



The \$150 million question

ON THE "OTHER SIDE" OF THE BRIDGE, at North Sydney, Mr George Clarke, managing director and director of planning at Urban Systems Corporation, works among maps and graphs. This "urbanist" (planner) and his associates have been asked by the Council of the City of Sydney to prepare by early 1971 a strategic plan to guide the city's immediate and long-term development. The plan, he said, is to be concerned with "the five Ps" — principles, policies, priorities, procedures and programs.

"What is desperately needed in Sydney," he said, "is the achieving of some consensus among the many interested authorities and private developers as to what principles and policies ought to guide Sydney's city development." For too long we had thought of the city as separate bits of "urban infra-structure" with different authorities controlling the different bits, he said. Sometimes private developers had called the tune, sometimes authorities.

The Department of Main Roads, Mr Clarke said, planned an expressway system which would feed cars from ramps into the city, but had no "parking strategy" for them once they came off the ramps. "This sort of thing has happened in many cities," he said, "but with Sydney's centre evolving like a mini-Manhattan we can't afford to think in isolated elements, but must lay down a strategy for what we want."

A second Harbour crossing could form part of a major north-south bypass west of the city, he said. But it could be considered only as part of the overall strategy. The core of a city existed to serve people, not cars — a city's "raison d'être" was to let people "exchange paper and parcels" and meet socially and on business. Cars were economic and physical liabilities in a city centre, though perhaps they had a vital role around the edge of the central business district.

How would extra cars from a second crossing integrate with traffic on the planned expressways? Where would they park?

Activity systems and movement systems must be studied as part of a single system, Mr Clarke said. A second Harbour crossing would not be a short-term solution—it would take at least 10 years to raise the money for it and acquire land.

"At the start of work on our strategic plan I don't want to have preconceived ideas," he said. "However, you've

heard of Parkinson's Law. My own law—Clarke's Law—says that land use and traffic achieve equilibrium, and that cities never choke up as people predict. As roads begin to become choked, people decide to stay away, or park in a fringe area and catch taxis or public transport." He suggested that a fleet of mini-taxis or moving expressways could shuttle passengers from parking stations into the city, which in the future should have a network of pedestrian ways, free of traffic.

At the University of New South Wales, Professor W. R. Blunden, Professor of Traffic Engineering, had this question: "What other great city, divided by a major waterway, has such paucity of bridges or other forms of crossing? The Thames has a dozen, the Hudson a score or more." Professor Blunden saw the question of whether Sydney needed another Harbour crossing as a straightforward exercise in land use and transport planning. Appropriate Government authorities would need to carry it out—in fact, the Department of Main Roads and the State Planning Authority had already put much work into the problem.

Professor Blunden was surprised that so little had been heard of the De Leuw, Cather plan of 1961 with its projected bridge from Longnose Point to Greenwich. At this site a bridge—or two on the scale of Gladesville Bridge—would be much less expensive than the present Harbour Bridge, and would provide both a good bypass and an approach route from the North-Western Expressway. It would connect the north side directly to the airport and to the industrial complex of south-east Sydney and provide a link with Balmain-Camperdown — an area seen by the professor as a future Upper Manhattan.

The present Bridge, he said, was almost at complete saturation, though peak-hour traffic had been helped by conversion to six x two-lane operation.



Professor BLUNDEN



Mr ASHTON

HELEN FRIZELL concludes her report on a second Harbour crossing for Sydney

Gladesville Bridge, too, was approaching saturation.

In the next 10 years population and cars would increase. The extension of the Warringah Expressway into Warringah Peninsula and the development of the North-Western Expressway (both much needed) will bring in more cars.

Are there ways of increasing the capacity of the Sydney Harbour Bridge?

A half-deck, built above the present deck, was one possibility, he said.

High-grade transport terminals with good parking facilities could be built near railway stations, and perhaps the North Shore railway track to Chatswood could be quadrupled and a new line built to Brookvale.

