

B3 Walking strategies and local action plans

Contents

- B3.1 Developing a vision
- B3.2 Developing a plan
- B3.3 Implementation strategies

Purpose

This module provides information to assist council planners in developing pedestrian strategies and action plans. It outlines aspects to consider in preparing a vision, a plan and a set of strategies to promote and increase walking in the local community.

Introduction

This module outlines steps that can be taken to create a successful walking program. It discusses the development of a vision and plan which has supporting objectives, strategies and action items. Figure B3-1 shows the general relationship between these elements.

The objectives support the overall vision, the strategies support each objective, and the actions are undertaken to implement each strategy. Additionally, consistent with the total quality management principles discussed in Module B2, Figure B3-1 indicates an ongoing assessment process and adjustments to the plan as needed to attain the desired objectives and sustain the overall vision.

Information on successfully implemented walking programs, as well as related resources for developing such programs, can be found in Part E *Resource toolbox*. Other information on developing walking strategies includes:

- ▶ *Techniques for planning local networks: developing a walking strategy* (Lumsdon & Tolley 1999), which outlines key ingredients and core principles for developing a walking strategy

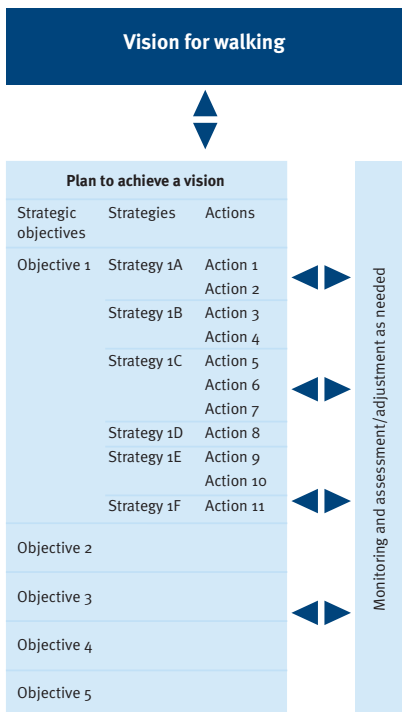


Figure B3-1
Relationship between vision, objectives, strategies and actions

- ▶ the UK Department for Transport website, which provides a framework for a local walking strategy at <http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_roads/documents/page/dft_roads_504817.hcsp>.

B3.1 Developing a vision

Establishing a vision is an important step in developing a walking plan for the future. A vision provides guidance and assists in developing strategic



objectives and key outcomes for action plans. When organisations have a vision, walking strategies and action plans can be developed using a 'whole of council' approach.

Councils can develop a vision either by themselves or with the assistance of the local community. By engaging the community in developing a vision, council can hear from residents about local issues. For example, Monash City Council (2004) consulted widely with individuals and community groups to gain a clearer picture of walking trends as part of the process of developing its walking strategy.

A vision statement is formulated to articulate and document the vision. This statement expresses the ideal, ultimate, realistic and achievable outcome or goal of council. While a vision is typically long-term, the statement should include specific and realistic outcomes that can be completed within a reasonable timeframe. It should also be consistent with the overall values and philosophy of council.

A vision statement can help establish the big picture and illustrate target objectives. It can assist with team building and with focusing the energy of the team on achieving desired outcomes.

The following questions may assist development of the vision statement:

- ▶ What makes our community unique and how can walking contribute to this uniqueness?
- ▶ What do our residents consider most important for increasing participation in walking?
- ▶ How could we more effectively or efficiently provide improved facilities and programs to encourage walking?

An example of a succinct vision statement for a walking and cycling plan is contained in the *Hervey Bay Living Streets Strategy – Walk and Cycle Plan* (Hervey Bay City Council 2003). This plan expresses the following vision:

Hervey Bay streets and parks will be vibrant with pedestrian and cycle activity as people enthusiastically use these facilities for social, recreation and transport purposes.

In addition to being concise and detailing the ultimate aim of the plan, the vision supports the corporate plan and other policies and strategies of Hervey Bay City Council.

A sample checklist for items to consider when developing a vision statement is shown in Table B3-1.

Table B3-1
Sample checklist for the development of a walking program vision statement

Was the walking vision statement...	✓ if yes
▶ prepared in consultation with the public?	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ prepared in consultation with key walking groups or other relevant stakeholders?	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ consistent with council's general philosophy and overall vision, goals and objectives?	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ specific, with realistic outcomes?	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ reflective of the uniqueness of the community?	<input type="checkbox"/>

B3.2 Developing a plan

A simple, easily understood plan that is relevant and demonstrates how to achieve the vision for the future is the key to achieving effective and sustainable results. A walking plan will often contain strategic objectives, each dealing with the various attributes of the functional and recreational qualities of walking.

A well-thought-out and well-crafted walking plan has many advantages. One of the key advantages is that it can help obtain funding for the program.

Strategic objectives

Strategic objectives for walking should be target-orientated, typically have a long-term focus, be linked to the overall vision and produce measurable results. They should cover the full range of components necessary to facilitate a successful walking program, and relate to such topics as:

- ▶ increasing participation in walking
- ▶ developing effective walking networks
- ▶ addressing relevant land use and urban design issues.

