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INTRODUCTION

This booklet is Part 1 of a "Plan for Melbourne" prepared by the "Modern Melbourne Committee" and adopted in its present form by the Victorian State Conference of the Communist Party of Australia on November 3rd, 1968. It was pre-circulated to all delegates and a pre-Conference discussion resulted in a number of amendments finally carried by Conference itself.

The authors are acutely aware that mankind is undoubtedly on the eve of technological developments which may make many of today's solutions for living rapidly out-of-date.

For example: If there is evolved a small cheap electric car, electronically and safely controlled for high speeds, there could be a system where these vehicles are not privately-owned but left in plentiful quantities in convenient parking bays. To use one, the driver would place an identification disc in a meter connected to a central computer which would not only charge more for travel in congested areas, but automatically send out a "transport account" to the user once a month! This would be a sort of cross between rail public transport and car private transport, making both possibly obsolete.

Or for another example: Radical experiments in re-design of the internal lay-out of private homes for urban living are already being advanced, giving maximum range of both indoor-outdoor choice ranging from spaces for complete personal privacy to complete family communal living. Along with this go radical concepts of grouping dwelling units to provide a range of service, recreation and cultural facilities, tastefully landscaped, and impossible for a single household to achieve, which mass-produced cheap modular units could well make possible and popular.

Discovery of new resources and new methods of treating old resources could also open up better prospects than seem feasible today for massive decentralisation. Possible use of cheaper nuclear power to produce fresh water from sea water is one spectacular example.

Thus today's controversies:-

More freeways or rapid rail transit ?

More sprawling suburbs or higher density living ?

More big-city growth or more decentralisation ?

could tomorrow evaporate under the impact of entirely new conditions.

But tomorrow hasn't arrived. With one eye on tomorrow, we still have to cope with today.

The Victorian Communist Party hopes that "Plan for Melbourne", historically its first attempt to formulate a city-plan, will, with all its shortcomings, play some part in preparing people for a worth-while tomorrow by tackling the immediate urgent practical problems confronting our city and its citizens.

We thank those friends who have given their critical advice in helping to frame this document. We trust that, supplemented by material from various other surveys and plans for Melbourne which appeared in 1966-68 (See bibliography on back page) this effort will contribute to the building of policies for a coalition of left forces. This surely is the key to rallying all those with a vision of the future and a desire to end a bungling system that not only destroys man's physical environment, but tends to deprive man of all that is finest in his relationship with other men.

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Plan for Melbourne

To set down a program for Melbourne's future in the interests of its working people involves both the examination of current facts and the formulation of certain basic principles.

Without such an acceptable framework, argument about the thousands of potential changes would be endless and fruitless, and could even lead to political disunity.

With such a framework however, argument can systematically lead to more and more satisfactory solutions, becoming more and more concrete, and finally capable of producing popular political action.

This plan therefore is in two parts:-

- Part 1. Facts and principles. (This publication)
- Part 2. Blueprints for change. (To be published later)

As the blueprints are deduced from the facts and principles, it is important that discussion on Part 1 should proceed first.

1. Services needed as well as facilities.

There are two competing ideas of what is valuable in life. The prevailing concept, advanced in a thousand different ways, tells us that man's main purpose is to endure the drudgery of work to earn more and more money to acquire more and ever more material goods.

The better concept is that man, when at work, should be able to enjoy the creative fellowship involved in production and feel he is contributing a useful service to the community, and that man, at leisure, finds his most satisfying experiences in some form of social life.

The purpose of this plan for Melbourne is to assist to improve "the quality of life" of its working people when they have finished their day's work in the factory or office.

A minority of aged, infirm and low-income families are really suffering but the majority, though many have to battle hard and many are affected by fatiguing work, excessive bureaucracy, monotony, overtime and poor wages, do nevertheless have jobs and shelter, are sufficiently clothed, have T.V. and cars and do not go hungry.

Certainly, the quality of life needs to rest on a foundation of better material goods, better housing, better transport, better factories and better consumer goods.

But men cannot live in isolation. Even more important is the improvement of recreation, culture, entertainment, education, holidays and sports, in a word, improvement of "social life" in one form or another.

The trend of modern capitalist society is to encourage each family, even each person, to live as isolated individuals, each buying from private enterprise his house, his car, his T.V., entertainment, his boat, his caravan or holiday shack.

Of course, each person and family needs privacy at home, but there will surely be a revolt against the trend which drives each person or family into an artificial privacy. Man is a social animal and a rich life can only be one in which his real nature is taken into account.

To reach his full stature man needs a measure of privacy, a measure of casual informal association with relatives, workmates, friends and neighbors, a measure of enjoyment where he is one of an audience, and, at the highest level, and on occasions, full participation in some type of organised social activity.

This last and highest level, being the most difficult to achieve will be the problem mainly kept in mind, because such experiences at their peak stimulate all other features of everyday life.

The peculiarity of any high-class social life is not only that it is based on a group of people voluntarily co-operating with the same interests or aims, but to operate at its highest, or often to operate at all, each such group requires skilled persons to give instruction, guidance, inspiration and organisation.

A sports team needs a coach as well as equipment and a ground to play on. A hall is not enough to produce a play, a concert or even a dance: it requires producers, conductors, band-leaders, ticket sellers and organisers. A youth centre or community centre, however elaborately equipped will fail without a team of leaders. An ablution block and a stretch of river or beach is not really enough to provide a full satisfying holiday for all the family. Though the value of team work and group spirit is at least recognised to some extent in the school, there are insufficient academic and craft teachers for our children. Many schools could successfully be adapted for lively after-school community activities for all age groups, but not without teachers and leaders. The lack of kindergarten and day nursery staff and playleaders are a bigger bottleneck for expansion of the care of children than the provision of buildings and playgrounds.

In a word, services of people with special skills and in great numbers are needed to raise the quality of life, not to replace the efforts of the participants, but to complement them. And this applies at all levels, from umpires for junior cricket up to, say, choreographers. With the increase in productivity, and the possibility of increased leisure all this will become even more important.

