

influence extending into the Croydon, Bayswater and Fern-tree Gully districts. As shown by map 7, over a period of 50 years the eastern suburbs have progressively become more popular for residential purposes, and there is no reason to expect that this popularity will diminish.

However, existing development in Box Hill, and the physical restrictions imposed by the railway yard and Whitehorse Road, present problems which required some detailed study to establish that this location had the physical potentialities for practicable and economical development into a centre such as is suggested. At the present time the railway station and goods yard are retarding the development of the centre to the south, while the width of Whitehorse Road and the volume of through traffic using it have a similar effect to the north.

The present railway station is on a summit, and it is obvious that the elimination of the very objectionable level crossing at Station Street should be achieved by lowering the railway line as part of a regrading scheme for this section. This would also make possible construction of new pedestrian and road crossings over the railway reserve to give more effective communication between the north and the south sides of the station, thus consolidating the centre.

The consulting valuer supports the view that when the railway line is lowered and the centre developed as visualised the space now occupied by the goods yard, the briquette store, and the two industrial establishments, together with the nearby vacant land, will become too valuable for their present use. It would then be in the interests of the Railway Department to make them available for large-scale commercial development, and for the activities now carried out on the site to be transferred to land to the east of Station Street adjacent to the existing railway sidings.

Similarly, the area to the west now used as a timber yard would become too valuable for this purpose, and offers opportunity for commercial development in this direction when required.

To demonstrate the potentialities of the site, a perspective sketch illustrating one way in which it could be developed and the area effectively used is shown in diagram 13.

Southern District Centre

The development in recent years in the Moorabbin district has led many people to look to this area for business opportunities, and it is natural that this would be one of the first locations in the district to be considered for a district centre. Its possibilities were further enhanced when the State

Development Committee accepted the suggestion by this Board that the best means of providing public transport for the Black Rock area was by a branch railway line from the main line at Moorabbin.

The proposed arterial road system for the area favours this site, but at the same time introduces difficulties. The existing centre is cut into six sections by Point Nepean Road, South Road, and the railway, a condition which militates against satisfactory development. Heavy vehicular traffic and shopping traffic obstruct each other when brought together on the same road. The proposed arterial road south of Point Nepean Road, which leaves that road at Elsternwick, is brought back at the South Road junction, from which the arterial road system is continued south in Point Nepean Road and east in South Road. This makes any major extension of the Moorabbin shopping centre to the south of Point Nepean Road and to the north of South Road undesirable. The railway line and existing residential development in the vicinity also introduce some difficulties.

For these reasons, and despite the geographical advantages of the location, consideration was given to other sites, but none could be found as favourable. So the area was again studied and the scheme of development shown by stages in diagram 12 was outlined as one practical way in which a district business centre could be gradually established on this site. The scheme illustrated provides for the abolition of the level-crossings at South Road and Point Nepean Road by lowering the railway line. While this would be somewhat more costly than regrading the roads, the overall advantages would justify the added expenditure.

Objection may be raised to the inclusion in the business zone of a small area of new homes. This portion of the zone represents the last stage of development and would not be needed until most of the houses were approaching the end of their economic life. For many years there would be no interference with these buildings, but it is considered necessary to include them in the zone so that development of the whole area may be kept under control.

South-Eastern District Centre

Standing at the gateway to the rich Gippsland district, the township of Dandenong has long been a thriving centre of rural activity. With the gradual expansion of the metropolis along Princes Highway and the recent establishment in the district of many industries, some of substantial size, the former rural township is rapidly developing into an important outer urban centre.

At the present time, through traffic which traverses the township is a matter of concern to the local council. The utilisation of the brown coal resources of the Latrobe Valley and the activities that will be associated with it, while rendering this centre one of growing importance, will increase the traffic hazard.

The planning scheme, therefore, provides for a diversion of Princes Highway to the north of the township, and of the

South Gippsland Highway to the south. These, in conjunction with the relatively low value of many of the existing buildings, will create the physical opportunity for practicable re-development.

Representatives of the Dandenong Council have suggested that the area now used as a market should be retained as a retail market when the wholesale section is moved to its new site. It seems, however, that a much more suitable site for a retail market is south of Foster Street, west of Princes Highway. The present market area, therefore, has been zoned for medium density residential development, thus permitting and encouraging the erection of flats which will in time be needed here and for which the particular area is well located. The council should be able to finance the acquisition of the new market site suggested by selling the area now used for market purposes.

