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*Local Government and its Changing  
Role in Transport and Land Use  
Integration*

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**Title:** Local Government and its Changing Role in Transport and Land Use Integration

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## Abstract:

Land use/transport integration is no longer a nice sounding professional platitude. It is a major factor in the challenge of achieving adequate urban infrastructure world-wide. In different countries and different circumstances there are variations in importance, but it is not uncommon for transport elements to account for *more than half* the total infrastructure costs of new suburban development (Saggers 1990). There is a high degree of consensus about the importance of land use/transport integration, but there is also a major gulf between the rhetoric and the reality. The subject of land use/transport integration is not new. Some readers may proclaim- '*no, not again!*'. But herein lies the problem. Despite consensus about the *importance* of the subject, the *practice* has been found wanting.

This paper is based on a Masters thesis prepared at Monash University by Chandler (1994), which was supervised by Professor Ken Ogden. The thesis reviewed past actions related to the interaction between transport and land use in Melbourne, Australia. It concluded, firstly, that there had not been spectacular success in integrating transport and land use decisions and secondly that, amongst other actions, the chances of success in integration would likely be greater if Local Government played a more significant and effective role.

Firstly, this paper, identifies contemporary circumstances in Australia which have led to a resurgence of interest in the subject. Secondly, it highlights a resultant deterioration in quality of life for many people which, if left unchecked, will eventually create destructive social, environmental and economic situations. It is observed that these problems are occurring, or are likely to occur in other countries in the region.

Thirdly, the paper places emphasis on the importance of understanding user needs, and activities and travel characteristics at the *local* level. The paper concludes with the identification of the '*window of opportunity*' presented by the year 2000 - the new millennium. Actions proposed address the costly and damaging gap between the rhetoric and the reality - focusing particularly on the role that Local Government can play in addressing this challenge.

## Keywords:

Land use, transport integration, traffic facilities, urbanisation, personal mobility, freight movement, community concern, infrastructure provision, dimensions of land use, evolving Australasian culture, operating transport systems, major alterations, dynamic urban change, concept of land, current discussion, role of local government, transport planning.

## Preamble

At first glance, Australian and New Zealand cities may seem to compare favourably with many cities elsewhere. Despite population increases and urban growth, accessibility and choice of lifestyle for most people in Australia and New Zealand is relatively high. Illustrating this point, social research has highlighted a general level of satisfaction found in living in relatively low density/low congestion/car dependent suburban areas.

Some people may conclude that the current level of integration between land use and transport is adequate. However others, including the Authors, are less sanguine. Growing evidence of transport poverty amongst the car-less, decreasing public transport capability, increasing road congestion, and lack of infrastructure funding all signal a warning that urban dynamics and patterns developed in the last half of this twentieth century may not be sustainable into the new millennium.

## Cyclical interest in land use/transport integration

Land use/transport *interaction* is a fundamental part of the history of civilisation. It is a key descriptor of human activity in time and space. But to achieve *integration*, to remove barriers and bring the two elements together as a whole, the explicit aim is to *optimise the interaction*.

The expressed level of dissatisfaction with traffic facilities is considerable and constant. "...Traffic is becoming slower and slower...Roadways are becoming constantly more inadequate. Business is suffering as a result. Citizens everywhere are clamouring in a confused way for a relief from this state of things" (Thomson 1977 p23). The quote is about Los Angeles, and is taken from a 1938 publication. But, it is a common enough complaint - we continue to hear it frequently.

Interest in land use/transport integration is again rising on what might be accurately described as a recurring cycle of academic and professional interest. But this time around, some of the imperatives are different:

- Urbanisation is continuing at a rate not previously contemplated (imagine the extent of our cities four decades from now, at current growth rates).
- Expectations about personal mobility, and freight movement are continuing to increase in both the so-called *developed* and *developing countries* (imagine the current car ownership patterns of Australia, New Zealand or the United States of America applied to the Indonesia or China).
- Community concern about the effects of urbanisation on the natural environment have heightened (there is a broadening community consensus to achieve an ecologically sustainable future)
- Funding for infrastructure provision has significantly reduced (the luxury of being able to develop cities in the patterns of the past is fast fading - some would say it is no longer with us).

This is a multi-edged sword, with all edges cutting in the same direction. It is leading toward an explosive situation. For example, the forces which would encourage more to be done to protect the environment run headlong into the forces which ensure that the wherewithal is not available for them to be done. Is there a glimmer of hope that the climate of expectation may be changing? Recent US legislation provides for fewer freeway projects, more multi-modal facilities, and a general recognition that the patterns of the past are not sustainable (Goodman 1992 p32). In Great Britain, the rhetoric, if not the reality, of policy change recognises a serious land use/transport problem. But in Australia and New Zealand, and elsewhere in the Asia Pacific region, the expectation of mobility continues to increase.

The effects are clear: transport inefficiencies are getting worse; there is decreasing effectiveness in meeting people's needs; inequities are increasing; and environmental and amenity degradation is accelerating. Despite a multitude of studies, and the expenditure of very large amounts of money on project implementation, there are still major conflicts between urban development, the provision of transport facilities, and the environment.

