TT:ROADS75 (100)

29 June 2009

Road Safety Committee
Inquiry into Pedestrian Safety in Car Parks
Parliament of Victoria
Spring Street
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

For the attention of Ms Alexandra Douglas

Dear Committee

INQUIRY INTO PEDESTRIAN SAFETY IN CAR PARKS

Thank you for your invitation to make a submission to the Inquiry into Pedestrian Safety in Car Parks.

The City of Monash’s submission is attached and I trust that it assists with the Road Safety Committee’s evaluation and debate into this matter.

Please do not hesitate to contact Terry Tillotson, Council’s Senior Transport Engineer, on 9518 3439 if you have any queries or wish to further discuss any of the issues within the submission.

Yours faithfully

DAVID CONRAN
Chief Executive Officer
SUBMISSION FOR THE INQUIRY INTO PEDESTRIAN SAFETY IN CAR PARKS

CITY OF MONASH

Introduction
The City of Monash has responsibility for providing and/or managing a range of on-street and off-street car parks within the municipality. It also has interests in car parks provided by public authorities such as VicTrack as well as private commercial car parks available for public parking.

Parked motor vehicles generate pedestrian traffic in all forms ranging from agile and alert pedestrians, parents with young children to those that are frail or with major disabilities requiring assistance by others such as the visually impaired or immobile. The dynamic mix and movement of pedestrians in common space with motor vehicles regularly causes varying forms of conflict that require responsible authorities to monitor and where necessary respond so that associated risks are minimised.

Five major retail activity centres in Monash with substantial on-road and off-road parking provided are:
- Glen Waverley;
- Mount Waverley;
- Pinewood;
- Oakleigh; and
- Clayton.

Motorists attending these centres are presented with a range of circumstances and these are discussed in this submission.

Car Parks - General
Council has responsibility for, and/or interests in, a number of forms and types of car parks as illustrated below.
Car Parks - Numbers
The following table summarises car park numbers in the five recognised retail activity centres.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Centre</th>
<th>On-Road</th>
<th>Off-Road</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Spaces (approx)</td>
<td>No. of Council Car Park Locations / Spaces (approx)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glen Waverley</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>8 / 1,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Waverley</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>6 / 650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinewood</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>2 / 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakleigh</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>10 / 480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clayton</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>5 / 430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals (approx)</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,210</strong></td>
<td><strong>31 / 3,310</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
1. On-road spaces listed are time-restricted parking.
2. Private car parks listed are regulated under the Road Safety Act and enforced by Council.
3. VicTrack car parks listed are all-day parking provided for commuter vehicles by VicTrack.

Crashes
Council does not have access to accurate data specific to crashes in car parks in Monash. This is due to several factors that include:
- There is no requirement for crashes where personal injury does not occur to be reported to Police or Council;
- When reported, crashes are often not recorded specifically as car park crashes; and
- Various owners of and responsibilities for the car parks provided.

Council is therefore not in a position to submit meaningful information in relation to car park crashes.

Pedestrian Safety Measures at Car Parks
Pedestrian safety in car parks can be adversely affected by:
- Motorists travelling at excessive speeds;
- Through traffic cutting through off-road car parks;
- Non-defined walking paths for pedestrians;
- Undisciplined pedestrian movements; or
- Motorists reversing from spaces while not exercising sufficient surveillance.

Where identified as a safety issue in off-street car parks, excessive speed and through traffic can be addressed by the installation of strategically placed traffic management devices to slow traffic flows. Flat top road humps have been used in some locations with the flat top being designated as a pedestrian crossing from the car park. Where installed, these have provided a safe crossing point for pedestrians.
Caution must be exercised when intending to use road humps to reduce vehicle speed in car parks. There is a tendency by some to install the Off-Road Hump – Type 2 as defined in Section 8.8.6 of the VicRoads Traffic Engineering Manual, Volume 1 – Traffic Management (a small hump more suitably described as a ‘road bump’). The City of Monash avoids using these and similar types of devices as they become tripping hazards, particularly for elderly pedestrians and those with mobility difficulties.

Providing safe walking paths in off-street car parks is an ongoing challenge. Because of the commercial monetary value of land provided for parking, a tendency exists to maximise the number of parking spaces that can be provided by minimising the areas for non-car parking uses. In Monash, the cost for providing an off-road parking space (land price and construction cost) is currently up to around $30,000. Some car parks can be more readily configured than others to provide designated walking paths. This often depends on the regularity of the car park shape, topography, natural vegetation present and external boundary restrictions.

Undisciplined pedestrian movements with both on-road and off-road car parks are a common cause of conflict with vehicles. In these situations pedestrians regularly walk between parked cars to cross roads and car park aisles without taking due care. Even where designated crossings have been provided most pedestrians continue to take the most direct route rather than deviate to the safer location.

Concern regularly exists for vehicles reversing from parking spaces into pedestrians or other vehicles. This may be caused by the reversing driver not sufficiently observing what is behind them prior to and during reversing due to them having obstructed vision to the rear of their vehicle or by the presence of adjacent vehicles. The addition of ‘park assist’ devices as a standard fitting on new vehicles is of considerable assistance in alleviating this concern however it is going to take considerable time for the majority of vehicles to be fitted with this device. Rear mounted CCT cameras fitted to vehicles without ‘park assist’ devices would provide their drivers with far better rear vision when reversing resulting in improved pedestrian safety.

Suggestions to Improve Safety at Car Parks
Car park environments are unique where it is common practice for the traffic aisles to also cater for pedestrian movements. They are a shared territory where the basic imperative is to use commonsense.

Section 17A of the Road Safety Act places obligation on road users to act in a safe manner and take reasonable care to avoid endangering the safety of other road users. However, the Road Rules do not reiterate this with a ‘duty of care’ rule and only isolated Road Rules, more pertinent to the operation of the road network system, can be referenced for control in car parks. For example, with the car park area being considered to be a ‘road’, priority is given to the vehicle over the pedestrian. If a parking bay in a car park is considered a ‘road related area’ then the vehicle leaving the parking bay and entering the traffic aisle (a ‘road’) must ‘give way’ to all users of the aisle including the pedestrian. Another examples are the ‘give way’ scenarios to be applied to traffic aisle intersections and application of the default speed limit.
An opportunity exists to improve safety in car parks by placing a higher value on occupancy of the road space by pedestrians (but not necessarily to the extent of a Shared Zone) by more clearly defining user responsibilities in the Road Rules, possibly in a section specifically relating to car parks. This could also embrace an appropriate speed limit including consideration of any benefits of developing a symbolic “Car Park Zone” speed limit sign similar to that used for a Shared Zone. Section 7.6 of the VicRoads Traffic Engineering Manual indicates a 30 km/h speed limit is appropriate for these areas and Council supports this.

The scope of this inquiry could also be widened to consider the usage of car parks for Shared Pathway purposes. Monash has several bicycle paths and trails, particularly those that are on or are adjacent to VicTrack (railway) land and are required to pass through VicTrack all-day car parks to provide path continuity. VicTrack car parks generally fill with rail commuter cars over a short period early in the mornings and empty out late afternoon to evenings. Council believes that a safe designated shared pathway for pedestrians and cyclists could be provided through these car parks without compromising commuter usage. Council has experienced resistance by VicTrack to formally agree to such usage resulting in pedestrians and cyclists using these car parks randomly without appropriate route designation or regulation signage to control usage being in place.