The Melbourne Journey Towards Improved City Liveability: A Revival of a Dead City
(Case of Melbourne CBD)

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Abstract:

Achieving liveable communities in cities has gained growing interest worldwide over the past twenty years. It is evident in various scientific literature arguing the livability notion from different scientific disciplines, such as social and environmental science. Indeed, the Liveability notion is ambiguous and complex that is perceived differentially according to each scientific discipline's perspective. Moreover, establishing a consensus over a united understanding of the "Liveability Dimensions" term might be unreachable. Despite having appeared repetitively among various academic studies, the intended meaning and content of the "Liveability Dimensions" term is not necessarily held the same. Indeed, several scholars and organizations have defined the Liveability dimensions. However, every one of them has introduced his comprehension of Liveability dimensions based on his perspective or experience drawn from other scholars' research.

Through a case study analysis, this paper intends to establish a general understanding and background for the Liveability notion and shed light on the practical meaning of the Liveability Dimensions. The study was conducted in one of the top liveable cities worldwide, the City of Melbourne CBD. It is a city that is referred to be among the pioneers interested in the field of achieving liveable cities over the globe. The case study analysis was performed based on three main categories that combined reflected the livability dimensions: Physical and Environmental Indices, Economic Indices, and Social Indices. Through the study analysis, this paper concluded with a set of urban, economic, and social indices that contribute to creating Liveable city centers, where people, in the same area, can live, work, and entertain.

Keywords: Liveability, Liveable City, Liveability Dimensions, Liveable Melbourne, Liveable City Center

1. Introduction

Globally, enhancing liveability, particularly for urban communities, has become one of the most significant issues that are gaining increasing interest. According to Shamsuddin (2012), the past 20 years have witnessed an increase in the liveability issue among urban studies. Indeed, academic scholars and government officials are becoming more committed to providing the frameworks and tools necessary for creating Liveable cities. However, it is worth mentioning that there is sometimes a common misconception associating Liveable communities with only urbanized ones, contrary to the core understanding of liveability. Wherever human needs were fulfilled in a place that fit to live in, it shall indeed be described as a Liveable place and a Liveable community.

A set of guidelines, policies, and strategies have basically defined the route that shall be taken to achieve the aspired Liveable cities. It includes developing neighborhoods that are safer, healthier, and walkable. Also, it aims to create cities that offer equitable and affordable housing; public transportation that is cost-effective and reliable; and a growing economy that seeks to earn an increased share of the global competitiveness of cities.

Indeed, shedding light on the competitiveness of cities regarding their efforts towards improved liveability has always been the focus of many global ranking systems. On top of them are the Economist Intelligence Unit's (EIU) Global Liveability Index and Mercer's Quality of Living Survey, which usually publishes annual reports ranking cities globally according to livability. According to the EIU Global Liveability Index (2021), Auckland city of New Zealand, is the most Liveable city in the world, while Damascus city came as the least Liveable city in the world.

Furthermore, improving liveability in cities has always faced a critical challenge: improving the city's physical structure and economy through urban contexts that do not compromise the environmental quality. According to Evans (2002), Liveable cities can only be realized by treating economic and environmental issues equally important.

2. Understanding Liveability

According to Cambridge Dictionary, the literal meaning of "Liveability" term means: "The degree to which a place is suitable or good for Living in" (Cambridge University Press 2022, n.d). In addition, "Liveability" is defined according to the Webster dictionary as: "Suitability for human Living" (Okulicz-Kozaryn & Valente, 2019, p. 198). Thus, "Liveability" is all about the human's Quality of Living experience within the built and natural environment. Since humans have a complex nature, the 'Liveability' concept has, in turn, acquired characteristics of multi-dimension in a direct reflection of the human nature essence.

2.1. Dimensions of Liveability

Urban Liveability is a multi-dimensional notion extended over many different scientific disciplines. It also reflects a reticular interaction between multiple dimensions and is a vague and complex term. Despite the "Liveability Dimensions" term introduced in different research studies, its intended meaning and content is not necessarily the same (Lau & Hashim, 2010). Indeed, several scholars and organizations have defined the Liveability dimensions. However, every one of them has introduced his comprehension of Liveability dimensions based on his perspective or experience drawn from other scholars' research (Paul & Sen, 2018). Also, other factors affect Liveability dimensions differently, such as location, situation, and culture (Kamp, Leidelmeijer, Marsman, & de Hollander, 2003). Based on the literature, there are two approaches to defining the Liveability dimensions among scholars. One of those approaches describes the Liveability Dimensions similarly to the Sustainability Dimensions. According to

Ruth & Franklin (2014), both Liveability and Sustainability seek the protection and preservation of the environment, develop social relations, and achieve economic prosperity. Moreover, in an attempt to illustrate the co-relationship between Liveability and Sustainability, the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) has mentioned that: "Liveability emerged as a way to describe tactics that local governments and regional planning organizations use to achieve the kind of sustainability goals described by the Brundtland Commission." (NARC, 2012, p. 9)

The other approach, adopted by most scholars, defines Liveability dimensions based on various derived aspects from the Liveability elements and indicators. They are the Physical Dimension of liveability, the Functional Dimension of liveability, and the Social Dimension of liveability.

