

1974

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SYDNEY

BRIEF REPORT  
ON  
METROPOLITAN CENTRAL AREA

Cities Commission  
Brief 2104

by George Clarke 1974

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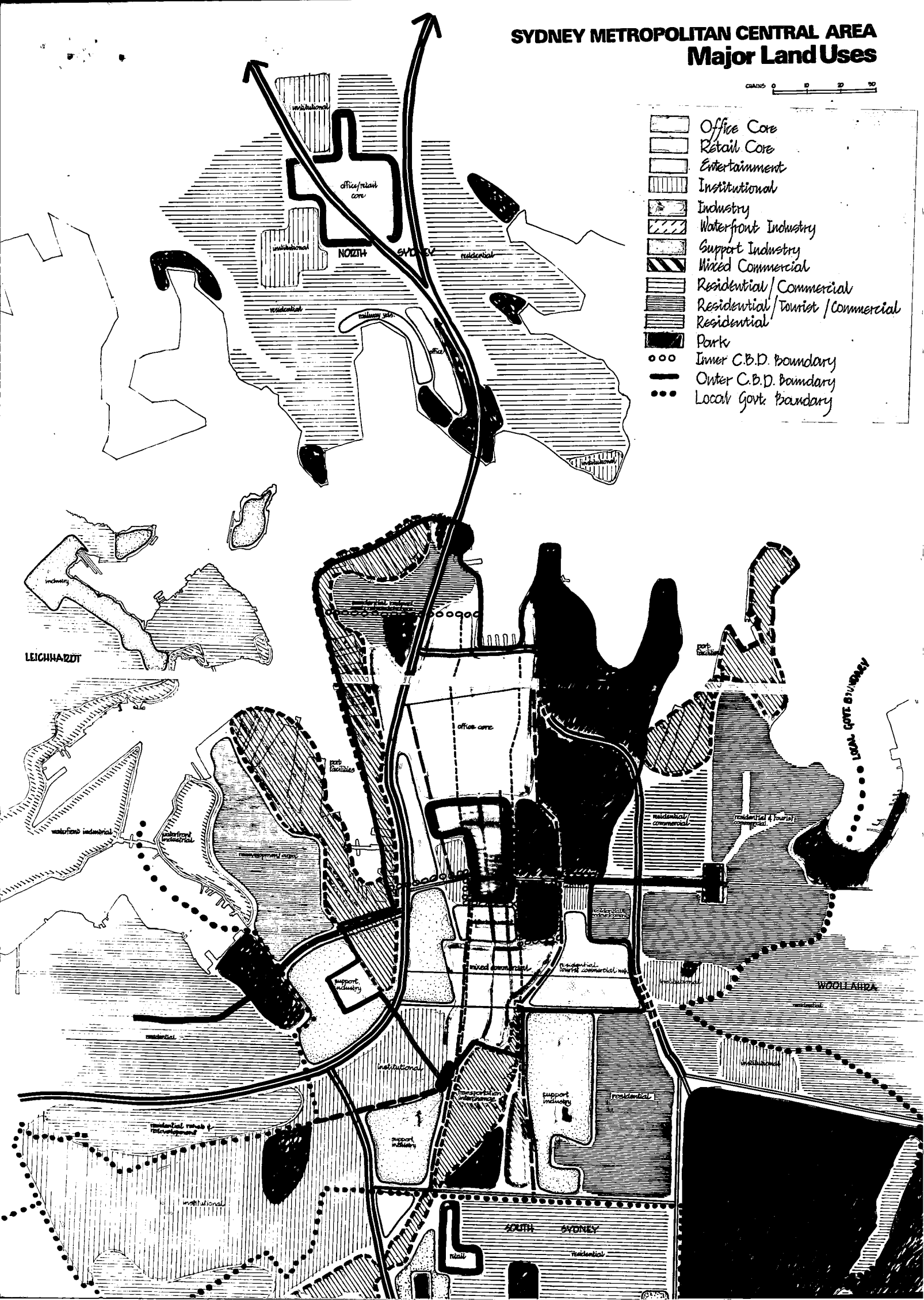
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# SYDNEY METROPOLITAN CENTRAL AREA Major Land Uses