It follows that it is incorrect to point to a few under-used facilities as proof that the people do not need them. That does not prove that the local politicians, parents or planners have erred. Their mistake lay not in going so far but in not going a long way further. What it does prove is that buildings and equipment, however necessary, are barren without participants; and participation has to be encouraged, organised and inspired by those who know how.

Private enterprise can make profit out of sport and health when it provides proper coaches, trainers and instructors, as a number of city and suburban centres demonstrate. What can be done, privately, for profit, should be done publicly, for a full range of activities and on a vast scale.

Today, private enterprise provides much of the framework of activities which for want of an alternative people are forced to accept. Youth especially, however, in revolt against predetermined patterns of social activity and behaviour are searching for forms of expression which are their own. Neither private nor public enterprise today provides an atmosphere conducive to youth feeling that they themselves have satisfied their inmost aspirations.

The attitude therefore concerning the provision of plentiful facilities properly serviced must never be regarded as a complete solution to people's needs: only they themselves can determine this. Only they themselves can provide the final link to lift their own activities to more and more human and satisfying forms.

2. Services and Facilities economically feasible.

Capitalist economists, for purposes of their own theories, divide industry into primary, secondary and tertiary. "Services constitute the bulk of the output of tertiary industry" says the Vernon Report (p.226) and the projections of the Report for the future show "there would probably be a continued pronounced shift of labour to the tertiary industries, possibly even more pronounced than in the past" (p.229).

If the building industry, the transport industry and all manner of personal services including those mentioned above are sharply to increase in the future, then it is high time the working people obtained a proper share.

Post-war Government policy has been to create a bonanza for services sold by private industry, at the expense of a crisis in services traditionally supplied by public authority, such as health, education, low-income housing and sports facilities and transport.

New recreation industries, which especially attract the youth, such as ski-ing, surfing and power boat sports tend to be the exclusive province of private enterprise debarring many youth by expense. Enormous capital investment is sunk in holiday places for Melbourne's rich, for example at

the Gold Coast and now beyond to Pacific Islands. Millions of dollars are being sunk in luxury motels, and boatels, at which only well-to-do motorists and boat-owners can afford to stay. Penthouses and luxury flats are flowering all over South Yarra, Toorak and St. Kilda Road. There is no limit to the extravagant features aimed at putting city buildings into so-called "prestige" class. One-brand petrol stations blossoming everywhere are a scandalous waste of land and money.

A re-direction of this sort of misplaced investment into less extravagant but more popular facilities, coupled with proper Government subsidies for essential community projects is needed.

The young people of today, unlike their middle-aged parents are not conditioned by the Depressions. And they are right.

The economy can afford such services and facilities. The main obstacles are lack of a popular program, and a political struggle to realise it.

3. Melbourne must have a heart.

The quality of life in the suburbs depends partly on the facilities and services provided locally, but the local standard of activities, in their turn, depend very much on central standards. Any great metropolis is more than the sum of its parts. Its central city area provides the highest form of all social endeavor.

The best sports finals, the best orchestras, opera and ballet, the best shops, the best churches, the best race meetings, the best gardens, the best theatres and television studios, and therefore, the best actors, comedians, artists and singers, the best shows, circuses and exhibitions, and the best festivals and marches -- all of this is expected of a great city centre. And there is more expected: the top-committeemen of a host of societies and clubs with an all-Melbourne membership, the central offices of the public services and big commercial enterprises, and in Melbourne, the seat of State Government itself.

The higher the class of such central activity, the more vigor and quality it generates, the more inspiration it creates for local suburban or district activities. Junior cricketers need the inspiration of periodic Test matches, but these cannot be played off in the suburbs, just as young musicians are encouraged by visiting world-famous musicians or conductors at central concert halls.

Melbourne is endowed with some magnificent central facilities that rank in world class. The Botanic Gardens, the Melbourne Cup at Flemington Race Course, the football finals at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, the Myer Music Bowl, the new Cultural Centre, the Showgrounds, the Olympic Pool, and some fine theatres, shops, offices, hospitals and churches can be added to the list. All these facilities are in or near the city and so they should be.

But Melbourne's central areas for all their strength, have also big weaknesses. Like all big capitalist cities, they contain the worst as well as the best: blatant profiteering, brash culture, the criminal strata, and the unfortunate victims of these. On top of this, Melbourne has its own peculiar faults. From the past we inherit the "deadness" that overcomes the city at night and at the weekends. People are not attracted to a "dead" city. Consequently, many fine facilities that lie idle could be used during the very time most people have leisure. From the past too we inherit a desperate indifference by the Government to subsidies for culture. This is one particular aspect of a general neglect to provide "services" mentioned above. So that, instead of building up a tradition of great masses of the "ordinary" people coming to the city to enjoy the finest offerings at reasonable prices, there tends to be only a small though dedicated following. Under Liberal Governments which have systematically increased fares to the city, there is a recent tendency to increase the charges for culture.

From what has been said it is clear that the city's "heart" is far bigger than the "golden mile" of the city's commercial centre or the C.B.D. (City business district) of planners' terminology. It includes already many facilities sited in the inner suburbs... Albert Park, St. Kilda Beach, Flemington Racecourse, M.C.C. and the Showgrounds. With a doubled population a much bigger "heart" with more facilities will be needed. The renewal of the inner areas must be planned to take this into account and not be confined to residential and factory buildings only.

From the present period there are troubles too. Shoppers by car cannot park easily and cheaply. So there is a trend for retail business to migrate to the suburbs to cater for the car. This tends to increase the relative amount of central city space taken by multi-storey car parks and offices, still further deadening the city, even in the day time.

Bowing to bad trends, past and present, Mr. N. F. Clark, Head of the Transportation Section of the Melbourne University, has predicted a Melbourne in twenty years time, with all of the inner suburbs demolished and given over to car parks, with only an occasional high rise office or flats, amongst a sea of cars. He attacked the proposed city underground on the basis that all functions except executive and finance will soon have fled from the city to the suburbs, and as executives all come by car, improvement in public transport was a waste of money.

Such slavish trend-thinking cannot be accepted. Man surely can organise better than to allow the internal combustion engine to break up the great city centres which have nurtured all the highest that civilisation can offer.