2.1.1. Physical Dimension of Liveability

The physical environment is a place where people can live, work, and communicates with each other (Lau & Hashim, 2010). Indeed, Physical Dimensions refer to facilities, urban fabric, land use, services, and infrastructure. According to Yeang (2006), the Physical Dimensions of Liveability comprises a group of elements that could be categorized as follows, the built environment, quality of parks and land, public realm quality, and level of derelict land. Also, Heylen (2006) mentioned that the availability of amenities and services is considered a crucial element of the Physical Dimensions of Liveability (Rafiemanzelat, 2014).

2.1.2. Functional Dimension of Liveability

This Liveability dimension is concerned with the functionality within the Liveable city. According to Yeang (2006), this dimension involves the aspects related to the public transport utility, pedestrian conditions, vitality, and viability. In addition, Rafiemanzelat (2014) has mentioned that the functional dimensions of Liveability depend on the provision of efficient communication systems and locations; shops and shopping centers; schools and kindergartens; clinics, and other services. Therefore, it is a truism that the functionality of the city affects its economy either positively or negatively based on its efficiency and efficacy.

2.1.3. Social Dimension of Liveability

Social dimensions involve several aspects related to community life and social interactions. Ensuring the accessibility and affordability of housing are at the top of interests within the social dimensions of Liveability. Indeed, Rafiemanzelat (2014) quoting from (Timmer. V, & Kate Seymoar. N, 2005) argues that: "In order for a city to welcome people of different income levels, they need to be provided with an affordable place to live." Moreover, among the fundamentals of the social dimensions is the quest to create separate neighborhoods with different housing types for different income levels and diverse cultures. From a social perspective, a Liveable city is where its points of strength are derived from the interactions of people from different perspectives and backgrounds. Indeed, by placing diverse groups of people within one community, social diversity is supported, and tolerance is nurtured (Rafiemanzelat, 2014).

3. Case Study of Melbourne CBD

Australia is recognized as one of the leading countries that have widely addressed the issue of Liveability in cities. In promoting such fundamental citizen-related rights for better living, Australia has addressed achieving Liveability in cities at national and local municipal scales. For instance, in 2011, the government initiated a national program entitled: The Liveable Cities Program. Through this program, the government committed funding to support state and local governments in meeting the challenges of improving the quality of life in capitals and major

regional cities (Department of Infrastructure and Transport of Australia, 2012). Indeed, far before this program, many success-proved individual experiences facing such global-interesting issues have been structured by many local Australian municipalities. At the top of them comes The City of Melbourne, which ranked the most Liveable city in the world many times.

The City of Melbourne is a local government area that lies in the central city area of Greater Metropolitan Melbourne, the capital of the Australian state of Victoria. The city lies at the northern end of Port Phillip Bay, on Australia's southeastern coast (Figure. 1). The city is featured with two rivers. The Yarra River cuts through the city near its southern part, where it borders the city's Central Region. Indeed, the Central Region is the city's economic heart as it combines the Central business district (CBD), which will be the focus study area of this case study (Prescott, John R.V., 2021).

The City of Melbourne CBD lies in the southeast part of the city. It is bordered by the Yarra River from the south, Docklands precinct from the west, East Melbourne precinct from the east, and West Melbourne and Carlton precincts from the north.

