Brimbank submission – Inquiry into pedestrian safety in car parks

Council recognises the importance of enhancing safety for all who; live, work, visit, learn or play in Brimbank. Council is particularly cognisant of, and plays an active role in enhancing safety for pedestrians, in particular vulnerable pedestrians, in car parks.

Pedestrian safety in car parks can be enhanced through a number of mechanisms including; the strengthening of planning provisions, providing for delineated pedestrian pathways, providing additional and sufficient resources for local government, allocating resources for retrofitting car parks, strengthening Australian Standards, developing strong design guidelines / legislation.

"The location and design of car parks can have a significant impact of the safety and quality of public space and private development. All car park layouts and locations require careful and considered design, taking into account principles of natural surveillance and sightlines, lighting requirements and direct access by pedestrians to specific destinations."

(Safer Design Guidelines – Department of Sustainability and Environment, 2005)

Submission focus
This submission focuses on larger car parks and vulnerable pedestrians, highlights the role council plays in enhancing safety for pedestrians in car parks and makes a number of recommendations for enhancing safety for pedestrians in car parks.

Car parks
Car parks in Brimbank are large. This submission will focus on larger car parks (approximately 100 bays or more) and car parks associated with retail and commercial activity centres. There are significant car parks within industrial areas in Brimbank, however they are not treated in this submission as being as significant in terms of enhancing pedestrian safety. Council also plays a role in pedestrian safety in relation to 'on street' car parking, however this issue is regarded as more relevant to issues of road safety and not addressed in this submission.

Car parks are designed predominantly to facilitate efficient parking of vehicles; yet drivers and passengers become pedestrians when alighting their vehicle. Council also acknowledges that people use car parks to travel through to destinations as pedestrians.

Vulnerable pedestrians
The most important focus for enhancing safety in car parks should be vulnerable pedestrians. Vulnerable pedestrians using car parks include;

- children and young people
- the aged and frail
- people using shopping trolleys
- parents with prams
- people in wheelchairs
- frail people using motorised scooters, and more broadly
- cyclists.

Relevant aspects of the Brimbank Profile
Brimbank City Council is located in the north-west of Melbourne between 11 and 23 kilometres of the Melbourne GPO and covers an area of 123 square kilometers. The landscape is relatively flat basaltic plains. Brimbank is bound by the Hume City Council in the north, Maribyrnong and Moonee Valley City Councils in the east, Hoppers and Wyndham City Councils in the south and the Melton Shire in the west.
Brimbank has a significant amount of ‘suburban’ residential areas including residential developments, particularly in the north-west areas of Sydenham and Taylors Lakes and the southern areas around Cairnlea and Derrimut. Brimbank also has industrial and commercial areas, shopping centers of ‘box like’ and other design, a number of activity centers and a range of educational, recreational and community facilities.

Brimbank is the second most populous municipality in metropolitan Melbourne, and the largest in the western region with approximately 170,000 residents. Brimbank has a growing and ageing population. Cultural diversity is high with 43.4% of residents born overseas and over half speaking a language other than English. There are areas of high social disadvantage in Brimbank.

**Car parks in Brimbank**

Car parks, and particularly broad acre car parks, are a significant and important aspect of the Brimbank landscape.

Multi-level car parks are currently not a feature of the Brimbank landscape and the majority of car parks are owned privately or by other government interests.

There are approximately 200 separate and significant car parks within Brimbank (ten or more spaces) with a total estimated capacity of 27,700 car park bays over a total estimated area of 1.25km².

These car parks are spread across the municipality, are located in industrial and residential areas and adjacent to activity centres and transport hubs. They are associated with various facilities and institutions including schools, higher educational institutions, hospitals, places of worship, sporting facilities, passive recreation facilities such as parkland and ‘box like’ retail centres. The car parks range in size from small (approximately 10 bays) to very large (approximately 2000 bays). Car parks in industrial areas range from small (approximately 30 bays) to large (approximately 650 bays).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Estimation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Separate areas</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bay capacity</td>
<td>27,700</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total area (km²)</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum capacity</td>
<td>2000</td>
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**Vehicle crashes in car parks**

Local government is not a significant collector of relevant data in relation to vehicle crashes. Council does however collect data pertaining to claims made against Council involving Council vehicles.