Indiscriminate investment in towering insurance offices, banks, head offices and car parks concentrated in some parts of the city and eradicating in their wake small shops, offices, hotels and cafes which once gave more variety and vitality to these areas, needs to be controlled. Instead, plans are needed for diversified uses of city land including the rehousing of

thousands of people of mixed income groups in central city areas in high-rise buildings.

This would facilitate retention and development of a variety of "small-man" enterprises as well as entertainment and cultural centres.

The heart of our city, previously a fact of natural growth, fostered by the dominant commercial and industrial interests and strengthened by its radial rail and road systems, must now be consciously preserved by planning against the natural erosion of the centre wrought by the invasion of cars, migration of the big factories to the outer fringes and lop-sided and indiscriminate investment in city buildings.

Unless this can be achieved our children will never live in a truly great city, nor have the rich opportunities which such a centre has to offer. Before discussing how this is to be achieved it is time to examine other aspects of Melbourne.

4. The Suburbs need re-vitalising.

To approach the subject of Melbourne's suburbs it is well to look at the past and present before examining the future.

The Past and Present.

Aside from its city "heart", Melbourne has certain marked features distinguishing it from other big cities in other countries

a) Quarter-Acre Blocks.

From the 1920's until quite recently the almost universal type of home for working people was a single storey family dwelling built on a $\frac{1}{4}$ acre or $\frac{1}{5}$ acre building lot.

This has a positive side. In part it was a popular revolt against cottages on 15 or 20 ft. frontages, badly designed with poor access to light, sun and with poor privacy, run up by big building speculators of the last century. The Anti-slum Society and the Minimum-size Allotment Society had their place in the early part of this century along with the Anti-sweating League in an assault on the worst excesses of industrialisation.

b) Early Efficient Transport.

This process of doubling or trebling the frontage of a worker's home became economically feasible because it was assisted by cheap land, far from the city, opened up by electrification of the suburban rail services in the 1920's. Melbourne was one of the first cities in the world to electrify and by world standards it was a very efficient system, the radial suburban routes providing fast commuter services to the industries and offices in or near the city, the new residential areas closely hugging the railway line. At the end of last century the terminals were pushed far beyond the urban limits deliberately to open up urban development, thus assisting to hold down the price of building

blocks everywhere and making possible the pattern of $\frac{1}{4}$ acre blocks.

c) Record Home Ownership.

After the 1940's, speculation in houses for rent became unprofitable. So in addition to the younger generation paying off their own home in the outer suburbs, the older generation of working people in the inner and middle suburbs began to buy the homes for which they had previously paid rent. The latest estimates are that 77% of Melbourne's householders own their own homes, even if many are paying them off. This is claimed to be a world record.

d) High Car Ownership.

By 1966, 63% of Melbourne householders were estimated to have at least one car, twice the proportion of England. It is clear that if present trends continue, Melbourne could well outstrip the present American record level of about 75%. Many of America's big cities have very high density residential areas which Melbourne does not have and is unlikely to have.

The early high class radial rail system has not been extended to meet the problem of cross suburban transport. In the outer fringes cross suburban buses and buses to rail stations have been left in the hands of the private bus owner and are not subsidised.

The slow infrequent services to the rail heads therefore have become more and more frustrating as residential sub-divisions have opened up further and further from rail stations. The car thus becomes a necessity for many even to get to the station and recently with development of big factories on the outer fringes, to get direct from home to work. More recently still, the car becomes a necessity to get to the super-market and to take the youngsters to school. High car ownership by working people while saddling them with debts and more and more often with long unpleasant commuting, does however give the new found mobility for leisure purpose, for picnic and for camping holidays.

e) Declining Quality of Suburban Life.

The factors mentioned, low housing density, high home ownership, high car density, outer suburban factories and supermarkets, and the poverty of services for all types of social life have all combined to change the leisure time habits and character of Melbourne's working people.

There are greater distances to travel, Saturday morning shopping often becomes a major excursion both for husband and wife who now become their own shop-assistants and delivery-men, the problems of house and garden maintenance or car repair sometimes turn into a camouflaged unpaid extension of the working week and there is a pre-occupation with home-making and weekend car jaunts. All this has several effects. Proportionally to population less people come to Melbourne's heart to spend their spare time. Proportionally too, less spend their time in social activity of some kind

locally. The trend is for a decline in typical local suburban organisations of every kind.

True, there are a few new suburbs where there is a vigorous growth of organisations, in some inner suburbs migrants are increasing the organisations of their social life, and now activities such as bowling alleys, trampolines, Karate, Judo and Yogi have appeared. But there is a tendency for a relative decline in participants in the basic sports, in local clubs and societies and in local educational, hobby and cultural efforts.

More and more the typical Melbourne suburbanite is becoming home-centred, T.V.-centred, garden-centred and car-centred. When he goes out he often takes with him a family group including children, at least those who are not in their late teens. Social life more frequently takes the form of gatherings of relatives and friends in the sitting room, at a barbeque in the backyard or out on a picnic.

All this has a positive side. It tends to confirm the unsophisticated out-door type of life for which Australians are already noted, and which is connected with their high regard for sport. But, what is new; it encourages a "handy-man" type of self reliance and creativeness although understandably the results, due to lack of training, often disappoint even the creator. Also for many families a holiday has become possible for the first time.

In addition, the "small home", not nearly so small as it used to be, often now has enough rooms to give the possibility of complete privacy to any member of the family who may want it.

These home-centred and out-door habits all of which tend to lay the stress on family privacy and self sufficiency have their place. They are good in their place. But unless they are balanced with a good measure of the best type of community activities, they can lead to a steady decline in the quality of family life itself.

At its worst, the decline of community purposes, leads to a narrow minded selfish exercise in "keeping up with the Joneses", which tends to create barriers between friends and neighbors, instead of drawing them closer.

Especially severe is the effect of this home-centred self sufficiency on the housewife and youth in the outer suburbs. The commuter has at least his work mates. Many wives, however, feel desperately lonely. Youth with no proper local life to attract them tend to go "on the tear" to discotheques and drinking parties in other suburbs or the city, anywhere at all in search of something to do.

The Future

Our children will live to see Melbourne twice the size. Such a stormy rate of development has the possibility either of tragic mistakes or exciting chances to reshape many features of our suburbs.