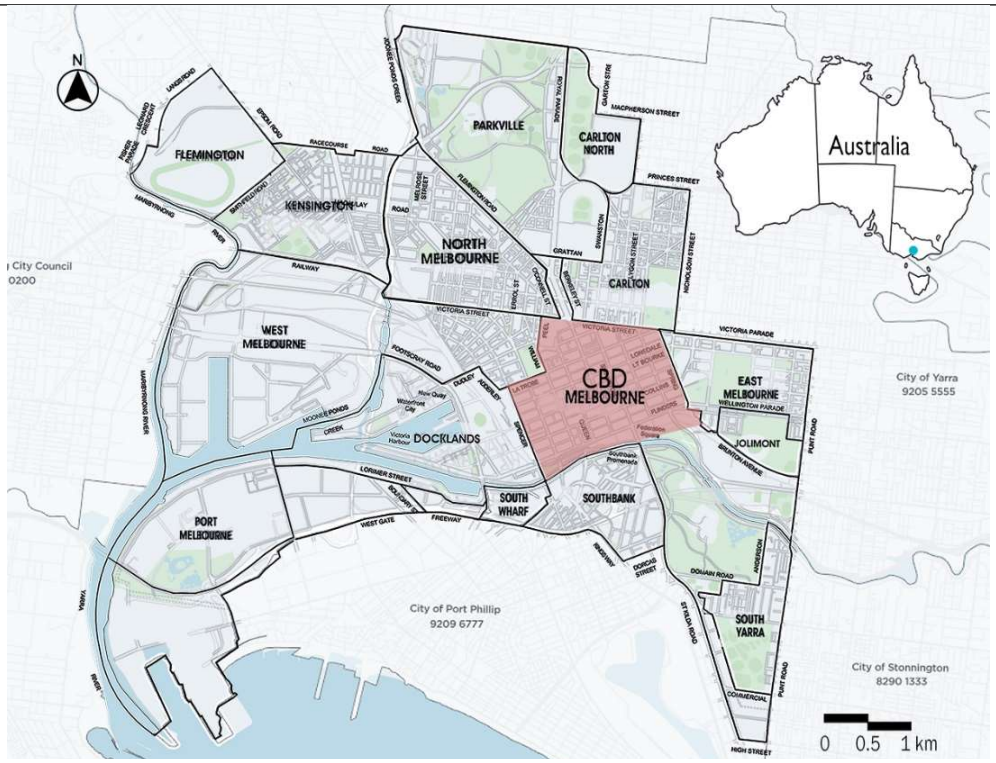

Figure. 1: The City of Melbourne Map and its CBD location
Source: Author adopted from (City of Melbourne, 2016 b; City of Melbourne, 2021)

Quoting from an article by Prof Norman Day, published June 1978, in describing the City of Melbourne, Melbourne is "An empty, useless city center." He further added, "Effective city planning has been almost unknown in Melbourne for at least 30 or 40 years. For the ordinary Melburnian, that means our city has been progressively destroyed. It no longer contains the attraction and charm it once had." (City of Melbourne & GEHL ARCHITECTS, 2004). Through those words, Prof Norman shed light on Melbourne's aggravating urban problem back

then. However, the city has needed only a few years to change its course of development toward becoming one of the most Liveable cities in the world.

Indeed, The Melbourne's CBD has successfully reflected the City's Vision of becoming a city for work, living, and entertainment. This was due to the successful planning of the city that has depended on a mixed land-use approach. After the failure of the planning strategies of Melbourne in the 1970s, the Melbourne City Council (MCC) has embarked on setting a new vision for the city to be a citizens-inducing city for "Living, Working, and Entertaining." The emergence of Melbourne's 1985 Strategy Plan represents the starting renaissance of the city towards becoming a Liveable city. It was a direct alteration of the fact that had been prevailing then that the city would nearly become a dead one. This strategy was a (ten to fifteen) year policy framework, which has formed the foundation for the subsequent decades of the city's urban renewal. It aimed to revamp the economy, social activity, and future development of the city. As a result of that, since 1990, Melbourne has been internationally acclaimed as one of the most Liveable cities globally (Centre for Public Impact, 2019).

The following part explores the Physical, Environmental, Economic, and Social indices that significantly contributed to the improved Urban Liveability of Melbourne's CBD.

3.1. Physical and Environmental indices towards Urban Liveability

The success of Melbourne's strategic plan toward a better Liveable city stems from a specific planning framework that Melbourne's planning authorities have embraced. The planning framework of Melbourne's city center has applied specific planning approaches on different planning scales and has imposed various urban policies and guidelines. Mixed land-use planning has been the primary approach of Melbourne's planning framework. It was the key player in improving the City's Liveability through combining various socio-economical activities within the city center.

Indeed, Melbourne's planning authorities prepared an "Development and Action Area Plan" to reveal the city's potential and development goals ahead of the mixed land-use planning (Figure. 2). The plan has identified three focused Zone within the CBD: Key Development Areas, Areas of Stability, and Action Areas. "Key Development Areas" are regions where the city plans to encourage significant new commercial and residential investment. "Areas of Stability" are regions where the city intends to place a strong emphasis on achieving development, which is consistent with conservation, streetscape, and pedestrian network improvements. Also, the plan has identified several "Action Areas" that have significant potential for large developments and environmental improvements (Strategy Plan Review Steering Committee, 1985).