### **The gulf between the rhetoric and the reality**

There is a significant gulf between the rhetoric and the reality of land use/transport integration, clearly demonstrated in research, and made obvious by discrepancies between policy statements and the actual form and functioning of both old and new areas of our cities. The main reasons for the gulf between the rhetoric and the reality are:

*Limited understanding* - by politicians, professionals, and the public - of the dynamics of urban areas, in general, and land use/transport integration, in particular;

Land use/transport planning, in practice, has been something of a misnomer, *lacking both rigorous analysis and the degree of commitment* necessary to make it effective:

*Insufficient integration* between the three levels of government, the private business sector, and the community sector, to achieve effective land use/transport integration;

*Specialisation* of professionals, and divisions between government departments that cause major problems which can only be overcome by more effective commitment to, and practice of, interdisciplinary and collaborative working.

It is worth pausing to recognise that these problems are not unique to this particular subject, but none-the-less important. What is not often recognised, however, is the very narrow understanding of the problems, and the low level of expectation we have about rectifying them.

### **Dimensions of land use/transport integration**

Land use/transport integration is not, of course, an end in itself. It serves broader societal goals. What dimensions are valid and applicable? The following cameos illustrate the complexity of the subject:

*Science and rationality*: This is an obvious dimension - although it is clear that, while making analysis of the subject relatively easy, it is not necessarily a good indicator of 'real life', or an accurate prescriptor for future change.

There is a great temptation, of course, to seek the solace of the rational/scientific approach, but even a cursory reading of the contemporary literature on planning and development of the world's resources quickly exposes the weakness of that approach. There is also the false hope that, somehow, technology will resolve all the problems.

Suzuki has popularised the ecological discussion, and emphasises the essence of the problem: "...I began to realise that if Western science really could deliver the promised benefits for humankind, then the quality of life should have vastly improved during the 1960s and 1970s...we are waking to the dangers of clinging to the faith that science and technology can forever resolve the problems they helped to create..." (Knudtson and Suzuki 1992 ppxxi-xxii).

This growing appreciation of the limitation of the so-called rational approach - which has dominated thinking about land use/transport matters - can be seen as a challenge, rather than a threat. In many aspects of the dynamics of decision-making about our lives (eg choosing partners, having children, buying houses and cars) our processes are not necessarily totally rational or comprehensive. Yet they result in a degree of human happiness, satisfaction, achievement, and sustainability that is impressive. There is a necessity to address the considerable complexity of urban dynamics which transcend rational thought and action.

*Spiritual, social, and cultural:* The first aspect is likely to raise some eyebrows, but perhaps less so when the link between the spiritual dimension and traditional science is better appreciated (Davy 1985 pp36-82). Demographics is the easiest social dimension to understand. Other social dimensions are given less prominence, because they are less easily quantified. In some quarters, that is now changing.

Cultural dimensions are frequently taken for granted, but they form the basis on which land use/transport decisions are predicated (Horan 1989). An instructive insight can be gained from even a casual observation of the way in which some technologies are inappropriately transferred from so-called *developed* societies to so-called *undeveloped*, or *developing*, societies. Frequently, there is knowledge but no understanding. What cultural differences are relevant when considering land use/transport integration?

Alexander comes directly to the point: "People come to cities for contact. That's what cities are: meeting places...Yet the people who live in cities are often contactless and alienated...They have thousands of contacts, but the contacts are empty and unsatisfying. What physical organisation must an urban area have to function as a mechanism for sustaining deeper contacts?" (Alexander 1966 pi). He goes on to identify the *autonomy-withdrawal syndrome* as a critical factor to overcome, if urban populations are to recreate the intimate contacts necessary for a healthy city.

It is worthwhile noting here that this is an American author in an American university writing, primarily, about American cities. But is the difference with cities in our region only a matter of time and degree? I believe that there is still time to avoid the extremes of this social alienation, but there are choices to be made.

These dimensions should be considered in the Australian and New Zealand context. Despite some similarities, the evolving Australasian culture is neither American, British, Asian, Pacific, or European. It needs to be appreciated in its own right. The same applies to other countries in the region. It is tempting for land use and transport planners to

question the significance of the above observations, but it is highly presumptuous to assume that there is no significance. The challenge is to both understand the significance, and consider how its relevance can be addressed in practice.

*Political:* This is obviously an important dimension, embracing the linked concepts of self-interest, community, governance, power and equity. It is a key dimension in considering the future shape of land use/transport decision-making.

In discussions about land use/transport integration, the written and the spoken word are a key form of communication. But the words do not come value-free. They have attached expectations, assumptions, conventions, and a diversity of meaning which does not always result in a clarity of communication. When language attempts to cross cultures, the problems are even greater.

*Institutional arrangements, administration and management:* These elements are closely linked with the political dimension, and often blamed for problems - and rightly so. But often they also have a positive potential that is either not admitted, or little understood.

*Economics:* This is a very important factor, but not the *sole* factor. Although *economic rationalism* is still a strong force in some public and private decision-making, it has now been exposed more as a way of thinking than as a fundamental truth. Indeed, it can be argued that *economics* is just a way of thinking, a language for quantifying value systems. But it is very pervasive, and its workings at other than the personal scale are beyond the understanding of many people.

