

**Political factors in the rebuilding of mass transit:
an investigation of failure in Melbourne since 1970 through
comparisons with Perth and Vancouver**

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma, and to the best of my knowledge contains no material previously published or written by any other person except where due reference is given in the text.

The text has been edited by David Hudson of the Swinburne Institute for Social Research. This editing has addressed only style and grammar and not the substantive content.

John Stone
May 2008

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Abstract

The starting point for this thesis is the observation that per capita patronage on Melbourne's transit system declined rapidly after 1950 and has remained largely static since 1980. The aim is to understand why this was the case.

Using theoretical and empirical work to understand competing transport policy prescriptions and practice in western cities, it is clear that Melbourne's transit performance is disappointing given city's extensive rail and tram systems, and is not explained by the physical character of the urban region or by the absence of knowledge of alternative policies. The broad hypothesis in this research is that Melbourne's transit performance is the result of political contention over transport policies since 1970.

To develop an analysis of this political contention, a conceptual model of the processes of 'challenge and resistance' surrounding contention over urban transport policy was developed. This was drawn from understandings of the economic power of business in urban politics; the influence of institutional path dependencies and the relative powers of central and local governments; and the nature of policy networks and their resistance to change.

The model recognises the importance 'windows of opportunity' for change that can occur when the legitimacy of existing urban transport policymakers is publicly challenged, and when this challenge is associated with change in the membership of urban governments and with new opportunities for proponents of alternative transport policies.

To determine the validity and relative importance of hypothesised explanations for Melbourne's transit performance, a comparative analysis was used. Perth and Vancouver were chosen for this analysis because they are similar to Melbourne on a range of relevant variables but show differences in broad approaches to transport and planning policy: differences that explain the variability in transit performance trends and in prospects for future improvement.

Economic conditions and patterns of parliamentary representation are similar in the three cities, but the early development of institutions for urban government saw the formation of stronger and more autonomous public authorities in Melbourne in the first half of the 20th century. This history, to some degree, shaped later formulation of transport policies in Melbourne.

In Melbourne and Perth, the modern institutional structures for urban government and management of transport systems are similar. Variations in transit performance are best explained by the striking differences in the behaviour of political entrepreneurs, leaders of transit management agencies, and civic action groups before and after the election of reformist governments in the early 1980s.

In Vancouver following the defeat of freeway proposals in the early 1970s, politicians and new professional appointees established a progressive planning policy network through decisive action. This network has maintained its influence through decades of conflict and is identified as the key factor in the relatively strong performance of transit in Greater Vancouver. It is based in institutions of local and regional government that exhibit some significant similarities and differences from those in Melbourne.

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Contents

1. Introduction	1
Explanatory model and hypothesis	3
Research methodology and outcomes	5
2. Transit use in Melbourne and the international urban transport debate.....	9
The decline and stagnation of transit use in Melbourne.....	10
Current understandings of the reasons for Melbourne’s transit performance	15
The content of policy debates on urban transport problems.....	17
Changing theory and practice in urban and transport planning.....	22
Transport and related urban-planning debates in Melbourne	29
Formulating the research question	33
3. Challenge and resistance: a model for policy change	35
How cities are governed: structure, agency and power – regime theory and its critics	36
Pluralist debates	36
Economic determinism and urban politics.....	37
Urban regime theory	42
Regime challenge and change.....	45
International use of urban regime theory	49
Regime theory: typology or analytic tool?.....	51
Critiques of regime theory	52
Understanding resistance to change: policy networks, institutions and path dependence	55
Policy networks.....	55
Institutionalists and other contemporary views of the policy process	59
Path dependence.....	62
Studying political influences on transport and urban planning practice.....	64
Analysis of policy discourse and path dependence.....	65
Case studies and theorising largely based on personal experience.....	66
Comparative studies.....	70
‘Challenge and resistance’: a conceptual model for investigating transport policy change.....	74
Explaining Melbourne’s transport outcomes using the ‘challenge and resistance’ model.....	77

4.	Choosing cities for comparative analysis	79
	Choice of analytic technique	79
	Choice of locations	81
	Focus of attention in each city	93
	Methods for acquiring the necessary detail in the descriptions of each city	93
5.	Broad environment for transport politics in the three cities	99
	The economies of the three cities	100
	Urban government in Melbourne, Perth and Vancouver	103
	Broad political structures	103
	Institutions of urban government	104
	Early patterns of governance	106
	Modern institutions of urban government	109
	Regional government	113
	Political leaders and business alliances	115
	Melbourne	117
	Perth	122
	Vancouver	123
	Conclusion	126
6.	Institutions and policies for transport and planning in the three cities	129
	Melbourne	130
	Transport in the pre-car city	130
	From the 1950s to the early 1970s	134
	The last decade of the Liberal Government: 1972-1982	135
	The period of ALP reform: 1982-1990	138
	The neo-liberal period: 1992 to the present	140
	Perth	142
	The pre-car city	142
	The roads consensus: 1950-1979	146
	The last years of the Liberals: 1979-1983	149
	The ALP reform years and beyond: 1983 to the present	149
	Vancouver	152
	Before the car	152
	Freeway contention: 1968-1972	155
	The first reform period: 1972-1975	157
	Contention between the province and the region: 1975-1990	159
	Cooperation re-established: 1990-2001	162
	Directions for the future in question: 2001 to the present	165
	Comparing institutions, outcomes and critical periods of contention over transport policy	166
	Conclusion	170

7. Actor groups in key periods of political contention: power relations, resources and strategies	173
Melbourne: the politicisation of transport policy formulation after 1969	174
Road planners and builders	174
Public transport agencies	176
The planning agency	179
Civic action groups	180
Unions	182
Melbourne: reform of transport management, 1980-1985	183
Road planners move to take over transit resources	183
Civic action against the Lonie proposals	185
The ALP reforms: Crabb's role as political entrepreneur	186
The response of 'pro-transit' civic action groups to the ALP reforms	193
The window closes: after 1985	196
Perth: reform takes hold, 1979-1993.....	201
Transport planners and their opponents: conflict over the Fremantle line...	201
The reform of transit management in Perth, 1983-1993	204
Building on success: transport policy in Perth after 1993	211
Vancouver: key periods in continuing contention, 1968-2007.....	214
The freeway fights: 1968-1972	214
The 'community' takes power: 1972 to 1975	218
Making SkyTrain a success: 1980	219
Establishing a new mandate for growth control and transit: 1990-1996	220
Translink and the 'Gateway': transit growth and continuing contention after 1996	221
Summary of the key differences in actor group behaviours and outcomes in the three cities	224
Road planners and builders	224
Transit operators and planners	225
Urban planners	226
Civic action groups	227
Political entrepreneurs.....	228
Conclusion	229
8. Conclusions	231
Explanations for Melbourne's transit performance.....	232
Actor group strategies and resources	232
The role of institutional structures for urban government and management of transport systems	235
Governing coalitions and broad economies	238
Does geography play a role?	239
Avenues for change in transport policy in Melbourne.....	240

Reviewing the basis for the ‘challenge and resistance’ model.....	241
Regime theory, governing coalitions and the difficulties faced by ‘challengers’	242
The significance of business interests to the transport policies of a governing coalition	245
Historical patterns of transport investment and urban development.....	247
Building political and institutional challenges: the conditions for changing urban transport policy.....	247
Future directions for research.....	249
References	251
Appendix: Interview subjects	275
Melbourne	275
Perth.....	278
Vancouver.....	279

Figures and Tables

Figures

Fig. 2.1: Annual per capita transit use in Melbourne from 1950 (unlinked trips)	11
Fig. 2.2: Annual per capita transit use in Melbourne from 1970 (unlinked trips)	12
Fig. 2.3: Policies for cars and transit, and their impact on improving transit mode share	18
Fig. 4.1: Recent trends in per capita transit use in Canadian cities.....	86
Fig. 4.2: Transit performance trends in Ottawa	89
Fig. 4.3: Transit performance trends in Vancouver	90
Fig. 4.4: Comparison of transit performance in Melbourne, Vancouver and Perth.....	92
Fig. 4.5: Mapping of key actor groups in Melbourne and important elements of the economic and social environment in which they operate	95
Fig. 5.1: Population of Greater Melbourne, Perth and Vancouver – 1901 to present...	102
Fig. 6.1: Map of Melbourne’s urban boundary, rail lines, freeways and key localities	131
Fig. 6.2: Map of Perth’s urban boundary, rail lines, freeways and key localities.....	143
Fig. 6.3: Map of Vancouver’s urban boundary, transit lines, freeways and key localities	153

Tables

Table 2.1: Average travel time for round trip to work in Canadian cities	20
Table 4.1: Average travel time for round trip to work in Canadian cities	87
Table 5.1: Governing parties, premiers and mayors: 1950 to the present.....	116
Table 6.1: Broad phases in transport politics in the three cities.....	171

1. Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to document and analyse the reasons for the failure to reverse the decline in transit use in Melbourne that began in the 1950s, despite the fact that transit improvement has been an objective of government policy since at least the mid-1970s.

The disappointing trend in transit use is seen as an indicator of the difficulty that Melbourne has faced in responding effectively to the challenges thrown up by the rising environmental, social and economic costs of its transport systems.

Early in its history, Melbourne built extensive suburban train and tram networks. These shaped the growing metropolis, creating patterns of settlement and movement that are still evident today, and were not dismantled in the post-war years, as was the case in many other cities. Despite these advantages, transit use since 1950 fell faster and further than in any other western city with the exception of Auckland. Transit use, measured in annual trips per head of population, reached a low point in 1980 and has remained virtually constant since then.

Internationally, governments and residents in developed cities generally welcomed the arrival of affordable cars in the 1950s. By the 1970s, the negative impacts of large-scale car use were more apparent. Public disquiet was often given political focus through opposition to intrusive road-building projects; in many cities this led to change in government rhetoric and stronger assertions of the need to improve the levels of transit use.

In Melbourne, there was popular opposition to freeways proposed in 1969 to bring traffic into the inner city. In 1981, there were strong protests against proposals for severe cuts to transit services. A reforming government took power in 1982 with a clear mandate to improve transit. Despite this, growth in transit use since 1980 has managed only to keep pace with the rise in population. At the time of writing, ambitious government targets for growth in transit use, announced in 2000, appear to have lost political momentum.

The reasons for the disappointing pattern of transit use would be immediately apparent if, as many still believe, the physical form of Melbourne is now so spread out that

greater transit use is impossible, or if no practical transport policies could be found that offered any hope for increased transit use.

The notion that Melbourne transit performance is an inevitable result of its physical form is demonstrably false. Comparative international data (Kenworthy and Laube 1999, 2001; Newman and Kenworthy 1989) shows substantial variation in transit performance among cities with similar physical characteristics. Detailed comparison of urban form and transit performance in Melbourne and Toronto (Mees 2000) shows that Melbourne's urban form is not the causal factor underlying its disappointing transit system performance.

The existence of technical transport policies that could be applied to Melbourne with reasonable expectations of delivering an improvement in transit use can be established from the theoretical and empirical considerations of urban transport policy of Vuchic (1999) and others.

Arguments about the failure of Melbourne to meet its potential for transit use are explored further in Chapter 2. This chapter outlines the prescriptions of modern urban transport policy researchers in the context of the historical development of urban planning theory and practice. It reveals two competing positions about the nature of the urban transport problem and two sets of largely incompatible ideas about the required content of urban transport policies and programs.

The first of these two competing positions on transport policy is based on a belief that the dominance of the car can, and should, be challenged. The second position argues that cars will continue to dominate urban transport and that freeway networks should be built to cater for this traffic.

This thesis is not an analysis of 'what needs to be done' to improve the performance of Melbourne's transport system – although a position on this question will emerge. Rather, it investigates the conflicts between different conceptions of the 'right' urban transport policy for Melbourne since the 1950s. It seeks to understand the nature of the city's urban transport policies by examining who won the policy conflicts and how they came to be successful. Such analysis is obviously important to the creation of strategies to improve transit use in Melbourne in the future, but Melbourne is not the only city facing huge difficulties in reducing the costs of its urban transport systems, and the

perspectives developed in this work are likely to be applicable in many other cities. The detailed research question to address this enquiry is formulated in Chapter 2.

Explanatory model and hypothesis

An explanatory model has been developed to help identify the factors that might contribute to the difficulties faced by so many cities in making the changes to urban policies that are required to increase transit use.

The theoretical basis for the model uses concepts from several different levels of political analysis.

The first level of analysis focuses on the impacts of the interplay between economic and political process in the government of cities. In this, the urban regime theorists have proved most useful. Regime theory recognises that the management of a modern city or region is complicated and fragmented, and uses a ‘social production’ conception of power to explain empirical observations of the alliances of politicians and business interests that are formed and held together over time in order to get things done (Stoker 1995; Stoker and Mossberger 1994; Stone 1989). This theory draws attention to the informal arrangements through which individuals and institutions form ‘governing coalitions’ to maintain cooperation over time in order to implement particular policy and program agendas. It also points out the many obstacles faced in mounting a challenge to an existing governing coalition or in expanding the range of policy options that a coalition is willing or able to consider when new problems emerge.

Notwithstanding these obstacles, there is evidence that the power of growth interests and the constraints of the global economy are not so strong that the outcomes of such challenges are predetermined. Successful challenges and new policy learnings are possible.

A finer level of political analysis is concerned with the processes of policy development within government. Here, the concepts of path dependency and policy networks, and the perspectives of institutionalists, are important. Ideas put forward by Rhodes and Marsh (1992), March and Olsen (1996) and Sabatier (1999) help to explain the tenacity of established policy positions and the ways that resistance to change is organised.

None of these various theoretical frameworks have been developed specifically for the investigation of political conflicts over transport policy. But, there is also extensive research that examines the political influences on transport and urban planning practice.

The theoretical grounding of this research is very diverse. Some researchers see the power of the market as an overwhelmingly positive force. Others use Habermas or Foucault as the basis for their analyses of distortions of democratic processes. Their methodologies are correspondingly wide-ranging. Some use discourse analysis techniques, but a less constrained narrative approach used by Bratzel (1999), Altshuler (1965) and others appears to be a more useful way to explore and explain transport outcomes both in individual cities and as part of comparative studies.

It is clear from the nature of urban transport policy options that conflict is generally based around decisions about large public and private investment. Choices are often mutually exclusive and so competition can be fierce and is characterised by a constant process of challenge and resistance. Successful challenges to dominant transport policies appear to require an initial crisis that weakens the political legitimacy of the existing governing coalition in relation to transport policies followed by sustained and skilful interventions both inside the institutions that manage these policies and in the wider political process.

In the concluding parts of Chapter 3, the multi-layered generalist and transport-specific approaches to the analysis of political conflict and policy development are distilled into an explanatory model that recognises the difficulty of forcing change in transport policy and proposes four key determinants for the outcomes of transport policy conflict.

In the light of this ‘challenge and resistance’ model, a number of factors are brought together in a hypothesis that describes some conditions that appear necessary for changing an established formulation of urban transport policy. This hypothesis sets the direction for the research into the particular trajectory of transport policy formulation in Melbourne.

This hypothesis, in summary, is that:

- Structures of urban and regional government that concentrate power at a single jurisdictional level limit the potential for existence, in that region, of several competing transport policy networks with comparable strength in their respective institutional bases. This limits the potential for change to an established direction in urban transport policy.
- To be successful, political and institutional interventions in support of change to an established policy direction must be preceded by a strong civic challenge to

the legitimacy of prevailing transport policies, and must be pursued with great skill over a considerable period.

Following from this hypothesis, investigation of the political contention over directions for urban transport policy in Melbourne and in other cities focuses on factors such as:

- political power structures and administrative processes, both formal and informal, that influence the formulation and implementation of urban policies
- the membership and tactical choices of civic action ‘challenge’ groups
- the strategies used by new political entrepreneurs
- power relations in the professional planning community
- the public and private arguments used by members of dominant policy networks.

Research methodology and outcomes

Due to the multiplicity of factors that might have played a significant role in the failure to reverse the decline in transit use in Melbourne, it was clear when the research was being planned that a form of comparative analysis would be needed to determine the relative importance of whichever factors were found to be relevant.

The logic of this analysis requires comparisons to be made between Melbourne and cities that are as similar as possible to it in the institutional and political frameworks relating to the determination of transport policy directions, but where the policies implemented are more conducive to improved transit performance and, within the local context, trends in transit use are more positive.

The search for such cities proved difficult. The closest matches were Perth and Vancouver, although both are ‘younger’ and smaller in both population and economic complexity. It may be that these differences have made the delivery of urban services more straightforward, but even if that is the case, any insights into the reasons for relative success in the ‘easier’ settings are still important in building an understanding of the problems in Melbourne.

Analysis of the similarities and differences in the institutional and political context for the resolution of conflicts over transport policy in the three cities is presented in Chapters 5 to 7. These chapters are structured to simplify the narrative and to maintain the focus on particular aspects of the theoretical framework.

Many published works explore the broad institutional and political environments for urban government in the three cities, and published accounts of some aspects of the development of transport policy. However, the main sources of information about the events and processes in the ongoing contention over transport policy were policy documents, interviews with representatives of key actor groups, newspapers from the periods of most active public disputation, and other archival material covering the activities of key groups and individuals. Chapter 4 includes a discussion of the way this material was used, in particular, the way that subjects for the interviews were chosen and how the interviews were conducted.

Chapter 5 comprises a discussion of the variations in the political and economic environments and the structures of the institutions for urban and regional government in the three cities. Some clear differences in the structures of regional government between Vancouver and the Australian cities emerge, while the broad patterns in electoral representation since the 1950s are seen to be remarkably similar.

Chapter 6 turns to the evolution of transport management institutions in the three cities and demonstrates some important path dependencies. It provides a short narrative of the events and outcomes in transport policy and politics from the 1950s until mid-2007. This allows each city's transport policies and investment patterns to be compared and categorised according to the theoretical systems outlined in Chapter 2. It also identifies the crucial periods of political contention over transport policy. In Melbourne and Perth, these periods began with public challenges to plans to cut transit services and the subsequent election of reform governments with clear transit agendas in the early 1980s. In Vancouver, the critical time began a decade earlier before strong institutions for road construction had been established.

In Chapter 7, attention moves to the behaviour of key actor groups during these crucial periods of political contention. For each city, these include politicians, senior figures in transport-management and urban-planning institutions, unions representing transit workers, and a variety of civic action groups. This chapter reveals significant differences in Melbourne, Perth and Vancouver in the membership, institutional base, resources and strategic choices of these actor groups.

In Chapter 8, the multi-level analysis of the similarities and differences between the three cities is brought together. The conceptual 'challenge and resistance' model, and the theoretical literature underpinning it, are reassessed in the light of the research

findings. This leads to a discussion of the causal significance of various differences between Melbourne and the comparator cities. From this, an explanation for Melbourne's disappointing transit performance is put forward. This demonstrates the importance of the failings in the skills and strategies of transit professionals, political entrepreneurs and civic action groups in the 1970s and 1980s in the continuance of road-based transport policies in Melbourne. The thesis concludes with some thoughts on directions for further research.

Note on referencing: While a standard Harvard system is used for most referencing, quotes from the research interviews are indicated in italics, so: *(Smith)*.

Note on usage: In Australia and the UK, bus, tram and train operations are collectively referred to as public transport; in North America and continental Europe, the common term is transit. For consistency and brevity, and to avoid ambiguity when discussing operations of buses, trams and trains by public or private interests, transit is used throughout.

2. Transit use in Melbourne and the international urban transport debate

The explosion of mobility offered by the car in the second half of the 20th century provides many individual benefits, but it comes at an increasing collective cost to urban societies and to the global environment (Whitelegg 1997).

Some cities have reduced the economic, social and environmental costs of their transport systems, and an important part of almost all policy packages that have been used to reduce transport costs has been improvement to mass transit networks and a subsequent growth in transit use. Many cities have aspirations to greater transit use, but have not delivered.

Melbourne's official plans state the intention of authorities to provide alternatives to the car through improved transit. The current urban strategy says "the Government is committed to providing a more sustainable transport system that offers genuine options to travellers" (DOI 2002). Earlier governments have made similar commitments. In the period between 1950 and 1980, before governments began to publicly express their aspirations for transit improvements, transit use fell at a rate exceeded anywhere in the world only by Auckland (Mees and Dodson 2002).

Since 1980, transit use has stagnated. This reality may be somewhat disguised by the way statistics are gathered and reported by local transit operators, but the disappointing performance of the system is not seriously in doubt among local planning practitioners or in the court of public opinion.

Understanding the reasons for this failure to meet expectations is obviously of local interest as large amounts of money and effort continue to be invested in Melbourne's transport systems and any insights into the obstacles to reducing transport system costs will be valuable.

Melbourne is also an interesting case for international transport research. It is often remarked (for example Ogden 1995) that it has a comparative advantage over other cities, particularly in North America, because its large networks of train and tram infrastructure survived intact through the years of broad professional and public rejection of the future need for transit in the 1950s and 1960s. The inability to make better use of this valuable legacy is internationally relevant because it draws attention to

the importance to transit success of a range of technical, institutional and political arrangements that are often obscured by controversy over proposals for large investments in new rail lines.

The popular explanation given for the performance of transit in Melbourne is based largely on perceptions of the city as a sprawling, low-density agglomeration. The idea that Melbourne's disappointing transit performance is an inevitable result of a car-based urban form is deeply embedded in the city's political and professional planning debates. However, the evidence clearly favours the view that Melbourne's transit performance is a result of policy decisions that are neither inevitable nor irreversible.

Therefore, to understand the reasons for Melbourne's transit performance, and the potential to improve it, there is a need to understand better the local political and institutional processes that have delivered these policy outcomes. This chapter describes the theoretical and empirical basis for rejecting physical determinism as the explanation for Melbourne's transit outcomes. It also gives an account of the evolution of international professional practice and academic thinking about urban transport problems within the wider discipline of urban planning. This review explains why many planning practitioners and scholars are sceptical about the need for and the viability of attempts to increase the use of transit, particularly in North American and Australian cities.

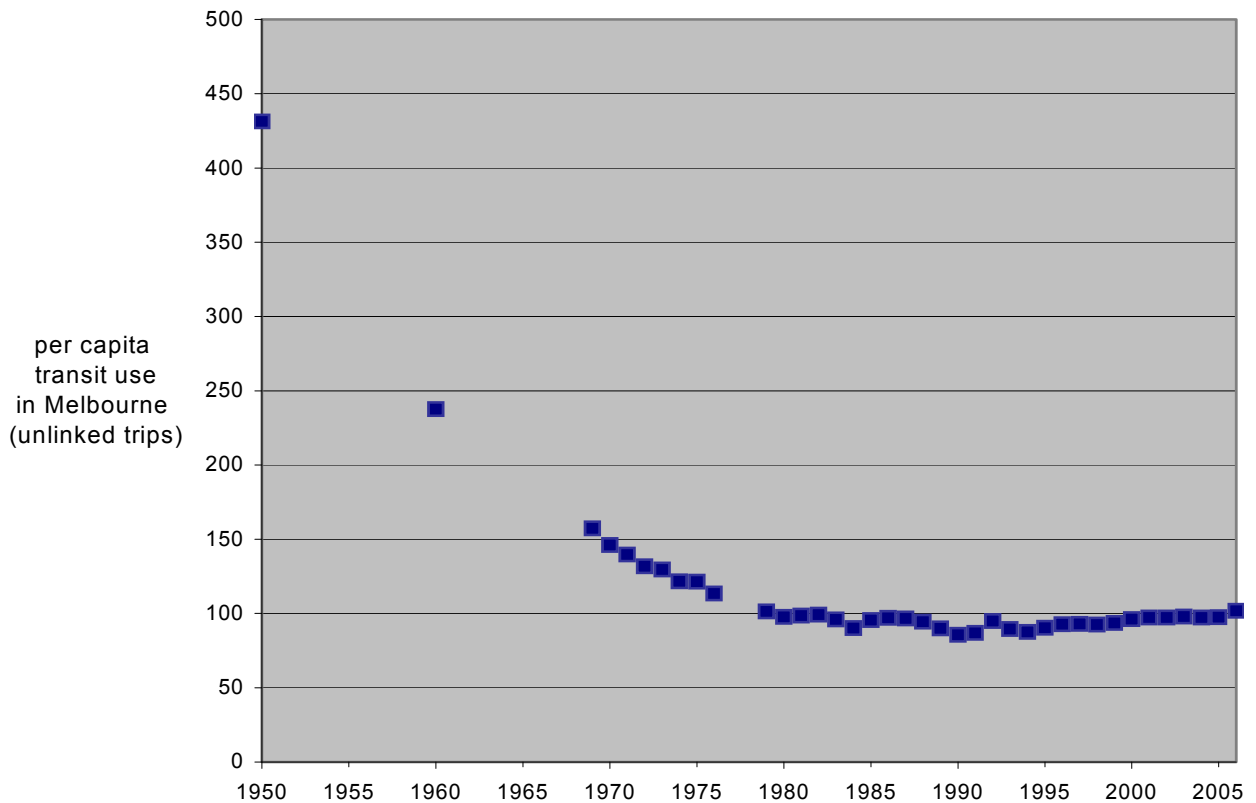
By bringing these perspectives to the Melbourne case, a broad research question for this thesis can be formulated.

The decline and stagnation of transit use in Melbourne

The first step in establishing the research question is to determine some measures of transit performance in Melbourne.

The measures that public and private organisations use to report on their own progress towards their stated goals can be misleading and there is a tendency to use measures that put a positive spin on any outcome (see for example O'Faircheallaigh et al. 1999, Ch. 12). This general principle is true in the case of transit in Melbourne where operators typically report their annual performance in terms of passenger numbers or boardings, with the result that growth due to increases in the urban population is conflated with the effects of operational decisions made by transit managers. A better measure is one that corrects for population changes: transit trips per capita. By this measure, transit use in

Melbourne fell dramatically between 1950 and 1980, and has remained stagnant since then, see figs 2.1 and 2.2 below.



(Sources: to 1999 – operators’ Annual Reports; from 1999 – DOI, compiled from information from private operators)

Fig. 2.1: Annual per capita transit use in Melbourne from 1950 (unlinked trips)

Notes on the collection of patronage data

The major modes of transit in Melbourne – train and tram – were managed separately until 1983. This separation of operations resumed in 1999 when the system was privatised. The various transit operators have consistently reported patronage as unlinked trips, that is, each transfer is counted as a separate trip (a journey that included a bus from home to the station, train to the city, and then a tram to work would count as three ‘trips’).

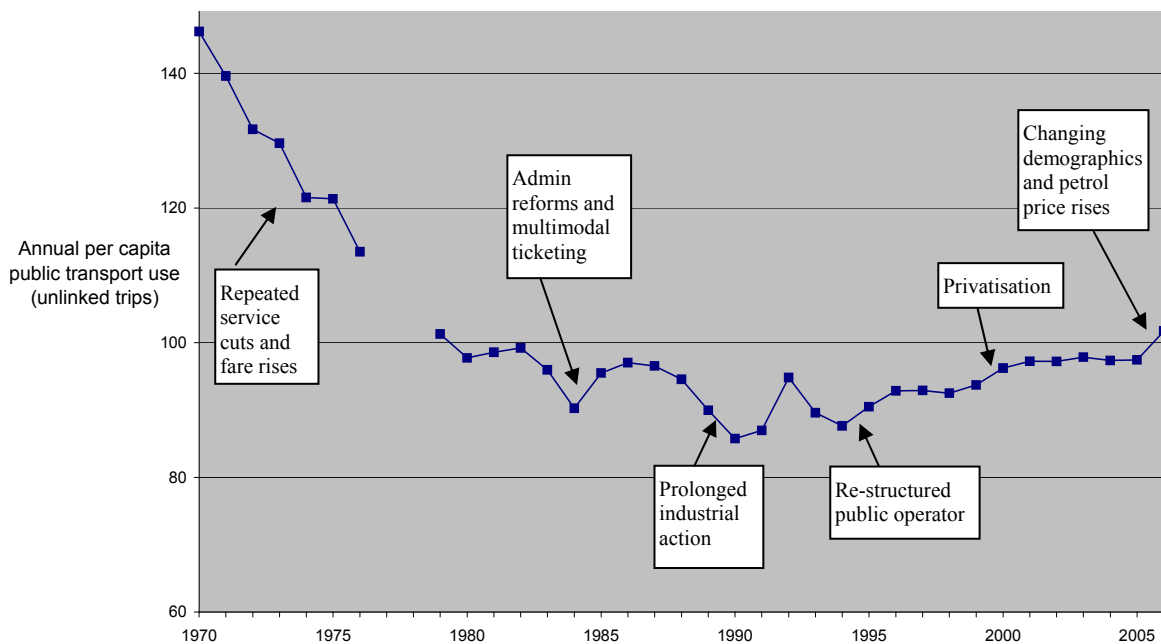
Since the 1970s, methods used to estimate the numbers of unlinked trips have changed several times.

A noticeable change in the reporting of train patronage occurred in about 1973. There are discrepancies from year to year in the patronage numbers given in Victorian

Railways Annual Reports at this time. Where these discrepancies exist, the higher figures have been used.

Since 1981, Melbourne has had a multi-modal, time-based ticketing system. In such a system, ticket sales do not match boardings because many passengers use a single ticket to make more than one trip. In most cities that use this type of ticketing, patronage estimates are checked against the results of physical surveys of actual boardings. In Melbourne, the number of unlinked trips is calculated from the numbers of tickets sold, using a factor that is said to estimate the average number of separate boardings made on a single ticket. This factor is not systematically checked against physical counts (David Arblaster, Senior Information Analyst, DOI, pers. comm.).

The Annual Reports of the Metropolitan Transit Authority (formed in 1983) and its successors indicate that changes to the ‘boarding per ticket’ factor were made in the mid-1980s, in 1992 and in 2004. No detail of the basis for these changes is provided other than claims that the new methods are more accurate. Each change appears to have resulted in increases in reported boardings: the 1992 change lifted the estimate by between 4% and 5%; the 2004 change added around 2.5%. The numbers used in Figs. 2.1 and 2.2 have been adjusted to discount these effects so that patronage can be compared over time.



(Sources: as for Fig. 2.1)

Fig. 2.2: Annual per capita transit use in Melbourne from 1970 (unlinked trips)

Analysis of patronage data

Fig. 2.2 shows the detail of small fluctuations in transit use in Melbourne since the late 1970s when the problems of declining patronage gained greater political currency with the global 'oil shock' and growing transit budget deficits. These are correlated with the major changes in the institutional landscape for transit management.

As it unfolds in subsequent chapters, the focus of this research will be on the processes and outcomes of institutional and political changes in the management of transit operations in Melbourne in the 1980s. When the research commenced in 2003, the transit-use data showed that the institutional changes made during the 1990s by a government with a strong neo-liberal agenda had stabilised transit performance, but made no significant improvement. However, data from 2005 and 2006 shows a sudden growth in per capita transit use.

Internal government analysts accept, at least off the record (DOI staff, pers. comm.), that most new passengers came to transit for reasons external to the management of the system itself. A major influence is the growth of employment in central Melbourne – up 42% between 1992 and 2004 (MCC 2006). For people in these jobs, many of whom live in the gentrifying inner and middle suburbs, current train services are a practical alternative to the car. When petrol prices began to rise sharply in mid-2005, they had an alternative to driving. Crowded trains and government admissions that new rolling stock would not be available for several years (*The Age*, 25 April 2007, p. 3; 5 May 2007, p. 13) confirm the view that this increase in patronage was unexpected. The new figures, though welcome, do not undermine the analysis developed in later chapters.

Other indications of poor transit performance in Melbourne are the falls in the proportions of travel by transit both for the journey to work and for general trips.

For the journey to work, analysis of census data (Mees et al. 2007) from 1976, when the question on work travel mode was first asked, to 2006 shows that, compared to other Australian cities, Melbourne experienced the largest decline in public transport, car-pooling and walking, and the biggest increase in driving. Public transport's mode share for work trips fell from 24.1% in 1976 to 13.9% in 2006.

Mode share data for general travel is typically collected via sample surveys in which randomly selected participants complete travel diaries. The results of the surveys are

correlated with demographic data allowing estimates to be made of the total number, purpose, distance and duration of trips made by different modes across the city.

In Australia, transit mode share is often expressed as a proportion of motorised trips. This gives a larger figure for transit use, but is less illuminating than data commonly reported elsewhere that includes non-motorised modes. This is because a change in mode from cycling or walking to transit represents an increase in transport system costs.

Surveys to collect mode share data have not been conducted systematically in Melbourne. The 1978-79 *Melbourne Home Interview Survey* estimated transit's share of linked motorised trips as 11.6% (quoted in Mees 2000, p. 180). Between 1994 and 1999, the now-defunct Melbourne Transport Research Centre undertook the *Victorian Activity and Travel Survey* (VATS). Reported results of this work give transit's share of motorised trips as 9% in 1997 and 8% in 1999 (DSE 2006, sect. 5.12). The 2006-07 state budget papers report that the Department of Infrastructure:

no longer considers the VATS sufficiently reliable ... [and] has now adopted a revised methodology, which incorporates ... a more robust measure of metropolitan travel. In 2004-05, the proportion of trips taken by public transport as calculated by this method was 8% (Victoria 2006, p. 357).

Whatever the flaws in the data collection, it is clear that Melbourne has experienced a long-term trend of decline and stagnation in transit use, which occurred despite the existence of an extensive rail system and the preservation of its electric tramways, and despite repeated statements of intent in government policy that improvements in transit use were an important goal. These intentions were implicit in the 'quality of life' agenda adopted by Victoria's long-serving conservative government when Rupert Hamer took over the leadership in 1972 (Holmes 1976, 1980). They were clearly stated by a reformist social-democratic government elected in 1982 whose policy priorities included "remodelling and expanding Victoria's failing transport system" (Kiss 1992, p. 159). In 2002, intentions were given concrete targets, and the strategic plan for Melbourne included the following:

By 2020, the Government intends that public transport's share of motorised trips within Melbourne will rise to 20 per cent from the current level of 9 per cent (DOI 2002, policy 8.1).

Current understandings of the reasons for Melbourne's transit performance

There is a stark mismatch between the stated intentions of governments to improve transit use in Melbourne and the reality of decline and stagnation, and there has been much speculation about its cause.

A very common view of the causes of the decline of transit in Melbourne focuses on the deterministic influence of physical characteristics of the urban form, including population density, car ownership and job location (examples include Beed 1981; Ogden 1995).