CHAINS 0 10 20 30

- Office Core
- Retail Core
- Entertainment
- Institutional
- Industry
- Waterfront Industry
- Support Industry
- Mixed Commercial
- Residential/Commercial
- Residential/Tourist/Commercial
- Residential
- Parks
- Inner C.B.D. Boundary
- Outer C.B.D. Boundary
- Local Govt. Boundary



George Clarke  
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## CITIES COMMISSION

### METROPOLITAN CENTRAL AREAS

#### BRIEF REPORT ON POLICIES - SYDNEY

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1. MAP - See Frontispiece

2. ESSENTIAL BIBLIOGRAPHY


- S1 Sydney Region - Growth and Change - Prelude to a Plan, State Planning Authority, October, 1967, 80 pp.
- S2 Sydney Region Outline Plan, State Planning Authority, March, 1968, 111 pp.
- S3 The City of Sydney Planning Scheme Ordinance and Scheme Maps, NSW Government Gazette, July 16, 1971.
- S4 The 1971 City of Sydney Strategic Plan, Urban Systems Corporation, July 21, 1974; adopted by resolution of the Sydney City Council, August 2, 1971; 163 pp plus 7 Technical Annexures, hardbound. \$15. 12 pp Summary also available, 50¢.
- S5 Development Control and Floor Space Ratio Code, drafted by USC, amended and adopted by resolution of the Sydney City Council, December 6, 1971, 38 pp, \$12.50 (currently being reviewed and revised by USC).
- S6 Parking Policy and Control Code for New Development, prepared by USC, adopted by resolution of the Sydney City Council, December 6, 1971, 35 pp, \$12.50.
- S7 City of Sydney Action Plans, 1971 onwards  
No. 1 - William Street Boulevard, adopted 1971  
No. 2 - Low Cost Streetscape Improvements, continuing implementation  
No. 3 - Wynyard Pedestrian Network, adopted 1971  
No. 4 - Western Perimeter Car Parking Stations, adopted 1972  
No. 5 - Council's Information Systems, 1972 onward  
No. 6 - CBD Overall Pedestrian Network, 1972 onward  
No. 7 - Woolloomooloo Precinct, 1972 onward  
No. 8 - Kings Cross Precinct, 1972 - completed 1974  
No. 9 - Ultimo Precinct, 1972 - completed 1974  
No. 10 - Pyrmont Precincts, 1972 onward  
No. 11 - West Surry Hills Precinct, 1972 - completed 1974  
No. 12 - Surry Hills Residential Village Precinct, 1972 - completed 1974



- No. 13 - Preservation of Historic, etc. Buildings, etc., 1972 onward
- No. 14 - Transportation Planning, Eastern District, 1972 - completed 1974
- No. 15 - Oxford Street Precinct, 1972 onward
- No. 16 - Darlinghurst/Taylor Square Precinct, 1972 onward
- No. 17 - Newtown Precinct, adopted 1974
- No. 18 - Garden Island Naval Base Removal, adopted 1974.
- No. 19 - City Boulevards, minor progress
- No. 20 - Urban Design Control Techniques, minor progress
- No. 21 - Camperdown Precinct
- No. 22 - Central Railway Precinct, adopted 1974.
- No. 23 - Detailed Residential Development Control Code, completed 1973.
- No. 24 - Pedestrianisation of Martin Place, George to Macquarie Streets, 5 blocks, being constructed.
- No. 25 - Noise, Pollution Control, 1972 onward
- No. 26 - South Paddington, adopted 1972
- No. 27 - Street Furniture, 1972 onward
- No. 28 - Community, Social and Welfare Services, 1973 onward
- No. 29 - West Rocks Precinct, commenced 1974
- No. 30 - Moore/Centennial Park Residential Precinct, commenced 1974
- No. 31 - Chippendale Precinct, commenced 1974
- No. 32 - Stanley Street Precinct, commenced 1974
- S8 Sydney Area Transportation Study, by Dr R. Nielsen for the Minister for Transport, through the NSW Government's Urban and Regional Transport Advisory Committee, 1971-1974, 3½ year, \$3m Study, due for press release by the Minister, May 16, 1974.
- S9 CBD Cordon, Origin and Destination Studies, Department of Main Roads, 1965 and 1972.
- S10 Survey and Recommendations re Expansion of Ferry Services, by W.D. Scott & Co. for the Minister for Transport, 1973.
- S11 A Series of Reports and Expressway Design Exercises by De Leuw Cather, for the Department of Main Roads, 1950's, 1960's onward.
- S12 Population Projections for NSW 1971-2000, State Planning Authority, Technical Bulletin No. 4, November 1973, 64 pp.
- S13 Archer R.W., "The Efficiency of the Sydney Central Business District: the Public Authority Contribution", Australian Planning Institute Journal, July 1969





