The Retreat from Public Planning in Melbourne

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As the focus of western politics shifted sharply to the right during the 1980s and 1990s, planning became one of the many casualties of the trend towards reducing the size and scope of government, privatisation and using economic efficiency criteria to determine public policy. As a result, the social and environmental dimensions of planning often became sidelined in favour of economic growth goals and market principles.

This paper examines the shift towards market-led urban policy and planning practice in Melbourne, Australia during the 1980s and 1990s. In the context of the emergence of neo-liberalism there has been a retreat from public planning and the pursuit of social and environmental goals in shaping the city.

An example of a Victorian State Government policy for the Melbourne metropolitan area known as the District Centre Policy will be examined to illustrate the shift towards market led planning over recent decades. The study shows how in Melbourne market driven goals became increasingly prioritised in urban policy and planning practice over non-market (social and environmental) goals. It is argued that the purpose and process of planning does not necessarily require the exclusion of social and environmental goals despite the pressure for governments to become more entrepreneurial.

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Introduction

There has been a paradigm shift in the philosophy and practice of planning since the post-war period (Davoudi 2000) which has lead to a crisis of legitimation in planning theory and practice over recent decades. In the Australian context, Gleeson and Low (2000a: 174) argue that "in practice, planning has been outsourced, marketised and stripped of the knowledge and confidence that informed its founders" and is therefore in need of 'revaluing' and 'reinstating'. This is certainly the case in Melbourne. This paper will examine some of the key influences reshaping the role of planning policy and practice by focusing on a metropolitan planning policy for district centres in Melbourne from the 1980s to the current period. The analysis shows how planning in Melbourne has become dominated by market driven goals such as development facilitation and deregulation of the planning system at the expense of social and environmental goals. Over time it has become broadly accepted that market-led planning is inevitable and therefore beyond the control of policy makers. This paper argues that planning decisions are a matter of political choice and there are always alternative choices to prioritising market goals. It is critically important to challenge the shift to market-led planning if issues of environmental sustainability and social equity are to be seriously addressed.

The first section will briefly outline some of the major influences shifting the focus of planning in many western nations towards market principles and economic efficiency and away from non-market goals such as social equity and environmental sustainability. The second section will examine the District Centre Policy in Melbourne from its development in 1980 to its demise in the 1990s. The story of this policy illustrates the shift towards prioritising market-goals in planning. The third section will examine the revival of activity centre planning under the current Labor Government as part of its metropolitan strategy, Melbourne 2030. The conclusion will draw together some of the key lessons that can be learned if the shift towards market-led planning is to be challenged.

The Shift Towards Market-led Planning

In the post-war period planning became institutionalised and legitimated as a "systemised social scientific process" where the planner was the expert who applied scientific rational methods to analyse and order land (Hall 1996);(Dear 2000). Planning was primarily a technical or regulatory function of government for the purpose of ordering land use. The primary role of the state and the planner as expert was central to the notion that planning ought to operate in the "public interest" (Sandercock 1998). During the 1960s and 1970s planning was influenced by the "rise of populism" brought about by the surge in participatory democratic politics (Dear 2000). The ideology of state paternalism in planning was challenged by the myriad of community and interest groups that emerged to fight against large scale state planning initiatives (e.g. freeways and inner city urban renewal programs) (Davidoff 1965);(Pahl 1970). The state came under pressure to include public participation as a key element of its planning process. This necessity to make planning a more inclusive process reflected a growing understanding that planning was a complex area of public policy, which had implications for social justice and environmental quality. Rather than a single 'public interest' which was determined by the expert planner, the planner was now required to work with multiple 'publics' with a diversity of needs and interests [(Sandercock 1998),(Fincher and Jacobs 1998)]. The notion of a deliberative and collaborative planner emerged where planning ought to be about debate and making choices [(Healey 1997; Forester 1999)]. In theory, planning ought not be driven by the expert planners and the goals of government, but be a result of a process of debate involving the community. In practice, the

results vary from place to place. There is an ongoing contest between the many interests involved in the planning process from community groups to developers to government agencies. The following identifies some of the broad influences shaping the context in which planning as a political activity is occurring across many western nations and cities.