In light of the prepared Development and Action Area Plan, Melbourne's Mixed Land-use Plan has made the best possible use of the city's potential (Figure. 3). Melbourne's strategies for land-use patterns aim at creating a Liveable environment through boosting the socio-economic activities within the CBD. This is evident in the land use distribution percentages and their location within the CBD parameter. The city core encompasses retail, entertainment, and market land uses that occupy about 39% of the land, while surrounded by administrative and government land uses that occupy about 61% of the land (Strategy Plan Review Steering Committee, 1985). Indeed, parks and residential land uses have been intentionally allocated out of the CBD on the fringes of its boundaries. This has led to ensuring promoting the functionality of the CBD as a hub of socio-economic activities. Besides, it has generated a walkable and accessible environment through a well-connected urban grid network with its surroundings. Therefore, Melbourne's Master Plan has shown much evidence of positive outcomes resulting from its effective land-use pattern configuration. For instance, several streets significantly

transformed into more appealing ones for commercial and investment purposes. Swanston Street is among those streets that have become the main commercial street of Melbourne's CBD.

Stemming from the importance of the element of accessibility for its significant impact on cities' liveability, the Melbourne government has launched a comprehensive study resulting in a Transportation and Mobility Plan (Figure. 4). The plan aimed to ensure the Urban Grid Network supports and provides a well-connectivity to and from CBD. Also, it has provided the CBD with various means of public transportation to mitigate the private car dependency rates. This reflects directly on reducing traffic jams and high CO2 emissions, which, in turn, improves the environment's air quality and achieves high standards of urban liveability.

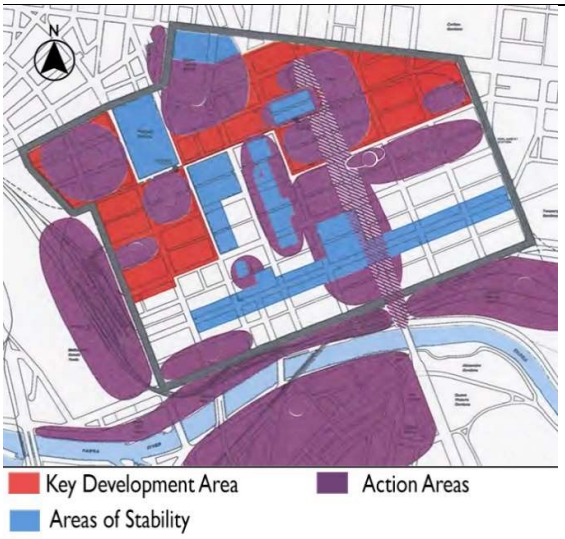

Figure. 2: Melbourne's CBD Development and Action Areas Plan
Source: Author adopted from (Strategy Plan Review Steering Committee, 1985)

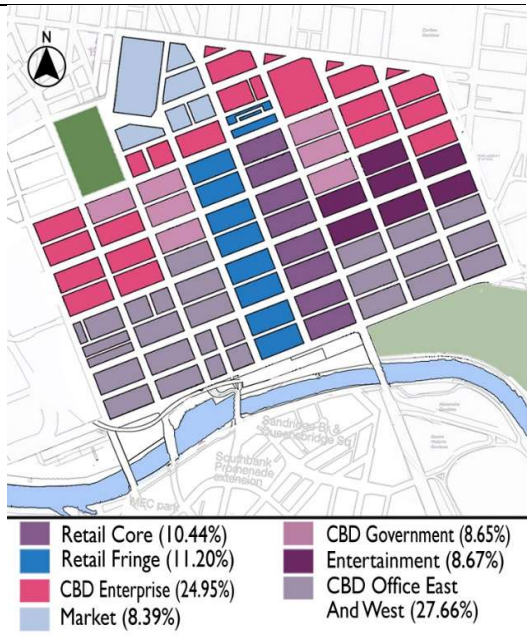

Figure. 3: Melbourne's CBD Land-use Plan
Source: Author adopted from (Strategy Plan Review Steering Committee, 1985)