- S14 Archer R.W., "Market Factors in the Redevelopment of the Central Business Area of Sydney 1957-1966", in Urban Redevelopment in Australia, ANU, 1967. 
- S15 Clarke, George, "The 1973-74 Review and Revision of the 1971 City of Sydney Strategic Plan", in Proceedings, City of Sydney Action Planning Forum, Sydney City Council, November 22nd, 1972, 10 pp.
- S16 "Alternative Future Employment Bases for the City of Sydney to 1985, incorporating Statement of Assumptions and Data Sources" by Urban Systems Corporation and Plant Location International, in Papers presented to the 5th Meeting of the 1973-74 Sydney Strategic Plan Review Committee, February, 1974.
- S17 The 1974 City of Sydney Strategic Plan, by Urban Systems Corporation for the Sydney City Council, due for publication July 22, 1974.
- S18 The Office Space Market, Sydney Metropolitan Area: 1972-1980, Plant Location International, December 1972; Volume 1, 130 pp; Volume 2, Seven Data and Technical Appendices; price per copy, \$7,500.
- S19 The North Sydney Planning Scheme Ordinance and Map, originally gazetted 1953, and subsequent Varying Schemes Nos 1 to 6 (currently in dispute with the SPA).
- S20 North Sydney Development Control Plan - Summary Analysis - Data and Recommendations, by North Sydney Planning Consultants, for North Sydney Council, September, 1971, approx 40 pp. (not proceeded with)
- S21 The North Sydney Residential (Development Control) Code, adopted by North Sydney Council, November 8th, 1972, and currently in operation.
- S22 Come Help Plan King's Cross, 8 page Newspaper Supplement, by Urban Systems Corporation for the Sydney City Council, May 1972, as part of the citizen participation process in the preparation of the Council's Kings Cross Action Plan.
- S23 Do you care for Surry Hills?, 8 page Newspaper Supplement, by Urban Systems Corporation for the Sydney City Council, June, 1972, as part of the citizen participation process in the preparation of the Council's two Action Plans for Surry Hills West and the Surry Hills Residential Village, both now supported by the local "Planning for People Campaign" and the Builders Labourers Federation.



### 3. RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITIES

(a) Land Use Planning, Development Control and the actual development of Major Non-Transport Projects

- . The Council of the City of Sydney, which covers the 5 sq. miles constituting most of the true Metropolitan Central Area.
- . North Sydney, South Sydney, Leichhardt, and Woollahra Municipal Councils, which cover the inner-metropolitan residential and industrial areas, as well as the "twin" subsidiary office core at North Sydney.

Initiation of strategic and action planning, citizen participation, land use planning, development control, and other local government functions for each Municipal area, as well as a number of major development projects.
- . The Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority

Planning, development control and plan and project implementation for the East Rocks area, by virtue of total ownership and a special Act of Parliament.
- . The State Planning Authority of NSW

Advice to Minister and local governments on planning and plan implementation; coordination; research, land acquisition; revenue raising, regional planning; and regulation of large scale development, foreshores and ribbon development.
- . The New South Wales Planning and Environment Commission

A new Commission to take over the powers, duties and functions of the State Planning Authority on a day yet to be appointed (probably August or September, 1974), under an Act passed by both State Houses in early April, 1974.
- . The NSW State Pollution Control Commission

This was set up in 1970, but has been recently strengthened by absorption of the Department of Environment, with powers to "police" the Clean Air Act, 1961 and the Clean Waters Act, 1970, previously administered by the Department of Health.



