

Travel planning

for new developments

Advice for local governments



For the better

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Western Australia faces significant challenges in managing a rapidly growing population and thriving economy. Nowhere are these challenges more obvious than on our transport network where congestion is impacting on quality of life and economic productivity.



In WA, by 2020 it is expected that -

- › there will be 1,000,000 additional registered motorised vehicles; and
- › the cost of congestion will reach \$2.1 billion.

There is no single solution to fix congestion, a suite of measures are needed and the role of Travel Demand Management (TDM) tools such as Travel Plans (TPs) in contributing to congestion reduction should not be underestimated.

What is a Travel Plan?

A TP is a management strategy which comprises a package of measures designed to address the specific travel needs and impacts of a site or occupier. The overall intention of a TP is to encourage and facilitate the use of alternatives to single-occupancy car travel for journeys associated with the site.

Where are we currently at with Travel Planning?

TPs, and TDM programs more broadly, are being developed and implemented with increasing frequency in Australia.

Through the TravelSmart programs for example, the Department of Transport (DoT) is already working successfully with local governments and site occupiers in WA on voluntary TPs for existing workplaces, households and schools. The importance of these programs in promoting more sustainable and active travel behaviour is widely acknowledged and recent evaluations have demonstrated clear benefits.

There remains however only a few examples of the application of formal mechanisms to require travel planning as part of the planning process in Australia.

Are we missing a trick to maximise the benefits of Travel Planning?

By requiring TPs for new developments 'hard' measures (i.e. physical infrastructure) can be incorporated as part of the

Case Study 1

In 2012, the RAC prepared a TravelSmart Plan for its West Perth and Collier Pass offices (covering 1,039 staff). Targets included an 8% reduction in single-occupancy car travel by 2014.

A number of initiatives have been implemented including site access guides, an electric pool bike scheme, car-pooling database, cycling club, Bike to Work Day, TravelSmart page and staff discounts for cycling stores.

A 2011 evaluation of the DoT TravelSmart Workplaces program for the past five years demonstrated:

- › an average 5% reduction in single occupancy car travel for commuting to participating workplaces; and
- › \$4.50 return in community benefits for each \$1 spent, with net annual benefits of \$2.4m.

scheme design, avoiding the need and expense associated with retro-fitting facilities, and 'soft' measures (i.e. marketing and promotion, etc.) can be developed ready to roll out at first occupation of the site. This therefore provides a significant opportunity to influence travel behaviour before a tendency towards single occupancy car travel is entrenched. In addition, the availability of a TP at this stage helps planning and road authorities to better understand the likely impacts of a development, bearing in mind the mitigating effects of the TP, as part of the approval process.

Integrating travel planning within the planning process is common practice in other parts of the world, including the UK and USA. In the UK for example, TPs have been linked to the planning process since 2001 and are secured through planning conditions or a legal agreement (referred to as a Section 106 Agreement).



Several local governments in the eastern states require TPs for significant developments:

- › City of Darebin (Vic);
- › Maribyrnong City (Vic);
- › City of Gold Coast (QLD); and
- › City of Sydney (NSW).

What can local governments do?

Local governments can work to secure TPs for new developments by either:

- › requiring the preparation of a TP as part of the planning process through the inclusion of appropriate provisions in the Town Planning Scheme (TPS) and/or other development control policies (with implementation as a condition of planning approval); or
- › as a minimum, negotiating with developers for the preparation of voluntary TPs as part of the development application process.

In securing, and supporting, TPs for new developments local governments could consider:

- › developing a policy and framework for inclusion in TPS and/or other development control documents specifying when, and to what extent, TPs are required;
- › making complementary TPS amendments associated with the production and implementation of a TP such as discounted parking requirements (where minimum requirements apply) and/or plot ratio bonuses;
- › developing ongoing TP monitoring requirements (e.g. monitoring periods, data to be collected, provision of data to the local government), which could potentially include TPS amendments if the requirements are to be mandated; and
- › preparing locally specific guidelines and templates for developers and their consultants (ideally aligned with guidelines and templates from State Government).

Travel planning does not need to be onerous!

When developing a framework for requiring TPs for new developments, local governments can establish thresholds to

Case Study 2

The Town of Victoria Park has developed a framework for requiring Travel Plans for new development as part of its recently adopted Integrated Movement Network Strategy (IMNS).

Thresholds vary depending on the:

- › planning application stage (e.g. structure plans and individual development applications);
- › area development site is situated in; and
- › proposed land use(s).

Depending on the above, and the scale of development, one of four types of Travel Plan would be required:

- › Framework TP – providing the overarching strategy for a site which will have multiple occupiers, or a where the end user is unknown;
- › Full TP – detailed plan setting out targets, measures and monitoring for a specific occupier;
- › TP Statement – a short document demonstrating a commitment to encouraging travel by sustainable modes; and
- › Voluntary TP – for smaller developments where there is no mandatory requirement but preparation of a TP is encouraged.

ensure the requirements (in terms of scope and content) are appropriately balanced with the scale of development and thus likely impact (similar to the Transport Assessment process).

Thresholds can be set for different land uses based on traffic generation levels or specific development characteristics such as proposed floor area, number of employees or residents, etc. and can be varied based on the location of development. The absence of locally derived trip rates adds a degree of uncertainty in determining the requirement for a TP and as such, thresholds directly linked to the development characteristics may be more transparent than basing thresholds on forecast traffic generation.



Communicating the benefits to developers...

Preparation and implementation of a TP for a new development can bring direct benefits for the developer, as well as with indirect benefits for the ultimate site occupier (the business/organisation) and the end users (the employees, customers, visitors, residents, etc.). For example, a TP can:

- › Help foster good relationships with local governments and smooth the planning process by demonstrating an attempt to mitigate the expected traffic impacts of the development;
- › Reduce demand for car parking spaces, enabling more cost-effective use of land which would have otherwise been required for parking (if supported by appropriate provisions in the TPS);
- › Improve the accessibility of the site, making the development a more desirable place to work / live / play, thus increasing the marketability of the development;
- › Increase the value of the property and/or demonstrate higher service charges as a result of the provision of enhanced services such as high quality cycle parking and end-of-trip facilities, pool bikes, delivery and servicing facilities, car share schemes, etc.;
- › Improve community perception and acceptance of the development by making a visible contribution to reduce congestion and parking pressures in the local area, etc.; and
- › Help reduce the carbon footprint of new developments, highlighting the organisations green credentials and enhancing its corporate environmental image. It would also support achievement of Green Star environmental performance ratings (credits can be gained under the 'Transport' category).

These benefits should be communicated to developers, and prospective occupiers as appropriate, throughout the process to help secure buy-in and ultimately, delivery of an effective TP.

Preparing a Travel Plan can help to reduce development costs, improve corporate environmental image and help enhance community support for a development.

About the RAC

The RAC is the leading advocate on the mobility issues and challenges facing our State and is committed to ensuring safe, accessible and sustainable mobility options for our members and the broader community.



For further information relating to the TravelSmart/LivingSmart programs refer to:

www.transport.wa.gov.au/activetransport/24605