

Integrated planning in activity centres: influencing change across all travel purposes

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Abstract

The purpose of more than 20 per cent of all trips made in Melbourne is for shopping. In outer suburban areas this travel is focused on retail-dominated activity centres. Shifting a portion of all travel – travel for shopping, work, education etc – to sustainable transport modes is needed to help achieve the planning outcomes and sustainability objectives identified for Melbourne, which include focusing employment and development in key activity centres outside the CBD.

Knox City Council is leading a travel plan for the Knox Central Activity Centre that includes employees, students and shoppers. The major purpose for travel to the centre with over 1.2 million trips per month is shopping. Council, UrbanTrans and the shopping centre management have identified a range of 'soft measures' to complement infrastructure improvements and support changes in travel behaviour. This is one of the first major efforts in Australia to address shopping-related travel through travel planning.

This project demonstrates an approach that may be applied across other retail-dominant centres. It assesses the role that travel planning has in complementing infrastructure and service improvements to activity centres. It also examines opportunities for utilising travel demand management approaches in future planning of activity centres, responding to the varying needs of different travel purposes.

1. Introduction

The purpose of more than 20 per cent of all trips made in Melbourne is for shopping (DoT, 2007). In outer suburban areas this travel is focused on retail-dominated activity centres. Shifting a portion of all travel – travel for shopping, work, education etc – to sustainable transport modes is needed to help achieve the planning outcomes and sustainability objectives identified for Melbourne, which include focusing employment and development in key activity centres outside the CBD.

Knox City Council initiated a project to influence changes in people's travel behaviour focused on the Knox Central Activity Centre. The Knox Central Activity Centre stretches from Stud Road to Scoresby Road, and from Burwood Highway to the Blind Creek and also includes Lewis Park and the Swinburne University of Technology. The area includes the municipal offices of Knox City Council, Knox Shopping Centre and Swinburne University. Figure 1 below shows the extent of the area. The project was jointly funded by Knox City Council and the Victorian Department of Transport, under its TravelSmart program and Local Area Access Program (LAAP) and commenced in March 2009.

The project aims to encourage a reduction in car trips and support an increase in the use of sustainable travel options to the activity centre. The program commenced with engaging staff from Knox Shopping Centre and Knox City Council, and staff and students from Swinburne University of Technology Wantirna Campus.

Figure 1: Knox Central Activity Centre



Reference: Booz & Co, 2009

The Department of Transport (DoT) saw the potential to expand the existing project into an integrated travel plan which would address all major travel purposes to the centre: work, education and shopping trips. UrbanTrans was appointed by the DoT in late June 2009 to work in collaboration with Knox Council and expand the existing project to include the major travel market of shoppers and visitors to the centre. Over 1.2 million people travel to Knox Shopping Centre for shopping and associated activities each month, by far the largest purpose for travel to the activity centre. The centre also has 5,000 employees. In comparison, the other major destinations of Council offices have less than 500 employees over two sites and around 4,300 visitors each month; and Swinburne campus has 4,000 students during term time and around 200 staff.

In this paper, we will focus the discussion of this project on our engagement with shoppers/visitors and staff at Knox Shopping Centre, as it is by far the dominant travel purpose to the centre and little research has been published on travel behaviour change work targeted at this market segment. Work has been undertaken to influence travel behaviour of recreational and shopping travel in local areas by several local governments in Victoria, such as described by Myers (2005). The City of Darebin has implemented several initiatives to increase walking, cycling and public transport use to the Preston activity centre, both by specific centre-based actions (a market home-delivery trial) as well as a broad residential campaign 'Love Living Local' to shop locally to foster more active transport trips (City of Darebin, 2008).

This paper explores the opportunities and challenges for influencing changes in travel patterns for shopping at a retail-dominant outer-suburban activity centre. It draws on the authors' experience in developing and delivering the Knox project. While this project is still underway, with evaluation of its impacts still some months away, it demonstrates an approach that may be applied across other retail-dominant centres and the role that travel planning has in complementing infrastructure and service improvements to activity centres.

2. Project context

Knox Shopping Centre is situated approximately 25 km southeast of the Melbourne CBD. The surrounding area would be classified as 'suburban' – predominantly single purpose land developments with large areas of residential with relatively low population density. The

shopping centre is bordered on two sides by major arterial roads with 80 kph speed limits, and the other two sides by a mix of residential, light industrial/commercial and parkland.