The NSW Minister for Planning and Environment, currently The Hon. Sir John Fuller, MLC. The SPA and its successor, the NSW P. & E. Commission, are subject at all times to the control and direction of this Minister, as is, or probably also will be, the "twin" State Pollution Control Commission. This Minister has taken over all major land use planning and development control powers previously held by the Minister for Local Government, together with all pollution control and environmental impact responsibilities previously exercised by a Minister for Environment, and by the Minister for Health. Sir John is a strong Minister, whose views may be studied in a Sydney Morning Herald feature page article of March 13, 1974.

Other NSW authorities which impinge on planning and development in the Metropolitan Central Area, include :-

NSW Housing Commission

Provision of housing for lower income groups, land and property acquisition, redevelopment, possibly, one day, rehabilitation.

NSW Departments of Education, and Technical Education, and the NSW Advanced Education Board

Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Schools, and technical institutions or colleges, particularly in Ultimo.

The NSW Maritime Services Board

Recently placed under Ministerial control (the Minister for Public Works) for the first time, this traditionally obtuse and secretive body controls the Port of Sydney, involving large areas of land within the MCA.

The NSW Local Government Appeals Tribunal

This administrative, quasi-judicial tribunal has replaced the Land and Valuation Court as arbiter of planning appeals. NSW law does not grant rights of third party appeals. The Tribunal can frustrate some of the decisions of Local Councils and the SPA.

The NSW Height of Buildings Advisory Committee

This has in the past been the ultimately most powerful development control authority on all development



applications for buildings over 80 feet in height, with powers even the Minister could not over-rule. But the coming-into-force of the new national Building Regulations is taking away its original fire-protection raison d'etre. It has recently fallen into obscurity since the office building boom went bust in 1972. Very few applications for high buildings are now being made. The Government has long since stated that it will be abolished. The time is coming when Local Councils will be fully capable of carrying out its pioneering functions. Meanwhile, it operates increasingly as an adjunct of the SPA.

The Builders Labourers Federation, the Coalition of Resident Action Groups, the RAIA and the RAPI, the National Trust, et al

The pre-1972 role of HOBAC (Height of Buildings Advisory Committee) as the most powerful and effective single development contro, or more strictly, "veto" body, has been taken over by the Builder's Labourers Federation, using the "Green Ban" technique of withdrawal of basic building site labour. The BLF acts on the "advice" of a host of dissident groups, the major of which are listed above.

The NSW Government has expressed the intention, in the 1974 Act to create the new Planning and Environment Commission, of having new planning and development control legislation and machinery drafted by 1975, the major thrust of which will be to confine the new Commission to State, regional and sub-regional "strategic" or "structure" planning, and forcing and encouraging Local Authorities to take responsibility for detailed development control, ~~too much of which the SPA attempts to carry out, and which it is impossible to carry out effectively in detail through an unwieldy and badly managed centralised authority.~~

(b) Transportation Planning

(i) General

• Sydney Area Transportation Study

Transportation needs and facilities throughout Sydney Region, without detailed regard to particular facilities within the Metropolitan Central Area.

• The NSW Urban and Regional Transportation Advisory Committee

Coordination and advice to the Government on transportation.





- . The Public Transport Commission of New South Wales  
Planning, construction, financing and operation of State-wide rail, bus and ferry services.
- . The NSW Minister for Transport, The Hon. Milton Morris, MLA  
Carries Ministerial responsibility for each of the above three bodies, as well as the Department of Motor Transport. Is sincere and can be imaginative, but has no Ministerial staff and must rely on the quasi-independent technical bodies he nominally supervises.

(ii) Roads

- . The NSW Department of Main Roads  
Planning, design, construction and maintenance of the State system of freeways, highways, trunk, main and secondary roads.
- . The NSW Department of Motor Transport  
Control of registration, etc., of motor vehicles and taxis, traffic control and management.
- . The Police Traffic Branch - Police Department  
Traffic management and control, parking policies and controls.
- . Local Government Authorities  
Planning, design, construction and maintenance of local roads. The Local Government Act has recently been amended to restrict the powers of Councils to close local streets to through traffic and subject them to the veto of the Minister for Local Government.
- . The NSW Deputy Premier, Minister for Local Government and Minister for Highways, The Hon. Sir Charles Cutler, MLA.  
Sir Charles remains responsible for the non-planning functions of Local Government and remains the Minister to whom reports the quasi-independent Commissioner and Department of Main Roads. (It is believed that Sir Charles intends to retire as soon as practicable. It is believed that the Premier, Sir Robert Askin, also wishes to retire by the end of 1974.)