Two major factors that have influenced planning policy and practice over recent decades are economic globalisation and neo-liberalism (Stilwell 1997; Scott 2000; Gleeson and Low 2000b). The combination of economic globalisation and deregulation has fundamentally challenged the role of the state as regulator, and 'instrument of social reform (Considine and Painter 1997; Self 1999; Gleeson and Low 2000a). The emergence of economic rationalist principles in Australian politics has seen a trend towards reducing the size and scope of government, privatisation of public utilities and functions and using economic efficiency criteria to determine public policy. Bell (1997) commented on Australia that "for a country with relatively statist political economy traditions, the transformation in political economy along neo-liberal or 'economic rationalist' lines that has occurred in the last two decades marks an extraordinary turnaround". He went on to say that "all advanced capitalist economies have experienced tendencies towards neo-liberal policy convergence since the 1970s, particularly at the macroeconomic level" (Bell 1997:1). The implications of this shift has meant that the role of government has become explicitly about creating the right business climate and for itself to become more like a business enterprise or a 'market bureaucracy'(Considine 1996). The effect of this changing role of government for planning has been the increasing priority given to development facilitation and economic growth often at the expense of public participation and social and environment goals.

The emergence of the right in western politics, strongly influenced by the Thatcher and Reagan administrations, saw the rise of a number of ideologically driven claims during the 1980s in Australia which by the 1990s had become virtually accepted truths. In the State of Victoria (Melbourne is its capital city), it was argued that there was no other alternative but to facilitate the market - an argument which severed any notion that the government could challenge or regulate the expansion of capital (Tasman Institute and Institute of Public Affairs 1991). Over the course of two decades, planning as an activity of the state shifted from being about the achievement of important social and environmental goals to prioritising private sector investment decisions, city competition and development facilitation. This rise of urban entrepreneurialism has been well documented over recent years in urban policy and planning literature (Kearns and Philo 1993; Healey, Cameron et al. 1995; Griffiths 1998; Hall and Hubbard 1998; Oatley 1998). The combination of economic globalisation and neo-liberalism that has pervaded politics and planning in many nations and states has fuelled the argument that there is 'no alternative' but to prioritise the market (Stilwell 1997). This has certainly been the case in Melbourne.

Choosing the Market: the Rise and Fall of the District Centre Policy

Melbourne's District Centre Policy (DCP) has been chosen for analysis as it provides an excellent illustration of how State Government planning policy and practice has shifted away from government intervention for the pursuit of a range of important social, environmental and economic objectives and towards a market-led approach to shaping the city during the 1980s and 1990s.

In 1980 the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW)[1] produced a *Metropolitan Strategy*, which had as its key concerns rising fuel prices, lower rates of population and economic growth, changes in employment levels and patterns and shifts in community attitudes

(MMBW 1980). Along with the four E's (energy, efficiency, employment and environment) used to analyse future growth options for the city, a fifth criteria was added – equity – which concerned the equitable distribution of community resources. A policy was developed which focused on maintaining activity levels at the central business district (CBD) and concentrating new growth at twenty suburban 'district centres'.

While the concept of concentrating activities in suburban nodes had been around in Melbourne since the first Metropolitan Planning Scheme (MMPS) in 1954, it had been largely ignored during the period of rapid growth up until the 1970s. By the end of the 1970s, with the push to consolidate city growth, the MMBW was intent on renewing interest in the DCP, arguing that much stronger political support was needed for it to work. It was argued that more government intervention was required to make the centres work, to attract development to centres and to limit development away from centres. The sorts of advantages in concentrating activities at selected suburban centres were listed as: better use of fixed rail networks; the reduction of single purpose trips; equity of access; an increase in local trade and job opportunities (synergies); providing a social focus; a reduction in fuel consumption; and the reduction of congestion in the CBD (MMBW 1980). It was determined that the concentration of community facilities and entertainment, shopping, employment and servicing activities at selected suburban centres, as well as maintaining activity levels in the CBD would be the most appropriate strategy. The role and implementation mechanisms of the Board and the State would be to: assist in land assembly; use planning controls (a District Centre Zone) to increase housing densities around the selected centres; concentrate retailing and office functions at these centres (unless developers could demonstrate reasons why they could not locate at a centre); improve public transport accessibility; and locate government offices at the centres (MMBW 1980:55). Detailed urban design plans for each centre would be developed and funding was allocated to public authorities for land assembly and carrying out environment improvements (Logan 1986). An implementation report for the Strategy was released (MMBW 1981)and a subsequent Amendment 150 to the Scheme carried out. Amendment 150 also proposed that the MMPS would explicitly state planning objectives and suggested ways in which local government, other authorities and the general public should get involved in metropolitan planning (McLoughlin 1992).