However, recent research has shown that the primary cause of the disappointing performance of Melbourne's transit system is not the city's urban form. A comparative study of urban form and transit use in Melbourne and Toronto (Mees 1997, 2000) demonstrates that the two cities are remarkably similar on a range of measures of urban form and structure, including variation in residential density across the urban area, distribution of employment and retailing, and the development of suburban centres. But, even though it has much less rail infrastructure, the Toronto transit system is used much more than that in Melbourne: "Toronto's mode share in the mid-to-late 1980s [was] at least double Melbourne's" (2000, p. 180). The big difference, identified in this research, was the quality of the transit service. Most noticeably, the access to multiple destinations, made possible by an operational focus on creating attractive conditions for transfers between buses, trains and streetcars, was far superior in Toronto (p. 245). Mees argues that Toronto's superior transit service was the result of planning and delivery by a single public agency, while Melbourne's transit operations were fragmented and poorly planned.

The extensive comparative data collected by Jeff Kenworthy and his collaborators (Kenworthy and Laube 1999, 2001; Newman and Kenworthy 1989) helps to confirm Mees' particular findings. Success in minimising costs of transport (measured in terms of energy use or money), in limiting growth in car use, or in improving transit performance is variable even among cities with many physical similarities. The Kenworthy data suggests that relative success is associated more with the consistency with which policies to support alternatives to car dependence are pursued by urban governments (Kenworthy and Laube 2002) than with factors such as wealth or cultural attitudes to mobility as suggested by other commentators like Gomez-Ibañez (1991).

In technical policy areas like urban transport, governments rely on ‘experts’ to give substance to policy intentions. So, the political and institutional dynamics of the professional transport planning community are key factors in determining the mix of policies that are ultimately put in place to deal with urban transport problems.

The political dimension in transport policy has long been recognised, going back at least as far as Altshuler’s (1965) account of the power of road engineers in urban freeway decisions in US cities. Yago (1984), through an examination of differences in the effectiveness of mass transit in Chicago and Frankfurt, concluded that political and economic factors best explained the contrasting outcomes (p. 176). He rejected the deterministic position of:

researchers from fields as diverse as geography, sociology, economics, political science and urban planning [who had claimed] for decades that population, income and spatial characteristics of cities impossibly constrained mass transit services (1984, p. 1).

In Australia, Sandercock (1975), Beed (1981) and (Davison 2004a) have documented the political dominance of supporters of car-based policies in Melbourne since the 1950s and 1960s.

Mees restates Yago’s point that physical and technological determinism can provide an apparently apolitical rationale for political decisions that act against transit improvement (2000, p. 45). This political dynamic is central to his explanation for the differences between Melbourne and Toronto, pointing to historic patterns in investment in infrastructure and in the wasteful competition between operators of different transit modes that reduced the quality of the service and weakened the ability of the Melbourne transit bureaucracy to successfully engage in later political conflicts (2000, pp. 258-268).

Low and Gleeson (2001; Low et al. 2003, 2005) have also shown that the institutional structures in which Melbourne’s transport planning policies have arisen helped to create the conditions for the dominance of the road construction agenda.

Before it is possible to examine further the role of political and institutional dynamics in Melbourne in the ascendancy of one set of policy outcomes over others, it is necessary to explore, in general, the content of debates on the appropriate responses to urban transport problems. This is done below. First, opposing positions in current international

transport policy debates are described. Then, there is an account of the changing fashions in international academic theory and professional practice that set transport planning in its place within the wider discipline of urban planning. Finally, there is a summary of some peculiarly Australian twists in urban transport policy debates.

The content of policy debates on urban transport problems

Almost all transport is a means to an end. So, a better urban transport system is generally taken to be one that maintains or enhances the economic and social functions of a city, while consuming fewer physical resources like fuel and land, and costing its users less in both time and money.

There is broad evidence that car-based systems offer their transport benefits at considerable cost. Comparative data suggests that cities that are more reliant on cars spend a greater proportion of their available economic resources on their transport systems (Kenworthy and Laube 1999; Kenworthy et al. 1997). Broadly, the environmental costs of a transport system are less if car use is reduced in favour of travel by well-patronised transit or, even better, by non-motorised modes such as walking or cycling. Car-based transport is not available to socially disadvantaged sections of the urban population, and so increased access to other modes of transport for those who do not, or cannot, use a car reduces the costs of this disadvantage. Increasingly, as the health benefits of exercise are recognised, the replacement of a car trip with one that includes some active component is seen as a reduced cost to the health system (Frank et al. 2004).

While the emphasis on economic, environmental or social aspects may vary, the reduction of broad transport system costs is assumed in the stated goals of almost all formal government responses to urban passenger transport problems. However, despite broad agreement on the ultimate goal, very many policies are promoted as the means to this end. These policies are often contradictory and the combined package of measures implemented in different cities varies widely.

There has been much theoretical discussion and some empirical research to categorise various policy directions and to understand the implications of their contradictory directions.

In his theoretical discussion, Vuchic (1999) recognises that urban transport policy packages vary, in content if not rhetoric, in the balance of incentives and disincentives

that exist for both car and transit use. These sticks and carrots, he says, will influence the choice of transport mode made by individuals in situations where either a car or transit trip is a realistic option. (Vuchic does not consider the choice of a non-mechanised option, but the principle is the same.)

His “generalised, simplified” model of urban transport policy choices is reproduced below.

Policy type	Investment	Mobility	Mode	
			Car (C)	Transit (T)
Incentives (I)	High	Increased		
Disincentives (D)	Low or negative	Decreased		

Effect of policy pairings:

- Improves balance between transit and car mode shares
- May not influence modal balance
- Increases imbalance favouring the car

Fig. 2.3: Policies for cars and transit, and their impact on improving transit mode share

(from Vuchic 1999, p. 240)

The matrix shows four generalised policy directions that a city might take in response to transport problems as different pairings of broad incentives and disincentives for car and transit use. Vuchic says that coordinated incentives for transit and disincentives for car use (the CD-TI pairing) make “the most rational and cost-effective policy for achieving ... livable metropolitan areas” (p. 247).

For the CI-TI pairing, he gives examples of cities that have invested heavily in both freeways and metro systems and that typically provide subsidised car parking in their central core or at major regional centres or transit nodes. He notes that transport systems

of this type cannot be properly integrated and that the outcome is generally a continued imbalance in mode share towards car travel but with greater subsidies required for each. The other common pairing in western cities is the CI-TD combination. This, says Vuchic, leads to car-based policies that are “particularly undesirable and even infeasible in large cities” (p. 244). Transit disincentive policies are seldom explicitly recommended or adopted but consist of the “deterioration, decrease or discontinuance of transit services” (p. 242) and are usually followed “de facto, in cities with no comprehensive plans or clearly defined intermodal transportation goals and policies” (p. 244).

Vuchic also argues that, in order to be successful, the implementation of his CD-TI transport policy pairing must be done together with complementary planning policies for other physical and functional components of the city including housing and economic development (p. 84).

Vuchic’s assessment of the impact of different policy packages is supported by Bratzel’s examination (1999) of five European cities where car use has grown relatively slowly across the whole agglomeration and has been reduced or stabilised in the city core. As seen in the international data collected by Kenworthy and his collaborators, these cities are among those that have made the greatest progress towards reducing all transport system costs. In all cities in his study, Bratzel identifies a consistent application of policies that restrict car use and make alternatives more attractive, including “measures to support public transit, travel by bicycle and by foot, [and] measures for environmentally-oriented spatial structures” (p. 184).

The land-use and transport policies employed in Vancouver (GVRD 1996, 1993a) provide a good example of the complementary approach described by Vuchic and Bratzel. Over several decades, Vancouver planners have substantially regulated land-use, road network expansion has been restricted, and the city is building an effective transit system. A measure of the success of this approach to urban planning is found in data for travel times for the work journey. This information is collected by Statistics Canada for the census metropolitan areas of the country’s larger cities. Trends since 1992 are shown below in Table 2.1.

	1992	1998	2005
Toronto	68	76	79
Montreal	62	65	76
Vancouver	70	68	67
Ottawa	57	62	65
Calgary	52	64	66
Edmonton	50	58	62

(Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, reported in Turcotte, 2005)

Table 2.1: Average travel time for round trip to work in Canadian cities

There is a modest but long-lasting positive trend in Vancouver, while the situation is steadily deteriorating in the other cities. This result represents a reduction in costs for an important component of the urban transport task, and is probably unique in North America and Australia and is rare elsewhere. (Comparable data are not collected for cities in Australia or the USA.)

Despite evidence for its effectiveness, most cities do not follow the policy directions prescribed in the CD-TI package. There are many other forces besides dispassionate assessment of data at work in the making of transport policy choices.

There have long been two broad positions over the preferred direction of transport and urban planning policies to achieve the goals of reduced transport system costs. The typical policies that characterise these two polarised positions are described below, though the emphasis will vary from city to city.

The complementary ‘*environmentally oriented*’ package, described by Vuchic and Bratzel, typically includes a plan for economic and residential land-use and development, supported by transport policies that provide incentives for transit, walking and cycling, and that make car use less attractive through measures such as restrictions on the supply of road capacity and parking. The balance of these measures varies across different cities.

The other direction for transport policy has been called ‘*sustainable automobility*’. This second position asserts that alternatives to the car are either unrealistic or unnecessary.

In contrast to the environmentally oriented approach, supporters of ‘sustainable automobility’ believe that growth in car-use is inevitable, and some see it as a desirable expression of legitimate individual preferences for convenient mobility (for a summary of this literature see Mees 2000, pp. 57-65). The package of policies to ameliorate the negative consequences of the reliance on automobiles as the primary mode of travel generally includes:

- continual expansion of road capacity to allow more fuel-efficient free-flowing traffic and to reduce travel-time costs, particularly for freight and other business travel
- encouragement of fuel-efficient vehicle technologies
- containment of growth in travel distances by moving jobs, housing and urban services closer to each other, either by planning intervention or by leaving decisions on these locations to the free market.

As Vuchic has pointed out, there is little evidence to support the effectiveness of the automobile-based package if it is pursued in isolation. At least three significant problems arise.

First, increases in road capacity typically result in growth in the number and length of car trips. This causes a rise in vehicle emissions that is not offset by the efficiencies of smoother traffic flow or by predicted gains from the use of improved engine technology or cleaner fuels in individual cars (SACTRA 1994).

Second, fuel-saving benefits of new technologies are seldom realised as environmental gains. For example, the increased weight of SUVs and the greater power of many modern cars mean that average fuel consumption across the Australian vehicle fleet has changed very little in the last four decades.¹

Third, containment of travel distances appears to require considerable focus on improving the performance of alternative travel modes. The sole example of a city in North America or Australia that has achieved some success in reducing travel distances is Vancouver, where containment is pursued through the environmentally oriented package. Also, despite some claims to the contrary (Gordon et al. 1991), market forces

¹ The average fuel efficiency of the Australian passenger vehicle fleet has not changed in more than 40 years. It was 11.4 litres per 100 kilometres in 1963, peaked at 12.6 in 1976, and returned to 11.4 in 2001 and 11.7 in 2005 (ABS, Surveys of Motor Vehicle Usage).

have not, without strong planning interventions, led to reduced travel distances in any city (Newman and Kenworthy 1999, pp. 104-107).

From this discussion, it is clear that explanations for Melbourne's disappointing transit performance will require analysis of the broad balance of transport and urban planning policy measures implemented across the city over many years. This will be addressed in detail in Chapter 6.

Changing theory and practice in urban and transport planning

One important component of the process of making transport policy choices is the advice given to governments on urban transport problems by professionals. There is intense rivalry among those who give professional advice on these questions, and an individual's ways of thinking and acting are shaped by their background and training. The major divide is generally that between the training of a generalist urban planner and the more focused, and often more prescriptive, training in urban road planning and engineering.

A useful perspective on this divide can be gained by reference to the international development of academic theory and professional practice in urban planning, and to the specific expression of this in Melbourne.

Urban planning might be a simply defined task of devising an "orderly scheme of action to achieve stated objectives in the light of known constraints" (Hall 2002). However, in the professional and academic world, generalist urban planners can appear to lack confidence or collective direction and, in general, their judgements and prescriptions tend to receive inconsistent or half-hearted political support.

In his *Cities of Tomorrow*, Peter Hall describes the complex and contradictory intellectual foundation of urban planning and the way that this has shaped the self-image and the practices of planners in the field.

Many early urban planners responded to the evils of the slums of the nineteenth century with a vision that was "not merely of an alternative built form, but of an alternative society" (p. 3). Modern cities, says Hall, reflect the tangled paths by which the ideas of these visionaries were "discovered [and] resuscitated ... in very different places, in very different circumstances, and often through very different mechanisms from those their inventors had originally envisaged" (p. 2). This transplantation "in time and space and

socio-political environment” produced results that were “often bizarre, sometimes catastrophic” (pp. 2-3).

Hall identifies several strands of thought and action that competed with those of the social visionaries. One is the monumental tradition that runs from Haussmann’s Paris to Stalin’s Russian cities and Burley Griffin’s Canberra. Another was the “tradition of the authoritarian planner”, exemplified by Le Corbusier, who as “all-powerful master-planner would demolish the entire existing city and replace it with a city of high-rise towers in a park” (p. 9).

From the 1920s, planners were often independent practitioners who used their intuition as the principal guide for their work. They attempted to gain acceptance for their ideas through the persuasive power of their blueprints and designs and they expected that urban problems could be managed with a relatively fixed land-use plan. The planner’s job gradually became institutionalised: “to make plans, to develop codes to enforce these plans, and then to enforce these codes” (Hall, p. 355).

By the 1950s, schools of planning were established to teach these institutionalised processes. The staff of these schools began to be absorbed by debates about the theory of planning (Hall, p. 353), gradually creating a divide between themselves and their graduates who were attempting to deal with real world problems, of which there were many. If the shocks of depression and war were not enough to upset the idea of planning as the creation and implementation of a single and enduring optimal land-use plan, then the post-war economic boom and population explosion, apparently not predicted by planners, certainly did.

In looking for new ideas to deal with the rapidly changing world, planning theorists were attracted by the popular attempts in many fields to establish a scientific base for their endeavours (Taylor 1998). Learning from defence technologists who were using the new science of cybernetics to design and build complex missile systems, they built a new ‘science’ of planning, which came to be known as rational-comprehensive planning. It was to be “a continuous process of control and monitoring of the systems [of cities and regions]” (p. 360).

New computers could now handle masses of data, and planners were in the queue at the cardpunch machine. Mitchell and Rapkin (1954) claimed that they could predict future urban traffic patterns from existing land-use patterns. Within a few years, road

engineers were doing the reverse: using models to predict the land-uses that would follow from changes in transport links. With the ‘truth’ in their computer printouts, road engineers “invaded the professional territory of the traditional land-use planner” (p. 362).

By the late 1960s, the systems approach was under serious intellectual attack. On the one hand, observations of competing political interests at work in planning practice had, for some time, provided evidence of a huge gap between the theory of rational-comprehensive planning and the reality of urban planning practice that was persuasively described as “disjointed incrementalism” (Lindblom 1959). On the other hand, to the New Left, urban riots in the US were evidence that systems planning contributed to urban decay, reinforcing their distrust of the expert and his pseudo-science and jargon.

It was clear that there were many differences between an urban planning system and a missile guidance system. For the systems planner, the city was the system, and planning was the control mechanism. Observation provided the planner with knowledge of the present state of the system. Then, from that knowledge, the planner, through a design process, rationally produced a plan for controlling the system (Batty 1979).

The first hurdle was the imperfect and contestable basis of knowledge about the state of the city. But, even accepting a large measure of uncertainty about the state of knowledge, there was a bigger problem. It did not seem appropriate to assume a highly elaborate rationality for shaping the ‘control mechanism’: the design or plan. The problem was that:

knowledge of the city system exists within the planning process but not *vice versa* ... the system exists inside its own mechanism of control [instead of, as in the case of weapons systems] the control mechanism exist[ing] inside the system (Batty, p. 20).

This could be overcome if the system could be observed objectively, but it was apparent that “in the social world, this can never be the case” and that “treating the social system as passive, will always involve distortion” (p. 21).

There were attempts to devise elaborate processes of feedback and evaluation between current ‘realities’ and the actual and intended outcomes of particular designs (Chadwick 1971; McLoughlin 1969). Even here, there were problems:

in urban planning, there was not just one problem and one overriding objective, but many, perhaps contradictory: it was difficult to move from general goals to specific operational ones ... By 1975, [one of the] most celebrated of all the systems planners [wrote] that he no longer believed that the more difficult problems of planning could be solved by optimising methods (Hall, p. 363).

With this realisation, the consensus seemed to be that planners should participate more in the “complex, often messy, set of dealings between professionals, politicians and the public” (p. 363). To meet this need, ideas such as ‘communicative planning’ were conceived, based on the notion that:

if different groups – all presumed to have legitimate claims – can be brought to the negotiating table, the resulting communication, if handled with contemporary consensus-resolution techniques, will somehow prove beneficial in identifying the best possible solutions for all concerned (Storper 2001, p. 169).

This method has evolved into various forms of public consultation and is now a necessary political touchstone for the form, if not the content, of most major urban planning exercises.

Common to these responses to systems planning was increasing doubt among academic planners about the theoretical legitimacy of their own discipline.

Marxists took up the challenge of trying to find a theoretical bridge between planning strategies and the urban physical and social systems to which these strategies were applied. Their search brought them to a point from which they could offer the practising planner little help. As Hall puts it:

either theory is about unravelling the historical logic of capitalism, or it is about prescription for action. Since the planner-theorist – however sophisticated – could never hope to divert the course of capitalist evolution ... the logic would seem to demand that she or he sticks firmly to the first and abjures the second ... the Marxian logic is strangely quietist: it suggests that the planner retreats from planning altogether into the academic ivory tower (p. 371).

The distance between the academics and the practising planners widened in the 1980s and 1990s as the focus of ‘radical’ planning academics shifted from political economy to cultural discourse.

During the 1980s, academic planning came under the influence of sociologists and philosophers who argued that there could be no ‘grand narrative’ in social theory. This turn may have benefited fields like education where the focus on difference enabled post-structural critiques of race and gender that could be translated into practical strategies for the classroom. In planning, though, this approach has taken many theorists up a blind alley “towards a total relativism [and] a denial of any kind of norms” (Hall, p. 375). Celebration of difference for its own sake and a localism that “disdains state-oriented collective solutions to problems” left practising planners “baffled or bored” (p. 376). More significantly, they were unsupported and vulnerable to attacks from the political right on the very existence of planning itself.

The rise of the neo-classical economists and their preference for market-based solutions to urban problems saw governments attempting to free business from the constraints of planning law. In the UK, the payoff was large private investment in regeneration projects to transform the derelict urban manufacturing areas into forms required by new economies. Hall quotes a Thatcher government 1983 White Paper that foreshadowed the abolition of the Greater London Council and declared the end for strategic planning (p. 401). This was a premature call as the result of this free-market experiment was hundreds of “ever more complex, ever more protracted, ever more bitter” local disputes (Hall, p. 401). A similar pattern of cause and effect can be seen in Melbourne in the 1990s (Shaw 2003).

Politically, some publicly determined rules for the urban fabric are still necessary. The reality of global environmental damage and the rhetoric of sustainability also require codes for urban life. So, planning survives, even if just at the level of administering the rules.

In some cities (for example, Vancouver), systems planning processes have not been abandoned but have been linked to attempts to achieve some consensus on planning goals as required by communicative planning theory. This form of planning is generally done through a logical process that includes gathering data, setting objectives, evaluating a range of options against these objectives, monitoring progress and so on (similar to the Best Practice Environmental Outcomes process endorsed by the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution 1994, p. 156)).

Plans for urban transport systems are often created within broader planning processes, but in many cities road transport planning has taken on a life of its own. The growth in

the affordability and availability of cars from the 1950s created demand for road space and, backed by huge government and private investment, a large cadre of engineers grew up to design and build increasingly complex urban highway systems. As Yago says, “the largest planning bureaucracy in the modern state was created by ... highway building” (1984, p. 210) and, in many cities, it established an institutional base in organisations that train and employ civil engineers. Not surprisingly, ‘sustainable automobility’ policies are most strongly supported among road transport engineers and planners.

Current practices of road transport planners are often little changed from those used in the prescriptive, technical modelling exercises of the 1960s. This approach involved extrapolating future road needs from existing trends in demographics and driving patterns. It was popularised by several firms of US consulting planners and engineers who produced plans for massive freeway networks in cities around the globe. This process, commonly called ‘predict and provide’, continues despite the emergence of serious problems.

As Vuchic says:

the complex role and impacts of [road] transportation on cities ... were not understood ... For example, street and highway congestion was believed to indicate that additional capacity was required ... It took years of experience ... to learn that capacity increase is desirable only when it causes no excessive negative impacts (1999, p. 228).

Unfortunately, as Vuchic also points out, it can be difficult to determine exactly how much road capacity is too much. His prescription for avoiding this and similar problems is for cities to implement the outcomes of processes in which:

transportation as a functional system is planned in relation to other systems such as residing, economic and social activities and the environment (p. 84).

This prescription requires that city planning processes have sufficient priority and powers, and that urban planners who wish to challenge established road planning practices are capable of dealing with the technical and political challenges.

There is often great momentum behind the notion of building one’s way out of transport problems, even when the evidence mounts against this approach. The case of the UK in the 1990s is instructive. In the early 1990s, strong popular opposition to inter-city trunk

road construction led to a thorough technical analysis of the impact of road-building on future traffic volumes (Vigar 2002). Senior road engineers, under political pressure to participate in this analysis, accepted its conclusion that new roads did induce more traffic (SACTRA 1994). This was a compelling argument for transport policy change. It was supported by a contemporaneous report of the prestigious Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution that criticised the ‘predict and provide’ doctrine and recommended that “planned expenditure on ... trunk roads be reduced to about half its present level” (1994, p. 244). New Labour won government in 1996 with a platform supporting a more environmentally oriented policy package called the ‘new realism’ (Goodwin 1991). Ten years on, motorway construction continues unabated (DfT 2004). The implementation of alternatives to ‘predict and provide’ requires urban planners to come up with workable policies to manage changes in urban form and structure. It also requires credible and effective plans for growth in transit use. Such plans are the responsibility of transit planners and engineers. Unlike the road-builders and the traffic engineers who regulate road space and signal systems to maximise car flows, training and other professional support for transit planners is limited. Theories of transit planning are not well articulated and the practice is most commonly taught ‘on the job’, with the result that outdated operational patterns can easily remain unquestioned. Modern techniques for designing and operating the multi-destination transit networks necessary to compete with the car in dispersed cities are only recently becoming available in academic texts and in material designed specifically to assist practitioners (see Mees 2000, Ch. 5; Nielsen and Lange 2005; Vuchic 2005).

In many cities, a further limiting factor in transit planning is the existence of strong professional rivalries between those responsible for different modes – particularly bus and rail – even when they work in the same agency: “limited knowledge [and] biases ... lead to counterproductive intermodal competition” (Vuchic 1999, p. 84).

These broad patterns in the shaping of the intellectual frameworks that underpin the positions of practitioners in a range of urban planning professions provide some explanation for the dominance of road planners and engineers in the politicised transport policy debates in many cities.

Transport and related urban-planning debates in Melbourne

The responses of planning academics and professional practitioners to urban transport problems in Melbourne since the 1950s have been largely influenced by the international developments described above. However, two distinctly local characteristics of transport planning practice directly affect the range of policy options that are presented to the government and the public by planning professionals.

The first is the particularly wide gap between road planners and transit planners in their effectiveness in arguing the case for policies based on their areas of expertise.

The Melbourne experience of the evolution of the road planning and engineering profession since the 1950s is vividly described by Graeme Davison in *Car Wars* (2004a). These planners and engineers have proved extremely competent in getting support for their plans for the construction of road projects that include massive multi-lane freeways, bridges and tunnels.

In transit, historical management structures fuelled intermodal rivalries and contributed to a strong operational focus on maintaining existing service patterns, characterised by poorly connected train, tram and bus routes catering to downtown commuters and captive markets like students and pensioners. Combined with isolation from centres of innovation in transit planning, this has meant that modern multi-destination network planning techniques are very poorly understood in Australia. The experienced Zurich transit engineer Rolf Bergmaier has used some of these techniques to create proposals for transit reform in Melbourne (for example, Russell et al. 2001), but these have gained little support.

The second local characteristic of transport planning practice is the peculiar slant on urban consolidation and the need to increase residential densities.

In the transport planning context, urban consolidation is generally taken to mean the range of policies intended to reduce the number and length of car trips by changing land-use patterns to contain housing, employment and other services required by any one individual within a small part of the urban area. As described earlier, such policies can be part of both the environmentally oriented and sustainable automobility policy packages.

In Melbourne, the issue of residential densities dominates discussion of urban consolidation policies. The need to substantially increase urban residential densities is an article of faith with many planners, including the authors of the current Melbourne urban plan *Melbourne 2030* (DOI 2002, section 2). However, the desire for increased residential housing density is often strangely disconnected from issues about improvements to transit service.

Road planners and their allies have actively fostered the idea that Melbourne is an exceptionally low density and sprawling city. This is not surprising, but the acceptance of this view among those who are openly concerned about the negative impacts of car-dependence like Beed (1981) and many others in more recent times (for example, *The Age* 2006) is more remarkable.

With such apparent consensus from the ‘experts’, it is no wonder that Melbourne’s sprawling nature is accepted as fact in the popular mind. Nor is it strange that there is little traction for Mees’ evidence-based argument, discussed earlier, that Australian cities are not examples of extreme sprawl and that there is not a causal link between Melbourne’s transit performance and its residential density.

The need to increase residential density is also justified on economic and environmental grounds.

The economic argument for urban consolidation is not primarily about improving conditions for transit. Broadly, the claim is that spare capacity in urban infrastructure of many kinds in established parts of Australian cities makes it much cheaper to provide housing for growing populations in these areas rather than in new developments on the urban fringe. There are a number of credible critiques of this claim, including those by Neutze (1995) and Troy (1996, Ch. 2), which argue that the cost differentials may often not be as high as is claimed.

Newman and Kenworthy (1989; 1999) have cemented a place as the champions of the argument that there is an environmental imperative to increase urban densities. They see this as an essential requirement for reducing car-dependence. Their view is based on relationships between urban density and transport energy-use and transit mode split, which they derived from their huge set of international data. Their conclusion is that “automobile-dependent land-use patterns appear to be an inherent characteristic of the city” when urban density is below 20 to 30 persons per ha (Newman and Kenworthy

1999, p. 100). From here, it is only a short step to argue that such densities are sufficient explanation for transit failure, and many commentators, including Newman and Kenworthy, have made exactly that move.

However, the methods used to calculate densities in different cities vary significantly, and comparisons require careful qualification. The methods used in the Kenworthy studies are not consistent. The Toronto calculation (41.5 persons/ha) uses a metropolitan area that is defined by the Metro Toronto boundary (around one-third of the greater metropolitan area) and which excludes many non-residential land-uses within this boundary. Melbourne's density calculation (14.9 persons/ha) uses the whole metropolitan region and includes parks and industrial land (see Kenworthy and Laube 1999, pp. 227 (Melbourne) and 373 (Toronto)).

This deficiency has significant political relevance in Melbourne. The public challenge to current planning policy made by Mees and others rests in part on an understanding of similarities in the urban form and structure of Melbourne and Toronto. The differently calculated densities for the two cities, taken from Kenworthy and Laube, are still being quoted without qualification in Melbourne 2030 (DOI 2002, section 2.1). This reinforces the erroneous proposition that it is fanciful to expect significant improvements in transit use without massive changes in Melbourne's urban form. Operators and politicians can use the density argument to escape responsibility for the failure to provide a service that could deliver increased transit use in Melbourne's existing suburbs.

Alarm bells about the Newman and Kenworthy analysis should have sounded long before Mees published his critique. In 1946, Fooks set out very clear definitions of the different notions of density, pointing out that different planning purposes could be served by choosing to exclude different parts of the urban area from the density calculation. (For example, 'net density' excludes agricultural land, while 'residential' density also excludes land used for industrial, commercial and civic functions.) Nearly 30 years ago, Neutze (1977, p. 64-69) made density calculations for Perth, Adelaide and Sydney using three separate definitions. His Australian 'residential' densities are calculated using comparable urban land categories to those used in Kenworthy and Laube's Toronto calculations quoted above, and show that Toronto and the Australian cities are alike.

In any case, there is only limited potential for increases in density across the whole city through residential consolidation. In the 1970s, Neutze concluded that the density of original subdivisions and the nature of the initial housing stock have a powerful and long-term influence on future density patterns. This is not surprising: most people in Melbourne in 2030 will live in houses that are already built. Current urban consolidation policies do not propose the massive changes to the existing built form that would be required to raise urban densities to the supposed transit density threshold. Further, residential housing requires only a small proportion of total urban land, but policies for the consolidation of industrial and commercial land are not part of the current planning agenda.

The Australian debate about the style of new urban in-fill development and its location is also imprecise. If the photos in their books are any guide, Newman and Kenworthy favour high-rise construction. Interestingly, this view is not shared by planning academics in Vancouver, where many of the photos used by Newman and other environmentalists were taken. For example, Condon (2002), a strong environmentalist, believes that large increases in population can be accommodated inside the existing urban boundary with cheaper and less-intrusive four-storey development located along high-frequency trolley or tram routes.

Despite the apparent concern with improving densities to encourage transit growth, *Melbourne 2030*, with around 100 ‘activity centres’ in which higher-density development is encouraged, appears to allow in-fill anywhere that a developer might wish, rather than in locations that realistically support transit improvements (Davidson 2005). The strong housing market in inner and middle suburbs of Melbourne (DOI 2002) is clearly one reason for such policies of urban consolidation. Gleeson and Low argue that consolidation policies in Australian cities have been “applied crudely and thoughtlessly, as an open invitation to developers to make profits from communal values such as pleasant environments with good access to facilities” (2000, p. 108).

An important consequence in Melbourne of the lack of local models of transit success in the so-called ‘low density’ suburbs, and the acceptance even among transit planners that little real improvement is possible, is that many urban planning and design professionals choose, or are forced, to lower their expectations. Even those planning professionals who support a strong environmental agenda tend to vacate the field of the urban transport debate and limit their efforts to implementing fragments of the

‘environmentally oriented’ policy package such as new subdivisions on the ‘new urbanist’ model; energy-efficient in-fill developments at suburban rail stations; or new cycle lanes on suburban streets. Evidence for this can be seen, for example, in the solutions to transport problems proposed in the Australian Institute for Urban Studies series, *Environmental Indicators for Metropolitan Melbourne* (AIUS 1998-2007). Severed from the body of a coordinated policy package, these fragments cannot compete with large increases in road capacity and the absence of a high-quality transit network. In fact, they may produce the “bizarre” or “catastrophic” results that Hall observed when planning ideas are implemented out of their original context².

Formulating the research question

From the previous discussion, it appears quite possible that the observed decline and stagnation in Melbourne’s transit use could have been reversed, and the economic, environmental and social costs of Melbourne’s transport system reduced, through better coordination of urban planning and development policies and the adoption of specific transport policies that fit Vuchic’s CD-TI model.

As will be discussed in more detail in later chapters, Melbourne has generally fallen somewhere between Vuchic’s CI-TD and CI-TI pairings. The most recent policy program, *Melbourne 2030*, is, even on the most optimistic reading, clearly in the CI-TI category, and so its claim that “significant progress [has been made] in developing a transport network that [will] sustain ... Melbourne’s livability into the future” (DOI 2006, p.3) appears doubtful.

Professional communities have been aware for many decades of the existence of alternatives to the policies implemented in Melbourne, and policy choices have been contested at many levels. Mees and others have identified the importance of political and institutional dynamics in shaping the outcomes of these contests.

Despite this work, there is a significant gap in understanding the political and institutional factors behind urban transport policy choices in Melbourne. The broad research question addressed in this thesis can now be formulated as follows:

² One example, among many, is the proposal of local government planners to establish ‘urban villages’ at locations with poor or non-existent transit connections (Moreland City Council 1998, p. 25).

How have the formal and informal structures and processes of politics and the institutions which develop and implement government policy affected the outcomes of conflicts between different conceptions of the 'right' urban transport policy for Melbourne in the era of mass mobility by car?

Across a wide range of policy areas, many researchers have sought to understand the complex causal factors that result in one policy program and not another being implemented in a particular place at a particular time. In the following chapter, reviews of several approaches to the study of policy development and urban politics, and transport policy in particular, are distilled into a conceptual model that is appropriate to understanding how urban transport policy choices are made. This model will be used to generate hypotheses relevant to the research question.

3. Challenge and resistance: a model for policy change

To become reality, any large-scale urban transport proposal must pass through a “complex, often messy, set of dealings between professionals, politicians and the public” (Hall 2002, p. 363). In the previous chapter, the research task for this thesis was established around the need to understand these dealings in the case of the formulation and implementation of transit policy in Melbourne.

In the first part of this chapter, a framework for analysis of the research question is built up through a review of three main areas of scholarship, each of which is extensive. For this reason, the review is selective. It covers aspects of the literature that are considered most useful for the research task.

The three bodies of literature cover:

- the nature of urban government, focusing on questions of economic structure, political agency, and power, with particular reference to regime theory, a ‘middle level’ conception of the forces at work in urban government
- the variability of policy outcomes where these are determined by different levels of government whose powers and functions overlap and compete
- policy development process in modern liberal democracies including:
 - the ‘policy network’ as a major site of resistance to policy change
 - institutionalist and other contemporary perspectives on the policy process
 - the influence of structural, political and intellectual path dependence.

The second part of this chapter examines several analytic and descriptive methods that might be used to investigate the research question that was articulated in Chapter 2.

These methods have been used in a variety of studies of the political dynamic in urban planning and directly in urban transport decision-making and policy implementation.

They include:

- analysis of discourse and path dependence
- single case studies of transport and planning policy conflicts in a variety of cities and from a variety of theoretical perspectives
- comparative analysis.

Finally, ideas from these varied perspectives are brought together in a conceptual model of the processes of change in urban transport policy. This model is used to formulate a number of hypotheses that might explain the trajectory of transit performance in Melbourne.

How cities are governed: structure, agency and power – regime theory and its critics

The first area of scholarship to be reviewed is that centred on understandings of the forces that shape the modern city. There is a basic divide in theoretical positions on the relative importance of economics and politics in urban development. Is the competition for mobile capital at the root of all significant urban outcomes, or do urban politics “still matter” (Stone 1987, p. 4)? This question is typically framed as a debate between structure (or, the tendency for economic and social forces to determine all significant outcomes) and agency (the potential for the actions and decisions of individuals to shape events).

This review will trace the rise of regime theory within this debate, and will discuss some useful concepts provided by regime theory through its attention to the means by which local political activity mediates large-scale economic forces.