Donaldson notes that the skills of the professional economists are under question "...the world about which economists have commonly woven their theories has generally been one of their own making, remote from reality itself...questions to which economists should honestly answer 'We simply don't know' are far more widespread than the general public (and sometimes governments) usually think" (Donaldson 1978 p11). Has this changed with the gung ho attitudes of the 1980s and the advent of 1987? We think not.

The regular bemoaning of public transport deficits illustrates the shallowness of economic understanding. A report from the Environment and Forecasting Institute in Heidelberg, Germany, was quoted (The Melbourne 'Age' 2nd August, 1992 p12) as calculating the *externality* costs of using private motor vehicles at \$6960 per year "...a state subsidy equivalent to giving each car user a free pass for the whole year for all public transport, a new bike every five years and 15,000 kilometres of first class rail travel". Needless to say, it is not quite as simple as that, but the point is worth considering.

*Physical and technological:* These are the most obvious dimensions of land use/transport integration, embracing the form and structure of urban settlements, the spatial distribution of activities, the travel modes (mechanically-assisted and otherwise), the transport technologies, and built forms and images.

*Time and dynamic change:* This is a fundamental aspect, but often the conservatism of institutional and community decision-making processes causes this dimension to be rejected or ignored. Sometimes the conservatism also leads to contemporary perceptions which fly in the face of real change which has already occurred in urban structure and form.

## **BASIC ASSUMPTIONS AND CHALLENGES**

There are a number of basic assumptions and challenges that should be stated:

Transport is a derived demand, it is not an end in itself. It is the action of moving people or goods from one place to another for an economic or social purpose. *A key challenge is to assess the most appropriate form of transport for a particular purpose or circumstance, and then devise service delivery systems which are adequate and sustainable.*

Transport is usually considered as a necessary service for land use activities. However, it is legitimate - and there are many precedents - to use transport facilities to lead and structure urban development patterns. *A key challenge is how to take necessary immediate or short-term action which will not only serve present needs but also beneficially influence medium- and long-term transport provision.*

Land use patterns (local/metro/state/national) have developed incrementally, and are complex and dynamic. However, they can also exhibit a high level of resistance to change. Land use planning has sometimes been more successful as a technique for providing the rationale for ad hoc decision-making than in determining the pattern of urban settlement patterns. Cities are not optimal in their nature: a dynamic equilibrium is the best that can be expected. However, there will be many different expectations, and effects, and costs to be considered. *A key challenge is to achieve an institutional and management structure which has the vision and commitment to bridge between individual decisions and strategic decisions which affect the urban amalgam.*

Transport demands derive from the needs, choices, and decisions of individuals. *A key challenge is to enable people to make better informed choices, and for decision-makers to give clear leadership which encourages positive change.*

Individual travel/transport decisions can be presumed to have a rational choice basis for the individual but, given the complexity of the possible combinations of the choice factors for the individual (eg cost, convenience, comfort, mood, status, etc.), decisions may not be rational in aggregated systems terms. *A key challenge is to devise ways of bridging the link between individual decisions and feasible operating transport systems. This is critical if the problem of the transport poor is to be effectively addressed.*

Integration can respond to, or cause, changes in land use or transport. The changes can involve major alterations to the system (eg Very Fast Train; new land use patterns - such as regional centres), or systems maintenance changes of greater or lesser magnitude. *A key challenge is to comprehensively devise and deploy the diversity of techniques necessary to better integrate land use and transport in the dynamic urban change environment.*

## **THE CONCEPT OF LAND**

At most times, concepts about 'land' are so much a part of our culture and our being that they are simply taken for granted - they are more part of our subconscious than our conscious. Current discussion and debate about the essence of land ownership in Australia, stimulated by the so-called 'Mabo' ruling in the High Court, has changed that consciousness in two ways: the ownership of some (albeit limited) areas of land may be under question;

and, the concept of 'land' in a non-western culture needs to be considered. To some people, both of these circumstances are seen as considerable threats.

For the purposes of this paper, it is not necessary to engage in the debate about the implications of the 'Mabo' ruling *per se*, but it is appropriate to consider the concepts of land which have a major bearing on outcomes of land use/transport interaction. Suzuki, in another context, bridges cultures to reflect on the concept of land held by the dominant society in America, but it is similarly applicable to Australia and New Zealand.

"My grandparents were born and raised in Japan. They were driven out of their homeland by poverty and a rigid caste system so profound that they could only escape by emigration. They were pulled to North America by the irresistible attraction of potential wealth...the strange new place represented *opportunity*. Land to them was a *commodity*, a *resource* to be bought, exploited, developed, and sold. It was only temporarily occupied until circumstances or accumulated wealth allowed them to move along. My grandparents had no sense of the sacredness of the land, as they might have had in Japan. They were too busy making a living...perceptions [which were] passed down to me through my parents as part of the accepted ethos of the dominant society...(Knudtson and Suzuki 1992 pxxi).

It is important to understand the strength of the 'lot production' culture which frequently overshadows the 'urban planning' culture in Australia and New Zealand. The result has been a strong emphasis on land use regulation, rather than proactive planning. Recognition that both public and private planning and development has the effect of redistributing land value is critical.