When the Cain Labor Government came to power in Victoria in 1982, it brought full political support to the concept of the DCP in the approval of Amendment 150 to the MMPS. Prior to this, the MMBW had had no real regulatory power to implement the policy itself. Support from the Labor Government for the DCP was strongly driven by the concern to improve public transport usage and the provision and access to services along with the concern that large retailers concentrating in large car-based centres would make smaller retailers and traditional shopping centres less viable. The Government's objectives were clearly influenced by social democratic concerns for the management of urban growth. McLoughlin applauded the Government's attempt at linking socio-economic matters and spatial forms (McLoughlin 1992). "Up to 12 District Centres will be directly connected by rail to the CBD, and, in turn, will be supported by smaller converted centres. All commercial development will be brought under proper planning control. Melbourne will become less car-dependent" (Town and Country Planning Association 1982).

The policy came under significant pressure in the mid 1980s. In practice, large retailers had continued to locate at car-based shopping centres and highway retailing was beginning to emerge. The Government's decision to allow the large retailer Coles Myer to locate its headquarters at a free-standing car based site was seen as a critical blow to the credibility of the DCP (Kilmartin 1986). Scheme amendments were 'fast-tracked' as "ministers pushed almost any major development proposals through" which resulted in the downfall of the district centre

policy (McLoughlin 1992). During this time competition between Melbourne and Sydney to attract investors was increasingly on the agenda. The State Government was particularly concerned with improving Melbourne's image as a place to invest and competing with Sydney was a central factor in the decision to bypass the DCP and allow the Coles development to occur. "The Melbourne/Sydney thing is a very real consideration……..We should never have allowed it, but the Minister came into Cabinet and said Coles/Myer will go up to Sydney if we don't give them this permit……We were bluffed, we weren't bluffed on many but we were bluffed on that one. That was the threat….The other one was the RACV headquarters, they both blew a hole in the district centre policy" (Interview with former Victorian Premier John Cain 11/9/95 by Robin Goodman and Nicholas Low).

The loss of credibility for the DCP led to criticisms about planning in general. It was argued that conventional planning was powerless to affect real change in the urban system and that the real power lay with the private sector and beyond the realm of local control. A Melbourne planning academic argued that the State could "do little to regulate large firms, which operate at a national scale and can threaten capital flight" (Logan 1986:13). Not only was this type of critique consistent with the rhetoric of globalisation and the powerless state (Hirst and Thompson 1996) but also the general wave of dissent against the 'master-plan' mentality of conventional planning (Sandercock 1998). Two claims began to emerge, the first that planners are powerless to influence private sector locational decisions (i.e. powerless in the face of capital) and second, that conventional planning methods and practices are inadequate to the task of addressing complex urban problems in times of economic restructuring. Over the coming years in Victoria these arguments were used to justify the inadequacy and failure of planning itself as a government exercise.

