

# **TRAVL AND TRAVEL PLANS IN LONDON**

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

### **1.1 Overview**

This Paper describes the TRAVL database and its role in Travel Planning and how Travel Planning is developing in London. The database has played an important role in development control and assisting in assessing development impact since the early nineteen nineties. Over the last year, this role has been expanded to incorporate travel planning.

### **1.2 What is TRAVL?**

TRAVL (Trip Rate Assessment Valid for London) is a unique, multi-modal trip generation database designed specifically for use in the capital. It is used by planners working on projects across London to estimate the effect of proposed changes in land use on transport patterns and, in particular, on the amount of road traffic in an area.

The TRAVL database now contains surveys of over three hundred and fifty sites across the capital and is considered a key transport planning tool for transport planners. The sites identified reflect urban development trends across the city and are chosen to ensure that the coverage of the TRAVL database remains comprehensive.

The development of TRAVL is overseen by a steering group made up of representatives from the Association of London Government (ALG), the London boroughs, Transport for London and the Greater London Authority. This helps to ensure that the database remains relevant and can respond to the needs of its users. As a result of requests submitted earlier in the year by steering group members, TRAVL now monitors usage of blue badge parking spaces at sites and will also be monitoring cycle parking provision and usage at sites.

### **1.3 History**

TRAVL was set up in the early nineties by the London Research Centre (LRC) in order to assist the city's planners in determining the impact of potential development on the transport network. The database was distributed to all of London's boroughs and also made available for purchase by consultants. The LRC was subsumed by the Greater London Authority in 2000 who took over the

management and ownership of TRAVL. By this point it was a well established tool with extensive usage across London.

However, in 2003, the GLA found it no longer had adequate resources to devote to TRAVL and maintain the level of service required. Boroughs were keen to ensure that this land use planning tool was protected. So in Autumn 2003, the ALG's Transport and Environment Committee agreed to take over ownership of TRAVL with a view to engaging a third party to undertake the day to day management. Ownership was transferred in June 2004 and following a comprehensive tender exercise, MVA were appointed to manage TRAVL.

#### **1.4 About the ALG**

The ALG represents all 32 London boroughs, the City of London, the Metropolitan Police Authority and the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority. The organisation advises on a range of issues relating to London government and other matters of concern to Londoners. It also works closely with the Local Government Association and with many private, voluntary and public sector bodies. The ALG is a part think tank and part lobbying organisation, undertaking policy work on behalf of the London boroughs across a range of issues. This policy work is supported by the delivery of a number of services, including the provision of grant funding to a wide range of projects, operation of the Parking and Traffic Appeals Service and the provision of specialist housing advice, research and analysis.

Transport policy and operations are under the remit of the ALG's Transport and Environment Committee (TEC). TEC aims to ensure that London boroughs' concerns are taken fully into account in the development and implementation of the whole range of transport, environment and planning policies generated by Government departments, the European Union, and the Mayor of London. It then seeks to identify best practice to aid boroughs in the implementation of such policies.

The Transport and Environment Committee, TEC, provides a range of operational services such as parking and traffic appeals, the London night-time and weekend lorry ban, the Freedom Pass and Taxicard schemes. Against this background of activity, the ALG is well placed to oversee a borough wide project such as the TRAVL database.

#### **1.5 MVA's Role**

As managers of TRAVL, MVA:

- Manage and undertake a rolling survey programme to ensure that data within the database is current and relevant for use by transport planners within London;

- Act as liaison point for all customer queries for TRAVL;
- Manage TRAVL's finances; and
- Identify opportunities for enhancements to TRAVL .

One of the first initiatives that MVA undertook was a major revamp of TRAVL to move it away from the older platform on which it was designed. The re-launch of TRAVL, which took place last summer, involved a complete overhaul of the front end accessibility of the database and resulted in the following improvements:

- A modern look and functionality to navigate the software (possible as a result of changes to the operating software);
- Compatibility to export data into excel and other windows packages (possible given that the new software runs in Access);
- GIS function (enables the user to view site locations in a sample and also view associated origin-destination data for a site);
- Facility for online upgrades and off-line working (means users will have access to new survey data as soon as it has been analysed and validated. Off line working enables the user to use TRAVL at normal speed without the constraints of the internet which may be 'down' or running slowly);

And, in particular:

- A Travel Plan monitoring and assessment function.

Travel Plan monitoring and assessment is an extension of the original database and includes the options to view changes over time for a particular site (where more than one survey for a site has been input). The travel plan part of the database also holds complementary information for the Travel Plan Monitoring and Management System (i-TRACE) that has been developed by TfL for the London Boroughs.

## **2. POLICY BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Introduction**

TRAVL uses an established and comprehensive survey methodology that has been promoted and used in the London boroughs for many years. There are several types of surveys required for each site which cover all aspects of traffic

and movement of people at the specific sites. The survey methodology is detailed later in Section 3. Because the TRAVL survey methodology gives a comprehensive picture of travel and transport for any site surveyed, this has widespread support.

