CROYDON MAJOR ACTIVITY CENTRE PARKING STUDY
December 2011

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Strategic Context

The Croydon Town Centre has been classified as a Major Activity Centre (MAC) in the ‘Melbourne 2030’ metropolitan strategy and contains a wide range of retail, commercial, community, leisure and administrative functions. A mix of these activities are found on both the north and south side of Mt Dandenong Road within the Croydon MAC.

Major Activity Centres are to be large centres with a mix of activities that are well served by public transport. They provide scope to accommodate ongoing investment and change in retail, office, community, service and residential markets. There are a total of 94 Major Activity Centres in Melbourne.

The supply and management of parking within the Croydon MAC has an important role to play in realising this vision, and the development of a specific Parking Strategy for Croydon is seen as necessary in realising this vision.

To assist with the development of a Parking Strategy, it has been deemed necessary, firstly to undertake a detailed Parking Study. This will assist Council to gain a thorough understanding of the prevailing parking environment, providing an empirical baseline from which a Parking Strategy can be developed.

The key objectives of this Parking Study are broadly summarised as follows:

- Capture and map all existing car parking stock, both Council and private, in the study area
- For all publicly accessible parking, determine existing capacities, occupancy and turnover rates
- Establish the different usage patterns within the parking areas, and tie usage back to the various parking generators
- Establish through surveys and consultation the perceived parking needs, pressures and issues in the precinct
- Survey rail / bus commuters to establish origin / destination, current commuter parking issues, and potential incentives to discourage alternatives to driving and parking
- Forecast future land-use growth, and future car parking demands, overall and by specific area
- Identify existing and future parking ‘hot-spots’ and areas of opportunity to modify, consolidate, or create additional parking infrastructure, both public and private.
Public and Sustainable Transport

Croydon is very well serviced by public transport, with the Croydon Station and the Croydon Bus interchange acting as a hub for these services.

Croydon Station is designated as a ‘Premium Station’; is located within Zone 2 Ticketing and is staffed from first to last train. According to the Metlink website, there are 378 car parking spaces, 6 bike lockers and a bike cage that can accommodate 14 bikes. It is also integrated with the Croydon Bus Interchange.

Overall, there is a high level of service at the Croydon Station and Croydon Bus Interchange, with a total of 1,444 train and bus services during a normal full week.

In general, during a normal weekday there is reasonable integration, with six buses for every train throughout the day.

Traffic and transportation consultants Austraffic were engaged by Council to undertake commuter intercept surveys at the Croydon Station (train commuters only). It was found that:

- 77.3% of commuters surveyed reside less than 5km from Croydon
- 29.6% of commuters drove and parked near to the station
- 26.9% caught the bus
- 41.9% cited the need for improved bus frequency / rail co-ordination / operating hours / reliability

Walking and Pedestrian Access

The Croydon MAC generally has good pedestrian connectivity and permeability, however, there are a number of areas that have been identified as significant pedestrian barriers, or areas that require infrastructure, lighting, DDA or safety improvement works, in order to provide a better outcome for pedestrians.

Existing Parking Conditions

With respect to actual car parking spaces provided in the Croydon MAC, it was found that in the study area there are approximately:

- 6,571 car parking spaces

This includes approximately:

- 2,288 on street car parking spaces
- 4,283 off street car parking spaces (both public and private)

Prior to this parking study, Council had made reactive changes to the management of parking in:
- The Croydon Main Street precinct
- Civic Square
- Norton Road (precinct)
- Residential streets (Railway Cres, Ellesmere Av, Alto Av, Anzac St, Gallipoli Pd, Mena Av, Mt. View St and Haig St)

Parking ‘Hot Spot’ Surveys revealed ongoing issues or high demand in Main Street, the majority of car parks that would be classified as ‘commuter’ all day parking, some streets close to the station with all day parking (Ellesmere Avenue and Mount View Street), areas of ‘staff’ parking at Civic Square, at the Croydon Leisure and Aquatic Centre (CLAC) and parking associated with the commercial businesses in Croydon Road (opposite the Croydon Primary School).

In Main Street specifically, the parking spaces are generally in high demand (86% occupied during business hours), other than north of Lacey Street (40% occupied during business hours).

The 1P restrictions seem to work quite well with 85.4% of people parked observing the restriction.

In most instances, there was always some level of free 1P parking, however due to the high parking demand a visitor to Main Street would not be guaranteed a parking space or a space outside the shop they were to visit, unless the shop was located north of Lacey Street.

