



Smart Steps: for Councils

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Getting Communities on Their Feet, 26 September 2013

www.victoriawalks.org.au



Smart Steps for Councils



- Supporting councils to promote walking, across all activities.
- Three main components:
 1. Online toolkit
 2. Guide to Walking Strategies
 3. Guide to Measuring Walking.

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Welcome to *Smart Steps for Councils* - the online information toolkit for promoting walking and walkability across the full range of council activities.

Whether you're a town planner, engineer, recreation officer, transport planner or health promotion officer, *Smart Steps for Councils* has information to help you promote walking and create more walkable environments in your day to day work. It's a one stop shop for information on walking policy, planning, programs and infrastructure.

This toolkit links you to the best information from around the world, but it also highlights (often harder to find) information from Australia and Victoria. It includes local case studies of successful projects that promote walking and better public spaces.

Why reinvent the wheel when you can learn from the success of others?

How does it work?



Each page provides higher level information and then links to more detailed material on particular issues. We have been selective about the links provided to ensure you get the most relevant information without having to wade through a whole lot of extraneous material. Local case studies are generally provided at the bottom of the page.

The format is very user friendly, but based on rigorous research.

Smart Steps for Councils aims to provide the best compilation of walking and walkability information in Australia.

If you have any feedback on the toolkit, including any good resources you think we should include, we would love to hear from you. Email info@victoriawalks.org.au or call 9662 3975.



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Urban design and planning

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"Artists, philosophers, urban planners and architects have been dreaming, writing about and drawing 'ideal cities' for hundreds of years...In most of these visions the pedestrian is the measure of ideal urban spaces." (Pedestrians' Quality Needs, p.34)

What makes a walkable environment?

There is an extensive body of research that explores the different types of policy interventions and built form characteristics that promote walking. Some useful summaries include:

- [Travel and the Built Environment](#) (Ewing and Cervero 2010), provides a quantitative analysis of more than 50 other studies on the built environment.
- [The Walking and Cycling International Literature Review](#) prepared for the Victorian Department of Transport (Krizek, Forsyth and Baum 2009).

Some of the key conclusions to be drawn from this research include:

- Destination accessibility - making sure there are places to walk to within walking distance - is probably the most important factor. This includes availability of public transport, which is strongly associated with walking.
- Connectivity and permeability in the walking network is very important - intersection density is one of the most important measurable indicators of a walkable environment.
- The availability and cost of car parking is a key factor in determining how people travel.
- Higher density development provides an opportunity for more people to live in walkable areas and provides the customers required to sustain local business - providing walkable destinations.
- Proximity to the CBD is strongly associated with walking, perhaps reflecting the fact that inner city areas tend to be more walkable.
- The quality of walking infrastructure - footpaths, crossings, etc - is important for less mobile groups such as seniors, disabled people, children and their parents. Perceptions of infrastructure may be as important as the reality.
- The aesthetic quality of the built environment is significant, but hard to quantify.
- The street environment must feel safe.



Designing for walking

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Well planned neighbourhoods can increase the number of people who walk every day, however in order for a neighbourhood to attain an environment that is conducive to walking it needs to address some principal design issues namely density, diversity and connectivity.

Destinations and diversity

Fundamental to successful walkable neighbourhoods is the diversity, or mix of uses, creating a higher density texture of destinations.

Destinations are the most elemental aspect of walking for transport. Put simply, people need destinations within walking distance to be able to walk. Locating destinations within 400 metres is ideal, because walking is likely to be at least as quick as driving over this distance. In Melbourne about 75% of trips below 400 metres are walked. However there is certainly potential for people to regularly walk longer distances, up to about 1.6km (a 20 minute walk for most people). In Melbourne, about 20% of trips that are more than 1km but less than 2km are already walked ([Pedestrian Access Strategy 2010](#)).



With greater diversity in their neighbourhoods residents can find more of the amenities and services they need within walking distance. Increasing the diversity in the form and function of a neighbourhoods building stock creates a broader base for employment, commerce and social connections. [Made for Walking](#) looks at these critical concepts in more detail.

