

Site Situation Analysis

Overview

A Situation Analysis is a well-known business tool usually applied to understand the strengths and weaknesses of, and the opportunities and threats facing, a company or product. Here, this tool has been adapted to the analysis of a site providing an informative and productive way to start understanding the potential of a new site.

As part of the *Tribus* process, it is critical that this step is completed early, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the conditions, opportunities and constraints the development faces, as this information, along with a detailed economic assessment, will help inform the early visioning stages. By better understanding the needs, gaps and competition in the marketplace from a developer's perspective, the core team is better enabled to create a unique and tailored vision.

The following information should be collected as part of the Situation Analysis.

Commencing with a *Macro Analysis*, this part of the process is designed to give a holistic view of factors affecting the site such as:

- *Political/Legal*

For example, state and local government planning policy may reveal an opportunity to attract funding and/or streamlined development approvals by preserving native grassland.

- *Economic*

For example, understanding the industries that contribute to the local municipality GDP may reveal unmet commercial opportunities.

- *Social/Cultural*

For example, surrounding population composition such as age demographics and household composition may reveal there is a high number of elderly residents in the area or that high youth unemployment is an issue.

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- *Local Environment*

For example, an analysis of local transport infrastructure may reveal the need to provide an innovative solution to connect residents with existing transport networks.

- *Natural environment*

For example, the presence of views may influence the layout of the town centre to capitalise on the outlook, while understanding the local microclimate may influence the future design.

The *Ecosystem Analysis* is designed to help the core team understand how the new development can leverage the strengths and shortcomings of surrounding town centres and residential areas.

For instance, if the analysis reveals that surrounding retail centres only provide a supermarket and a small number of specialty shops, then the opportunity may exist to explore other elements such as medical services or entertainment facilities that are not on offer elsewhere in the immediate area.

The *Target Audience Analysis* is partly built from information gathered in the preceding stages. The *Macro and Ecosystem Analyses* should reveal specific target audiences that the new development has the opportunity to cater for – for example it may indicate that there is a high proportion of young families in the area, which will highlight the need for more child services, play areas etc. In this part of the analysis, these target audiences are explored in more detail to further inform the development of the project vision.

Finally, the *Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis* acts as a summary of all the insights gathered in the previous stages and should provide a useful reference and discussion document during the early Visualise phase.

The type of information gathered during this stage is generally publicly available online in Australia, while parts may be sought through the knowledge and experience of the core team and importantly, via community engagement.

Where to find information.

- Most councils have an area of their website that outlines their policies and strategies
- *home.id.com.au* provides a range of economic, social and demographic data for Australian municipalities
- The local chamber of commerce or other business associations may also be a useful source of information
- Information on Council website
- Council reports
- Google maps
- State libraries
- Local libraries
- Physical survey
- Talking to locals
- Desktop research
- Investigate on foot
- Liaise with commercial real estate agent
- Interview potential tenants

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Key Considerations

The below list is intended as a starting point of some of the key considerations when undertaking a site situation analysis, it is not exhaustive and can be expanded on for each project.

Political/Legal

- Summarise local and state government planning policies affecting the site.
- Consider what opportunities the policy environment provides for local and state government support of your eventual planning application.
- Consider the social, cultural, economic and environmental aspirations of the local council and how your development can contribute to achieving them.

Economic

Focusing on the local municipality summarise:

- Components of municipality GDP
- Seek out reports exploring current industry types/capacity and future directions
- Employment rates/demographics
- Average individual/household income
- Make a list of relevant industry organisations

Consider the commercial development opportunities available in support of local industry.

Social/Cultural

Focusing on the local municipality summarise:

- Current population and projected growth
- Population composition – age demographics
- Population composition – ethnicity demographics
- Percentage of residents that travel outside the municipality to work
- Population health and wellbeing
- Population ethnicities
- Take note of local cultural organisations
- List popular local public events

Consider the housing, lifestyle and services and cultural vibrancy that needs to be available to attract the ideal mix of residents/meet market demand.

Local Environment

Focusing on the local municipality summarise:

- The degree of housing diversity
- Public transport infrastructure
- Natural assets such as parks, rivers, lakes, farm land, forest
- Retail options

- Night and day time entertainment options
- Education at the primary, secondary and tertiary level – number, distribution and quality and how education supports skills development to assist local industry
- Presence of art and culture (public art, festivals, events, presence of relevant community groups etc.)
- Degree of social cohesion
- Safety and security

Consider opportunities to build on existing strengths and to address weaknesses.

Natural Environment

Focusing on the site itself summarise:

- Flora and fauna present (particularly mature trees, native grasslands etc.)
- Waterways
- Views
- Heritage elements (eg. Buildings, old railway etc.)
- History (historic use of the land, people who may have lived there in the past, industries that operated on the site etc.)
- Weather
- Susceptibility to flood/fire or other natural disaster
- Local stories

Ecosystem Analysis

List other urban developments within a 5km radius.

For other urban developments, analyse their comparative:

- Size
- Characteristics
- Weaknesses
- Composition
- Strengths

Consider how your site might differentiate from or build upon the strengths of neighbouring developments or how it might offer infrastructure that is lacking in the general area.

Target Audience Analysis

Make list a of relevant resident types/commercial tenants/consumer visitor types etc that the new urban development could potentially attract.

Ensure you thoroughly understand each target groups' needs and characteristics.

Consider what type of physical and social environment, infrastructure and services these audiences would find attractive.



Site Situation Analysis

Template

Political/Legal

Economic

Social/Cultural

Local Environment



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Template

Natural Environment

Ecosystem Analysis

Target Audience Analysis

SWOT



SWOT Analysis

Template

Strengths

Weaknesses

Opportunities

Threats
