businesses.

PLACE SCORE



LOTS TO IMPROVE!

WENTWORTHVILLE CENTRE HAS ALL THE 'BITS' TO MAKE A THRIVING NEIGHBOURHOOD. AGEING INFRASTRUCTURE AND LONG TERM LACK OF CAPITAL INVESTMENT HAS LEFT IT LOOKING TIRED AND UNLOVED. THE OPPORTUNITY IS BRINGING THE INSIDE OUT, THE CULTURE AND COMMUNITY, AND BRING LIFE BACK TO THE STREETS.

EXPERIENCE AUDIT

AESTHETICS

Look & feel



- › Many parts of the Centre enjoy good sunlight, wide footpaths and a sense that this is a local place with friendly people with a number of small, local shops and restaurants
- › The Centre lacks investment in quality streetscapes including landscaping, shop fronts, and visual merchandising, it feels old and unloved

WELCOMING

Accepting of all



- › The Centre reflects the diverse demographic profile of the suburb in its retail mix, particularly in regards to a cultural cluster of South Asian businesses
- › Some parts of the Centre are dimly lit, defensive and in a poor physical condition, making people feel unsafe, there is a physical split between cultural retail clusters

SOCIAL

Things to do



- › Daily shopping needs are met in the main streets and public facilities such as the library and Friend Park are available
- › A lack of places to sit or comfortably spend free time limits the social offerings in the Centre, deterring non-shoppers from visiting

UNIQUENESS

Local character



- › The concentration of Tamil speakers (the highest in Australia) is represented in the high number of South Asian traders. A number of heritage elements including the Railway Station, Memorial Fountain and Post Office, as well as the Wentworthville Hotel and the large fig tree in Friend Park, are irreplaceable
- › Many centres in Western Sydney offer similar affordable retail options

CARE

Maintenance



- › The Centre is relatively clean and orderly with a number of heritage items retained
- › Buildings feel uncared for due to a lack of investment in maintenance and inviting shop fronts

03.1 Social and Cultural Review

WHO IS USING THE PLACE?

The Centre is used by a high proportion of elderly people, with 37% of people counted in behaviour mapping appearing to be 50+. Elderly people are most frequent in the morning outside the Mall (46% being 50+), as are males (70%). A more even gender split is present throughout the rest of the day, as younger working age people or mothers with children visit the Centre. However, the Centre offers little for youth aged 10-19, which is reflected in the data with only 8% of all users appearing to fall into this age group. A segregation of cultures can also be seen across the Centre. Station Street is frequented by a higher percentage of people of South Asian descent, whilst Dunmore Street is frequented by a higher percentage of people of European descent.



Elderly people on Dunmore St

WHAT ARE THEY DOING?

Shopping is the primary activity in the Centre. Behaviour mapping data indicates that 61% of people come to the Centre by themselves, 25% in a couple and 14% in groups. Higher numbers of people visiting by themselves generally indicate that people do not feel comfortable coming to socialise or spend time, usually due a poor public realm. The only instances where people seem to be spending time on the street is to smoke cigarettes outside the Mall, or use the facilities in Friend Park. Western Sydney Up Markets operate in the carpark on the corner of Dunmore Street and the Cumberland Highway on the third Sunday of every month from 9am to 4pm. The Centre is also activated in the evening by a small number of retailers including Udaya Supermarket (open until 10pm daily), IGA (open until 7pm most nights) and some restaurants.



Playground at Friend Park

PLACE STATISTICS (WENTWORTHVILLE SUBURB)

- > Population 10,588
- > Median age 34
- > Highest growth groups 25-29 & 50-54
- > % over 65 11.5%
- > % under 18 25.5%

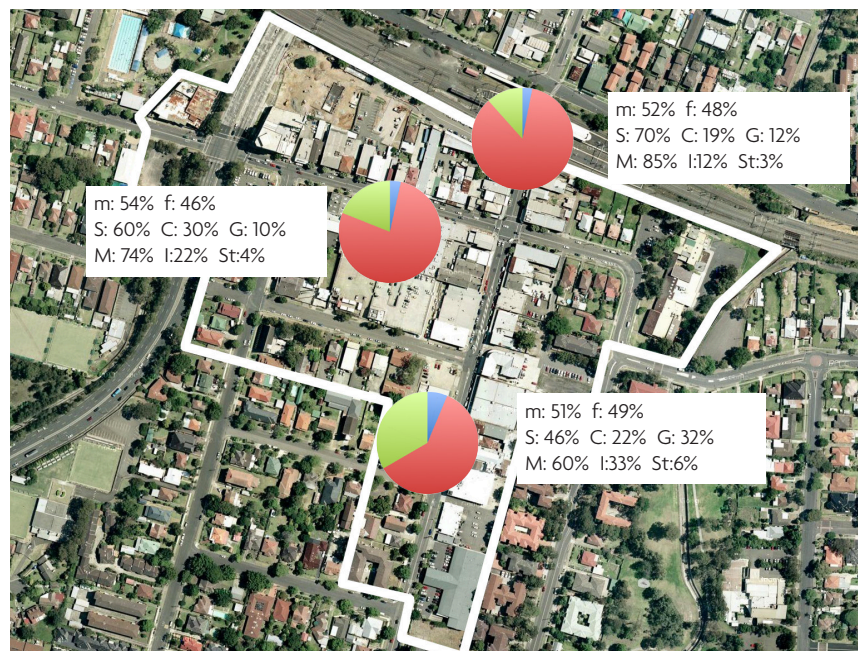
PLACE ACTIVATION (OVERALL)

