

**A WALKING POLICY  
FOR  
THE CITY OF STONNINGTON  
DRAFT  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION AND VISION .....	3
THE POLICY CONTEXT .....	3
RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION .....	6
GOOD PRACTICE FOR INCREASING WALKING .....	7
EVALUATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN STONNINGTON .....	9
The Physical Environment .....	9
The Behavioural Environment .....	11
THE RECOMMENDED WALKING POLICY FOR STONNINGTON .....	12
Change attitudes and behaviour .....	12
Collaborate to improve the provision for walking .....	13
Create pedestrian-friendly built environments, streets and public spaces. ....	13
Increase the safety of walking to school and to/within retail precincts. ....	14
Integrate walking with public transport .....	14

# CITY OF STONNINGTON WALKING POLICY

## ***INTRODUCTION AND VISION***

Stonnington Council approved the Sustainable Transport Policy (STP) in 2008, and agreed that walking was to become the “Priority Transport Mode” within the City. The development of this Walking Policy springs directly from that important decision of Council.

Based on the Victorian Integrated Survey of Travel and Activity (VISTA) data, 22% of the trips taken by Stonnington residents are made by walking, placing it sixth on the table of walking rates, behind the City of Melbourne (46%) and Yarra (40%). The Metropolitan Melbourne average for walking is 15%. Stonnington has a relatively high rate of trips by car at 63% (compared with the City of Melbourne at 35% and Yarra at 43%).

Data from the Victorian Activity Travel Survey (VATS) show that approximately one third (35%) of all car trips in Metropolitan Melbourne are less than 2kms in length. Most of these short car trips are to local shops, services, schools (as passengers), public transport and social destinations. Many short trips could be undertaken on foot. The Walking Policy is designed to identify the best approaches that Council can adopt to enable and encourage residents (and some visitors) to replace short car trips with walking trips.

The City of Stonnington should aim to reduce the number of local short car trips by 50% over 10 years (reducing the share of trips by car in Stonnington from 63% to 52%) and increase the share of local walk trips by 50% (from 22% to 33% of all local trips). There are major congestion, environmental and safety benefits to be gained by reducing traffic levels, especially within the City’s Activity Centres and near schools and stations, and a wide range of health, economic, amenity and social benefits to be gained by increasing the level of walking in Stonnington. Improved walkability and high quality walking environments are known to increase both residential and commercial property values.

This is an achievable and worthwhile target.

***The proposed “Vision” for the future of walking in Stonnington is:***

**To progressively make Stonnington’s suburbs and retail precincts world-class walking areas, where it is safe and convenient to walk to destinations, where people are actively encouraged and enabled to walk, and where key community stakeholder groups and the community at large support Council’s efforts to increase the amount of walking.**

**The target is to increase the share of walking trips made by Stonnington residents in Stonnington by 50% by 2020.**

## ***THE POLICY CONTEXT***

Walking was the “forgotten mode” during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and our cities were planned, almost exclusively, to accommodate cars. However, since the turn of this century there has been a resurgence of interest in walking for a range of health,

environmental and economic reasons. Throughout the world there have been numerous projects and programs developed and implemented to enable and encourage more walking. Examples include the revitalisation of Copenhagen, numerous areas in the UK, the closure to traffic of Times Square, as well as innovative projects in Victoria. The international examples identify what can be achieved in changing travel behaviour by improvements to both infrastructure and the quality and quantity of information.

In many countries walking accounts for 25-30% of travel mode share, whilst in some of the most walkable cities in the developed world it reaches almost 50%.

The Victorian State Government has released the Pedestrian Access Strategy (September 2010) aimed at increasing walking for transport by making it safer to walk, changing peoples' attitudes and behaviour, creating pedestrian-friendly environments and integrating walking with public transport. VicRoads has adopted a "SmartRoads" approach – in which the major Retail Precinct roads have been designated as "Pedestrian Priority" areas, within which it is much easier to implement initiatives that support people travelling on foot.

Most of the recent State transport policies and programs have acknowledged and provided funding for initiatives supporting pedestrians, including *The Victorian Transport Plan* (2008), the *TravelSmart Program* (2002), the *Local Area Access Program* (2005) and the *Creating Better Places Program*.

State Government policy is supported by the programs of not-for-profit organisations which provide programs to encourage walking, including Kinect Australia (the *Walktober Program*) and VicHealth (*Victoria Walks* and *Streets Ahead*). *Victoria Walks* enables local groups to "audit" their own areas and identify improvements needed to the local walking environment.

