Producing and Using Transport Access Guides

Scope

This guide was produced to encourage the use of alternate transport methods and help the environment for every day business; it is also a guide to producing an effective transport guide for events and venues. This guide should be read in conjunction with our guide 'Wayfinding Signs and Guides', which describes wayfinding, map production and document presentation in technical detail together with audio and video production.

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1 Introduction

Everyone who comes to your premises—staff, clients, customers, couriers, visitors—has travelled there by some means of transport. Every time you call a meeting offsite, organise a conference or hold a special event, everyone must travel to the venue you choose. All organisations are 'trip generators' and some organisations could be creating more than 1000 trips per day.

Reducing the number of trips generated by your organisation—particularly the number of trips taken by car—will have a big impact on greenhouse gas emissions and street pollution.

A very easy and effective way to reduce the proportion of car travel in the trips generated by your organisation is to make sure people know how to get to your premises or venue by using public transport, cycling or walking.

Research shows that people overestimate the time taken to travel by public transport, and underestimate the time taken by car especially when you include the problems with parking encountered in many areas, even if they are already aware of the environmental consequences of their choice.

People also forget that time spent on public transport can be used productively—for reading, work, relaxation etc, but time in a car can be stressful.

To provide this information, you can produce a Transport Access Guide.

2 Transport Access Guide?

A Transport Access Guide is a concise presentation of how to reach a site or venue using low-energy forms of transport—public transport, walking or cycling. Its objective is to make Energy Smart travel choices, easy choices.

It can take many forms—from a map printed on the back of business cards or invitations, to more comprehensive information provided, for example, to new staff as part of an induction kit.

Transport Access Guides can be produced:

- By all organisations, for their own premises and for events they organise;

- By businesses such as real estate agents, developers and venue managers, for the premises they rent, sell or hire out;

- By a group of businesses, in the same or neighbouring building;

- For a whole 'locality', many local authorities or gazette publisher produce guides.

Guides may be incorporated into stationery, brochures and sales literature, or provided electronically on your website and in emails.

Staff involved in organising events or providing information to customers can hold an electronic version in their computer and reproduce it as needed. Reception and enquiry staff should be familiar with the content so they can advise callers about easy transport options that don't require car travel.

See also our guide 'Access Guides for Museums' and similar venues for further information on content and formats. This document also provides guidance on assessing street footway and infrastructure accessibility.

2.1 Simple and Effective

A Transport Access Guide is simple to produce but very effective. It can be part of a broader transport greenhouse strategy, but it's something you can do right now. As well as helping in reducing greenhouse emissions, it will -:

- Contribute to good staff and customer relations, and enhance your organisation's public image;

- Promote 'active transport' including walking and cycling, which contribute to the 30 minutes of daily physical exercise recommended by public health departments.

- More broadly, contribute to changing people's assumptions about transport options and reducing the emphasis on car travel.

- Aid those who are less able to travel distance, have sensory or cognitive impairments.

3 How to Develop a Transport Access Guide

3.1 Purpose

Consider purpose and application The content and presentation of a Transport Access Guide will depend on how you're going to use it.

- Is it a one-off guide to be used for an event such as a seminar or conference?

- Is it a guide for people travelling to your premises, or to a site you're offering for sale or rent?

- Who is it for? Your staff? Your customers? Visitors? Hirers of your venue?

- How will it fit in with other information you provide for these people?

3.2 Stakeholders

Involve stakeholders: The process of developing a Transport Access Guide needs to involve:

- **Key staff** who will be distributing the guide (reception or enquiry staff, for example; personnel or sales staff; event organisers)—these people will have useful advice about the content and possible formats for the guide;

- **Public transport operators and the local authority** —you'll probably be contacting them for information anyway, but it's a good idea to involve them from the beginning. Tell them that you're developing a transport access guide and ask them to review and confirm a draft. You could also try to get some input from

  - **Potential users** of the guide (staff, customers, clients)—perhaps produce a brief questionnaire to find out how people are currently travelling to the site, and what they know about transport options. Once you've developed a draft guide, you can show it to stakeholders who have provided input, to see what they think about it and how it could be improved. Older and disabled people and people with young children especially should be included as they encounter more barriers than other people.