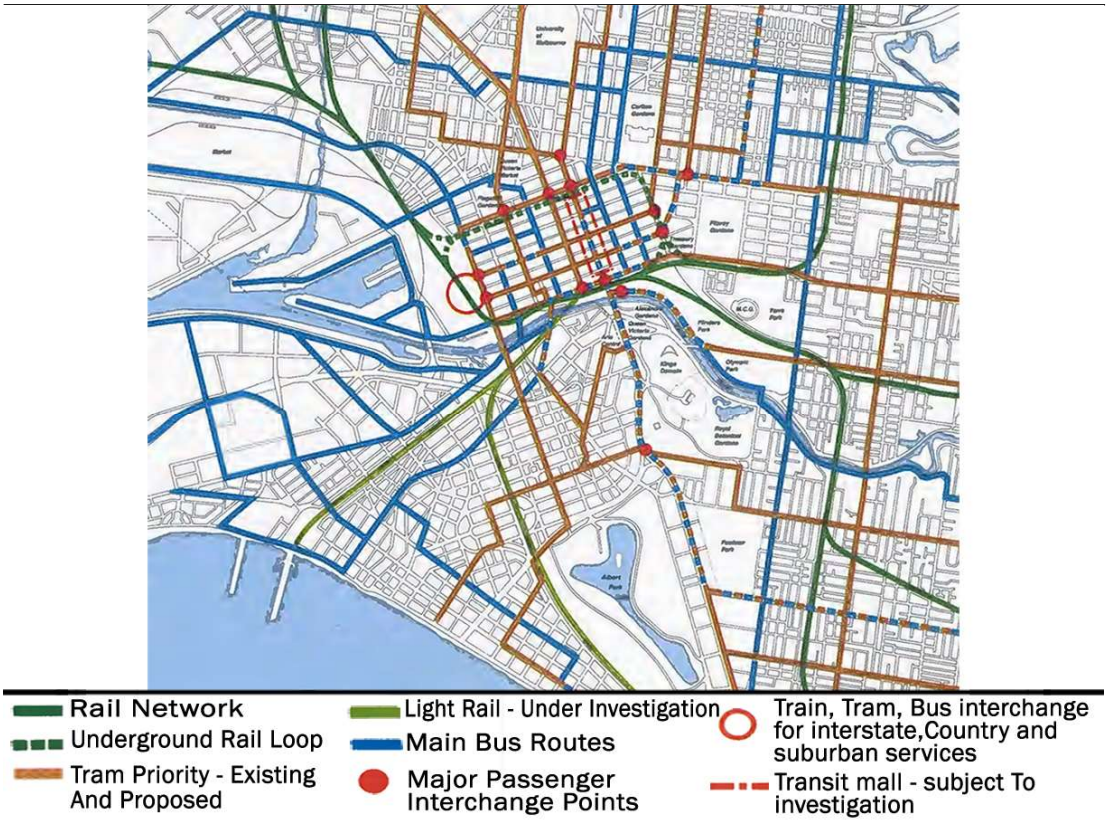

Figure. 4: Melbourne's Mobility and Transportation Plan
Source: Author adopted from (Strategy Plan Review Steering Committee, 1985)

Melbourne's government has not only addressed the enhancement of liveability in cities through an Urban Planning strategy but also has implemented specific policies and initiatives to help the city grow toward more Liveable. The Land Consolidation policy and The Active Edges policy are among these policies. The Land Consolidation policy aimed to change the City's Built Form by combining the adjoining small-scale land parcels to provide larger ones (Figure. 5) (Strategy Plan Review Steering Committee, 1985). This policy has impacted the city flourishing significantly on the physical and economic scales. On the economic scale, it provides an incentive for investment in the city by expanding the investment options that have become available due to the large-scale land parcels. While on the physical scale, large-size monolithic facades with large open spaces have replaced the old CBD's small-scale vertical facades with narrow-sized open spaces.

Concerning the Active Edges policy, it is considered part of Melbourne's attempt to keep the CBD alive and exciting. The policy regulates new building design to create a vibrant street and urban environment with a wide range of functions and activities. The primary objective of having active edges along city streets is to ensure that ground-floor facades appeal to pedestrians and provide adequate lighting, interest, and movement (Figure. 6). Also, the policy determines the sorts of businesses allowed on the ground floor to ensure that they are diversified and serve the high levels of pedestrian traffic in the area (City of Melbourne & GEHL ARCHITECTS, 2004). Indeed, the policy has been implemented through a group of defined Urban Guidelines as follows:1) The rhythm, scale, architectural detail, windows, and colors of new facades must be in keeping with existing street space.2) Buildings must provide details of

interest to pedestrians and use high-quality, durable materials.3)Facades must not be devoid of detail; large facades, in particular, must be divided into smaller sections for articulation.4) Signs must be adapted to building designs.5) Windows must be glazed with clear glass; facade design must provide good lighting at night for additional security.