The sprawl once workable now a danger

The limited low density housing sprawl along the rail lines in the 1920's in a city less than 1 million was workable. The rapid post-war between-the-rails sprawl is becoming increasingly unsatisfactory. Uncontrolled sprawl for the future is dangerous. What worked for one million does not work for five million.

All the worst trends of present suburban life will be intensified and apply over much bigger areas. The sprawl stultifies all efforts to revitalise the quality of suburban living. Uncontrolled it is not only uneconomic and time consuming, but by its very nature it complicates organisation of community activities.

The difficulty is not just one of the low number of people per acre although this is a real difficulty. It dictates that many activities if they are to take place at all must do so on a district instead of a neighborhood basis, thus making travelling necessary, which in itself deters many potential beginners and debars many children, especially those not near public transport services.

The deeper difficulty lies with the changed pattern of suburban life based on the car and its consequences. First the car becomes a necessity to get to work. It does not need proving that for those who work in the city it is impossible for all commuting to be done by car. Even in Los Angeles, with its staggering and extravagant freeway system, the most motorised city in the world, more than 50% come into the city by public transport.

The reason is not only mathematical or economic. Success in bringing tens of thousands of large steel boxes into the city daily and storing them away there, can only be achieved by pulling down buildings which house human activities which were the reasons why people brought the steel boxes along. The more sky-scrapers go up to house humans, the more buildings come down to give place to multi-storey car parks. The ultimate effect of this is to "kill" the city heart. It is one of those processes akin to certain chemical reactions which cannot proceed beyond a certain saturation point.

Long before complete deadlock however, crisis occurs. Freeway systems are demanded to overcome congestion. Freeway systems never solve such a crisis, only hasten the self-defeating process by a demand for ever more terminal car parks.

But freeways have effects in the other direction. They not only entice people to bring their cars to the city, but they entice people to go out further and further from the city to build their homes far from any public transport.

Thus sprawl breeds car commuting which breeds freeway systems which in their turn drive ahead the sprawl in a never ending vicious circle. The car, having become a habit for work and then for shopping and then even for school, finishes dictating the scale and pattern of life. Just as in

the heart of the city, the cultural facilities, the restaurants, the social clubs, the small retail shops in the older buildings are the first to be driven out by the car park competition, so too in the suburbs the small shop, the small local centres tend to give place to the district super-market or tend to vanish altogether.

That is the point at which the family is trapped. A generation ago "Junior" could walk to the Scout Hall, teenagers could tram to the tennis club, and there were many adult activities within walking distance or close in terms of public transport. The future outer-suburban-car-dependent parents, however will be compelled to chauffeur every member of the family to most activities until they are old enough to drive a car themselves.

There is of course an easy alternative, which is winning at the moment, already mentioned; that is to orientate the whole family around the T.V., the house, the garden, the family car trips and forget community activities.

To avert the spiritual poverty and meanness of life to which this would eventually give rise, the sprawl must be controlled.

The fashionable theory of planners and administrators is to accept the impact of the car on suburban life as inevitable and unimportant. Mobility, they say, has made obsolete all local facilities and services, except perhaps the service station and a small park or so and a milk shop. The neighborhood as a unit of community activities is, according to this view, an anachronism.

The theory is that leisure time car mobility enables people to escape from the neighborhood. The advantages of car mobility are seen, but none of the disadvantages. Amongst some sections, especially of the youth, mobility does lead to the formation of collectives outside the neighborhood, e.g. there are ski-lodges where numerous youth collectives gather to build their lodges and organise their entertainment, there are surf clubs and social activities apart from the marvellous life-saving services, and there are numerous specialist centres within the metropolitan area, too, which cannot be duplicated in every suburb.

Nevertheless the great majority of "car escapees" are couples or family groups, who do not form or reform collectives in the course of their journeys.

So apart from those who use their car for purposes of collective effort, and those who use their car for the sheer pleasure of driving as a recreation, car mobility as such does not have much effect on the quality of life for the "escapee". They may feel they have more opportunity for variety "the spice of life". In practice however they often go from a situation in one neighborhood to a similar situation in another, so the quality of life may even deteriorate for them to the extent that there is "lost time" in the travelling.

But by draining a neighborhood of many of its vigorous citizens and their children during the leisure hours, car mobility disrupts the pattern of local contact, thus tending to deprive local activities of steady patrons.

This tends to accelerate the decline in local organisations generally. The very ones who most need local collectives, the housewives, retired people and children up to driving age, are deprived.

That is one problem.

Another problem is that the sprawl has spread 15 to 20 miles from the city, and to travel right across Melbourne is from 30 to 40 miles. In our own children's lifetime these distances could be doubled. Properly speaking it is time already to think of Geelong, Werribee, Melbourne, Dandenong and Western Port as taking shape into one urban complex over the whole Port Phillip Region. In these centres and in many outer suburbs, even though the main bread winner may live near his employment, his children trained for different occupations have to travel great distances to higher education or to work.

5. Localities and Districts must have a Heart.

Still another problem is what might be termed "district centres": the grouping together of big public facilities of all types into a lively district centre served by public transport. Lack of planning results in big factories, supermarkets, educational institutions, sports grounds, housing commission flats, now even big offices being dotted all over the metropolitan area. Some are on main public transport lines, but others not. In 1930 Melbourne's population was one million and the city of Melbourne served as a "district centre" so-to-speak, for the whole metropolitan area, many parts of which were even then too far away for effective contact. Our children will probably live in an urban complex with five times the population of 1930. It will need by then at least five, maybe more "district centres", and unless these are consciously planned for now they will not emerge.

Some apologists for the break down of local community activities on a neighborhood basis argue that with car mobility these activities appear or should appear at a higher and better level on a district basis. This is no argument to abandon local activities, because just as Melbourne's "heart" cannot thrive without district level activities, so the district activities cannot thrive without local activities. From top to bottom each type needs to be supplied not only with facilities but skilled leaders and needs to be integrated from beginners up to stars.

