Activity Centres – Policy settings and traffic outcomes

Activity Centres are an important component of Government planning and sustainability policy. This forum will provide an update on how Activity centres are evolving, providing a context for an overview of the forthcoming Austroads Guide to Traffic Management in Activity Centres. The presenters will provide:

- A policy and desired outcomes context from Government
- An outline of the new Austroads Guide and some specific issues arising from it
- An examination and evaluation of some of the outcomes from this process

www.aitpm.com
**Melbourne 2030:**
*Setting the Scene for Activity Centre Planning*

_Australian Institute of Traffic Planning and Management, Victorian Branch_
14 August 2008

Paul Buxton
Manager, Activity Centres Unit, Urban Development, Department of Planning and Community Development

**Overview of presentation**
1. Melbourne 2030 (M2030)
2. Activity centres
3. Structure planning process
4. Implementation
5. M2030 Audit and Planning for All of Melbourne

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**The ‘status quo’ is not an option: OECD**

"Remaining with the status quo is not an option: doing nothing different translates into lost opportunities, higher transaction costs, and higher costs to cope with social distress and environmental problems."

-OECD Territorial Review of Melbourne 2003

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**Melbourne 2030 - 9 Directions**

1. A more compact city
2. Better management of metropolitan growth
3. Networks with the regional cities
4. A more prosperous city
5. A great place to be
6. A fairer city
7. A greener city
8. Better transport links
9. Better planning decisions, careful management

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**Key spatial elements of Melbourne 2030**

- Urban Growth Boundary
- Green Wedges
- Growth areas
- Activity Centres
- Principal Public Transport Network
- Networked cities region
Activity Centres – What are they?

- The focus areas of major urban change
- Areas identified for growth in dwelling numbers
- Are, or will be, well serviced by public transport on the Principal Public Transport Network (PPTN)
- Provide (or should provide) a wide range of services and facilities for the whole community
- Centres for business, shopping, working, living, leisure and recreation
- Centres that have, or will have, a defined and connected sense of place and sense of ownership by the community
- Principal, Major and Neighbourhood Activity Centres are determined through criteria in Melbourne 2030:
  - Principal Activity Centres and Major Activity Centres must serve a regional or sub-regional metropolitan economic, social and community role and must be located or capable of being located on the PPTN.
  - They must provide additional scope to accommodate ongoing investment and change in retail, office, service and residential markets.
  - They are designated areas of major change in metropolitan land use and form, subject to specific centre opportunities and constraints.

How do we plan for Activity Centres?

- Local Government prepares structure plans, following the Activity Centre Structure Planning Practice Note
- Structure Plans deal with future land use, built form, transport and connectivity, urban design, community and stakeholder engagement, implementation and many other issues

Structure Planning for Activity Centres

- Sets the strategic framework for use and development of land in and around an activity centre
- Must establish a visionary outlook for the centre
- Must give clear direction to landowners, developers and investors about the preferred locations for investment
- Defines and supports the role and function of the centre
- Shows the scale and direction of development needed now and into the future
- Must be based on strategic analysis and directions and must be consistent with state policy, relevant Ministerial Directions and the Structure Planning Practice Note
- Are about facilitating mixed land use, more intensive development and accommodating growth and urban renewal for net community benefit

Implementation of Structure Plans

- Statutory mechanisms
  - Guide land use and development through the Planning Scheme
- Non statutory mechanisms
  - Place management
  - Development facilitation
  - Capital works
  - Marketing and positioning of the activity centre

Status of Structure Plans across Melbourne

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Statutory mechanisms</th>
<th>Non statutory mechanisms</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Status % of centres</th>
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Notes:
- The list of Activity Centres includes 12 growth area Activity Centres that are not included in the Addendum to Melbourne 2030 Activity Centres and Principal Public Transport Network Plan dated Nov 2003.
- Specialised Activity Centres or Neighbourhood Activity Centres.
- Other spatial plans may include a masterplan, a project plan, a urban design framework or similar.
Expert Assistance Program & Creating Better Places Program

- Expert Assistance Program (EAP) was established to help finalise structure plans for PACs and MACs and/or to assist in their implementation.
- EAP has two components: proactive and responsive funding.
- Proactive: 6 targeted centres (Coburg, Chirnside Park, Cranbourne, Knox Central, Moonee Ponds and Preston).
- Responsive: remaining metropolitan Principal and Major Activity centres.
- Aim is to have structure plans already underway completed and implemented quickly.
- DPCD working with Council to ‘fast track’ development of the structure plans and the provision of enabling planning provisions and other initiatives.