The City of Stonnington is already active in planning and providing for walking, in many locations and by many departments. There is a strong focus on walking issues in the Road Safety Strategy, and walking is an important element in documents such as the recently released Access and Inclusion Plan (2010-2013), the Community Safety Plan, the Older Person's Strategy, the Public Realm Strategy, as well as all other documents reviewed in the Sustainable Transport Plan Background Report. That Report identified the need for Council to officially make walking the priority transport mode.

The current Council Plan (2009-2013 Year 2) identifies the four "pillars" of the Plan (the Environment, Community, Liveability and Prosperity) and shows that all need to be supported through increased pedestrian activity and high levels of public amenity, to reduce the City's impact on the environment, to encourage community activity, to increase local liveability and to support jobs and retail precincts.

Council has been progressive in appointing a Sustainable Transport Officer, a Road Safety Officer, a Disability Access Officer and an Environmental Education Officer, all of whom are involved in walking issues and solutions. Council operates one "Walking School Bus" service for Stonnington Primary School. Numbers of relevant studies have been commissioned, including *Chapel Vision* (2007) which recognised

that future population and employment growth in the area can only be accommodated through improvements to public transport, cycling and walking in preference to the private car. Council officers work actively with the development community to ensure that major new developments provide walkable and “permeable” environments for pedestrians and do not provide excessive parking.

Council is involved in supporting walking programs, and publishes the “Walking for Pleasure” booklet. “Easy Walkers” and Seniors Events are funded by Council and co-ordinated by Council’s Social Support Program Team, while the local Historical Societies also provide information, self-guided walk booklets and special event walks and tours locally.

Council was involved in the “Best Foot forward for Stonnington (Malvern)” project, conducted in 2005, under the TravelSmart banner. The specific aim of the project was to highlight the benefits of sustainable active transport to residents within a one kilometre radius of Glenferrie Road Malvern, in an effort to increase the number of residents walking, cycling and catching public transport to the shops (Glenferrie Road retail strip in Malvern) rather than driving their cars.

The evaluation of the project showed that measurable change in travel behaviour took place as a result of the campaign. (Improved pedestrian access to retail precincts could act to “compensate” traders who may have been negatively impacted by the time extension of Clearways).

Council has been involved in the Inner Melbourne Action Plan (IMAP) project and world-class pedestrian wayfinding signage has been installed in the Chapel Street and Toorak Village Precincts, and has supported the installation of 40kph zones covering much of Prahran.

The City spends approximately 10% of its Capital Budget on items largely for the benefit of pedestrians, such as footpath replacements in residential and commercial areas, trails and signage, road safety and streetscape works, trees and furniture. In addition staff time is allocated to walking promotion and support.

Council’s existing contribution to walking issues is strong, but it will need to increase to fulfil the commitment to make walking the priority mode and to reach the target identified in the proposed Vision.

Figure 1. Walking is relevant to many areas of Council's responsibilities



**RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- Stonnington has a population of 100,000. Ten percent are aged 5-17yrs and are too young to drive, and seven percent are aged 75+ yrs, and may find driving and car parking difficult or too costly. Up to 17,000 residents may need to walk for many of their trips.
- There are 11,000 people in Stonnington with some form of disability. Many cannot drive and will need to walk or use mobility aids for many of their trips.
- Within 10 years the City could grow by 10,000 new residents. Approximately 50% of the population changed address from 2001-2006. Many were new residents. The population is very “mobile” and needs a constant supply of information about local destinations and services, and encouragement to walk.
- There are large numbers of primary and secondary students in Stonnington (up to 15,000). Encouraging walking and reducing the contribution of the “school-run” would impact significantly on peak traffic flows.
- Of the 44,000 jobs in Stonnington only 10,000 are filled by local residents. Reducing car driving to work in Stonnington would impact significantly on peak traffic flows. Visitors to Stonnington can also be treated as “temporary residents” and encouraged to walk to nearby destinations while they are in the City.

## **GOOD PRACTICE FOR INCREASING WALKING**

There are a wide range of activities that Councils can undertake to increase the rates of walking in an area. (They are illustrated in Figure 2). There are three major groups of activities covering programs and events, signage/information and improved infrastructure and walking environments.

Figure 2.