- > 52% walking alone
- > 76% moving
- > 20% interacting
- > 4% staying
- > Special events: Western Sydney Up Markets

The diagram illustrates the findings of the Behaviour Mapping in terms of what people are doing on each street. A great people place has more people in couples or groups interacting and staying than just moving through.

KEY

- m Male
- f Female
- S Singles
- C Couples
- G Groups
- M-Moving
If people are 'passing through' the area and do not shop or stay in place
- I-Interacting
If people are window shopping, carrying shopping bags or interacting with people and the environment
- St-Staying
If people are sitting, playing, dining or relaxing in the public realm



03.2 Physical Environment Review

WHAT IS THE OVERALL QUALITY OF THE PUBLIC REALM?

The majority of buildings are two storeys, with some dating back to the 1920s. Many are in need of painting or repairs to the rusting metal work.

The streets are in a good functional condition with even pavements and street corner ramps, crossings and traffic lights. Within the Centre, Friend Park and the area outside the Mall are the best examples of well functioning public realm. Lack of care is visible throughout the Centre, particularly in terms of graffiti tags around The Kingsway. Many storefronts are dilapidated and in need of improvements with tiles falling off walls, old/broken signage, and areas in need of painting. Many vacant shops are left empty, dark and some unclean. The Kingsway also has poor physical and visual access to Dunmore Street, particularly due to the poorly maintained Wenty Arcade.

The lack of landscaping features and trees make the place seem more grey and barren than it is, despite the distant view to the evergreen trees beyond. There is a significant lack of places to sit, particularly on Station Street. This limits the ability of users to stay in the Centre for a longer period of time.

There is very good access to public transport, however, the station does not currently offer disabled access to the train station platforms. The whole Centre is relatively flat (with the exception of a slight inclination on Dunmore Street), which is important due to the high number of elderly people who use the Centre. There is often a disparity of walking experience across different sides of the streets. For example on Station Street, the eastern side is more pleasant due to diverse, food-oriented shops while the western side has a number of vacancies and a large space occupied by a service station.



Street trees on Dunmore Street



Typical paving and furniture quality

STRENGTHS

- > Train station, needle pines and heritage items
- > Wentworthville Hotel
- > Friend Park and mature fig tree
- > North facing streets/sunny streetscape
- > Relative low traffic/wide footpaths
- > Contiguous shopfronts, heritage buildings, awnings and sense of enclosure

WEAKNESSES

- > Lack of staying places
- > Lack of mid block pedestrian crossings, blocked desire lines
- > Gaps in built form on Station Street: service station, empty lot, vacant shops
- > Old infrastructure: buildings, paving, furniture

The only dedicated open space on Dunmore Street is at the front of the Mall and of poor quality - but nice climatic conditions



Positive (green) and negative (orange) physical elements

03.3 Economic Review

HOW IS THE LOCAL ECONOMY?

The Centre provides for everyday shopping needs of the local population, with catchment areas including Wentworthville, Westmead and parts of Pendle Hill, Toongabbie and Northmead. Wentworthville Plaza located just 800m to the south of the Centre is the primary competitor due to its similar target market. Parramatta (particularly Parramatta Westfield) offers products not available in Wentworthville, including fashion and homewares. There are a high number of restaurants and businesses that offer fast food, but few cafes. Other services include tax accountants, health services, lawyers, real estate agents, massage services and banks. Local businesses form the majority of retailers in the Centre, with only a few national franchises, such as Subway and Dominos.

Shopping areas appear to be most used around midday. As the train station is a major destination for commuters, there are a high number of pedestrians in the centre prior to 9am and after 4pm. Some restaurants and bars including the Wentworthville Hotel and Sawadee Krub Thai are open till late for dinner and drinks.