Density

In her seminal text [Jane Jacobs \(1961\)](#) stressed that a high concentration of people is vital for a street life, economic growth and prosperity. She illustrated that higher densities yield a critical mass of people that is capable of supporting more vibrant communities. Density needs to be thought of in a more holistic manner rather than simply people per sq km, it has to include density of jobs, schools and services such as retail, public transport and recreational facilities.

[Transforming Australian Cities 2010](#) was commissioned by the Victorian Department of Transport and the City of Melbourne to explore the potential to accommodate Melbourne's residential growth through infill development.



High density does not necessitate high rise. Source [Transforming Australian Cities](#)

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Case study - shared space in Bendigo

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Bendigo city centre has been redeveloped with a focus on public realm improvements to improve pedestrian spaces. This includes the innovative Walk Bendigo shared space which aims to increase the levels of alertness and responsiveness of all street users to their surroundings – drivers, pedestrians and cyclists.

By redesigning traditional street spaces with pedestrian style paving, furniture and fittings, and in so doing increasing the level of ambiguity at intersections and streets, it has been shown that the psychology of street users can be modified to provide a safer and more amenable city. The removal of things such as traffic lights and road markings all serve to increase the uncertainty of space. By encouraging unpredictability and creating uncertainty in the minds of all road users, vigilance and care are improved, resulting in safer streets and the potential for a higher quality pedestrian and cyclist environment.

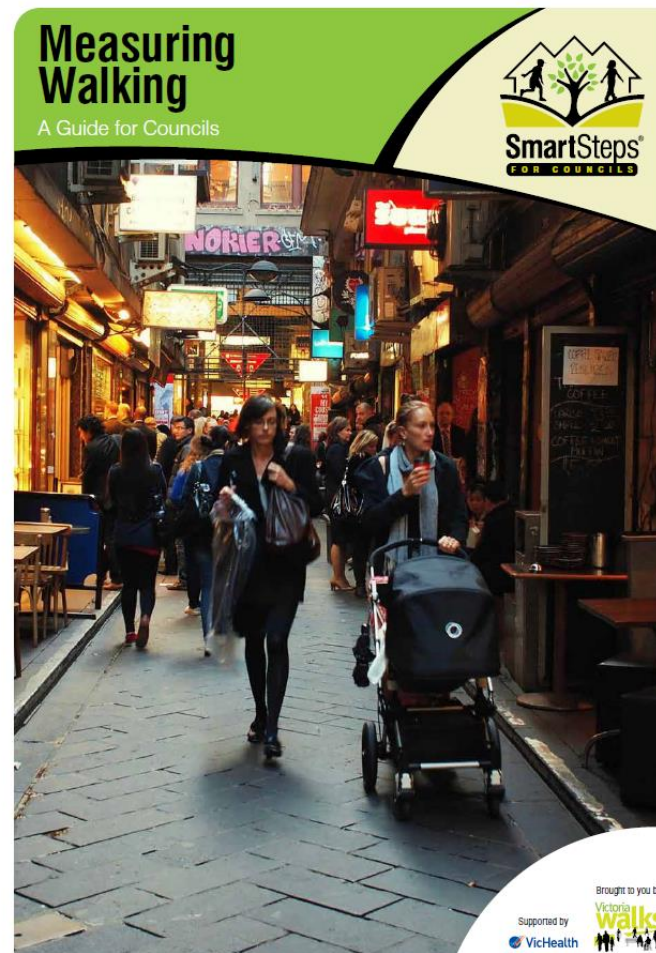
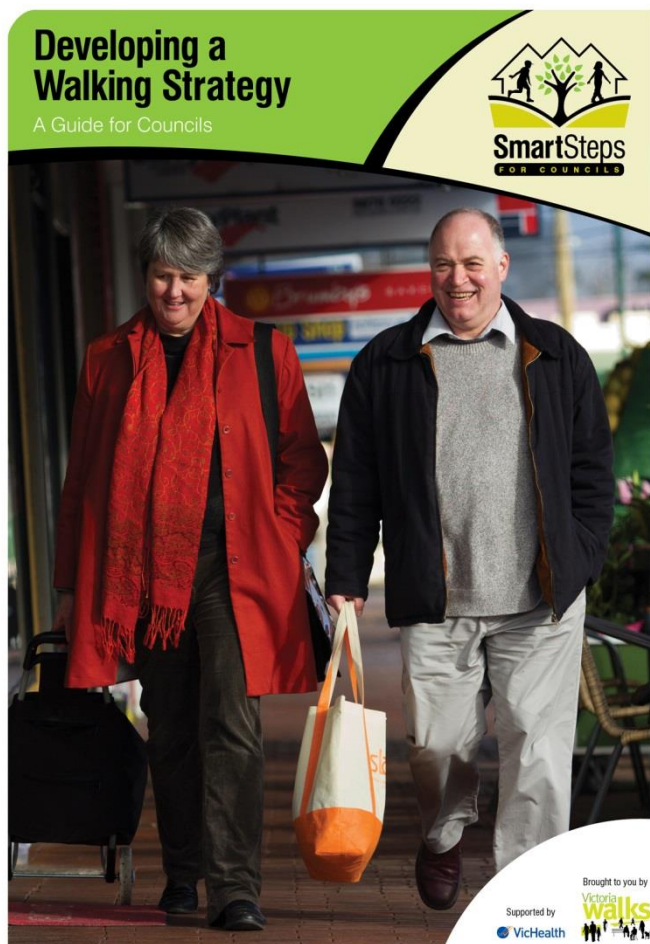