By the late 1980s the Victorian Labor Government had become increasingly pre-occupied with restructuring government along corporatist lines and entrepreneurial in its approach to urban development issues. Despite the strong push towards deregulation at the Federal level at the time, the Victorian Government maintained its interventionist style. This would later be used to justify its failure. In August 1987 the State Government, which had taken over the MMBW's planning role, released *Shaping Melbourne's Future, The Governments Metropolitan Policy* (Ministry for Planning and Environment 1987). While it was praised for being wider in scope than anything used previously, it was criticised for omitting to consult with any community representatives (Royal Australian Planning Institute (RAPI) 1987). McLoughlin describes the "super glossy" document as the "high point of Cainsean corporatism" (McLoughlin 1992). The concept of activity centres was introduced with this Strategy which marked a significant change of policy. "The new emphasis was not on bolstering strategies to achieve environmental or social objectives, but on creating opportunities for economic growth and reclassifying existing centres to more accurately reflect their roles at that time" (McNabb 2001). The practical framework for emphasising 'activity centres' was spelt out in the April 1989 document called *Metropolitan Activity Centres* (Ministry for Planning and Environment 1989). The document acknowledged that the private sector had continued to invest in free-standing car based centres and decided to work with local government to better integrate new developments around those centres. There was little mention of prohibited further development to freestanding centres. The notion of 'clustering' activities and the emphasis on business and technology precincts reflected the strong economic development priority of the government. What that meant for the district centre policy and planning in general was a need for more 'flexibility' and methods of 'encouraging' development, rather than regulating and restricting development. This new emphasis meant that planning and the DCP were being reshaped to accommodate private sector locational decisions and private transport usage, rather than being pro-active

in actually affecting those preferences and trends, for the purposes of achieving environmental and equity goals.

After less than a decade of implementation the Victorian Government commissioned a review of the DCP in 1990. One of the key findings from the review was that the State Government's support for and promotion of the policy had been ad hoc, fragmented and under-resourced (Moodie 1991). It recommended that in future the Government should restate and widen its commitment to the DCP, in terms of both resource allocation and awareness by all departments and agencies. The need for support from the Ministry of Transport was raised as an important issue (i.e. transport and planning were in separate state departments). It argued that all agencies of Government needed to adopt the policy and give it priority if it was going to work. Despite earlier criticisms that the policy had failed, the review argued that at that stage in 1991 it was too early in the life of the policy to fully assess its potential for success (Moodie 1991). The validity of the findings was confirmed in a more recent review, which stated that "the Moodie report is a significant document in the history of 'centres' policies, for the breadth and thoroughness of its analysis. Its conclusions debunked the widespread 'urban myth' that centres policies had failed" (McNabb 2001). Unfortunately the findings and recommendations had little impact on the future life of the DCP. The last two strategic planning policies produced by the Labor Government, both released in 1992, had replaced the concept of district centres with activity centres as part of the broad aims of environmental sustainability and urban consolidation (Department of Planning and Housing 1992). It was clear that planning was to play much less of a regulatory role and more of a facilitation role in shaping the growth of the city. While some of the review's recommendations were supported and reiterated (Department of Planning and Housing 1992), none could be implemented as it was in the same year that there was a change of government.

In 1992, a Conservative Liberal Government (led by Premier Jeffrey Kennett) came to power in Victoria amidst a backdrop of an economic recession. The new Government appointed an Advisory Committee to restructure the planning system. On the issue of Metropolitan Urban Centres, they proposed, "a new metropolitan urban centres policy for Melbourne which reflects both market preferences and community interests" (Department of Planning and Development 1993:19). They recommended that, "the State's task in future will be to encourage viable development in centres through a more dynamic policy framework. This will require a shift from control to facilitation" (Department of Planning and Development 1993). The report rejected the notion of designating centres, stating that the old district centres should be treated no differently from other major metropolitan centres. In the Minister's 1993 Statement, he supported the Committee's recommendations and the new aspatial "metro centres" concept was borne.

The District Centre Policy, as had been defined by the MMBW and endorsed by Labor in the early 1980s, was formally abolished. While the shift towards a more aspatial non-regulatory policy had already begun with Labor in the early 1990s, the Kennett Government's approach served to abandon the notion that planning had any role beyond facilitating development. This was reflected in the Liberal Government's first and only metropolitan strategy plan *Living Suburbs: A Policy for Metropolitan Melbourne in the 21st Century*, (Department of Infrastructure 1995). A government planner commented "there has not been a lot of acceptance for *Living Suburbs*, it was seen as more of a coffee table document – so in that sense there has been a bit of a vacuum" (Department of Infrastructure (DOI) planner, authors interview 18/4/00).