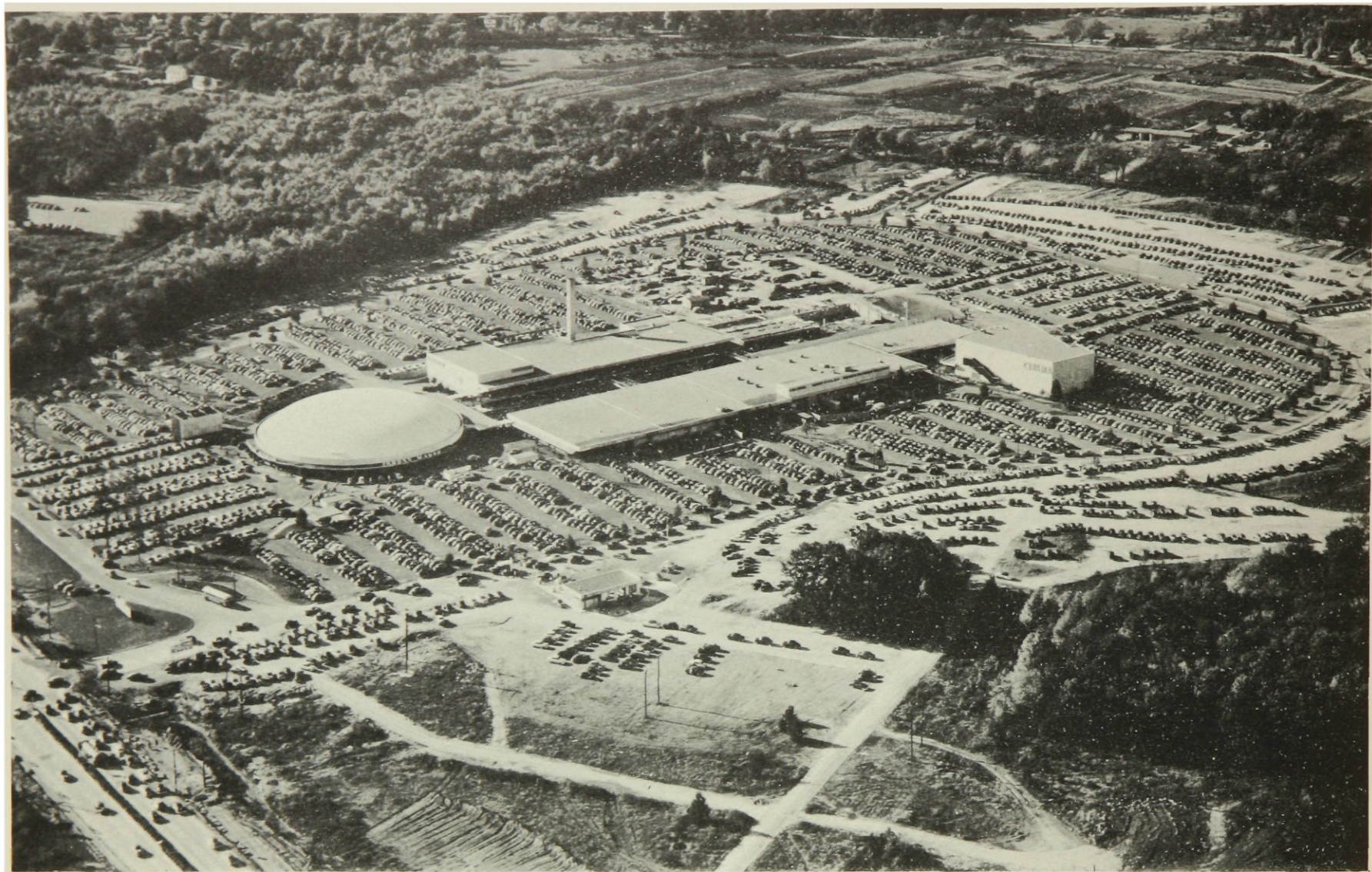
The above presentation explains the conception underlying the zoning of these areas for district commercial centres. The ideas illustrated are presented merely to indicate possibilities. They form no part of the planning scheme. Any concrete scheme for redevelopment would require much more detailed study to ensure that the solution adopted was the best possible.

The detailed planning of these centres, with due consideration to stage development, should be done without delay so that future building may be properly guided. Actual development could be carried out progressively by private and public enterprise according to circumstances and as the need arises. Full realisation might not come for some decades.

There is no doubt that the proposed District Business Centres would be an asset to residents of the various districts and that, as the city grows, they would alleviate congestion in the central city area.

There can also be no doubt that with imagination, foresight and initiative, and by co-operation between the municipal authorities, property owners and business interests, these centres could be developed.

Some people might fear that urban decentralisation would react to the detriment of the central business area and lead to a reduction in property values. If the growth of the city were static, this could be so, but with a city growing as fast as Melbourne is, there is no risk of this eventuating. Rather is decentralisation essential for healthy development. Unless positive steps are taken, the growing discomfort and inconvenience within the central area must inevitably force business enterprises to decentralise in their own interests. The only question is, "Will they decentralise according to a plan or without a plan?" The dangers of unplanned decentralisation are obvious. On the other hand, the district centres provided for in the planning scheme will permit of planned decentralisation. The provisions of the scheme will enable their growth to be controlled and guided so that they will, at the appropriate time, fulfil their intended function in our community structure.



Modern American shopping centre — Framingham near Boston, Mass.