In the period July 2001 – July 2009 there is no record held by Council of a pedestrian being injured by a Council vehicle in a crash. There were a limited number of incidents reported in car parks in this period, generally relating to vehicle-vehicle crashes or unknown cause incidents (scratched vehicles etc).

**Council’s role in enhancing safety for pedestrians in car parks**

Council plays three (3) distinct roles in enhancing pedestrian safety in car parks. Council indirectly influences car park safety via devising and reviewing policy, delivering services and delivering and maintaining infrastructure. The two direct instruments by which Council influences pedestrian safety in car parks are the enforcement of parking regulations and reviewing and approving planning applications for developments that include car parks.
1. Broad policy, service and infrastructure measures
Local Government continuously devise and review policy, deliver services and deliver and maintain infrastructure that can and does impact on pedestrian safety, and in some cases pedestrian safety in car parks. These measures range from minor and localised to major and wide ranging.

Example
Council recently conducted a review of lighting in Central Sunshine. The review was conducted as one of a number of measures to enhance community safety, in particular for pedestrian. The review identified that lighting limitations in a number of broad scale car parks and recommended enhancements. These recommendations are being implemented.

2. Enforcement of parking regulations
Council enforces parking regulations in public car parks and in gazetted private car parks. This activity is primarily undertaken in order to provide order and subsequently provide a level of safety for all car park users.

3. Planning application assessment
Council assesses planning applications that include car parks against Australian Standards and in reference to the Victorian planning provisions.

Council objectively assesses aspects of proposed car park designs against Australian Standards;

- AS 2890.2 (2002) Parking facilities - Off-street commercial vehicle facilities

This assessment is limited by the thoroughness of the relevant standard and the standard's focus on ensuring that pedestrian safety is addressed.

Council assess the planning application in reference to the planning provision Clause 52.06. This clause is predominantly concerned with ensuring that an adequate quantum of car parks are provided in a development and has limited direction relating to pedestrian safety.

Council also conducts an informed expert and subjective assessment of elements of planning applications that include car parks against factors that are understood to impact on pedestrian safety. The aspects that are considered through this process are outlined in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Consideration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>• Dedicated pedestrian paths are provided to ensure access is pedestrian and cycle friendly</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There are continuous and accessible pathways through the car park</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Paths to and from car parks are appropriately signed, lit and have clear sightlines</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Adequate disabled parking spaces are provided in close proximity to entrances</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Footpaths / crossings allow disability and pram access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pedestrians/ cyclists entering from adjacent infrastructure are allowed for (footpaths, shared paths etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Disabled parking spaces are designed in line with the draft Australian Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Under cover bicycle storage areas are provided close to building</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
entrances and in locations that are overlooked / surveilled
• Gradients within car parks / pedestrian pathways are suitable for access by vulnerable users (inclusive of the use of shopping trolleys)
• Delivery areas are independent of the public/ pedestrian access to the associated development

Footpaths
• Footpath provided across the face of the building are of an adequate width
• Footpaths are free of obstructions (pillars, columns etc).
• Footpaths/ shared paths are located within walking/ cycling desire lines
• Footpaths on car parking access isles are a minimum of 1.5 – 2.5m wide (to allow for cars overhanging onto footpath)

Natural surveillance & pedestrian visibility
• Visibility within and into car parks is enhanced by minimising unnecessary structures
• Car parking spaces are designed to provide effective sightlines from moving cars