The depth of personal security and individual integrity that has accrued to land cannot lightly be dismissed, and the implications of seeing land as a commodity are critical in addressing changing patterns of land use/transport planning.

Of continuing interest in the challenge to better integrate land use and transport will be: the activity of speculation - using land as a commodity; pricing and taxing regimes; and the long-running debates about equity, compensation and betterment. The current focus of these issues is the development of policies relate to the reduction of infrastructure costs to agencies, and payment of infrastructure costs by developers and builders, and eventually the end users.

With the increasingly multi-cultural population in Australia and New Zealand, it is also relevant to consider the implications of how 'western' values of land are adopted by migrants. In a wider sense, it is also relevant for relationships with regional neighbours in Asia and the Pacific, particularly when Australian and New Zealand (or North American or European) expertise in land use/transport planning is applied to those rapidly developing countries and societies.

### **Land use/transport planning**

Churchill is credited with saying "it is always wise to look ahead, but difficult to look farther than you can see". That may well be the epitaph for planning.

*Planning* is a concept commonly implying pre-thought or action to make, do, or arrange for something to happen at some time in the future. A complementary concept is

*management* where the emphasis is on similar activities, but in present time. However, when used in the context of land use/transport integration in Australia and New Zealand, the term *planning* is, in reality, something of a misnomer. It most commonly refers to *land use control*. In many instances it is nothing more than fiddling at the edges of development which will occur in any case. Sometimes it simply involves mapping decisions which have, in effect, already been made. Bieber (1971 p35) points out that planners have a preoccupation with avoiding pre-emption of the future. This leads, he says to a focus on existing urban behaviour, and an inbuilt conservatism. It results in a major problem of credibility for planners.

There are many different approach to planning. When the term planning is used in relation to land use and transport integration, there is no single simple definition of consensus amongst all interested parties. It is useful to consider some common approaches. They include:

*Rational planning*, where it is assumed both that individuals will respond rationally, and that agglomerate systems will also behave in a rational manner. Webber (1978 p152) clearly highlights the flaws in this much-touted approach, but it does provide useful techniques when used with an understanding of those flaws;

*Needs-based planning*, where it is assumed that an analysis of the needs of people- or particular groups of people - should provide the basis for planning which results in actions to address those needs. It can be argued that all planning should be needs-based, in which case the challenge then focuses on the resolution of priorities about *which* needs and *which* people;

*Trend planning*, one of the most prominent forms of planning, where an analysis of past occurrences provides the starting point for planning which assumes that the historic trends will, or should, continue into the future. This frequently becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, but there are some celebrated mismatches, particularly in the field of transport and traffic planning: for example, traffic growth projections used to determine the need for freeway networks;

*Major project planning*, where there is often an unstated assumption that the best way to progress is to assume that, if a few key projects can be achieved, the overall urban system will sort itself out;

*Advocacy planning*, where there is an explicit or implicit intent of using planning processes to achieve a particular vision or goal;

*Muddle-through planning*, a reactive and intuitive approach without resort to comprehensive systems analysis or other techniques. It is an approach which can be more positive in its outcomes than its name would suggest, and is more commonly used than many planners would be prepared to admit;

*Windows of opportunity planning*, where an alertness by planners and decision-makers to changing circumstances stimulates sufficient foresight to plan for actions which can only succeed if undertaken in a particularly propitious time period;

*Strategic planning*, an approach which refines a time-related action/reaction process and draws heavily on the terminology of military language for its images. A dictionary

definition of the word 'stratagem' indicates derivation from the Greek, 'to lead an army', and refers also to a trick or plan for deceiving an enemy in war. Presumably, in popular usage, it also refers to peacetime activity and planning for friends!;

*Incremental planning*, an approach which responds to a particular change in circumstances by planning for the next obvious step, and so on. It has the advantage of not requiring radical change, but runs the risk of avoiding, or preventing, desired or necessary major change;

*Comprehensive planning*, where the intent is to take into account all significant factors, and plan for how those factors might be manipulated or controlled to achieve particular ends. There is an implication that comprehensive control of circumstances is possible which, in land/use transport integration is seldom the case;

