

# Developing a Walking Strategy

A Guide for Councils



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Victoria Walks Inc is a walking health promotion charity working to get more Victorians walking every day. Our vision is for vibrant, supportive and strong neighbourhoods and communities where people can and do choose to walk wherever possible.

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# Introduction

## Why Create a Walkable Environment?

A walkable environment is safe, interesting and easy to walk around. It incorporates travel routes and destinations that are lively and attractive. From footpaths to parks and other public spaces, it invites a culture of walking, to shops or services, for recreation, to catch the bus or to get to school or work.

Improving the level of walkability of your council area has a wide range of benefits, including:

- **A healthier population** – Countries where people walk more have lower obesity rates<sup>1</sup>. Walking briskly for 30 minutes a day can help lower weight and guard against heart disease for adults.
- **An improved local economy** – People walking to local shops have been found to spend more time and more money than people driving<sup>2</sup>.
- **Increasing land values** from a more attractive neighbourhood – Houses in walkable streets tend to sell for higher prices than those in less walk-friendly streets<sup>3</sup>.
- **A sustainable local environment** – Walking can replace many short car trips, which contribute more to local pollution and congestion. In Melbourne, 39.7 per cent of trips of less than 1 kilometre are taken by car; that's a 15-minute walk<sup>4</sup>.
- **Safer communities** – Walkable streets attract more people and have improved safety levels, for both traffic and crime, compared to other streets<sup>5</sup>.

A good walking strategy will help create an environment where all types of walking are supported, allowing council to meet transport, health and planning objectives. It will coordinate your council's work to support walking, ensuring it is prioritised in transport and strategic planning, increasing its integration with other modes of transport, improving the safety of walking and raising its profile within your municipality.



## About This Guide

This guide overviews the issues and approaches you need to consider to promote walking in the community. It has been developed in response to a need identified in discussions with councils and the Victorian Pedestrian Advisory Council.

The guide does not provide detailed design guidance, but points out the key factors to keep in mind, with links to relevant resources. The Victoria Walks [website](#) is progressively providing more detailed information on particular aspects of walkability, including local examples and the latest news on walking research from Australia and around the world.

This guide focuses on walking for transport rather than walking solely for recreation. Creating an environment that encourages more people to walk more often as part of their everyday activities has the greatest potential to promote walking (and replace car trips). In some instances, the ingredients of a walkable environment will match those of other transport modes, such as public transport or cycling, but the focus of this guide is walking.

The guide includes:

- A quick **self-assessment survey** (separate online resource) to help you work out the best approach for your council and what you think you can achieve through a walking strategy.
- Collecting information and considering it, as part of your strategy. This includes hard data, such as census demographic profiles and pedestrian counts, as well as related state and local government policies that affect walking within your municipality.
- Building the strategy, including mapping of pedestrian networks, assessing walkability on the ground and consulting the community.
- Walkability solutions, for example in infrastructure, urban design and planning. This part includes links to the relevant guidance to help you meet Australian traffic engineering and safety standards, and advice on fostering a walking culture.
- Building support for your walking strategy, both within and outside council, and navigating the consultation process. This will help your strategy become a document that brings about real change.
- Implementing your walking strategy, following through on objectives and setting measurable targets.
- Walking strategies in action, including examples from councils in metropolitan and regional Victoria.

# Collecting Information

The information you collect will shape your priorities and actions in developing and implementing your strategy. Your data should be a mix of locality-specific and background data.

After gathering information, you should have a clearer idea of what a walking network might look like within your municipality and how it can be developed. You may wish to express this in the form of a vision for walking within your municipality and the strategic objectives required to deliver it. This may be important, depending on your council, for building support for the strategy within council.

Seek to use some of the information you have collected to form a baseline from which you can measure future gains delivered by a successful walking strategy. The data selected should reflect your strategic objectives.



## Self-assessment survey

Local councils have different levels of funding and capacity to deliver different strategies that best meet their needs. Use the **online self-assessment survey** to get you thinking about the kind of walking strategy most appropriate for your council and what you can achieve with your resources.