Creating Better Places Program (CBP): Funds design, capital works and place managers in Principal and Major Activity Centres and Network Cities and their corridors.

- Round 4 of CBP – applications are currently being assessed.
- Looking to see M2030 Activity Centre policy on ground sooner rather than later.

Development Assessment Committees, Activity Centre Boundaries and Activity Centre Zone

- Melbourne 2030 Audit: focus of effort on ensuring that the planning and management of Activity Centres is less complex and more effective.
- Government response to the Audit Expert Report, titled ‘Planning for All of Melbourne’ has proposed a number of initiatives related to activity centres.
- Establish Development Assessment Committees to make planning permit decisions in relation to areas of metropolitan significance, including Melbourne’s 26 Principal Activity Centres and central Geelong.
- DACs will be a ‘third way’ – a partnership with local government.

Current issues being considered by working group include:
- Membership/appointment options
- Threshold?
- Delegations?
- Issues being worked through with a Technical Reference Group comprising local government representatives.

Activity Centre Boundaries

- An Advisory Committee will be appointed to review and determine the boundaries of five market ready activity centres/transit cities and based on the experience of these five centres, identify criteria and a methodology suitable to define the boundaries of further activity centres.
- Five identified market ready centres are Camberwell; Coburg; Doncaster Hill; Preston (High Street); and Central Geelong (Transit City).
- There are a range of criteria to set the centre boundaries which are based on existing and potential land use and development, walkable catchment, transport and other factors, as well as existing completed strategic work for each centre.
- These boundaries will be tested and reviewed with local government and other stakeholder input.
- It is anticipated that the work of the Advisory Committee will be near completion in early 2009.

Activity Centre Zone

- Through a separate process, an Activity Centre Zone (ACZ) will be developed in 2009 following the final Advisory Committee report and recommendations to be considered by the Minister for Planning. The ACZ should align to the centre boundaries, but each centre may also include other zones specific to each centre’s differences.
- Boundaries of the five market ready centres and application of the future Activity Centre Zone will have a strong relationship to the boundaries of the proposed Development Assessment Committees.
Austroads Guide to Traffic Management Part 8—
Traffic Management in Activity Centres

Dr Ray Brindle
Eldamar Research Associates

Scope of the Guide

- The new Austroads GTM series
- Types of Activity Centre
- What Part 7 sets out to do
- Principles and “Givens”
- The Guide offers guidance around three types of traffic situation and the elements that need attention in each type of case
- Section 2: Principles and context
- Section 3: Techniques
- Section 4: Examples
- Some specifics

The new GTM series

- Guide to Traffic Engineering Practice \rightarrow
  Guide to Traffic Management.
- In the transformation, some of the former Parts are being subsumed into the other Parts (e.g. Pedestrians and Cyclists).
- Some new topics have appeared in their own right, e.g. the Guide to Traffic Management in Activity Centres.

Parts to the Guide to Traffic Management

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<td>Part 13</td>
<td>Road Environment Safety</td>
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Special role for Part 7

- Obvious that most of these contain material relevant to practice in activity centres.
- Intention is to cross-reference rather than repeat content in the GTM series.
- Few if any TM techniques are unique to activity centres.
- Part 7 therefore acts in part as a “signpost” to detail in other docs in the series.

Flavour of the Guide (Part 7)

- Main thrust of the Guide is to bring planning and traffic management objectives together.
- Activity centres are more than just ‘traffic generating developments’
- They are characteristically defined by their higher level of internal activity and interaction, especially by people on foot.
- It follows that ACs are pedestrian-focussed and that vehicle traffic is subordinate.
- However, good traffic management practice is still (especially?) needed.
The Guide does NOT—

- assume that all ACs are “transit oriented”, “urban villages”, “transit cities”, “shared streets (or spaces)” etc
- although they may be any or all of these.
- Rather, it takes a typology approach based on three generic types of centre and three types of traffic situation.
- These adequately cover the range of required traffic management emphases.