Land use

If we didn't build a second crossing, Professor Blunden said, there would have to be a complete readjustment of land use activity between Sydney's north and south. More jobs and more industry would have to be created on the north side.

However, Professor Blunden thinks the north is more suitable for residential development, that it has wonderful living areas close to Sydney's major job sources. So he favours a new crossing—in particular, between Longnose and Greenwich.

For the past eight or nine years the Department of Main Roads had been concentrating on north-south crossings, said Mr E. F. Mullin, the Chief Engineer (Urban). It had built Aston Street Bridge, near Parramatta, in 1966, Gladesville Bridge in 1964, and Silverwater in 1962. Future plans

include a bridge between Bedlam Point and Abbotsford and another traffic bridge at Ryde, twin for the present one.

"We're a very awkward city for transport," said Mr Mullin. "Once we go east of the Harbour Bridge—look at the map—we're into colossal crossings. They could be made, for materials are stronger in tension than we've ever had, and pre-tensioned concrete can span huge gaps. We could put a bridge between North and South Heads. It's quite possible."

"But we must think in economic terms of 'desire and demand.' Most of us desire a new bridge, but we have not got the demand—cash—to pay for it."

"West of the Harbour Bridge, land is cheaper and the river narrows. Except where we have created bridge crossings, roads run parallel to the rivers, east-west, not north-south. If we build a new bridge, it must be really wide, eight lanes, and have new roads leading to it."

Interesting developments had come in bridge building abroad, said Mr Mullin. In Japan some bridges, instead of having the usual ramped approaches, were reached by "corkscrews" resembling the twisting ramps into parking stations. These save much land resumption.

At the State Planning Authority the chairman, Mr N. A. W. Ashton, said Sydney presented a unique problem: into its centre of roughly one square mile poured half a million people a day. Of these, half were workers, half were people on shopping or business errands.

Figures in 1966 had shown

that in peak hours, 87 per cent had travelled by public transport—56 per cent of them by train, 27 per cent by bus, 4 per cent by ferry.

"I don't think we've any right yet to talk about a second Harbour crossing," said Mr Ashton. It was only part of the problem. The County of Cumberland Transport Advisory Committee was collecting all data from the last census (1966) and relating it to a home-interview survey made in the same year. The computerised results would show how transport problems could be met efficiently and whether the second crossing would be needed. Parking problems were also being studied.

The way Sydney should grow, suggested Mr Ashton, was in one form of big outlying centres linked with the city by fast and improved public transport. Amsterdam, for instance, had this "multi-nuclear" pattern. To decentralise thus was one way out of a problem which would have its solution not in this generation but the next.

Mr Ashton stressed that we should think of people working in centres outside Sydney, not in it.

'Damage'

He and senior colleagues think that a bridge between Greenwich and Long Nose Point would cause "tremendous environmental damage." Another crossing west of Gladesville Bridge is "on the cards," they say. The twin-city complex of North Sydney and Sydney was not favoured entirely, they said. Even back in 1955, someone had pointed out that you "can't have two large cities at the end of a dumb-bell" — the Harbour Bridge.

Suggestions that one lane on the Bridge be used exclusively by buses in peak-hour present difficulties. The number of buses would rise to 360 in peak hour, but then there's the problem of getting the buses out again. Also, there would be "inevitable gaps" in the exclusive lane and motorists, seeing them, would be "spitting chips."

"Upgrade public transport," concluded Mr Ashton and his colleagues.

Agitation for our second crossing is growing. The N.R.M.A. favours it, so does North Sydney Council, which recently resolved that it should be constructed as a matter of urgency. The Lord Mayor of Sydney, Dr Emmet McDermott, would like to see it but "it doesn't appear it could be financed at this stage."

And that, to sum up, seems to be Sydney's \$150m question.

(Previous articles appeared on Tuesday and Wednesday.)