### **A spectrum of Activities and Actions**

To increase walking and active transport

**Information** – Promotional media, Advice (TravelSmart)

**Leadership** – Policy (setting an example)

**Events** – Walktober, unique local initiatives

**Programs** – Walking School Bus, corporate challenge

#### **Signage/information**

Install pedestrian/cycling wayfinding signage

Develop Transport Access Guides

#### **Urban space improvements**

Improve footpaths & shared paths, add amenity (seating)

Improve road crossings, speed limits



1. **Programs and events.** This includes information and leadership – actively encouraging people to walk more often. TravelSmart and Smarter Choices campaigns have been shown to work effectively. Events and programs introduce people to walking and can convert them from walkers for pleasure or health to walkers for transport (or both, as the health/pleasure benefits are achieved through walking for transport). Leadership, as exhibited through strong policy and the development and implementation of a Council Travel Plan demonstrates Council’s credibility – an important element in encouraging behaviour change within the local community.
2. **Information.** Good information for walkers is provided through quality pedestrian wayfinding signage (as installed in Chapel Street) and this encourages more walking. Map-based signage can also be installed in car parks to encourage drivers to park once and walk to surrounding attractions.

Transport Access Guides (TAGs) and good quality hand-held maps, especially designed for walkers, serve the same purpose. (See Figures.3 & 4)

Figure 3. The Mandurah TAG



Figure 4. The Mandurah hand-held Map



- 3. Good quality walking environments.** These both enable and encourage more walking. People walk more (and spend more time and money) in quality environments. Quality walking areas have a good “off-road” environment – with flat footpaths, low gradients, pram ramps, and tactile pavers and a high level of amenity with seating, lighting, and landscaping. They also have a good “on-road” environment, with ample crossings, low speed limits and traffic management devices. The creation of quality walking environments requires attention to detail.

The best guide to providing a quality walking environment is contained in the “Pedestrian Planning Design Guide” (New Zealand Land Transport Department, December 2007). This comprehensive manual is based on a review of good practice in pedestrian infrastructure development from

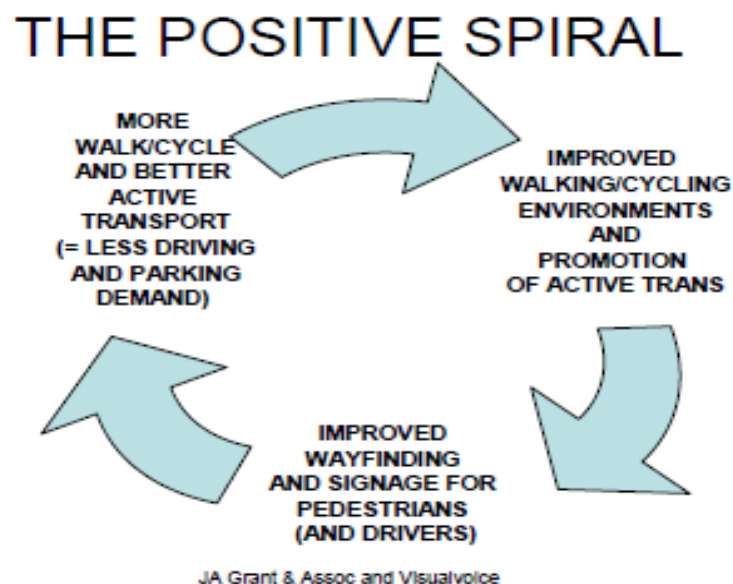


throughout the world, with an emphasis on what can be done to improve conditions for pedestrians in cities and suburbs that were developed during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, typically found in Australia, New Zealand, the UK, Canada and the USA. These countries generally have a low mode share for walking. The New Zealand Design Guide is complemented by the “audit notes” contained on the Victoria Walks website (see: [www.victoriawalks.org.au](http://www.victoriawalks.org.au) – *walking in your neighbourhood – do a walking audit*).

Creating better walking environments combined with the promotion and encouragement of walking will generate a positive spiral, which builds on itself and strengthens over time. It is an on-going process.

A major policy issue is to identify the correct balance between the development of walking infrastructure and the implementation of encouragement and other behaviour change programs in order to most effectively achieve the proposed vision and reach the target. The former are capital intensive and the latter staff intensive.

Figure 5. The positive spiral



## ***EVALUATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN STONNINGTON***

### **The Physical Environment**

Evaluation of the existing physical environment focussed on three main categories: (a) retail precincts – both large and small; (b) school precincts; and (c) station precincts. The evaluation consisted of a mix of auditing, reviews of previous studies, questionnaires and consultation.