## Policy, Planning and Legislative Context

The first step is to become familiar with council and state policies and planning that may support your strategy, provide a guide to priorities or set out necessary compliance. These include:

- Municipal Strategic Statement, council policies and plans, including any structure plans for town centres and activity centres. Ultimately, the town planning outcomes of your walking strategy must be incorporated into the Municipal Strategic Statement or local policy if they are to be effective.
- Council policies and plans across different sectors (health, environment, people with disabilities, children and young people, seniors) that may set commitments relating to walking or flag issues that need to be addressed in your strategy.
- **Transport Integration Act 2010**, requiring all Victorian transport agencies to work together towards a common goal of an integrated and sustainable transport system. Land-use agencies, including councils, are required to have regard to the Act when making decisions that impact on the transport system.
- **Road Management Act 2004**, designed to create a coordinated system of management for roads in Victoria.
- **Disability Discrimination Act 1992**, requiring compliance for access, including access to public transport.
- Victorian Road Safety Strategy 2013–2022, which sets a target to reduce fatalities and serious injuries by 30 per cent.
- **Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008**, requiring local government to produce a municipal health plan that can support initiatives to increase physical activity, through walking.

Talk to colleagues who have access to the relevant council policies, plans and legislation, and experience of implementing them. This will help you better understand what's relevant in developing your strategy.



## Land Use

Consider the different land uses across your municipality and how they affect the demand for walking. Find out if there are proposed new developments, changes to density (e.g. infill apartments) or new growth areas that need to be included. These will either increase the destinations people may walk to or increase the number of people with the potential to walk in a local area.

What are the major destinations? Consider all the places that people travel to by all modes – and may want to walk to more often if the conditions were right. This is likely to include town centres, neighbourhood centres, local shops, schools, major offices and medical centres, public transport and parks. Mapping these locations will help build a picture of priority areas for walking from the density of destinations or their popularity. This can then be used to identify and map pedestrian networks (see overleaf).

## Transport, Traffic and Infrastructure

The Victorian Department of Transport provides detailed information about travel patterns, through its Victorian Integrated Survey of Travel and Activity (VISTA), an ongoing survey of travel and activity. You can access the data through [VISTA Online](#) – you'll need to register first. The Australian Bureau of Statistics provides useful information, collected at each census, about journeys to work.

A host of transport infrastructure and traffic data can inform your strategy development:

- Road types across the municipality, including arterial and local, their designated speeds and width. Consider whether they support or are barriers to walking.
- Traffic volumes and speed, especially around key destinations (either review available data or identify key roads to undertake traffic counts).
- Location of formal pedestrian crossings (zebra and signalised).
- Percentage of streets with/without footpaths.
- Known pedestrian safety issues (using VicRoads crash data, observations, community feedback).

Find out what good work has already been done by the council or within the municipality to support walking. Where are the good walking environments and what areas have been identified as in need of improvement? This can go beyond infrastructure information to include soft measures, such as the number of active walking groups.

## Demographics

Understanding who lives within your municipality, and how this community profile is changing over time, can help identify different types of walking and how best to support them. For example, the walking needs and likely destinations of elderly people (including those using mobility scooters) may be different to those of families with small children.

From available demographic data, you can start to develop some user profiles of different kinds of walkers. These will be useful reminders when you're developing actions to improve walkability. Think broadly. The following users are just some examples that could be profiled (others may be applicable to your area):

- Children walking to school.
- Parents with children who are not yet walking.
- Elderly people living at home.
- Recreational dog walkers.
- Local shoppers (newspaper, café).
- People walking to public transport.

Australian Bureau of Statistics census data provides **community population data**, such as car ownership rates, ages of households and whether households require physical assistance. These can help to develop your profiles at different geographic levels, from municipality down to suburb and census district. **Local government profiles** compiled by ID Consulting, the council, or other consultancy firms often provide further demographic information. Council-commissioned household or satisfaction surveys may also provide useful information.

# Building the Strategy

## Pedestrian Networks

Once you know who you are planning for, their overall travel patterns and the transport and land-use data, map your information to help visualise the municipality's walking network. This desktop analysis will give you a general feel for priority routes, issues and opportunities.

You may wish to identify a principal pedestrian network (PPN), applying a similar network approach that is used for other transport modes:

- Place destinations as nodes in the network and create links between them, noting the main routes, existing high-use areas, barriers (e.g. rivers, major roads or areas with perceived safety risks), conflict points and gaps (e.g. lack of footpath connections).
- Identify walking catchments around major destinations. Measure these along the actual walkable route (not as the crow flies). Common walking distances can be longer than you think for major destinations; for example many people walk 1.5 kilometres to a train station. Mapping 10–20 minute walking catchments (around 0.8–1.6 kilometres) for major destinations is a guide.
- Set some priority within your network based on the importance of destinations, number of trips, population density and your community needs. This will help prioritise implementation of infrastructure improvements across the network. Existing walking infrastructure or supporting projects (e.g. funding for a signalised crossing) may also shape the rollout of your priority network, as filling in a few gaps can be a 'quick win' to build profile and support.