## **2.2 Recent Developments**

The ALG is keen to ensure that the TRAVL survey methodology is firmly embedded in the transport planning practices of London, both at the local and at the regional level. The survey methodology is described in detail in the next section. Along with MVA, we provide information and training for new and established users to ensure that everyone is kept up to date with all the developments in TRAVL. User groups are also held to get input from subscribers on future survey locations and ideas of how TRAVL should develop in the future. The upgraded TRAVL database, with travel plan functionality, was launched last summer.

We also work with Transport for London and the GLA to identify how TRAVL can best fit into policy developments in London. One of the most important developments in recent months has been the launch of the iTRACE system for the collection of and monitoring of travel plan data, is discussed later. However, there are two other initiatives that TRAVL is linking into:

- GLA/TfL Best Practice Guidance on Development Control;
- TfL Guidance on Transport Assessments.

## **2.3 GLA/TfL Best Practice Guidance (BPG) on Travel Plans and Development Control**

TfL has been working with officers from the GLA and also across the boroughs to produce BPG on travel plans and development control for the London boroughs. It is envisaged that this guidance will outline what boroughs should consider when determining planning applications. For example, it will put forward an outline of the sustainable transport initiatives that different sized developments should be taking forward. The aim of the guidance is to standardise the approach in London to securing travel plans through the development control process. This should help to promote the uptake of travel plans. The ALG and MVA have been discussing with TfL and the GLA how TRAVL and its linkages with TfL's iTRACE tool will fit into the proposals for this guidance.

## **2.4 TfL Guidance on Transport Assessments**

TfL has developed guidance on how it will undertake transport assessments for large sites. The guidance includes reference to the use of TRAVL for the preparation of transport assessments and also for the associated travel plans.

.Although the guidance will be for assessments carried out by TfL, boroughs may also wish to take advantage of it.

## **2.5 iTRACE Borough Monitoring Software for Travel Plans**

iTRACE is a Travel Plan Project Management Application used by Local Authority Travel Plan Officers to monitor travel plans in their area of responsibility. It was developed by West London and iBase Systems Ltd with funding from Transport for London. It provides a centralised software suite designed to monitor and report on the performance of Workplace and School Travel Plans as they implement behavioural and physical initiatives to reduce the dependency on car travel and promote the use of sustainable travel methods and practices.

## **3. TRAVL SURVEY METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

There are several survey types required for each Travel Plan site survey, as together, they present a detailed record of travel. Depending on the site or land use, variations of these are required.

Two fundamental definitions for the TRAVL survey methodology are:

- Main mode - 'the mode of transport used for the greatest amount of time'; and
- Final mode - 'the last mode of transport used to complete the journey to the site, excluding walks of five minutes or less'.

The survey types for non-residential surveys are:

- Employer Management Survey;
- Multi-modal Count Survey (final mode observed);
- Parking Survey;
- Deliveries/Freight Survey;
- Visitor Interview Survey (main mode); and
- Employee Self Completion Questionnaire and Diary (main mode).

For residential surveys, the above are also recorded, except in place of the employee survey, residents are asked to complete a diary and household information form. The residents' visitor information is also collected in the form of a logged diary.

The survey start and finish times will normally be for the full operational time of the site on a 'typical day'. This is normally 7am to 7pm on a weekday for offices. Judgement has to be made where the site is open for long hours but where there is no activity earlier or late on when the survey should start and finish. For retail sites where staff arrive before customer opening times, survey start times are normally ½ hour before opening time and ½ hr after closing time. Residential surveys are 7am to 10pm.

Standard survey forms are used for each type of survey which sometimes require some editing for the site and survey hours.

### **3.2 Employer Management Survey**

The Employer Management Survey is a self completion questionnaire issued to the site manager. It contains background factual details relating to the company and related travel such as parking spaces (including off site), deliveries and deliveries/refuse collection. There is a separate section relating to Travel Plans, designed to give an indication of the travel plan activity at the site. The type of information indicates whether the organization/company has:

- A Travel Plan Co-ordinator;
- An approved Travel Plan;
- A managed car park (if there are permits, charges, enforcement);
- Various specified travel plan incentives (showers and changing, subsidized travel tickets, car share scheme, etc);
- A Freight Travel Plan (if applicable); and
- Any other relevant details.

### **3.3 Multi-Modal Count Survey**

This is a count of all people and vehicles entering and leaving the site. All entrance and exit points should be covered normally at the site boundary. The count is by mode, so the number of occupants in each vehicle are recorded with vehicle classification.

There are several exceptions to all vehicle occupants being counted. Specifically, taxi drivers are excluded. For heavy goods vehicles and other delivery/servicing vehicles, occupants are not counted.

