

DISCUSSION PAPER – INTEGRATED TRAVEL PLANS

1. What is an Integrated Travel Plan?

An Integrated Travel Plan, as described in the Department of Transport Advisory Note is: “a document which sets out how the various forms of transport will be integrated with land use, so that urban sustainability is optimised.”

The ITPs referred to in this report are associated with Planning Permit Applications for new developments and land uses and target residents, workers and visitors to these locations.

The key purpose of ITPs is to reduce car dependence and impacts associated with single occupancy car use, by maximising opportunities for the use of more sustainable travel modes, such as walking, cycling and the use of public transport. The basic premise is to make alternatives to car travel more feasible, appealing and better understood through the provision of:

- Infrastructure, such as for example wider footpaths leading to and from the site;
- Facilities, such as bicycle lockers/storage;
- Promotion, such as through distribution of fliers advertising annual events such as Ride-To-Work-Day;
- Education, such as provision of information on the health benefits of active transport (i.e. walking and cycling);
- Incentives, such as free public transport tickets or bicycle store vouchers.

2. When is an ITP required?

Under Clause 12.08 of the Victorian Planning Provisions all new major residential, retail, office and industrial developments are required to submit ITPs as part of their Planning Permit Application.

However, Clause 12.08 does not define ‘major development’, leaving it to the Responsible Authority to decide when an ITP may be required. To assist Councils with this decision, the Department of Transport (DoT) has issued an Advisory Note (Refer Attachment 1), which details what it considers to be developments that warrant preparation of an ITP as follows:

- Residential developments of more than 200 lots or units
- New retail centres or offices of more than 10,000sq.m.
- Extensions of more than 10,000sq.m.
- Any other development which in view of the Responsible Authority is likely to generate significant travel demand.

Furthermore, the Advisory Note recommends matters, which could be considered as part of an ITP content.

3. How Integrated Travel Plans relate to IMAP Action 3.3?

IMAP Strategy 3 - *Minimise the growing impact of traffic congestion*, commits the IMAP partners to “investigating mechanisms designed to reduce car use at congested times”.

ITPs, aimed at reducing car use for travel to and from a location, may be one such mechanism, which should be considered. Their key purpose aligns directly with IMAP Action 3.3 objectives to:

- Encourage alternatives to car travel; and
- Limit commuter car spaces in new developments.

4. Current practice across the IMAP region

A preliminary review of current practice at the IMAP Councils has revealed that ITPs are submitted or requested generally under the following circumstances:

- With major land use and development applications, as defined by the DoT Advisory Note, outlined above.
- When Planning Permit Applicants want to justify and mitigate the impact of reduced on-site parking provision.
- When a proposal is considered to result in unacceptable traffic impacts.

Anecdotal evidence indicates that Council Planning Officers, Traffic Engineers and Transport Planners are under increasing pressure to assess ITPs submitted with 'major applications'. They are also often compelled to request ITPs when dealing with requests for car parking dispensations.

However neither of the IMAP Councils has formally defined what it considers to be 'a major development' with respect to ITPs. Nor are there any clear processes in place for requiring, assessing, monitoring or enforcing ITPs.

As such, there is no consistent approach either within each municipality or across the Inner Melbourne region. This situation exposes the IMAP region to negative consequences, with respect to sustainable travel and liveability by:

- Setting of precedents for accepting 'substandard' ITPs, thus failing to maximise the opportunities that ITPs could offer to reduce single occupant car travel and associated economic (eg. congestion), social (eg. health) and environmental (eg. reduced Co2 emissions) impacts;
- A high level of uncertainty and confusion among Planning Permit Applicants, with respect to each Council's, and even each individual Officer's expectations;
- Increased exposure to litigation and reversal of Council decisions by VCAT.

5. Recommendation:

Given the Planning Scheme requirement under Clause 12.08 of the VPPs, and the growing use of ITPs to justify reduced car parking provisions, it is recommended that the following work be undertaken by IMAP Action 3.3 Working Group to investigate the feasibility of developing a regional approach to ITPs by:

- Defining the size and type of 'Major Developments' to which Clause 12.08 requirement will apply;
- Outlining all other circumstances under which an ITP may be required (eg. the level of car parking dispensation applied for);
- Specifying the expected content of a typical ITP;
- Developing standard Planning Permit Conditions relating to ITPs and the circumstances under which they will apply;
- Developing a 'Package' of easy to use 'tools', such as information kits for Planning Permit Applicants and 'fact sheets' for Council Officers (Refer to Attachment 2 for an outline of City of Darebin's approach).
- Developing a monitoring regime and enforcement procedures.