Knox Shopping Centre is one of Australia’s largest shopping centres with over 150,000m² of retail space and 6,350 car parking spaces. It is owned and managed by AMP Capital. The centre consists of two sites: Knox City, which is a traditional large shopping centre with approximately 350 retailers; and Knox O-Zone, an entertainment precinct with restaurants, cafes, pubs, nightclubs and a large cinema, as well as some big box stores and office space. The shopping centre also has a large public transport bus interchange serving 12 bus routes and a total of 668 bus services arriving and departing the interchange daily. A map of the local area is shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: “Knox Central – by Foot by Pedal” Knox City Council local access guide



Reference: Knox City Council http://www.knox.vic.gov.au/Files/Knox_Central_by_Foot_by_Pedal.pdf

The area has been identified as a Principal Activity Centre under Melbourne 2030 (the Victorian Government’s metropolitan planning strategy) (DOI, 2002) the second highest classification behind Central Activity Districts (CADs). These classifications are designed to focus development in centralised areas outside the Melbourne CBD (DPCD, 2008).

Knox City Council’s long term vision for this area is to create a sustainable urban development that incorporates more mixed use developments and increased housing density. This TravelSmart project fits well into this long term vision – it aims to reduce car use in the area while building partnerships with key organisations within the Principal Activity Centre.

The Knox City Council engaged Booz & Co to produce the Sustainable Transport Options Report in mid 2009 as part of its assessment of transport issues to be addressed as part of the long-term redevelopment of the activity centre. The report provided a comprehensive summary of the issues and opportunities to shift travel to sustainable transport modes over the short to long term. It identified some significant challenges to accessing the shopping centre by walking and cycling from some directions, especially due to the limited crossing

points of Burwood Highway and Stud Road and lack of priority through the centre car parks. While there are 12 bus routes serving the centre, including a high frequency SmartBus route from Ringwood/Frankston, the off-peak service frequencies, reliability and travel times of many of the routes limit their perceived viability as an alternative to the car.

It is important to recognise these infrastructure and service limitations at the start of a project aimed at influencing people's travel behaviour to identify what options are realistic to promote to the target audience. While the current standard of bus services poses some challenges, there is also some opportunity as shopping-related travel generally has more flexibility around travel times, which may allow travel for this purpose to be adaptable to existing bus services. The Blind Creek shared path adjacent to the shopping centre also provides good access for a large residential catchment to walk and cycle to the centre.

3. The TravelSmart Five Step Travel Planning Process

This methodology (DoT, 2010) provides a framework for all TravelSmart projects undertaken with support from DoT to ensure a consistent approach to travel planning. Step One identifies the project need, the stakeholders and gains the support of the organisations involved. This step ensures that the project has support, funding, and provides the basic plan of the project.

Step Two assesses the current situation and identifies barriers and opportunities for travel behaviour change. In this step, data collection and analysis is completed. The third step creates the travel plan and identifies actions to overcome barriers and utilise opportunities. This step uses workshops and brainstorming to develop the travel plan initiatives that will support travel behaviour change. The fourth step in the methodology is implementing the travel plan. Step Five focuses on monitoring and sustaining change; it is about evaluating the project and embeds it into the culture/organisation.

This project has followed this approach and is currently at the fourth step of implementation.

4. Background analysis and shopper travel patterns

There were two priorities at the start of the Knox travel planning project:

- effective engagement with the key stakeholders to build support for the project; and
- identifying the shoppers' travel patterns and their main barriers and opportunities for change.

Following on from establishing the working group and the site assessment, a survey was undertaken to better understand the target audience. A 12-question shopper/visitor intercept survey was developed by UrbanTrans, Council and DoT, in collaboration with Knox Shopping Centre management