The general principles needed to tackle this combination of problems is threefold. First that faster mobility is required to overcome increasing distances, second that a much higher density of housing is required in selected areas to limit the sprawl and help invigorate local and district activities and thirdly that the siting of all facilities, industrial, commercial, leisure time alike, should be on the basis of reducing the need for transport wherever possible, or where unavoidable, that the type

of transport available be the cheapest and fastest for the purpose.

Expressing this as a slogan: To maximise social contact we need (i) Faster Mobility, (ii) Higher Housing Density, (iii) Better siting and Growth Patterns all of which minimise travelling time.

Although inseparably interconnected, these three elements will be dealt with one by one, always remembering that the underlying reason for each is the lifting of the quality of life at local, district and central level.

(i) Faster mobility.

The bulk of suburban travel by Melbournites this century will surely be shared between car and fixed rail transport. This is the reality of the situation whatever extremes of good argument can be produced either by car-advocates or rail-advocates, although across-the-bay commuting by hydroplane for example from Mornington or the Bellerine Peninsula to Flinders Street or increased helicopter travel is not beyond possibility.

The most economic use of a highway is speeds at 30 m.p.h. Any lower speed allows less cars per unit of time. So does any higher speed, surprisingly, because of greater distances required between cars the greater the speed. The average peak-hour speed in Melbourne's outer suburbs is between 20-30 m.p.h., less than 20 m.p.h. in the inner suburbs or on tram lines, and about 7 m.p.h. in Swanston Street. Such figures demonstrate that car travel for commuting to the city is either relatively slow, or if freeways are introduced permitting speeds of 50 to 60 m.p.h. relatively extravagant.

A long term relief to shift more people by car and at less cost could be effected by improving all main roads into the city. The aim should be to enable speeds of a steady 30 m.p.h. for as much of the route as possible. This would involve widening all bottlenecks, and closing access from side streets onto the main roads wherever possible. This latter would serve the dual purpose of increasing speed on the main roads and preventing traffic build-up in what should be quiet residential streets. To reduce the peak-hour congestion and conserve the city "heart" commuting by car to the city should be discouraged by steep increases in all-day parking fees, and a reduction in between-peak rates and rail fares.

A ring road so that Port traffic and through traffic can reach their destinations without going through the city should be commenced. Traffic experts talk about "balanced transport", that is, a balance between public and private transport. Some of these experts, associated with car production, see "public transport" however as privately operated bus lines with priority lanes on freeway systems and with interchange stations built above the freeway. Others again admit that the "balance" should be between cars and trains. However, because of the objective situation cars inevitably increase beyond the capacity of the roads to

carry them even without the lobby pressure of the car industry, the rubber industry and the oil industry. The dominant attention by Government is being given to roads to the neglect of rail improvements. For this reason the only way to maintain any real "balance" is to reverse this trend and give more attention and finance to rail improvement than to roads. If we are not to clog up our "heart" isolate our outskirts and create major disruption to social activities which make life worth living, roads should be improved as suggested, but freeways should come last, not first on the list of priorities. Such as are built, unlike the Tullamarine and South Eastern Freeways, should aim to bypass Melbourne's "heart". The "West Gate" Lower Yarra Crossing toll bridge and expressway will partially achieve this by eventually connecting Dandenong Road with Geelong Road, but only via the South Eastern Freeway.

However, Melbourne has, fortunately, a ready made freeway network for trains. Speeds here are also slow, averaging 20 m.p.h. Overseas experiments can more than double such speeds. For example the new San Francisco Rapid Transit trains will average 40 m.p.h., partly by faster running and partly by more widely spaced stations.

Some such rapid transit trains, frequent but cheap, will be needed for Melbourne and should be planned in good time. In the meantime express running techniques already being further developed by the Railways Department should be expedited and coupled with cheap efficient publicly-owned feeder bus services from home to the stations, more free parking at selected outer suburban stations and a city underground.

This could halve travelling time for many and put a brake on the self-escalating problems of cars on freeways. The individual should be free to choose either method of travel to work, but every possible encouragement should be weighted on the public transport.

Rapid transit rail should have first priority on the longest rail routes because these are most in need. The Geelong - Melbourne - Dandenong Line should be the first of all to be converted to rapid transit because this will also enable extension of the line to encourage further suburban growth beyond Geelong and beyond Dandenong branching east towards Warragul and south-east towards Western Port.

(ii) Better Siting and Growth Patterns.

The corridor-type development of new urban extensions beyond the present boundaries adopted by the Government in principle should be supported, not only because they enable green spaces between new suburbs, but also because planning in the future could be around rapid transit spines.

Siting of all future major facilities ... supermarkets, commercial centres, factories, educational institutions, recreational centres, high density housing estates, should be planned to be erected near the rail lines so that having travelled from home to the station, a variety of facilities are within convenient reach.

Siting of local facilities, kindergartens, day nursery, primary school, food shops, playgrounds, sport and other recreational facilities should be within pedestrian distance, and in many cases could form a close-knit central complex, including where possible, small factories and offices.

This approach would require a drastic modification to the existing zoning concepts. The idea of large tracts of land set aside exclusively for one type of use, either residential, commercial or industrial, creates the need for unnecessary travel. No one wants obnoxious factories built cheek by jowl amongst workers cottages as has been the case in the inner suburbs in early Melbourne. But, it is very important to have offices, unobnoxious factories, shops and recreation facilities within easy reach of all residential areas, and especially so for women and youth. Zoning regulations would need to be more specific for example compelling large enterprises to establish near district centres.

Apart from the effect of such diversification of land use in suburban centres in improving the opportunity for social life by tending to reduce the need for long journeys, it would reduce the pressure on both the rail system and the road system.

(iii) High Density Building.

Finally it is clear that the higher the density of housing the less distances need to be travelled. High density anywhere at all in Melbourne helps reduce the pressure on the sprawl and to that extent alleviates the worst isolation of the far flung outer suburbs and the commuting problem.

It is widely supposed that Australians dislike high density living to such an extent that only a small minority would ever choose it. Density of housing means the number of living units per acre and is often confused with overcrowding which is the number of persons per room.

What is true is that there is a widespread and well founded belief that flats or other high density dwellings are not suitable places in which to bring up children. Such beliefs are based on earlier experiences with flats, terrace houses and sardine-packed cottages of the inner suburbs of early Melbourne which were often overcrowded into the bargain.