In 1996, a government appointed review of retail development policy was carried out which argued that clustering activities was in the "interests of infrastructure efficiency, equitable access, environmental concerns, and the creation of a healthy sense of community"

(Government of Victoria 1996). It also argued that every shopping centre should be adequately served by public transport. The report explicitly supported the policy principles originally outlined in 1980. Despite this endorsement, the Panel report offered little guidance as to how such policy principles might actually be achieved or planned for. It rejected the notion of designating centres or adopting any prescriptive hierarchy framework for centres (i.e.. regional, sub-regional, etc). The tools for regulating land use had been stripped down and discredited[2] which meant that there were limited effective means of achieving important planning goals.

The shift towards a laissez-faire approach to the District Centre Policy and to planning in general, was consistent with the ideology of the Government in the 1990s. The essence of the original District Centre Policy was that by directing activities to locate around public transport nodes (rail/bus interchanges), access to services would improve (improving equity), the number of trips made by car would decline (improving environmental sustainability), and suburban populations would be provided with mixed use community centres (improving social quality). By the 1990s, both Labor and Liberal Governments had questioned and then rejected the concept of District Centres, principally because the State was rejecting the notion that it could direct private sector locational decisions and therefore distort the market. While some commentators and reports throughout the 1980s and 1990s had supported the principles and goals of the Policy, the criticisms of it became more prevalent (a response to Ministerial interventions which undermined the DCP) and served to justify the State's claim that it was no longer possible to pursue a 'designated' District Centres Policy. The emergence of an aspatial Activity Centre Policy in the 1990s, which considered all clusters of activity (regardless of mix or access to public transport) as 'activity centres', was a clear indication of planning policy developed to fit with the status quo rather than trying to influence the shape of the city to meet social or environmental goals (i.e. reactive rather then pro-active). The shift away from regulating private sector decisions emerged in the 1980s justified by the fear that capital could relocate (as reflected in the Coles Myer case) and the assumption that master-planning was inadequate to the task of dealing with a complex urban system (as reflected in criticisms of the MMBW policy). By the 1990s, however, the election of a neo-liberal state government completely eradicated any notion that planning ought to be about anything but development facilitation arguing that there was no other choice but to prioritise the market (Tasman Institute and Institute of Public Affairs 1991) .

The following section examines the latest incarnation of the activity centre policy in the metropolitan strategy for Melbourne released in 2002.

Restoring a balanced agenda?: The Revival of Activity Centre Planning in Melbourne 2030

After taking office in 1999, the Bracks Labor Government began work on a metropolitan strategy for Melbourne, a draft of which was released in October 2002 – *Melbourne 2030: Planning for Sustainable Growth*. Although the policy is currently in a period of review (to be finalised in 2004) it is already having an impact on development decisions particularly around activity centres (Millar 17/3/04). While the Government undertook a three year consultation program, the process has been described as token and its outcomes illegitimate (Mees 2003). The strategy is based around a notion of sustainable development and managing Melbourne's growth by controlling the outward expansion of the city and concentrating future growth in to activity centres. Of the 620,000 new dwellings projected over the next thirty years, the strategy suggests a target of 41% of proposed household distribution to be directed into activity centres, 31% to greenfield sites and 28% to dispersed and non-urban development (Department of

Infrastructure 2002). Activity centres are therefore a key element of the strategy and their success underpins the entire plan (Goodman 2004).

Activity centres are defined as places that, "provide the focus for services, employment and social interaction in cities and towns. They are where people shop, work, meet, relax and live. Usually well-served by public transport, they range in size and intensity of use from local neighbourhood strip centres to traditional universities and major regional malls. They are not just shopping centres, they are multifunctional" (Department of Infrastructure 2002; 2002b). While the definition is similar to that developed in the 1990s, particularly in the previous *Living Suburbs* document, *Melbourne 2030* has similar intentions to those listed in the MMBW's 1980 *Metropolitan Strategy.* They are to restrict out-of-centre development, reduce the number of private motorised vehicle trips by concentrating activities, encourage economic activity and business synergies, broaden the mix of uses, provide community focus points, improve access by means other than the car and support the development of a network of public transport routes called the Principal Public Transport Network (Department of Infrastructure 2002; 2002b).