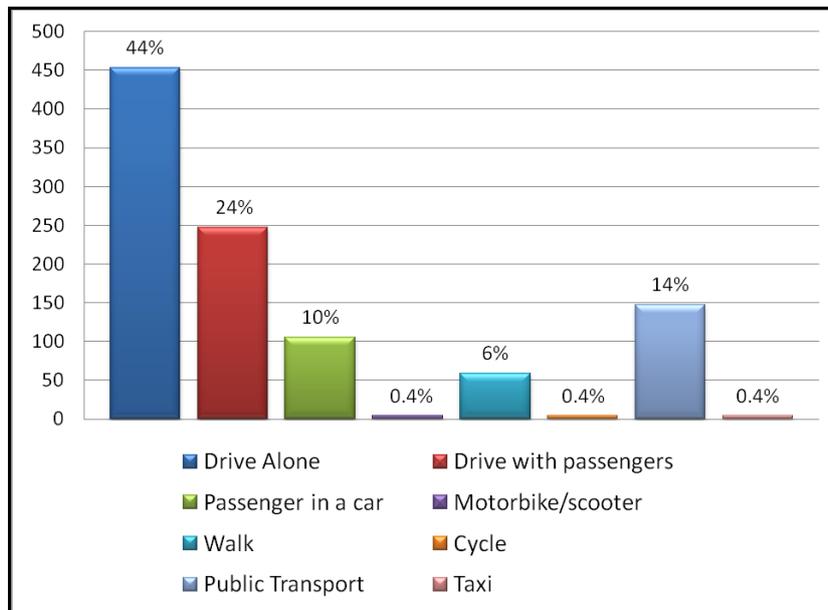
Some 1,021 valid survey responses were achieved over two weeks in August 2009. The survey was undertaken across a range of times to sample a broad selection of people. The times were recommended by centre management to coincide with peak weekly shopping periods and to help improve response rates. The following is a summary of key shopper survey results, which identify the opportunities for changing current travel patterns to the shopping centre. The demographic results (such as age, residential location etc.) of this survey were compared with the shopping centre's 2008 market research survey and found to have a comparable range of shoppers, which reassured the project team that a good cross-section of shoppers had been measured.

Not surprisingly, the most common usual form of travel to the shopping centre is driving alone. Driving alone accounts for 44% of survey respondents' travel to the centre. At 24%, driving with passengers is the second most common form of travel. Public transport

accounts for over 14% of travel. A small but notable portion of travel is made by walking, at 6%, reflecting the close proximity of the centre to many respondents' homes.

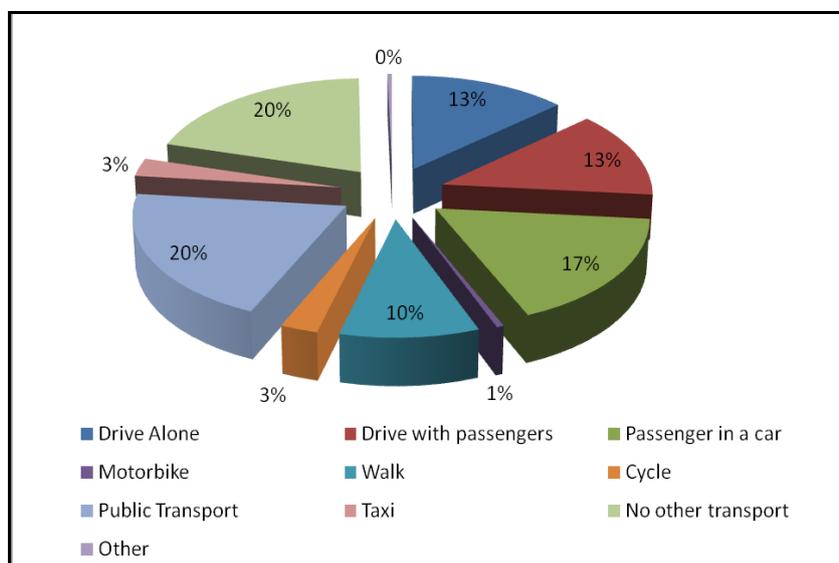
Over 55% of respondents come from seven nearby suburbs, which reflects the main trade area for the shopping centre. More than 13% of people come from Wantirna South, which is between 1km and 3km away. Direct distance of the main suburbs is less than 5km, however, topography and very large arterial roads are factors that may limit the appeal of walking and cycling from some directions.

