of the catchment area supporting it. These figures will rise with the general increase in car ownership providing adequate facilities for parking are available. For large suburban centres, therefore, an average figure of four cars a shop would seem a reasonable minimum to work on, and for minor and local centres about three cars a shop.

Because of the general tendency for the average size of shops to increase and for there to be few residential shops, the areas occupied by existing shopping centres do not form a reliable guide to what may be required in the future. However, for shopping centres in which the shop allotments average about 20 feet frontage by 120 feet in depth, as is common in existing centres in Melbourne, the area required can reasonably be calculated on the basis of seven shops to an acre in the larger centres and eight to an acre in the smaller centres. This allows for off-street parking, for uses other than for shops and for internal roads, but not for community facilities such as baby health centres or for open space other than for parking.

Shopping Trends and their Effect on the Size and Pattern of Shopping Centres

The most important development with regard to metropolitan shopping since World War II has been the increasing proportion of shopping that is now taking place in the suburbs. Although this trend is already apparent in large Australian cities, it has shown itself most forcibly in America. In Melbourne many chain or branch stores have already spread out to the suburbs, covering such items as food, hardware, furniture, clothing and variety lines. Several firms with both central area stores and suburban branches are finding an increasing proportion of their business is now being transacted in the suburbs. However, none of the large central city department stores have yet ventured into the outer suburbs.

The increasing growth and importance of suburban shopping has been a feature of retailing in America since the war. In that country approximately 10 per cent. of the large department stores have already opened suburban branches, while an additional 15 per cent. are planning to do so. The growing congestion in the large cities and the improved facilities for car parking in the suburban centres have resulted in an increased proportion of business now being done in the suburbs. The large department stores are finding it necessary to open branches in the suburbs if they are to maintain their share of increased business. Some have gone into established suburban centres while others have financed the development of completely new centres in areas where they have been able to acquire sites of up to 100 acres in extent. In most of these new American centres at least two-thirds of the total site area is devoted to car parking.

It is evident that a feature of this move to the suburbs is the convenience offered to the ever-growing number of car shoppers, which the large city centre is finding increasingly difficult to cope with. The automobile has given the individual a degree of independence never before experienced. In the days before the modern automobile, a person was usually compelled to shop at stores in the suburban vicinity or to use public transport into the city centre. An increasing number of people can now select the shopping centre which gives the best service, even though located some distance from their homes, and those shopping centres which can offer modern amenities and conveniences are those the customer will choose. Therefore, apart from offering a comparable range of goods, the successful suburban centre must now be able to offer pleasant and convenient shopping conditions, especially for car shoppers.

Another trend with regard to suburban shopping has been a general tendency for the size of the individual shop to increase, which gives rise to the claim that shopping centres of the future will tend to comprise fewer small shops with a reduction in the total number. Higher overhead costs of running a shop, the increasing variety of merchandise handled by each type of shop, and the economy of large-scale buying, all tend to accentuate this development.

Table 47

SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF LARGE SUBURBAN CENTRES (1951)

Shopping Centre	*Area Occupied (Acres)*	*No. of Shops*	*Shops per Acre (Gross)*	*Frontage Range*	*Most Common Frontage*	*Average Frontage*	*% of Total Frontage Occupied by Shops*	*Cars per Shop in Peak Periods*
Camberwell	25.9	276	10.7	8′ - 135′	20′	21.6′	88	2.6
Footscray	28.6	300	10.5	14′ - 90′	17′	19.0′	83	2.1
Bentleigh	17.4	158	9.1	16′ - 81′	18′	21.4′	91	1.6
Box Hill	12.1	155	12.8	12′ - 80′	20′	23.2′	87	2.9
Preston	19.1	167	8.7	12′ - 88′	18′	20.4′	79	3.0
Collingwood	20.5	208	10.1	8′ - 244′	17′	22.3′	82	1.8
Prahran	41.5	602	14.5	6′ - 250′	14′	18.1′	82	2.0
Oakleigh	18.8	194	10.3	8′ - 100′	20′	22.0′	79	2.5
Average			10.8			21′	84	2.5

Box Hill shopping centre

Small suburban shopping centre

Burke Road, Camberwell

SUBURBAN SHOPPING

Decadent shopping area in old inner suburb