The results are:

(a) The walking environment in the major street-based retail precincts is generally of a high quality. Examination of them showed that:

- The footpaths are generally flat and even, and well maintained;
- “Continuous path of travel” (CPT) crossings have been installed over side roads in some places – all along Glenferrie Road, much of High Street, Armadale, Toorak Road and elsewhere;
- Footpath trading boundary indicators are installed in all areas;
- The remaining footpath available to walkers is generally of sufficient width except in locations where the footpath is highly congested by pedestrians or is narrower than normal, e.g. in parts of Toorak Road;
- There are 40kph speed limits on most of the major retail streets, except High Street in both Armadale and Prahran (the latter is currently under review);
- Yellow “Walksafe” treatments have been installed at a number of intersections, but not all;
- The Prahran and Toorak Village areas have wayfinding signage, but the others do not; and,
- Street name signage is generally adequate.

In general the minor retail areas have less pedestrian friendly walking environments, especially those close to the stations such as East Malvern, Darling, Glen Iris, and Caulfield (Waverley Road).

It is recommended that the pedestrian environment of all retail areas is upgraded to an agreed “Stonnington Standard”. Such a “Standard” would need to be established by Council and could vary between the major and minor retail precincts. It could include:

- High quality design standards;
- Footpath, pram ramp and crossover evenness, gradient and maintenance;
- Crossing markings/colouration and maintenance;
- Crossing installation to major destinations;
- Adoption of “Greenlight” treatments at signalised crossings;
- Appropriate speed limit signage and traffic speed management;
- IMAP-type pedestrian wayfinding signage;
- Removing graffiti and any “negative” messages/signage; and,
- Amenity standards for seating, lighting and landscaping.

The adoption of a standard would make auditing easier, possibly enabling local “Walk Stonnington” groups to conduct much of the work involved.

Chadstone Shopping Centre is unique in the Stonnington environment, and the improvement of access to it has been the subject of an earlier study by this consultancy. There has been limited interest from Centre management in the provision of improvements.

(b) The walking environment of school precincts is generally of good quality. Most schools have either a full or part-time 40kph speed limit near all entrances and most also have road crossings on the routes-to-school, many of which have a crossing supervisor.

The main impediments to walking are due to: (a) the volume and speed of traffic around schools – frequently caused by students’ parents and (b) the fact that many schools are either private schools or secondary schools, with large catchment areas, limiting the capacity of students to walk.

These problems have been moderated in some areas, through the development of innovative School Travel Plans and changes to the “culture” of the school administration, parents and students.

(c) The walking environment of station precincts is poor in most cases. This is exhibited by:

- The fact that many of the 15 railway stations in Stonnington are in obscure locations, hidden within residential areas or behind retail areas;
- Limited quantity and quality of signage both to many of the stations and from the stations to the retail, education and other destinations that rail travellers want to access;
- Poor footpath conditions either approaching the stations, or within the immediate station environs;
- Limited crossing facilities of roads linking stations to adjacent residential or retail areas; and
- A small number of places (along Milton Parade) where footpaths are not installed and there is one sign reading “Pedestrians Give Way to Vehicles”.

Railway stations and their precincts could be the “gateways” to many of the retail precincts, provide access to schools and link people and places within Stonnington. They need improving to more effectively fulfil this function. The immediate station environs are controlled by VicTrack, while signage is controlled by Metlink. Council will need to work with these agencies to implement the necessary improvements. Council can set a quality standard of design and amenity on its own land close to the stations.

## **The Behavioural Environment**

Many people already walk in Stonnington. While the physical environment is in need of improvements, they will take time to plan, fund and implement. In the short term improvements to the “behavioural” environment are likely to be more effective in encouraging more people to walk to more destinations more often.

Currently there is no designated Officer responsible for the City’s priority transport mode and no medium-to-long-term plan designed to promote walking within the City, to both residents and visitors.

The Walking Policy recommendations that follow place an emphasis on behavioural change and on working with other stakeholders to bring about change, as well as issues such as safety, the creation of better walking environments and improved links to public transport.

## ***THE RECOMMENDED WALKING POLICY FOR STONNINGTON***

The proposed “Vision” for the future of walking in Stonnington is:

***To progressively make Stonnington’s suburbs and precincts world-class walking areas, where it is safe and convenient to walk to destinations, where people are actively encouraged and enabled to walk, and where key community stakeholder groups and the community at large support Council’s efforts to increase the amount of walking.***

***The Target is to increase the amount of walking by Stonnington residents within Stonnington by 50% by 2020.***

The objectives of the Walking Policy are to:

1. Encourage people to walk by changing attitudes and behaviour.
2. Collaborate to improve provision for walking.
3. Create pedestrian-friendly built environments, streets and public spaces.
4. Increase the safety of walking, especially to school and to/within retail precincts
5. Integrate walking with public transport.

