Summary report on the learnings from the second walkability workshop held on the 20th June 2012. The workshop was attended by some 40 persons from local government.

The workshop included:

- Malcolm Snow - Metro Planning Strategy,
- Marshall Kelleher - Knox City Council’s approach to Walkability,
- Anne Laing - City of Melbourne’s approach to Walkability,
- Serryn Eagleson - AURIN,
- Duane Burtt - Victoria Walks Strategies and Tools to support councils with walkability,
- MAV/Victoria Walks - walkability score card.

In reporting the content of this workshop the MAV has not attempted to rationalise or substantially change what was discussed. It is recognised that there are gaps and occasional inconsistencies but these are consistent with the opinions expressed in the workshop.
Key Learning

The workshop opened with a series of presentations, following these we asked councils what were there major road blocks stopping or limiting the development of walkability in their council.

Issues

**Ingrained Mental Models**

The new thinking around the Metro Planning Strategy (MPS) was challenging traditional planning orthodoxy.

The MPS is challenging us to think about planning and a city comprised of 20 minute neighbourhoods in ways that require new mental models. It’s much more than simply a better plan or community design, it a new way of approaching the issues that modern metropolitan communities face.

However, many engineer and planners have developed a life-time of experience thinking, planning and designing for communities in which the personal mobility and the car are at the top of the hierarchy.

**Multi-Dimensional Problem**

Traditionally we have viewed walkability as infrastructure, beautiful straight paved paths along our streets. However, we are being challenged to think again about what makes an area walkable and what gets people walking and it is not necessarily more of the same.

One council suggested that they need to address the problem on several fronts:

- Infrastructure
- Behaviour
- Regulatory
- Leadership
- Educational

The Way Forward

**Code of Practice**

Walking codes need to become embedded in the development codes of practice. As one participant said “if it is not part of AustRoads it will be ignored”

However, many suggested that simply embedding in standards was not sufficient. It has to be become part of the thinking, it needs to embrace a holistic way approach.

Education is key to changing people’s approach getting people to think beyond the traditional ways.

We can help this by asking new questions and asking them at the points in the decision making process where budgets are set rather than where they are spent.

Ask new question about community along the lines of those posed by the MPS.

Use a collaborative approach, involve other parts of the community service – after all walking impacts almost every part of the community and service delivered by councils. Think about walking and walkability holistically at the time when the projects are being conceived rather than at the detail design stage – its too late by then to change the paradigm.

We need a NEW approach to urban planning where cars run second and density is embraced.
Issues

Lack of Strong Evidence
There was a strong belief in the workshop that we still require more evidence in order to deliver effective change.

Councils are not exploiting the key drivers in seeking to promote walkability.

The flip side to the argument is the “Time Poor” perception of the community, “I don’t have time to walk”, rather than I don’t have time NOT to walk, because I value my health and wellbeing and the community benefits of waking.

The Way Forward

Evidence Based Stories
We need good evidence based stories around areas such as health and wellbeing

Stories to demonstrate the personal health benefits
Visual stories maps and 3D

Promote Personal Health Outcomes
Kids Walking to school organically (not in an organised chain) is one of the best indicators of a community that walks.

To enable kids to walk to school safely all of the other thinks need to be in place.

Employment
To reduce time poor perceptions councils should consider employing people locally.

Councils will need to lead their communities on a journey as they discover a new type of city of 20 minute neighbourhoods.

Solutions
The workshop identified a significant opportunity to share evidence and stories.

Taking communities on a journey
Councils need to develop the leadership and culture to actively lead their communities in the change from a car dominant culture to an active transport and walking culture.

Councils will need to develop a holistic leadership culture across the whole of council, not just the one department.

It may be wise to start with small demo projects enabling the collection of local evidence and stories.

The growing interest in walkability means councils will be able to build a coalition of interest around walking across their regions.

The MAV can take a lead in helping councils share stories and learning:
- collect and share evidence that is relevant to the type of community being served,
- build on the stories that were developed in the transport connections program,
- enable stories to evolve as needs and experiences develop.

Develop a Council Walkability Tool Box, including:
- Templates: form different perspectives, types of place and community groups.
- Look for funding sources to help establish pilot projects, in particular supporting the realisation of the MPS vision.
Next steps

1. Establish a LG Walkability Network to promote knowledge-sharing (and wiki online facility). Seek to also engage the Victorian Pedestrian Advisory Council, RACV, VicRoads and other key stakeholders

2. Ask Councils to provide feedback on the Walkability Scorecard (to assess process performance) and then MAV to circulate to all Councils for feedback and informal benchmarking

3. Conduct an audit of Council activity in developing and implementing strategies

4. Promote Victoria Walks tools and frameworks to Councils

5. Conduct ongoing LG walkability workshops and an annual conference

6. Seek to make a submission to the MPS consultation process on behalf of the network

7. Seek feedback from Austroads re standards and mobility aids

8. Seek Council input to Aurin and Ands tools

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