Pluralist debates

In the US debate on urban politics in 1950s and early 1960s, the prevailing view of political scientists held that a unified elite wielded direct control of the local state (Hunter 1953). Empirical researchers like Dahl (1961) and others challenged this position when they went looking for evidence of elites and instead found a complex tangle of interest groups whose influence shifted around different political disputes and policy decisions. These studies led to the formulation of ‘pluralist’ theory that saw urban power wielded through the outcome of bargaining among a multitude of interests, each of which could commit or withhold some important resource on any particular issue. In some formulations of this theory, political power was available to any group that was active, organised and wanted to be heard, and academic analysis of power focused on observations of these shifting, short-lived coalitions.

The eruption of political and social mobilisation in the 1960s and the fiscal crises of the 1970s made this “relatively tranquil picture of urban politics as a kind of market-

equilibrium-reaching mechanism seem anachronistic” (Mollenkopf 1992, p. 26). And, in this climate, a significant challenge to the pluralist view came from ‘structuralist’ critiques from the left and the right that identified how economic, political and social status influenced the capacity of different groups to realise their ends.

Economic determinism and urban politics

Many critics of pluralism believed that economic forces were more important for good or ill than political bargaining in shaping urban development.

From the right, public choice theory influenced ideas about the management of urban development. This theory is a branch of economics that challenged the interventionist approaches of the Keynesians. ‘Public choice’ refers to the problem of deciding how and what public goods should be provided and who should pay. According to the theory, distortions are built into state allocation of resources by the self-interested desire of the state bureaucracy to build and extend its own operational empires (Buchanan and Tullock 1962).

In an attempt to formulate a model of urban government that matched this theory, Tiebout (1956) suggested that a local government ‘marketplace’ would efficiently provide public services: a multiplicity of local governments each competing for residents by offering different services at different tax costs. Building on this model, Peterson’s *City Limits* (1981) put forward a theory of urban government and development that argued that the over-riding determinant of city policy is competition to attract investment or to prevent capital flight. He argued that to succeed in this competition, cities must lower taxes and restrict state involvement in the provision of services and infrastructure.

Later writers, like Leo (1997), showed that Peterson’s characterisation was a peculiarly American view, assuming a particular distinction between the fiscal capacities and policy domains of local and higher levels of government. Leo demonstrated this by providing counter-examples in Canadian and European cities where local taxation powers are different or where national or state governments play an activist role in local affairs and where, as a result, the desire to reduce state involvement in service provision is only one of many motivations for urban policies. Even so, public choice theory has had a profound influence on urban government and transport planning practice. In

Australia, this free-market, small-government ideology is generally called ‘economic rationalism’ and it has changed government practice at all levels (Pusey 1991).

During the 1970s and 1980s, the left’s structuralist bandwagon went at full tilt, painting the early pluralists as naïve and rejecting the normative defence of liberal capitalism underlying many pluralist observations. Researchers assembled evidence to show that the changing global economy created or constrained patterns of urban development. This, in turn, spawned increasingly complex urban economic theories that tended to put urban politics in the back seat.

For example, Magnusson (1995) puts forward a simple determinism that emphasises the necessity for the state to “appease” capital. He gives examples of the different forms that this appeasement has taken in North American cities. In Vancouver, he argues, capital required a ‘liveable’ city to attract and keep labour and investment in industries associated with the growth of the city as a node in the Pacific Basin’s urban network. This meant that capital allowed the local state to implement particular planning and urban development outcomes.

This analysis shows the limits of the pure structuralist approach. If urban development outcomes are the inevitable products of the needs of capital in a particular time and place, then it is easy to conclude that there is little purpose in making an effort to intervene or plan. This is Hall’s “quietist” Marxian logic described earlier.

Another example of the deterministic approach is the ‘growth machine’ model used by Logan and Molotch (1987). In this model, the motivation for urban politics is reduced to the boosterism associated with the needs of economic growth. It recognises that some capitalists – real estate agents, developers etc. – are less mobile than others, and that the ‘sunk costs’ of these business interests give them a powerful reason to intervene in local politics to secure new local investment. This work tries to explain opposition to the growth agenda by making a distinction between ‘exchange value’ – the market return sought by business interests in a particular urban development – and ‘use value’ – the value put on existing urban form or social arrangements that acts as an incentive for resistance to a particular proposal and the formation of civic action groups.

These various approaches have struggled to explain the uneven economic development seen in cities around the world. There are three main strands of thought on this question (see Savage and Warde 1993).

First, there have been attempts to classify cities into categories, for example, global, third world, old and new industrial, or restructuring former communist city. This process tends to collapse as more diversity is observed and the classifications multiply. Second, writers as early as Geddes (1915) and as late as Hall (1988), have suggested that there is a process of urban evolution. However, the increasing differentiation of cities around the world under the impact of the global economy makes it impossible to generalise about a single evolutionary path for all. Also, some of the evidence used to support the notion of a single path for urban development has been found wanting. For example, claims of ‘counter-urbanisation’ in Melbourne, following the US pattern of central city decline, arose because analysis of the distribution of employment locations over time used a fixed boundary for the downtown area. So, any job growth outside this boundary was classified as occurring at a dispersed suburban location. In fact, much of the employment growth was directly adjacent to the fixed boundary and was evidence of resurgence of economic activity in the city centre – the complete opposite of what the evolutionary model predicted (Mees 1995).³

Third, regulation theory is used to explain the role the world economy plays in urban politics and development. Regulation theory “roots the relationship between economics and politics in ... fundamental realities” (Leo 1997, p. 81). For Leo, this theory seeks to explain the nature of urban social, economic and political life by investigating “how technology, the economy and social relations, including formal social organisations of all kinds, evolve in relation to each other”.

Regulation theory grew from structural Marxism to explain how capitalism has survived so long in the face of its theorised internal contradictions. It proposes that:

extraeconomic ... forces help respond to the economic contradictions in a fashion that leads to the long-term survival of the basic capitalist social relations (Lauria 1997).

Its precursors can be found in the disciplines of sociology and geography as well as economics.

³ This attempt to demonstrate that Melbourne was following a US pattern of urban development was used in the public debate over transport policy by supporters of new road projects to argue, wrongly, that these new employment markets were difficult to service with transit.

Frobel et al. (1980) explained the different economic performance of cities across the globe through the modern spatial division of labour and the growth of transnational production in new industrial sites where labour-power was cheap, abundant and well disciplined.

David Harvey (1982) made an ambitious attempt to analyse capital accumulation and the way that the built form embodies the needs of capital at a particular time. His focus was on two contradictory aspects of the use of property for capital accumulation: the significant profit that can flow from investment in the built environment, contrasted with the barriers to profit because the built environment can become outdated and anachronistic in a relatively short time. He argued that dramatic changes could occur in a city over short time periods through movement of investment between two principal circuits of capital accumulation: first, the classic accumulation through manufacturing and, second, investment in the built environment. Traditional Marxists had seen that capital accumulation through manufacturing could stall if the production of goods outstripped the availability of money to purchase them. Harvey thought that when such a crisis occurred, the state would be encouraged to intervene to allow capital to shift out of manufacturing into property, and that this process would continue until it was no longer profitable and new sites for investment would need to be found. As examples of this process in action, Harvey uses suburban development in the 1950s and the office development boom of the 1970s and 1980s.

In the end, Harvey's economic theories are circular. There is a change in investment patterns because there is a capital crisis. We know there is a crisis because there is a change in investment. Later, Harvey (1985), with Castells (1983), did focus attention on the social conflicts that are created by the tendencies within capitalism to make and break urban environments. These conflicts were organised not only on class lines, but also around gender, ethnicity and local neighbourhoods.

Another complementary, though less comprehensive, approach is that of Massey (1984) who compared the social character of different regions and the effects of this on local urban development. She observed the ways that businesses in the UK were rationalising, intensifying and investing in new technology, exacerbating polarity between the prosperous Home Counties and the depressed provinces, and explained this in terms of the greater mobility of capital compared with labour. Investment, she argued, will be concentrated in ways that reflect the social character of the available

workforce. This insight led to investigations into the distinctive character of different places.

Regulation theory attempts to unify these different explanations of uneven urban development by describing the ways in which social relations shape economic relations. The important theoretical concept is that aspects of social and economic relations such as the form of the state, the nature of its intervention in the economy, and the provision of welfare are seen as modes of regulation that create historically-specific patterns of capital accumulation.

One mode of regulation, called 'Fordist' after the mass-production methods pioneered by Henry Ford, describes the industrial arrangements of the mid-twentieth century in which businesses are characterised by scientific management and economies of scale, and are supported by the welfare state and Keynesian economic management. The 'post-Fordist' mode of regulation is associated with a reduction in the size of production units and more 'flexible' work practices, and the changing arrangements of society and state that support this.

A new explanatory theory inevitably gives rise to a new literature that uses the new terminology to describe rather than explain, leading to a proliferation of typologies. Proponents of the theory (for example, the contributors to Lauria 1997) see it as most useful when it attempts to clarify processes and tendencies in urban development, rather than becoming too rigidly associated with descriptions of individual examples.

In fact, for this study, the insights of these higher-level economic theories are useful only insofar as they draw attention to aspects of the broad environment in which transport and urban planning policies are formulated.

While structuralist theory encouraged urban researchers to regard politics as a secondary, if not irrelevant, factor in urban development, the real world continued to throw up problems. Economic outcomes in different cities varied in ways that the theory struggled to explain. It was apparent that while "state actions may be constrained by economic structure ... they cannot be reduced to it" (Mollenkopf 1992, p. 36).

This problem with structural theory led to difficulties in many areas of social inquiry. In response, Giddens (1984) articulated his theory of structuration to "help break with the fixed or mechanical character which the term [structure] tends to have in orthodox ... usage" (p. 18). Instead of a polarity between agency and structure, he proposes that

structure is internal to individuals and that “the structural properties of social systems are both the medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organise” (p. 25). Although these properties of social systems are beyond the control of any individual actors, Giddens argues that in some way “all human beings are knowledgeable actors” (p. 281). He describes action as the practical response to this internal process of ‘knowing’ within a particular social system (p. 6). This gives individuals the theoretical room to do what they are observed to do, namely, to produce new effects in the world. These effects, and their intended and unintended consequences, are influenced by the “scope of the knowledgeable ability that actors have and the power they are able to mobilise” (p. 11).

The nature of the mobilisation of power by individuals and groups in the context of decision-making in urban government is discussed further below.

Urban regime theory

Urban regime theory is a middle-level attempt to bridge the gap between structural economic influences and the unpredictable and fragile outcomes of urban political processes. A chief architect of this theory was Clarence Stone whose insights came from a study of the politics of Atlanta (1989) in the period from 1946 to 1988.

Atlanta had survived the turbulence of the civil rights movement and the end of segregation without the huge riots that had engulfed other cities, and so was of more than academic interest in the American South. Stone reformulated the question of uneven urban development in the US by asking what it means to “combine legal equality at the ballot box with inequality in various other resources”. He concluded that politicians are “predisposed to cooperate with those who can provide them with useful resources and opportunities to achieve results” (1989, p. xi). Unsurprisingly, business has these resources.

Stone found that outbreaks of anti-business sentiment were a “recurring feature of [Atlanta] politics” and that, while the “business elite is extraordinarily influential, it does not exercise command power, nor does it display an ability to control attitudes” (p. 220). On this basis, he argues that structural economic power is not enough to explain how “in the face of complex and sometimes divisive forces, an effective and durable capacity to govern can be created” (p. xi).

The problem for Stone was that “modern societies ... lack an overarching power of command” (p. 219). Therefore, he concluded that in order to bring significant projects to fruition:

informal arrangements [were required] by which public bodies and private interests function together to make and carry out governing decisions (p. 180).

These arrangements he called an urban ‘regime’.

Stone identified three elements in this definition:

- a capacity to do something
- a set of actors who do it
- a relationship among the actors that enables them to work together.

His ‘regime theory’ was never meant to be a comprehensive theory like Marxism or public choice:

It is a second-level theory, concerned with a particular set of problems, not with a total way of viewing the world ... For example; a regime approach posits that the impact of the global economy is *mediated* through local governing arrangements. This does not mean that the global economy has no impact. ‘Mediate’ does not mean ‘block out’ (Stone 1998, p. 250).

Stone saw the study of urban regimes as “the study of who cooperates and how their cooperation is achieved across institutional sectors of community life” (1989, p. 9). This cooperation is relatively uncommon. In fact, he says “cooperation rather than its absence is to be explained” (2001, p. 23). In Atlanta, cooperation existed between the white business elite and the black middle class who were able to organise effectively to control the political process.

Without formal authority to command compliance, Stone argued that cooperation becomes possible through:

- Agreement on purpose – this enables a group of citizens to act together to bring about a particular state of affairs that otherwise would not have occurred. In later work, Stone argues that purpose is constrained by ‘bounded rationality’. He assumes that:

people most of the time [do not] make their choices on the basis of full awareness of the wider world or complete information about how it works (1998, p. 256).

- ‘Selective incentives’ – rewards and punishments administered so as to encourage individuals to support group aims.
- ‘Small opportunities’ – social or collective improvements that can be offered to maintain participation in a coalition. These offers work because most people can be motivated by more than just direct personal gain, but they are attracted more by particular concrete opportunities than by grand visions of how the world might be reformed.

By characterising the process of urban government as the ‘power to’, which he describes as a ‘social production’ model, Stone escapes the theoretical dependence on ‘consent’, whether freely given or manipulated, that forms the basis of the conception of ‘power over’ found in ‘social control’ models that often underpin Marxist political economies.

Stone argues that none of the conventional formulations of the ‘social control’ model can easily explain the influence of Atlanta business in city affairs.

His evidence of business defeats and its need for compromise and coalition building steers him away from social control through elite domination. He “finds little evidence of control by monopolization of the realm of ideas” (1989, p. 221), and he points to a series of opposition movements to show that “citizens are aware that the community could be ordered on some basis other than investor prerogative” (p. 222).

The issue of maintaining a system of control – the cost of compliance – is central to the ‘social control’ model. Pluralists say that give-and-take occurs because consent is real and compliance is genuine. Their Marxist opponents believe that the few dominate by manipulating consent and that change comes when consent is withdrawn and a challenge becomes too costly for the ruling group to resist.

This does not fit with Stone’s observations of significant, but largely inconsequential, challenges to business domination in Atlanta. In his model:

the challenge group has to do much more than withhold compliance ... It must also be able to bring together and use a body of support that is suitable and

durable enough to govern ... *The cost burden is on the challenge group* (his italics) (p. 228).

In his observations of urban politics:

participants do not behave as if the underlying structure ... is polarity between the few and the many ... within an integrated system of control. Instead, they act as if the capacity to govern is in question. Where are the needed resources? How can cooperation be induced? Who can provide a reliable foundation of support? (p. 228).

Regime challenge and change

An important part of regime analysis deals with the processes of challenge and change.

As Stone argues, a regime, once formed, has a 'gravitational pull':

the greater the ability of a regime arrangement to contribute to and co-ordinate project efforts, the more other elements of the community are attracted to 'going along' (1989, p. 235).

This means that significant change is hard to achieve. Stone (p. 230) sets out the requirements for any group seeking popular support for regime restructuring:

- A substantial body of people would have to believe that a new order of things is superior *and* workable.
- They would have to also believe that a sufficient alliance could be composed to constitute the new order – and the more far-reaching the change the new order represents, the more substantial the alliance needed to bring it off.
- They would have to be willing to risk immediate interests in established arrangements for the sake of long-term gains from a by-no-means-assured new order.

A challenge group can also be restricted by its own economic circumstances, or by institutional structures and political processes built and maintained by the dominant regime. Keating (1991, p. 10) describes two forms that these blocking mechanisms can take. The first is closure, the "ability to keep certain issues off the political agenda or to circumscribe debate"; the second is containment, which he describes as action to keep a

challenge group out of power or find ways to withdraw “key powers and decisions from elected governments controlled by challenging groups”.

There have been several analyses of regime formation and challenge in US cities that have observed varying degrees of success in attempts to build governing coalitions around progressive agendas.

In an analysis of the politics of urban development in San Francisco, Richard DeLeon (1992) identifies a progressive coalition emerging from active cooperation between environmentalists, neighbourhood preservationists, and liberals seeking more ‘redistributive’ labour and social programs. He argues that this group achieved some degree of regime restructuring: they were able to create a defensive capability to stop some developments and to change some policies, but were not able to establish a workable governing coalition of their own.

DeLeon identifies a number of characteristics of San Francisco that allowed the progressive coalition to meet, in some degree, Stone’s requirements for regime challenge: these included a fragmented and leaderless downtown elite, and the city’s strong service economy which provided the coalition with a resource-rich base in the large ‘non-corporate’ middle class of professionals and entrepreneurs.

Regime challenge in San Francisco also depended on the ability of the progressive coalition to articulate an ideology to “inspire a common vision, legitimate new power structures, give coherence to policy, and embrace divergent constituency interests” (p. 32). San Francisco has a political history that fosters such ideology, but DeLeon remarks on the ‘double bind’ that this created for the coalition’s leaders. Efforts to broaden the governing ideology of the coalition to make it more inclusive limited its coherence as a guide to political action, while a narrower but more consistent and politically useful ideology tended to drive potential allies away. The problem for the San Francisco progressives, thought DeLeon, was the limited ‘political carrying capacity’ of ideology as a means to build and legitimate a regime challenge: compromise on program content can alienate core members faster than new allies are gained by diffuse appeal.

Further up the US west coast in Portland, Oregon, a regime established itself in opposition to the typical directions of the ‘growth machine’, taking on an:

extraordinarily ambitious agenda [of] supervising the growth process for the metropolitan area as a whole with a view to promoting efficient land use, environmental safeguards, and overall attractiveness and viability (Leo 1998, p. 368).

Although he gives some evidence of the limits to its environmental and social achievements, Leo's observations are of a relatively stable regime that has been responsible for a "long series of remarkable political developments", including a decision in the 1970s to tear up a section of a six-lane expressway to create a waterfront park.

A self-image of prudence and foresight is a key feature of the political culture of Oregon. In 1967, this culture threw up a charismatic Republican governor who was also an ardent environmentalist. Famous for a speech that cast developers as 'grasping wastrels', he set the scene for the emergence of a coalition that has shaped Portland. This coalition is made up of businesses that accept that their interests are served by managing growth intelligently; farmers who want to maintain viable commercial agriculture in the region; and environmentalists who do not consider themselves 'insiders', but who have been "powerful and central actors" (p. 381).

Leo observes over time a similar pattern of informal networks of cooperation and influence to those described by Stone in Atlanta. The environment groups that have played a major part in the coalition have been stable and consistent, something very rare among community organisations. Leo characterises their leadership as "exceptionally perspicacious in understanding political manoeuvring", able to exploit opportunities for leverage between different levels of government, and:

self-conscious about shifting back and forth between a confrontational strategy designed to expand the debate and a coalition-building approach designed to build a majority (p. 381).

A regime of this type cannot operate in secret like more business-centred regimes; citizen participation and education have been effective tools for "legitimation and as a way of forestalling gaffes" and to overcome the use of closure or containment strategies by their opponents. Unlike the purely inner-city regime of Atlanta, Leo describes a regime in which the State of Oregon and a level of elected regional government (formed in 1978) are active participants. This wider range of actors appears to require more

formal control mechanisms than Stone's theory suggests. Leo argues that the degree of informality in a regime will depend on the number of levels of government involved and on the "width of ideological gaps that must be bridged in forging the coalition" (p. 390).

Favourable conditions for regime change do not depend entirely on the strength of a challenge group. Decline can come from within: the gravitational pull of a particular regime can weaken if the purposes around which it has been organised become less important over time.

In 2001, Stone re-examined the Atlanta regime and remarked on its declining vibrancy. After rejecting diminished resources or a failing economy as the cause of this decline, he looks for an explanation in the loss of its 'identifying agenda' or agreement on purpose. This had been encapsulated in the slogan 'the city too busy to hate', but was now "remote from current concerns" (p. 32). The ability to find a new agenda was stifled because business, fearful that the public sector would:

build a costly political capacity independent of business, [resisted] expansion of the public-sector role in attacking social problems (p. 31).

Stone suggests that work (for example Baumgartner and Jones 1993; Tarrow 1998) on problem definition and issue framing can increase the power of regime theory to explain the way identifying agendas are constructed and changed. He looks for evidence of:

[the way] issue concerns come to be specified as purposes, and how they are linked, enlarged and refined for action. Analytical and presentation skills, policy expertise and an ability to plan on a big-picture scale form a category of resources that warrant our attention (2001, p. 20).

The process of regime formation and adaptation needs to recognise the separate task of framing the purposes of the coalition:

some set of actors must, as a way of establishing and updating the identifying agenda, take on the task of framing purposes, including giving them concrete detail and linking them to actors who can obtain resources to act on significant public purposes (p. 23).

Stone believes that the public sector and NGOs hold the greatest capacity to undertake this task in a coalition that is seeking to tackle any large social issue, and he argues that

the actions of such groups and individuals, expressed through local politics, matter in the way that different communities interpret and give form to the global economic context.

International use of urban regime theory

The processes used to create a 'capacity to act' will vary depending on the nature of the local political institutions.

In US cities, the key participants in coalition formation are elected officials and business leaders and, to a lesser extent, some community interests such as minorities or local neighbourhoods. So, these groups are the focus of US regime theory. In order to use the insights of regime theory in the analysis of cities outside the US, we need to take into account differences in the conduct of public affairs.

First, technical and professional officers, employees of governments or of non-elected agencies, play a role in the creation of the 'capacity to act' in the cities of Canada, the UK, Europe and Australia in ways that they do not in the USA. As Stoker and Mossberger say, "knowledge can join economic position as a key resource that gives groups privileged access to decision-making" (1994, p. 198).

Second, there are widely different contexts for the relationships between local elites and higher levels of government and the wider political environment. For example, in many countries, the social and economic dislocation of inner cities is not a problem on the scale seen in the US.

Third, cultural history shapes attitudes and approaches to the practice of politics. Michael Keating (1991) gives some examples of the practical impacts of different cultural and political histories. He contrasts a European notion of the state as the formal embodiment of the national interest with a US conception of government as a necessary evil required to arbitrate disputes and which, consequentially, is restricted and divided. The greater public power embodied in the European state gives it more legitimacy to define the 'public good' as something beyond the aggregation of competing private interests. This, says Keating, leads to a European political culture with a tradition in which professional state officials identify problems and design and implement solutions and, in French at least, he notes that the language makes no distinction between 'politics' and 'policy': '*c'est tout politique*'. This is contrasted with a US political culture where there are no 'objective' solutions, just different interests to be fought over

in competitive electoral processes. Keating characterises public affairs in the UK and Canada (and, by implication, in Australia) as falling between these two poles. Many functions are removed from market and electoral competition and are managed by professionals, but the borders are continually fought over.

In recognising these cultural differences, one could argue that the governing of European or Australian cities is so different from the US that regime theory can be rejected as an analytic tool outside its country of origin. John and Cole (1998) raise this question about UK urban politics. Outside the US, the central state appears to monopolise many urban development decisions, including those on land-use and transport, and there is very limited variation in local taxation and expenditure powers. So, why should local politicians in the UK:

leave their power bases in urban social organisations and party structures ... to ally with the business community ? (p. 383)

Their answer is that the complex interdependencies between business and public institutions in the globalised economy make informal relationships between public and private decision-makers inevitable, and so they conclude that the insights of regime theory can be useful outside the US.

In their cross-national perspective, Stoker and Mossberger (1994) argue that understanding the process of building purpose, motivation and cooperation in “countries with a stronger anti-business and pro-welfare culture than the US” (p. 204) will require more attention to non-material factors than is recognised by Stone’s earlier work. They point out that the ‘selective incentives’ identified by Stone can also include social status and a sense of belonging. They also argue that the strategic use of symbols in the battle to establish a dominant ‘culture’ can “come to the fore when other incentives for co-operation are absent or weak” (p. 205).

Together, these various insights suggest that in an Australian city the relative importance of various groups beyond business leaders and elected officials, and the cultural and social messages used to encourage cooperation, may differ from other countries. However, the key observation of regime theory is still valid. That is, success in urban government is dependent on the ability to assemble and mobilise the diverse resources required to implement particular policies and programs.

Regime theory: typology or analytic tool?

A search of the regime theory literature yields a huge list of case studies. This writing has led to the identification of a large number of regime ‘types’.

Fainstein and Fainstein (1986) and Elkin (1987) identify four phases of post-war US politics, each having characteristic regimes: directive, concessionary, conserving and entrepreneurial. Other writers have identified maintenance or caretaker regimes that seek to preserve the status quo, development regimes that promote growth, and progressive regimes of the middle class aiming to manage growth. There are mass-mobilisation working-class regimes, and a service-delivery regime in London local government. Savitch and Thomas (1991) even define a ‘hyperpluralist’ regime as one in which “neither political leaders nor private actors are powerful enough to pull together the strings of the urban political economy” – a regime that doesn’t exist! As Stoker says:

there is a great danger that the popularity [of regime theory] has created a descriptive catchword in place of an explanation (1995, p. 62).

Dowding (2001) also worries that the regime concept is sometimes useful as an explanation of particular political events, but at other times is merely a descriptive label. He observes that “regimes do not need to be created for local electoral success” (p. 17), and argues that the future of regime analysis lies in a broader model of local political success and failure that examines “the elements which make up all forms of successful coalition formation” (p. 16). Stone seems to share this view when, as quoted earlier, he says, “cooperation rather than its absence is to be explained” (2001, p. 23). This point is central to the development of regime theory away from its US roots.

John and Cole (1998) make another argument in the same vein. They reject an attempt by other researchers to apply a regime label to a public-private relationship in Bristol where there had been “acute and destructive conflict between local business, central government and the left-wing council” (p. 386). They argue that the conditions necessary for the emergence and stability of an urban regime, including the need for coherent local business interests and a history of positive inter-organisational relationships that foster mutual trust, are very rare, and that a focus on the reasons for this rarity “can reveal some of the mysteries of contemporary city governance” (p. 401). This leads them to conclude that it is better to call the set of relationships between

powerful figures in urban government a regime only when such stable patterns of interaction exist.

This study will adopt this more restrictive definition of a regime. Where there is an absence of long-term cooperation, political and business leaders will enter into a series of changing relationships as different groups compete to assemble the 'capacity to act' in a complex and fragmented world. A set of relationships in existence at any point in time that falls short of being a 'regime' but which is able to achieve some control over the direction of local 'action' will be referred to as a 'governing coalition'.

Critiques of regime theory

There is some empirical research into the influence of different characteristics of the relationship between business leaders and urban governments on the extent of 'growth-limiting' policies. Results of extensive surveys of US local governments are analysed by Clark and Goetz (1994). While 'growth' is defined simplistically as more jobs and more people, and they appear to equate the presence of an 'anti-growth' lobby with its success, they do make a number of interesting observations:

- There are a great variety of business positions on 'growth'.
- Business 'leaders' follow as much as lead on controversial policies.
- The level of 'growth-limiting' policies does not correlate with the power of business leadership.
- 'Growth-limiting' policies correlate more with the existence of a progressive political culture.

These results tend to support Stone's nuanced view of the complexities of urban government.

While not directly addressing the explanatory power of regime theory, Walton (1990) offers a summary of a range of international studies designed to identify characteristics that correlate with a progressive response to global pressures for economic restructuring. He found that the following conditions were conducive to a progressive response:

- historical experience and memory of popular political action

- a current and extensive network of community organisations participating in politics (and providing a ‘left opposition’)
- regional autonomy (geographic independence, decentralisation and intergovernmental cooperation).

Negative correlates were:

- polarised social classes and a large working-class population threatened with unemployment
- extensive integration with a larger metropolitan area or national systems of investment, marketing and production
- political centralisation and a dominance of conservative parties and economic ideologies.

Some non-correlates included:

- economic decline
- dissimilar institutional or governmental structures.

The findings of both these studies tend to confirm the assertions of regime theory that the particular expression of the power of capital in a city will be shaped by local political agency and that the potential exists for alliances of progressive organisations to restrain capital in some strategic fashion.

There are several strains of regime theory critique used by writers with a background in Marxist political economy.

The regulation theorists have been discussed above. In a similar vein, Imbroscio (1998a; 1997; 1998b) frames his opposition as a disagreement about what is required to rectify urban injustice. In this account, regime theory “suffers from a flawed conceptualisation of the division of labour between the state and the market within cities” (1998b, p.235). In other words, it accepts as an immutable fact the domination of the private sector in the creation of wealth and economic development.

This may be a valid criticism of some versions of regime theory, like that of Elkin (1987) which makes a clear normative commitment to the ‘commercial republic’ as a society subject to political decision but which does not arrange the daily lives of individuals. Elkin says:

a liberal democratic regime is the successful accommodation of these two impulses ... its appeal lies in its contradictions – and so do its difficulties (p. 200).

Stone is not so clearly normative. In his early work, he does say that “in principle [a regime] embodies an approximation of justice” (1987, p. 295). But he later observes that the capital accumulation process is just one of “multiple sources of system bias to be overcome” (1998, p. 254). His problem with big structural sources of bias is not their existence or their theoretical immutability; rather it is the practical problem of building a successful challenge:

most of the time people are not attracted to large social purposes, but instead pursue small and even everyday purposes. They can be drawn into big causes ... but the cost of pursuing a social objective stands as a significant consideration (p. 255).

Davies (2002) acknowledges Stone’s pragmatism, but argues that regime theory still does not help to understand how business privilege can be challenged.

No matter how this question might be answered in the future, it goes beyond the needs of this study. Regime theory, with its pragmatic understandings of the nature and use of power, and its recognition that the mediation of structural economic forces through individual and collective political activity makes policy outcomes uncertain and hard to predict, provides a useful framework for this investigation into the factors that influence or obstruct changes in urban transit performance.

Transport and urban development programs are complex and expensive enterprises. So, when attempts at change are made, the nature of the governing coalition is likely to be a significant factor in the outcome. Regime theory provides insights into the difficulties in mounting a challenge to an existing order, particularly if it has a stable base. These insights will be useful in trying to understand the reasons for the success or failure of particular attempts at transport policy change, and how the actions of individuals and groups can be powerful enough to influence urban outcomes such as levels of transit use.

Understanding resistance to change: policy networks, institutions and path dependence

While the approaches discussed previously offer insights into the broader economic and political influences on competition over urban transport policies, researchers who have focused on the policy process provide a finer level of analysis. This is an extensive area of scholarship. It helps to explain the tenacity of established policy positions and gives some indications of the conditions required for policy change.

This review does not seek to provide comprehensive coverage of such a large body of work. Instead, it draws out some useful concepts from research into policy networks; from other contemporary views of the policy process, including the institutionalist perspectives; and from explorations of the influence of path dependence.

Policy networks

The evidence of the complexity and fragmentation of modern governance that led to regime theory has also changed the way scholars describe and analyse questions of policy development and implementation.

From the 1970s, it became clear that studies of formal political institutions (like Anderson 1975) were no longer a fruitful approach to understanding policy processes. Campbell et al. (1989) hypothesised that the way “specialists relate to each other and to generalist actors will have a significant impact on policy outcomes”. By the mid-1990s, “policy network analysis [had become] the dominant paradigm for the study of the policy-making process” (Dowding 1995). As a metaphor, the ‘policy network’ has proved illuminating. It is less clear if the concept can be used as an explanatory theory.

Richardson and Jordan describe policy networks, or policy communities, as the close links between civil servants and favoured interest groups (1979). These networks can include bureaucrats, legislative personnel, interest group leaders, researchers and specialist reporters (Sabatier 1991).

As Considine says:

networks themselves are not actors and nor are they institutions. They are a kind of capillary system through which work is done ... and they become the means for extending or modifying the paths available for the next expected encounter between regular participants (2005).

There are many examples of the use of this concept to illuminate questions about variation in policy outcomes.

In one case study, Baumgartner (1989) poses the question: “why is nuclear power a ‘technical’ question in France, but a ‘political’ question in virtually every other country?” After a lengthy description of the nuclear power policy communities in France and the US, and a comparison of the respective political institutions, Baumgartner concluded:

the answer lies ... in the internal characteristics of the policy communities that surround ... nuclear power in the two countries ... Conflict among members of the policy community [encourages] those on the losing side ... to create a ‘political’ issue out of what had previously been considered a ‘technical’ question. The institutional structures of the policy community ... determine the success that these expanders are likely to have. In a tightly controlled issue area such as nuclear energy in France, where rules ... restrict the involvement of non-experts, and where conflict between experts is low, issues can be successfully portrayed as ‘simple technical measures’. Where conflict erupts among those involved, or where institutional procedures allow less control over participation, as in the US, political issues erupt where none had existed before (p. 63).

As the case studies multiplied, so also did the labels for the different policy networks or communities. This reached a peak with a catalogue devised by Van Waarden (1992) in which eleven types of network are listed against seven criteria demarcated into 37 sub-categories.

Others (Jordan and Schubert 1992; Raab 1992) collapsed these huge typologies. They argued that there was little difference between many of the categories and that the naming was more a reflection of prevailing debates between ‘pluralist’ and ‘corporatist’ views of the functioning of the state than any differences in the nature of the networks themselves.

In the end, the definitional debate resulted in acceptance of a continuum from a tight ‘policy community’ where small numbers of interdependent professional actors maintain strong and persistent control over a particular policy sector to larger, more open ‘issue networks’ where conflict is present and outcomes more in doubt. Most networks identified in case studies were found to be at the ‘policy community’ end of

the spectrum (see examples in Jordan and Schubert p. 26; Richardson et al. 1992). This tight, sectoral control clearly has an impact on policy outcomes:

the existence of a policy community is a key cause of policy continuity ...
policy networks have been very successful in resisting policy changes (Rhodes and Marsh 1992, p. 197-8).

The network concept provides a good descriptive tool for analysis of transport policy outcomes and, taken together with an analysis of formal political institutions, it may allow some broad answers to questions such as those posed by Baumgartner about the nuclear industry. It would be even more useful if it offered some guidance on questions such as what factors lead to the dominance of tight policy communities, and how and why do networks change.

In relation to the first question, there is very little work that bridges the gap between the policy network and theories of the state or models of distribution of power (Rhodes and Marsh p. 202).

Raab (1992) raises the possibility of aspects of the policy process that some political scientists seem unwilling to acknowledge. Drawing an analogy with the hidden or 'black' economy, he says that policy network models may cast light on a "hidden or black polity" (p. 73):

Civil servants negotiate policies with outsiders ... in a policy network through well-understood routines ... these norms, however, do not derive their legitimacy from the public processes and values of parliamentary democracy, and might conflict with or circumvent the latter (p. 74).

Analysis of the actual (if covert) norms of a particular policy community might well help to explain policy outcomes.