A useful tool in developing a strategic objective is the SMART principle: 'specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely'. Ideally, each objective will satisfy each part of this principle.

A step that often gets overlooked is the identification of a stated target. This step is very important because it allows the objective, and hence the overall plan, to be monitored and assessed to determine whether it is achieving the desired impact.



Figure B3-2
Walking paths with activity centres for children



Figure B3-3
An endorsed local walking event

Without this piece of the process, ineffective plans can remain unchanged. This has not only a budgetary impact (since money is being spent ineffectively), but it can also have a political impact and diminish the prospects of funding for walking programs in the future.

An example of a strategic objective that satisfies the SMART principle is '15% of trips are to be made by walking by 2016'. This objective, contained in the *Transport plan for Brisbane* developed by Brisbane City Council, is specific and measurable, and has a relevant and achievable timeframe.

See the case study 'Evaluation of the *Perth pedestrian strategy*' in D5.3.1 for an example of an evaluation process.

To be able to measure the effects of objectives, appropriate data needs to be available. This can be a limitation for walking programs, since the primary focus of transport-related data collection

is typically the motor vehicle. Specific pedestrian-related counts are occasionally undertaken; however, these are usually conducted only in areas with higher volumes of pedestrians, such as shopping malls. The limited range of such data could make measuring the achievement of a strategic objective difficult. To accurately measure the achievements of an objective, appropriate pedestrian-related data needs to be identified and collected.

To achieve the strategic objectives and their desired targets, detailed strategies and actions need to be developed and implemented.

Strategies

A strategy is a systematic plan of action developed to accomplish a specific objective. Several complementary strategies may be developed to achieve a specific objective.

The strategies should be tailored to what will work, given the specific conditions and circumstances existing in the given community. As an example, for an objective related to increasing overall participation in walking, specific strategies could include the following:

- ▶ developing a social marketing campaign
- ▶ implementing individualised marketing
- ▶ building stronger community partnerships
- ▶ providing facilities that entice people to walk (see Figure B3-2 for an example of activity sites provided for children)
- ▶ using events and merchandise promoting walking (see Figure B3-3 for an example of an endorsed walking event and Figure B3-4 for examples of promotional merchandise).

In the *Hervey Bay Living Streets Strategy – Walk and Cycle Plan* a suggested strategy is to 'provide appropriate signage for pedestrians and cyclists'. This strategy, aimed at achieving greater participation in walking and cycling, complements other strategies within the plan, which include education and increasing awareness of walking.

Potential strategies and actions, including case studies of successful implementation, are discussed in more detail in other sections of *Easy Steps*. For example, Module B4 highlights a number of strategies and case studies related to community engagement; Part C focuses on how to plan and promote a walking program; and Part D includes strategies and actions related to design, construction, monitoring and maintaining walking facilities.





Source: Heart Foundation (bottom photo)

Figure B3-4
Merchandise promoting walking

Information about examples of successfully implemented walking programs can be found in Part E.

Actions

An action is a specific task that contributes to achieving the intended outcome of a given strategy. Experience has shown that a plan is most effective when a particular person or organisation is directly responsible for each action, and when each action has a stated budget and timeframe for implementation. The items listed in the checklists (Tables B2-1 to B2-12) in Module B2 *Total quality management* are examples of such actions.

A critical action in the development of a walking program plan is the development of a walking network plan. This is needed to help councils identify walking infrastructure deficiencies.

Another useful action would be for local governments to review existing walking programs implemented by other councils and assess which aspects of these might be suitable for their own community.

Actions can be of a defined, limited duration, or can be ongoing. Most strategies would include a combination of both types. An example of an ongoing action would be to 'continue to fund the development of walkways and cycleways throughout the Shire'. This example comes from the *Redlands Cycle and Pedestrian Strategy* (Redland Shire Council 2004); the council has provided a costing for this action until 2016.

Table B3-2
Sample checklist for the development of a walking program plan

Does the walking plan...	✓ if yes
▶ consist of strategic objectives, strategies and actions?	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ have strategic objectives that, when fulfilled, will achieve the stated vision?	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ have desired, measurable targets associated with each strategic objective?	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ identify strategies for the achievement of each strategic objective?	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ identify specific action steps to implement each strategy?	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ identify parties responsible for implementing each action?	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ identify a timeframe and budget for implementing each action?	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ include an implementation strategy, monitoring and plan adjustment process?	<input type="checkbox"/>

An effective plan will also include a framework for prioritised implementation of actions, ongoing monitoring of the plan's effectiveness, and a process for adjusting the plan (typically through adjusting the strategies and actions taken) if the desired effects are not being achieved.

Table B3-2 outlines items to consider in the development of a walking plan.

