

The Lakes School P-9 South Morang School Travel Plan





INTRODUCTION

The new Mill Park Lakes School will provide every possible opportunity for innovative, successful life long learning in partnership with teachers, parents, children and the wider community. Developing a School Travel Plan is a great opportunity for the school community to be involved in a project that works in collaboration with local council to benefit students, their families and the wider community.

The School Travel Plan encourages students and their parents to change the ways they travel to and from school. The aim is to reduce the number of school trips that students take by private car, and to encourage environmentally friendly and healthy ways of travelling. This should lead to a range of positive outcomes such as reduced traffic congestion around the school resulting in improved safety for students and parents and improved health of students due to greater levels of physical activity. Less traffic will also benefit the environment through reduced pollution caused by cars.



DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL

The Lakes P-9 is situated in the Mill Park Lakes Estate and was opened in 2007. The school has two sites, a northern and southern, with just the southern site in use during 2007, and the northern site opened in Term 3 2008. The northern site houses the Prep – Grade 4 students. The Grade 5 – Year 9 students reside in the southern site. The school opened with an enrolment of 254 students, which has doubled in 2008 to approximately 500 students. The school has been designed to house up to 1275 students across the two sites.

The Municipal Reserve to the west of the northern site is The Lakes Recreation Reserve, and students can travel through here to access the school.

The Municipal Reserve between the northern and southern sites is unlikely to be used for pedestrian access. An endangered plant; the Matted Flax-Lilly (*Dianella amoena*) grows in this reserve and needs to be protected, along with aboriginal sacred trees. There is also an open drain situated at the southern boundary of the northern site being subject to flooding.

The school is located between Jardier Terrace, The Lakes Boulevard and Gordons Road.





TRANSPORT

Current transport modes that families use to travel to and from school are car, walking and cycling.

There is a bus service that travels to the Mill Park Lakes estate every thirty minutes. The service originates at RMIT in Bundoora and travels through Mill Park to the Mill Park Lakes estate. The bus stop is a 5-10 minute walk from the school. Mapping of 2007 student address reveals that there are 9 families who live along this bus route until the bus enters the Lakes estate.

The Master plan of the school design has incorporated many energy efficient and environmentally friendly initiatives. Continuing this theme through the way that students travel to and from school help to build on the school's community awareness and education of these important issues.