Questions of network change also push the limits of the network concept. At one level there might be a developmental process, as described by Campbell et al. (1989), in which a previously excluded group of activists and experts creates an issue network and seizes a 'window' of political opportunity to get political action on their agenda. This, in turn, leads to a policy change and a new bureaucratic institution. Against this threat, an existing policy community may form a defensive triangle of politicians, bureaucrats and interest group members. Or, alternatively, a moribund triangle might be

reinvigorated by new ideas or be forced to face a worsening problem. But, describing change in this way doesn't answer the questions of when and why.

In reviewing a number of case studies of policy network change, Rhodes and Marsh note that the most commonly attributed causes are variation in the economic, institutional or ideological environment, or advances in the knowledge or technology surrounding the policy area. They also recognise that a policy community interacts with its environment, typically to maintain stability and continuity to the point, often, of policy inertia, especially in "networks with dominant economic or professional interests" (p. 196)

Dowding (1995) has doubts about the explanatory power of the network concept. He rightly argues that, as an informal collection of labels and metaphors, it is a useful descriptive device. But, he says that it cannot create an explanatory theory because it is the properties of the members of the network, not the network itself, that drive the explanation. He uses the example of water privatisation in the UK. A study of the politics of this process (Richardson et al. 1992) uses network language to describe massive change in the water policy community. Failure to reach consensus on the details of self-regulation weakened the community, allowing new players from the EC and from green groups to enter the debate. Ultimately, this created a climate of dissension over which the government was able to unilaterally impose its own radical reforms. Following this intervention, a new policy community emerged. As Dowding says of this analysis:

all we learn ... is that if a policy community breaks down an issue network evolves and other groups are able to enter ... but it does not explain [the reasons for] community breakdown ... nor the dynamics of the change. It cannot do so, for part of what is to be explained is the creation and destruction of communities (p. 139).

Explanatory theory could be constructed, says Dowding, using sociological network analysis and game theory. This analysis identifies independent variables such as centrality or number of connections that are characteristics of the relations between members of a network. These can be used to underpin explanatory theory. As an example of the "fruition" of this approach, he quotes Heinz et al. (1993). However, Dowding points out the sheer complexity and scale of the data collection required to investigate the network connections. He also points out that it is difficult to know

whether government players in any network are “disinterested intermediaries or are ‘captured’ by certain groups” (p. 157). So, in the end, he is sceptical of the potential benefits.

Despite the failure of theorists to develop explanatory power from the policy network concept, it remains a very useful descriptive device. This research will use the metaphors and concepts identified by policy network analysts for the valuable insights these provide into observed phenomena such as the resistance to change in road-based transport policies, even when these policies are clearly shown to be failing to achieve their stated objectives.

Institutionalists and other contemporary views of the policy process

In his review of theories of the policy process, Sabatier (1999) describes a number of current approaches to the study of policy development and change that elaborate on the descriptions of policy network change outlined above. One of these, the multiple-streams framework, usefully characterises policy formation as:

three streams of actors and processes: a problem stream consisting of data about various problems and the proponents of various problem definitions; a policy stream involving the proponents of solutions to policy problems; and a politics stream consisting of elections and elected officials (p. 9).

In this model, change is possible when a political entrepreneur is able to “couple the various streams” (p. 9).

Many of the other frameworks described by Sabatier focus on the socially-constructed nature of knowledge (Dowding 1996) and try to analyse the generation of preferences and the nature of belief systems in order to understand processes of change within policy networks. Clearly this is a difficult task and there is a danger of confusing actual beliefs with the beliefs represented in public documents which may simply represent “strategic positioning” (Jenkins-Smith 1991, p. 163).

Within a network, researchers find that policy-oriented learning and change is generally confined to ‘secondary’ aspects of belief systems. More significant change in behaviour is more likely to occur when “issues are technically tractable ... and when [opponents] are forced to confront each other in professionalised forums” (Sabatier 1991, p. 155). Stewart (1991) calls for care in drawing conclusions about wholesale change in the

approach of a dominant policy network from short-term policy change. He argues that in US education policy in the 1960s the dominant policy network was not replaced but only:

meaningfully challenged for the first time ... The anti-segregation coalition was able to force an alteration of some key behavioural manifestations of the dominant coalition's core belief system, but the dominant coalition was left in key policy-making positions to adapt to the new rules of the game (p. 172).

He says that external events were significant in forcing the initial changes in behaviour, and persistence in the dominant policy network better explains the rise of "second generation discrimination" in US education policy during the 1980s.

Sabatier also favours the analytic approach of 'institutional rational choice', which focuses on "how institutional rules alter the behaviour of intendedly rational individuals motivated by self-interest" (1999, p. 8).

March and Olsen (1996) have put the case for an institutional approach to theoretical political science generally. Seeing themselves in the tradition of political science that involves the "interweaving of metaphors", they set out to examine:

the ways in which the practices and rules that comprise institutions are established, sustained and transformed, and the ways in which those practices and rules are converted into political behaviour through the mediation of interpretation and capability (p. 247).

While acknowledging that modern 'institutional rational choice' theory has an awareness of the limits of rationality within institutions, they argue that these models cannot tell the full story. The uncertainties faced by individual actors are "less ... about consequences and preferences than they are ... about the demands of identity" (p. 251). In an institutional context, the definition or achievement of an identity is not easy; it is a matter of "matching a changing (and often ambiguous) set of contingent rules to a changing (and often ambiguous) set of situations". Often, individuals will "not know what to do" or they will "know what to do but not have the capabilities to do it" (p. 252).

Political change, from an institutional perspective, is therefore complex. Simple exchange theories presume that "political bargains adjust quickly and in a necessary way to exogenous changes" (p. 255). Marsh and Olsen are less confident that outcomes

will match external pressures. Instead, they see change as shaped by institutions that have:

lives and deaths of their own, sometimes enduring in the face of apparent inconsistency with their environments, sometimes collapsing without obvious outside cause ... the paths they follow seem determined in part by internal dynamics only loosely connected to changes in their environments (p. 256).

They go on to say that these complications “tend to convert history into a meander” and that “the ability to create change ... does not guarantee either that any arbitrary change can be made at any time or that changes will turn out to be consistent with prior intentions” (p. 256).

In summary, the approaches described above are useful to this research in several ways.

The multiple-streams framework gives clues to the sorts of events and processes that need to be brought together to achieve transport policy change. Such conditions are difficult, but not impossible, to achieve. This is consistent with the observation that only a very limited number of cities have achieved significant transport policy change.

If March and Olsen are correct in their assertion that institutional responses to internal and external pressures will be complex and unpredictable, then determining the causal factors for the success or failure of attempts to change transport policy in a particular institution will be difficult and will require a thorough understanding of the local context.

An important factor in understanding the local context for the formulation of transport and planning policies is the degree to which decisions such as those on infrastructure expenditure are shared between various levels of government: local, regional, state and national. In general, the actual structure of shared government responsibilities varies from place to place but, in most cases, the powers and functions of these governments overlap and compete. It is difficult to classify the functions of different levels of government in federal structures, such as those operating in Australia, in a clear stratification where powers are clearly demarcated. A more accurate image is:

the rainbow cake, characterised by the inseparable mingling of different coloured ingredients, the colours appearing in ... unexpected whirls. As colours are mixed, so functions are mixed (Grodzins, quoted in Riker p. 104).

Explanation of the outcomes of conflicts over transport and planning policy in a particular city requires understanding of the ‘rainbow cake’ that can be used to represent the distribution of functions and powers in the government of that city.

It is possible to speculate that structures of urban governance that provide some balance between the responsibilities of overlapping jurisdictions might tend to create conditions that give challengers to established transport and planning policy more chance of success. This is for two reasons. First, challengers are able to build an institutional base in one level of government that can survive over time, even when competitors in another level of government are in the ascendancy. Second, there is likely to be a greater range of tactical options available to a challenge group that wishes to advance its agenda by playing off one level of government against another.

In Melbourne, transport policies are almost entirely in the hands of the state government, and local government is weak. The insensitivity to local needs that follows from this centralisation has been raised by Parkin (1982) as an explanation for policy outcomes such as the extensive freeway plans of the 1960s and the focus on central-city commuters in the provision of transit service.

Path dependence

Transport policy choices often involve the construction of roads or railways that have a long lifespan. Choices about land use influence the shape of a city for many decades. So, path dependence – the process whereby historical choices act as a constraint on future options available to policy-makers – is clearly relevant to this study.

Path dependence is based in probability theory, and it has been applied to urban politics as a way to bridge the gap between various general models of urban development and contextual studies such as those in the regime theory tradition.

Woodlief (1998) offers a form of path dependence to provide a theory of variation that he says is lacking in both general models and contextual studies:

many theories of urban political economy do not address variation [or see it as] the result of omitted variables ... scholars using contextual approaches often seek ... causes without fully analysing the underlying processes that enable them ... No general theory of variation exists only an understanding that context produces variation (pp. 406-7).

The mathematical basis for path dependence rests on an insight from probability theory about patterns that can emerge in repeated random selections of different coloured balls from a box. If selection rules are self-reinforcing – for example, if two balls of one colour are put back in the box every time one ball of that colour is removed – then stable patterns of selection will emerge. Different points of equilibrium can be reached, and the variation in these equilibria is determined by selections (random events) that take place early in the history of selection: reinforcement creates stability, and randomness leads to variable outcomes (Arthur 1987).

To show that this model of path dependence can be applied to questions of variation in urban political decision-making, Woodlief argues that city policy-making processes exhibit both self-reinforcement and randomness.

Self-reinforcement is a concept found in a range of urban political theories, from public choice theory's attention to the incentives for bureaucrats to protect and expand their patch, to the institutionalist literature which points out that an organisation's past practice becomes preferred by current policy-makers (Jones and Bachelor 1993).

Randomness is not as evident: urban policy-makers are 'looking into the box' when they make policy choices. However, there are enough pressures on decision-making to be reasonably certain that variations will occur: policy-makers will not always choose the same ball. Woodlief argues that randomness is approximated in urban policy-making because of the huge difficulties in making an 'optimal' choice:

[policy-makers] have limited information, numerous distractions and little time ... Imagine that instead of one person making selections ... there was a committee in disagreement about the final goal and which balls to choose (p. 411).

One could also imagine that a degree of randomness is also introduced by hidden agendas and back-room deals.

Woodlief explores path dependence as a mathematical notion by developing a method for detecting it in time-series data and by looking for, and apparently finding, evidence of path dependence in econometric models of government spending in New York and Chicago.

In describing this tendency for cities to get locked into suboptimal policy paths, Woodlief makes a distinction between political and structural ‘lock-in’. He defines political lock-in as:

suboptimal policies that, once implemented and found to be wanting, are difficult to change because of bureaucratic or interest-group resistance coupled with difficulties produced by the complexity of the policy environment (p. 429).

This is contrasted with structural lock-in through which policy outcomes “do harm but simply cannot be undone”. In this category, Woodlief includes placement of roads that alter traffic patterns or destroy neighbourhoods.

Woodlief’s hope for tackling political lock-in rests on the emergence of ‘public entrepreneurs’ (Schneider and Teske 1995) who can use political and persuasive “skills to reframe issues and debates ... to build a coalition in support of their proposed policy change” (p. 431). The difference between the two categories may not be fixed, but rather may be dependent on the extent of change that one imagines a public entrepreneur is able to achieve. Melbourne’s riverside freeway might be seen as structurally locked in. However, the transformation of a similarly located six-lane freeway in Portland to a park showed that this road was only locked in politically: perhaps the same might be true of the Melbourne freeway.

Mental models, through which information and experience are interpreted, also shape institutional notions of what may or may not be reversible. Denzau and North (1994) and Torfing (2001) describe the ways in which institutional resistance can limit the effectiveness of a public entrepreneur who is attempting to implement new policies.

Low and Gleeson have used these ideas to investigate the persistence of road-based transport policies in Australian cities. Their work is described below as part of the discussion of the various methods that have been used to investigate the politics of transport and urban planning.

Studying political influences on transport and urban planning practice

There is substantial body of literature reporting specific investigations of the political dynamic in transport and urban planning policy processes. Many of these draw on understandings of urban politics and wider government policy processes built on the research described in the first parts of this chapter.

Examples of three broad approaches are considered below and assessed in relation to their potential use in this study. These approaches are:

- analysis of discourse and path dependence
- single case studies of transport and planning policy conflicts in a variety of cities and from a variety of theoretical perspectives
- comparative analysis.

Analysis of policy discourse and path dependence

The work of institutionalists and some policy-network researchers, described earlier, has led to a focus on the behaviours and beliefs that institutions foster and express through the actions of their members. Hajer (1995) uses the term ‘storylines’ to describe the sets of assumptions, beliefs and values that shape behaviour in institutions.

A particular form of research, called discourse analysis, uses descriptions of competing storylines as a way to understand policy development and institutional behaviour. In the UK and Australia, researchers have used this approach to look at the institutional resistance to change in transport policy.

Vigar (2002) describes the discourse in post-war transport policy institutions in the UK. He tells of the seismic shift that occurred when one of the core arguments of the ‘predict and provide’ road proponents, namely, that new road capacity does not generate additional traffic, was challenged and discredited from the very centre of the professional policy community by SACTRA (1994). From here, he charts a rise in political and professional support for ‘new realist’ and ‘demand management’ storylines. However, at the same time as Vigar wrote that the “intellectual case concludes that ‘predict and provide’ has run its course” (p. 185), the road-builders were apparently looking for other ways to reach their objectives. A decade after SACTRA, many of the road schemes of the ‘predict and provide’ storytellers were in construction (DfT 2004).

In Australia, Low and his colleagues (Low and Gleeson 2001; Low et al. 2003) have followed a similar path to Vigar and have used discourse analysis to explore the successful institutional resistance to environmentally oriented transport policy in Sydney and Melbourne.

The work of these discourse analysts usefully characterises the internal narratives of various transport policy institutions and traces the ways that these shift in response to changes in the wider political and economic environment. However, it is clear from the UK experience and from Stewart's cautionary tale of US education policy, described earlier, that a particular 'storylines' may be very resistant to change even in the face of a strong intellectual or political challenge.

More recently, Low and his colleagues have broadened the framework for their discourse analysis by introducing the idea of path dependence (Low et al. 2005) to analysis of Australian transport policy. They describe three interwoven strands in institutional path dependence: the influence of existing infrastructure investment, the rules and routines of organisational life, and beliefs about the nature of the problems. They find evidence to support the emerging idea of path dependence as a mental and intellectual barrier rather than simply a physical one, and they argue that "transport policy is not so firmly locked in by concrete urban infrastructure investments" (p. 406).

While it is useful to document and analyse the discourses at work within transport policy institutions so that deeper sites of organisational resistance to change may be identified, other approaches may be needed to provide a full picture of the processes of urban transport policy change.

Case studies and theorising largely based on personal experience

Case studies and comparative analyses of the events surrounding both successful and unsuccessful challenges to transport and planning policy in cities in North America, Europe and Australia provide a different research perspective on the processes of resistance to change in urban transport policy.

A number of case studies of conflicts over urban transport and planning policy are available. They are generally built around the personal experience of the author in some aspect of the conflict. General explanatory principles usually reflect the particular theory of political processes favoured by the author.

In an early example, which is more descriptive than theoretical, Alan Altshuler (1965) gives an account of freeway building in the late 1950s in the 'twin cities' of St Paul and Minneapolis where he had worked as a political adviser.

He gives a human face to the urban transport policy community (pp. 80-82). The road engineers, urban planners, politicians and resident groups of St Paul in the 1960s will be immediately familiar to members of the policy community in Melbourne today. The engineers assemble “quantitative and impartial” data and advance with a moral certainty that “the cost of foregoing highways was almost always higher than the cost of building them” (p. 78). Urban planners nurse doubts about the benefits of big road projects but cannot marshal these doubts into politically potent arguments. Politicians look for experts to deem a project ‘necessary’ and so provide a hedge against controversy. And local opposition groups never quite coalesce into a force strong enough to counter the freeway proponents.

When the Federal Highway Department came to build inner-urban freeways in the twin cities in the late 1950s, the senior planner was a man schooled in the early craft of planning by design, personal experience and intuition. He had seen previous transport ‘solutions’ deliver only “more unpleasant and costly” congestion, and he put a higher value on the disruption to the “tens of thousands” of people who would lose their homes than on the “minutes and pennies” that the technical computations of the road engineers showed would be saved by drivers. But, with no resources to mount his own case, his opponents caricatured his position as a “return to the horse and buggy” and, before his retirement, he could make no headway with the local politicians who had been offered ‘free’ money for a freeway (pp. 80-81).

A younger man took over. He was a typical ‘modern’ planner who understood that “his profession enjoined him to plan comprehensively, but that it did not provide him with a comprehensive set of criteria for making value choices”. He knew that it was necessary to present alternatives and to demonstrate their superiority. But, he could not quantify the “important aspects of life” to counter the engineers’ assertions of a net benefit for the freeway plans, nor could he find normative theories with which to justify alternative recommendations. Because he wanted to “nurture public goodwill towards planning as a profession”, he was unwilling to create big public disputes that he saw little chance of winning. Not surprisingly, all this “sapped his sense of conviction on most issues”. Before long, he accepted the engineers’ viewpoint and confined himself to arguing about marginal design details (p. 82).

Altshuler generalises from this story. He says that planners tend to be liberal idealists with a desire to make plans that are “calls to action”, and a belief that the complex

social problems of cities should not be left to laissez-faire expediency (p. 400). He notes that, for planners, 'success' is defined largely by the recognition of individual influence over political decisions.

In Altshuler's view, planners have formal control over very little of the political environment, and acceptance of its main features is often seen as a condition for success. Instead of the "call to action", there is pressure to "be optimistic and to avoid controversy" and he lists the options for fitting into the cracks of the existing political order as:

- doing 'staff work' for operational agencies at their request
- concentrating on establishing data-bases of 'facts'
- issuing general plans with no "calls to action"
- making persuasive points 'off the record' to other officials.

This was not what a planning student might have expected after an education on the radicalised campuses of the 1960s. For Altshuler, the gap between training and reality meant that:

planners lack distinctive ... principles by which to deal with the more subtle temptations of public life ... they can hardly judge themselves except by their ability to present material in handsome format, their knowledge of planning fashions, and their immediate political success (p. 401).

In short, Altshuler's analysis fits well with the policy-network analysts' descriptions of the obstacles to policy change. Planners were trained to see the wider negative consequences of freeway building but their profession did not supply them with the tools to provide simple measures of their concerns, and they tended to be squeamish about participating in the political over-sell that the highway engineers appeared to relish.

Further case studies of conflict over urban transport policy are shaped by Marxian analyses of economic power.

Sandercock (1975) notes the failures of city planning in Australian cities since 1900 and describes their causes in terms of "the property-power nexus of capitalist society" (p. 4). Her chapter on post-war Melbourne is subtitled 'capitalism, crude and uncivilised'. This indicates the flavour of her analysis, and while she does not give up entirely on the

“redistributive possibilities of urban planning” (p. 213), her case for supporting reform is not inspiring: “we can hardly be doing much damage [to prospects of socialist reform], and we might in the meantime be doing some good” (p. 230).

Logan (1981) and McLoughlin’s *Shaping Melbourne’s Future? – Town Planning, the State and Civil Society* (1992) describe the attempts of Melbourne planners to create and implement plans to direct suburban commercial development into activity centres and to regulate the release of land for housing on the urban fringe. The question mark in McLoughlin’s title gives a clue to his pessimistic conclusions about the potential for planners to keep developers on a short leash.

Touching all three of these works on Melbourne to varying degrees is the negative aspect of the Marxian arguments in planning theory of the time that tended to attribute irresistible powers to developers and other forces of capital. This negativity was not necessarily well founded. As will be seen in Chapter 5, Melbourne planners did have quite strong legal tools to support their plans and had success in implementing some parts of them. Unfortunately, a likely, if unintended, consequence of these academic analyses was further disillusion and disempowerment for practising planners already struggling under the weight of the obstacles described by Altshuler.

In contrast, Bent Flyvbjerg (1998), who participated in, and then wrote about, the rise and fall and subsequent resurrection of a scheme to manage traffic in the centre of the Danish town of Aalborg, is understandably more optimistic that a positive role exists for academic and practising planners. His story is:

packed full of grand plans and little schemes, publicised hopes and back-room deceptions, talk of award-winning professionalism combined with misinformation and narrow self-aggrandisement (Forester 1999, p. 1).

Flyvbjerg’s sweeping theoretical analysis of this grubby but all-too-likely tale takes us through Aristotle, Nietzsche and Foucault to conclude that power can distort rationality. He quotes Nietzsche’s dictum that “power makes [you] stupid” (Flyvbjerg 1998, p. 230), by which he means that if you have sufficient power then you can ignore objections to your actions based on rational argument. His description of his own successes in tackling the irrationality of power in Aalborg, through rigorous and persistent ‘whistle-blowing’, provides encouragement to others to follow his lead.

In his review of Flyvbjerg's book, John Forester, a US planning academic, is critical of the heavy theorising that he feels obstructs the simpler lessons of the case study. He also thinks that Flyvbjerg is somewhat disingenuous in his surprise on discovering that:

planners and public officials can systematically misrepresent facts, manipulate the consent of the public, manipulate the trust of others, and shape public agendas and attention selectively (Forester 1999).

Forester points to numerous theoretical perspectives and practical processes that Flyvbjerg might have used to anticipate the debacle in Aalborg, and which can be used to assist professionals to act ethically, to recognise and address the structural biases in the political administration of planning and, in short, to enter the political contest with more hope of success. For examples, see Forester's Habermasian *Planning in the Face of Power* (1989) (which includes recommendations on how to teach broad 'political' skills to planning students) or Boyer (1986) who takes her lead from Foucault.

In addition to these works, which have a theoretical bent, there are many operationally based case studies that describe successes in implementing elements of the environmentally oriented transport planning package. These include Juri Pill (1979) on the planning processes that were used to capitalise on the political momentum created by public opposition to inner-city freeways in Toronto; Wachs (Wachs 1985; 1989) on the pressures that lead to misuse of transport forecasting; and Krumholz and Cavel's (1994) case histories of planners who have achieved some degree of 'redistributional' change.

The limiting factor in all these case-study approaches is their idiosyncratic choices of theoretical frameworks and the lack of empirical testing of their prescriptions that can make them uncertain guides to understanding how and why particular policy changes were achieved.

Comparative studies

In contrast to the studies of single cases, comparative studies of transport and urban planning outcomes do reveal more about the causes of political success and failure.

In his comparisons of Melbourne and Toronto, Mees (2000) showed that differences in the physical characteristics of the cities were small and did not explain the substantial gap in transit service quality and, therefore, transit use. From his understanding of

transit management theory and because his research revealed that this was one of the few significant differences between the two cities, Mees concluded that there were two interrelated reasons for Toronto's relative success. These were the long-term existence of a single agency responsible for all transit in Metro Toronto, and the successful services planned and implemented by this agency.

Mees suggests a political explanation for the creation of these mechanisms for successful transit service delivery. He describes three 'crises' in city planning (in the 1920s, 1950s and 1970s) which forced transport problems onto the political agenda in both cities, and he argues that political decisions taken in response to these crises allowed Toronto to introduce successful administrative, planning and service delivery arrangements for its transit system. Though not described in these terms by Mees, this reflects a successful confluence of the 'multiple streams' of the policy process, as described above.

Other comparative analyses also draw out the political dimension in explanations of urban planning outcomes.

In Canada, Leo (1994), compared urban planning process and outcomes in Vancouver and Edmonton to explore the impacts of global economic forces. He concludes that the outcomes in Vancouver are superior and that Vancouver's dynamic political culture is a better explanation than its comparatively higher placing in the global urban economic hierarchy. He describes the restrictions placed on developers in Vancouver and the "very substantial exercise of state power that [centrist groups] initiated and made respectable" (p. 690).

This work begs important questions about how such a political culture is created and sustained. Political culture can become a:

residual category to explain everything which cannot be explained in terms of structures, or ... a *deus ex machina* [to avoid an] analytic deadlock (Keating 1991, p. 3).

So, it is perhaps more useful to first carefully describe the mechanics of the political and institutional processes that have achieved effective transport policy change, and to invoke political culture only as a non-deterministic aspect of these processes that may change over time.

In Britain, Docherty (2000) used a regime-theory analysis to explore the influence of different structures of regional government on the level of support given to investment in transit projects and found that a difference in the balance of powers between elected councillors and professional bureaucrats was a significant factor. This analysis found that regional government in Strathclyde, where councillors held considerable power, was able to build support for transit projects with goals of improved social inclusion. This outcome was contrasted with the transit projects implemented in Merseyside, where unelected officials had greater power, and where transit projects were selected using narrower criteria relating to perceived benefits to the regional economy. It is argued that the main mechanism used by councillors in Strathclyde to implement their preferred transit projects was to demonstrate wide public support through consultations that ensured that “public opinion enjoyed a conduit to the very heart of the policy-making process even between elections” (p. 128). These are useful observations, but the analysis is weakened by the absence of any assessment of the success or otherwise of the Strathclyde transit projects relative to those implemented in Merseyside.

In Europe, Bratzel (1999; 2000) examined six cities that he describes as relatively successful in limiting growth in car use and increasing transit ridership.

Bratzel observed that there was little to distinguish the policy programs pursued in these cities all adopted the environmentally oriented policy package. He found that professional networks understood this package well both in the successful cities and in those that have made less progress, and thus he eliminated simple ‘policy learning’ as the explanation for the successful outcomes.

He then turned to a political analysis. Using a theoretical framework similar to that used in this thesis, Bratzel examined the decision-making processes in urban transport in Amsterdam and Groningen in Holland, Freiburg and Karlsruhe in Germany, and Zurich and Basel in Switzerland. He observed three stages of political activity that all six cities followed, and concluded that all were necessary for significant changes in travel behaviour to occur. These stages were:

1. a serious challenge to the governing coalition of the city or region, based on popular opposition to elements of its transport and environmental policies
2. a “radical change” in political leadership and in “important transport political positions” (2000, p. 92)

3. institutionalisation of operational and technical changes through the creation of a new policy network. This requires political leaders to maintain their mandate for new transport policies over some years by enlisting support from a range of social actors so that a new agenda becomes established in the governing coalition.

This work is consistent with Mees' observations that Toronto's relative success stemmed from political decisions taken in response to crises around transport policy and the successful maintenance of a consensus in favour of an alternative policy program over time.

From a regime theory perspective, it suggests that a significant change took place in the governing coalitions of these cities, at least in their political and bureaucratic membership, and that these individuals were able to 'sell' their new transport agenda to other members of the coalition.

Bratzel seems to have observed a true change in the dominant policy network. Consistent with the theories of policy network change, this was only achieved after long and skilful work by political entrepreneurs.

In conclusion, it seems reasonable to assume that significant change in urban transport policy will only occur in response to a strong and successful challenge to the public legitimacy of existing policies. So, to understand the trajectory of transport policy in Melbourne, the important focus will be to identify any forceful challenges that may have occurred and to explore in detail the behaviour of key groups of actors in response to these challenges. However, before turning attention to the specifics of transport policy conflict in Melbourne, the key elements of the many theoretical perspectives reviewed in this chapter can now be brought together in a conceptual model of the factors that influence change in urban transport policy.

‘Challenge and resistance’: a conceptual model for investigating transport policy change

The broad research question for this thesis centres on the need to understand how political processes and institutional arrangements affected the outcomes of conflicts between different conceptions of the ‘right’ urban transport policy in response to problems caused in Melbourne by mass mobility by car.

Having now reviewed a wide range of theoretical approaches to urban politics and the policy process in general, a framework has emerged that can be used to explain the tenacity of established policy positions and the likely trajectory of urban transport policy development and change through Hall’s “messy dealings” between professionals, politicians and the public.

From the perspectives of both regime theory and policy-network analysis, it is clear that in any significant policy question a range of alternative views on a problem and its solution will be present, and when one view dominates within a governing coalition or policy network there will be substantial obstacles to change. As described in Chapter 2, the major alternative views on urban transport policy represent mutually exclusive policy packages based on fundamentally different approaches to public and private investment in urban development. In most cities, conflict between these views plays out through a constant process of challenge and resistance between the supporters of policies designed to enable continued automobility and their opponents who believe that reductions in car use are both necessary and achievable.

Empirical evidence confirms the theoretical understanding that a dominant urban transport policy network is very resistant to change. Theoretically, some analysts seem to believe that policy network change is possible without a substantial change in membership of the dominant policy network. Empirically, however, change away from automobility seems sufficiently difficult that it does not happen without changes in policy network membership even as, over time, the evidence of such things as induced travel from road construction mounts up and the imperatives of issues such as climate change become more urgent. Change in policy network membership, in turn, seems to require change at the level of the governing coalition through which supporters of alternatives gain influential positions in a new coalition that brings together sufficient

resources to enact new policy prescriptions and to weaken the influence of previous approaches.

The literature reviewed in this chapter contributes to a conceptual model that illustrates the important factors affecting the trajectory of challenge and resistance in urban transport policy conflict. The model shows that there are many obstacles to successful transport policy change. The four elements of the ‘challenge and resistance’ model and the theoretical context of each are described below:

1. Change in the membership of governing coalitions and the difficulty of achieving such change

Both regime theory and the sociological insights of Giddens argue that individuals and groups have opportunities to mediate the impacts of local and global economic structures. These opportunities provide the means for change in urban transport programs. However, regime theory points out the advantages that an existing governing coalition has in maintaining its position in the face of challengers who must work hard to build support against the influence of the ‘selective incentives’ and ‘small opportunities’ available to an incumbent coalition.

In most cities, by default or by design, policies of automobility dominate decision-making in transport programs. Empirically, change to the implementation of an environmentally oriented policy package appears to require some change in the membership of the governing coalition of business and political leaders and subsequent establishment of a new coalition that is sufficiently powerful, in regime theory terms, to implement new transport programs in the complex and fragmented world of a modern city or region. The difficulties in making such a change are clear.

Broad political and governance structures in a particular city or region determine which groups will be most important within a governing coalition and, in Australian cities, bureaucrats and professionals will be likely to hold powerful positions. These structures also determine the methods available to an existing coalition to limit the power of its challengers.

Various researchers have used the idea of a persistent local political culture as part of their explanation for observed urban policy outcomes. The political

culture of a particular city or region is hard to define and there are risks in using it too deterministically as a theoretical explanation. Its outward manifestations are things like the range of interests typically represented in governing coalitions and in the groups that are able to influence local political processes.

2. *Variation in structures of government responsibility*

The institutions that define and manage overlapping jurisdictions and functional responsibilities of governments and institutions shape policy outcomes. So, knowledge of the particular structures of responsibility for transport policy in a city or region will be an important factor in understanding the range of strategic and tactical options open to supporters of policy change.

3. *Historical patterns of transport investment and urban development*

Theories of path dependence show that many factors exist that may ‘lock in’ suboptimal urban transport policies. These include factors such as historical investment decisions embodied in the elements of the urban form such as roads, railways, and the distribution of employment and residential locations; and intellectual and behavioural factors such as established patterns of problem definition and ideas about potential solutions that exist within institutions.

There appears to be a growing theoretical consensus that intellectual path dependencies are more resistant to change. Work on institutional behaviour indicates that responses to internal and external pressures will be complex and difficult to predict. So, knowledge of the local context is necessary in order to understand the reasons for success or failure of attempts to change transport policy in a particular institutional setting.

4. *Political responses to strong challenges to the legitimacy of existing urban transport policy*

The multiple-streams framework for the policy process and Bratzel’s empirical research both show that significant change to automobility policies can be implemented only in certain conditions. The first appears to be a strong political challenge to the legitimacy of existing urban transport and planning policy. Political entrepreneurs, in all the cities investigated by Bratzel, used opportunities provided by such a crisis to broker change by introducing new policy network leaders. In Bratzel’s cities, a second common condition is that

the entrepreneurs were skilful enough to maintain political support for the new policy network leaders over a sufficiently long period to overcome resistance to the introduction of new practices that then led to reduction in car use and substantial improvements in transit use.

Explaining Melbourne's transport outcomes using the 'challenge and resistance' model

Existing research identifies part of the explanation for Melbourne's disappointing transit performance as historic patterns of competition between the operators of different transit modes. These have produced suboptimal investment in infrastructure and have obstructed the adoption of approaches to transit network planning and service delivery appropriate for a modern dispersed city. This work has also demonstrated that Melbourne's urban form still embodies the potential for significant improvement in transit use.

This still leaves a deeper question unanswered: why have political entrepreneurs been unable to overcome this path dependency and find a way to realise Melbourne's potential for improved transit use?

The challenge and resistance model offers a comprehensive way of looking at the reasons for Melbourne's observed transit performance. It suggests a number of explanations that together represent a hypothesis in answer to the research question. The hypothesis is that:

1. Strongly centralised administrative and political structures concentrated powers over formulation and implementation of urban policy in the hands of the Victorian state government. This created obstacles to the establishment of institutional and political bases for opposition to the power of policy networks built around the road-planning authorities.
2. Although there were two significant crises in the legitimacy of the Victorian Government's transport policies (one in response to extensive inner-urban freeway plans in 1969, and another in 1980-81 following proposals for substantial cuts to transit services), in neither case were new policy networks established that could change urban transport practice in ways that would increase transit use.

3. The complexities of competing interests within successive governing coalitions in Melbourne may have made it more difficult for political entrepreneurs to sustain arguments for change in transport policy and to assemble support during ‘windows of opportunity’ for change.

The next chapter will outline the methodology that will be used to test this hypothesis. As seen in this chapter, the rich detail of the behaviour of particular actors that is found in the case studies of researchers like Altshuler and Flyvbjerg is important to understanding local policy outcomes. In this research, the detail that will be sought relates to factors that include:

- the nature of public and private arguments used by members of dominant policy networks
- power relations within the professional planning community
- the political strategies used by entrepreneurs within new governing coalitions
- the agendas or political strategies of various civic action ‘challenge’ groups.

However, to understand the relative influence of the range of causal factors set out in the hypothesis, comparative analysis of transport policy processes in other similar cities is also necessary.

4. Choosing cities for comparative analysis

In the previous chapter, a multi-faceted hypothesis was proposed to explain the failure to realise the potential for greater transit use in the period in Melbourne after 1970. This hypothesis is based on the ‘challenge and resistance’ model, also articulated in Chapter 3, for understanding the political and institutional processes associated with attempts to change urban transport policy in modern cities with liberal-democratic forms of government.

This chapter describes the reasons for choosing a methodology of comparative analysis to investigate the validity and relative importance of these explanations. It also describes the process used to identify Perth and Vancouver as the most suitable subjects for this comparative analysis, despite some limitations that arise from their relatively small populations and shorter histories as major urban centres.