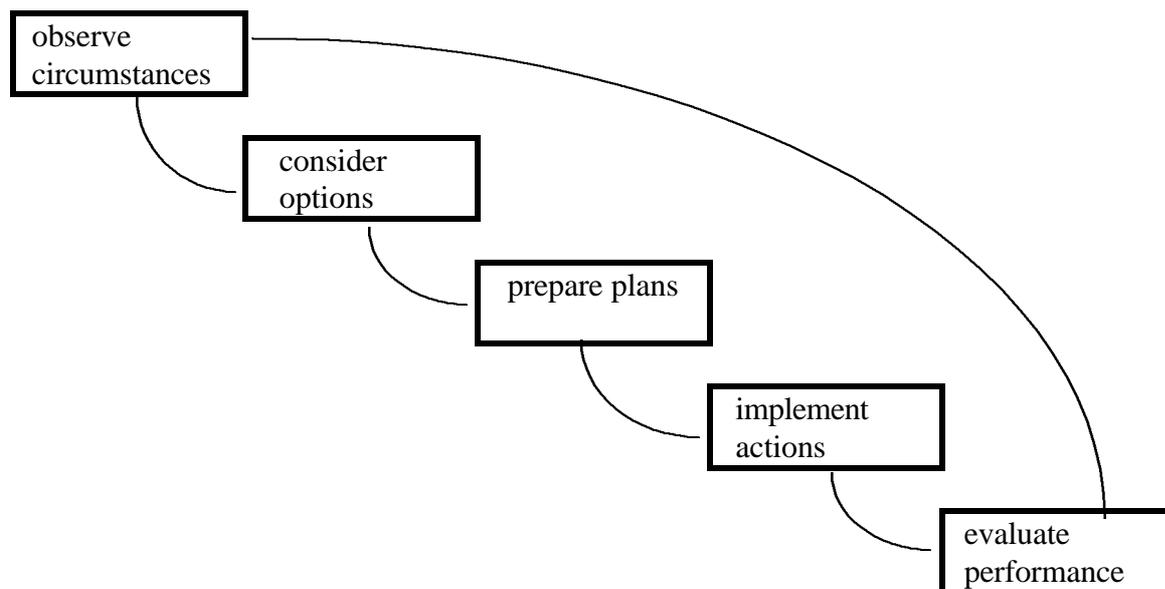
*Pulsating planning*, where a repeating sequence occurs which considers first the long term, then the short term, then the long term, and so on. It also addresses the small scale and the large scale, and other dimensions, in a similar pulsating manner.

It is recognised that some of these approaches overlap, and that usually a combination of approaches will be applicable. The combinations may be explicit, implicit, or sometimes simply confused. Greater exposure of the various approaches to planning, and their relative efficacy, would help considerably in the challenge of reducing the gulf between the rhetoric and the reality in land use/transport integration.

### **What is the best approach to planning?**

Given the complexity of the issues and relationships, and the monotonous regularity when the reality falls short of the rhetoric, it can be argued that to plan for the future is futile. Lock (1991 p8) refutes the myth of the unplannable future, and describes the need to be 'ducking and weaving on the path to tomorrow'. So what is the best approach?

What follows is not a new theory of planning, and is drawn as much from practical experience as from research. Its purpose is to provide a frame of reference for assessing strategic land use/transport planning and decision-making. To bridge the gulf between the rhetoric and the reality, it is essential that the following elements are authentically achieved:



The pulsating iterative approach is useful, to illustrate likely outcomes. However, this is not a linear or mechanical process. It requires a progressive iteration through the elements. The limitations of this approach are well recognised, because there are always many other dimensions which make up the complexity of urban dynamics. But how does one describe a planning process where urban dynamics reflect the challenges of the *Chaos* theory? That is a brief for more advanced research.

### **Planning and the free market**

There is considerable ambivalence, at many levels, about the necessarily *interventionist* role of planning in relation to the so-called *free market*. Town planning is seen by some as being hostile to market forces - an opponent to overcome - but this polarising view is changing. The reality is that Australia and New Zealand both operate as a *mixed economy* - that is, a mixture of both private sector and public sector involvement - and they are likely to continue to do so into the foreseeable future, regardless of the particular government in power. That dualism can result in conflicting goals.

It is not a question of having to decide whether the private sector or the public sector should take the initiating role in planning and development. Rather, it is important to test the intent and effect of development - whether it is likely to make better or worse the amenity and facility of the area for the private individual and the whole community. The community also has a fundamental right to be involved with changes which affect their interests, a right most frequently exercised at the local level, through Local Government processes.

Sometimes lack of data is used as an excuse for lack of rigorous analysis. One is left to wonder about how much the lack of land use/transport integration is contributing to the overall costs. If planning, in this broad sense, is to have credibility, there is a need for a radical relook at the cost of non-intervention, for example in issues such as employment and business location, and regional shopping centres.

There is also a lack of application of creative economic approaches to the issues of how much and what type of transport is needed. For example there is considerable timidity in openly assessing fare levels, road pricing, the effect of congestion, amenity costs, and the cost of balancing trade-offs.

Government has a role to create the structural changes which are beneficial to individuals and the whole community - in the short and the long term. This is a task the private market can never achieve - because of its fragmented nature. It is sometimes tempting to see larger scale elements of the market sector and private monopolies (for example, regional shopping centres) as having a life of their own, but the reality is that they too are a part of the urban dynamic. It is government planning that needs to deal with direction of change and the rate of change. If this is not so, why have a government sector at all?

### **Lack of integrated planning structures**

Despite attempts to corporatise the operations of government, there are still many instances where there is limited, if any, effective integration in land use and transport planning, other than at the most basic level. Why is this so? Two key reasons are suggested. Firstly, the traditional power structures within government continue to compartmentalise the responsibilities. Secondly, the basic educational training and associated attitudes have not provided professionals with the appropriate skills to achieve the desired level of integration.

When considering land use/transport integration, it is important to take a comprehensive approach. The needs of freight, and the pedestrian and cycling modes, are frequently neglected in favour of the more obvious needs of private vehicles and the public transport system. For example, walking is a part of nearly every trip, but research and policy for this mode of travel is embryonic at best.