Normally, the counts are undertaken by staff observing and recording on site. Occasionally entry and exit points may be covered by video recording or CCTV and this can be analysed instead.

If the site is open for long hours, e.g. 24 hours, and only a 12-hour survey period is chosen then it is also preferable that a count of the number of people present

at the start and end of the survey is made if at all possible. This helps to validate the count data.

### **3.4 Parking Survey**

Before the start, at the end and at regular intervals throughout the survey period, the number of parked cars, motorcycles, bicycles and other vehicles is recorded on site. This helps to validate the count data.

### **3.5 Deliveries/Freight Survey**

Freight and construction operations are often an important part of a transport assessment and Travel Plan, and in the future, they will be given greater attention in TRAVL.

Freight vehicles arriving and leaving a site are recorded either on the multi-modal count form or on a separate form in quarter hour intervals. They are recorded as one of six delivery vehicle types.

During 2006-07, the freight purpose will also start to be collected, that is delivery and servicing as one of the six vehicles types and waste collection will be recorded as either a small or large vehicle.

Drivers will also be interviewed whenever possible to ascertain where the driver started his journey (ie depot), where he is going next, how many deliveries in London are being made and where the driver will finish his journey (ie depot).

### **3.6 Interview Survey for Visitors**

Visitors and customers to a site (except residential), are approached and interviewed by TRAVL survey staff on arrival normally at Reception or at the building entrances. The interviews take less than a minute to complete and are completely anonymous.

The interview surveys are to establish the main mode and final mode that is used to get to and from the site. The main mode is often different from the final mode where public transport is used or where parking is not on available site. Historically, in TRAVL, the mode classifications are:

- |                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| 1. Car Driver    | 7. Motorcycle  |
| 2. Car Passenger | 8. Pedal Cycle |
| 3. Bus           | 9. Coach       |
| 4. Tube          | 10. Walk       |
| 5. Train         | 11. HGV        |
| 6. Taxi          | 12. Other      |

For Travel Plans, car drivers are being sub divided in the travel plan area to give the percentage of:

- Car Driver Alone; and
- Car Driver with Others.

A final additional mode is also referenced in the travel plan area that is additional to the usual modes. This is 'bike-train'. At the request of TfL and in recognition that cyclist trips are considered to be underestimated in London, this joint mode is being recorded. Travel plans generally focus on the main mode of travel, so if someone is cycling as part of their journey related to rail travel, then for the first time, the cycling element can be recorded. Any trip that has train for its main mode with bicycle as the final or first mode is being documented. This also accords with the iTRACE requirement.

One visitor is surveyed in each arrival group. A group is defined as 'any number of people travelling together to the site by the same form of transport and from the same origin, who also intend to travel away from the site together'. Where possible, a sample rate will be determined prior to the survey based on the anticipated number of visitors.

The origin and destination postcodes are requested if known, alternatively addresses are recorded and coded later. The modal and origin/destination information collected relate specifically to the trip made from the last significant place visited prior to arrival at the site, and after departure from the site to the next significant destination.

### **3.7 Self Completion Questionnaire and Diary for Employees**

A self completion questionnaire and diary is distributed to all employees for workplace surveys (offices, shops, factories etc).

The diaries and questionnaires are distributed either manually, by email or through the internal or external post. It is the responsibility of the business organisation to advertise, print, distribute and collect the forms.

Employees are asked to complete the diary, to show a one day record of their journeys to and from their workplace and any trips undertaken during their working day.

All staff including temporary and contract /agency staff are asked to be included in the survey.

The standard questionnaire asks for the following information:

- Time in and out of the building/site;
- Origin and destination postcodes (full if known);

- Main mode to work – form of travel used for the greatest amount of time, (modes same as the visitors diary);
- Final mode into work – the last form of travel used before arriving at the site (modes, same as the visitors diary);
- Time to walk to the building (if applicable);
- First mode out – the first form of travel used when leaving work;
- Main mode out - form of travel used for the greatest amount of time;
- Car parking location (if applicable);
- Diary of trips made during working hours, including time and mode and if the employee has a disability affecting their travel to work; and
- A more comprehensive Travel Plan survey, to explore the views of staff about travel to their workplace, can be added to this basic survey.

#### **4. WHY HAVE A STANDARD SURVEY METHODOLOGY FOR TRAVEL PLANS?**

##### **4.1 Introduction**

There is much guidance on what a Travel Plan should contain, there is little universal guidance on how a Workplace should be surveyed and avoid inconsistencies. A standard procedure is recommended to enable the comparison:

- At a site from year to year (monitoring); and
- Between a site and another site or sites with similar characteristics.