The chapter continues with an account of the methods used to assemble sufficient information to create contextualised descriptions of the institutional and political processes through which urban transport and development policy has been contested in Melbourne, Perth and Vancouver. It concludes with an overview of the way that the wealth of detail and rich description will be kept connected with the theoretical framework.

Choice of analytic technique

As discussed in the previous chapter, it is useful to explore, as a case study, transport policy processes in Melbourne since the 1970s. Much can be discovered about local processes through detailed contextualised description and, indeed, such description is necessary because of the complex and unpredictable nature of institutional responses to challenge and change.

Exactly this approach was used in theoretical work that underpins this study.

Clarence Stone’s method for finding this level of contextual detail includes looking for “evidence in patterns of detail” through extensive interviews that aim for insight into the flow of events (1989, p. 255). Flyvbjerg (1998) developed his theories about rationality and power from a rich narrative of the practice of transport planning in Aalborg, the methodology for which he describes as ‘Wittgensteinian narratology’,

but is really nothing more than a detailed assembly of material derived from interviews with protagonists and primary source material.

There is a problem in relying on narratives of Melbourne alone. The challenge and resistance model proposes multiple causal factors for the city's transport planning outcomes. The complete absence of one or more of these factors might be revealed through a single case-study of Melbourne, but this approach will not allow any testing of the relative causal significance of factors that are found to be present. For this, some form of comparative analysis is needed. And, because the behaviour of the actors and institutions involved in transport decision-making can only be understood through detailed understanding of the context for this behaviour, a case-oriented comparative method is appropriate.

Many researchers, including Kenworthy, Bratzel and Mees, have found that transit outcomes vary quite significantly in cities that are in many ways quite similar. Ragin (1987) gives details of a technique for case-oriented causal analysis commonly used in social inquiry to resolve apparent paradoxes of this type in which several cases might:

appear to be very similar yet experience different outcomes ... the goal is to identify the difference that is responsible for contradictory outcomes (p. 47).

This method, called a "variation-finding" comparison by Tilly (1984), restricts investigations to locations that are "similar on as many theoretically relevant variables as possible" (Ragin, p. 47).

Ragin says that care is needed, when using this approach, to avoid confusion from "illusory commonality" where two features are thought to be similar (and so are eliminated from the analysis) when, in fact, they do "differ dramatically in causal significance" (p. 48). This difference, he says, results from:

multiple conjectural causation, [whereby a feature is] causally relevant in one setting and not in another [because] its causal significance is altered by the presence of other features (that is, its effect is altered by context) (p. 48).

Thus, "contextualisation of the causal importance of different conditions is the rule ... in most case-oriented study" (p. 49). Ragin's prescription for avoiding problems of illusory commonality is an "intimate familiarity with relevant cases" (p. 50).

So, both the methodology and the institutional phenomena under investigation require the researcher to build substantial understanding of the contextual details of the chosen cases. This points to the need to investigate only a small number of locations, even though this may limit the extent of theoretical generalisations that might be made.

In one example of this approach, Keating (1991) uses case-oriented comparisons to investigate the factors that support the ability of urban governments to manage change and maintain an openness to social interests. He also notes that problems can arise if too many cases are included because this:

leads to an abstraction in which individual ... contexts fade away and the reader is left with little idea of how things actually work (p. 2).

However, within the set of locations that he chooses, he favours the inclusion of international comparisons because these provide:

a yardstick to measure the significance of findings which within a single national context might be exaggerated or trivialised (p. 1).

Choice of locations

The cities that might be included in the comparative analysis designed to illuminate the reasons for Melbourne's failure to meet its potential for transit use need to show some variation in transit performance compared with Melbourne and similarity on as many other theoretically relevant variables as possible. This stricture on similarity might be relaxed to include international comparisons in order to avoid the analytic distortions that Keating argues nationally based comparisons can produce.

Transit performance can be measured in a number of ways. As noted in Chapter 2, transit performance is affected the totality of the package of transport and urban planning policies adopted in a particular urban region. The trend in per capita transit use over several decades is one important indicator of a city's transit performance because it better reflects local successes or failures in urban policy packages than indicators such as absolute patronage numbers, for which local historical explanations might be more important. An assessment of the degree to which a city's transport and planning policies fit with Vuchic's 'car disincentive – transit incentive'

model is another way to judge the likelihood of future improvements in transit performance.

In Australia, Sydney is the city closest to Melbourne in its form of urban government and in its size (Sydney's population at the 2006 Census was around 15% greater than Melbourne's). However, trends in Sydney's transit performance show a similar pattern of stagnation to Melbourne, making it a poor choice for this study. Sydney's transit mode share is higher than in Melbourne, but it fell from 11.9% in 1991 to 10.6% in 2002 and was slightly lower again in 2004 (TPDC 2006). Absolute numbers of transit passengers have increased from a low point in 1980, but per capita transit use stayed roughly constant between 1980 and 1995 (ABS 2005, 2006) and has probably fallen since then.⁴

Brisbane, the next largest Australian city (around half Melbourne's population in 2006), is not a good case for comparison because of its particular form of urban government and its generally poor record in transit performance. Brisbane's urban governance is unique in Australia, having had a single metropolitan government since 1925 (Caulfield and Wanna 1995). Responsibility for transport services is split between this body (the Brisbane City Council) and the Queensland Government. In transit, the council manages bus services, while the state operates the suburban rail system. Very recently, there has been some improvement in coordination between the transit agencies of these two levels of government (Queensland Transport Annual Report 2005), consciously modelled on practices in Vancouver.⁵ A common ticketing system was introduced in July 2004 across all transit modes in Brisbane and south-east Queensland. A draft plan to coordinate transit services into a mutually supportive network was released in 2005 (TransLink Qld). There are some early signs of patronage growth in response to these initiatives, but trends in transit use before the formation of TransLink were negative. In the 20 years to 1995, passenger numbers remained virtually static while population grew by more than 50% (ABS 2005, 2006). During the 1990s, leading Brisbane City councillors made strong

⁴ The NSW EPA (2003) includes data for transit use in Sydney in its State of the Environment report. This shows a decline in per capita transit use from around 126 (probably unlinked) trips per annum in 1980-81 to 112 in 1999-2000. It appears that this data does not include private buses that operate in large areas of western Sydney, but there were no major changes in bus operations during this period (Unsworth 2003) that might suggest a transfer of trips to the private operators. Most of the small decline in the transit mode share between 1999 and 2004 was in bus travel (TPDC 2006).

⁵ In a sign of imitation being the best form of flattery, the new agency is called TransLink.

statements of intent about improving bus services, the main result of which was a plan for busways (McCormick Rankin 1995). Some of these busways were built, but they produced little growth in patronage.

The next Australian city in size is Perth (at the 2006 Census its population was 41% of Melbourne's). Perth's urban governance is similar to Melbourne in that the Western Australian State government has almost complete control of urban development and transport policies. Local government is even smaller and weaker than Melbourne's: significant amalgamations were forced through in Victoria in the 1990s but not in WA. One small difference in the municipal electoral system is that mayors in Perth are elected by popular vote rather than by the councillors, as is the case in suburban Melbourne.

In a close parallel with Melbourne, a reformist state government was elected in the early 1980s after a long period of conservative rule. Several years earlier, a part of the city's small rail network had been closed. A broad cross-section of the public had opposed the decision, and this opposition contributed to the electoral swing against the incumbents. The new government began to change transport policy and, by the mid-1990s, an increase in per capita transit use could be observed. Although the absolute level is low compared to Melbourne, the trend over the past 15 years has been positive – annual per capita transit use grew by 32% from 50.4 unlinked trips in 1992 to 66.7 in 2005 (based on the transit operator's Annual Reports). Further growth is expected with the opening in 2007 of the 72 km Southern Suburbs railway, which includes eleven new suburban stations to be fed by a coordinated bus network (PTA 2006). Planning policies, which include limits to growth in road capacity in the Perth region, add to the optimism about the future.

Adelaide was Australia's only other city with a population of more than one million in 2006. Transit use in Adelaide is in serious decline with annual per capita use falling from around 54 trips in 1988-89 to 39 unlinked trips in 2001-02. The chief cause of this decline is cuts to service. Attempts, so far unsuccessful, to reverse this trend have centred around the introduction of free transit travel for school students in 1990 and, more recently, the introduction of a travel-demand marketing program (DEH 2003).

Thus, Perth is the only Australian city that comes close to meeting the requirements for this comparative analysis. It is similar to Melbourne in the outward form of its

institutions of government and policy-making and in its broad political and cultural heritage. Its positive trends in transit performance, though modest, are supported by an emerging shift towards complementary transport and planning policies of the type advocated by Vuchic.

A major difference between Melbourne and Perth is Melbourne's greater size and economic diversity. This complexity is one of the hypothesised reasons for the absence of successful transit policies in Melbourne. It would have been preferable to have a more closely matched Australian city to compare with Melbourne, but this is not possible because neither Brisbane nor Sydney show the necessary trends of improving transit performance. This means that care will be needed not to use complexity as a 'residual' explanation or, conversely, to give it too little weight.

It is now necessary to look internationally for other subjects for the analysis.

The greatest variation from Melbourne in trends in per capita transit use is found in some cities in Europe and East Asia. However, these cities are not appropriate subjects for this investigation because their institutional and political structures and processes, through which transport policy choices are made, are substantially different from those in Melbourne.

Comparative research into the different forms of the modern western state is well developed. Typologies used in this research can provide confirmation of intuitive selections of countries that are most similar to Australia.

Esping-Andersen's way of classifying and comparing modern democratic states (1999; 1990) came from his work to describe and explain divergent forms of the modern welfare state. This analysis describes three models of welfare capitalism that have evolved historically to produce differences in social stratification, social rights and distribution of resources. His empirical basis is research that identifies "qualitatively different arrangements between state, market and family" (1990, p. 26).

Esping-Andersen differentiates the United States, Canada, the UK, Ireland, New Zealand and Australia from the wealthy northern European states. Countries in the first group are classified as 'liberal' welfare states that provide social benefits:

mainly to a clientele of low-income, usually working-class, state dependants [and] encourages the market [to provide] private welfare schemes among the

majorities ... a class-political dualism [exists] between the two (1990, pp. 26-27).

Further, the middle class became more wedded to market-oriented mechanisms of exchange and social support through historical patterns of:

political coalition-building in the transition from a rural economy to a middle-class society; [and through] past reforms [that] have institutionalised class preferences and political behaviour (p. 32).

Castles and Mitchell (1990) identified institutional differences, compared with the other 'liberal' states, in the ways that social protection for those in the workforce (particularly men) is organised in Australia and New Zealand through industrial regulation and redistributive taxation policies. Popular support for such institutions and policies, at least until they began to be weakened in the mid-1980s, has been a key to mobilisation of parties of the left in Australian politics. However, Esping-Andersen's more recent empirical work (1999) shows that, in his six liberal states, the similarities are greater than the differences, particularly on the dimensions that he sees as most important, namely, encouragement of private markets and a narrow definition of the problems in the lives of individuals or families that are deemed to have a 'social' cause.

On this basis, New Zealand is most like Australia in its social and political orientation to economic forces. But, Auckland, its only large city, with a population of 1.3 million in 2006 (Statistics New Zealand), fails the 'positive transit trends' test, although there are some very recent signs of recovery from an extremely low base. In 1994, Auckland's transit system managed only around 35 unlinked trips per capita (ARTA 2005), down from around 290 in 1955 (Mees and Dodson 2002).⁶ The transit mode share for the journey to work fell by half between 1986 and 1991 (Mees and Dodson 2006). There has been some recovery following modest service improvement in the city's small rail system and some integration of bus and rail networks: by 2004, annual transit use was just under 50 trips per capita (ARTA). If the transit network is further expanded and the growth trend is maintained in coming years, the situation in Auckland will be similar to Perth, and the political and

⁶ This fall (to 12% of the 1955 ridership) is proportionally greater than in Melbourne where the 1980 nadir of transit use was 22% of the 1950 levels.

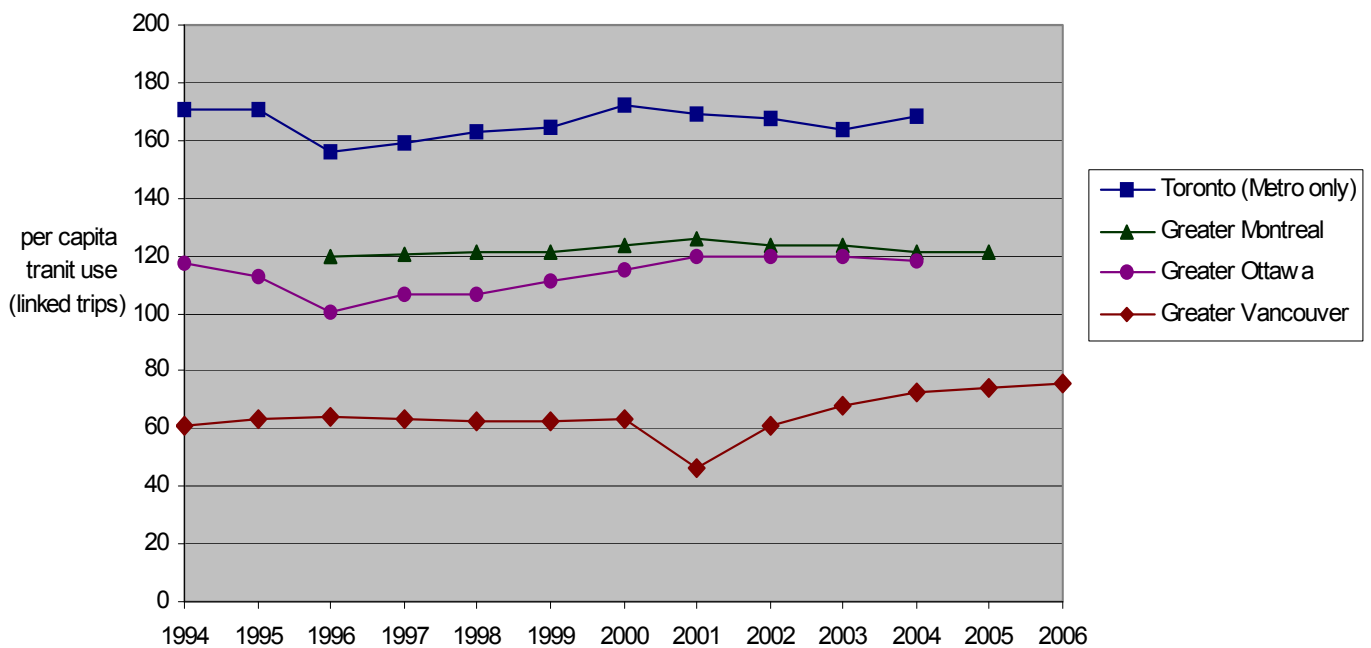
institutional processes of transport policy change will be worthy of further investigation.

Canada is the next most similar country in Esping-Andersen's classification. Similarities are also apparent in the political institutions that are based on their relatively recent UK colonial heritage (when compared with the USA), their large size and sparse populations, and the extractive and agriculture industries that underpin their economies.

Common political institutions and processes in Australia and Canada include:

- federal structures based on state or provincial parliaments that give less independence relative to the national government than is the case in the US
- local government that is legislatively, constitutionally and financially dependent on the state or province
- the level of managerial influence on policy wielded by professionals within government bureaucracies that gives them reasonably strong powers relative to elected officials (Keating 1991).

Recent Canadian trends in per capita transit use are shown in the following graph.



(Sources: Toronto and Ottawa – Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA), quoted in Al-Dubikhi 2007; Vancouver and Montreal – operators' Annual Reports.)

Fig. 4.1: Recent trends in per capita transit use in Canadian cities

Trends in average travel time for the journey to work across the metropolitan area since 1992 are also available and provide another indirect indicator of transit performance in Canadian cities. These trends are shown in the following table, reproduced from Chapter 2.

	1992	1998	2005
Toronto	68	76	79
Montreal	62	65	76
Vancouver	70	68	67
Ottawa	57	62	65
Calgary	52	64	66
Edmonton	50	58	62

(Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, reported in Turcotte, 2005)

Table 4.1: Average travel time for round trip to work in Canadian cities

This forms the basis of an assessment of Canadian cities to see if any are appropriate subjects for comparison with Melbourne and Perth in this study.

In Toronto, Canada’s largest city, transit use is much greater than in Melbourne. Between 1970 and 1990, patronage grew by 20% across the whole metropolitan region, increasing from 185 to 223 annual per capita unlinked trips (Mees 2000, p. 178). Since 1990, this trend appears to have flattened out. Mees reports a decline in patronage after a recession and long strikes in 1989 and 1991 that were followed by service cuts (p. 279). More service cuts came after a new neo-liberal provincial government was elected in 1996.

The CUTA data in Fig. 4.1 show stagnation since 1995 in annual per capita transit use in the Metro Toronto (now called the City of Toronto), which is home to around half of the 5.5 million people who live in the region. Transit services in greater Toronto over this period were delivered by at least seven agencies generally associated with different local governments. These arrangements make it difficult to assemble aggregate transit use data for the whole region in recent years. There are a number of grounds for believing that the trends in transit use in the outer suburbs are

generally no better than those seen in the City of Toronto. First, despite some localised improvements (notably in the City of York), the transit agencies in the outer suburbs have not overcome the problems in the quality of service frequency and coordination identified by Mees. Second, there is continuing growth in the average travel time for the journey to work across the whole metropolitan region of Toronto, as shown in Table 4.1.

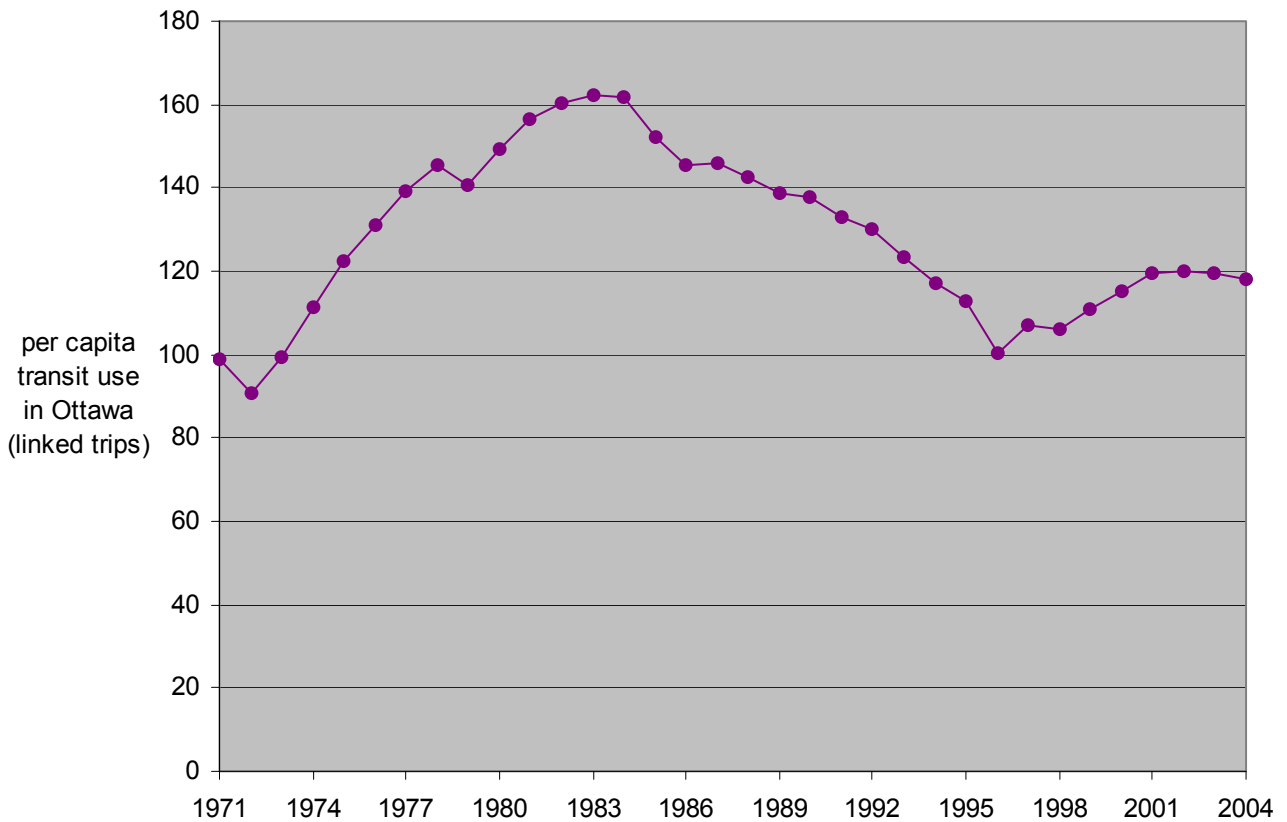
This relatively poor recent transit performance is one reason for not choosing Toronto for the comparative analysis in this study. Another reason is that comparison of political processes in transport policy development between Melbourne and Toronto would be likely to result in a reworking of the account that Mees has already given, if in a more abbreviated form, in his outline of the similarities and differences in the political contests over transport policy in the two cities. As discussed in Chapter 2, Mees provides a cogent argument that the growth in transit use that began in the 1970s was due to the policies of service integration pursued, with solid political support, by a single centralised agency that was responsible for transit planning and operations in what is now called the City of Toronto. The recent stagnation of transit performance coincides with a breakdown of political support for this model of transit planning and service delivery under a neo-liberal government.

Montreal, too, is of comparable size to Melbourne – the population of the Montreal metropolitan area at the 2006 Census was 3.66 million (Statistics Canada 2006) – and its transit use is much higher than in Melbourne. However, this pattern was set even earlier than in Toronto, and transit performance trends since 1980 are weak. The Kenworthy global data set reports growth in patronage⁷ falling slightly behind population growth between 1981 and 1991 (Kenworthy and Laube 1999). More recent transit operator data for linked trips, shown in Fig. 4.1, indicate a continuation of this flat pattern across the urban region. In addition, differences in language and culture between Melbourne and French-speaking Quebec make Montreal an unsuitable subject.

The positive trends in Ottawa's transit performance from 1994 to 2001, seen earlier in Fig. 4.1, might give some cause to consider this city as a candidate for this study.

⁷ It is not clear from the documentation provided, but the reported patronage appears to be unlinked trips across the whole metropolitan region.

However, this trend is put into context by the data on performance since 1971 shown below in Fig. 4.2.



(Source: transit operators, reported in Al-Dubikhi 2007)

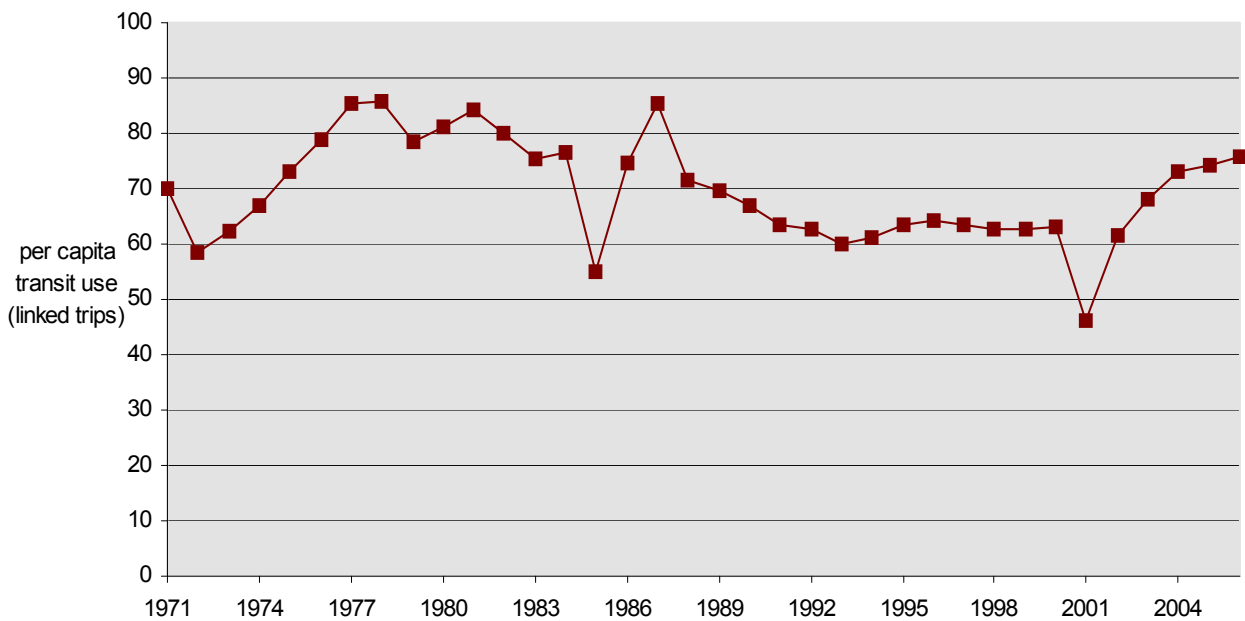
Fig. 4.2: Transit performance trends in Ottawa

Fig. 4.2 shows an interesting picture of growth and decline, especially when the numbers are correlated with administrative and technical changes made to transit operations. Growth in the early 1970s coincides with the formation of a regional transit agency and a subsequent improvement in service quality. The decline in the mid-1980s began soon after the introduction of a new bus system that operates largely on roadways separated from other vehicles. Some services were improved in the 1990s, and a small diesel-powered rail system opened in 2001, but the latter does not appear to have contributed as greatly to overall transit performance as its supporters might have hoped.

While other cities in Canada recorded transit growth during the 1970s and some decline thereafter, the extent of the reversal of Ottawa's previously strong position is

puzzling. The correlation of these trends with changes in transport policy suggests that interesting research could be undertaken into the institutional and political processes surrounding transport decision-making in Ottawa. However, this study is not the place for that research. Ottawa is a small city – 75% of the size of Perth⁸ – and, as a national capital, may be subject to unique political and institutional pressures. In any case, the primary requirement for this comparative analysis is a positive trend in transport system performance.

Evidence of positive trends in transport system performance can be found in Vancouver.



(Source: Vancouver transit operator)

Fig. 4.3: Transit performance trends in Vancouver

The pattern of transit use in Vancouver from the 1970s to the mid-1990s, shown in Fig. 4.3, is a gentler form of the general Canadian trend of growth in the 1970s followed by a period of decline. (The two outliers in the data show the results of long bus strikes in 1985 and 2001.) The difference from the general Canadian trend is found in the steady growth trend since the late 1990s.

The lower levels of transit use, compared with other Canadian cities, reflect Vancouver’s limited rapid transit infrastructure and its relatively small downtown

⁸ The population of the Ottawa- Gatineau metropolitan area at the 2006 Census was 1.13 million (Statistics Canada).

employment market due to the location of most of the BC provincial bureaucracy in the capital, Victoria. The interesting point, however, is the recent rally in performance. This trend provides some evidence of successful transport policy outcomes in Vancouver.

The unique trend towards shorter travel times for the journey-to-work, described in Chapter 2, adds to a picture of relative success in reducing overall financial and environmental transport system costs. Long-lasting strategies to manage urban development (GVRD 1996) and current expansion of locally-proven transit technology and service patterns (GVTA 2004) give cause for optimism that the emerging trend in transit use can be maintained or improved.

One question over the choice of Vancouver for this study is the same as that over the selection of Perth: Vancouver is smaller than Melbourne.⁹ The difference is not as great as Perth: the population of greater Vancouver in 2006 was 59% of Melbourne's (Statistics Canada 2006), while Perth was just over 40% of Melbourne. However, no other city in Canada shows the same degree of transport system improvement. So, with the same caveats that were applied to the population difference between Perth and Melbourne, Vancouver is the only Canadian city that can be used for this study.

⁹ The population of the Vancouver metropolitan area at the 2006 Census was 2.12 million (Statistics Canada 2006).

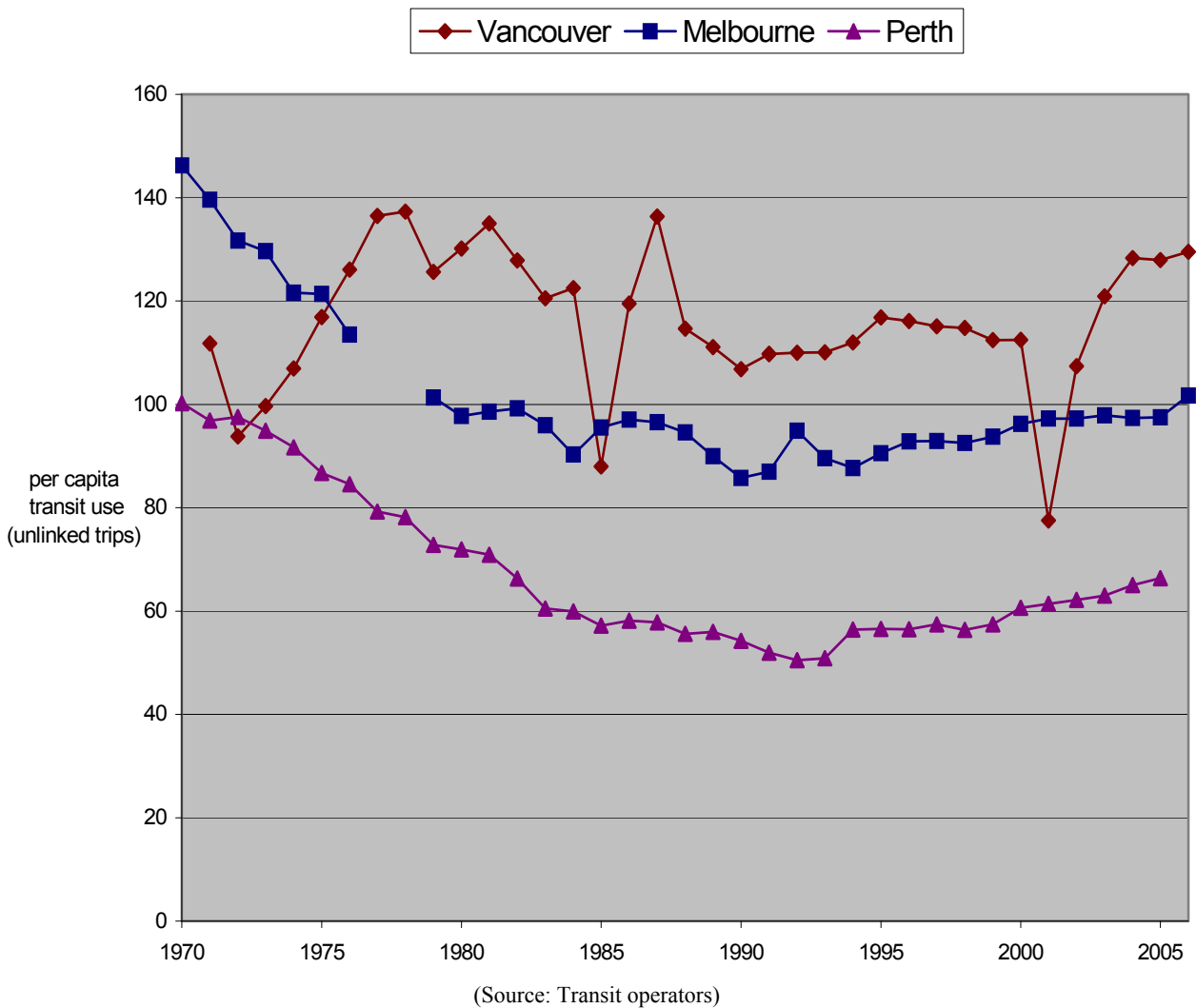


Fig. 4.4: Comparison of transit performance in Melbourne, Vancouver and Perth

Fig. 4.4 provides further evidence of superior transit performance in Vancouver compared with Melbourne and Perth, using data for unlinked trips.¹⁰ Even with Melbourne’s large comparative advantage due to its many miles of established train and tramlines, per capita transit use in Vancouver is on average more than 20% higher.

In both Perth and Vancouver, there are demonstrably positive trends in transit use that appear to be the result of changes in policy and within the institutions that manage urban transport systems.

¹⁰ The transit operator could not provide data for unlinked trips in Vancouver before 1992. A conservative estimate of unlinked trips for the period from 1970 to 1992 is made by converting linked trips to unlinked trips, using a factor for ‘transfers per trip’ of 1.6. This is slightly lower than the average of 1.78 transfers per trip that was seen during the years 1992 to 2006 when both linked and unlinked trip figures are available.

Beyond Canada, the other countries in Esping-Andersen's market liberal grouping are the US, Ireland and the UK. Choosing a city from any of these countries would be stretching too far the analytic requirement for similarity on a range of theoretically relevant variables. Important differences include the structures and processes of urban government, and the nature of transport problems in more densely settled regions and conurbations.

In any case, because of the high level of contextual detail required to reveal local institutional and political processes and to provide enough evidence to explore complex causal factors in the comparative analysis, the resources and time available for the study will only allow three cities to be included.

Focus of attention in each city

The original research question asked how political and institutional processes shaped transport policy outcomes in Melbourne in the era of mass mobility by car. This long and somewhat indeterminate timeframe could create difficulties in the size and scope of the research task. However, the theoretical framework offers some guidance on the conditions under which change in transport policy is most likely to occur.

Bratzel's first condition for the introduction of transport policy change is a 'crisis of legitimacy' based on perceived shortcomings of the transport policy of the established governing coalition. The multiple-streams framework for public policy processes also points to change being most likely at times of heightened political conflict.

It will be necessary to look for such periods of contention in each of the three cities, and to use these as the basis for the investigation. This means that the critical research period in the each city will be identified based on local circumstances.

Methods for acquiring the necessary detail in the descriptions of each city

The contextualised description of the institutional and political processes through which urban transport and development policy has been contested in Melbourne, Perth and Vancouver is assembled in three parts.

The first covers the broad environment within which contention over transport policy is played out; it includes descriptions and analysis of the similarities and differences in the three cities in:

- their economic base
- structures and institutions of urban and regional government
- patterns in electoral representation and the membership of local governing coalitions since the 1950s.

The second part describes the evolution in the three cities of institutions for the management of urban transport systems. This is put together with an account of the major events and outcomes in transport and urban development policy, and with changes in the wider political landscape that were described in the previous chapter, to produce for each city a short narrative of events and outcomes in transport policy and politics in the second half of the 20th century. Through this, it will be clear at what times political contention of transport policy was at its greatest.

The third and final part of the contextualised descriptions entails the assembly of detailed narratives of the behaviour of key actors and their interactions with each other, particularly during periods in which the preconditions for change in transport policy were strongest.