For more information about developing a PPN, see the [methodology](#) developed by the Victorian Department of Transport. The PPN concept is fairly new to Victoria, but a number of councils are currently preparing PPN for their area.

## What Is Happening 'On the Ground'

Walking your local centres and neighbourhoods is a crucial reality check and helps refine the desktop network you may have developed. It will help you to identify and document what does and does not work and specific infrastructure improvements required, and to assess the relative importance of these improvements. Take lots of photos!

Where you start depends on how comprehensive your data gathering and strategy will be. Start with the walking catchment to major destinations and then the rest of the PPN, if you have identified one. Depending on resources, consider

doing audits at different times of the day (e.g. school start and end times; during the day and evening time in town centres). You can support your observations with casual conversations with people in the area, asking them how easy it is to walk around and what, if any, issues they face. This will give your observations greater context and depth.

The Victoria Walks [Walking Audit tool](#) steps you through the things to look for at street level. From a strategy perspective, consider:

- Shortest travel distances between destinations. People will often trade off time against amenity when walking for transport, so assess potential opportunities to reduce travel times (e.g. delays at pedestrian signals).
- Overall connectivity of the area (to destinations and with other transport modes) and the priority given to walking relative to other transport modes.
- Small pieces of infrastructure or changes that will make walking easier (the missing pram ramp on one side of a street that makes a road crossing more difficult; the over-hanging branches that force people off a path; etc.).

Almost every car and public transport trip begins and ends with a walking trip. This means that even the most car-dominant areas need to be viewed through a walking lens. In these areas, small-scale works and safety improvements such as designated pedestrian access through car parks may be the focus of actions.

## Community Consultation

Talking and listening to the members of your community is vital in understanding their walking needs and building support for your strategy. You can seek input from the community in several ways – choose the consultation methods below that best suit your audience.

- Existing feedback to council – Council may have undertaken consultation that might include resident feedback relevant to your strategy. Talk to other council officers to see what is already available, for example public consultation on structure plans or renewal of community sites (e.g. parks or foreshores), which may have covered walking access issues. Referring to previous consultation will give participants greater confidence that their views will be considered.
- Focus groups – Structured focus groups can be excellent ways of seeking deep information about attitudes to walking as well as generating ideas and challenging preconceptions. They are especially good for working with specific audiences (such as elderly



people or traders). Running a focus group well isn't just a matter of turning up and talking. Work out what you want to ask and be prepared to prompt conversation. Aim to have two people running the group: one to act as moderator and the other to take notes. Make sure that everyone gets a say, and at the end of the session sum up in front of the group what you have discussed. Generally, focus groups shouldn't run for more than an hour.

- Street intercept surveys – Short surveys of random people in the street help broaden your reach into the general community. Find a spot that has steady foot traffic and where people have time to stop and talk. Randomise your approach (e.g. choosing every third person). Your survey should be short (no more than two minutes) and have a structure that will enable easy analysis of answers – avoid open-ended questions where possible. Street surveys are also useful in places where you may be considering a specific action and you can include relevant questions (e.g. 'What would you think if we widened this footpath?').
- Phone surveys – These surveys extend your reach beyond those who are motivated to respond to standard council consultation approaches. They can give you a good feel for what the 'silent majority' is thinking. However, make them short for effective response rates, and keep in mind that they are more resource-intensive. Ask questions that are more general than for street surveys, and attempt to gauge community attitudes to walking (and other modes of transport) rather than specific actions. If your council has adequate resources, you might consider using a marketing agency for this work because they are able to contact large numbers of households in a short time.

- School surveys and audits – Finding out how and why children travel to school by a particular mode of transport can be useful in identifying specific infrastructure improvements around schools. Most state schools have restricted catchment areas, which will often be within an easy walking distance. However, there may be barriers along the way, such as busy roads and traffic speed, which a school survey and audit of facilities can identify and suggest actions to address.
- Walking audits – One of the best ways to gather community information is to invite people to comment using the Victoria Walks **Walking Audit tool**. This allows people to identify what they like and don't like about walking in their neighbourhood and suggest improvements. The tool can provide you with specific suggestions from the community, rather than general complaints.
- Community groups – Groups campaigning on particular transport issues may already exist in your community. These groups represent a great opportunity to work on specific issues and to make sure walking is well captured within their campaigns as well as hearing what they have to say on transport more generally. Have a look at how **Locomote** on the Northern Bellarine Peninsula worked effectively with its local council. Also consider other community groups to get a better idea of walking needs (eg. senior citizens).