Figure 3: Usual form of travel to Knox Shopping Centre



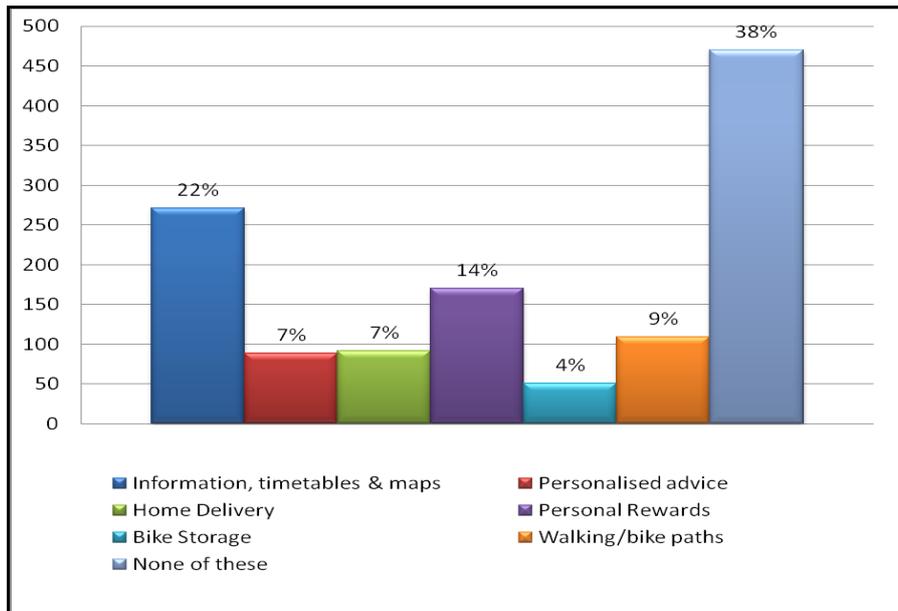
Given driving alone is the most common regular form of transport it is also important to know what other forms people have used at any time, to see the potential for change. Some 10% of people have at sometime walked to the centre, which is greater than the numbers who usually travel to the centre by walking. This suggests an opportunity to increase the frequency of walking trips. As well, 20% of the people who normally drive alone have also used public transport. This knowledge of using public transport may help reduce the barriers to using it more often. About 3% of people have also cycled to the centre, suggesting a small opportunity to increase travel by this mode.

Figure 4: Other forms of transport used to travel to the centre.



When asked about what might encourage people to consider sustainable transport for some of their travel almost two thirds of respondents showed interest in initiatives to encourage occasional travel by walking, cycling or public transport. Respondents could select as many options of interest to them from the options shown in Figure 5. Some 29% of people are interested in better information and personalised advice about sustainable travel options. People are also motivated by incentives, with 14% of people interested in some form of personal rewards program. There was also reasonable interest in improvements to walking/bike paths.

Figure 5: Interest in encouraging travel by sustainable transport.



Given the outcomes of the survey, some key themes were identified to focus on in the shopping centre travel plan:

- Many people are seeking better information about sustainable travel options. This makes improving information a first priority for the travel plan as it is most sought after and a low cost action.
- A large number of shoppers live within 2-5km. There is high potential for targeted direct marketing of different travel modes for different catchments. For example, marketing of walking options could be targeted at all households living less than 2 kilometres from the centre.
- Many people who normally drive have used other forms of travel to the centre. This suggests they may be receptive to reduce their frequency of drive-alone trips as they are already familiar with other transport options.
- The high frequency of visits, especially from people who live nearby, suggests opportunities to make occasional sustainable transport travel habitual.
- There are many overlaps with opportunities and actions for employees, so integrating actions and messages about travel options for both employees and shoppers makes sense.

5. Supporting changes in travel behaviour

Drawing together the background analysis and stakeholder input, the project team developed a draft travel plan which was then reviewed by the Knox Shopping Centre management working group.

The plan recognised that there are opportunities for broad scale actions for all groups as well as actions that could be targeted at different groups depending on whether they work or shop at the centre, how far away they live and the frequency of their visits. The overall approach of the travel plan is to focus on passive information provision and broader campaigns in the first six months, then develop more targeted and active measures in the short to medium term, which generally require more lead time to develop and are more effective building on the earlier actions.

5.1. Short-term travel plan strategies

The main short term strategy that the project team developed was to provide targeted information to increase awareness of travel options and encourage changes in travel behaviour. This strategy is supported by many other travel behaviour change projects, especially those targeted at households. As an example, Ampt (2004) conducted a TravelSmart project in three different suburbs of Melbourne which found that general information was the most successful tool used to encourage travel behaviour change, as rated by the participants in the study. The comparison of the benefit of tools offered as part of that project is shown in Figure 6.

The top four tools offered in Ampt's study considered by participants to be of most benefit all relate to providing better travel information, in various forms. The three different suburbs trialled in the study are economically, culturally and demographically quite different to each other, which emphasises that this strategy should be successful in most locations.