One size does not fit all

There cannot be a simple “guide” for all ACs, because:

- Different types and sizes of centre need different traffic management attention.
- Not all existing ACs meet the ideal planning vision.
- Need to cover inputs at the planning stage as well as pragmatic traffic management in operation.

What the Guide sets out to do

- Not a guide to planning of ACs.
- Rather, is aimed at “those responsible for operational and physical measures to provide for movement to and within activity centres” (either in planning or day-to-day management).

How will it help these practitioners?

Main focuses for TM

Traffic management in ACs has two main focuses:

1. Support the planning and urban design objectives established for the centre.
2. Attend to the movement needs of all users of the centre and those travelling through or past it.

The principles to guide TM are derived from these.

Role of traffic/transport in ACs

- Transport planning and traffic management for activity centres seeks to support the purposes for which the centres exist.
- It must not dominate the purpose and functions of the centre.
- ? while ensuring safety, adequate access and functionality of the centre.

Role of traffic/transport ctd

Thus, the purpose of traffic management in activity centres is to:

- provide adequately for vehicular access and circulation (including service, emergency and delivery vehicles)
- while implementing planning and policy intentions for those on foot, bicycle and public transport
- and without compromising the functionality and enjoyment of the site by the people who use it.
Purpose of the Guide

“The purpose of the Guide is to help the practitioner get this balance right.”

Principles and “Givens”

- The pre-eminence of urban design and higher-order transport policy objectives.
- Movement and access facilities must be fit for purpose.
- ? but not dominate the purposes for which the centre exists, nor be detrimental to them.
- Recognise and implement traffic management’s role in demand management.
- TM must accord with the centre’s intended level of integration with public transport.

Principles and “Givens” ctd.

- The balance between the needs of internal and “through” movement should be considered at the planning stage, not “on the run”.
- LOS for through/passing traffic should be specified and considered.
- Manipulation of cross-sections and speeds are valid strategies, even on major links.
- Road user safety and comfort is a paramount consideration.

Types of traffic situation

In traffic terms, activity centres fall into one of three types:

- Activity centres with through traffic.
- Activity centres with internal streets (but not overtly catering for through traffic).
- Activity centres with no internal vehicular traffic (“off-street”).

Elements needing consideration

Include such things as:

- Space allocation (on- and off-street)
- Bicycle provisions (movement and parking)
- Pedestrian routes and facilities
- Loading and delivery areas
- Provisions for on-road PT
- Parking quantity, distribution and control
Elements needing consideration

ctd.

- Dealing with through traffic
- Treatment of intersections
- Passenger transfer areas
- Signs, barriers and other road furniture
- Traffic calming measures
- Transitions and conditions at the fringe of the centre

### Section 3: Techniques for TM

1. Information gathering
2. Traffic and transport impact studies
3. Managing travel demand and mode choice
4. Network management
5. Road design and capacity
6. Traffic calming and speed management
7. “Environmental Adaptation”

### Some specifics covered in the Guide

- Functional classification & “Link/place”
- TODs
- Parking search
- Traffic calming in ACs
- “Environmental Adaptation” ("Main Streets")
- “Road diets”
- Pedestrian malls and transit malls
- Shared zones
- Shared spaces
Parking search

- Mentioned under “Parking management” in Section 3.
- The location and supply of parking (both on- and off-street) can influence the parking search paths.
- Much of the traffic volume is caused by cars searching for parking spaces – typically around 30% or higher.

Traffic calming

- GTM Part 8 is the primary source for LATM/traffic calming techniques.
- Low speeds are essential in a pedestrian environment (30-40 km/h max).
- Intention: adapt the road to the environment it serves.
- Low speeds open up traffic design and management opportunities.

Environmental Adaptation

Where through traffic compromises a centre, the choices are:

- Provide a bypass. (Not always possible or desirable)
- Adapt the centre and the way its people use it, so that it can accommodate the through traffic. (Unpopular and unsustainable).
- Adapt the road and its traffic to the needs of the centre.