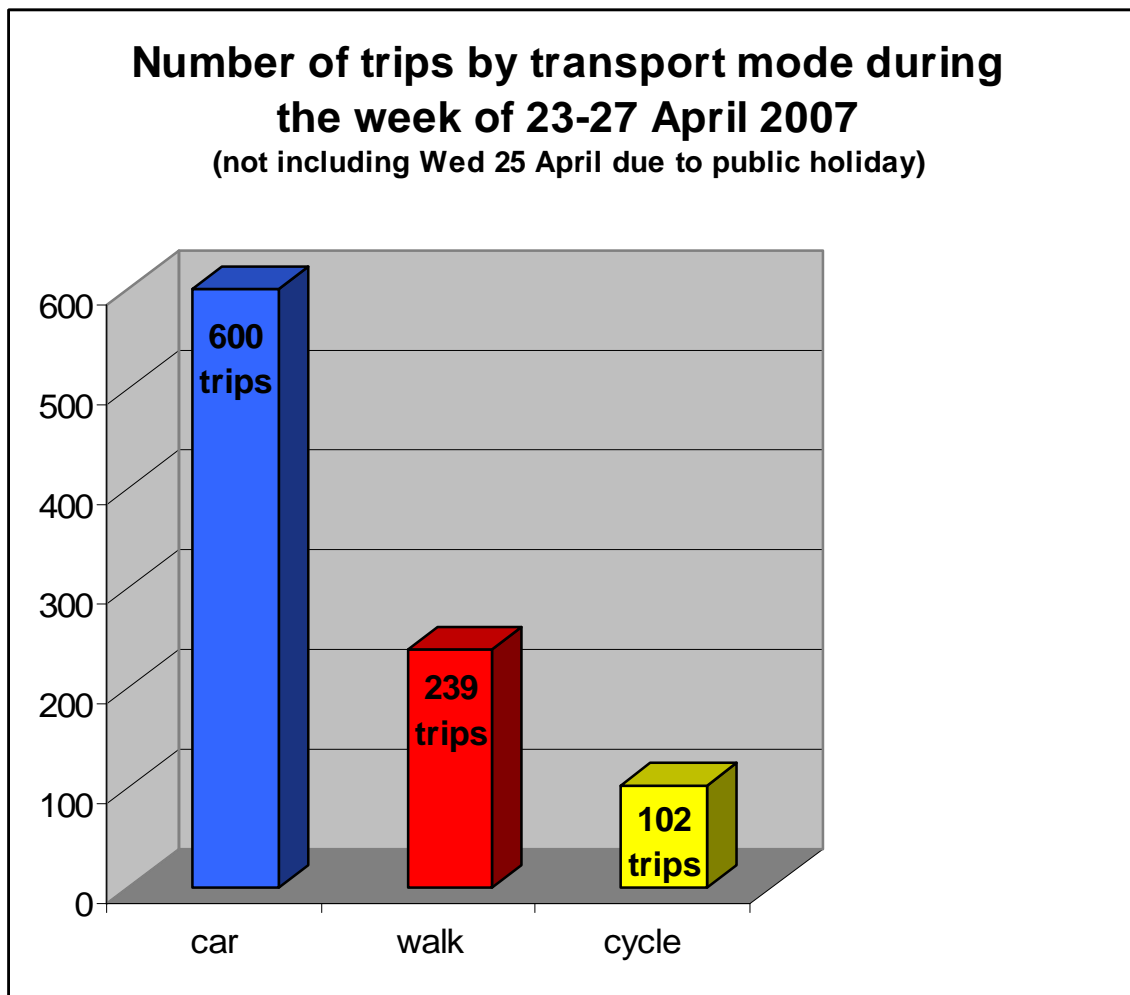




THE CURRENT SITUATION AND SUMMARY OF SCHOOL TRAVEL ISSUES

In April/May of 2007, a survey was sent home to all students of The Lakes School to be completed by both parents and students. Traffic counters were also located on two roads to collect the volume of school traffic on nearby streets.

A total of 262 surveys were completed, 102 by both parent and student, 141 by the student only, and 19 by the parent only. Parents were asked how their child travelled to school for each day of the week 23 – 27 April, and the results are displayed below.



Sixty four percent of all school travel trips are made by car, followed by 25% of trips by walking, and 11% of trips by bike. When the data is broken down into year levels, children in Grades Prep – 2 are driven 80% of their trips, whereas Grade 3 -6 students are driven for 56% of their trips, and Year 7 students are driven 37% of their trips. Forty two percent of trips are made by bike in the Year 7 group.



The top five reasons why parents drive their children to school are:

- It is convenient as I can drop off/pick up my child on the way to work or somewhere else
- I am worried about my child's personal safety
- Weather
- My child is too young to walk or catch public transport
- We are usually running short of time

For those parent's whose children did walk, common reasons as to why were:

- We live close to the school
- It promotes health and fitness
- It is more convenient
- My child walks with siblings/friends

Eighty percent of parents would like their child to walk to and from school more often, and 65% would like their child to ride to school more often. Another popular form of transport was a school bus, with 57% of parents indicating that they would like their child to travel to and from school this way. However, when further investigation was done into the provision of a school bus, there was a lack of interest and commitment from parents. This may indicate that whilst parents like the idea of a school bus, they are unable/will not commit to the cost or utilisation of the service. Several parents also mentioned that they would allow their children to walk to school in a program like the Walking School Bus. There was a lack of parent interest in volunteering to lead groups of children however, so the program has not been established.

Changes that parents identified that could be made to allow them to drive less often were:

- Safer routes and road crossings to school
- Provision of public transport or school bus close to our home
- Bicycle education

Responses from the TravelSmart survey showed that 50% of students lived within a 2 km radius of school. This was compared to Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping of students. The GIS mapping showed that 61% of students live within a 2 km radius of the school. The GIS mapping is most accurate, as the addresses of every family was mapped with addresses provided by the school and distance calculated by the GIS program. The survey data came only from those parents who responded to the survey, and they have estimated their distance to school.