Figure 6: Tools used to support changes in travel behaviour

Comparison of Tools Offered in the 3 Areas

| Tool | Total | Brunswick | Dandenong | Elwood |
|------------------------|-------|-------------|-------------|--------|
| General Information | 30% | 28% | 32% | 33% |
| Local Activities Guide | 24% | 24% | 23% | 24% |
| Travel Blending | 21% | 18% | 18% | 23% |
| Journey Plans | 15% | 17% | 17% | 10% |
| Kids' Pages | 7% | 9% | 8% | 5% |
| Congratulations | 2% | 3% | 1% | 3% |
| Loan-a-Bike | 0.3% | Not offered | Not offered | 1% |
| Ideas Tool | 0.2% | 0.2% | 0.1% | 1% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Reference: Ampt 2004.

(Travel Blending is a process where participants track their travel in a diary, which is then reviewed alongside their specific values/goals to provide individual advice on changing their travel patterns.)

More recently Zhang, Stopher and Halling (2009) evaluated the tools used in an Adelaide community-based travel behaviour change project. They found that the most useful features from the TravelSmart program were providing information on the availability of using alternatives to car travel. A Cycling and Walking Map provided to households appeared to be the most effective tool, and encouraged people to walk more.

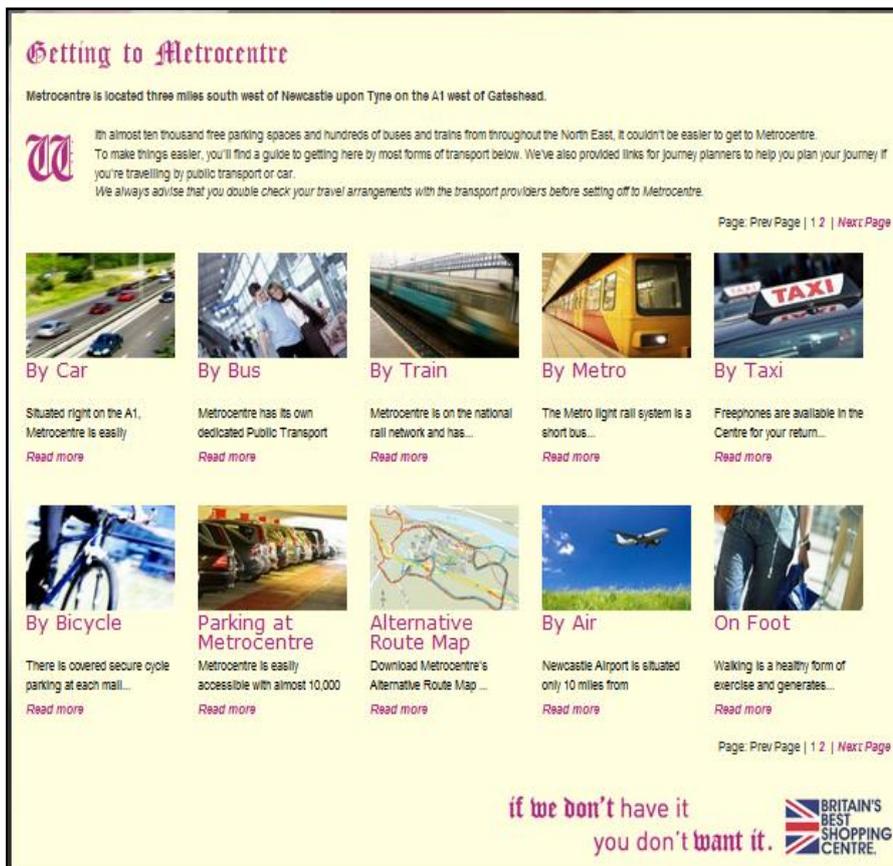
In developing the Knox Shopping Centre travel plan, the project team identified the following priority areas, most of which have a strong focus on sustainable transport information provision:

- Improvements to the shopping centre website.

- Using the shopping centre’s 20,000 member VIP Club email list to promote easy ways to travel to the centre.
- Providing readily available sustainable transport information around the shopping centre, such as maps and bus timetables and destination-specific information
- Training Customer Service staff to respond to travel questions.
- Developing a local access guide to promote walking and cycling in the surrounding area.
- Developing a within-centre public transport campaign (Metlink as project partner).
- Commencing work with larger tenants (such as Myer, Kmart and Coles), which have large groups of employees, to distribute information and commence other actions.
- Commence detailed planning for pedestrian and cycling infrastructure improvements (Council as lead).

