

Book title: **Urban Environments for Healthy Ageing – a global perspective**

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Reviewer's Name: Ben Spencer

Affiliation: School of the Built Environment, Oxford Brookes University, UK

Email: bspencer@brookes.ac.uk

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This book stems from the International Ageing Urbanism Colloquium held at the Singapore University of Technology and Design in October 2017. It addresses the crucial issue of how cities can best prepare for both the challenges and opportunities of ageing and increasingly urbanised societies.

It includes contributions from researchers and practitioners from many disciplines working in Asia, Australia, Europe and North America. Following a succinct and well-informed introductory chapter the book is organised into three sections: housing, mobility and transport and finally urban planning and design. These themes are directly linked to Singapore's Action Plan for Successful Ageing with its admirable aim to 'transform Singapore into an age friendly city where Singaporeans can age in place gracefully and confidently'.

The introduction sets the scene well in terms of socio-demographic population changes globally, and in Asia, and introduces the sociological models of healthy ageing which underpin the later chapters of the book.

Section one starts with two Australian studies of the suitability of different types of housing in older age. Julie Byles explores changes in housing across later life in terms of the experiences of older women nationally and people's experience of their homes and neighbourhoods in suburban Sydney. Chapter 2 moves from the 'great Australian dream' of the freestanding suburban home (and other options) to Singapore where 82% of people live in high density public housing. Belinda Yuen sets out the impressive work on improving Singapore's public housing provision for older people and asks what older Singaporeans look for in their homes to age in place. She reports high levels of satisfaction with location, facilities and social connections and emphasises the importance of variety, choice and adaptability and of inclusive design. Next stop is Japan, where Satoshi Kose provides an historical overview of Japan's experience of providing housing for the world's most aged

population. This identifies a shift from more specific solutions, such as specialised housing and nursing institutions, to universal design. He poses important questions about the level of design standards, the challenges of adapting existing housing stock and the use of assistive technologies.

The mobility and transport section starts with a detailed review of the evidence linking attributes of neighbourhood built environment and older people's physical activity. In this stand-out chapter the authors combine several extensive reviews of quantitative and qualitative studies. They conclude with clear implications for policy and practice regarding the built environment but emphasise the need to simultaneously target other determinants of activity friendly neighbourhoods. Importantly, they highlight the predominance of studies from North America and Europe and question the generalisability of the findings to Asia and other parts of the global south. The second chapter zooms in on a large Finnish Life-Space Mobility in Old Age research project and other related Finnish studies on active ageing. Here the conclusion is the importance of 'getting out of the house' for quality of life, but also the wide variety of individual motivations and types of support to do this. This is followed by a chapter on research on ageing and transportation modes including generational shifts, gender differences and lifestyle groups including 'captive car users'. This goes on to usefully summarise knowledge on ageing and traffic safety before concluding with ageing-friendly transportation recommendations. The final chapter in this section is a commendably detailed spatial analysis of older adult's travel behaviour in Singapore. This shows that overall, older people are likely to replace work trips for non-work trips as they retire and to use public transport much more than in many Western cities. Spatial differences in transport modes used by older people across the city and variations in trip destinations also flag up potential policy interventions - and the need for research to understand why these patterns occur.

Section three, urban planning and design starts with an overview of theory and policy relating to active ageing and intergenerational communities. A comprehensive review of the literature on environmental support for ageing in place follows, usefully summarised in a series of best practice tables. Moving on to considerations for implementation it concludes with the need to use long-term, multi-domain, multi-sectoral approaches with local specificity. These generalities are illustrated through both a visualisation of 'macro' neighbourhood features in an idealised age friendly neighbourhood and 'micro' details from a new community in Texas. Finally, a call is made for broadening research from the affect of individual programmes, usually in terms of physical activity, to broader evaluations of large-scale integrated policy efforts. The next chapter switches back to Singapore where Gillian McFeat Lin looks at design strategies for integrating active ageing into neighbourhoods. Examples of micro design challenges and solutions are analysed. She concludes with a call for increased urban greening and collaboration between transdisciplinary stakeholders and communities to go beyond mere codes and standards to create truly inclusive and sustainable high-density neighbourhoods. Detailed examination of high-density Singapore continues in Joshua Comaroff's chapter on graphic design of the city. This is a fascinating exploration of the legibility of Singapore's Housing and Development Board residential blocks, where 80% of the city's population reside, and the challenges of navigating the ground floor level where open spaces underneath the blocks are divided by structural walls. The final chapter highlights the challenges of designing digital services for public transport which are accepted and adopted more swiftly by older people and the importance of multi-stakeholder co-creation in this process.

A concluding chapter would have helped to crystallise the learning from the book in terms of the implications for moving from research to policy and practice in promote ageing in place 'gracefully and confidently'. This could have usefully teased out the differences between Singapore and other contrasting cultures, policy and built environments.

This book will be highly useful to students, practitioners and policy makers with an interest in ageing, urban planning and design, globally and particularly in the context of high-density Asian cities.

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