Restaurant cluster along Station Street



The Big Apple

BUSINESS MIX

- > 122 street front businesses including Wenty Arcade
- > 17 vacancies (14%)
- > Main role for the everyday shopping needs of local residents
- > Anchors include the Wentworthville Mall, Udaya Supermart and the Big Apple fruit and vegetable shop
- > Major destinations include the Wentworthville Train Station, Wentworthville Hotel, the Library, Community Centre and Redgum Centre
- > Unique traders i.e. spice sellers and unique Indian foods

STRENGTHS

- > Established anchors, new health attractors
- > Mix of cultural restaurants and food operators
- > Low number of franchises - local businesses appear to be performing on par with larger national chains

WEAKNESSES

- > Lack of night time economy and weekend trading
- > Lack of quality shops
- > Empty lots and empty new developments

Western Sydney Up Markets are held on third Sunday of every month.



Retail anchors (green) and indicative locations for vacant or inactive areas (orange)

03.4 Station Street Experience Audit



Wentworthville Train Station

Station Street is the main north-south thoroughfare through the Wentworthville Centre. Along this street, there are a high number of businesses that cater for the South Asian population of the area, anchored by the Udaya Supermart. The Wentworthville Hotel is a major architectural feature, standing out amongst the single storey shop fronts. Friend Park and a small health precinct occupy the southern section of the street. The fig tree in Friend Park and the needle pines at the train station have strong visual presence.

PLACE SCORE



LOADS OF POTENTIAL!

STATION STREET HAS ALL THE RIGHT INGREDIENTS TO BE A GREAT STREET FOR PEOPLE; PUBLIC TRANSPORT, GOOD URBAN DESIGN, INTERESTING HERITAGE BUILDINGS, GREEN SPACE AND FOOD - IT JUST NEEDS SOME LOVE AND TO MAKE ITS OFFER MORE VISIBLE.

EXPERIENCE AUDIT

AESTHETICS

Look & feel



- > Large trees at either end create visual bookends with quality destinations in the Wentworthville Hotel, South Asian shop fronts and Friend Park
- > A long term lack of investment in the building stock combined with vacant, dilapidated shops limits this street's visual appeal

WELCOMING

Accepting of all



- > The street appeals to people of a range of backgrounds due its low price point and visible cultural diversity
- > A lack of outdoor dining, shop displays and pedestrian crossings makes it difficult to engage with the businesses and the walking experience is monotonous

SOCIAL

Things to do



- > Friend Park and the outdoor area at the Wentworthville Hotel provide well used spaces for playing, eating, drinking, relaxing and meeting friends
- > The dominance of cars on the street, the large service station, the lack of street trees and furniture make the street edges less pleasant to spend time in

UNIQUENESS

Local character



- > The cluster of Asian businesses offer unique products, while the train station, Wentworthville Hotel and large fig tree at Friend Park are unlikely to be replicated
- > The street's public realm lacks visual expressions of the existing cultures

CARE

Maintenance



- > The street is well kept in general, with limited rubbish on the streets
- > Some parts of the street are less cared for than others, with graffiti and mould

03.5 Dunmore Street Experience Audit



Dunmore Street

Dunmore Street is the traditional main street of the Centre with the most pedestrian activity due to the presence of anchor tenants such as the Big Apple fruit and vegetable shop and Wentworthville Mall, (Supa IGA). The majority of activity is focused on the street between Garfield Street and Station Street, with a high number of businesses spread across a slight incline in topography. The street offers products and services for a wide range of people undertaking their everyday shopping.

PLACE SCORE

50 /100

YOUR PLACE NEEDS HELP!

DUNMORE STREET IS A GREAT PLACE TO DO EVERYDAY SHOPPING AND MEET FRIENDS OVER COFFEE BUT SUFFERS FROM INCONSISTENT QUALITY AND ATTRACTIVENESS OF LANDSCAPING, SHOPS AND PLACES TO SIT.

EXPERIENCE AUDIT

AESTHETICS

Look & feel



- > This street is visually diverse and offers continuous shelter, good solar access, wide footpaths, warm brick buildings and some small areas of street trees
- > The street lacks quality landscaping and has inconsistent quality of buildings

WELCOMING

Accepting of all



- > This street offers a good 'traditional main street' mix of businesses with shop fronts and businesses that appeal to a wide target market
- > Desire line connections across the street are physically blocked by fences and barricades; cars are prioritised over customers

SOCIAL

Things to do



- > Small outdoor area at the Mall entry is well used for sitting in the sun, whilst the car park at the western end of the street is used for monthly markets
- > Many people walk through the space straight to their destination due to the lack of staying places, there is minimal outdoor dining