From reviewing the shopping centre’s website, there was limited information on sustainable transport and it did not take priority, it was somewhat difficult to find and only provided very basic advice. The project team conducted some market research on other major shopping centres and found some excellent examples from the UK where travel planning has been used for several years. On these websites, sustainable transport options either took precedence or were given equal weighting with other transport modes. Figure 7 below is one example from the Metrocentre website. The project team proposed changes to the Knox Shopping Centre’s website and drafted new text that would encourage shoppers and visitors to use sustainable transport.

Figure 7: Metrocentre website travel page



Reference: www.metrocentre.uk.com/getting_here.htm

The team also recommended using the shopping centre's 'VIP Club' mailing list to help spread the sustainable transport message. The VIP Club is a database of over 20,000 shoppers and visitors to Knox which is used to promote special events at the shopping centre and is linked to prize draws and giveaways at the centre. The messages are distributed via email and on the website. Again, we drafted several theme messages to promote sustainable transport to the centre, with the focus of the message on 'taking the easy way to Knox Shopping Centre', suggesting that it can be less stressful than traffic congestion and difficulties finding a car park at the centre during peak shopping periods. In developing our messages, we have tried to target a few different values such as health, the environment, saving money and easing stress. This allows a range of people to connect with the message depending on their own set of values.

To make information more readily available to both staff and shoppers/visitors, it was decided that the Customer Service Desk would be an appropriate place to distribute sustainable transport information as it is already an information hub. Public transport information (bus timetables and route maps) and TravelSmart maps were sourced from the DoT and the local access map and general information sheets on sustainable transport were developed. This information is now being distributed from the Customer Service Desk. Customer Service staff have also been given a Frequently Asked Questions list with suggested responses to queries about sustainable transport options to the centre.

The customer travel survey identified that many shopping trips are not for the purchase of large/heavy items and would be suitable for walking and cycling. This result is typical of similar surveys at other shopping centres. To promote the option of walking and cycling in the local area, a local access map, titled "Knox Central – by Foot, by Pedal" for the surrounding area was developed. This map identifies suggested walking routes in the local area and provides approximate walking times to the shopping centre. The access map is shown in Figure 2.

5.2. Medium-term travel plan strategies

The next steps identified in the travel plan beyond the short-term initiatives are to move towards active distribution of information as well as other actions to support changes in travel behaviour. Along with these more targeted actions the effort will be to sustain changes in travel patterns that will commence this year once the early actions have been implemented. Now that the groundwork has been set with significant improvements to information, over the next 6-18 months the following actions to implement include:

- Running a 'transport cafe' for a week to assess the benefits of direct and targeted information to individual shoppers within the shopping centre.
- Developing targeted campaigns direct to households along the SmartBus route.
- Scoping and designing a staff bike cage.
- Developing an employee carpooling program.
- Installing end of trip facilities for employees.
- Promoting Walk to Work and Ride to Work days.
- Scoping pedestrian access improvements through the carparks following review of the two improvements to walking and cycling access into the centre, funded under the Local Area Access Program. Implement priority actions (Council as project partner).

6. Facilitating partnerships

Activity centres have multiple stakeholders who will each have some influence on the travel behaviour of visitors to the centre. By working together more can be achieved, so it is important to identify the potential benefits to each of the stakeholders. Travel planning facilitates the development of partnerships as they are central to the effective delivery of this work. The partnerships can then achieve mutual benefits for all of the stakeholders involved. The Victorian Government and Knox City Council partnership has been fundamental in the development of this project. TravelSmart and Local Area Access Program (LAAP) grants from the Department of Transport, together with matching funding from Council, enabled this project to be implemented.

For Knox City Council, some of the key benefits of this project are in developing partnerships and resilience in the local community. Knox Shopping Centre represents a major stakeholder within the Knox Central Activity Centre, so developing a strong working relationship with the management and businesses of the shopping centre is important for future plans in the area. Council also recognises that sustainable transport has the potential to create healthier, happier and better connected communities.

For both the Victorian Government and Knox City Council, infrastructure for walking and cycling provides people with more transport options. The shopping centre carpark however creates a significant physical barrier for walking and cycling. Council can usually provide walking and cycling paths that lead to the shopping centre boundary, but not into the centre itself as it is private land. By working with the shopping centre, walking and cycling infrastructure can be, and has been, built through its land to create fully connected links for pedestrians and cyclists.