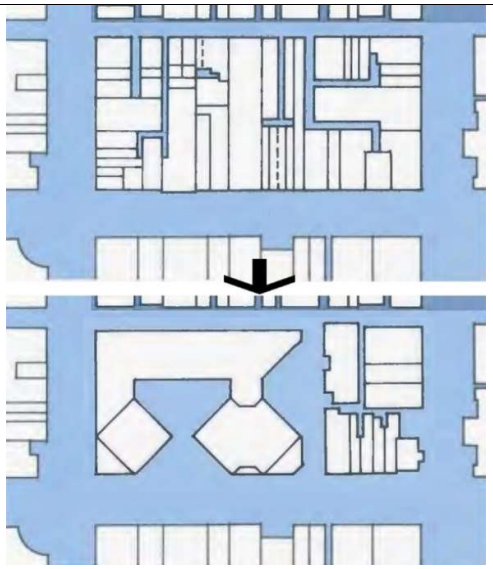

Figure. 5: Transformation of Urban Built Form from small land parcel into larger consolidated ones

Source: Author adopted from (Strategy Plan Review Steering Committee, 1985)

Figure. 6: Transformation of buildings' facades due to the Active Edge policy

Source: Author adopted from (City of Melbourne & GEHL ARCHITECTS, 2004)

3.1.1. Improving the Natural Environment

It is a truism that minimizing the impact on the environment of the urban setting shall eventually create places that endure and thrive, which has become the focus of most literature on modern cities. Therefore, stemming from the importance of enhancing the environment for better Liveable places, Melbourne has embraced an approach to achieving Greener City. The approach combines a group of defined measures aimed at promoting the quality of the environment and its protection as well.

One of those measures is the "Annual Tree Planting" program, considered one of the most important and most impactful programs on the environment. Indeed, it makes a vital contribution to the health and amenity of city streets and public spaces. The program intends to increase the Green Areas rates within the city through intensifying the streetscape green cover (Figure. 7). The program plants approximately 2,000 trees per year throughout Melbourne's municipality, with about 30-40 per year in the CBD (City of Melbourne & GEHL ARCHITECTS, 2004).

Also, Melbourne has intensified its efforts for environmental quality by extending its green cover areas through well-distributed public parks surrounding the CBD. one of those parks is the Birrarung Marr Park, which lies at the CBD's southern east edge (Figure. 8). Its design focuses on environmentally sustainable principles, offers diverse recreational experiences, and provides a robust setting accommodating various events.

Melbourne has imposed certain measures and programs concerning environmental protection, such as introducing quieter Tram Systems. Melbourne's tram system has been replaced with new technology tram services that produce less ambient noise. Also, there are the "Traffic Calming" measures, which aim to reduce the motor vehicles' negative impacts by permanent or temporary (e.g., during business hours) laneway closures.

Furthermore, there is the Liveable Housing Design (LHD) Guidelines program. This program includes practical guidelines that describe uncomplicated and simple living design features. It incorporates low-cost design elements into house design and provides significant social and economic benefits to future generations of Australians. The program evaluates buildings on three performance levels. It assigns a liveability grade of Silver, Gold, or Platinum for the buildings depending on their degree of adherence to liveability principles (Department of Infrastructure and Transport of Australia, 2012).

Figure. 7: Intensifying the CBD's streetscapes green cover

Source: Reprinted from (City of Melbourne & GEHL ARCHITECTS, 2004).

Figure. 8: Birrarung Marr Park borders the CBD's southern east edge

Source: Reprinted from (City of Melbourne & GEHL ARCHITECTS, 2004).

3.1.2. Improved Mobility and accessibility

While introducing the Improvement Plan for the CBD's Liveability, the Melbourne government devoted special attention to the city's accessibility and connectivity. The plan has identified two key approaches for achieving the intended outcome. The main one focuses on city development on a planning scale to enhance the functionality of the city's urban grid, as illustrated in the previous section. The other one focuses on revitalizing and improving the pedestrian network and incorporating sustainable modes of transportation into residents' everyday decisions.

The pedestrian network's revitalization aims to redesign the road space to become more Liveable and inclusive. Melbourne has significantly improved its walking environment through a coordinated Streetscape Improvement and Street Management program. The program provided physical improvements to the city's streets and lanes that reflected on its safety, comfort, and engagement for the pedestrian. It has encouraged various choices of uses within the city routes. As a result, Melbourne's pedestrian priority public space levels increased substantially during the past 20 years (City of Melbourne & GEHL ARCHITECTS, 2004; City of Melbourne, 2014). Most significant is the redevelopment of Swanston Street and Bourke Street to become the great walking streets of Melbourne. Swanston Street and Bourke Street have been upgraded in new sections with footpath widening, bluestone paving, and tree planting (Figure. 9).