The strategy claims to have identified a network of over 1000 activity centres across metropolitan Melbourne and categorised them into 5 types: the CBD; 25 'principal'; 79 'major'; 10 'specialised' and ; over 900 'neighbourhood centres'. The top 115 centres have been selected primarily on the basis of retail floorspace with little distinction between privately owned car-based shopping malls and traditional shopping strips. While naming or designating centres directs future state and local funding and planning initiatives, the inclusion of so many centres is likely to reduce the impact of designation. More importantly by including large car-based shopping malls within the Principal Centres category, these centres will become key sites for future development and housing. The environmentally damaging nature of car-based shopping malls and their negative impact on the economic viability of surrounding smaller traditional mixed use centres has been recognised by planning policies all over Europe, and such centres are frequently the reason for the development of centres policies (Goodman 2004). This in fact, was a key justification for the District Centre Policy in the early 1980s. The head of the department responsible for *Melbourne 2030* has argued that the sustainability of car-based shopping malls will improve as they will be required to "promote public transport access" (Neilson 2003).

Melbourne 2030 recognises that out-of-centre development will need to be restricted. It is not clear how this will be achieved. The control, or lack of control, of out-of centre development was a critical factor in the downfall of the District Centre Policy. *Melbourne 2030* states that it "discourages out-of-centre development by giving preference to in-centre and edge-of-centre locations for new developments. Such out-of-centre proposals will only be considered where it can be convincingly demonstrated that the proposed use or development is of net benefit to the community in the region served by the proposal." (Department of Infrastructure 2002; 2002b). Mees (2003) contends that this is exactly the same approach to regulation adopted in *Living Suburbs (1995)*. Net community benefit is not clearly defined in the draft implementation plan, and if not tightened up would clearly give rise to plenty of interpretation in appeal hearings before the adjudicating Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) (Goodman 2004). One of the proposed actions is to develop performance criteria for each centre. It is stated "over time each centre will be assessed in terms of its own ability to achieve sustainability, and of its contribution to the network of activity centres", (Department of Infrastructure 2002b). Of the 19 proposed performance criteria (listed under social, economic and environmental headings) only three, one under of each of the headings, relate directly to changes in transport usage. There is no indication at this stage that there will be any weighting given to any individual criteria over any other. A car based centre with little or no public transport could rate highly on 14 out of 19 criteria, giving it a very high

performance rating on criteria meant to address sustainability (Goodman 2004). This raises a key issue about the strategy's conception of environmental sustainability, one which Mees vigorously challenges in his criticisms of its treatment of transport policy and the priority given to the road network above public transport (Mees 2003). He argues that the importance given to the issue of improving public transport in the public consultation process had little bearing on its importance in the strategy. He also argues that key recommendations from consultant reports commissioned by the Government were rejected in the final draft, including a recommendation to prevent the expansion of car-based malls and prevent the expansion of the freeway network (Mees 2003).

Conclusion – Towards a more balanced agenda

What can be drawn from this experience of district/activity centre planning in Melbourne over the last two decades and what can be learned if the shift towards market led planning is to be challenged? Melbourne has progressively opted for a less regulatory approach to planning over time. The District Centre Policy lost credibility during the 1980s due to a lack of co-ordinated government support and because government made decisions to allow private developers to locate outside designated areas. Despite these weaknesses, there was a call to renew support for the Policy in the early 1990s. The election of the neo-liberal Kennett Government in 1992 put the interest of the private sector first, rejecting the notion that the state had a role to play in planning for environmental and social goals and reduced planning to development facilitation. The abandonment of the District Centre Policy is explained by the almost wholesale acceptance, in Melbourne, of neo-liberal claims including the assumption that market led planning was the only alternative. The recent revival of activity centre planning in *Melbourne 2030* marks a minor challenge to that assumption and some have argued only rhetorically (Mees 2003). While the concepts of sustainability and social equity have been used to justify concentrating activity around key centres, the method of implementation and regulation leave much to be desired. While car-based centres were explicitly excluded from the 1980 District Centre Policy, government decisions that overruled the policy allowed those centres to continue to grow. This was viewed as government failure to properly implement the DCP. Those decisions were also used to justify the argument that government could no longer regulate private sector locational decisions. The Liberal Kennett Government explicitly rejected designating centres for growth and therefore any of the key planning goals that were associated with it such as reducing car usage and improving access to services. This was market-led planning by definition.