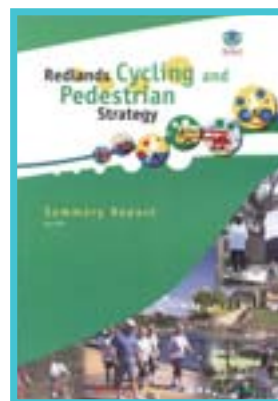
B3.3 Implementation strategies

Often, the level of funding is not sufficient to cover immediate implementation of all the actions developed in the walking plan. Identified actions need to be prioritised to determine the most effective use of available funding.

Evaluation criteria are most commonly used when prioritising the elements of the plan. The criteria should cover the range of issues specific to the local community and to council.

As an example, the *Redlands Cycling and Pedestrian Strategy* (see Figure B3-5) used the following criteria for prioritising plan elements:

- ▶ addresses public liability concerns and helps reduce public risk



Source: Redland Shire Council

Figure B3-5
Redlands Cycling and Pedestrian Strategy

- ▶ increases cycling and walking activity
- ▶ is cost-effective
- ▶ integrates with other transport activities
- ▶ integrates with other stakeholder activities
- ▶ is required to enable delivery of other works
- ▶ improves conditions for cyclists and pedestrians and meets the needs of user groups.

(Redland Shire Council 2004)

Weightings according to the relative importance of the actions and requirements of the council can be applied to the criteria to aid prioritisation.

Elements can then be prioritised in terms of identified importance and assigned timing of implementation. Possible timing categories could be:

- ▶ immediate: to be implemented in the next 2 years
- ▶ short-term: to be implemented within 5 years
- ▶ medium-term: to be implemented within 5 to 10 years
- ▶ long-term: to be implemented within 10 to 20 years.

(Hervey Bay City Council 2003)

Consistent with the principles of total quality management (see Module B2), once implementation of the plan has begun, its effectiveness should be monitored. Performance indicators are typically used to evaluate the plan's effectiveness.

These indicators identify whether the desired targets of the strategic objectives are being achieved.

Table B3-3
Sample checklist for the development of a walking program implementation strategy

Does the implementation strategy...	✓ if yes
▶ include evaluation criteria that address the critical issues relevant to the council and the community, as well as the stated vision and strategic objectives?	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ identify the available funding for the time period(s) in question?	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ identify a prioritised sequence of implementation of actions?	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ match implementation actions to available funding?	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ outline a monitoring and assessment process for the plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ summarise the performance indicators to be used in monitoring the plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Three basic types of indicators include:

- ▶ output indicators, focusing on the level of activity, such as completing specific tasks, or providing a product or service, such as developing a program or building a walking path
- ▶ outcome indicators, reflecting actual results achieved and measuring the level of effectiveness or success, such as the percentage increase in new users
- ▶ quality indicators, measuring effectiveness in meeting customer expectations (including reliability, relevance, timeliness, quality, and completeness) (adapted from Department of Sport and Recreation, Western Australia 2004).

Measuring walking levels in communities is one example of an outcome indicator. The *National physical activity survey* developed by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare in 1999 details the nationally recognised method of measuring walking levels in populations (see E3.1 *Planning and urban design*).

The implementation of the plan/strategy should be evaluated and reviewed regularly, and checked for progress against the agreed objectives and specified performance indicators. This review could form the basis for developing future annual programs. Funding for the plan/strategy often depends on the development of annual programs that detail



the current or revised list of actions. Table B3-3 provides a sample checklist of items to consider when developing an implementation strategy.

An example of an implementation plan is the *Toowoomba Cycle and Pedestrian Strategy (TCPS) Implementation Plan*, which includes the following elements in its monitoring and review program:

- ▶ complete TQM checklists annually
- ▶ prepare TCPS statistical report on an as-needed basis
- ▶ prepare a TCPS progress report annually
- ▶ provide regular updates to the community on progress through the *Car Free Day* newsletter.

References

Armstrong T, Bauman A & Davies J 2000, *Physical activity patterns of Australian adults*, results of the 1999 *National physical activity survey*, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Canberra, Australia.

Brisbane City Council 2002, *Transport plan for Brisbane*, Brisbane City Council, Brisbane, Australia.

Department for Transport n.d., Framework for a local walking strategy, viewed 18 February 2005, <http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_roads/documents/page/dft_roads_504817.hcsp>.

Department of Sport and Recreation, Western Australia 2004, viewed 18 November 2004, <<http://www.dsr.wa.gov.au/organisations/planning.asp#objectives>>.

Hervey Bay City Council 2003, *Hervey Bay living streets strategy – walk and cycle plan*, Hervey Bay City Council, Torquay, Australia.

Lumsdon L & Tolley R 1999, Techniques for planning local networks: developing a walking strategy, *World Transport Policy and Practice*, S/1, pp. 17–23.

Monash City Council 2004, viewed 22 November 2004, <<http://www.monash.vic.gov.au/news/media2003/media0103.html>>.

National Heart Foundation 1996, *Exercise in daily life*, Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services, Canberra, Australia.

Redland Shire Council 2004, *Redlands cycling and pedestrian strategy*, Redland Shire Council, Cleveland, Australia.

Wet Tropics Management Authority 2001, *Wet tropics walking strategy*, Queensland Government, Brisbane, Australia.