There are some exceptions, but in general, governments in Australia, and New Zealand have very limited capabilities in the area of effective strategic planning. The skill and political will to consistently operate the iterative sequence discussed above - observing circumstances, considering options, making policy decisions, preparing plans, following them through to implementation in a complex change environment, evaluating the outcomes, and then repeating the process to accommodate changing circumstances - is lacking. Worse still, in many government arrangements, not only is responsibility for land use separated from transport, but road transport is separated from public transport.

A recent change in Victoria has seen the setting up of a Department of Infrastructure which embraces land use planning, transport planning and transport agencies, and local government. It is an impressive concept, and a radical change. how it performs should be the subject of future research.

### **Educating for real choice**

It can be argued that people will not change their travel habits or the suburban form in which most Australians live. If that is true, then there is little point in considering the matter further. We could simply leave development to occur at will, and cope as best we can with the consequences. But that complacent approach cannot achieve the current imperatives for land use/transport integration.

If it is assumed that community participation in defining needs is important, there must be a strong commitment to educating the community for real choice. Without that nexus, the result - at best - will be benevolent tokenism. Given the previously discussed rapid change, education is a critical dimension of achieving agreement for necessary and desirable change to occur.

### *Professional education'*

Despite the rhetoric, the educational programs for professionals such as planners and traffic engineers fail to embrace the holistic dimensions necessary to achieve successful land use/transport integration in practice. While this is frustrating in the short-term, its implications are even greater for the long-term. Kendig (1992), in another context, introduces the concept of 'careers' of activity. This goes well beyond the narrow definitions related to work activity and explains how cohorts of professionals mutually reinforce ways of thinking learnt decades ago - much of which is counter-productive in there present work.

Professional activity to address land use/transport integration has come from a number of specialist disciplines - transport, land use, environmental - and many attempts have been made to integrate them. But it has often been set in a framework of conflict, where the roadbuilders, the planners, the environmentalists, and the people affected have traded insults, won short-lived victories, but often fail to achieve robust solutions. With monotonous regularity, the problems reoccur.

Given the rapid changes in society, it is no wonder that many decision-makers in the land use/transport planning area have trouble in achieving contemporary relevancy. There is a growing demand by professional institutes that members undertake continuing professional development. In an increasing number of cases case it is a *de facto* mandatory requirement for maintaining membership. The policy is very clearly addressed to '*all of professional life*' education, not just for junior professionals. Appleyard and Jacobs (1982 p10) write of the 'rootless professional' retreating into trends rather than planning and designing for contemporary needs. Goodman (1971), in a scathing attack on professional planners and designers, points out the importance of learning lessons from past mistakes before rushing off into new solutions.

## **THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

When considering transport in Australia and New Zealand, emphasis is usually focused on the role played by the State and Federal Governments, and the private sector. This is understandable, because of specific constitutional and traditional responsibilities those levels of government have in relation to each other, and with the private sector. However, Local Government can, and does, have a rather more influential *actual* role in transport planning and implementation than is sometimes realised, or admitted.

People experience the effects of land use/transport integration, or lack of it, most obviously at the local level. While acknowledging the many players involved in land use/transport interaction, it is clear that research on integration at the local community level has been neglected.

In Australia, land use planning is a shared responsibility between the State Governments and Local Government, although the Federal Government can also exercise its influence.

The last Labor Government used programs such as the "Better Cities" initiative and the National Housing Strategy. Recently the Howard Government demolished the 'Department of Regional Development' and most of its urban programs on the spurious pretext that it was overlapping State Government responsibilities. It is a similar response to the Fraser Government which followed Whitlam. The Federal interest in cities has oscillated, on a fairly long cycle. State land use policies and controls vary considerably but, in most instances, it is Local Government that makes the decisions about detailed land uses and activities. Even decisions about major projects which have regional or State significance invariably have local consequences which are the responsibility of Local Government.

It should not be surprising, therefore, to realise that, regardless of where the actual responsibilities lie, it is at the Local Government level that most land use/transport decisions are actively brought to fruition, or delayed, or rejected. Despite a long-standing recognition of the complexity and importance of the interrelationship between land use and transport planning, with monotonous regularity, the blame for action or inaction is placed on Local Government. The blame is often not deserved.

Local Government is in a state of flux across Australia and New Zealand. Its size and functioning is being reassessed, and significant changes are occurring. There is a major opportunity to reassess the role of Local Government in achieving the better integration of land use and transport.

In some cases, changes to Local Government legislation have given greater opportunities for Councils to be more enterprising, to take entrepreneurial initiative. Some councils are already becoming more directly involved in achieving better land use/transport integration through both their land use decisions (eg development control and land acquisition) and transport involvement (eg community bus services, liaison with public transport authorities about the development and use of railway stations). But the possibilities have been barely touched.

Local government has a central role in 'the street' where the mix of land use functions requires a degree of sensitivity usually not possible by other levels of government. Because of its scale, and fundamental interest in property and access, the scope for local government to achieve and maintain a robust data base is significant.

Although it cannot be pursued in detail in this paper, there is an established and growing commitment to the importance of *urban design*. This concept is obviously related to land use planning, but goes further in detail to embrace both the functional and aesthetic dimensions of the public realm, which is usually the street (Bentley et al 1987). Other approaches are also being developed (for example, Engwicht 1992), where an explicit aim is to address the challenge of ecological sustainability. These approaches have broad implications, but are most amenable to creative change at the local level.