Much of the information for the first part of these descriptions comes from published sources, but, for the second and third parts, interviews with actors were the key source of information, supplemented by material from formal policy documents, extensive review of newspaper records for important periods, and manuscripts and other archive materials.¹¹ While it is possible that missing or selective documentation may have resulted in errors of fact or misinterpretation of motive, the important events and processes were subject to a detailed examination from a range of perspectives, as described below, to minimise the impact of any gaps in the documentary record.

A mapping exercise of the type shown for Melbourne in Fig. 4.5 below was conducted for each city, and key actor groups were identified. Interview subjects were then sought to cover each of these groups through different periods of political or social activity.

¹¹ Cabinet records are one important source of material for Melbourne, but these are closed to public inspection for 30 years after their transfer to the Public Records Office. Such documents for the period from 1969 to 1976 might have been expected to be available; unfortunately, all Victorian Cabinet papers from 1969 to 1982 are classified as a single consignment by the PRO and so, under current agreements between the major political parties, will remain closed to researchers until 2013.

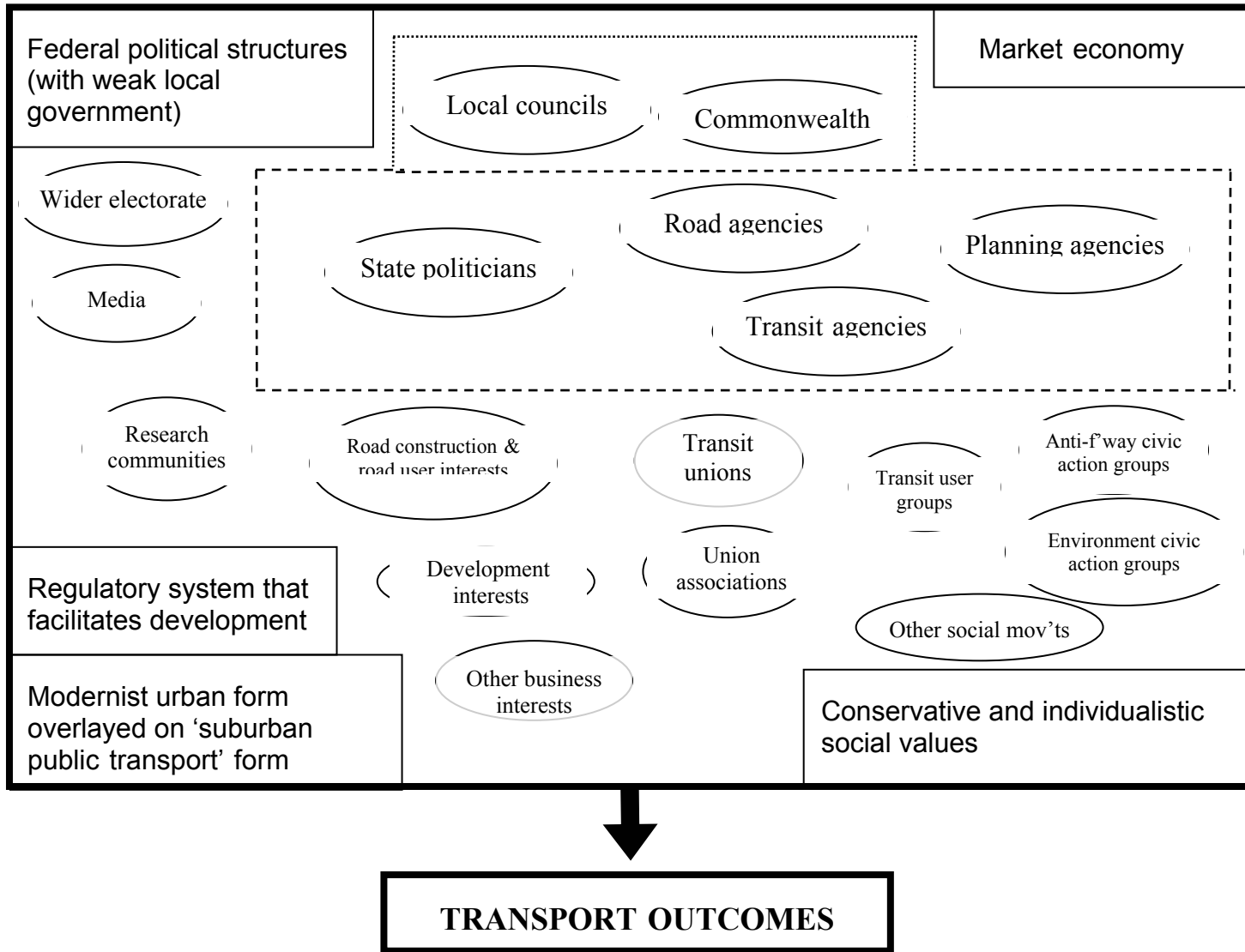


Fig. 4.5: Mapping of key actor groups in Melbourne and important elements of the economic and social environment in which they operate

Various approaches can be taken to identifying key actor groups. Rhodes (2007) explores agent types in the housing system by first categorising agents according to their role in the system. She identifies “consumption” agents, “production” agents and “policy developing or influencing” agents. In the transport system, consumption agents would include drivers or transit users who make their mode choices based on the extent to which a transport service meets their needs in terms of time, cost, convenience, safety and so on. Production agents would include those involved in the complex economies of car production, sales and repair; road construction and petroleum supply companies; transit staff, and the like. For this study, individual agents of this type are not the central concern. The main focus is the agents involved in the processes of developing or influencing policy. In addition to the obvious groups of agents who hold political office and those in the public service, these policy agents include associations that represent the interests of different groups of consumption or production agents. These include trade unions and road and transit user groups, and organisations that represent a community of interest in less tangible factors such as the environment or ‘neighbourliness’.

The approaches taken to determine the subjects for interviews in each city were based on the standard principles for this type of research (Neuman 2003; Patton 2002, pp. 230-242) and involved identification of subjects by reputation, initially using published material. In addition, individuals with some connection to the subject area, and with whom personal contact could easily be established, were approached and asked to suggest others who might be appropriate subjects. This enabled written or telephone requests for interviews to be made, often with personal recommendations from prior contacts, and each interviewee was asked directly who else should be approached.

A list of participants with dates of interviews, and brief biographical information about the subjects and their roles in transport policy debates at the time of the interview can be found in the Appendix.

The purpose of the interviews was to build an understanding of the main transport policy objectives of key actors, their sources of support and information, and their understandings of the constraints and opportunities that governed their activities.

To achieve this, the interviews were relatively unstructured, with participants asked to provide narrative and commentary on specific events or periods. A variety of

probes and follow-up questions (derived using techniques suggested in Rubin and Rubin 2005) were employed to elicit the required level of detail and reflection.

Most interviews were conducted face-to-face and were digitally recorded; a small number were conducted by phone with detailed notes taken during the interview and immediately afterwards. These recordings are kept securely in accordance with university protocols. Hand-written verbatim transcripts were made of the major portions of each interview. Excerpts used in the narratives were selected through analysis that involved sorting the content of the interviews into themes based on particular events and processes identified earlier in the investigation.

As the literature on techniques for carrying out this kind of research makes clear, problems can arise if interviewees chose to give selective, exaggerated or otherwise distorted accounts of events. This might arise from a desire to manage the impressions given to the researcher, or, with less manipulative intent, be the result of limited direct experience or partial memory or be an example of what Rubin and Rubin call a 'story' (p. 109), in which the accuracy of specific detail is less important than the theme or point being made.

As far as possible, the factual content of interviews was 'triangulated' (Yin 2003) by reference to newspaper records and other written and oral material. As many interviewees as possible were asked specific questions about their direct experiences of important events or processes. Particular effort was made to confirm details from written records when discrepancies emerged in the accounts of interview subjects.

Interview participants were offered a degree of control over the use of their contributions to the research. If desired, participants could remain anonymous, though none took this option. Also, they were able to respond to written drafts of inferences or conclusions drawn from interviews and, if they wished, to keep some parts of the recorded interview out of the public record. The extended interaction with some participants that resulted from this process has added greater clarity and richness to the narratives.

The author was an active participant in the political contention over transport policy in Melbourne from the late 1980s, working on the campaign staff of the Conservation Council of Victoria until 1997 and subsequently as an advocate and researcher in local government and in various community organisations. Information

and impressions gained from this experience is explicitly used only occasionally, but autobiographical material of this kind is generally viewed as a valid source of research data that can add depth and strength to narrative analysis (Huberman and Miles 2002). In no case was any knowledge gained through this previous experience used to identify any participant outside the protocols for the protection of privacy and obtaining consent described above.

The credibility of particular claims made in interviews and in other research material was explored using standard tests for the validity of qualitative research findings as described by Hess-Biber and Leavy (2006, pp. 62-68). These included looking for 'negative' cases and testing interpretations through discussions with other researchers and interview participants.

5. Broad environment for transport politics in the three cities

Explanations for Melbourne's failure to meet its potential for growth in per capita transit use are being sought through an investigation of the ways in which formal and informal political processes and institutional structures have influenced the outcomes of transport policy conflicts. To do this, the methodology established in the previous chapter requires detailed descriptions of a wide range of structural, institutional and political factors surrounding transport policy outcomes in Melbourne, Perth and Vancouver.

In order to maintain a clear connection to the theoretical framework established in Chapter 3, these detailed descriptions are presented in three parts.

This chapter, the first of these three parts, highlights variations in the general political and economic environment and the structures of the institutions for urban and regional government in the three cities. It examines:

- the nature of the powers and responsibilities of different levels of urban and regional government
- the characteristics of local governing coalitions and changes in their membership.

These factors are important from a number of theoretical perspectives. Regime theory points to the need to understand economic influences behind the processes of formation and change in local governing coalitions. And, the idea of subsidiarity argues that the nature of overlapping structures and functions of different levels of government and associated institutions affects the range of strategic and tactical options available to supporters of policy change.

The main purpose of the chapter is to provide sufficient material for analysis of the importance of these broad structural and institutional factors in transport policy outcomes. The chapter also serves another purpose by providing the context for the exploration of transport policy and politics in the three cities that will be presented in Chapters 6 and 7.

This chapter explores variation in the three cities in:

- their economic base

- structures and institutions of urban and regional government
- patterns in electoral representation and the membership of local governing coalitions since the 1950s.

Because of the huge amount of information available on these subjects and the great range of analytic approaches that have been used to address them, this presentation of material is necessarily only a brief overview. The intention is to provide a sufficient level of detail to identify key differences.

The economies of the three cities

In the modern global economy, the relative positions of Melbourne, Perth and Vancouver as middle- to low ranking cities are intuitively clear. Attempts to find a rigorous basis for the classification of cities according to their place in the global market is a major focus in modern urban studies. However, much of the information behind these classifications is impressionistic. One critic points out that standard methodologies (such as that used by Taylor et al. 2002):

typically [count] corporate headquarters or banks [and rank] cities in terms of population or air passenger traffic, or the location of stock markets, Olympic Games, or even Rolling Stones concerts (Alderson and Beckfield 2004, p. 812).

The proposed alternative is a scheme using complex social network analysis of relationships between headquarters and subsidiary offices of multinational enterprises.

Whatever the merits of this debate, the results for Melbourne, Perth and Vancouver are similar for both academic ranking methods approaches, and for the more market-oriented ‘livability’ rankings published by *The Economist* Intelligence Unit and others. All show that Melbourne and Vancouver are well-matched competitors: each is an important sub-centre in its national economy but is secondary to Sydney and Toronto respectively.¹² Perth is in a lower tier: its primary global function is as the administrative centre for the processing and export of the huge mineral wealth of the west of Australia, with most finance coming via Melbourne and Sydney or through offshore markets.

¹² Of 121 Pacific regional headquarters established in Australia in three years to June 1996: Sydney attracted 75, Melbourne 25 and Perth just 6 (Avenell 1996). Of Canada’s top 500 corporations, 48 had headquarters in metropolitan Vancouver in 2005; most are based in Ontario (Finlayson and Graham 2006).

All three cities are major international import and export ports. Vancouver is ahead on total tonnage because of the volume of its timber and other raw material exports.¹³ In 1992 it was “the largest port by volume on the west coast of the Americas and, in most years, the second or third in North America” (Wynn and Oke 1992, p. 226).

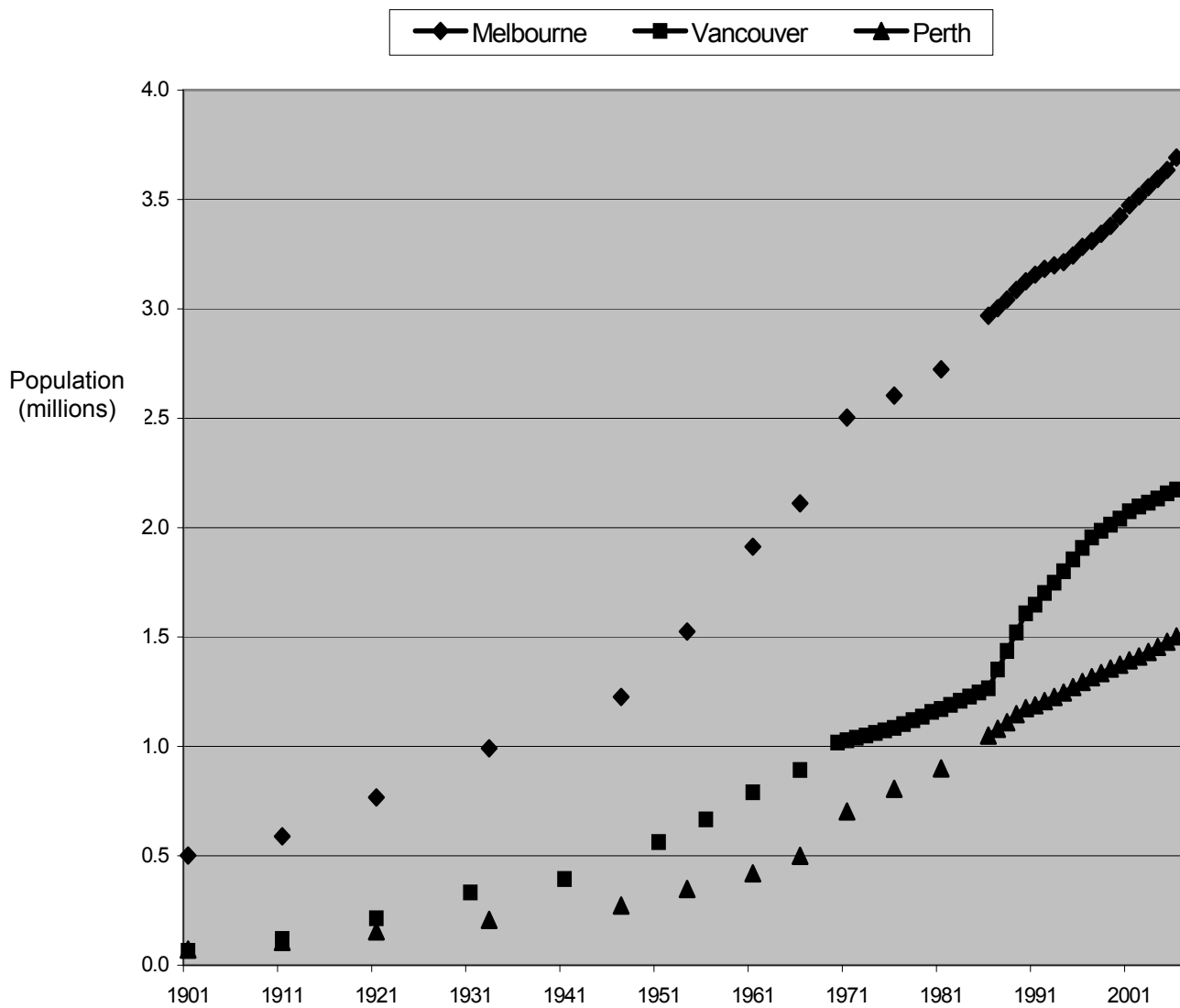
Vancouver and Perth have only short histories as metropolitan centres. Melbourne has a longer history, and in earlier times was the dominant Australian commercial city. The Australian cities are home to the legislature and administrative bureaucracies for their respective states. These play an important role in the economies of the two cities. Vancouver is different, with the administrative apparatus of the British Columbia government based in the much smaller city of Victoria that is located on Vancouver Island.

The growth in population in the three cities is shown below in Fig. 5.1.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Melbourne’s oil and chemical industries expanded. There was also growth in manufacturing protected by high tariff barriers (Considine 1983). As the traditional finance capital of Australia, Melbourne also housed head offices of major banks and insurance companies. In recent decades, Melbourne’s manufacturing sector has declined and business leaders see the future in the expansion of the city’s role as a freight hub, and in successful bids for major global sporting events, technology centres and corporate headquarters to encourage property development and the service sector.

Mining and agriculture are at the core of the Western Australian economy, and the centre of mining activity is in the north of the state. For many years, at least a quarter of the nation’s export earnings have come from WA (Appleyard 1991; DTF 2004). A small manufacturing sector has grown up in Perth to support these industries (Spearritt 1984), and the city has seen consistent growth in employment and population (Stilwell and Troy 2000). It became Australia’s fourth city in the early 1980s, and by 2005 was 30% larger than Adelaide (ABS 2006).

¹³ In 2002-03, total trade through Melbourne was a record 24.7 million tonnes and container throughput was 1.6 million TEU (20-foot equivalent units). Vancouver, in 2002, handled a gross tonnage of 95.3 million tonnes and container throughput of 1.5 million TEU. Perth total port trade in 2003-04 was 25.9 million tonnes and 0.47 million TEU in containers. (All data from port authority websites.)



Sources: ABS and Statistics Canada, Vancouver pre-1960 estimated using data from BC Statistics)

Fig. 5.1: Population of Greater Melbourne, Perth and Vancouver – 1901 to present

Perth is the clearing house for the inflow of investment and manufactured goods from the eastern states and overseas and for the outflow of commodities and profits (Harman 1986). In the early 1980s:

not one Australian national company, let alone an international company, had ever headquartered their operations in the West (Horgan 1991, p. 3).

This reflects the fact that “Perth has never had a well-defined indigenous ruling class ... to control its own development” (Harman, p. 69).

Vancouver's small size and its isolation from Canada's eastern economic and political base meant that manufacturing never grew strongly, and historically the city "got the short end of the federal infrastructure investment stick" (Berelowitz 2005, p. 81). Since the 1960s, shipping, rail freight handling and raw material processing have moved from downtown Vancouver to the Fraser River, and commercial and residential property development has flourished on the old industrial sites. Just over half the GDP of BC is now generated in Greater Vancouver and over two-thirds of the BC population lives in the Lower Mainland (Tindal and Tindal 2004). Biotechnology and software industries are adding to the region's traditional strengths in finance, resource development and freight handling.

Urban government in Melbourne, Perth and Vancouver

Broad political structures

In Australian states, the influence of early arrangements used to share power between city and country interests remain strong (Strangio and Costar 2006). From colonial times, bicameral parliaments and disproportionate voting systems were established partly in response to competing economic and social interests. Both Victoria and WA still have bicameral parliaments, while the BC parliament has never had an upper house. Voting systems in WA and BC still allow country electorates to have fewer voters than city electorates (Hamer 1994; Jackman 1994).

In Canada, the 'first past the post' voting system is used at the federal, state and municipal level. This can lead to parties achieving massive majorities from a relatively small proportion of the total vote if their opposition is split and, quite commonly, governments lose office from an apparently impregnable position on a small swing.

Australia, by comparison, has a unique preferential voting system¹⁴, used in the single-member electorates of the lower houses of the national and most state parliaments, and in most municipal elections in Melbourne and Perth. Upper houses in Australian parliaments and a small but growing number of municipal elections use some form of proportional representation.

¹⁴ Voting is compulsory and all candidates must be ranked in preferred order. If no candidate has an absolute majority of first preferences, second and subsequent preferences are distributed until one candidate reaches 50% + 1 of the total votes cast.

In Australia, the major modern political parties are national organisations with branches that contest state and federal elections. The oldest formation, the Australian Labor Party (ALP), has had a constant presence since 1914, when it was the parliamentary wing of the trade union movement. Its factions are highly visible and, in recent decades, are more based on ambition and histories of internal conflict than on the ideological debate of earlier years.

Urban liberals and conservatives came together in a stable party at the national level in the United Australia Party in the 1930s. This became the Liberal Party in 1945. In Victoria and Western Australia, competing local interests maintained a shifting array of parties until they were subsumed into the structures of the modern Liberal Party in the 1950s. Today, state branches of the Liberal Party maintain a loose national federation. Factions are deep, but less visible than in the ALP and, in the modern party, small-l liberals are weaker than in the past. Various agrarian groupings joined to form a federated Country Party in the 1920s. It changed its name to the National Country Party in 1975, and dropped the 'Country' label to become the National Party in 1982 (Phillips et al. 1998; Strangio and Costar 2006).

At the federal level in Canada, the major parties are the right-wing Conservatives or Tories, (who were for a time called the Progressive Conservatives), the centre-right Liberal Party and the social-democratic New Democratic Party (NDP) which grew out of the socialist Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF).

Unlike in Australia, parties representing comparable places on the political spectrum often do not correspond at provincial and federal levels. In many cases, the provincial parties operate only at that level. In BC, the local NDP has formal links with the national party, but the Liberal and Conservative Parties have no federal affiliations. The other major party in BC, until the 1980s, was Social Credit, which dropped its commitments to social credit economic theory in the 1950s to become a populist free-enterprise grouping.

Institutions of urban government

The institutions of urban government in the three cities are generally established under state or provincial legislation. These institutions, which operate at municipal, metropolitan and state levels, are described below, starting with a short account of the place of each city in its local political landscape.

The three cities in their regions

Within the tight constitutional and fiscal constraints of Australia's federal system, national economic policy and international trends leave little room for state politicians to manoeuvre (Galligan 1989). Their main activity is to:

promote one local industry over another or favour one firm over its competitors [and to] vary the mixture of public versus private enterprise and the extent of public infrastructure provided for private enterprise (Galligan 1986, p. 115).

Canada's provinces have had a similar constrained role (Hamer 1994), although trends in power relations within the Canadian federation are towards greater provincial autonomy in many areas of public policy (Sharman 1994). The reverse is true in Australia in areas like health and education but, in urban affairs, state governments still predominate.

Melbourne and Perth strangled the aspirations and economies of competing urban centres by such methods as the centralising of rail networks, and each now contains an overwhelming concentration of the labour force and consumer markets of its state (Stilwell 1992). Perth also exerted its domination over other regional centres on the WA coast through the dredging of a deep-water harbour, 15 km away at Fremantle, in 1897 that became the state's primary port.

In both cities, the state parliaments subsequently came to control urban affairs. The presence of the state legislatures and the economic identification between the capital city and its state stifled the growth of strong local government because of the fear that it would become a direct competitor. The merging of executive and legislative branches of government in the Westminster system reinforces this centralisation (Parkin 1982).

Vancouver is the economic centre of British Columbia. The great glacial outwash of the Fraser River delta on which Vancouver now stands is the only place in BC where large-scale settlement is possible. Early colonial settlement in the region were managed directly by UK authorities, but this orderly pattern of growth was upset in the 1880s when the terminal of the privately run trans-continental railway was located on the future site of downtown Vancouver (Wynn and Oke 1992). The city became Canada's commercial link to the export and import markets of Asia, and the centre for local resource development in British Columbia, a position that grew when markets for food and raw materials opened up in the big cities of the Atlantic Basin after the Panama

Canal was completed in 1914 (Magnusson 1990). Its identity emerged from a combination of the “managerial paternalism” of its capitalist founders and the “ethnically complex, transient, isolated, unsettled ‘lumber society’” (McDonald 1996).

The BC Government is based in Victoria on Vancouver Island, 100 km from Vancouver and accessible only by sea or air. Unlike the two Australian cities, most urban affairs have historically been the responsibility of Vancouver’s municipal governments, which grew strong enough to have some power to compete with the province.

Early patterns of governance

Drawing on the extensive literature that explores the early years of the three cities, variations in patterns of governance can be described. These were to have long-term effects on transit service provision.

In the 1830s, Tasmanian pastoralists founded settlements without official sanction on the northern coast of Bass Strait, and the first European dwellings were built on the future site of Melbourne in 1835. Within a decade, sheep stations spread over the grassy plains that extend many miles to the west, and the UK Government separated the new colony of Victoria from NSW in 1851 (Blainey 1984).

Blainey, Davison (2004b) and Cannon (1976) describe the transformation of Melbourne from a pastoral outpost to a metropolis based on the wealth of huge gold rushes in the hinterland. ‘Marvellous Melbourne’ collapsed after a spectacular land boom in the 1880s burst, causing a deep depression in the 1890s. However, during this period, Melbourne became Australia’s largest city, reaching a population of half a million in the early 1900s, and the capital of the country’s commercial life.

State parliamentary politics in Victoria in the first half of the 20th century were characterised by unstable coalitions in which different groupings of urban conservative, liberal and labour interests were forced into fragile alliances with a strong country faction (Holmes 1976; Wright 1992). It was “an era in which deal-making, sometimes of the most breath-taking cynicism, triumphed over policy-making” (Strangio and Costar 2006, p. 8).

Reflecting their economic importance, railways were prominent in early Victorian politics. Government and private spending on railway construction was a principal engine of growth, and many politicians profited directly through corrupt land

speculation or indirectly through railway expansion in the electorates of colleagues (Bate 2006). In 1903, a conservative government attempted to reduce the electoral impact of the public sector workforce by corralling them into special electorates. Four new electorates were created, of which two were solely for railway workers. This odd arrangement stayed in place for only one election (Rickard 2006; Wettenhall 1961). Government involvement in railway construction was only one facet of the policies of direct engagement in development that were later known as ‘state socialism’ (Eggleston 1932; Sandercock 1975). Large state enterprises in irrigation, water supply, land settlement, port facilities and electricity supply were established, and the model organisation for the delivery of these programs was the statutory authority. These were outside direct ministerial control, with policy outlines established by parliament but with detailed execution left to governing boards (Holmes 1976). The authorities were established chiefly to protect increasingly complex technological and commercial investments from the destabilising effects of partisan politics and individual greed (Wettenhall 1985), and they took on many of the roles of local government in other countries.

From the 1920s, authoritarian leaders of the statutory authorities like Sir John Monash in electricity, who was said to have dealt with Cabinet like “Napoleon with the Directory” (Encel 1962, p.131), and Sir Harold Clapp in the railways wielded substantial power. However, in the years of the Great Depression and its aftermath, the Country Party under the leadership of Albert Dunstan, “a virtuoso in that black art” of cynical deal-making (Strangio and Costar 2006, p. 8), established a rare and relatively stable coalition with the ALP as junior partner. For nearly a decade under these so-called ‘bullock wagon’ parliaments, not one member of the Cabinet lived in Melbourne (Browne 1985; Wright 1992).

Holmes argues that these governments courted their rural electorates through ‘pork-barrelling’ and low taxes, and were “parsimonious [in their] neglect of state enterprises and social services” (p. 87). She suggests that investment in urban services fell in Melbourne compared to Sydney where the NSW ALP Government, reliant on the urban working class, delivered employment projects that built infrastructure in the railways and elsewhere. Further, she points to an imbalance in state revenues that was entrenched in 1942 when Curtin’s ALP Australian Government took over income tax collection and set up a formula for distribution of funds to the states that was based on existing

taxation levels. Such historical disinvestment is said to have “left deficiencies” (p. 87) that were never made up, and it is a constant complaint of Victorian politicians and road lobbyists today (Davison 2004a). It is likely that the railways may have suffered some decline in investment in their suburban system during this time, but the statutory authority with responsibility for the tramways was able to continue, if slowly, the electrification of its services – a process that began in 1922 and took 18 years to complete (Manning 1991).

The early patterns of government in WA reflect the much slower growth of the state and its capital city. Perth is the administrative centre of Western Australia – 2.5 million sq. km of mostly arid land comprising a third of the continent – and is one of the most isolated urban centres in the developed world. Agriculture was hard to establish on the sandy coastal plain and convicts were an important part of the labour force from settlement in 1829 until the 1860s, well after this was abandoned in the eastern states (Bolton 1972). Perth’s population at Federation in 1901 was only 70,700 – just under 60% of the inhabitants of the new state (ABS 1997). Growth came eventually after the railways opened up richer agricultural land, and later, when massive gold deposits were discovered in the interior, the government piped water huge distances to support mining towns.

The colony was governed from the UK, first by direct rule, then in 1870 through a part-elected parliament that remained subject to veto from London. Responsible government was only established in 1890 (The Constitutional Centre of WA 2005a). WA was a reluctant member of the new nation: not surprising given its isolation, its disproportionate contribution to the national economy, and its reliance on external capital. As late as 1932, a state referendum recorded a two-thirds majority in favour of secession, with the result that new and more favourable funding arrangements between the national government and the smaller states were established (Reid 1979).

WA had strong leaders in its early years of statehood. Both the ALP and conservative parties were able to form majority governments for periods of up to ten years (The Constitutional Centre of WA 2005b). Statutory authorities were set up, on similar models to those in Victoria, to manage many areas of development, including the railways, and the chiefs of these organisations did wield significant power. However, these enterprises were relatively small, and the management of new federal funding and

other aspects of growth in the first half of the 20th century were shared between the parliament and the administrators (Phillips et al. 1998).

Patterns of governance and investment established in these early years did not create the same problematic legacy for modern transit, as was the case in Melbourne.

Vancouver was not the seat of the BC Government and the early patterns of governance, important to the development of modern transit, were at the municipal level and will now be discussed.

Modern institutions of urban government

In Melbourne and Perth, state governments and their authorities face little challenge from municipal government.

Local councils in Australia did not typically evolve from local needs or the desire of the population for self-government. Instead, their genesis in the 19th century was primarily the foisting by colonial parliaments of responsibility for local minutiae onto a largely unwilling local community (Parkin 1982).

Unlike many municipalities in other countries, they do not operate schools or hospitals and have only occasionally been involved in transit or power supply. However, road construction has been a central task. District roads boards were formed in Victoria from 1854 with authority to levy tolls and rates (Holmes 1976). After recognisably modern municipalities emerged in the 1870s, the local roads board became part of the new organisations, and the road engineer assumed a position of some status and autonomy in the emerging hierarchy. In Perth, Road Districts were the forerunners of local government. These committees, with membership decided by some rudimentary local election, came to manage land-use controls and building codes as well as road construction. They persisted as the local executive body in some cases until the 1930s (Berry 1992). Building local roads and managing car parking have remained central functions of local government in the two cities, and the influence of the road engineer is still strong.

In Melbourne, small municipalities, based on the early ‘villages’ of what is now metropolitan Melbourne, were constituted under restrictive legislation that allowed “only expressly conferred powers [to] be exercised” (Parkin p. 100). With such narrow legitimacy, it is not surprising that their main role was local development and that

property investors were prominent among councillors. Remnants of the original property-based franchise remain as a conservatising influence (Kiss 2003, Thornton-Smith VEC, pers. comm.)

In 1994, amalgamations were forced on the existing municipalities by a neo-liberal state government. After this change, which created 31 municipalities from 56 in greater Melbourne, the average population of a Melbourne municipality increased from 57,000 to 103,000 (Dollery et al. 2003). These councils build and maintain local roads, gardens, swimming pools and libraries; they also deal with rubbish and recycling and deliver some welfare services. They administer building and planning codes that are legislated by the state government. Average revenues for local government across Victoria in 2000 were around \$700 per capita, about 13% of state revenues, about 60% of which came from local property taxes (ABS 2002, 2001).

The state government maintains formal powers of dismissal and these are used – in cases of corruption, incompetence or intransigence (Bowman and Halligan 1985) – irregularly but often enough to represent a real threat. State politicians are often directly involved with routine council business and wield considerable influence through informal sanctions and incentives, including the distribution of program funding and political preferment for individual councillors.

Historically, local government in Victoria has tended to attract as candidates for office people who “are not dismayed by its lack of scope, vision and power” (Holmes 1976, p. 71). This is another explanation for the political conservatism of local government and provides a possible reason for the widely made observation that control of council activity is firmly in the hands of senior managers (Marshall and Sproats 2000; Mowbray 1997; Whitford 1970).

Part of the argument for the amalgamations was that the larger municipalities would have greater resources to manage more complex and diverse services and to engage with difficult urban issues in a more sophisticated manner. However, in 1997, even supporters of this position still noted a widespread perception that:

the role of local government was simply [to be] the agent for delivery of state government services (Marshall 1997, p. 4).

One exception is the Melbourne City Council that, although small in physical extent even by local standards, has stood at times against the power of the Victorian

Government. It has been able to do this partly because of a property base that gave it operating revenues of A\$239 million in 2005 (City of Melbourne 2005)¹⁵ – and partly by virtue of its connections to the elite of Victorian business.¹⁶ In these conflicts, it has had greater, though still limited, success than have the suburban councils. The business connections of the City of Melbourne have meant that it has been a conservative force. In transport, largely through the influence of its engineering and planning staff, it has been a consistent supporter of urban freeway programs.

There are now 29 municipalities covering greater Perth. Their average population is around 50,000, ranging from less than 10,000 in six inner-city municipalities, to 150,000 on the urban fringe (ABS 2005).

WA local government has a comparable legislative basis and delivers similar services to Victorian municipalities, although one detail of electoral process is not shared. Unlike all Victorian municipalities except the City of Melbourne, voters directly elect their mayors. This may give incumbents more incentive to pursue popular local issues, although, the business-oriented City of Perth aside, their influence on the WA Government remains limited. Indeed, local government in Western Australia has been described as among the “most moribund in the nation” (Parkin 1982, p. 63).

In Vancouver, the balance between the different levels of government is still tilted in favour of the province, but municipal politicians wield greater power than their Australian counterparts. Many provincial politicians forge their careers in Vancouver before moving to Victoria, a small town of “genteel civility” (Wynn and Oke 1992, p. 106).

The City of Vancouver¹⁷ takes in around 25% of both the population and the land area, and about one-third of the property values, of Greater Vancouver (GVRD 2006a). In the suburban municipalities of Greater Vancouver, there is a great range in size. Three cities – Surrey, Burnaby and Richmond – have a combined population of 783,000, while the tiny city of White Rock on the US border has only 19,000 residents (BC Stats 2006).

¹⁵ This is nearly five times the per capita average.

¹⁶ Compared to suburban councils, businesses have historically outnumbered residents on the Melbourne City Council electoral roll. In addition, businesses operating in the City are each given two votes.

¹⁷ With a population of 587,000, the City of Vancouver operating budget in 2006 was C\$773 million (equivalent to A\$1,410 per capita). This is more than three times the operating budget of the City of Melbourne, although the City of Melbourne’s budget represents around A\$3,400 per capita.