Melbourne's working people have never yet had the opportunity of living in high class high density dwellings especially designed for a full family life. Other things being equal, however, you would have expected a high demand for high density by elderly people, single people and couples whose children have left school.

"Other things", however, were not equal. There was a heavy economic pull of cheap land and reasonable commuting services mentioned earlier favouring separate dwellings on biggish building lots. Finance policies also made money available mainly for new detached cottages. Moreover,

the Uniform Building Regulations tended to consolidate this position, determining frontage, lot area, set back, and siting requirements and making experiment difficult.

Yet, now there is a sharp reversal of trend. Currently there is one flat built to every two houses. According to surveys this trend is not a passing one and the number of flats built is likely to equal or even exceed the number of houses. High prices of building blocks, not only because of speculating land developers, but because they are compelled to supply most services and pass on the cost as part of the purchase price have been one reason for this un-Melbourne trend. But it could not have proceeded far without a sociological change too. At first it was mainly elderly people, or single people who bought flats. Increasingly however young married couples sometimes even with babies are starting their life in flats.

Except for the very rich, however, no serious attempt has been made to design flats, terrace houses, apartment houses, villa units or any other form of medium or high density housing with really adequate amenities for children, either by public authority or private enterprise. Though design of living quarters is often vastly improved over earlier periods, the finance starved Housing Commission and the profit orientated master-builders nevertheless fail to supply adequate play space for children of different ages, natural meeting places for housewives, workshops for husbands or overflow accommodation for everyone.

Moreover the same Uniform Building Regulations are badly in need of drastic amendment for the purpose of proper standards relating to high density building. In some ways they need to be far more restrictive, preventing poky flats on poky allotments, preventing flats towering over and ruining the privacy of neighboring houses, compelling under-housing or under-grounding of cars in big high density projects. In other ways they need to be far more flexible permitting the close grouping of dwelling units provided that proper provision is made not only for sunlight, air and privacy, but also for proper communal facilities such as garage space, laundromats, workshop, children's playing area and garden.

Everyone should have a choice as to whether they live in a detached cottage or in some form of high density. But just as advantages of time and cost should be given to commuters using public transport, so the same advantages should be given to those electing for high density in certain areas.

High density becomes especially valuable when it is near the city itself or near one of the district centres or located along any of the rail routes, because it can bring many times the number of people near public transport, avoiding the necessity to use their cars even to get to the station.

Also the higher the density in such places, the better. Twelve, twenty, twenty-five or thirty storey flats, called "high rise" flats should

not be rejected off hand, as some do, on the grounds that they lack privacy, are slums of the future, are only little boxes or are concrete monstrosities. None of these judgments need have truth of consequence that could not be remedied.

Man has lived in extremely different conditions during his evolution and if he is to live in great urban complexes many times the size of cities that history has hitherto produced, then he can no doubt adapt to high rise living too, especially if improvements such as those mentioned are incorporated. The higher the densities the bigger the opportunity for really high class community facilities provided the working people can successfully demand the skilled people required to run them.

The overwhelming advantages of high density dwelling linked with rapid transit lines along which there are clustered district and suburban centres mean that redevelopment around the inner areas of Melbourne is not only inevitable, but should be much more rapidly carried out. Later the same will apply to the older areas along the rail lines, which because they were the first to be built, will in the main, wear out the sooner.

However, redevelopment has often been carried out in an inhuman way. Old people and women, in particular, suffer emotionally when the community fabric is disrupted. They become understandably bitter especially when the acquired land is used to build Own Your Own units by private enterprise for higher income buyers.

Radically improved methods of acquisition and re-housing need to be adopted by the Housing Commission to avoid the justified outcry that arises whenever acquisition is announced. The principle should be re-settlement in the same area, in much better housing and at no greater cost.

Suburban Amenities .

In addition to the wealth of services and facilities dealt with in the first item above, suburbs need a high standard of amenities. This means clean air, control of noise and noisome smells, clean water in the creeks, generous tree planting, clean beaches and control of sand erosion. Historically speaking Melbourne has had early a good water supply and a good sewerage system. The excellence of both these services has recently been brought into doubt both basically due to lack of finance; and as the proposal for a treated sewerage outflow to the bay saved much finance, there is widespread suspicion that it may really pollute the bay and its beaches. Standard tree-planted "sanitary zones" should be established between all obnoxious industries and land used for other purposes.

Another amenity, the separation of vehicular from pedestrian traffic is urgent. Many leading town planners have long called for this. Little is done, though it is a matter of design rather than cost. Not only is it not compulsory, but the archaic, grid-iron, cross-roads-pattern-of-streets subdivision by private developers can still be approved. Wherever possible existing shopping areas fronting streets should be turned into malls with off-street parking provided.

For the sake of children and housewives a footpath system completely independent and separate from the road system should be compulsory, connecting houses with schools, kindergartens, shops, bus stops, parks and other important local points.

For this reason and to encourage new type really well-designed "mixed" densities; a public authority staffed by top planners should be set up to acquire farm lands on the city's outskirts, instead of the land developers call for plans for design and buildings with a lay-out of roads and footpath systems and with built-in facilities, and when homes are completed and fully serviced, sell or lease to the purchaser or tenant. This could also help hold down land prices.

6. Beyond the City and the Suburbs.

About three quarters of Victoria's wealth is concentrated in the Port Phillip district, as economists count wealth.

As a picnicker or a holiday maker sees value, however, the balance is the other way. Melbourne's three quarters are thinking of somewhere to go in the bush or at the beach.

Here, under Australian conditions, the car really comes into its own for camping holidays and weekend outings which many are enjoying for the first time. This use of the car should be still further extended. At the same time, improved suburban public transport would enable many car owners to abandon the tedious daily trip to work retaining their vehicles for leisure time use. Cheap public transport by plane, train and coach would enable a greater variety of holiday opportunities.

The flood of holiday makers have given rise to two problems. One is that there is not enough room for them all at "pick" spots, and this problem becomes aggravated the more the sub-division for holiday shacks is permitted along the beach fronts and river fronts.