# Walkability Solutions

It's time to start thinking about the various elements that help create and make your network walkable. A good network is the backbone of walkability, supporting short and long trips on foot in a comfortable environment.

Creating such a network involves considering some high-level urban design and planning decisions such as the layout of streets and the interaction with other elements of the local environment, such as street frontages. It also requires some specific thinking about the infrastructure involved, including footpaths and street furniture. Finally, it involves considering how to get people to use the network as much as possible, through advocacy and engagement with your community. These steps, which are explained further below, should be considered when developing new or upgrading existing walking facilities in your municipality. Where possible, each element is linked to relevant official guidance.

Full Austroads guidance on pedestrian facilities must be purchased from [Austroads](#). Detailed information is also available in the [Easy Steps](#) guide from the Queensland Government, and in the New Zealand Transport Agency's [Pedestrian Planning and Design Guide](#). Remember, there will be specific rules that apply in these jurisdictions that may not apply in yours.

## Urban Design and Planning

Improving walkability through better urban design requires careful thinking about how people are going to use a space when it is complete. Is it a space that people pass through on their way to somewhere else? Is it designed to encourage them to linger in a public setting? What does the environment suggest about walking – is it designed for people or cars?

Connected streets, which ensure that pedestrians can pass through spaces easily and safely to get to their key destinations, will encourage walking. This idea is used for large-scale planning of streets (e.g. restricting the length of blocks to encourage walking through perceived shorter distances), but it can also apply to smaller areas. This could include the cut-throughs in new developments and cul-de-sacs to allow greater permeability and encourage more walking links between sites.

Active street frontages can be created by reducing blank wall spaces and having the frontage of buildings closer to the footpath. Windows facing the street are particularly important. In a residential context, high front fences and similar structures restrict visual connection between public space and front yards, and should be avoided.

In activity centres such as shopping strips, activities and infrastructure such as art installations, benches and kerbside cafes can encourage people to stop. These should be integrated into the street in a way that does not compromise existing street activities, circulation requirements and pedestrian or traffic safety. Avoid large-scale, ground level off-street car parking between shops and the road reserve.

Open spaces, in the form of parks or small plazas, can be configured to encourage people to walk to and within them. These can be made from vacant lots or even some car spaces. Increasing appropriate vegetation (to allow clear sightlines and to provide shade) can make walking more pleasant in spaces that connect destinations as well as in the destinations themselves.

For a fuller understanding of how good urban design can support more physical activity, such as walking, check out the Heart Foundation's [Healthy by Design](#) resource.





## Walking infrastructure

### Footpaths

Footpaths are not only places for travel; they also function as public spaces – for talking, living and playing.

Good footpaths and trails are at the heart of your pedestrian network. They should be built and maintained to get people where they want to go in a way that makes walking pleasant and enjoyable. Footpaths should be of adequate width for their purpose (Section 6.2.1 of the [Austroads Guide to Road Design Part 6A](#)). In some instances, they may take the form of shared paths with cyclists (Table 6.3, [Austroads Guide to Road Design Part 6A; Pedestrian and Cyclist Paths](#)), such as alongside parks or crossing bridges.

Wider shared paths, where possible, are recommended for recreational shared paths to encourage cyclists to comfortably ride side-by-side without affecting pedestrians. Avoid changing existing footpaths into shared paths, unless they can be widened to a suitable standard.

You can potentially reduce conflict between pedestrians and cyclists by designating separate areas of the path. Careful design is required: separated paths can potentially lead to increased severity of accidents and/or hostility because cyclists feel a sense of entitlement to their section of path. Differing pavement colours or surfaces are recommended and adequate signage and line marking is essential.

In some areas, such as low traffic volume streets, pedestrians and cyclists may be able to share the roadway with vehicular traffic. In these shared spaces, motorists are required to give way to any pedestrian in the shared zone, making the street a public space. Speed is usually restricted to 10 km/h.

Making sure that all users can move between surfaces of different heights, such as from a footpath to a road, is crucial, especially for those pushing a pram or using a wheelchair. This can be achieved by providing kerbside pram ramps (Table 6.2 of the [Guide to Road Design Part 6A](#)). Bluestone guttering, although an important part of Victoria's heritage, is sometimes a barrier to smooth crossings, especially for people with disabilities. It can be re-mortared and re-set with tight joints to provide an even surface, lifting the level of the individual bluestones to the kerb where necessary.

