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STRATEGIC AND ACTION PLANNING FOR THE CITY OF SYDNEY

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There is a pressing need for a redefinition of the very nature of what used to be called "town planning". We now recognise that most of our work and concern is no longer with relatively stable and definable towns, but with a continuously urbanising nation, a dozen continuously spreading urban regions, and with the thousands of continuously changing and redeveloping urban neighbourhoods and precincts which make up the scores of municipalities within those regions.

It is not unreasonable to suggest that the City and the metropolitan region of Sydney have changed more radically over the past decade than they ever did over the past century. Until the nineteen sixties, Sydney was a single-centred metropolis, wherein retailing, wholesaling, offices, and major community services such as hospitals, were concentrated in one dominant central core which stretched all the way from Circular Quay to Railway Square and beyond to Grace Bros. up on Broadway, to Taylor Square and beyond, along Oxford Street.

~~Industry, too, was concentrated between Railway Square and Botany.~~
By 1970, Sydney had become a truly many-centred urban region, with retail, industrial and distribution centres scattered far and wide throughout the metropolitan area. The Central Business District itself contracted from the southern end of the City, moved northward towards Sydney Cove, and has jumped the Harbour, spilling over and expanding into North Sydney.

In 'the good old days', town planning was a fairly simple business, ~~mostly involving architectural, engineering and surveying skills.~~
From these lines of thought, we inherit our Statutory Planning Scheme techniques which are proving so inadequate to deal with the accelerating pace of urban change.

Today, we are being forced to redefine the true nature of urban planning.

It is no longer sufficient for us to think of it as concerned with simple and rigid Statutory Planning Schemes, with static zones, or with the piecemeal granting of development consents for subdivisions and buildings, or with the planning of individual public works.

whole structure of govt needs rethinking as well
— abandon separate rail bus & car depts & think in terms of movement.

fairly simple

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Any plan today must firstly be a vision, or a model of a desired future situation and, secondly, a series of strategies and actions designed to move us in the direction of the model.

For the City of Sydney, we need first and foremost to achieve some social and political consensus on our major objectives, or the outline of the kind of urban environmental system we want to achieve in the long term.

Then we need to devise strategies, or guidelines for decision making, to move us towards our objectives. We need to learn to discern what things it is essential to control, i.e. what is strategic in the light of our objectives, and what specific and immediate actions we must take, in what order of priority, and in accordance with what procedures, so that we may begin to move in the general direction of our major but flexible long-term objectives.

Our traditional statutory planning procedures actively hinder us from acting in this fashion.

The emerging urban planning and environmental management profession is learning much from the techniques of military and business or corporate planning, and it is through adaptation and systematic application of these techniques that we can gradually begin to cope with and control urbanisation.

Sydney urgently needs a definitive statement of the kind of city it wants to be. Over the past twenty years, redevelopment has gone on in bits and pieces without benefit of any overall guiding strategy on such vital matters as traffic, parking, public transport, pedestrian movement, or the bulk of buildings. Decision-makers, whether they be private or governmental, have too commonly been at a loss to know how they should act in the best interests of the city. Many fragmentary attempts have been made, and are currently being made, to replan and redevelop small pieces or isolated elements of the City. But there has been no agreed strategy to guide or coordinate, let alone govern, the individual decisions, the separate attempts to replan and rebuild. Real Estate men and developers know how difficult it is to get decisions on development applications when different authorities have conflicting ideas about any particular project. The City Council, in an effort to sort out this confusion, has created a new Committee - The City Development Committee - to concentrate on this aspect of Council's work. As Council's Consultants, we are making a determined effort to hammer out, and set down in words, diagrams, charts and sketches, the principles and policies which should guide and govern the systematic shaping and reshaping of the City over future years. We are trying to evolve, through a systematic process of investigation and consultation with interested authorities and

British example

performance standards

performance standards

hand use a privilege not a right
but people have right to logical systematised & swift decisions not to be held to ransom by ineffective bureaucracies.

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independent groups, a series of priorities for action to improve our City. We are seeking to get agreement on immediate, short-term priorities for action, and as well, on longer-term priorities for continuous city growth and redevelopment over the next thirty years.

~~In starting this process, the Council is taking an historic step. This strategic plan is the first attempt since Governor Macquarie's day, 150 years ago, to produce a positive vision and practical plan for the City of Sydney.~~ We are only too well aware of the magnitude and difficulty of the planning task. Planning in the midst of rapid daily change is very difficult. Planning for the coordination of so many different authorities and groups is very difficult. Many people must feel it is impossible. But the Council believes that it is its duty to try.

Our work so far has brought us to a concise statement of what we think are the four most basic strategic principles which should guide and govern decision making for the City of Sydney. We would like to have your opinions and your comments on them, and upon their order of importance.

The overall goal of the City of Sydney Strategic Plan is to improve the quality of life for all who use the City and its major objectives are:-

1. To maintain and restore the environmental quality of the City
2. To improve accessibility into and within the City
3. Stimulate economic growth and investment in the City, consistent with acceptable environmental standards and achievable levels of accessibility
4. Encourage diversity of activity in the City.

I would like to say a few words about the significance and implications of each one, and hope that we might have some continuing open discussion of their relevance, their significance and their practical implications.