Average revenues for BC municipalities are more than three times average local government revenues in Victoria (Statistics Canada 2005). The larger councils deliver a range of services including schools, hospitals, police and transit services (Sancton 1994).

Mayors in all BC cities are directly elected, and municipalities have the power to conduct plebiscites on by-laws. This practice is maintained in the City of Vancouver where the current convention is to hold a vote on the City's three-year Capital Plan seeking approval for future borrowings for particular projects.

In general, most municipalities in BC operate in a "restricted legislative and financial framework" (Tindal and Tindal 2004, p. 11) under provincial legislation first enacted in 1896 that restricts them to explicitly described functions (Bish and Clemens 1999).

The City of Vancouver has a slightly different base in provincial law. Its incorporation in 1886 took place before the more restrictive legislation was enacted. Under what is now called the Vancouver Charter, the City has some freedoms that are denied to municipalities established under the later law. Chiefly, the City is able to approach the province directly and negotiate particular reforms to meet local needs without having to alter the status quo in every city in BC. Punter (2003), a Welsh planning academic, views this aspect of the Charter as very important to the development of the Vancouver's unique urban character, and Tennant (1981) believes that the existence of the Charter has been important in maintaining a convention of deciding important matters of formal decision-making and expenditure by plebiscite. In practice, freedoms that come from the detail of the Charter and those that stem from Vancouver's economic strength may be hard to distinguish. In any case, there are real limits. Local scholars (Bish and Clemens) consider that Vancouver is greatly constrained by provincial power, and Berelowitz describes it as operating within a "strikingly hierarchical, condescending power structure" that restricts its scope in "matters of taxation and raising capital" (2005, p. 92).

Much of the modern form of Canadian municipal politics was set by reforms won by city businesses in the early 20th century in response to significant growth in the political strength of organised labour and to widespread corruption among politicians and civic officials (Leo 1977). The ideal was an 'apolitical' model, based on the structure of a business corporation, that restricted the influence of workers (Tindal and Tindal 2004). A catchcry of the early municipal reformers was "there is no political way to build a

road” (Leo p. 7) – by the 1970s the opposite would be true. Changes to local government administration included a shift from ward-based election of councillors to ostensibly less corruptible ‘at large’ arrangements, a general rejection of overt political partisanship, and a smaller and more centralised political executive dominated by appointed officials whose power was entrenched through the creation of ‘independent’ boards and commissions (Leo 1977; Lightbody 1995).

Municipal politics in the City of Vancouver have been described as outside the standard Canadian mould, having an overt – though not rigid – party system (Tennant 1981). The major formations are based locally, without direct affiliations to provincial or national groupings. The dominant group, since at-large elections were introduced in 1936, is the Non-Partisan Association (NPA) (Berger 2004; Office of the City Clerk 1996). This oxymoronic name reflects NPA’s place in the early business reform movement and its opposition to the CCF, which had provincial connections and, unlike the NPA, enforced a policy platform on its candidates (Tennant).

Regional government

Another important difference in the institutions of urban government in the three cities is found in the ways that issues of coordination, planning and service delivery are dealt with at the metropolitan or regional level.

In Melbourne, a statutory authority, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW), was created in 1891, largely in response to public health crises that required sewerage and water-supply engineering beyond the scope of local government and the budget of the colonial parliament. Instead of the small boards of experts typical of the other authorities, the administration of the MMBW was set up with direct representation from the municipalities. One councillor from each municipality served as a commissioner: a much sought after position that often came as a reward for a long and uncontroversial career (Dingle and Rasmussen 1991).

The MMBW became Melbourne’s institution for the coordination of metropolitan services, but it never became a “parliament of the suburbs” as some of its instigators had hoped (Gardner 1987). Its existence effectively blunted later attempts to establish a directly elected metropolitan government, a long-held aim of the ALP in the early and mid-twentieth century. Opposition to metropolitan government came from local conservative interests protecting their property-based franchise (Holmes 1976;

Sandercock 1975), but it has always faced the bigger obstacle of potential competition from the Victorian parliament, as explained earlier.

By the mid-twentieth century, the MMBW had responsibility for an increasingly complex water and sewerage system, and in 1956 took responsibility for the construction of metropolitan main roads. It was also the regional planning agency. Its size, the technical nature of the tasks, and the tendency for conservatism, factionalism and parochialism among the commissioners, meant that it was run chiefly by its professional staff (Dingle and Rasmussen).

Reform came close under Victoria's first majority ALP government in the 1950s: the Chair of the MMBW had obtained the car-licence plate 'GMB 001' (for Greater Melbourne Board) (*Delaney*). By 1982, when the ALP won power again, a metropolitan government was not on the agenda; the MMBW was dismantled and its various functions came under direct ministerial control. Changes in the approach of the ALP to the MMBW, and to the statutory authorities in general, are described in more detail below and in the next chapter.

There is no body comparable to the MMBW in Perth, where the size of the city has allowed planning and coordination functions to be undertaken by state agencies through direct intervention or negotiation with councils. As in Melbourne, the City of Perth has had an important voice in these formal and informal processes through its traditional connections to the business elite.

In Canadian cities, by contrast, a variety of formal structures for regional government have been tried. The push for regional government in Canada came, in part, from recognition by the inheritors of the business-based tradition of civic administration that city boundaries were being made irrelevant by car-based growth (Sancton 1994). The new structures were not designed to facilitate the assertion of political control by residents or communities (Leo 1977), but they became an important stage for emerging conflicts over freeways and urban renewal.

The move to regional government in BC began in the 1940s when special-purpose agencies were established in Greater Vancouver and its rural hinterland to coordinate some services. Through an "evolution of traditional regionalism" (Bish and Clemens 1999, p. 51), a form of metropolitan government peculiar to BC emerged. This is "best conceptualised as an institution for inter-municipal cooperation" (Sancton, p. 71).

Under the model put forward by the conservative provincial government in the early 1960s, BC would be divided into Regional Districts, and the municipalities in each District would decide on the powers and functions to be assigned to it and then seek provincial approval (Lightbody 1995). Provincial Cabinet could confer powers and duties, including funding responsibilities, without consent or consultation (Lash 1976; Tindal and Tindal 2004).

Change did not come without its opponents, and in 1967 the Lower Mainland of BC was “cut up rather arbitrarily and in an atmosphere of bitter politics” (Lash, p. 18) into four Districts, the most important being the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD), then comprising 14 municipalities and three rural districts. In 2006, the GVRD covered 2.18 million people in 21 municipalities and had an operating expenditure of \$448.6 million, mostly related to its water supply, sewerage and waste disposal functions (GVRD 2006b).

The governing body of the GVRD, called the board of directors, is not directly elected. Instead, the directors are local councillors who are appointed by the constituent municipalities. Both the number of directors and the number of votes each municipality has on budget decisions are weighted to municipal populations. Thus, in 1998, the City of Vancouver chose six out of 35 GVRD directors and had 23% of budget votes (Bish and Clemens 1999).

Political leaders and business alliances

There is a broad similarity in the cycle of voting patterns and policy approaches seen at state and provincial level in Victoria, WA and BC since the 1950s that reflects national and global influences. In all three, conservative governments were in power for most of the 1950s and 1960s. Liberal reformers had varying degrees of success in the 1970s and 1980s, before the emergence of the neo-liberal economic agenda in the 1990s.

Details of the local patterns of political representation in Victoria, WA and BC, and at the municipal level in Vancouver, are given below in Table 5.1.

<i>Victoria</i>	<i>Western Australia</i>	<i>British Columbia</i>	
		<i>Premier</i>	<i>Mayor – City of Vancouver¹⁸</i>
July 2007 – present John Brumby (ALP)	2006 – present Alan Carpenter (ALP)	2001 – present Gordon Campbell (Lib)	2006 – present Sam Sullivan (NPA)
1999 – July 2007 Steve Bracks (ALP)	2001-2006 Geoff Gallop (ALP)	2000 – 2001 Ujjal Dosanjh (NDP)	2003 – 2005 Larry Campbell (COPE)
1992 – 1999 Jeff Kennett (Lib)	1993 – 2001 Richard Court (Lib)	1999 – 2000 Dan Miller (NDP)	1994 – 2002 Philip Owen (NPA)
1990 – 1992 Joan Kirner (ALP)	1990 – 1993 Carmen Lawrence (ALP)	1996 – 1999 Glen Clark (NDP)	1987 – 1993 Gordon Campbell(NPA)
1982 – 1990 John Cain Jr. (ALP)	1988 – 1990 Peter Dowding (ALP)	1991 – 1996 Mike Harcourt (NDP)	1981 – 1986 Mike Harcourt (indep.)
1981 – 1982 Lindsay Thompson (Lib)	1983 – 1988 Brian Burke (ALP)	1991 Rita Johnston (SocCred)	1977 to 1980 Jack Volrich (NPA)
1972 – 1981 Sir Rupert Hamer (Lib)	1982 – 1983 Ray O'Connor (Lib)	1986 – 1991 Bill Vander Zalm (SocCred)	1973 to 1976 Art Phillips (TEAM)
1955 – 1972 Sir Henry Bolte (Lib)	1974 – 1982 Sir Charles Court (Lib)	1975 – 1986 Bill Bennett (Social Credit)	1967 to 1972 Tom Campbell (NPA)
1952 – 1955 John Cain Snr (ALP)	1971 – 1974 John Tonkin (ALP)	1972 – 1975 David Barrett (NDP)	1949 to 1966 <i>Various</i> (NPA)
	1959 – 1971 Sir David Brand (Lib)	1952 – 1972 W. A. C. Bennett (SocCred)	
	1953 – 1959 Albert Hawke (ALP)		

Table 5.1 Governing parties, premiers and mayors: 1950 to the present

¹⁸ Vancouver elections are held in December. Successful candidates take office the following year.

Melbourne

The balance of power between the executive government and the statutory authorities in Victoria gradually shifted from the 1950s. From 1944, Victoria's long parliamentary instability continued through ten governments in 11 years until, in 1955, the Liberal Party began a reign that lasted for 27 years, including the 17-year term of Henry Bolte as premier. Country interests played a part in this coalition, but political power followed the inexorable concentration of Victoria's economy and population in Melbourne.

The Bolte Government was the face of an increasingly stable governing coalition during the long post-war boom. The Liberals' grip on political power, in Victoria and at the national level, was assured by the dramatic schism in the Labor Party, centred on the activities of anti-communist Catholics and their opponents, that split the working-class vote and condemned the ALP to decades of the factionalism bred of powerlessness (Costar et al. 2005).

The national economic policy of the Menzies Liberal Government, itself dominated by Victorians, centred on attracting foreign capital to invest in import-substituting manufacturing behind high tariff walls and managing a program of mass migration, largely from Europe, to boost national growth. This suited Bolte who, as a "very talented small-town horse trader" (Blazey 1972, p. 85), was able to focus Victorian government activity on promoting business and providing it with the necessary infrastructure for growth (Galligan 1986).

Bolte's urban policies favoured big engineering projects like the Thompson Dam to 'drought-proof' Melbourne, the huge Westgate Bridge and the other freeway projects contained in the 1969 Transportation Plan (Davison 2004a). However, as Parkin has observed, "the consciousness of the urban dimension was simply undeveloped [among] politicians, scholars and citizens" (1982, p. 83). Without a conceptual framework for understanding the interdependence and distributional impacts of public policy in areas like housing, transport, welfare and education, the Victorian Government had little intellectual or political drive to interfere with the day-to-day management of Melbourne's urban systems by the many statutory authorities charged with this task. In fact, on occasions it was electorally helpful to shift blame onto these authorities or to use them to test public responses to new ideas (Dingle and Rasmussen 1991).

Rupert Hamer, who became premier in 1972, had an urbane and cultured style that allowed the Liberal Party in Victoria to project a more moderate image than it had under Bolte. This allowed it to keep the support of the urban middle class who had voted for Whitlam's reformist ALP at the federal level. But, Hamer was forced to deal with new interest groups in housing, education, urban planning and the environment who criticised the content of many programs overseen by statutory authorities and challenged the power and style of their leadership. He could follow his personal interest in 'quality of life' issues, but his low-key manner was seen as a problem in direct confrontations with the 'barons' in the authorities (Holmes 1976). He tackled the resulting conflicts through administrative reform, in vogue across the country following the Coombs Royal Commission on Australian Government Administration (1976).

By 1980, the statutory authorities were becoming problematic. It was a political talking-point that there were over 1,000 "significant" public bodies (Galligan 1985, p. 131) and that 80% of the state's public servants operated outside ministerial departments (Holmes 1976, p. 42). The interests that were managed or regulated by the authorities commonly dominated their boards, bringing interest group politics directly into the process of government and creating a structure that was very resistant to change (Holmes 1980).

The autonomy of the administrative fragments of the Victorian bureaucracy was said to embody:

traditional courtesies and protocols of medieval barons [where the understanding is that] each authority will be free to go its own way provided it keeps off the territory of its neighbours (Paterson 1978, p. 10).

As a result, there was:

inconsistency, duplication ... and starvation of initiative in areas not within the perceived mission of an existing organisation (Parkin 1984, p. 68).

The recruitment of staff into different authorities reflected significant cultural and religious fault-lines in Victorian society: authorities became identified with either "the Tykes [or] the Grippers"¹⁹ (Cain 1995, p. 5), thus adding an extra dimension to conflicts between them. Within the huge Victorian Railways, some branches were almost exclusively Catholic and others Masonic (*Crabb*).

¹⁹ Catholics or Freemasons.

The emerging intellectual rhetoric of ‘small government’ came together with political and economic factors to make inefficiencies in statutory authorities and their inability to work together targets for reform.

Hamer’s reform took place against a background of growing competition among business for the limited, and contracting, resources of government. In transport, for example, a number of factors were coming together to restrict the flow of money for urban freeways.

Since the 1950s, the growing cost of urban services had inevitably brought the Australian Government into the equation. Through its position as the collector and distributor of the major proportion of income tax and other revenues, it wields considerable influence on the delivery of large projects. Most large capital projects in the transport sector, at this time, were achieved through direct grants or through cheap borrowings that are only available with support from Canberra. Menzies and his successors had managed this process through a Commonwealth Bureau of Roads, but the election of Whitlam’s reformist ALP in 1972 and opposition from the new Department of Urban and Regional Development (DURD) to investment in inner-urban freeways interrupted this process (Davison 2004a; Mees 2000).²⁰

The Liberals, under Malcolm Fraser, returned to power in Canberra in 1975 and tightened fiscal policy in response to the international recession and the energy crisis. Manufacturing in Victoria was in decline, and the terms of a revenue-sharing deal with the federal government over the development of new oil-fields in Bass Strait meant that Victoria gained little from the post-OPEC bonanza (Galligan 1986).

In this context, competition was becoming fierce among businesses that wanted the Victorian Government to continue to deliver state investment to favoured projects. Some of these projects were much larger and more complex than those of the Bolte years, and business was more competitive about who would benefit. Divisions in the government made decisive responses difficult and, in the debate about which projects

²⁰ The Whitlam Government had a redistributive agenda, generally opposed by the states, and to bypass this obstacle, it set up DURD and attempted to fund projects through new regional agencies and existing local government. Whitlam had a ‘crash through or crash’ style and his government lasted only three years, so the intervention in urban management was not effectively institutionalised. DURD was a massive social experiment and a formative experience for a generation of urban policy analysts and bureaucrats. Attitudes and antagonisms established in this period have had significant influence in subsequent policy network conflicts. Within conservative administrations, DURD became a byword for extravagant, ideologically motivated intervention.

would get government support and under what terms, doubts surfaced about the capability of the state agencies to deliver projects of this scale (Considine 1983). Cabinet, having left these matters to the authorities for decades, had only rudimentary planning and coordination structures available to it; these were soon overwhelmed, and Hamer's reforms were inadequate. The Liberals were trapped in the "web of debts and favours generated by their business constituency" (Considine p. 229) and could not hold together the governing coalition that had sustained Bolte.

The ALP, scenting the possibility of success for the first time in a generation, was in a position to benefit from the fracturing of the business community and its search for new alliances with government. It built its electoral support on the moderate and competent image of its leader, John Cain, and on its platform of reform in government administration and Keynesian investment in public infrastructure. New investment was to be funded from public sector reserves that would be unlocked by tapping into the reserve funds hitherto inaccessible in statutory authorities (Wettenhall 1985). The ALP's economic policy also included plans to harness resources from the private sector in the form of lease-back arrangements, builder finance and equity capital (Considine).

The election of the Cain Government in April 1982 was a watershed. Victoria now had a unified Cabinet with a clear agenda for administrative and economic reform, support from a significant cross-section of the business community, and high public expectations of economic growth and expectations of reform from the many interest groups that had put their weight behind the ALP, including some seeking transit improvements.

The ALP's administrative reform agenda centred on reducing the power of the statutory authorities by bringing control back to Cabinet. Systems for management of cabinet business and recording decisions were almost non-existent when Cain came to power and he was quick to establish new procedures (Mant 1982). In all major portfolios, new ministries were set up and many new appointments were made to the public service executive.

A government with a Keynesian approach was eventually going to run into problems with the wider business community, but for the first few years Cain's cautious and measured style and a steady improvement in the local economy kept any conflict in check. The finance and banking sector, newly deregulated by Canberra, fuelled a boom in speculative construction and property development. These sectors grew faster in

Victoria than in the rest of the country, and they fell further after the international economic shocks of 1987 (Davidson 1992). A series of collapses in private and public financial institutions exposed the Victorian Government to irresistible attack from political enemies in the market-oriented ALP Government in Canberra and galvanised business and media support for the local Liberal opposition (Considine and Costar 1992; Jaensch 1989).

Faced with these pressures, disputes with unions over policies to deal with the contracting economy reignited the factionalism that lay just beneath the surface in the ALP:

Government decision-making was undermined – Ministers were back-doored before Cabinet ... factional heavies [from outside state parliament] were attending meetings of members of their faction in Caucus [and lining up the Caucus vote] ... It started with the [building unions] but transport finished it off (*Cain*).

Cain resigned, and the ALP fought itself to a standstill. A later Royal Commission tended to absolve the Victorian Government from primary responsibility for the financial crash (Armstrong 1992), but it was inevitable that Labor would lose the 1992 election in a landslide. Its policies of economic intervention and its moderate social-democratic style became, in the public and political mind, an unremitting failure perpetrated by incompetents (Considine 1992).

The Liberals, under Jeff Kennett, made Victoria a testing ground for the Australian version of the neo-liberal economic revolution: their “bullish program of privatising public assets brought to an end the 100 years in which large statutory authorities had occupied a commanding administrative and economic position in the state’s governance” (Strangio and Costar 2006, p. 9).

The next ALP Government, which succeeded the freewheeling Liberals in 1999 and was elected for a third term in 2006, has proceeded cautiously. It has done little to disturb the market-oriented governing coalition, established under Kennett.

Perth

The conservative parties held government in Western Australia from 1959 until 1983, except for one term between 1971 and 1974, and the Liberals slowly took a dominant role in their coalition with the Country Party. Charles Court became Opposition Leader in 1971, and he vigorously used an upper house majority to destabilise the ALP, which held government by a single seat (Black 1979). He was premier from 1974 until 1982.

Court was an overwhelming force in WA politics (Black 1991), but his style left a legacy of polarisation. His primary focus was to support the mining boom. As in Victoria, government was there to ensure “the welfare of the entire production process” (Forrest 1979, p. 73) by maintaining high international credit rating and providing everything from roads and power to health and leisure services for workers in remote new mining towns. The executive and its administrative arm were in complete control: there was limited media scrutiny and some government agencies did not even produce annual reports (Forrest). The *West Australian* had, and still has, a virtual monopoly on the reporting of state politics, and through the 1970s and 1980s maintained a very strong position of support for conservative governments (Joseph 2000, p. 119).

Following national trends, Court set up a number of reviews of state authorities (Black) and, as in Victoria, these became a focus for doubts about the Liberals’ capabilities. A newly rejuvenated ALP team built their credibility around plans to take an entrepreneurial role in the economy, using ‘idle’ money in pension funds and other reserves (Horgan 1991). The ALP, led by 36-year-old Brian Burke, took power in 1983 with the support of influential sections of local media, business and academic communities (Peachment 1991).

The community of Perth’s elite is very small, and the links between Burke and his entrepreneurial supporters were strong. So, when the government moved to prop up local banks and other enterprises that were crippled by the 1987 stock market crash, Burke was close to the action. He resigned before the full scale of government losses was revealed through a Royal Commission into the collusion between government and business, which became known as ‘WA Inc.’, and served seven months in jail in 1994 on charges relating to misuse of travel expenses (Peachment 1995).

Despite the controversies of WA Inc., the ALP won a third term at an election in 1989. Growing support for its transit reforms, which included a new rail line in the mortgage-

belt suburbs in northern Perth, was seen as a contributing factor in this victory (*West Australian*, 16 Dec 88).

The Liberals, led by Charles Court's son Richard, took power in 1993 and held office until 2001. Like Bracks and Brumby in Victoria, WA's current ALP leaders are cautious consensualists with close connections to local business interests.

Vancouver

In the 1950s, the populist Social Credit party, led first by W. A. C. Bennett and later by his son Bill, succeeded the Liberals and the Conservatives as BC's "preferred party of free enterprise" (Magnusson 1990, p. 175). It invested in roads and dams to further open up the province's forests, mines and sources of hydroelectric power, and so gathered support from workers in these industries. This weakened the electoral base of parties associated with BC's previously strong labour movement, and Social Credit won eleven of twelve elections from 1952 until financial scandals destroyed it in the late 1980s. Its only lapse was in 1972 when a reformist NDP Government was elected for a single term.

In the early years, the Social Credit Government, with its base in Victoria and its economic interests in the BC interior, had had little direct involvement in the growth of Vancouver where developers and the councils proceeded "much as they pleased, relying as necessary on support from Ottawa"²¹ (Magnusson, p. 178). The 1960s marked a change in the focus of the provincial government when the City of Vancouver drew both it and the federal government in as partners in freeway and urban renewal proposals, but both Social Credit and the municipal NPA suffered electoral losses in a great backlash against these plans.

From this time, provincial politics became more directly entwined with politics at the municipal level in Vancouver.

Municipal administrators held a strong degree of control in the City of Vancouver in the 1960s. The link between the councillors and the City staff was a 'board of administration' that came to be dominated by the City Manager, Gerald Sutton-Brown

²¹ This was a rare case of federal engagement with urban issues. The Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation began in 1944 and was the principal enabling mechanism for the post-war suburban housing boom. It lasted until a combination of fiscal belt-tightening and a backlash against the problems of massive urban renewal projects in the early 1970s led Ottawa to give urban issues back to the provinces.

(Tennant 1981), who had come to Vancouver from England in the early 1950s. He had entrenched his position so thoroughly that he controlled hiring and firing at City Hall and managed council business through strict control of the flow of information (Bernard et al. 1975; Gutstein 1975).

Until the 1960s, the NPA-dominated Vancouver Council was part of a typical growth-oriented civic alliance with business leaders (Magnusson 1990), albeit one which operated with “competence and integrity” (Tennant p. 133). This alliance began to fall apart under the mayoralty of developer Tom Campbell, from 1966 to 1972, when:

idiosyncrasies and alcohol came to the fore ... [and] although a polite press kept the details from the public, reporters and columnists became highly contemptuous ... [and the Council became] a laughing-stock (Tennant p. 130).

Candidates from TEAM (The Electors’ Action Movement) – a loose but energetic grouping of liberal professionals with an agenda of ‘growth control’ – were first elected in 1968 during a period of great civic unrest in response to proposals for urban freeways. They took control of the Council in 1972. Their first act was to dismiss Sutton-Brown. The new mayor became, in practice, the chief executive of the City and, since this time, elected officials have continued to take a strong role of in managing the detail of civic business. This period of reform at the local and regional level was matched in provincial politics by a single term of NDP government from 1972 to 1975 (Tennant).

TEAM disbanded in 1982: its loose structure and broad membership were more suited to the needs of building a strong oppositional movement than to the daily demands of wielding political power. Since then, ‘independents’ and groupings like the recently formed Vision Vancouver have taken the centrist ground.

Both the NPA and the centrist groupings typically find their support in middle-class West Vancouver. The left party – COPE (the Coalition of Progressive Electors) – generally finds its support in East Vancouver. This east-west divide goes back to an earlier division of the City into several municipalities (Office of the City Clerk 1996) and still “encapsulates differences in housing affordability, environmental quality, levels of traffic, ethnic diversity and politics” (Punter 2003, p. 4).

COPE is backed by the unions through the Vancouver Labour Council, has strong organisational input from the provincial NDP and is linked to working-class residents’

groups (Church et al. 1993). It worked closely with centre-left independent Mike Harcourt who was mayor from 1980 to 1986, and controlled the Council in its own right for a term from 2002 until 2005.

At the provincial level in 1975, Social Credit, after only one term in opposition, recovered the ground they had lost during the Vancouver urban development controversy. They immediately cut taxes and public sector spending and put restrictions on the powerful BC unions in a bid to attract new investment from Asian and American investors. They brought to Vancouver their ‘megaproject’ approach, established over many years in the interior, to exploit the potential of commercial property development in the old industrial and port areas of the inner city (Magnusson 1990). The provincial government was able to work with business-oriented politicians who regained control of Vancouver Council in 1978 to commence projects like a domed stadium in False Creek North and a high-tech transit project for the transport-themed 1986 world Expo (Persky 1980).

Conflict between the province and the City of Vancouver re-emerged during Harcourt’s time as mayor and continued for a decade. A more cooperative era began in 1991, when Harcourt, having made the move to provincial politics, took the NDP to victory. This change in provincial government was built on the strength of Harcourt’s profile and popularity in Vancouver and a series of financial scandals involving the Social Credit leadership (Carty 1996).

During Harcourt’s premiership, new trade links with North Asia were reinforced, and there was a focus on reform in forestry management and improving relations with First Nation communities (Rayner 2000). In urban policy, collaboration between the province, the GVRD and some Vancouver municipalities, resulted in the creation of the innovative transport agency, TransLink, in 1999.

More recently, the current Liberal Government, first elected in 2001 in a climate of economic decline and political scandals in the NDP, has had a sometimes tense relationship with the Vancouver region. In this period, the construction of a third SkyTrain line has begun, but the province has provided a political base for trucking and freight interests who want wider freeways and new bridges in suburban Vancouver.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the first of the three-part comparative analysis, similarities and differences have been identified in the general political and economic environment and in the structures of the institutions for urban and regional government in Melbourne, Perth and Vancouver.

The most important areas of difference are summarised below.

Broad economies

Apart from Melbourne's size, the economies of the three cities have a comparable base in freight movement, in commerce and in the services sector. Melbourne has a larger, although declining, manufacturing base, and Vancouver lacks the scale of public service employment that the Australian cities have through their place as state capitals. These differences may add to the complexities of urban governance in Melbourne because of the greater diversity of business interests, but there does not appear to be any other *prima facie* reason to think that the nature of Melbourne's broad economy has an important role in explaining the poor performance of its transit system. Other institutional factors appear more likely to be instructive.

Structures of urban government

In both Australia and Canada, national governments have played little direct role in urban affairs, although the constitutional and fiscal powers of the two federal governments limit the scope of action available to provinces and states in similar ways.

In BC, while the province has legislative and financial superiority over municipal government, the complexities of the political interactions between the different tiers of government provide a stark contrast to the virtual monopoly of the power over urban affairs wielded by state governments in Melbourne and Perth.

The location of state parliaments and administrative machinery in the Australian cities contributed to this centralisation of power. Local government did not offer an ongoing institutional base, weak as it might have been, for challenges to the states' general support for the automobile agenda. Factors behind this include the historic centrality of road construction within the very limited range of functions for which Australian local government is responsible; and the connections to the business elite and its support for

car-oriented policies within the most prestigious, and best-resourced, local government bodies like the cities of Perth and Melbourne.

By contrast, the institutional support for environmentally oriented urban policies at the municipal and regional level in Vancouver has been strong. The City of Vancouver has historically taken a significant role in the provision of urban services, including transit, and is a more sophisticated operation than anything found at the municipal level in Australia. The City's commercial and cultural history, its size and aspects of its legislative base have led to a vigorous and independent political culture and, with this example before them, even the smaller suburban councils appear to play a greater role in metropolitan affairs than their Australian counterparts.

At the regional level, the GVRD provides a structure for cooperation between councils and this serves as an important base for municipal politicians in conflicts with the province. In Melbourne, the MMBW provided a structure for metropolitan coordination that had some legitimacy in representing local interests against the state, but it was dismantled in the 1970s and 1980s. Perth has no formal bodies for metropolitan government or local government coordination.

Parliamentary power and business leadership: governing coalitions

The Australian preferential voting system is quite different to Canada's 'first past the post' system, but there is little difference in the broad patterns of parliamentary representation at provincial and state level in Victoria, WA and BC since the 1950s. Trends in parliamentary representation have followed fluctuations in the global economy and in social attitudes. The patterns of parliamentary representation in Victoria and WA are almost identical.

The most important difference is the extent of power gained by reformers in the City of Vancouver and at the provincial level in BC in the early 1970s. Conservative state governments in Victoria and WA resisted the reform movements of this time: Whitlam's strongly reformist national government had much less influence on urban policy than it did in other areas.

During this period of reform and with the support of some business interests in Vancouver, a growth management agenda was established that included support for improved transit

6. Institutions and policies for transport and planning in the three cities

This chapter is the second part of the comparative analysis of structural, institutional and political factors surrounding transport policy outcomes in Melbourne, Perth and Vancouver.

It describes the evolution in the three cities of institutions for the management of urban transport systems, illustrating some important instances, both positive and negative, in the persistence of institutional forms and in patterns of problem definition.

The descriptions of transport management institutions are put together with major events and outcomes in transport and urban development policy, and with changes in the wider political landscape that were described in the previous chapter, to produce, for each city, a short narrative of events and outcomes in transport policy and politics in the second half of the 20th century.

These narratives have two purposes.

First, they make it possible to use Vuchic's general categorisation of urban transport policy and investment decisions, discussed in Chapter 2, to assess the performance of each city's transport policies.

Second, they are used, in conjunction with the theoretical and empirical understandings of the policy process explored in Chapter 3, to identify the periods at which there was the greatest potential for major changes in policy direction.

In the theoretical studies of the policy process, the multiple-streams framework shows that the potential for policy change is greatest when new definitions of a problem or new data can be brought into formal political electoral or parliamentary processes in a way that gives new opportunities for different policy solutions to be put into practice. Supporting this, Bratzel has shown in his empirical work on transport policy processes that meaningful policy change has required a period of serious political contention over transport policy and significant challenge to the legitimacy of prevailing policy directions.

The chapter concludes with the identification of the periods of serious political contention over transport policy in the Melbourne, Perth and Vancouver.

Chapter 7 will complete the three-part comparative analysis through an investigation of the power relations between key actor groups at these critical periods. This will include analysis of the resources available to each group, and the effectiveness of political strategies and tactics chosen by them.

Melbourne

The information for this description of Melbourne's transport policy processes and outcomes is taken from a variety of sources including Beed (1981), Davison (2004a; 2004b), Dingle and Rasmussen (1991), Manning (1991) and Mees (2000), as well as material from research interviews, government policy documents and associated public submissions and debates, newspaper reports, parliamentary documents and other archival material.

A map of the present urban boundary of the city, rail lines, freeways and localities mentioned in the text is shown in Fig. 6.1.

Transport in the pre-car city

The railways were central to economic development in the late 19th century and, as discussed in Chapter 5, statutory authorities were established to protect UK investors from the direct interference of local politicians and land speculators. From 1878, the Victorian Railways built and managed both suburban and rural train lines.

A statutory authority for urban tramways came later. From 1885, a private franchise, set up under colonial legislation and managed by twelve municipalities, built an increasingly dense layout of cable trams. This private operator became hugely unpopular for its profiteering and, when its franchise expired in 1919, both the cable tram lines and the newer electric tram routes that had been built around them were brought under the control of a new statutory authority, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board (MMTB) (Fiddian 1993; Manning 1991).

From the start, the rail and tram systems:

worked in a fever of perverted competition. The two operators ... tapped and drained each other's natural catchment areas (Davison 2004b, p. 198).



The result was “mutual unprofitability” (Manning, p. 16).

After the creation of the MMTB, the Victorian Railways continued to see trams as a competitor and used their extensive political influence to have regulatory obstacles put in the path of the new body. For example, the government gave the railways, by legislation, 20% of tram revenues (Fiddian 1997). Over time, the two authorities came to rely on government regulation to protect them from competition from each other, from buses and from the car.

Melbourne’s buses, apart from a minority of services historically run by the railways and the MMTB, have always been a private system, with a myriad of small companies operating with limited regulation or planning. There are still 24 bus companies in operation today. These companies, and many others that have now closed or amalgamated, were founded by soldiers returning from the First World War who bought trucks and sorted out with their fists who would operate the most profitable local routes in the suburbs (Maddock 1992, p. 9). Competition with the trams led to some regulation of routes in 1924 and 1934, but bus operators were still able to compete with each other on some routes until the 1970s (Mees 2000, p. 262).

In the early 20th century, there were ten major suburban rail lines, up to 40 km long, and an irregular grid of tram tracks in a 10 km radius of the CBD. These transit services established patterns of development and mobility that can still be seen in the modern city. Most of the original train lines and the electric tramlines, built over and around the earlier cable tram routes, are still running. With minor additions and extensions to this basic structure over subsequent decades, there are now more than 350 km of heavy rail and a similar length of tramways (*Jane’s Urban Transport Systems*).

Supported by transit, largely unregulated land speculation saw the spread of single-storey detached dwellings with gardens, often surrounded by “large areas of vacant land [that] exaggerated the low density suburban profile” (Beed 1981, p. 144). A distinct physical divide between the attractive rolling country to the south and east of central Melbourne and the drier, windier basalt plains to the north and west led to a self-perpetuating spatial imbalance in the distribution of population and wealth. The middle classes settled to the east, and industry concentrated on the cheaper land in the west where it had ready access to the port.

In this pre-car era, roads were chiefly the responsibility of local governments.

In line with the international rise of the town-planning profession, an advisory Metropolitan Town Planning Commission was formed in 1925. Its 1929 Plan championed town planning as the means to deal with problems of crime, sanitation and urban poverty. The plan led to some land reservations for future road development but the Depression and the Second World War halted any construction that the rural-oriented state governments of the time might have contemplated.

From the 1950s to the early 1970s

The lifting of wartime petrol rationing in 1950 ushered in a period of dramatic growth in car ownership in Melbourne (Davison 2004a, Ch. 5).