At CLAC, there is generally some parking capacity, with an average occupancy of 53% (during operating hours / higher during peak usage hours). The parking zones that are considered the most convenient are in the highest demand. Although the majority of the spaces are unrestricted, most of the cars (79.8%) picked up in the survey were there for less than 1 hour. Some of the larger car parking areas, which are close to the CLAC with respect to walking distance, appear to be underutilised. This may be a result of vehicular and/or pedestrian connectivity from these spaces to either the existing road or car park network, or the lack of the pedestrian connections from these spaces to the building’s entrance.

At the Croydon Civic Square Council offices, parking demand was quite high, and for the majority of parking survey duration, the average occupancy was 74%. Of those that were surveyed in these spaces, around half (52%) stayed for less than one hour. Generally, parking for the Croydon Council offices appears to be adequate, however at times, in particular if there is an activity on in the area or at Keystone Hall, convenient parking would not be guaranteed.

**Stakeholders Surveys**

A stakeholder survey with respect to parking in Croydon revealed:

- **That in the Station Precinct and Main Street** the major issue is long term parking. There is some merit to the existing parking restriction arrangements (i.e. short term parking up to 9.00am to allow all day parking after this time); however the prevailing view seems to be that traders should be entitled to parking permits. There is support for the current free parking arrangements. On Main Street there is support for more short term parking.
- **For Civic Square** the key issues are bus parking, staff parking, traffic safety (in general) and the current parking arrangements in Birdwood Road.

At the CLAC, the issues seem to relate to parking convenience, whereby most visitors try to park as close to the front door as possible. This problem is exacerbated by poor parking connectivity (i.e. no access off Birdwood Road).

On the library side of Civic Square the main issues are the appropriateness of the existing restrictions with respect to Keystone Hall (U3A), the library (after hours), and Council staff parking.

- **With respect to Public Transport / Walking / Cycling** commuter parking is the biggest issue (supply vs. demand), along with a call for improved amenity, safety and frequency (better connections) of services. Pedestrian safety and connectivity through car parks was seen as an issue. Key locations identified were at the intersections of Wicklow Avenue / Kent Avenue / Croydon Road / Coolstore Road (replace roundabout with signals) and Mt Dandenong Road and Civic Square (full intersection pedestrian facilities). There was a call for more bike paths and additional bike (secure) storage / parking. Carpooling and active Travel Plans were also suggested as initiatives that could be introduced into the Activity Centre.

- **For residential parking**, the key message was that the approach of Council to introduce 2P on one side and unrestricted parking on the other side, with permits for residents and driveway delineation worked well. Streets that were identified as having issues were Birdwood Road and Mt View Road.

### Future Parking Demands

With respect to **future car parking demands**, for Main Street, there is limited potential for additional retail floor space due to the current configuration of the Town Centre and competition from larger centres nearby. For the Croydon Market site, the property is large enough to self contain with regards to parking. **Residential development** will generally self cater appropriately with respect to parking requirements. Where there are higher density residential developments occurring, similar parking issues to those experienced in Ringwood may occur, and a similar approach (on street parking restrictions with limited resident parking permits) may be required to manage the situation.

With properties fronting Lusher Road, the unique qualities of these sites (large land parcels, located next to an existing residential area, within walking distance to the station and Town Centre and overlooking the town park) make this area a prime site for a medium density residential development. The **station area** is identified as an area that will provide future mixed use development, up to 4 storeys. With the **Civic Precinct**, the Croydon Structure Plan calls for a co-ordinated urban design strategy that rationalises the buildings in the area, improve the quality of its spaces, and create stronger connections to Main Street and the Arndale Centre.
Conclusion

Given the results of the surveys and the obvious hot spots, further work, and a firm **POLICY POSITION** will be required by Council to manage parking into the future.

In moving forward, Council officers will need to consider the information in this study to undertake the development of a Croydon Major Activity Parking Strategy.

The various key elements to be considered in the strategy are to be recognised as individual ‘Strategy Policies’. These Strategy Policies should be written as high level statements of principle and should include:

i. On Street Parking Management

ii. Public Off Street Parking Management

iii. Private Off Street Parking Management

iv. Rail / Bus Commuter Parking

v. Croydon Main Street Parking
   1. Trader
   2. Shopper

vi. Specific Use Parking
   1. Maroondah Council Croydon Civic Centre and Library
   2. Swinburne TAFE
   3. Town Park
   4. Croydon Leisure and Aquatic Facility
   5. Sport Related Parking
   6. Industrial
   7. Other, i.e. Keystone, EVs. Etc

vii. Residential Parking

viii. Statutory Parking Rates

ix. Parking Restrictions (by area)

x. Parking Permits

xi. Enforcement

xii. Car Park Infrastructure, Amenity and Safety

xiii. Connectivity of Parking Zones
xiv. Parking Directional Signage

xv. Commercial Parking Opportunities / Car Parking Contribution Fund

xvi. Paid Parking

xvii. Parking and Garbage Collection and Construction Zones