3.3 Gather information

Checklist of the kind of information you could include in your guide.

a) Consult the Local Access Groups and Transport Forums who should be able to provide guidance on access maters related to local transport.

b) Bus routes, train lines, ferry routes, cycle paths, footpaths.

c) The closest railway station, wharf and/or bus stops and how long it takes to walk from them to your site or venue (walk it and time it to find out).

d) Service details (e.g. first and last service; frequency; weekends and weekdays; fare information).

e) Access arrangements for people with disabilities on public transport routes and at train stations.

f) Key visual landmarks for people on foot and unfamiliar with the area; closest cross street.

g) Estimated travel time from the closest major centres or interchanges (e.g. Railway Square, Junction 42 on M4).

h) For an event which is due to start and end at specified times, you could also include relevant timetable information (exactly which buses or trains to catch, for inwards and outwards journeys).

i) Phone numbers and web addresses for public transport service providers.

j) Location of taxi ranks and phone numbers for any local taxi services, including availability of accessible vehicles.

k) Availability of facilities for cyclists—secure bike parking, showers/change facilities, lockers (check the site or venue).

l) Put information about parking facilities in context. For example: 'Getting to [the site] by public transport is easy, but some parking is available at a cost of…'; 'Accessible parking is available for people with disabilities'; 'Parking is metered and costs £X per hour…'.

m) If a better-located bus stop or better bus stop facilities would be useful, talk to your local service provider and Council.

3.4 Other Information

Other information, particularly for less accessible sites or venues, might include:

a) A telephone number to call for information about carpooling (you'll need to establish a system for putting drivers and passengers together if you offer this option).

b) For events such as conferences or dinners, consider the cost of a 'free' shuttle bus to be included in the total cost and recovered through the general price.

c) Check with Community Car schemes who can sometimes provide transport for older and disabled people. Remember these are run by volunteers and you should consider making a financial contribution.

d) Check availability and location of Shopmobility scooters and wheelchairs. They may be able to provide mobility vehicles for your venue. Again these are usually charities so consider making a financial contribution.

3.5 Present the information

How you present the information will depend on how the guide will be used, but some general principles include:

a) Be graphic—show the address of the site or venue on a small map marking bus stops, railway stations, bicycle lockers/stands/showers; you could use icons to emphasise public transport and active options. There are many standard symbol sets available in clip art packages.

Check the websites for other graphic resources.

Your local council may be able to provide a map you can use as a starting point.

b) **Be specific**—'10 minutes walk from Central Station, using the Muddy Ave exit' is better than 'close to Central Station'.

Be as comprehensive as possible—and cover getting there and back, eg:

The meeting hall is within 10 minutes walk of the bus stop at the 'white gates' next to the King Edward Pub. Bluebird Lines (tel 0xxx xxxx) route 90 departs from Stand Q at XXX bus station at 7:03 am and runs every 45 minutes. Return buses go every 45 minutes throughout the day.

c) **Be helpful**—provide phone numbers or web addresses for public transport, and any local taxi companies. Remind people about fare discounts. Look into accessible shops, cinemas, entertainment venues, have the information readily available for your guests. The Local Access Group and Access Forum may have details available.

d) **Be encouraging**—incorporate messages about the benefits of alternatives to car travel, such as:

'No parking fees! No parking hassles!' 'Catch the bus; take the first step to reducing pollution.'; 'Park and Ride Scheme'.

'Short walks to the bus stop contribute to the 30 minutes of daily physical activity recommended by healthy living.'

3.6 Sources of information

3.6.1   Local Groups

The Local Access Group which exists in most towns/counties will be able to help with access matters.

The Local Access and Transport Forums will be able to provide information and help on travel and transport related matters

3.6.2   Trial

Check out any routes you specify or recommend using a variety of people. Children, older people and those with disabilities all have different needs and perceptions it is therefore important that these groups are consulted. Sending out a fit twenty year old athlete is unlikely to bring potential problems to your notice.

3.6.3   Public Transport Directories

These includes detailed maps showing railway lines, stations, bus and ferry routes as well as contact details for service providers in different areas. This is a good place to start, although some information may be out of date.

3.6.4   Transport Information Websites

These provide route, fare and timetable information on public transport including on-line booking.

Similar information and booking facilities are available for hotels, entertainment and eating establishments.