The new intersections using the shared space model allow level and direct pedestrian crossing routes. The whole intersection is an intermingled traffic space with pedestrians able to traverse between, behind and in front of slow moving vehicle and cycle traffic. The installation of textured rumble strips and approach ramps will provide drivers with the physical cues to slow down. The reduced speeds will in turn create safer pedestrian spaces and encourage more pedestrian activity.

Analysis of speed in Hargreaves Street show that the changes have reduced average speeds dramatically, from 40km/h to 26-29km/h.



Detailed guides



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To successfully promote walking and create walkable environments a holistic approach will deliver the best results. Research suggests that no one element will create a walkable environment, but a number of elements will.

It is important to remember that walking is a human behaviour and a choice that people make - whether they will go somewhere and if so, how. The objective is to have people *choose* to walk.

For travel, that means a choice between walking or travelling by another means. Other travel modes can either compete with walking (eg cars) or complement walking (public transport). For recreation, the choice may be between walking and sitting on the couch.

Different people will have different reasons for walking and different needs. Western Australia's [Planning and designing for pedestrians guidelines](#) (section 6) outlines the different general groups of pedestrians and their needs. **Councils should plan for people with more restricted mobility, including children and seniors, to ensure that everyone in the community has the chance to walk.**

See the [behaviour change](#) section for analysis of motivators and barriers for people to choose to walk.



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Thinking big for walking

17 MAY 2013

In Australia we regularly spend billions on road projects and, occasionally, public transport, while projects to improve public space and encourage walking feed off the crumbs of public spending.

But what would happen if we spent big money on walking? If the experience of Indianapolis is anything to go by, we would transform the way people think about their city.



Last week Indianapolis, a city of around 2 million people, launched their [Cultural Trail](#) - 8 miles of walking and cycling trail with associated improvements to public space. The project cost a total of \$63 million, big money by the standards of pedestrian projects, but a drop in the ocean compared to Melbourne's proposed east-west freeway tunnel, for example.

And the locals seem to think it's money very well spent. See this [news article](#) for a taste of the response. And read the [Indy Star editorial](#) for a sense of the civic pride created. A warning though, you may find the level of parochialism a little blinding. Even the [business community](#) are struggling to contain their enthusiasm.

On some stretches of the trail a traffic lane was removed to accommodate it, but nobody seems to care now. In fact, the city council's engineering manager is as enthusiastic as everyone else -

"This is actually an enhancement and an incredible asset to the city."



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Walking Strategies



- David Meiklejohn, UrbanTrans

Walking Strategies as a Means of Engagement – Developing a Walking Strategy that engages stakeholders across organisations, communities and government to provide a clear plan for implementation

- Kerry Irwin, Baw Baw Shire

From Issue to Implementation – A rural council's journey

- Panel Discussion

David Meiklejohn, Kerry Irwin and Kathleen Kemp (Moonee Valley City Council)

- Morning tea 11.30-11.55