Students identified that they would prefer to travel to and from school by bicycle (42%), car (25%) and walking (22%). Grade 3 – Year 7 students identified that the following changes would encourage them to walk/cycle to school more:

- Less traffic around the school
- Help on walking safely
- Safer routes and school
- Cycling improvements

Data from the traffic counters located on Jardier Terrace and Gordons Road showed that traffic peaked between 8am – 9am, and 3pm – 4pm. Between 6am and 9pm, outside of the peak times, Jardier Terrace has an average of 90 cars per hour. During the morning peak time this increased to 254 and to 216 cars in the afternoon peak time. On Gordons Road, the average cars per hour was 117 outside of peak time, but increased to 292 in the morning and 270 in the afternoon.

The average speed that vehicles were doing on Jardier Terrace during peak times during the week was 37 km/hr, and on Gordons Road, 38 km/hour.





MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

- Review at the beginning of each year by the school coordinator and Parents and Friends Association
- After-survey in August 2008 in conjunction with traffic counters on Jardier Terrace and Gordons Road. Data to be processed by Council TravelSmart Project Officer.
- TravelSmart and Travel Plan issues to be communicated via school newsletter articles/reports
- Continue regular contact with the City of Whittlesea for any support or collaborative partnership opportunities
- Contact/discussion with TravelSmart Victoria Officers at the Department of Infrastructure

REPORTING AND PUBLICITY

The Lakes School Travel Plan needs to be promoted so that everyone involved in the school and local community can see how the school are addressing travel issues. It also provides the school with opportunities to report back on their achievements throughout the year on sustainable transport.

The Travel Plan will be publicised in the following ways:

- A copy of the plan will be added to the school website
- Regular updates about the progress of the Plan to be included in the school newsletter
- Involve the Parents and Friends Association in Travel Plan ideas/opportunities
- Provide information about the school Travel Plan at School Open Days, and have a copy of the Plan at the school front office
- Invite the local media to the school for new activities/projects around sustainable transport
- Link classroom competitions, projects or activities with the Travel Plan



PROPOSED INITIATIVES

Objective One:

Increase awareness of road, pedestrian and cyclist safety of students

Action	Timeline	Responsibility
Organise safe road crossing sessions for Prep – Grade 2 students with school crossing supervisors	Term 1 2009	School Coordinator
Provide Walking to School maps to all students showing walking paths, bus stops, crossing and walking times	Term 4 2007 Term 1 for new students	Council TravelSmart Project Officer Council GIS Department Council Transport Department
Include Walking to School Map in Year 7 orientation packs	Term 1 for new students	School Administration
Encourage parents to walk and/or cycle with their children through regular TravelSmart updates and articles in school newsletter	Ongoing	School Coordinator Council TravelSmart Project Officer
Link with integrated studies to reinforce messages of benefits of sustainable transport and the environment	Ongoing	School Coordinator Teachers
Invite the Victoria Police Youth Resource Officer to the school for a meet and greet and to talk about road and pedestrian safety when walking to and from school (ie Stranger Danger)	Term 1 2007 and ongoing	School Coordinator



Objective Two:

Increase the number of students using sustainable transport to and from school by 10% by the end of 2009.

Action	Timeline	Responsibility
Provide the opportunity to participate in bike education	Provided as an elective in physical education Ongoing	Teachers
Provide secure storage for bicycles at the school	Ongoing	School Council School Coordinator
Provide secure storage for helmets at school	In lockers, school bags and classrooms. Ongoing	School Council School Coordinator
Investigate options for providing shelter for bikes	Term 1 2009	PFA
Participate in walking/cycling to school days to increase the profile of active transport to school	One per term	School Coordinator Teachers VicHealth (partner) Pedestrian Council of Victoria (partner) Bicycle Victoria (partner)
Include a section in the school newsletter for TravelSmart messages and articles	Ongoing	School Coordinator Council TravelSmart Project Officer



Objective 3:

Reduce the impact of car travel on the environment through reduction of traffic congestion around the school by 10% by the end of 2009.

Action	Timeline	Responsibility
Encourage parents who drive to park a short walk away from school through school newsletter, Prep Orientation, new parents information pack	Term 1 2008 and ongoing	School Coordinator
Disseminate information regarding travel options to students and parents via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newsletters • Website • School Assemblies 	Term 3 2008 Ongoing	Council TravelSmart Project Officer School Coordinator
Parent information nights held by the school to have a component about school travel	Term 4 2008	School year level coordinators School Coordinator