

Urban Structure

While Melbourne's population has shown an increasing interest in recent years in the need to conserve resources of landscape and habitat within the urban areas there is concern regarding the changing quality of life—increasing congestion, traffic delays, pollution, and the inadequacy of public facilities such as schools. At the same time the disruption which the solutions to these problems can entail—the acquisition of private homes, the disturbance of existing communities, and the change or loss of areas of high amenity, architectural merit, or historic significance—is of considerable concern.

It is evident that sections of the population, formerly living in inner areas, have moved outwards to areas generally considered to be of higher amenity and convenience, when their economic and other circumstances have permitted. Notwithstanding this, there is a general resistance to compulsory relocation of population and of activities arising from public proposals. This may be due in part to existing acquisition procedures, particularly in the older areas, under which the payment of compensation for acquired land, while based on fair market value, often does not enable a person or organisation to acquire similar property in the same or an equivalent area; and in part, to the fact that compulsory relocation can involve quite considerable personal stress for those affected.

The inner portions of Melbourne contain attractive examples of 19th century architecture. While some of this development was of indifferent quality, many major public buildings, inner area parks, tree lined roads (St. Kilda Road and Royal Parade) and private development in areas such as East Melbourne, Parkville and South Melbourne do have a gracious charm and historic significance and warrant preservation.

If due regard is to be given to these considerations, then the community must accept some constraints on future growth and change in present built-up areas, particularly inner areas. These constraints include not only the financial feasibility of providing works and services but also the question of the impact that such works can have on established population and activities. Indeed there is growing evidence of resistance to major changes in the urban environment.

These issues are of major importance when giving consideration to the form and intensity of growth and change which should occur within potential and existing urban areas.

Urban growth through the metropolitan region will take two basic forms—on the one hand renewal, restoration and change in the present built-up areas and on the other, outward expansion both in the undeveloped parts of existing urban zones and particularly along the proposed growth corridors.

These two forms of growth are closely interrelated, but the one that will have the biggest bearing on the future urban structure will be the outward corridor growth, and its related communications network.

The growth corridors must not simply be new dormitory areas where residential settlement will occur, but dynamic growth areas where all forms of urban development must be positively encouraged. Each corridor will need to develop its centres of specialised activity around which new communities will be established having all modern amenities and facilities such as schools, recreation, hospitals and shopping facilities, industrial and commercial employment and professional services.

The effective development of these growth corridors will require positive government encouragement particularly in the form of funds for essential services such as transport networks, schools and hospitals, water supply, sewerage, drainage, gas and electricity.

It is essential that public sector finance is sufficient to enable the essential services to keep abreast of private development so that private developers will feel sufficiently confident in the future of the corridors to invest their funds in their development.

Unless the corridors can be developed dynamically in this way and be kept viable so that they act as positive attractors of new development there is a real danger that their future will be jeopardised.

In this event it could be expected that strong pressure would arise for releasing land in the non-urban areas for urban settlement. If such a trend started and went too far, the non-urban areas and their conservation and landscape preservation functions would be undermined and the main purpose of establishing the growth corridors would be compromised.

Within the policy of dynamic development of the corridors

there appear to be two broad courses that can be followed and these are illustrated on Plan 9.

Alternative 1

Follows closely the present pattern of development and likely trends in the future. It involves maintaining the Central Business District as the most dominant centre in the region but clearly involves the active encouragement of growth in each of the proposed corridors simultaneously in response to demand and servicing economics. It would not be proposed that any action should be taken to specifically inhibit growth trends in any particular corridor by restrictive land use policies but rather to encourage and guide existing demand. It will be clear that if this course is followed, the growth in corridors to the east and south-east and particularly the latter will be at a higher level than in the other corridors. The Board believes that this alternative is the appropriate course to follow in that it gives each part of the region an opportunity for growth.

A different course might have to be followed if, at a later stage, it is found that Alternative 1 is not having the required results. This could arise through the provision of public funds for growth encouragement being spread over too wide a range of corridors with the result that insufficient impetus is given in any one of them. It could also become necessary if accessibility to the Central Business District does not keep pace with its expected development, resulting in some of the commercial and other uses at present locating in the CBD seeking other growth centres where better accessibility can be provided. It could arise if the growing resistance to change and intensification of use in the built-up area, particularly the inner area, continues and the pressures for change and intensification are not relieved by action in the growth corridors.