### ***Change attitudes and behaviour***

Council to consider:

- a) Promoting walking as Stonnington’s priority transport mode.
- b) Amending the Municipal Strategic Statement to insert policy or statements in support of walking, reflecting Council’s stated position.
- c) Signing the International Charter for Walking (a document outlining the principles and actions which form the basis of creating healthy, efficient and sustainable communities where people choose to walk).
- d) Appointing an Officer to be responsible for the implementation of the Walking Policy, to coordinate walking development across departments, and to increase the involvement of Council in all aspects of walking.
- e) Developing a Walking Policy “Implementation Plan” that identifies how the policy elements can be implemented. Review the Plan every 2 years.
- f) Maintaining the level of resources and support for existing walking programs.
- g) Resourcing, developing and implementing a range of new promotional programs, information and events that will be delivered on an on-going/permanent basis to both residents of and visitors to Stonnington, including a comprehensive “Walktober” walking program across the City and a “Best Foot Forward” campaign for all major precincts.
- h) Providing resources and support to enable the formation of “Walking Action Groups” across Stonnington, and amongst a range of different stakeholder types. Collaborate with Victoria Walks/VicHealth.
- i) Developing and implementing a “Council Travel Plan” and using the results to demonstrate leadership to other employers and relevant groups, including local schools.

## ***Collaborate to improve the provision for walking***

*Council to consider:*

- a) Establishing strong working relationships with external stakeholders – at the State level, amongst relevant research and support groups (e.g. Kinect Australia and VicHealth).
- b) Building on established working relationships with Trader Groups to research, promote and increase walking to and within retail precincts.
- c) Establishing strong relationships with schools in Stonnington, providing resources and support to enable them to produce and implement School Travel Plans that significantly increase the extent of student numbers walking to school. In the short term develop pilot projects to guide ongoing development.
- d) Conducting local research and investigations into pedestrian activity and local barriers to walking.
- e) Working closely with developers in the City of Stonnington to ensure that walkability and “permeability” for pedestrians is built into development applications. Emphasise the impact of walkability on property values.
- f) Establishing relationships with surrounding Councils to facilitate mutual support and collaboration over inter-municipal walking issues (e.g. walk access for Stonnington residents to Caulfield station).
- g) Promoting the formation of a Victorian Walking Advisory Committee (similar to the Bicycle Advisory Committee) and seek to become a founding member.

## ***Create pedestrian-friendly built environments, streets and public spaces.***

*Council to consider:*

- a) Progressively establishing a “Stonnington Standard” for footpaths, crossings, signage and other essential elements of the pedestrian environment for principal retail precincts, smaller retail precincts and suburban streets.
- b) Providing training and resources to Council Staff and resident/interest groups to give them the skills and information to identify improvements needed to the quality of the pedestrian and built environment.
- c) Conducting research into “best practice” internationally and regionally to advance knowledge in creating pedestrian friendly environments.
- d) Implement appropriate recommendations from the “Public Realm Strategy”.

### ***Increase the safety of walking to school and to/within retail precincts.***

*Council to consider:*

- a) Identifying and publicising the importance of the links between actual and perceived personal and traffic safety and people's willingness to walk, or letting children walk. Promote safety as a key issue in improving walking to school and to/within retail precincts in Stonnington.
- b) Conducting local research to demonstrate that low traffic speeds and safe walking environments are "good for business" in Stonnington.
- c) Continuing to reduce traffic speed in existing pedestrian environments and where there is "latent demand" for increased walking.
- d) Strengthening the efforts to improve safety around schools, and increase the perceptions of safety for both parents and students.
- e) Reducing traffic speeds around other "people destinations" to ensure they are accessible to people of all ages and abilities.

### ***Integrate walking with public transport.***

*Council to consider:*

- a) Working with the Department of Transport, land owners and Metlink to encourage them to significantly improve pedestrian access and wayfinding signage to/from railway stations in Stonnington.
- b) Rolling out IMAP wayfinding signage, identifying walking and public transport services and linkages, within all major retail precincts in Stonnington.
- c) Developing plans and strategies to integrate rail stations into their adjacent retail/community areas, making rail travel within Stonnington more attractive.
- d) Producing hand-held and on-line maps and "Travel Access Guides" for each major retail precinct, emphasising walk and public transport links and connections.