3.6.5 Ordinance Survey

Publish a set of maps of foot, cycle paths, roads, railways, air ports, ferry terminals. These are available online and on CD, (check for copy right and payments)

3.7 Getting the most use out of your Transport Access Guide

There are many ways of using Transport Access Guides and appropriate formats for each. Possibilities include:

a) In recruitment advertising (brief statement about public transport accessibility), in induction information (full description of transport options, including any incentives or programs offered to staff);

b) On business cards, invitations and stationery (small map summarising transport access);

c) In newspaper or magazine advertising (small map summarising access);

d) In brochures and sales information (map and/or text, with level of detail depending on space constraints and readers' needs);

e) On your website, in a format which can easily be downloaded, e.g. As a 'pdf' file;

   Note: Microsoft Word files are not useful where graphics are contained in the document as Word tends to loose the picture leaving a large red X in place of your graphic.

f) As a single-page guide which can be referred to by reception and enquiry staff, or faxed or emailed to enquirers as needed;

g) As part of a standard 'hours of opening' voicemail message;

h) As a separate 2, 4 or even 6-page brochure (if your organisation or event generates a lot of trips).

It may be worthwhile to get a basic guide produced professionally by a graphic designer. You could ask for it to be provided in a variety of formats (different sizes, with varying amounts of detail), or in form that you can adapt for multiple uses yourself.

3.8 Monitor and Report on Effectiveness

Once you have produced a Transport Access Guide for a particular event such as a seminar, or for your place of business, you should use a post use evaluation or housekeeping session to assess the guide's effectiveness.

a) Find out who came by what method of transport, so you can work out the percentage of trips made by foot, bicycle, public transport

(or combination) and by car. Evaluate where problems have arisen and what can be done to improve the situation. Frustrated people tend not to return to places where they have encountered difficulty in finding the location or for example have trouble finding parking or buses.

b) How useful was it for people with disabilities? Are there any changes or additions needed? Would producing the guide in other formats be financially reasonable?

c) Are you doing well? Better than last time? What's the goal next time?

d) For Transport Access Guides produced for your staff and customers, try to work out ways of monitoring effectiveness. Try to get feedback, ask questions and include a user return slip in the guide.

e) If you conduct customer satisfaction surveys, for example, you could add a question about how people travel to your site and how much they know about transport options.

f) And if you surveyed people before introducing your Transport Access Guides, you can use those results as a baseline to show the effect of the guides.

g) You can report results in terms of shares between different modes of transport, and include estimates of the benefits in various ways: for example, savings of air pollution or carbon dioxide emissions.

Such statistics can be published in corporate annual reports, and may be useful in promoting your organisation's 'green' credentials, in marketing and in maintaining staff morale.

3.9 At A Glance Checklists For Trip Generators

3.9.1   Business Premises

a) Has information about transport access to your premises been gathered, including public transport services, pedestrian access, bike routes and facilities, wheelchair and scooter routes?

b) Has this information been incorporated into Transport Access Guides for

- Your staff recruitment, and induction information

- Your advertising and sales material

- Your website

- Your stationery and business cards

c) Are the contact staff in your organisation aware of the organisation's transport' objectives and are they equipped with information to answer people's queries about access to the site by

public transport, by foot and by cycling, disabled persons facilities?

d) Have public transport service providers been consulted in the development of your Transport Access Guides, and been given copies to review and confirm and make available to their customers?

e) Is the use of your Transport Access Guides monitored, and the results? Does the organisation have a policy of including 'sustainable transport' access as a factor when choosing new premises.

f) Before publication printing have you shown your proposed guide to a variety of potential users such as children, older people, people with disabilities. Have each of these groups been asked to make trial runs using your guide for navigation.

3.9.2   Events

a) Is the venue readily accessible by public transport/foot/bike (including for people with disabilities)?

b) Has information about transport access to the venue been gathered, including public transport services, pedestrian access, bike routes and facilities?

c) Have you assessed the route for:

- Wheelchair users (powered, manual, with and without assistance), scooter users (different turning circle and width to wheelchairs),

- People with limited manoeuvrability, walking impairments, crutch or walker users,

- People with learning and orientation impairment,

- People with visual or hearing impairment,

d) Has this information been incorporated into a Transport Access Guide for the event/venue?

e) Are the contact staff in your organisation aware of the 'transport' objectives for the event and are they equipped with information to answer people's queries about access to the venue by public transport, by foot and by cycling?

f) Has the transport objective been included in the printed publicity and in the 'housekeeping' information for the event?

g) Have arrangements been made to monitor participants' use of the Transport Access Guide for the event, and the results included in your organisation's publicity and corporate reports?

h) **If you developed a Transport Access Guide for the event yourself, have you left a copy with the venue and encouraged them to provide such a guide to other users in future?**