Figure. 9: Transformation of the Swanston Street into becoming a leafy and lively retail precinct street with broad bluestone pavements and convenient street furniture.
Source: Reprinted from (City of Melbourne & GEHL ARCHITECTS, 2004)

In addition, the plan focuses on improving accessibility by establishing connectivity between the CBD and the Yarra River. Many new links have been formed, such as north-south laneway sequences, Federation Square and Birrarung Marr, Enterprize Park and the Turning Basin, and Spencer Street footbridge (City of Melbourne & GEHL ARCHITECTS, 2004).

Furthermore, there is the rejuvenation of priority laneways to form attractive and fully accessible routes through dense city blocks, enlarging the pedestrian network and offering better connections within the central city (Figure. 10). Footpaths have been widened and paved with bluestone throughout the central city. Increase the usable length of Melbourne's arcades and laneways to offer good quality pedestrian access and high amenity. Almost 3km of laneways have been redeveloped to become accessible and pedestrian oriented. Among these 3 km of laneways are 500m of completely new lanes or arcades, which have replaced the missing links in the pedestrian network. The systematic integration of laneways into the walking pattern has had a very positive impact on the pedestrian network and level of activity in the city center (City of Melbourne & GEHL ARCHITECTS, 2004).

In an initiative to embrace more sustainable modes of transportation, Melbourne has introduced a plan based on two main actions. On the one hand, the plan aimed to replace Melbourne's tram system with more advanced tram services with less impact on the environment, such as reducing its producing ambient noise. On The other hand, Melbourne sought to develop a plan to embed a cycling network into the CBD urban grid. The cycling network plan has been in an incremental development since the introduction of the first bike plan in the 1980s. Since then, Melbourne Council has been actively developing facilities for cyclists within the CBD. For instance, the incremental development of the CBD road network has been supported by high-quality road-dedicated cycle paths, especially along the river, Bay, and rail corridors (Figure. 11).

Due to its relatively flat topography and wide streets, cycling has expanded rapidly in Melbourne. Recreational cycling has been the most common kind of cycling to date. However, commuter cycling is gaining popularity. Nevertheless, the competing demands for road spaces have hindered the development of the CBD's cycling network from providing the required level of safety and comfort for bicycles.

Figure. 10: Integration of laneways into the walking pattern has positively impacted the level of activity in the city center.

Source: Reprinted from (City of Melbourne & GEHL ARCHITECTS, 2004)

Figure. 11: The CBD high-quality road-dedicated cycle paths

Source: Reprinted from (City of Melbourne & GEHL ARCHITECTS, 2004)

3.2. Economic indices toward Urban Liveability

Melbourne has established an integrated plan that intends to improve the competitiveness of the city economy through introducing specific measures and initiatives. The plan aimed at creating a 24-hour city center that provides a place to work, live, and entertain. The main contributor to the success of this plan was the utilization of the mixed land-use planning approach in setting the land use master plan of the city center (mentioned in the previous section). The introduced land-use master plan has contributed to the redistribution of commercial and administrative land uses throughout the city center precinct. Therefore, the city center has become more Liveable, as the city always introduces a variety of Mixed Activities wherever the one is heading.

Moreover, Melbourne has introduced a group of programs and policies supporting its plan for an improved economy within the city center. On top of those programs, there is the "Retail Corridors Revitalization Program." The program focuses on the redevelopment of Melbourne's laneways and corridors. Indeed, this program has had an immeasurable contribution in making the city center more welcoming for multiple activities and transforming it into a denser and lively area (Figure. 12). The program took into account setting appropriate restrictions to achieve the required goals without violating the cultural heritage values of the city. Therefore, the laneways, in turn, support the sustainable development of the inner-city by allowing the retention of heritage streetscapes (City of Melbourne & GEHL ARCHITECTS, 2004).

Figure. 12: The Degraves Street before and after the redevelopment project

Source: Reprinted from (City of Melbourne & GEHL ARCHITECTS, 2004)

In light of promoting and preserving the city heritage as considered one of the main attractions for touristic activities, Melbourne has launched a program to revive and revitalize the city's renowned "Café Culture." The program has imposed specific cafe furniture standards, especially for the quality of the outdoor furniture, to ensure the integration with the buildings, landscape features, and heritage of the streetscape. Also, Melbourne has encouraged the expansion and spread of the 'micro-scale' retail to make more active and Liveable streets; and attract a more significant population to the city. The program organizes and legitimizes the distribution of retail stal ls over the city center, such as newsstands and flower stalls, etc.