AMP Capital, as the owner of Knox Shopping Centre, has been the primary stakeholder for facilitating implementation of an effective travel plan that targets shoppers and visitors. There is a range of benefits for the shopping centre in the success of this project. This project aligns well with AMP Capital's corporate social responsibility values, as well as Knox Shopping Centre's sustainability projects to reduce their impact on the environment.

Additionally this project could also alleviate some of the parking issues currently experienced by shoppers:

- By shifting staff to other forms of transport, more parking would be available for shoppers with no additional investment on infrastructure.
- By shifting shoppers to other forms of transport, in the long term the demand on parking would decrease, which could make land available for future redevelopment or expansion.

This work also gives shopping centre management access to transport professionals to help them solve some of their transport issues. In the end, this will benefit them by making travel to the centre easier and which could well increase patronage. As with Knox City Council, it also helps develop stronger working relationships with other stakeholders in the area, which could also be a help when the shopping centre proposes any redevelopment plans.

AMP Capital has shown a high level of commitment to this project, with four members of the shopping centre's management team actively involved since its inception. The working group comprised all areas of management that may need to be involved to help deliver the project: centre management (to approve travel plan actions), marketing (to lead information campaigns), leasing (for direct engagement with the retail tenants) and operations (for any capital works). Each of these members has played an important role in the delivery of this project.

The Assistant Centre Manager has been the lead contact for this group and the main decision maker. Marketing has worked extensively in developing key messages, providing access to the different marketing tools such as the centre website and VIP club. Leasing has provided advertising space in the centre as well as providing contacts with other major retailers in the centre. Operations has been key to the infrastructure work at the centre, such as providing better access for walkers and cyclists through the shopping centre carpark.

Another partnership that is in the early stages of development is with Metlink, the Victorian public transport company that promotes public transport on behalf of the train, tram and bus operators. The project team has helped broker a partnership between Metlink and Knox Shopping Centre to undertake in-centre promotional campaigns on taking the bus to Knox Shopping Centre, as it has a major public transport bus interchange on its site. The benefits of Metlink joining this partnership would be to increase the bus patronage in the area. This could increase bus utilisation (percentage of capacity), with many shopping trips occurring outside the normal peak travel times when buses typically have fewer passengers. The first campaign is currently being developed and will utilise some of the centre managed advertising space as well as an advertising campaign targeted at the bookstores in the shopping centre. Metlink is also proposing improvements to public transport information (maps and timetables) at the bus interchange.

7. Lessons learned

As the project is still in its early stages, there will be more lessons learnt as the project matures and we are able to see which actions become more or less successful. The most important lesson learnt so far relates to the timing of this work. The shopping centre working group remains positive and engaged with the travel planning project but has taken longer than anticipated to respond to actions due to key staff being on leave and their focus on other priorities during the peak shopping periods. AMP Capital sees the benefits of this work but it did not initiate this project – so it has to fit within its priorities. For a start, it is important to recognise the peak periods for the shopping centre and understand that initially little progress will be made during these times. These peak periods are around Christmas build-up and summer holidays (November to January), end of financial year (June), and the school holidays (March/April and September). During these times, the shopping centre management are extremely busy and it would be very difficult to progress an extra project at the same time. Once the project has been developed further, we believe that these times will be important to promote sustainable transport as they are also the times when parking demand is at its highest.

7.1. Sustaining changes

The pace of implementation has been a challenge with this project. The project team has responded by working within the centre's quieter times and focusing on 'easy wins' to continue to build AMP Capital's support. The next main challenge is to sustain changes beyond the project team's involvement. There have been several approaches to support this through:

- Creating a forward plan of actions with AMP to set a timeline for implementation of the travel plan.
- Providing all the material developed for this project to the shopping centre management for updating and use in future campaigns.
- Promoting engagement with the shopping centre's major tenants (Kmart, Myer, Target, Coles etc.) to help achieve more direct contact with staff and find other champions for this work so that it does not solely rely on shopping centre management to implement actions.

- Raising the project profile at AMP Capital's regional head office to build interest and momentum at a company level which may help travel plan actions to be applied across all AMP Capital shopping centres (such as travel information improvements to their website).
- Building partnerships to implement future actions, such as with Metlink (described above).

While travel behaviour change programs will be useful at anytime, it is also worth recognising that these programs could have greater success if linked with other external drivers to influence travel demand, such as redevelopment, expansion or changes to parking management (ie paid parking).