UNIQUENESS

Local character



- > The heritage-listed post office, the human-scale street and interesting mix of businesses contribute to its point of difference
- > Similarly designed streets with similar offer may be seen throughout Western Sydney

CARE

Maintenance



- > Many of the shop fronts are well presented, and the bins and pavement outside the Mall are well maintained
- > Many shopping trolleys are abandoned throughout the street, the post office façade is not celebrated and some shop windows are covered with newspaper

03.6 The Kingsway Experience Audit



The Kingsway

For the many locals and visitors that arrive in Wentworthville by train, The Kingsway is the first street that they experience. It runs from a carpark in the west to its eastern termination as it bends into Station Street. The southern edge is a mix of hairdressers, masseurs and convenience stores, whilst the northern edge is a disused bus stop appropriated to a taxi stand to service the station users. The two heritage buildings at the corner of Station Street and The Kingsway, in combination with a memorial fountain and a monument celebrating the first train to reach Wentworthville, add to the historical feel of the streetscape.

PLACE SCORE

28 /100

PLACE EMERGENCY!

THE KINGSWAY FEELS UNSAFE, DIRTY AND UNLOVED, TUCKED AWAY AND DISCONNECTED. THE OPPORTUNITIES LIE IN THE HERITAGE ITEMS, STREET TREES, RETAINED OLD BUILDINGS AND CONNECTION TO THE TRAIN STATION.

EXPERIENCE AUDIT

AESTHETICS

Look & feel



- › The good solar access due to the lack of buildings on the northern side makes it feel intimate and contained
- › Whilst being movement oriented, the prevalence of barbed wire, fences, vacant shops and graffiti give the feeling of a defensive place

WELCOMING

Accepting of all



- › The street has good access to public transport, taxis and a public toilet
- › Dimly lit or empty store interiors and unclean public toilets make the street feel unsafe and there is a lack of pedestrians or 'eyes on the street' outside the train arrival times, 'closed' shop fronts are unfriendly and unwelcoming

SOCIAL

Things to do



- › Benches outside the train station operate as a taxi rank, and the site is also used by taxi drivers who socialise between fares, and people waiting for pick-ups
- › There is a lack of non-movement/transport related activities

UNIQUENESS

Local character



- › The street has two heritage items, the railway station and a memorial fountain giving a sense of history and community and the buildings are all of a similar style and era
- › The poor quality retail environment and movement-oriented environment make the entry to the railway station similar to many others, a place to move through and not pay attention to

CARE

Maintenance



- › A sense of community spirit and appreciation for history is felt through the memorial fountain and monument
- › There is little sense of retailer care, maintenance or management of the area with highly visible graffiti, it feels unloved and a little dangerous

04 OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHORT TERM, LOW COST PLACE ENHANCEMENTS

The following place enhancement opportunities are determined by Council as being able to be achieved with relative ease, at lower cost and within shorter timeframes. They are also known as 'small wins' or 'short term actions for long term change'. Their success will rely to a certain extent on a more collaborative approach between Council, local residents, business and landowners in order to deliver the desired change.

There may be an opportunity to start a crowd funding project where the community can vote on priority improvement projects and raise funds to implement them with the Council's support.

LOCATION	PLACE ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITY	RESPONSIBILITY
Wentworthville Centre	Support street front businesses to have a stronger and more positive presence in the street - consider painting sections of the pavement with promotional content, updating window displays, offering outdoor dining, displaying products outside, and using landscape elements to brighten the look and feel of the streets	Business
Wentworthville Centre	Consider providing two pot plants for each business to take and place at their shop entry, businesses would then be responsible	Council/Business
Corner of Station and Dunmore Street	Remove graffiti from walls and replace damaged bins. Provide a visual link between the core of the Centre and the library by involving the youth through creative means - consider providing dedicated space to paint murals, on the brick building and pavement at the Northwest corner of the streets	Council/community
Wentworthville Centre	Establish a committee of local restaurants- organise a 'family night out' on Saturdays with a special meal-deal.	Business
Wentworthville Centre	Start actively promoting local restaurants, bars and cafes via review websites such as Urban Spoon, Tripadvisor and Eatability	Business/community
Station Street: public toilets	Address safety, vandalism and cleanliness issues related to the public toilets	Council
Station Street: market location and the surrounds	Build on the existing Western Sydney Up Market and support local restaurants' participation	Business
The Kingsway	Improve the visual appearance of the fencing and barbed wire on The Kingsway	Council/ Transport NSW
Dunmore Street: the Mall	Improve the Mall premises by painting or replacing the benches, providing planter boxes and new street trees, and de-cluttering the entry area	Landowner

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