Notably, Melbourne's Plan has not neglected the effect of boosting the local economy through stimulating the buying and selling rates. Therefore, developing and distributing markets all over the city center was on top priority of Melbourne's Plan for a better Liveable city center. Also, the plan embraces increasing the number of evening activities and festivals through markets, which leads to a livelier and safer city at night (City of Melbourne & GEHL ARCHITECTS, 2004). The summer night markets are one of those activities that stimulate social gatherings. They have scheduled events that offer various entertainment, shopping, and eating activities, such as the Night Noodle Market set in the Birrarung Marr garden. Among them is the famous Queen Victoria Market (QVM), which has preserved its position as the heart and soul of Melbourne's trading hub for more than a century and will continue lasting due to the city's growing interest in its development. In promoting the QVM role in improving the city's liveability, the city has introduced a strategic plan for its development. The strategy adopted the sustainability principles, which focused on preserving the market heritage. It has led to adding QVM to the National Heritage List of Melbourne (Queen Victoria Market, n.d.). The city also provides another type of market known as the Specialized Markets, such as the Federation Square market, known as the Book Market. Also, Southgate's Sunday market specializes in art and craft products.

Moreover, in light of the growing importance of Information Technology globally, Melbourne has addressed it as an effective tool for promoting the city economy. Therefore, the city introduced an electronic information hub called: City Ambassadors. It is an online platform that offers assistance for tourist visitors regarding the city's ongoing events and activities and provides general guidance and direction about the city's places.

3.3.Social indices towards Urban Liveability

Undoubtedly, there is a mutual benefit of any program targeted to develop one of the Liveability dimensions separately. It is due to the interrelation between the main three Liveability Dimensions. Therefore, many of Melbourne's programs that serve the improvement of the economic dimension of the city's liveability have contributed to enhancing the social aspects, as well. Melbourne's plan for better liveability in the city center has also encompassed a social program. It focuses on improving social inclusion and cohesion and establishing principles of social equity within the community. In compliance with the Australian Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA), the program aimed to ensure the right of disabled people to have access to public spaces through easy and safe access pathways. Indeed, this action follows the objectives of the Australian states on a national level, targeting achieving social equity (City of Melbourne & GEHL ARCHITECTS, 2004).

Among Melbourne's Social program outcomes is the Disability Action Plan of the City of Melbourne (The University of Melbourne, 2022), which defines the type of adjustments that is feasible for serving disabled people's needs. It concluded that the recommended adjustments include, for instance, providing an audio announcement service within public transportation

systems and installing street wayfinding tracks for the sight disabled person (Figure. 13). In addition, there is a widely utilized program for improving pedestrian ramps (Figure. 14), which primarily serves the needs of people with physical disabilities (City of Melbourne, 2014).

Figure. 13: street wayfinding tracks for the sight disabled person
Source: Reprinted from (Riordan & Potter, 2015)

Figure. 14: Improving pedestrian ramps as part of Melbourne's widely utilized Improvement program
Source: Reprinted from (City of Melbourne, 2014)

4. Conclusion

The study concludes that achieving a Liveable city center demands specific measures targeting all aspects of the liveability dimensions. These measures can be summarized as follows:

- **Physical and Environmental aspects of a Liveable city Center:**
  - Adopting the planning approach of Mixed land-use planning supported by well-defined planning strategies, policies, and guidelines is a crucial key to achieving Liveable city centers.
  - Mixed land-use planning contributes to combining various socio-economical activities within the same area, which, in turn, improves the city's liveability.
  - -Planning a well-connected and accessible city center to and from the surrounding regions is fundamental for achieving high standards of urban livability.
  - Shifting dependency to more public transportation and eco-friendly modes of transportation instead of private cars dependence plays an essential role in reducing the city center traffic jams and high CO2 emissions, which contributes to improving accessibility and environmental quality.
  - Increasing the city center's green cover area is essential for enhancing the natural environment through well-distributed public green spaces and promoting annual tree planting programs.
- **Economic aspect of a Liveable City Center:**
  - Creating an economic climate that attracts investment and meets the labor market demands is vital for improved Liveable city centers.
  - Achieving a high-quality business environment that encourages people to work and live and entertain is vital for improving livability, which depends on specific measures as follows:

- Adopting a planning strategy of transforming urban landform from small land parcels into larger consolidated ones increases the variety of available site-investment opportunities, giving investors greater autonomy and flexibility.
- Promoting Retail Corridors revitalization contributes to making the city center more welcoming for multiple activities and transforming it into a denser and more lively area.
- Adopting information technology tools, such as online platforms that provide information on the city's ongoing events and activities and general guidance and direction about the city's places, plays an essential role in attracting tourism, which is a vital resource for any thriving economy.

❖ **Social aspect of a Liveable City Center:**

- Achieving a sense of social inclusion, cohesion, and equity among the community members.
- Adopting programs that provide enhanced access to public spaces through easy and safe access pathways for all the city residents, and disabled people, in particular, shall be the top priority for cities seeks improved livability.

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