Environmental Adaptation

- Change the road environment to change driving behaviour?
- to reduce negative impacts of the through traffic on the town and particularly on its centre, and
- to give priority to pedestrian movement.
Environmental Adaptation

Elements:
1. Decide on a target speed profile – and make it happen (by design and traffic calming).

2. Ensure that planning decisions do not compromise the intended “pedestrian activity profile” along the street.

3. Achieve a high-quality pedestrian environment.

“Road Diets”

Inherent part of “Environmental Adaptation”
A road diet entails removing travel lanes from a roadway and utilising the space for other uses and travel modes. (Rosales 2006)

“Road Diets”

Well-known for 20+ years that? midblock roadway width in urban centres can be traded off for gains in parking, bicycle provision and a median

- without significant reduction in total traffic throughput.
(Intersections control urban capacity, not link width)

US research confirms that:
- Conflicts reduced
- Intersection delay did not increase significantly
- Delay and queue lengths did not increase
- One through and opposed right turn lanes performs better than 4-L undivided
- Travel times did not change substantially
“Road Diets”
- LOS similar to 4-L cross-section up to 1000 veh/hr each direction.
- Suggests that 2xsingle lane conversions are feasible at vols 15,000 veh/d or more
- Demonstrated by Danish and German cases where daily vols exceed 20,000.

“Road Diets”
Guide points out that:
- Care needed to check for queue lengths, particularly at signals.
- Success may depend on circulating vs. through traffic, and degree of side friction caused by kerbside parking manoeuvres.
- Moral: Sacrifice a second lane before you upset traders by removing kerbside parking.

“Shared Spaces”
= “Naked Streets” (misleading)
Follows the woonerf/winkelerf-by-design and Shared Zone precedents.
Relies on uncertainty to create caution (assumes risk compensation).
Extrapolation of “natural awareness“ found in car parks, caravan parks etc.
Relies on design and built form rather than management.

“Shared Spaces” ctd
Experience suggests that zero traffic control may be considered if:
- speeds below 40 km/h can be obtained
- vols are less than 5000 veh/d two-way
- there is no non-terminating traffic
- road user culture does not allow drivers to exert dominance
- design and other features are suitable, and
- you have good liability insurance.
Strategic Context

Declared Project Area

REVITALISING CENTRAL DANDENONG

Objectives
• Restore central Dandenong as capital of Melbourne’s south east
• A great place to live, work, study and socialise
• Attract $1 billion private sector investment over 15-20 years

Targets
• Develop 4,000 new households
• Create 5,000 new jobs
• Attract up to 30,000 new visitors per day

TRANSIT CITY

Hierarchy of Users:
1. Pedestrians
2. Cyclists
3. Public Transport
4. Cars and Parking (local destination)
5. Cars (through traffic)

• Integrate travel modes (walking, cycling, bus, train, etc)
• Create efficient, ‘seamless’ and convenient mobility network
• Promote use of sustainable travel modes esp. short trips and reduce travel times
• Efficient and safe movement of buses within central Dandenong
• Move passengers to/from key locations
CIRCULATION & TRANSPORT FEATURES

- Safer and more accessible pedestrian environment
- Bike lanes to encourage bike transport
- Safer and well-located public transport
- Increased bus services coverage
- Accessible drop-off zones near station to encourage train and bus transport

TRIPLE DIAMOND – BUS ROUTES

POSSIBLE BUS IMPROVEMENT MEASURES

- Priority in road network (e.g., bus only road links, bus only slip lanes, etc.)
- Signal priority (e.g., advance detection for buses to initiate extended green phase or to reduce phase times for non-priority movements)
- ODI will re-schedule every bus route within Dandenong to match the expected changes to routes and travel times

KEY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS & STREET REALIGNMENTS

- City Walk
- Lonsdale Street
- Station Surrounds
- George Street Bridge
- Cadle, George and Mason Street
CITY WALK
LANGHORNE STREET

SEED PROJECTS – Learning and Education
PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT – GRENDÁ

PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT – DANDENONG INN

Thank you!
Discussion and Questions
RCD – Presentation to Australian Institute of Traffic Planners and Managers
14 August 2008