Footpaths and supporting infrastructure (detailed below) should be maintained as part of council's asset management system. The condition of all footpaths and walking trails should be checked regularly. Tree roots and temporary retail materials such as café tables, chairs and

advertising signs can be obstructive or unsafe. Schedule inspections and provide opportunities for people to report issues as they arise.

Public transport infrastructure, such as bus and tram stops, need to be clearly marked and designed to maintain visibility along a footpath. There should be sufficient width for pedestrians (including wheelchairs) between the edge of the stop furniture and the other edge of the footpath.



**Poor street furniture design** – structure blocks the footpath; creates a visual obstruction; and creates a potential point of pedestrian conflict that may lead people to walk into the roadway.



**Good street furniture design** – footpath remains clear and direct, views are unobstructed.

# Walkability Solutions (cont.)

## Road Crossings and Intersections

Good quality road crossings reduce the occurrence of accidents, often severe, involving pedestrians and vehicles. Streets that facilitate safe and comfortable crossings can be more attractive and vibrant. Pedestrians can walk between shops, cafés and restaurants while enjoying the freedom and amenity of the street.

A highly walkable environment enables people to safely and comfortably walk across a street at any location (although it is illegal to cross informally within 20 metres of a formal crossing). Pedestrians can continue on natural desire lines (where they want to go) when safe to do so.

Avoid infrastructure such as pedestrian fencing to funnel pedestrians to formal crossing points, as it reduces the amenity of the walking environment. Infrastructure such as underpasses and tunnels, which take people out of sight, decreases feelings of safety and is generally less convenient than walking at street level.

To better support safe road crossings, consider:

- Traffic speed – Slower vehicular speeds are a major factor in encouraging safe and welcoming pedestrian environments. You can reduce vehicle speeds by formal speed limit changes or by introducing physical traffic calming devices, such as raised crossings and kerb outstands, which also make walkers more visible.
- Traffic lane width – Reducing the width of the road available for cars helps slow vehicles as well as making crossings safer for pedestrians, as the distance they need to walk is shorter.
- Medians – Median strips containing pedestrian refuges help people to cross wider streets and roads safely (Section 4.7.3, **VicRoads Traffic Engineering Manual – Volume 1**). Well-designed and landscaped medians are also an effective way of increasing the beauty of a street and slowing traffic.

**Austrroads Guide to Traffic Management Part 6: Intersections, Interchanges and Crossings** considers the different design principles more fully. Section 3.4 summarises the general crossings treatments that can be considered at intersections and mid-block locations. Section 4 of the VicRoads Traffic Engineering Manual – Volume 1 summarises the design of all forms of pedestrian facilities. Remember that VicRoads controls the arterial road network and must approve any significant traffic control on the local road network.

Roundabouts are problematic for pedestrians because drivers do not need to give way to pedestrians in any

circumstance and tend to focus on avoiding conflict with other cars. The standard engineering response is to provide marked pedestrian crossings set back from the roundabout. Because the crossings are not on pedestrian desire lines, walking there will be inconvenient, so fewer people will use them and they may be deterred from walking altogether. Councils wishing to promote walking should generally avoid building roundabouts.

If a roundabout is a preferred option, consider the design approach developed by Port Phillip City Council. This involves crossings raised to the level of the footpath on desire lines immediately adjacent to the roundabout, to provide a smooth and clear line for people to walk. Splitter islands should be considered to offer a refuge for pedestrians, especially where the roundabout is more than one lane.

Traffic lights at crossings are installed through a warrant system operated by VicRoads, which determines whether enough pedestrians are crossing a road at that point to install signals. Signals should include pedestrian lights which operate automatically when the corresponding vehicle light turns green. The timing of the pedestrian signal should be sufficient for a person to cross the road in one signal phase. Standard traffic lights are often inconvenient for pedestrians and councils should promote options that facilitate crossing, such as auto head start, auto green walk and late call up.

## Supportive Infrastructure

The attractiveness and practicality of a footpath environment can be significantly enhanced by the use of supportive infrastructure, such as:



- *Street furniture and facilities* – Strategically located seating, rubbish bins, toilets and water fountains are important for a comfortable walking environment. Locate facilities to minimise reduction of the effective width of footpaths. Provide facilities in the ‘shadow’ of trees or



kerbside cafes if possible and set them back far enough from on-street parking to ensure they do not obstruct people opening car doors. Public transport infrastructure not only helps extend the range of walking trips through better integration between the modes, but it can also serve additional supportive purposes, such as shelter and rest spots.