Secondly there is a matter of sheer conservation of our bush and sea shores in their natural state, not only to avoid erosion of our natural resources, but because the birds, the animals, the bushes and the trees are after all the very reason which attract people back to nature.

It is urgent that a State Conservation and Holiday Resort Authority declare hundreds of thousands of acres of suitable bushland and seacoast as conservation areas, and be empowered to control land use in these areas. Such an Authority should also buy up all vacant lots in places where private cottages are not desirable and help to develop proper accommodation ranging from tents and caravans to holiday flats and guest houses concentrated in suitable areas, leaving unspoiled countryside around for general enjoyment.

Unless this is done wild-life and scenery will be in danger of destruction by commercialisation and over-use. The concepts of "conservation"

and "total environment" are ones which go far beyond the holiday aspect. They include the condition of our atmosphere, the pollution of our rivers and harbours, the wise use of all our natural resources on, under and above the ground and including our forests, plains, heathlands, beaches, waterways and oceans, and the native wild life and vegetation associated with these.

Unfortunately, the word "conservation" is often misinterpreted as being limited to a sentimental devotion to non-human creatures. What is overlooked is the threat posed by plans for the rape of our natural resources by big business ventures both local and overseas.

Far-reaching total-environment standards of conservation and planned management of the countryside, whether developed or undeveloped are urgent for Melbourne's citizens. This is so because, apart from holiday-making, natural resources supply the raw material for its industries, because the natural balance between species of fauna and flora and their environment is easily destroyed by unregulated human pressures, and because rare species of Australian animals, birds and vegetable life unique by reason of this continent's separate development over millions of years are in danger of extinction which would remove from the field of scientific study important links in evolutionary life.

Another problem of the countryside and of Melbourne concerns decentralisation. There are some who imagine it is possible to decentralise, building country towns at a rate necessary to contain the growth of Melbourne. They think it would be better for more people to live in country towns somewhat nearer nature than in a city of several millions.

Decentralisation is possible and should be encouraged wherever it seems feasible. At the very least the modest recommendations of the Decentralisation Committee for subsidised expansion of Bendigo, Ballarat, the Latrobe Valley towns, Portland and Wodonga should be immediately implemented. However, so great already is the tremendous economic and population strength of Melbourne that even a stupendous decentralisation program could do very little to slow down Melbourne's growth.

To contain Melbourne's growth altogether at say 2½ million people would require building somewhere else every two years, a city of 100,000 or so - the size of Geelong.

It would take 16 new Geelongs in the 32 years to the end of the century. Not even a socialist country with power to direct industry where to locate, could attempt such a necessarily uneconomic proposition on such a scale within such a time.

The truth is not only Melbourne, but big cities all over the world due to the industrialisation of agriculture and the magnitude of modern big industry and its complex interpenetration with small industry, are all destined to grow to a size never before known to mankind.

Unplanned, such cities will be a curse to their working people. Properly planned and democratically owned and controlled by their working people they can provide immense opportunities for a further elevation of the level of civilisation.

7. The Perspectives.

Under the present capitalist system such meagre planning for a better "quality of life", as is attempted, is frustrated at every level by private ownership of the main productive forces, and by the influence of such owners on public authorities at all levels.

The conclusion should not be that the effort is hopeless, and should be left until after a socialist system is established. Certainly, the socialist solution, by ending altogether the power of the great corporations that dominate investments in land, buildings, transport and banks would be the most radical one. It would remove the main obstacles to the effective co-ordination of all authorities for an integrated overall community plan.

More fundamental still, a society that throws the emphasis not on amassing consumer goods and "keeping up with the Joneses", with all the waste of material and human spirit to which such concepts inevitably give rise, but on the importance of the creative effort of production of goods and services for human needs and hence the promotion of social and cultural life would release a flood of public pressure to lift the "quality of life" hitherto unknown.

Short of such a thoroughgoing solution, however, a reform program and action around it is urgent. As with other causes championed by the Australian people, such as industrial conditions, foreign policy and education, immediate practical policies are capable of enlisting wide popular support.

Yet if Melbourne is to have such an immediate plan, the planning process can succeed only to the extent that it is democratic. It must be a people's plan in every sense of the word. This is not to define democracy, as some apologists for the capitalist system do, by saying that the only people who need to be consulted are affected property owners.

On the contrary, planning and public authorities should have control over all big manufacturing, extractive, commercial, recreational, administrative, or "development" concerns as well as adequate finance from them. Otherwise, for example, the effort to obtain balanced district centres, or apply principles of conservation would be hopeless.

At times, acquisition of farms, business properties or homes is necessary for community purposes, and with proper consideration and compensation for those being displaced, can be effected justly. Moreover, it is necessary to establish tight controls over speculation and profiteering by property owners and any corruption by public officers or politicians in connection with them.

But authorities should never assume the power to give directions to individuals as to the manner of their housing, travelling or spending of their leisure. Thus people should be given a choice between public or private travel to work, between public or private housing, between low, medium or high density housing, between Melbourne or decentralised country towns, between participatory or spectator sport or culture.

However, often this choice should be offered on the basis of giving advantages or subsidies to what the community judges to be the particular type of individual preference which lies in the direction of the best interests of the community as a whole. For example: public as against private commuting, high density in selected areas, subsidies for decentralisation or libraries.

More fundamental than this, however, the very success of planning depends on whether the people take part in making the plans. The emphasis must be changed from negative restrictive land-use planning towards positive expansive design-planning of whole integrated communities. Forward exhibition, careful explanation, wide publicity and popular discussion should be provided for all such efforts long before decisions are taken so that an informed public can exercise a rational democratic voice.

At every turn "the Establishment" and the big property owners will no doubt endeavour to avoid or sabotage such democratic procedures, preferring to continue the situation in which they keep such decisions in their own hands. To do so these days they are often driven to hide behind talk in favour of planning in the hope of being able to confine it to talk.

If they are incapable of organising the cities of tomorrow, growing movements of the people, gathering strength as the urgency of the situation becomes more apparent will surely coalesce to supply the dynamic leadership required to win the degree of popular support necessary to replace the present system with one that can do the job.

SUMMARY.

