

Breakthrough Pill

- Reduces heart attacks and strokes
- Prevents obesity and overweight
- Prevents and treats diabetes
- Reduces cancers of bowel, breast and uterus

But wait- there's more

- Treats blood pressure
- Treats high cholesterol
- Prevents kidney disease
- Improves mood, job satisfaction and reduces absenteeism
- Is as effective as standard antidepressants in treating depression
- Reduces risk of premature death by 25%

- So why isn't the entire population taking this pill?

This pill is exercise...

- And urban planning makes a big difference

Prevention

- The most efficient and cheapest way to improve health outcomes
 - For every \$1 spent on tobacco control **since 1971** over \$50 saved in health system costs alone
- Needs a government and community approach - environmental change is crucial in changing behaviour
- Slow – incremental change

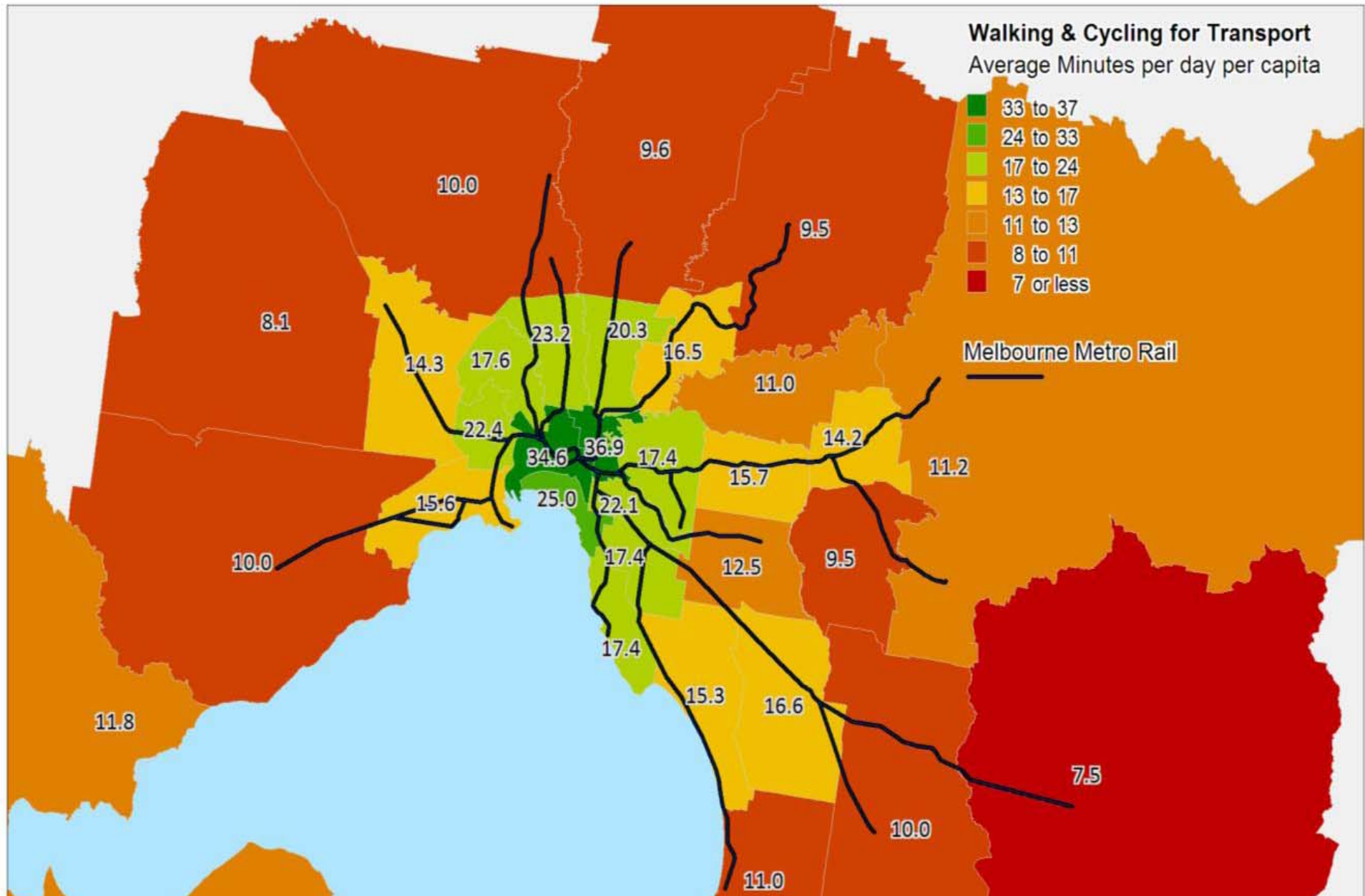
Just for comparison

- To treat Cholesterol, three “statin” drugs are in the top ten drugs prescribed nationally.
- 11% of the population take them, and they cost \$ 1.1 billion annually (the Victorian state health budget is \$ 13 billion).
- This \$1.1 billion is just drug costs. This excludes GP/specialist visits, hospitalisations and medications for all the other conditions listed (and illness and lost productivity).

Environmental contribution to health and well being

- Public transport is crucial to increasing exercise at a population level
- Brisbane 2004
 - 11,000 respondents using public transport: average 28 mins daily exercise
- Melbourne 2010
 - 42,800 respondents exercise: public transport average 41 mins daily, car drivers 8 minutes daily

Current densities are too low



Most Promising Opportunities

1. Increased density
 - New developments need:
 - At least 30 dwellings per hectare
 - mixed land use
 - walkable design features (grid layout, footpaths and cycle paths, 30 km in residential streets)
 - public transport available from the outset.

2nd Opportunity

Increased destinations

What urban features are associated with increased transport related walking?

- 400m- Bus stop, convenience store, newsagent, post box, shopping centre
- 1500m –Schools, train stations, shopping centre
- Each feature added to physical activity 400m 12 mins, 1500m 11 mins per fortnight

3rd Opportunity

Increased public transport

- Public Transport needs a “Vicroads” approach with long term planning, capacity building and good funding.
- Encourage inner and middle suburban “brownfield” and “transport node” developments where there is existing infrastructure and mixed use

Recommendations

- Public Health is a major objective of the new Environment and Planning Act
- Integrate health into planning and planning tools at both state and local level, so local urban planners have support when implementing higher densities.
- Health Impact Assessments
- Need to recognise the adverse effects of urban sprawl on health

Health impacts of urban planning

- Low density, car dependent suburbs result in increased illness and increased and unrecognised costs to the community
- **To increase physical activity**
 - Public transport
 - Medium density
 - Mixed use
 - Active transport design –walking and cycling