(iii) Parking

. Local Government Authorities

Planning, design, construction and maintenance of on and off street parking areas and stations.

. The City of Sydney Parking Advisory Committee and its equivalent in other Local Government Areas

Brings together local government and other authorities concerned with parking policies and provisions in local areas.

THE MOST EFFECTIVE, ACTIVE AND THEREFORE MOST GENERALLY INFLUENTIAL, ALTHOUGH NOT NECESSARILY THE MOST ULTIMATELY POWERFUL, OF THESE AUTHORITIES IN THE FIELDS NOTED ARE CURRENTLY ASSESSED AS :-

. Central area planning and development control

1. The Builders Labourers Federation, and its associated "advisory" bodies.
2. The Council of the City of Sydney, and other Local Councils.
3. State Planning Authority (soon to be the Planning and Environment Commission).

. Public Transport

1. Public Transport Commission
2. Sydney Area Transportation Study (This order may be reversed on publication of the SATS Report)
3. The Urban and Regional Transportation Advisory Committee

. Roads

1. The Builders Labourers Federation, and its associated "advisory" bodies.
2. Department of Main Roads
3. Sydney Area Transportation Study
4. The Urban and Regional Transportation Advisory Committee
5. Local Government Authorities

. Parking

1. The Council of the City of Sydney
2. The Police Traffic Branch
3. The City of Sydney Parking Advisory Committee
4. The Urban and Regional Transportation Advisory Committee



#### 4. POLICIES AND PLANS, EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT

##### (a) Planning and Development Control

###### 1. The Builder's Labourers Federation

- Explicit . Merely acts on "requests" from "residents" groups to veto grossly offensive projects, until new participatory and environmentally sensitive planning and development control attitudes and procedures are adopted by all authorities.
- Implicit . Wants to hasten end of industrial capitalist system, usher in social and political revolution.

###### 2. Sydney City Council

- Explicit . The 1971 City of Sydney Strategic Plan (S4), the 16 integral policies and 83 Action priorities.
- Explicit . Council's Floor Space Ratio Code (S5). This has begun to erode previously sacrosanct high FSRs, and has succeeded in achieving the preservation of several historic buildings by use of the "transfer" of FSR technique. Unfortunately, the Code was only devised and adopted just as the central city office boom was collapsing, and few new major development applications have been subjected to it.
- Implicit . Council Aldermen have implicitly agreed that Urban Systems Corporation's current review and revision of the FSR Code will incorporate drastic reductions in Maximum FSR particularly outside the Tank Stream Precinct A1 of the City, and will foreshadow drastic reductions in commercial zonings, in favour of encouragement of residential development generally throughout the City.
- Explicit . Council's Parking Code (S6). The Council's Parking Policy Control Code has been enthusiastically received and accepted as of "biblical" status by representatives of those authorities who had laboured on the City of Sydney Parking Advisory Committee for decades to no effect. It is rigorously enforced, sometimes too much so, by the Council, and supported by both political parties. Council particularly likes the cash contributions it exacts from developers. The



1971 City Strategic Plan recommendation that parking meter charges be doubled has recently been implemented. Specific projects to provide parking stations adjacent to the Western bypass distributor, in order to assist the pedestrianisation of the CBD Core, however, have not yet materialised.

Explicit . The Gazetted Planning Scheme Ordinance and Maps (S3)

Implicit, becoming Explicit

- . Councils 32 Action Plans (S7), as they are gradually adopted and implemented. These indicate the gradually increasing heed the Council is paying to the advice of its planning consultants and its new City Planning Department, and the Council's increasing sensitivity to public opinion, made more acute by the actions of the BLF. Aldermen have learnt much about city planning since 1970. Since the collapse of the building boom in 1972, less subject to pressure by developers, and in 1973, finally agreed to abandon the SPA's 1969 Woolloomooloo Plan and to act as recommended firstly by the 1971 City Strategic Plan, which recommendations were patiently persisted with by the new Council City Planning Department.