The following summary requested by some readers of the draft, contains conclusions rather than analysis or argument and is not intended to replace the text but only to provide a few reminders of its content.

1. Services Needed as Well as Facilities.

The "quality of life" is enhanced not by keeping up with the "Joneses" with material possessions but by a creative job and satisfactory social life. Outside the work-place, therefore, (and this is the area dealt with), improvement of recreation, culture, entertainment, education and sport is needed, not as commodity package-deals sold to the individual or family for cash, but for participation in some form of social activity allowing, always, that individuals need privacy, casual contact with their fellows, and a measure of spectator enjoyment, and providing always that there should never be any attempt to foist activity on people.

The provision of buildings and facilities for "social life" is insufficient in itself. The provision of the services of instructors, teachers, trainers, coaches, skilled leaders of all types is needed.

2. Services and Facilities Economically Possible.

The economy can afford a bigger slice of the growing "tertiary industry" for such services and facilities by redirection of private investment in extravagances, and by Government subsidy.

3. Melbourne Must Have a Heart.

Melbourne city centre has fine facilities for the performance of the highest standards of many types of activities and should not only be protected from erosion by the car, the migration of factories to the outer fringes and lopsided investment in city buildings, but extended to provide for bigger population.

4. The Suburbs Need Revitalising.

The accumulated effect of quarter-acre blocks, record home ownership, early efficient public transport and more recent high car ownership, has had positive effects in developing "outdoor" life and handy-man self reliance, and home privacy. The negative effects include a tendency for a declining quality of suburban activities, which is particularly severe on housewives and youth.

The suburban sprawl, encouraged by and encouraging car commuting and self defeating radial freeway systems, increase car mobility generally disrupting the pattern of local activities. The resulting "sprawl" adds to the problem. Already we need to think of Geelong-Werribee-Melbourne-Dandenong-Western Port as taking shape into a Port Phillip Region, within

which a number of "district centres" are required.

5. Localities and Districts Must Have a Heart.

But this is no argument to abandon local activities because district activities cannot thrive without local activities any more than central city activities can survive without district activities.

From top to bottom each type needs to be supplied with facilities and skilled leaders and needs to be integrated from beginners to stars. Thus to maximise social contact we need: (i) faster mobility, with (ii) higher density housing and (iii) better siting and growth patterns to minimise travelling time.

(i) Improving all main roads to city, closing access from "side" residential streets which should be protected from through traffic, increasing all-day city parking fees and reducing rail fares. Railways, cheap publicly-owned feeder buses to rail stations, rapid transit first on Geelong-Melbourne-Dandenong route and beyond, and underground should all get priority treatment over freeways. Freeways should aim to by-pass rather than penetrate to the city centre.

(ii) All future major facilities, supermarkets, commercial centres, factories, educational institutions, recreational centres, and high density housing estates should be grouped as district centres around rail spines as the central cores of corridor-type growth patterns with "green" areas between corridors. As many local facilities as possible should be grouped and within pedestrian distance of residents.

(iii) Medium and high density residential buildings in selected areas close to the city and to the rail lines is required, but under two conditions: (a) radically improved design of buildings to allow adequate space for children, natural meeting places for housewives, workshops for husbands and overflow space for everyone. (b) radically improved method of re-housing to provide re-settlement in the same area, in much better housing and at no greater cost.

Overall improvement of amenities by control of pollution, separation of vehicular from pedestrian traffic, shopping malls, and public control of sub-divisions to ensure proper design - planning of physical and community facilities.

6. Beyond the City and Suburbs.

Not only for holiday makers, but, for conservation considerations generally, an Authority is needed to declare suitable areas as conservation areas and to develop proper holiday accommodation concentrated in suitable areas, leaving unspoiled countryside for general enjoyment.

Decentralisation should be encouraged with immediate implementation

of accelerated assistance to Bendigo, Ballarat, the Latrobe Valley towns, Portland and Wodonga, although it would be unreal to regard any such effort as being capable of materially affecting the further rapid expansion of Melbourne.

7. The Perspectives.

Although the most thorough-going solution would be the ending altogether of the corporations that dominate investments in land, buildings, transport and banks, a reform program and action around it is urgent, based on a measure of control in the community interest.

Choice of individuals as to the manner of their housing, travelling or leisure should be preserved, and the emphasis changed from negative restrictive land-use planning towards positive expansive design planning of whole integrated communities, with democratic participation in the planning.

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The period 1966 - 1968 was one of gathering ferment over Melbourne's future. Planners, architects, municipal councillors, engineers, experts in various state departments and instrumentalities, church committees, the official union and white collar organisations, and some political parties all contributed in seminars, journals, reports, conferences and publications.

Readers interested to study the subject more deeply could perhaps do well to start with some of the basic reports and papers, official and otherwise, which appeared in the last two years. Here are a few in order of appearance:-

1. *Australian Cities, Chaos or Planned Growth?* Proceedings of 32nd Summer School of Australian Institute of Political Science. (Angus and Robertson 1966).
2. *Travel in Melbourne - A summary of the Consultants' Report* prepared by Metropolitan Transportation Committee 1966. (Another earlier useful work is *Living with the Motor Car, a Traffic Symposium* organised in February 1964 by the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria, published July 1964 by the R.A.C.V.).
3. *An Urban Planning Policy for Victoria* (Report by the Town and Country Planning Association to the Minister for Local Government, published in Plan News Review, December, 1966).
4. *The Enemy Within Our Gates* - a publication of the Housing Commission of Victoria, December, 1966.
5. *Town Planning - Co-ordination or Chaos?* (Report of Seminar Proceedings Australian Resources and Living Standards Convention, April 1967, conveyed by the T.H.C.... A.C.S.P.A. and the Victorian Public Service Association).
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Town Planning Review (Vic. Chamber of Manufacturers)

The Australian Municipal Journal (Municipal Assoc. of Vic., S.A., Tas. etc.)

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READERS' IDEAS WELCOME

The authors, working now on Part II of Plan for Melbourne would be grateful for the views of any reader either on Part I, "Facts and Principles" contained in this publication, or on any details they think should be in Part II "Blueprints for Change."

Please send ideas to ...

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