



# Town and Country Planning Association Bulletin

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## Northern Transport Corridor Study

The public focus is currently on freeway proposals and their impact on the adjacent suburbs and Princess Park. However, the study is intended to examine a wider range of options for improving conditions and planning for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport, as well as road traffic.

Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, and Smith Street (Fitzroy - Collingwood) have busy strip shopping centres and carry tram tracks. They also function as secondary traffic arteries. Nicholson Street to the west, and Wellington and Hoddle Streets to the east, also function as traffic arteries. Enhanced conditions for pedestrians in the shopping strips, while retaining a reduced traffic function in the remaining sections of the streets could be achieved.

To deter through traffic from using the shopping strips, kerbs would be brought out to meet the tram lanes at tram stops and pedestrian crossing points, thus forcing vehicles to follow behind the trams. The kerbside lane between these constrictions would be available for parking. This treatment has already been applied to several shopping streets in Melbourne, including Centre Road, Bentleigh, Glenferrie Road in both Malvern and Hawthorn, and Chapel Street, South Yarra.

The shopping strip in Brunswick Street lies mainly between Johnson Street and Alexandra Parade. In Smith Street, the shopping strip lies between Johnston and Gertrude Streets. Through traffic can avoid the shopping strips by travelling on Smith Street north of Johnston Street, and on Brunswick Street south of Johnston Street.

Ray Walford

## Local Government Watch

The TCPA welcomes the new requirement for local governments to develop local greenhouse strategies. The following are extracts from comment made on the City of Boroondara's Draft Greenhouse Strategy:

'Whilst a 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2010 is a significant and worthwhile step, I think you should make clear in your strategy that this is only the first phase of a continuing effort to reduce emissions much further. I have heard various estimates of how much reduction by developed countries is needed to stop the build-up of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, generally in the range of 60% - 80%. Undoubtedly, the first 20% will be the easiest to achieve. I think we should be contemplating significant changes in technology, practices

and lifestyle in the future.

With regard to the division of attention between Council operations and community activity, I would like to ensure that things do not fall through the gap between the two. For example, whilst transport does not rate highly as a Council source of CO<sub>2</sub>, Council staff travelling between home and work are acting as part of the general community, and should be encouraged to use walking, cycling, public transport and car-pooling. As an employer, Council can ensure that adequate secure bicycle parking and showers are provided for staff, and could offer public transport tickets in lieu of car-related benefits.

I am also concerned to see that other Council strategies, particularly those relating to car parking and residential density, are consistent with the aims of the greenhouse strategy.

Providing ever-increasing amounts of car parking entrenches unsustainable behaviour. Council will need to be very much more pro-active than it currently is in its support for public transport. It is worth recalling that the tram network in the eastern suburbs was originally developed under the auspices of local government.

Medium density housing built around shopping centres and public transport access points is one way to encourage greater use of walking and public transport. Whilst this may be covered by point 2 ("Consider all urban development policy matters..."), it requires more than simply evaluating each development application in isolation. The strategic land use plan will need to identify locations for medium density development, and should set targets for residential density that are consistent with a viable public transport system (I would suggest a figure of 50 residences/hectare within 400m of a public transport access point).'

Members are urged to get copies of their local strategies and monitor local objectives.

## Melbourne Metropolitan Strategy

The TCPA will be seeking a meeting with the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Infrastructure on metropolitan strategy. The committee is presently developing its agenda for the meeting and would like to hear from members who have specific issues relevant to the objectives of the association that they would like the delegation to raise.

## ResCode - How Good Is It?

### Development Issues

The association's suggestion that the Code should be restructured into separate parts for single dwellings, multiple dwelling developments and new subdivisions was in fact adopted. While this does appear to have resulted in a more comprehensive set of parameters for the new urban areas, it has not resulted in mandatory planning standards. To all appearances there is considerable scope for discretionary variation by local councils and to what extent planning strategy will be hands of the council or VCAT remains to be discovered.

The code now contains a residential diversity objective and Standard C4 that neighbourhood design should provide for a variety of housing types (including smaller lots and lots 'suitable for integrated medium density in areas close to services, public transport and public open space') and encourage the provision of local services, facilities and employment.

While there is a dwelling diversity objective (variations in dwelling and lot size), there is no equivalent dwelling density objective. The reduction in the maximum building height to 9 metres height limit and 60% site coverage does not encourage higher density. There is no standard or objective which directly relates to a mixed activity zone.

The TCPA had called for 25% of land in a new subdivision to be zoned for mixed use to facilitate local employment and reduce travel distances and time, and a minimum standard of 20 dwellings per hectare.

The final code has not addressed our criticism of the draft that it took 'no account of important functional differences between the residential, mixed use and township zones of the VPP. ResCode appears to be addressing the "within the property boundary" view of residential development with insufficient regard to the systemic relationships with other urban, societal and resource functions.'

Our position that 'Strategic planning objectives should not be constrained or compromised by the micro-scale planning rules of ResCode' has not been addressed.

Dr Miles Lewis, a former President, has expressed concerns in a recent opinion article (The Age, 18/6/01) as to what extend ResCode may 'stifle development'. Councils now have 'the option of adopting a schedule to residential zones, which prescribes across-the-board standards for some matters, such as building height, setback and site coverage', and blocking all medium-density development. He wrote:

*'Now that the essentially middle-class concerns of the existing suburbs have been dealt with, those issues affecting the broader community deserve attention.'*

*'What are we doing to provide low-income housing, to increase the density of the new outer-suburban development, and to provide new housing areas with public transport and other facilities?'*

The final Code has not met our call that:

*'ResCode must facilitate the production of an urban fabric that satisfies both local amenity objectives and sustainability criteria for individual buildings and the structural objectives of a metropolitan, regional or local strategic plan. This implies the need for local variations to satisfy not only differences in existing neighbourhood character, but also differences in strategic intent: for example, to increase residential density around railway stations.'*

### Micro Planning Rules

**The 3.5 star energy rating standard** for single dwellings has been dropped and there is no mandatory standard for multiple dwelling lots. However, the final code has recognised our point that single dwellings as well as multiple developments should be subject to solar orientation requirements, and there seems to be more attention paid to the importance of north-facing windows and the energy efficiency of adjacent houses (Standard A7). Standard C8 includes a provision for the orientation of the street network to promote efficient solar access.

**Car spaces objectives** for single and multiple developments are framed to ensure that parking is adequate/appropriate to the needs of residents. It will be a test of the Code as to whether local variations can be used to contain car usage or encourage non-provision as well as cater for it.

The needs of **cyclists** are recognised. Bicycle parking spaces are now required in developments of five or more dwellings. The standards for new subdivisions provide for a 'permeable network of low traffic volume and low traffic speed routes for cyclists'. Slow points and carriageway narrowing 'should be designed taking into account the need of cyclists by ensuring: speed compatibility, adequate space for concurrent passage and off-street diversions.'

The TCPA has responded to a request from the Disability and Housing Alliance and written to the Minister about the lack of any mandatory standards for **accessibility of the physically impaired**. We can see no reason why there cannot be a mandatory standard that houses be capable of being adapted to wheelchair access.

### TCPA Committee Meetings

The next meeting will be held at 7.00 pm on Monday, 13th August in the Wunderlich Laboratory, ground floor, Architecture Building, University of Melbourne.

### Address for Correspondence

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