Implicit . The majority Civic Reform group of Aldermen face Local Government elections in late September, 1974, under the leadership of a "moderate", pro-planning Lord Mayor. They will, over the months to September, attempt to finalise and adopt as many "popular" action plans as possible, and can be expected to increasingly support more radical measures for :-

- \* new residential development, including a component of low income housing (preferably not too much in the swinging Fitzroy Ward);
  - \* preservation of buildings of historic and architectural interest;
  - \* more major steps towards the pedestrianisation of the CBD Core, and carriageway narrowings or closures throughout the City;
- They can be expected to cooperate well in trying to implement some Commonwealth Government policies, particularly as seems now to be happening in the 'Loo. Some Civic Reform Aldermen feel that the Commonwealth Government perhaps understands their problems better than does the State Government and State authorities.



### 3. State Planning Authority

- Explicit . Sydney Region Outline Plan (S2)  
Implicit . Limitation of growth in central area by whatever means possible, wherever opportunities occur.

### 4. NSW Housing Commission

- Explicit . Complete redevelopment of central area housing areas as in Waterloo (Municipality of South Sydney)  
Implicit . To date, unresponsive to changes in public opinion, and defends its traditional modes of thought and action.

## (b) Transport Planning

### 1. Public Transport Commission

- Explicit . Upgrading of public transport serving the central area by means of improved signalling, more double deck carriages, busways and other operational techniques.  
Implicit . Most interested in State-wide and metro freight services, regards metro passenger services as unfortunately necessary evil.

### 2. Sydney Area Transportation Study

- (Explicit . Upgrading and general improvement of public transport (S8)  
(  
not (Explicit . Construct bypass or circumferential freeways (S8)  
yet (Explicit . Proposed new transport coordination body (S8)  
public (Implicit . Tries to please everyone, from DURD to DMR,  
( but resigned to fact that in present situation, this  
( is impossible.

### 3. Department of Main Roads

- Explicit . Retention of radial inner-urban freeways and distributor roads (S3 and S11).  
Implicit . To date, unresponsive to changes in public opinion, and defends its traditional modes of thought and action.



5. STUDIES, PLANS AND POLICIES IN PREPARATION OR EMERGING

These have been covered in earlier sections of this Brief Report: they are integrated with Section 2, ESSENTIAL BIBLIOGRAPHY; Section 3, RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITIES; and Section 4, PLANS AND POLICIES, EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT.

6. IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES - DIFFICULTIES & CONFLICTS

Many separate Government Departments and Authorities are responsible for their own policies with little or no regard to policies made by other Departments which may influence or be influenced by their own policies. For example, the Minister for Transport has constituted a group known as the Urban and Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (URTAC) which consists of :-

Chief Commissioner, Public Transport Commission  
Commissioner for Main Roads  
Commissioner for Motor Transport  
Chairman, State Planning Authority  
Assistant Commissioner of Police (Traffic)  
Under Secretary to the Minister of Transport  
A representative from the Treasury

This Committee debates issues referred to it by the Minister but the extent to which it reaches cohesive decisions is conjectural. It would appear that few if any of the people on the Committee have any real appreciation of the interaction between land use and transportation and the planning conclusions and policies that might be derived therefrom.

Generally, the members of the Committee are completely preoccupied with the problems and policies of their own Departments ~~and give only~~ *rather* ~~lip service to the need for~~ *than to broad* an overall transportation policy.

The Public Transport Commission operates rail, bus and ferry services, and has its own revenue sources, but is saddled with a heavy capital debt. Worthwhile improvements that would improve efficiency tend to be stifled by the Unions, because any such improvements could mean at least a gradual reduction of the labour force. Now that bus, rail and ferry operations are under the one Commission, it is expected that some rationalisation of services and fare structures will occur, particularly following the publication, even if not the formal adoption, of the SATS Report by the State Government. Technical capability on planning matters is generally poor, particularly in the Bus Division, but there are some noteworthy exceptions in the Rail Division. The degree of cooperation with other Departments and Councils, once notoriously bad before the Commission amalgamated the Railways Department and the Department of Government Transport (buses), has improved since the formation of the Commission.