8. Integration with supply-side improvements and activity centre development

Many shopping centres in the United Kingdom have implemented some form of travel planning to help reduce single-occupant car travel to these centres. Only one shopping centre in Australia, Rouse Hill (in North West Sydney) has established a comprehensive travel plan.

Information from the UK on implementing travel demand management measures to change the travel behaviour of shopping centre visitors and staff shows that:

- Car use is increasing and parking is limited and the cost of providing additional parking is prohibitive.
- Retailers tend to overestimate the importance of car drivers to shopping centre profits.
- Those who walk or come by bus visit more often than car drivers.
- Travel demand management measures can increase the use of sustainable transport to shopping centres.
- Sustainable transport is an important part of overall corporate social responsibility / climate change policies.
- Travel behaviour change and other demand management strategies are highly cost-effective methods of reducing single-occupant car travel.

Many of the UK shopping centres have some level of parking constraint, which strengthens the travel plan measures. Many travel plans have been underway for several years, which mean they are now implementing a range of targeted actions including personalised travel planning, carpooling schemes for staff and incentive schemes. All travel plans, however, have a common starting point of improving information on all travel modes to the centre and giving equal priority to these modes on their websites and through other communications.

The Rouse Hill shopping centre sets an example in Australia for other shopping-related travel plans. With support from the activity centre developer and shopping centre management, Rouse Hill has appointed a travel coordinator for the centre. This is a critical element for sustaining momentum of the travel plan actions and giving the work status within the centre's management.

As Melbourne's activity centres redevelop (especially the larger central activities districts and principal activity centres) there is a great opportunity to coordinate travel behaviour change programs such as this with infrastructure and service improvements, whether they are local access improvements to support walking and cycling, or public transport investment. We need both supply and demand-side measures to shift current car-dependent travel patterns.

Starting with the soft measures of travel plans helps to build a relationship with shopping centre managers who control significant portions of land and influence the way people travel to these centres. It then allows councils and state government agencies to broach larger travel demand management measures, such as parking management. As mentioned earlier, sustainable travel outcomes would be strengthened by combining travel planning actions with parking management. This is a very sensitive issue with retail centres but leading with soft measures begins the conversation and helps demonstrate the benefits of reducing car travel to these centres.

In the longer term, with this approach we could see a reduction in demand for car parking, allowing these areas to be converted to higher value uses (such as new commercial development).

8.1. An Approach For Other Activity Centres

The travel planning approach taken at Knox Shopping Centre can easily be replicated at other retail-dominant activity centres elsewhere across Australia. While changes in travel choices are yet to be measured, the approach has clear merit and offers an important complement to other transport demand management and supply-side improvements. By first improving information on all travel options, then progressing to more targeted actions identified by stakeholders and the target audience, the project could then consider broader demand management measures. This work, however, needs to be led by a coordinator, who is preferably funded by all project partners involved, to help sustain changes beyond the initial travel plan development and implementation.

9. Conclusions

The outcomes of this work are not yet realised. It has been common experience for other TravelSmart projects using a similar travel planning approach to take between 18 months and three years to see measured changes in travel behaviour. This project has been delivered over eleven months, with two months of limited activity from the shopping centre management during their busy Christmas period. This has meant that the early travel plan priorities are just being rolled out, with no significant interaction or impact with the major target group to date. Measuring changes in travel patterns will need to be assessed once these actions have been underway for at least 6-12 months.

As previously mentioned, the sustainability of this work relies on Knox Shopping Centre management maintaining momentum and continuing to deliver on the travel plan actions. As research into other shopping centre travel plans has shown, most are managed by a travel plan coordinator either on-site or at a regional level. AMP Capital has shown good commitment to date but this has been with a lot of support from Knox City Council and UrbanTrans. This highlights the need for Council to remain engaged in this project beyond May 2010. Funding from the Victorian Government ends in June 2010, however it is expected that Knox City Council will provide further support to continue the project. Other stakeholders partnering on specific actions, such as Metlink on in-centre public transport campaigns, can help to sustain changes that have commenced under this project.

To date travel behaviour change projects in Victoria have predominantly focused on travel to work and school. As previously mentioned, shopping-related travel accounts for over 20% of all travel, which is a significant proportion of the total travel market. It makes sense to take a more integrated approach to changing travel patterns by addressing all trips to activity centres – for work, education, shopping/leisure etc. – and by incorporating behaviour change projects with other demand management measures.

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