In the current embryonic debate about the future governance of Australia and New Zealand - the so-called 'Republic' debate - there is a great deal of emotion and nostalgia overwhelming rational consideration of appropriate levels of government, and their relationships. There appears to be a general agreement that a National government is fundamental, and that some form of local government - the level of government closest to the people - must be retained. The role of state government and regional government is more problematic. Jeff Kennett, current Premier of the State of Victoria, is quoted as

saying "...that to reduce the cost of government in Australia, then State Governments are the most obvious to go" (Surrey Hills Neighbourhood News No 64 June/July 1993 p1).

The role and functioning of local government is far from settled at present. It is in this dynamic context that the issues relating to land use/transport integration are now discussed. The discussion transcends the well-known limitations of local government to instead focus on the importance of making decisions at the local scale with what ever forms, structures and processes that are appropriate and effective.

Local Government is by definition parochial, primarily representing the specific interests of the ratepayers - with or without heed to the interests of the wider community. That is both its strength and its weakness. It is important that this primary characteristic is not lightly dismissed, considering the fact that the other levels of government also have their strengths and weaknesses in a not dissimilar manner.

Local government has an intimacy not possible with the higher tiers. Local councillors and aldermen are more regularly seen in their electorate - opening fairs, chairing meetings, looking at properties the subject of planning applications, and doing the myriad of things that local politicians like to do. They are usually more accessible, they can consider the smallest detail of concern, and they can give intimate feedback in relation to decisions made.

Local government has an immediacy which cannot be matched by the other levels of government. Matters can be very promptly put on the agenda papers and dealt with, with as little or as much research and consideration as is considered necessary. Although local government may undertake lengthy research policy studies, the more frequent occurrence is to call on a report from the appropriate Officer, taking only days or weeks, rather than months.

So what is the problem? Sometimes local government reacts to very localised concerns, and makes decisions which satisfy perhaps as few as one ratepayer, without seriously addressing the wider implications. Likewise, the council may make a pre-emptive decision which does not have the benefit of scrutiny over time, as would usually occur with policy formulation and legislation at the higher levels of government. This does not presume that the quality of the decisions is, necessarily, any better or worse.

At the State and Federal levels, the political party system exposes, to a considerable degree, the policy intentions of those in power. Somewhat ironically, at local government level, policy intentions may be implicit only, or even concealed, where the elected representatives make decisions and form alliances in a somewhat less obvious manner. It is recognised that some local councils do operate an explicit party system.

No doubt, some will argue that Local Government is like the curate's egg - bad in parts, and therefore suspect overall. The hypothesis in this paper is that Local Government is a very important institution. The challenge is to develop its strengths, minimise the effects of its weaknesses and, when we are not sure which applies, to encourage best practice by giving the benefit of the doubt!

In 1988, Federal Government and local government, through the Australian Local Government Association, developed what was called the 'Rationalisation Exercise', where the focus was on "...how local government could assist the Commonwealth in the rationalisation of its national programs" (Australian Local Government Association 1990

piii). The discussion paper highlighted the problems of intergovernmental relationships, and considered some ways of dealing with them. These initiatives have been further developed, and a more recent discussion paper (Australian Local Government Association 1992) sets down a framework for integrated local area planning which is gaining considerable momentum.

Some of the practices and infrastructure for administration and operations for local government have become outmoded. Despite some of the important themes of this conference, it is a long time since their responsibilities were focused only on 'roads, rubbish, rates'. There is now serious consideration of involvement in employment, retailing, communications, and education. There is a wide range of function that local government can be involved in, consistent with achieving democratic control at the level of government closest to those most effected. Land use/transport integration is one of these.

Despite its obvious short-comings (parochial outlook; lack of resources; etc), it can be argued that Local Government has a better record, and better potential to achieve the necessary integration between land use and transport. There are also some interesting examples emerging where groupings of councils are co-operating to achieve better efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery. To assist the achievement of better integration, the following actions are necessary.

- recognition that Local Government has the interest, ability, and responsibility to play an important role - in its decision-making in relation to other agencies and the private sector, as well as its own land use and traffic management operations;
- commitment by Local Government to effective and efficient public consultation and participation in the decision-making processes as an integral part of its activities, not as an added extra;
- assumption that if local residents and ratepayers are better informed, then they will be more able to constructively participate in the land use/transport decision-making processes;
- substantial increase in the necessary skills and use of technology which can enable
- the community to better understand and communicate their needs and desires in relation to land use/transport matters.

## CONCLUSIONS

It is not that well-practiced skills such as transport modelling, land use regulation, or traffic management are wrong or outmoded *per se*. It is simply that they are inadequate tools for understanding the rapidly changing dynamics of urban areas. If these practices provide insufficient understanding, or wisdom, how can it be expected that actions which evolve from the traditional approaches have any hope of addressing the fundamentally new imperatives facing Australian and New Zealand cities, and urban people across the globe?

## **Thinking and acting in new ways**

Beyond the slogans of “world’s best practice” and “sustainable development” and the like, there is little evidence of the holistic understanding necessary to achieve effective land use/transport integration sufficient for the new millennium.