- **Streetlights** – Adequate but not excessive lighting (Section 6.5 of the [Guide to Road Design Part 6A](#)) is critical to ensure pedestrians can observe hazards such as uneven surfaces or street furniture, and to enhance feelings of personal security. Pedestrian underpasses should be well lit at all times, both day and night, to ensure a sense of personal security. Pedestrian crossings (formal or informal refuge areas) should be lit so that they are highly visible to both pedestrians and motorists.



- **Street trees and planting** – Trees and plants increase the attractiveness of a street and can provide shade for pedestrians. Make sure that trees are positioned so they don't reduce the effective width of the footpath. Consider kerbside plots for flowers, bushes and vegetables.
- **Overhead shelter structures** – Separated covered walkways (distinct from shopfront verandahs and awnings) protect pedestrians from rain and sun. These structures should be considered when connecting facilities such as shopping centres, commercial areas or along streets with kerbside cafés. Sufficient lighting must be provided. Note however that these structures can reduce the visual amenity of the street and reduce natural light and warmth.

- **Wayfinding signage** – Signs are important to help people understand where they are within a walking network. You can do this through adequate street signage as well as directional guidance to key destinations. You may even wish to brand certain walking trails and provide signage to help guide people along them. When doing so, you should consider the visual amenity: too many signs can detract from the look of the street. See the Victorian Department of Transport's [You Are Here: A Guide to Developing Pedestrian Wayfinding](#) for more information.



## Advocacy and Engagement

Creating a walkable environment is as much about culture as it is about infrastructure and environment. Making walking seem natural helps overcome perceptions that walking may be dangerous.

Ultimately, promoting walkability is about changing people's behaviour, getting them out of their cars and onto the streets – at least some of the time. The measures already discussed will create the conditions to facilitate walking, but people may still need some prompting to take up the opportunity to walk. This can be approached by selling the benefits of walking to individuals, especially health, and using positive images and messages. Council has a strong role to play in promoting these images through its materials and communications with its community.

Local government can develop and implement behaviour change programs to target specific audiences. This can be as simple as letting residents in a particular neighbourhood know about new walking infrastructure and holding events to celebrate its opening. Alternatively, it can be more structured, such as in a [school travel plan](#), support for [walking groups](#) or [challenges within workplaces](#).

# Building Support

Just as important as writing a clear and well-designed walking strategy is ensuring that it doesn't just sit on the shelf in council, but actually changes things on the ground.

To do this, you need to build support for your strategy, preferably at all stages of its development. Start as early as possible – ideally when you first announce you're going to be developing a walking strategy – to get key stakeholders on your side. This will create a better strategy, one that will have a good chance of being implemented.

Support comes in different forms, including traffic engineers building new infrastructure, councillors voting for the strategy, traders being happy with suggested changes outside their shops and parents encouraging their children to walk to school.

Ways of building support change as the strategy develops. For example, during consultation, you will be asking for advice and information to shape the strategy. When you are raising ideas, you will be concerned with making sure that all voices, both agreeing and opposing, are heard.

## Tailoring the Message

Be mindful when explaining what a walking strategy is and why your council needs one. Be prepared to talk specifics about walking in a way that different people will understand. For example, a traffic engineer will have a strong understanding of technical language surrounding design and infrastructure, but this may not be the case for a local resident.

A useful trick is to condense your arguments around the walking strategy into an 'elevator pitch'. This is a one-minute précis of what you're doing and why your particular target audience should support it. You can expand this according to the situation, but it's a good way to ensure that you are clear about what you're doing.

Keep in mind that people will often think of walking only in terms of what they do, and assume that everyone else does the same – you can challenge this (gently) but it's also a valuable viewpoint in its own right.





## Internal Audiences

Internally, you need to think about a number of key audiences. How you work with each of these depends on your position within council.