##### **4.2 Problems Arising From Non Standard Approaches**

As different methods of collecting and presenting data have been undertaken in the past (and still today), there is much confusion for those who are assessing Travel Plans. Real case studies have included:

- Questionnaire surveys covering more than one site, with all site responses merged together for a Workplace wide Travel Plan but presented to support a single site planning application;
- Only staff being surveyed, when the majority of trips are visitor trips (or student trips in the case of a college);
- Only staff employed directly by a Workplace being included in the headcount and questionnaire survey when there are many agency and contract staff on site too;
- Only final modes being used (from a count - final mode is that used on entering the site);

- Only final modes being used (from a questionnaire);
- Only main modes being recorded (only possible from a questionnaire - where main mode is the mode that is associated with the greatest part of the journey).

All of the above result in an inaccurate record of travel being used to assess and monitor travel plans.

### **4.3 How TRAVL Minimises Monitoring Problems**

The TRAVL survey methodology is comprehensively documented and is familiar to the governing and legislative bodies, many boroughs and consultancies working in London.

The methodology can only be applied to one site at a time and considers all types of trips relating to the site.

TRAVL does not rely on one survey type alone for the following reasons:

- A multi-modal count gives a total number of arrivals and departures to a site by final mode but does not give main mode details of a journey if the trip is by an employee or visitor;
- Questionnaires establish for employees and visitors, the main and final modes by purpose of the journey and postcode information for the trip ends (origin and destinations other than the workplace) ;
- Questionnaires on their own, do not cover all travel to the site.

The count and questionnaire information is combined to produce a more complete picture of travel to a site.

## **5. PRESENTATION OF TRAVEL PLAN DATA IN TRAVL**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The whole database is of use to travel planners to assist in the understanding of how a site operates and of its impact on its surroundings. For anyone using the database, the site descriptions are paramount as these give insight to the operation of a site and assist the user in deciding whether it should be included in their sample.

The main and final mode data for each site recorded in the database is of use to travel planners so that they can see the difference between main and final mode at surveyed sites. From this it can be gauged how many trips are multi-modal and possibly the impact of restrictive on site and adjacent parking controls on encouraging sustainable travel.

There are however, specific pages of interest to travel planners:

- Travel Plan Information tick list and details;
- Mode by Distance Travelled Reports;
- GIS Map showing the origin/destination of trips for a specific site survey; and
- Customized reports for individual site comparisons or comparison with others.

## **5.2 Travel Plan Details**

The Travel Plan Details page and report are overviews for users to see at a glance what is happening at a site. Details were given in Section 3.2 - Employer Management Survey, supplemented by the main modal split results from the surveys. It does not give all of the details of the site travel plan, this is the purpose of site travel plan which may be too large to contain on this database. An individual site report is available and also a site comparison report which shows the reports for two sites side by side.

## **5.3 Mode by Distance Travelled**

The site reports go on to show the main mode modal split for a site or group of sites by distance. Without a record of distance from a site that trips are made, it is almost impossible to consider what change in modal split could be achieved. For example, lone car drivers of less than one or two miles could be encouraged to walk, cycle or use a bus. Lone drivers further afield would need to be encouraged to consider rail (if possible), express bus, car share or park and ride facilities (if available). It may be possible to influence new sustainable travel incentives based on the knowledge of where trips are originating (e.g. new park and ride site or rail station).

A single site may be compared with its own historic data, when more than one survey has been undertaken over time and, in the TRAVL report, the difference in modal split for each time band is shown.

A single site may also be compared with one other selected site or group of similar sites, and also, in a TRAVL report, the calculated difference is shown.

## **5.4 GIS Viewer**

There is also a GIS facility within the database which can be used with OS mapping as background (separate OS license required). The GIS area shows the location of all sites on the database. When one site is selected, it is possible to view the geo-coded postcode data for the site. This is particularly useful to establish visually where trips for a specific site originate.

## **6. THE FUTURE**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The database is funded by annual user subscriptions which allow about 25 surveys a year to be undertaken. Since the transfer of ownership and management in 2004, the number of subscribers has increased resulting in a further upgrade of the data input and analysis software and larger survey budget.

### **6.2 Promotion of the Database**

Whilst the TRAVL database has over 350 surveys recorded since its inception, the travel plan area is new. It is hoped that iTRACE and GLA BPG on Development Control and TfL Guidance on Transport Assessments referencing TRAVL, will assist in further populating the database with the TRAVL survey methodology being used and the data then available for TRAVL. This then will significantly increase the pool of Travel Plan data available for the capital.

### **6.2 Investment**

A second software upgrade is currently underway to make data input and analysis less time consuming. The current process is time consuming and occurs in several operating environments. By the end of the Summer, it is envisaged that all input and analysis will occur in one environment and will be easier to train staff undertaking the analysis work. This will lead to an increased capability to process a larger amount of data more quickly and assist on processing larger numbers of travel plan monitoring surveys undertaken by accredited survey fieldwork companies.