Our hope for the new millennium goes well beyond the slogans and the rhetoric. It will need to be more creative than the ubiquitous reduction of debate to *either/or* choices. For example, it is no longer sufficient to demand a choice only between what is being offered by two major political parties - they have been both found wanting. It is no longer useful to narrowly argue the case of public or private transport, or promote competition between road and rail - the preoccupation with the old millennium technologies for shared transport has resulted in a considerable neglect in the way in which travel needs and expectations have changed. The enormous significance of the pedestrian part of nearly all journeys, the truly local transport, is all but ignored, yet it holds the key to mode choice.

## **Institutional change critical**

The lack of institutional co-ordination is graphically illustrated in many places where different Ministers are responsible for road transport, public transport and land use planning. Despite some welcome overdue changes particularly in the public transport area - the mechanisms for co-ordination are limited and unconvincing. This concern is exacerbated when the need to consider effective integration with land use and development is considered. The recent change in Victoria, setting up the Department of Infrastructure is an impressive concept, and a radical change. how its performance still needs to be demonstrated.

What is also needed is recognition of a greater role and resourcing for Local Government in addressing the challenge of better integrating land use and transport.

One profound concern remains: *do we have the will to collectively learn the, necessarily, new ways needed to achieve the goal of better land use/transport integration?* With a necessary degree of optimism, some proposals about what can be done are now put forward.

## ***Actions needed to achieve better integration of land use and transport***

The research by Chandler (1994) which forms the basis of this paper, and various documented projects have generated a plethora of ideas about how to improve integration. The most important actions are distilled as follows:

Significantly greater recognition of the importance of *strategic planning and implementation* land use/transport integration at the local level. Current ad hoc planning and development practices in are demonstrably inadequate for the task;

To have all levels of government and professional institutions undertake *proactive programs* which enable and encourage better community understanding of urban dynamics, in general, and land use/transport integration, in particular. These information and education programs should be aimed at achieving a community that is better informed about the relative benefits, and costs of land use/transport integration. They would also

provide an impetus for the institutional decision-makers to be more skilled in their work, and encourage people, as individuals and as groups, to gain the benefits of a more holistic integration of their own activities and transport needs;

Utilising the '*window of opportunity*' leading up to the new millennium to reduce the gulf between the rhetoric and the reality of land use/transport integration, in particular making good the neglected opportunity for Local Government to play a more proactive and positive role.

Recognising the need for, and support of professionals and politicians to generate *innovative approaches* to land use/transport integration - based on strategic thinking and action - which adequately address the problems and challenge of better managing our urban areas. The theory, and practice of how professionals and politicians rely on 'weapons from the last war to fight the battles of the next war' are well known. Strong and courageous leadership is required to break this cycle of inertia. For example, the current technologies and approaches to sewerage systems, water supply and usage, energy, and transport mode choice, all need lateral thinking to match the radical changes that have occurred in our community. One challenge is particularly important: beyond the rather polarised rhetoric, is it too difficult to design effective and efficient shared transport services that mirror the natural advantages of the private car while minimising the disadvantages? Some local transport approaches in the Asia-Pacific region have lessons to teach Australia in this respect.

Professional and departmental compartmentalism at all levels of government often overwhelms the stated intentions to achieve effective integration. Greater responsibility and funding for Local Government - which has some obvious limitations but considerable potential in the reforms that are now occurring - presents more hope for improvement than any other option;

Professional and educational institutions must be provide more holistic background and training. We are still teaching engineers to be just engineers, and land use planners to be just land use planners.

There is lack of an adequate, contemporary analytical frameworks for assessing the options and implications of land use/transport decisions. It will require a major shift in both the perceptions and actions of land use decision-makers, transport users, and transport providers, if our cities in the future are to match what most people desire and expect. The rhetoric of land use/transport integration has been found wanting.

Of particular importance will be skilled and insightful management for the new millennium. An attempt to simply make the traditional patterns of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s - when most current decision-makers were trained - more efficient is doomed to mediocrity. If it is just more of the same, slightly better, what has been gained? Kelly (1992) provides a cogent reminder that this is a period of uncertainty. The theories of *Progressive Iteration* and *Chaos* are much more relevant than a systems analysis approach;

Political parties and politicians must also take a more holistic approach, in recognition of the importance and potential of more efficient and effective management of urban dynamics in achieving the dual imperatives of an *ecologically sustainable environment* and a *viable economy*.

Professional public servants and authorities should be challenged to reform their approaches sufficiently to take seriously their responsibility for *planning for the future, not repeating the past*.

### **In summary**

Much of what is reported in this paper is not new. Many of the issues and ideas about land use/ transport interaction have been cycled and recycled. However, what is new is the attempt to go beyond theory and traditional practice - to understand why so many good ideas have foundered - and to recommend changes in the practice of land use/transport integration which can match the challenge of societal changes occurring all around us.

Idealistic? Yes, but also realistic. Without such action, the gulf between the rhetoric and the reality in land use/transport integration will remain. If we are to take our professional responsibility to current and future generations seriously, then the demonstrably inadequate approaches of the past must continue only as subjects for research, not be the patterns for the future.

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