- *Traffic engineers* – They are a good source of information on transport issues in the municipality. Knowledge of walkability varies, with some actively engaged and others wedded to a car-centric model of planning and provision. You will need to understand the position of the latter group and work out what is possible within your council. Understanding and linking to resources such as Austroads guidelines is critical when gaining the support of engineers.
- *Town planners* – They will usually have clear ideas about land use within the municipality. They often support increased density of land use, which in turn supports more active transport modes such as walking. Talk to your planners about the current state of planning within council and how it might support a walking strategy designed to increase walkability.
- *Community wellbeing or health promotion officers* – They are often responsible for preventative health programs from council. They will be a good resource for engaging with external audiences receiving these services and will often have detailed knowledge about health statistics within the municipality. They may also be running programs that align with your walking strategy and provide greater support for the actions as they are implemented.
- *Councillors* – This group is often a good first step to engaging with external audiences. Look for opportunities such as regular or ad hoc council briefings to engage councillors in the process early. Councillors will want to understand the reason for developing the walking strategy and what it will achieve in practical terms. Remember that some constituencies represented by councillors may be opposed to specific actions within the walking strategy, so the sooner you can get them on board and explain the benefits to be achieved through increased walkability, the better.
- *Senior management* – This group will want to see how the strategy links to other key council policies and strategies. The more links you can make to help deliver the objectives of these related policies, the better. They will want to ensure that development of the strategy is tracking according to the original projected timeline, that implementation will be effective and any potential conflict points with community members are anticipated and well managed.

For both engineers and planners, solicit their views on the physical and institutional obstacles to greater walking. They are likely to have observed barriers as part of their day-to-day work. Invite and incorporate their ideas on potential solutions. Building strong links with both traffic engineers and urban planners may help you deliver your strategy. This can take the form of ensuring walking is considered within existing capital works programs and larger developments, of which walking can be a minor part (from a budgetary point of view) but deliver significant benefits.

# Building Support (cont.)

## Outside Council

Outside council, consider a range of groups (some people will fit more than one group) relevant to the objectives set down in your strategy. They might include:

- *Families* – This group has varied walking needs. Young children travelling to pre-school or school will be dependent on adults and therefore affect their everyday walking patterns. Many parents will have strong opinions about the safety of walking, both from a traffic and a 'stranger danger' viewpoint. It is important to listen and develop appropriate solutions. Schools are a good conduit to spread positive messages about walking, though this should be done in a structured manner which considers the particular walking environment of each school. Resources for primary schools and families are available at Victoria Walks – [Smart Steps](#).
- *Elderly people* – This group may travel to specific destinations and/or be recreational walkers. They may be concerned about safety issues such as walking in poorly lit areas, trip hazards on footpaths and trails, the ability to cross streets, and traffic speed. They may also be interested in walking-supportive infrastructure, such as seats or toilets.
- *Recreational walkers* – These walkers often walk specific routes. They should be engaged to better understand those routes, and to determine what would encourage them to walk for more utility trips – they may drive to parks or other destinations to walk.
- *Commuters* – The walking of this group will often be integrated with other transport modes, particularly public transport. They are often primarily interested in direct routes of pure utility. They can be engaged through their workplaces, in behaviour change programs such as walking challenges.
- *Traders* – This group may raise concerns about the effect of specific actions (especially proposals to reduce parking or change footpath layouts) on their trade. They are often time-poor and focused on making their business run. The Heart Foundation's [Good for Business\\$](#) is a useful resource when working with retailers.
- *Community organisations* – They are a good source of information about the walking of their members. Think beyond those organisations that have an obvious link to walking or physical activity. Consider any organisation (e.g. migrant groups, Rotary, senior citizens) that represents a good number of local people – it's a great way to talk to a lot of people at once.
- *State government bodies* – Some of your external stakeholders, such as VicRoads and Public Transport Victoria, may also have a role to play in supporting the implementation of your strategy.
- *Local media* – The media can be useful in getting the message out about promoting walking and specific actions in the strategy. Talk to your public relations staff about an appropriate communications strategy.
- *Funding bodies* – Be aware of any funding opportunities that may exist or arise to support walking infrastructure and programs. Often, this will take a quite specific form and may not, at first, seem directly related to walking. For example, health promotion grants available from state and federal governments may provide an opportunity to develop a walking program that is stand-alone or able to be integrated with other actions from your strategy.



# Strategy form and implementation

## Objectives and Actions

A good walking strategy will include objectives that reflect an overall vision for walking within your municipality. As mentioned earlier, the vision will be derived from information collected during the consultation stage, which will give you a clearer idea of the value of walking to your community and how that should be expressed.

Strategic objectives should be accompanied by actions to ensure their delivery. These will be a mix of short and long term actions, staggered so that there is a clear logic as to when different infrastructure and supportive programs are delivered. For example, there is little to be gained in introducing a walk to school program if the school has identified that there are problems with street crossings nearby and that it will not support such a program without improvements.