While the current Labor Government's metropolitan strategy *Melbourne 2030* has revived important planning goals, it is not clear how or if they will be implemented. Encouraging growth at Melbourne's largest car-based shopping malls would appear to contradict a core reason for developing a centres policy, which is to improve environmental sustainability through reducing car trips. By identifying so many centres for development, including privately owned shopping malls, the Government can avoid making the same mistakes as the previous Labor Government (i.e. it can now justifiably encourage development at privately owned car based centres). Using the current performance criteria those centres can appear to rate highly as sustainable centres. This does not represent a challenge to market-led planning. While it is too early to judge how the strategy will be implemented its legitimacy as a process has been seriously challenged (Mees 2003).

There are a number of lessons that can be learned from this review of activity centre planning in Melbourne, if market-led planning is going to be seriously challenged. First,

planning must involve a legitimate process of public participation. The community driven planning processes adopted by the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) in its regional plans is a good example of an approach which contrasts with the top-down corporatist approach adopted in the late 1980s and 1990s and more recently in Melbourne. Public participation requires political commitment from various levels of government to make it contribute successfully to the final planning objectives and outcomes. Ongoing monitoring (a key part of the GVRD's Livable Region Strategy (Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) 1996) is also critical to ensuring that government and planning policy remains accountable to the public.

Second, the regulatory arm of planning needs to be developed and enforced if implementation of key policy goals is to be achieved. The introduced a performance based approach to planning in the 1990s was justified on the basis that it would provide a stronger focus on strategic policy and simplify and speed-up the planning process. Recent analysis suggests that the opposite has occurred (Buxton, Goodman et al. 2003). It is argued that the current planning system requires greater precision in strategy and policy and clarity and certainty in its regulations (ie. provisions and zones). Policy statements need to clear and direct and adequately supported by a regulatory system that can ensure they are carried through to implementation.

Third, achieving environmental sustainability through land-use and transport measures involves amongst other things a co-ordinated effort on the part of government to integrate both forms of planning. If land-use planning aims to achieve the reduction of car based trips then transport planning that focuses on continuing to fund freeway developments would completely contradict such a goal.

To conclude, there has been a retreat from public planning in Melbourne in the 1980s and 1990s at the expense of important social and environmental goals. This has continued to a lesser extent in recent years, however, beneath the rhetoric the change may not be very significant. The top down model of planning adopted by the State Government in the 1980s became dominated by the political agenda that shifted to the right during a period of economic restructuring. The neo-liberal government in the 1990s made explicit its role as facilitator of the market. The current Labor government may be challenging that position only slightly as it attempts to maintain the status quo while also setting the task of achieving important social and environmental goals. If the current rhetoric of achieving environmental sustainability, social equity and government accountability is to become a reality there ought to be legitimate public consultation, greater certainty in regulations and rational integrated policy goals.

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Aim to draw together cross-disciplinary literature on urban entrepreneurialism - mapping the myriad ways in which new modes of governance are implicated in the economic, social and cultural transformation of western cities.

WHat is lacking is any sense of consensual nderstanding of how entrepreneurialism differs from previous forms of urban governance and local growth alliance or how it relates to the broader dynamics of advanced capitalism.

TO provide an introduction to the debates surrounding entrepreneurial governance.

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1 The Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works was the chief planning authority from 1949 until it was dismantled and its planning section was absorbed into the Ministry for Planning and Environment in 1985.

2 The Kennett Government made fundamental changes to the land use planning system during the 1990s which allowed for more discretion in planning decisions and significantly weakened the regulatory arm of planning [BUXTON, M., R. GOODMAN, et al. (2003). The Failed Experiment: The performance of the Victoria Planning Provisions and the new format planning schemes. Melbourne, School of Social Science and Planning, RMIT University.
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