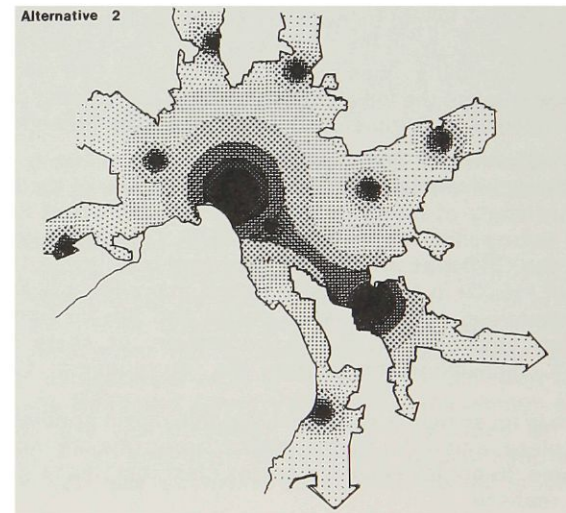
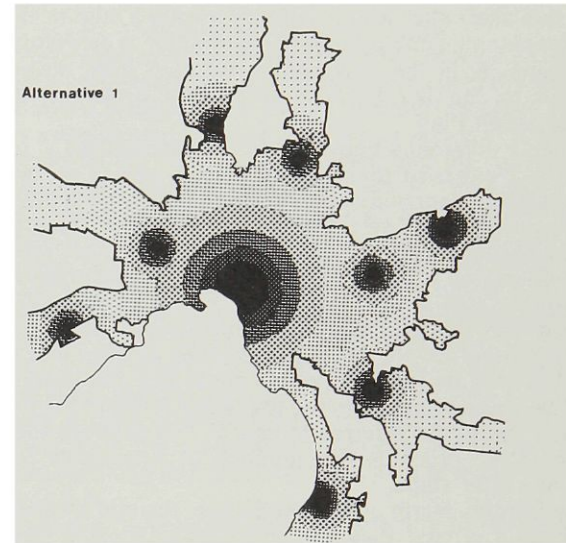
Alternative 2

Is a much more radical approach and involves the encouragement of selective growth aimed towards creating a new pattern. This alternative would involve selecting one or two corridors which have the best potential for growth and concentrating public resources in that direction. The south-eastern corridor would be an obvious choice for this. Action would need to be taken at the public level to channel specialised land use and associated activities into a selected location that would be readily accessible to the future workforce and communities settled in nearby residential areas.

Such a location might be based on an existing centre such as

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PLAN 9



3 Regional Planning Policies

Dandenong, but alternative locations could offer advantages, and these should be examined before a final decision is made. Part of this alternative would certainly involve a modification to transport planning and programming in order to give emphasis to accessibility in the new centre. It could even involve an alteration to the rail network at present proposed in the Transportation Plan.

The basic difference between the two alternatives is one of emphasis. Neither of them would involve any of the growth corridors being deprived of public funds for any period of time, but a move towards selective growth would mean that the selected corridor for a period of time would receive relatively larger allocations of public funds than the other corridors. The high priority area would be chosen on the basis of existing developmental demand and the optimum use of all resources.

As previously stated, the Board is of the opinion that Alternative 1 should be followed at this stage and that every effort should be made to maintain the present viability of the Central Business District as referred to later in this section; however, this would not preclude the adoption of Alternative 2, if required at a later stage.

In the Central, North and West Sectors the aim should be to encourage a greater diversity in the population in terms of occupation, income and ethnic structure, and any incentives given—and they would be needed—should be towards improved levels of amenity. In the North and West Sectors the establishment of satellite cities would seem to offer one means of achieving this but the feasibility studies currently being carried out will need to be completed, before firm policies are adopted.

C.B.D. Growth

In 1964 estimates were made for the purposes of the transportation study of future population and employment figures in the metropolitan region and the CBD. One of the targets set for the CBD was a rise in employment from about 155,000 to about 216,000 in 1985. This assumed that adequate access was maintained to the area by public and private transport and also envisaged a rise in population, of some 50,000 through redevelopment, within the surrounding Central Sector.

There is no evidence at present that this rise in population is taking place, and if the transportation proposals are modified and some do not take place, it seems clear that this target will not be realised.



Dandenong, 1913



Dandenong, 1971