The relationships you develop in preparing the plan across council will also be important in developing an effective implementation plan for your actions. Engineers are critical to securing funding for capital works programs and measuring its effectiveness. Traffic engineers will help you develop a realistic schedule.

Infrastructure actions will need to be assigned to the capital works budget for each year. Your actions should be affordable within the context of your typical capital works expenditure each year, though don't be afraid to push for additional funding for actions warranted under the strategy. Plan your actions so they make sense within a number of capital works budgets over time.

Consider the potential to implement a walking strategy through the planning scheme, such as an amendment to the Municipal Strategic Statement or introduction of a local policy. A walking strategy is unlikely to have a significant influence on land-use planning decisions unless it results in a change to the planning scheme.

To solidify executive and senior management support you have gained, ensure that the actions are recognised in the council plan.

## Targets and Evaluation

Your strategy needs targets that can be measured during implementation. They could be as simple as assigning start and completion dates for specific actions. Linking this to regular council reporting processes will help ensure timely implementation.

Targets should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely) and can be a mix of outcomes and process, depending on your capacity to collect and analyse data for evaluation. How you define each of these is up to you. You may choose outcome targets that are directly countable, for example metres of new walking trails established, pieces of street furniture installed or number of people using a recreational trail. Others could be self-reported, for example the number of children walking to school as measured through a school travel survey. A process measure could be a commitment to ongoing funding of walking in the council plan. While these aren't hard measures of how many people are out walking, they are indicators of a more supportive and walkable environment.

A Victoria Walks guide to measuring walking will be available in mid-late 2013.



# Strategy form and implementation (cont.)

## Walking Strategies in Action

The following examples will give you an idea of the many ways in which walking strategies can be presented. Note that some are combined walking and cycling strategies. We recommend separate strategies and actions for cycling and walking as they require different approaches and infrastructure (see page 11 of the Department of Transport's [Walking and Cycling International Literature Review](#)). In many ways walking has a stronger relationship with public transport than cycling.

Transport planning specific to walking is relatively new. If you develop a strategy using the process outlined in this guide, including network planning, you should be able to develop a more advanced strategy than many of those previously produced in Victoria.

- [City of Port Phillip Walk Plan 2011–2020](#)
- [City of Stonnington Walking Policy](#)
- [Maroondah Pedestrian Strategy](#)
- [Greater Bendigo Walking and Cycling Strategy 2007](#)
- [City of Brimbank Cycling and Walking Strategy 2008](#)
- [Shire of Campaspe Walking Strategy 2007](#)
- [Draft City of Monash Walking and Cycling Strategy](#)
- [City of Moonee Valley Walking and Cycling Strategy 2012–2022](#)
- [Shire of Mount Alexander Walking and Cycling Strategy 2010–2020](#)





## Overview of Walking Strategy Development

The different stages in developing a walking strategy are illustrated here and discussed throughout this guide. You can adapt this approach to your needs, for example adding a timeframe for each stage.

### BACKGROUND RESEARCH

- demographics research
- land use patterns
- transport and traffic data
- legislation and policy review



### STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION #1

- internal officer and manager consultation
- councillor briefing
- community consultation
- key external stakeholder consultation



### DRAFT STRATEGY

- development of draft
- feedback from key stakeholders
- re-draft to final version
- implementation timetable



### STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION #2

- internal officer and manager consultation
- community consultation
- key external stakeholder consultation



### APPROVAL

- sign-off from management
- approval from councillors
- media announcement



### IMPLEMENTATION

- finalise implementation schedule
- integrate with capital works budget
- seek funding for projects
- establish internal implementation process
- review and evaluate regularly

# Endnotes

- 1 Walking, Cycling and Obesity Rates in Europe, North America and Australia, Bassett Jr. D, Pucher J, Buehler R, Thompson D and Crouter S, *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, 2008 (5), 795–814.
- 2 *Good for Business*, Tolley R, Heart Foundation, 2011.
- 3 *Making the Case for Investment in the Walking Environment*, Sinnett D, Williams K, Chatterjee K and Cavill N, Living Streets, 2011.
- 4 Victorian Integrated Survey of Travel and Activity, 2009–10, Victorian Department of Transport.
- 5 *Safe Travels: Evaluating Mobility Management Traffic Safety Impacts*, Littman T and Fitzroy S, Victoria Transport Policy Institute, 2012.

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