Pedestrians movement
• Pedestrian crossing points are situated clear of vehicle manoeuvring and queuing areas
• Isles are oriented perpendicular to the entrance of adjacent shopping / activity centre. This provides more direct access.
• Provision of footpaths at the head of car parks so that pedestrians are not directed to walk behind their car and into traffic

Signage and markings
• Provision of Pedestrian Operated Signals (POS) & markings
• Clear bay markings
• Perimeter fencing that assist in the guidance of pedestrian movement
• Provision of signage that improve way finding for pedestrians is clear, simple and culturally appropriate

Vehicle control
• Vehicle movements are constrained with clearly defined vehicle paths

Lighting
• Lighting in car parks should be in line with Australian Standards at a minimum
• Car parks should be well lit with high quality white light.

Other
• Wheel stops are not supported as they are a pedestrian trip hazards
• Shopping trolley collection locations are strategically placed and:
  a. are readily accessed and conveniently located for pedestrians while not adversely affecting the pedestrian pathways
  b. do not affect access/ egress of vehicles
  c. are not located at the access points (vehicular) to the car park
• Adequate refuse disposal facilities are provided
Recommendations
Council makes the following six (6) recommendations to the Committee for the enhancement of safety for pedestrians in car parks.

1. Strengthen the Victorian planning provisions
The Victorian planning provisions should be strengthened to provide for greater emphasis on pedestrians in larger car parks and allow for pedestrian measures that enhance pedestrian safety (such as delineated pedestrian pathways).

2. Develop guidelines/legislation for pedestrian safety in car parks
Guidelines/legislation should be developed that provide for enhanced pedestrian safety in car parks. Local government should be consulted in the development of the guidelines/legislation.

The Safer Design Guidelines and Activity Centre Design Guidelines (Department of Sustainability and Environment, 2005) provide good design direction in relation to elements of the public realm, including broad scale car parks. The objectives and design suggestions in these guidelines should be refined, further developed, considered in relation to pedestrian safety and considered in the broader context of design for health and wellbeing, as outlined in Healthy by Design: a planners’ guide to environments for active living (National Heat Foundation, 2004).

3. Support delineated pedestrian pathways
The provision of ‘delineated pedestrian pathways’ (vehicle exclusion zones) should be supported within larger, broad acre car parks through specific car park design guidelines or legislation.

Physical separation of vehicles and pedestrians in car parks is a vital component of enhancing safety for pedestrians.

4. Provide resources for local government
Local government should be provided with greater resources to enforce new and existing legislation and resources to allow for better design of proposed broad scale car parks.

5. Provide resources for retrofitting existing car parks
Resources should be allocated appropriately towards supporting the retrofitting of existing car parks to comply with any development of design guidelines or changes to legislation.

6. Support development of relevant Australian Standards
The State government should lobby / influence the further development of relevant Australian Standards to further enhance pedestrian safety in car parks.
3 July 2009

Ms Alexandra Douglas  
Executive Officer, Road Safety Committee  
Parliament of Victoria  
Spring Street  
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Ms Douglas

Re: Submission – Inquiry into Pedestrian Safety in Car Parks

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Road Safety Committee of the 56th Parliament of Victoria’s inquiry into pedestrian safety in car parks. Please find attached Brimbank City Council’s submission.

Council recognises the importance of enhancing safety for all who live, work, visit, learn or play in Brimbank. Council is particularly cognisant of, and plays an active role in enhancing safety for pedestrians, in particular vulnerable pedestrians, in car parks.

Pedestrian safety in car parks can be enhanced through a number of mechanisms, and we make six recommendations to the Committee relating to;

• the strengthening of planning provisions;  
• providing for delineated pedestrian pathways;  
• providing additional and sufficient resources for local government;  
• allocating resources for retrofitting car parks;  
• strengthening Australian Standards; and  
• developing strong design guidelines / legislation.

If you require clarification or further information in relation to Council’s submission, please contact Council’s Community Safety Planner, James Sherry on 9249 4814.

Yours sincerely

NICK FOA  
Chief Executive Officer