Planning for this and other post-war changes became the responsibility of the MMBW. Until this time, the MMBW had been responsible for managing the mechanics of urban sewerage, drainage and water supply. As described in Chapter 5, it also provided a forum for regional coordination for local government.

The MMBW's 1954 Planning Scheme was based on extensive surveys and analysis that were intended to deliver a "complete understanding of the city both as a physical and social entity" (vol. 1, p. 1). In retrospect, its open presentation of its data and reasoning provides a refreshing contrast to later Melbourne planning documents.

The MMBW Plan saw development of the transit system and expansion of the road network as complementary tools to manage future congestion and parking problems. But, as patronage on transit began to fall in the 1950s, the MMBW, as planning agency, could only prod the transit authorities to integrate their services. It made it clear that the need for coordination was "serious and vital" and asserted that "it should not be beyond the imagination of the appropriate authorities to devise suitable and adequate machinery" (vol. 2, p. 105). This assertion proved to be completely wrong.

In 1956, the MMBW was given responsibility for the design and construction of highways in the inner metropolitan area where the pressure for roads was greatest (Dingle and Rasmussen 1991), but its capital works budget was small and had to cover the Board's sewerage and water supply responsibilities as well as roads. The roads that the MMBW built in this period solved some difficult engineering problems (Lay 2003) but were nothing like the great freeways that young Melbourne engineers saw on their visits to the USA on scholarships provided by leading Melbourne businessmen (Davison 2004a, p. 173).

The construction of a large network of modern urban roads was not within the power of the MMBW or either of the other two organisations that employed engineers with ambitions to lay bitumen. The Melbourne City Council had jurisdiction over only a tiny part of the metropolis. The Country Roads Board (CRB), another statutory authority, was then a tiny outfit operating from wartime Nissen huts built in a city car park (*Russell*). It was building a strong reputation through its road construction work in country Victoria, but was excluded, by legislation, from operating in the inner city, roughly defined by the extent of the tramlines.

MMBW plans for a freeway on the downtown fringe were rejected by the government after public protests in 1963 over its need to encroach on public gardens (Dingle and Rasmussen, p. 252). Road advocates were frustrated by this and other setbacks (Davison 2004a). In the same year, the Metropolitan Transportation Committee (MTC) was established, separate from the MMBW's statutory land-use planning processes, to advise the state government on the planning and improvement of transport facilities. This Committee brought in the computer-modelling and advocacy power of the US consultants Wilbur Smith & Associates who did a computerised version of the transport surveys and analysis done on paper by the MMBW in 1954 (1969). The resulting Transportation Plan (MTC 1969) proposed a 5 km freeway grid across metropolitan Melbourne. Despite its inclusion of a downtown underground rail loop and other train and tram route extensions, UK transport economist J. M. Thomson criticised the 1969 Plan as a:

public relations document ... a highway plan, not – as it is described – a comprehensive transport plan (1977, p. 137).

The 1969 freeway plan remains the driving force behind transport investment in Melbourne.

The last decade of the Liberal Government: 1972-1982

With freeways already the subject of public skirmishes, the release of the 1969 Plan raised the stakes, especially in inner Melbourne, which was a melting-pot of migrants, working-class Anglo-Australians and a first wave of gentrifying professionals. This community had already become politically active in response to plans for slum clearance and high-rise tower developments. By 1972, public meetings in opposition to the inner-city freeway plans were attracting large crowds, and a section of Melbourne's

elite was also roused to oppose a freeway that would run past their homes along the Yarra River (Davison 2004a).

These were serious public challenges, but the government adapted to these and other challenges from the social movements of the 1960s through a change in parliamentary leadership in 1972 from the brash Bolte to the urbane Hamer. The new premier had to deal with the road conflict early in his tenure because the McMahon Liberal Government had offered:

a great chunk of Commonwealth money for freeways ... [This] got [him] off his backside to decide which [parts of the 1969 Plan] were politically possible
(*Delaney*).

Hamer cancelled some of the most contentious freeway plans in March 1973, defusing the issue by adopting the 'quality of life' rhetoric of the freeway opponents (Mees 2000, p. 274-5), and transport became a subject for his administrative reforms (as described in Chapter 5). After Hamer's cuts, there were continuing protests against the remaining inner-city road that was planned to end less than five kilometres from the city centre. These protests had mass support in the affected suburbs and there were dramatic street protests (Davison 2004a), but the road was built and opened in 1978.

In 1974, responsibility for all major road construction in metropolitan Melbourne was handed over to the CRB who, with allies in business and government, kept up the political pressure for continuing to roll out the 1969 Plan. There was a hiatus in funding for road construction in 1970s, partly due to changes in national politics and partly because of the tightening of the international economy in the wake of the oil crisis. Inside the state authorities, there was some division between road planners keen to continue the implementation of the 1969 Plan, and MMBW planners who supported urban containment and nodal development policies first articulated in 1954, but it took some time to emerge.

The 1954 MMBW Plan had established corridor-based land release controls, which had slowly achieved spatial contiguity in residential housing, but it had grossly underestimated population growth. In 1971, the MMBW proposed a new planning scheme – *Planning Policies for the Melbourne Metropolitan Region* – to address this issue. This formally adopted the road network proposed in the 1969 Plan and asserted

that its urban corridors and district centres were “quite compatible with” (p. 33) the freeway grid.

By the late 1970s, the MMBW was not quite so willing to argue that the two approaches were harmonious.

The rail authority had won political support of the downtown underground rail loop from the 1969 Transportation Plan, but the CRB and other road advocates saw this large expenditure, in addition to the growing subsidies required for transit operations, as throwing good money after bad. Faced with dwindling resources for their own projects, road advocates built political support for a review of freight and passenger transit operations across Victoria. This review proposed significant cuts to urban transit and a more rapid implementation of road-building programs (VTS 1980a, p. 101 & 133).

In the MMBW, the rise in social and environmental activism encouraged a strengthening of “its advocacy of a more spatially consolidated urban form” (Beed, p. 177) and its support for transit. This became the basis for its 1981 *Metropolitan Strategy Implementation* planning framework. This document criticised the VTS, saying that the excess capacity in the transit system would be better dealt with by increasing patronage rather than cutting services (p. 96), and attempted to put transit ahead of roads in the quest for a “balanced approach” to transport planning (p. 91).

The MMBW hoped that its district centres policy would force sufficient changes in patterns of travel to create the “concentrated flows” (1981, p. 91) deemed necessary for viable transit services to operate. As in 1954, it was left to the transit authorities to design and deliver these services, but again they could not meet the challenge. All were under pressure from growing deficits (Loder 1977), and the railways were engaged in the construction of the commuter-oriented underground rail loop in the city which it had fought to have included in the 1969 Transportation Plan.

The MMBW never achieved great success in attracting commercial activity to its district centres. It had the power to prohibit commercial and retail development outside the centres, but it had limited resources to lure investment into them, and little support from other authorities. There were many cases where political and commercial pressures forced site-specific exemptions (McLoughlin 1992). A further failing in the MMBW policy of commercial consolidation was poor design in some of its attempts to create transit interchanges in district centres (*Evans*).

The rail unions led a strong campaign, using a combination of industrial muscle and actions designed to build community support, to challenge the VTS scheme for transit cuts and, by late 1981, the government had abandoned most of the proposed service changes. The success of this campaign played an important role in the election of the reformist ALP and the end of 27 years of Liberal Party rule in Victoria in 1982.

The period of ALP reform: 1982-1990

The ALP's transport reforms after 1982 were chiefly administrative. They created a single agency for the planning and operation of transit in Melbourne, called the Metropolitan Transit Authority ('the Met'), and introduced leasing arrangements to bring in new fleets of trains and trams. The Met was under direct ministerial control, and union representatives were brought into the heart of policy development processes. The separate fiefdoms of train and tram management remained strong within the new structure and, as will be explained in the next chapter, road engineers found themselves making operational decisions for transit about which they had little interest or understanding. Bureaucratic restructures became a "fetish", repeated with each new minister and departmental head (Considine 1992).

Bus services generally remained outside the influence of successive reforms. In 1974, the Victorian Government had begun to pay subsidies directly to private bus operators to keep them in business but did not enforce coordination of services (Mees 2000, p. 267). The ALP attempted some reform of the private bus network after 1983, but this collapsed when the operators successfully mounted a legal challenge to a requirement in 1987 that they tender for their own routes.²²

Since then, there has been little political will to introduce a regime for competitive tendering for bus operations or to tackle the historic accretion of convoluted bus routes that only erratically coordinate with trains and trams, and for which operators continue to receive subsidies unrelated to patronage.

Transit planning was later formalised and separated from wider strategic urban planning. The result of these processes was MetPlan (Metropolitan Transit Authority 1988). It was chiefly concerned with managing a large reduction in the transit workforce, and retained the traditional operational focus on 'captive' users and the

²² The judgement in the initial case can be found at 1988 VIC LEXIS 799 (VIC 1988) and the results of the failed appeal at (1991) 1 VR 181. The case is also discussed in Russell et al. (2000, p. 157).

dwindling proportion of commuters who could be attracted by old-fashioned service patterns.

Union opposition to job cuts led to conflict with the government that degenerated into an all-out war from which the enduring public image was rows of disabled trams blocking downtown streets. These conflicts destroyed the ALP's credibility on transit management and, more importantly, were an important factor in its demoralising defeat in the state elections of 1992.

In road management, the ALP's reforms of 1982 created two metropolitan road agencies; one responsible for safety and traffic flow through signal operations, the other for the planning and construction of most new roads and freeways. The ALP had a policy of 'no new freeways', but this had little political force: it was largely a hangover from the big road conflicts that had faded away after 1977. The new minister made it clear to his road engineers that he expected them to continue to produce freeway plans. The first new freeway under Labor was built with traffic lights to preserve the fiction of the government's policy. Subsequently, new roads were rolled out with strong support from business interests and local governments.

Partly because of this dislocation between public policy and private intention, it was not until late in the ALP's second term that it unveiled a planning strategy, *Shaping Melbourne's Future* (Victoria 1987). This used the familiar language of urban consolidation, growth corridors and activity centres. But, the sketch map showing the "pattern of future Melbourne development" (p. 35) revealed its intention to reverse the directions of the 1981 MMBW Plan. It emphasised freeway links between Ringwood and Frankston and between Greensborough and Werribee, rather than the radial rail corridors more familiar in early plans and in the lives of Melburnians. These links were to be forged by building a ring freeway that had been given the lowest possible priority in the road plan of 1981. And, as the government fell apart during its last term, the Industry Minister David White emerged as a champion for a long-discussed downtown 'bypass' freeway. His work with the road construction agencies saw the project design and environmental impact assessment processes virtually completed before the election (*Evans*). This facilitated the later construction of these roads by a private consortium.

The neo-liberal period: 1992 to the present

After 1992, the new neo-liberal Kennett Government amalgamated and corporatised the road agencies, and announced plans for the next 15 years of road-building (VicRoads 1994) to continue the roll-out of the 1969 Transportation Plan. The centrepiece, the \$2 billion privately-operated City Link, was a pair of downtown ‘bypasses’ with two deep tunnels, a high-level bridge and high-tech electronic tolling. The roads plans set the stage for a planning policy called *Living Suburbs* (Victoria 1995) which entrenched ‘integrated transport and land-use’ planning for Melbourne around construction of an outer ring road. *Transporting Melbourne* (DOI 1996) was launched as the companion to *Living Suburbs* and claimed to be the “first integrated transport strategy for Melbourne since 1969”. Although transit was given a relatively coherent and optimistic treatment, it was expected to occupy only a small niche in a city shaped around continuing growth in car-use.

Transit operations were corporatised in the first years of the Kennett Government and deals were done with the unions to implement the staff cuts that had triggered such destructive conflict with the ALP. Government services in many sectors were privatised, but such changes were not necessarily high on the agenda of Kennett’s former leadership rival, Alan Brown, who was the first Liberal transport minister. Eventually, transit was privatised in 1999 by Brown’s successor Robin Cooper, under a system modelled on the UK experiences of the 1980s. This restored the old operational units of competing train and tram companies and, in fact, created even greater fragmentation of service by dividing the tram and train systems in half and giving each of the four resulting pieces to separate operators (Mees 2005a). Together with the inefficiency inherent in the new arrangements, a huge amount of energy and time has been spent in designing, administering and defending the new franchises.

The four suburban franchise agreements included optimistic patronage growth targets with significant penalty clauses. By 2001, it became clear that the targets would not be met, but in early 2002, the ALP Government released the franchisees from many of the original service obligations and increased their subsidies (Watts and Alford 2004). This was not enough to keep all the operators in Melbourne, and the UK firm National Express pulled out in December 2002. In February 2004, the government announced new agreements with a single operator for the trains and another for trams. These

contracts expire in 2009 and the long-term future of the privatised system is not yet decided (Allsop 2007; Mees 2005a; Mees et al. 2006).

The ALP has shown little interest in reshaping transport or planning policy networks. Institutional frameworks continue to foster competition between transit modes; and there is no agency with clear responsibility for transit planning. Urban planning in Melbourne remains weak though the influence of neo-liberal ideologies, with a former head of 'planning' arguing that:

the importance and – even more, the possibility – of the application of conscious choice to city formation is exaggerated (Paterson 2000, p. 377).

Melbourne's current planning scheme is *Melbourne 2030* (DOI 2002). This policy differs from the planning policies of the Liberals in its prominent sustainability rhetoric. It was accompanied by a commitment from the Premier to a target of "20% of all travel by public transport by 2020" (DPC 2001, p. 16), although neither a rationale for the choice of this target nor a detailed breakdown of how it would be achieved were provided. Urban consolidation is a major theme, but with only weak protection for an urban growth boundary and more than 100 designated activity centres, restrictions on developers are largely cosmetic and regulations provide limited controls on the quality of the built form (Buxton and Scheurer 2005). Extensive freeway construction is at the core of the plan, and Thomson's critique of the 1969 Plan could be applied equally today.

At the time of writing, construction is nearly complete on the \$2.25 billion eastern section of the outer ring road, commitments have been made to further widening of radial freeways, and the route for the final link in the ring road is being discussed. There is concern at the lack of progress on 'Implementation Plans' for transit improvements proposed in *Melbourne 2030* (Millar 2005) and at the increasing costs and absence of network planning functions in the renegotiated franchise agreements for the private operation of the transit system (Mees et al. 2006). The '20% by 2020' target for transit patronage growth has been recast as an 'aspirational' goal, if it is mentioned at all, and the most recent transport plan, though strong on promises for transit, puts most of its short-term effort into continued expansion of the road system (DOI 2006).

Decades of road-building have been accompanied by suburban expansion in the established growth corridors, but the flight to the suburbs is not extreme in Melbourne.

While old working-class inner suburbs were the targets for high-rise urban renewal projects in the 1950s and 1960s, the downtown area continued to be the major centre for commercial employment and specialist retailing. A bubble of property speculation in office buildings that inflated and collapsed in the 1980s left developers looking for new uses for inner-city property at just the time when the middle class were recognising the advantages of inner-city living. Public and private investment has delivered the trappings of the 'gentrified city', with pockets of pedestrianisation and new and recycled cultural and sporting venues. Property values have boomed and a new market has grown in inner-city apartments, both in new towers and in warehouse and factory conversions. Current trends in the spatial imbalances in the distribution of wealth show that the urban fringe is now becoming the locus of poverty and disadvantage (ABS various-a). Employment, too, has not dispersed to the same extent as in American cities. Mees notes that 37% of total employment in 1991 was in the inner suburbs (2000, p. 215), while only 15% of the metropolitan population lived in these same inner suburbs, and that only 6% of office space was outside planned rail-based centres (p. 214). From 1992 to 2004, there was a 42% increase in employment in central Melbourne (MCC 2006). This strong city core creates travel patterns that could be served by a revitalised transit system based on the existing framework of rail and tram lines.

Perth

Apart from the research interviews, the main sources for this brief history of transport policy processes and outcomes in Perth are Cole (2000), Manning (1991) and the various contributors to Hedgcock and Yiftachel (1992).

A map of the present urban boundary of the city, rail lines, freeways and localities mentioned in the text is shown in Fig. 6.2.

The pre-car city

As in Melbourne, trains and trams shaped Perth's growth. The rural railway, built in the 1880s to link new agricultural expansion in the hinterland to port facilities, created two suburban centres, each about 15 km from central Perth. One was in the port town of Fremantle, the other inland at the Midland railway junction at the base of the Darling Scarp where an industrial and commercial centre emerged.



Suburbanisation of the region spread from each of these centres. Class distinctions became established, with middle-class suburbs concentrated in areas with access to river frontages and the beach, and working-class around Fremantle and inland. A relatively dense, linear commercial and residential built form can still be seen today along the tram routes in Perth and Fremantle that were closed down in 1949 and 1959 respectively (Cole 2000).

Suburban housing in the pre-car era was chiefly detached dwellings on quarter-acre blocks. This was driven as much by the desire of authorities to avoid the cost of providing reticulated water and deep sewerage systems as by individual preferences. On the sandy coastal plain, larger blocks with septic tanks were a cheaper solution to the sewerage problem and allowed groundwater to be tapped for residential use. The Road Districts and the fledgling municipal councils managed local development, with little guidance from the WA Government on metropolitan priorities.

A state railways authority, later known as Westrail, managed Perth's suburban railways and, from 1899 until 1913, both private and municipal companies ran electric tramways (Manning 1991). From 1913 until their closure, these systems were state-run. Government trolley buses operated from 1934 until 1970 (Cole 2000).

After 1917, the police licensed private bus operators on the advice of a committee representing railways, tramways, motor transport passengers' associations, local government and the public works department. This system "avoided fierce competition between buses and trams" (Manning, p. 26). Even so, the rivalry between bus companies remained strong, and unhealthy competition between trains and buses continued (Cole 2000). However, compared to Melbourne, the institutions managing transit in Perth entered the era of the car without the same baggage of tradition, hierarchy and competition.

Other institutions for management of transport systems have also remained quite stable. The statewide Department of Main Roads (DMR) manages major road construction in Perth, and broad transport planning, from the 1950s, was been the function of a small agency run by the Director General of Transport (DGT). In 2001, this role shifted to the newly formed Department of Planning and Infrastructure.

The roads consensus: 1950-1979

Since 1930, a state government planning commission has operated under a variety of names. Despite an active town-planning lobby, the government never adopted the planning commission's first report which recommended 'parkways' and other arterial roads and a single authority to manage all forms of transport.

Post-war ambitions for economic and industrial growth finally led the government to accept the need for a planning framework. The first step was the identification of Kwinana, 25 km south of Perth, as the centre for industrial expansion. The next step was the recruiting of two experts: the academic George Stephenson from Liverpool, and the practitioner Alistair Hepburn who came from Sydney and later worked for the MMBW in Melbourne.

Their plan (Stephenson and Hepburn 1955) advocated a relatively compact urban form with a strictly defined boundary based around the existing nodes of central Perth and Fremantle and Midland, "strong" rail and bus services, and a new network of metropolitan highways. It was considered in the profession to be a "definitive" statement of the factors that would influence future growth of Perth (Stokes and Hill 1992, p. 115). A new framework for managing growth in Perth strengthened the role of the planning commission, which produced Perth's first statutory metropolitan plan, the Metropolitan Region Scheme, in 1963.

Most development pressure was north and south along the coastal corridors and few planners or other in government officials "saw any great evidence as to why anything other than the car might be relevant to the city's future" (Hicks). In the translation to the statutory plan, Stephenson and Hepburn's arterial roads became "full-scale freeways" and their proposed rail lines in the northern coastal corridor and to the northeast of Perth were removed (Yiftachel and Kenworthy 1992, p. 132).

The focus on planning for the car strengthened in the late 1960s when it became clear that growth in car ownership and use was "far in excess of the estimates of the 1955 Plan" (Stokes and Hill, p. 117). Using typical methodologies of the time, the Perth Transport Study predicted severe congestion (PRTSSC 1971).

In response, a new planning strategy, the Corridor Plan, was adopted in 1973, establishing four growth corridors and adding two more district centres to the 1955 Plan. It further weakened the growth pattern proposed by Stephenson and Hepburn by

relaxing the defined boundaries and allowing for indefinite expansion of the major urban area and towns beyond the urban edge. It also continued the weakening of the transit provisions of the 1955 proposals, with almost all growth in travel to be catered for with an expanded freeway system. Development in the proposed district centres never met the targets of the Corridor Plan (MRPA 1970). Employment remained concentrated in central and inner-city locations, and residential growth was largely on the urban fringe.

Car-based transport policy went virtually unchallenged:

there wasn't a road lobby ... there was no question that [the Department of Main Roads] had complete control (*Newman*).

the strength of the road-based regional strategy ... was just so great that it was an underlying assumption that everyone made that it would continue to happen (*Affleck*).

The city grew, and road construction came at little political cost. Key elements of the inner-city freeways, including the Narrows Bridge and the interchanges that now separate downtown Perth from Kings Park, were built in the 1950s and 1960s. These required filling a bay of the river but, as Hicks says:

at the time, the community didn't pay a big price ... we didn't bulldoze inner-city communities very much at all.

The City of Perth ran an advertising campaign for downtown retail businesses with the credible slogan: *your car is as welcome as you are*. New suburbs were “created for the car and [grew up] very successfully with the car” (*Hicks*).

John Knox, the Director General of Transport (DGT), argued strongly that rail had no place in Perth and that what small future there was for transit would be met through the ‘flexibility’ of buses (DGT 1977, p. 21-25). Cuts to the rail-based transit system were inevitable consequences of this policy direction, and it was not until formal plans were announced in 1979 to close the Fremantle rail line that Perth's car-based transport policy was actively contested.

In the first decade after the Second World War, buses operated by private companies carried over a third of all Perth's transit passengers. These ‘bus men’ saw little common ground with the operators of the government railway, regularly pursuing opportunities,

for example, to set up routes on the Stirling Highway which runs beside the Fremantle rail line. The private operators were making enough money to run their fleets, but not enough to encourage them to buy new buses. The old fleet was gradually run into the ground and, in 1957, a new government bus operator, the Metropolitan Transport Trust (MTT), absorbed those private operators who chose to sell. The transition was complete by 1962, and the managers of the private system became managers of the government system and took responsibility for 900 buses: Australia's largest single fleet outside Sydney. While they continued to get mileage out of their ageing vehicles, they were not comfortable in the public service and kept their distance from political debates on transport planning (*Hicks*).

By the 1970s, management of the suburban rail system was little more than an irritant to Westrail which was engaged in fierce competition from road freight in its traditional agricultural markets and faced new demands from exporters to get huge quantities of ore from mine to port across vast distances in the north of the state. So, it was probably at Westrail's suggestion that the MTT "reluctantly" took financial responsibility for the suburban rail system in 1974 (Cole 2000, p. 138). Westrail continued to run the suburban trains, which operated on three lines with a decaying fleet of diesel railcars.

Although patronage on Perth's transit fell in the early post-war years, the rate of decline was slower than in Melbourne. The ALP, when it won government for a term in 1953 after a long rail strike and service cuts the previous year, improved service levels and cut the travel time from Fremantle to Perth by 12%. These changes brought patronage back to the levels of the 1940s (Cole 2000, p. 124). Management generally accepted that there was a waning market for transit, but was still able to make some important innovations that helped to slow the decline. In 1974, a common ticketing system was set up for bus, train and ferry services: this was a first for Australia (Manning 1991, p. 98). Modelled on the systems of continental Europe, a flat fare was charged for any journey of up to two hours by any mode. In 1982, Perth pioneered the use of simple automatic ticket machines. In addition, the bus system has a long and enviable record compared to other states in keeping its operating costs low (*McDougall, Hicks*).

The last years of the Liberals: 1979-1983

The idea of closing the Perth-Fremantle rail line had been first raised publicly in the 1970 Perth Transport Study. A series of departmental studies over the next five years led to a recommendation in 1975 to convert the railway easement to a cheaper 'busway'. Later, because access to the railway land would lower the cost of a proposed road link, the 'busway' was dropped in favour of buses running on the existing main road. In January 1979, the government announced a 'trial' closure of the Fremantle line to commence in eight months. Research into the nature of the opposition to this proposal, to be explored in the next chapter, will show that it went well beyond users of the service. The campaign was described by participants as a 'lightning rod' for dissatisfaction with the Court Liberal Government.

Over 25 years later, key members of the small group that founded the Friends of the Railways (FOTR) remember their campaign as remarkable for its energy and its inclusiveness. Working through the normal channels of civic activism, FOTR built strong support for keeping the Fremantle line open and for upgrading the transit system, but they could not reverse the government's position. The last train ran from Fremantle in September 1979.

There was a state election early in 1980. In the campaign, the ALP made prominent promises to immediately reopen the Fremantle line and electrify the suburban rail system in three years (*West Australian*, 24 Jan 1980). Court survived a strong swing to the ALP, emerging with a one-seat majority. In Cottesloe, a middle-class inner suburb on the Fremantle line, a prominent FOTR campaigner took the ALP primary vote from 35% to 44% (*West Australian* 25 Feb 1980). Though not enough to win the seat, this did confirm that transit could be a vote winner: especially when compared with the much smaller protest vote achieved by ALP candidates who were identified with concurrent campaigns to save native forests (*West Australian* 25 Feb 1980).

The ALP reform years and beyond: 1983 to the present

Brian Burke's revitalised ALP won the next election in February 1983. The policies for renewal of transit remained in place although they did not have the same prominence as in 1980. Even so, Burke went to Fremantle on the day after the election and told the local ALP branch that change would come, but not overnight. FOTR leaders told him that haste was less important than "getting it right" (*Grounds*).

Restoration of public confidence in the transit system began in 1983 with the reopening of the Fremantle line. Management of the system improved in following years and extensive renovations of the central Perth railway station in 1986 opened the dark nineteenth-century pile – symbolically and practically – to the bright Perth sunlight. In 1988, the government became embroiled in the WA Inc scandals and the Premier resigned. The ALP looked doomed to lose the next election due in early 1989. After much internal wrangling, an A\$124 million plan for a new northern suburbs rail line was approved in December 1988. Politically, it was a pitch for votes in ‘mortgage belt’ marginal seats.

The *West* reported, under the headline ‘On Line for the Commuter Vote’, that:

Since 1983, the [ALP] have ‘bought’ in a big way the arguments of transport planners that Perth urgently needs major capital spending on public transport ... [The northern line decision and its support from the Opposition] highlight how much community attitudes to public transport have changed over recent years (*West Australian*, 16 Dec 88)

The ALP policy launch in January added free public transport in central Perth and a study for a new rail extension south from Perth to Mandurah to the northern rail commitment. Despite a huge protest vote, the ALP scraped home, winning marginal seats in the northern suburbs by a handful of votes, and the northern rail line was built along the Mitchell Freeway median. It opened, with associated reorganisation of local bus routes, in 1993.

During the 1990s, the ideological drive of the newly elected Liberals towards the privatisation of government services did not have the same impact on transit management as it did in Melbourne. Managers were able to offer the government a model of privatisation that included private tendering for the operation of bus services in a way that did not “sacrifice the single, seamless system for public transport” (*Hicks*).

Throughout this long period, there was little formal change to the institutions that planned and operated transit in Perth. The Metropolitan Transport Trust (MTT) continued to operate the buses while Westrail ran the trains, although unified management and marketing was introduced under the banner of Transperth in August 1986, and the Liberals reinforced the position of the DGT as the leader of planning for future transit improvements in 1993.

After Labor returned to power, some changes to the institutional arrangements were made. The DGT's function was moved into the Department of Planning and Infrastructure in 2001, and rail and bus operations were formally brought together under the Public Transport Authority (PTA) in 2003. The PTA is set up as a statutory body under legislation similar to that which had governed the MTT, but with more carefully defined powers of ministerial intervention and control in case of conflict. The PTA also took responsibility for New MetroRail, the authority set up to manage the construction of the Perth to Mandurah rail line.

While these changes to transit were unfolding, Perth's road network continued to grow. A new planning process, initiated by the ALP after their election in 1983, produced Metroplan (DPUD 1990) with eight regional centres. This was essentially the same as the Corridor Plan, but with the addition of an expanded rail network into the growth corridors. Urban containment and employment growth in the district centres remained the aim, but expansion on the suburban fringe continued.

The staged roll-out of the freeway network went on through the ALP's three terms of government (MRWA various). The flat, sandy terrain of Perth's coastal plain offered few engineering challenges, so costs were low and predictable, and local opposition to intrusions into bush and wetlands had little popular support. Some restrictions on the road program were attempted in 1991 through a review that set out to reduce the expenditure on acquiring land, but the roll-out continued after the Liberals returned to power. As the freeway network neared completion, only a second crossing of the Swan River near Fremantle remains outstanding on the agenda of the early road planners. But, having been passed over during the 1970s and 1980s, its construction in coming years looks very unlikely. The next chapter will describe how the growing popular and professional recognition of the need to limit growth in car-use has gradually slowed the road program. The reservation for the Eastern Bypass of Fremantle (known as Roe Highway Stage 8) was removed from the planning scheme in 2003 (WAPC), against the recommendations of the DMR which no longer has access to hypothecated funding.

Road-planning decisions are not shaping the development of Perth in the same way that they did in the 1960s and 1970s, and there is bipartisan support for:

governments to focus their policy attention on getting rail infrastructure expanded and changing the approach to regional strategic planning (*Affleck*).

In general, there is anecdotal evidence that residents of Perth now have some pride and confidence in their transit system. It is now possible for politicians and the strengthened transit-oriented policy network to deal with the reality that transit still occupies only a small niche in the city's transport system. The 72 km rail line to Mandurah, which is due to open in late 2007, will shape future regional development to the south of Perth. Recent planning processes are again trying to establish limits to urban expansion and create new patterns for the location of commercial and industrial activity. Called 'Network City', the current planning process is intended to produce a new statutory framework to replace Metroplan and it is employing a greater level of community consultation and debate than in the past, although there is some debate about the extent and validity of this consultation (Albrechts 2006; Curtis 2006). In any case, further extensions to transit in parts of the city not served by the existing rail network are being seriously discussed.

Vancouver

This account of Vancouver's transport policy processes and outcomes is based on the research interviews and the work of Berelowitz (2005), Gutstein (1975), Leo (1977), Pendakur (1972), Tennant (1981) and Wynn and Oke (1992).

A map of the present urban boundary of the city, rapid transit lines (existing and under construction), freeways and localities mentioned in the text is shown in Fig. 6.3.

Before the car

Vancouver had its first streetcars in 1890. By 1919, there was 160 km of track. This determined the location of retail strips and desirable residential neighbourhoods and the streets that would become the arterials in the regular grid system laid out by early surveyors. From 1911, three 'interurban' lines, running on the same gauge track as the streetcars but with slightly more elaborate vehicles, provided passenger services to growing suburbs in South Vancouver and Burnaby and to the old provincial capital of New Westminster, now a satellite town. One of these interurbans also carried freight between the Vancouver railhead and the canneries, sawmills and settlements on the Fraser River.

From their early days, the municipalities of the Vancouver region were responsible for their own local roads and transit. In the City of Vancouver itself, transit was



administered through a private franchise that was held for decades by a subsidiary of the electricity company, BC Electric.

There was no mechanism for regulating private development until the province passed legislation in the 1920s allowing municipalities to establish planning advisory bodies. Soon, Vancouver had a Planning Commission that brought in a prominent American expert to produce a master plan for the city. Bartholomew's 1928 Plan had many grandiose elements that were never built, but his network of streets, neighbourhood shops and parks left a lasting imprint on the form of the city. Further grand plans for boulevards and bridges were put forward in the 1930s, but again little emerged except a monumental art deco City Hall, built in the suburbs 3 km from the centre of downtown.

The Bartholomew Plan envisaged continued expansion of streetcar and interurban networks through systematic replacement of buses with electric transit on the existing grid network. However, BC Electric began to favour trolleybuses over streetcars and, when faced with the need to overhaul the streetcar fleet in the late 1940s, they chose the rubber-wheeled vehicles. The last streetcar ran in 1955, but the trolleys continue to run.

Vancouver now has one of the world's largest trolleybus networks, operating almost route for route on the old streetcar network. The last interurban ran in 1958 and part of its route from central Vancouver to Burnaby was eventually taken up by a section of the Trans-Canada Highway.

Freeway contention: 1968-1972

In the 1950s, suburban expansion saw a replication of the existing grid street layout to the south and east using the basic templates of the Bartholomew Plan, with nodes forming around the established administrative and business centres in the major municipalities beyond the borders of the City of Vancouver.

Vancouver municipalities received no direct grants from the province for new roads, and ad hoc transport plans were prepared by committees organised by the municipalities. These plans were typical of the times, proposing new road networks to meet a rapid growth in traffic demand based on the "desires of the public" to use their new cars (Technical Committee for Metropolitan Highway Planning 1958-59, p. 4). The standard freeway network – a downtown loop, radial commuter roads and a suburban ring road – had to be "stretched and squeezed somewhat to fit the unconventional

geography” (Leo, p. 23). Access to the downtown peninsula would require four new bridges across False Creek and a third crossing of Burrard Inlet.

In the beginning, the problem was not one of legitimacy or of overcoming political opposition. Simply, it was how to assemble the necessary funds to build these roads. The City of Vancouver brought in the technical and political expertise of freeway engineers like Wilbur Smith and others from America to shore up their lobbying for provincial and federal support, and narrowed their focus from a network to particular sections of road for which money might be found.

Things came to a head in June 1967 when freeway plans were put to the council. These immediately became the focus for growing dissatisfaction with the heavy-handed style of the council and its staff on many issues. Opposition included University of British Columbia academics, members of the business community who had been shut out of development opportunities, and eastside residents whose neighbourhoods were slated for reconstruction. Representatives of these groups, united under the banner of The Electors’ Action Movement (TEAM), won seats on the council.

The big freeway project was officially scrapped on 9 January 1968, but its proponents still had a majority on Vancouver Council and support from the BC Government. They shifted their attention to the third crossing of Burrard Inlet, for which federal funds were still on the table. Commitment to the crossing could be used as a lever to get the rest of the freeway network built.

This new proposal was made public in 1971. As in 1968, opposition was strong, but this time it had an even wider base. Canada Pacific Railways and other waterfront developers had shifted their thinking on the best way to bring people in to their new shops and apartments. They now favoured rapid transit.

Following another strong campaign of civic action, the council leadership lost even its traditional support in organisations like the Downtown Business Association, and the third crossing and the wider freeway project were defeated before TEAM won control of Vancouver City Council in a landslide in 1972.

For TEAM, their time as a minority on the council had shown them where the obstacles to reform lay. Central to their platform was a desire to wrest the direction of civic affairs away from the bureaucracy, and they acted quickly to sack the City Manager, Gerald

Sutton-Brown, and five of the other 14 department heads, including the planning director, and five of the eight other planning staff (Harcourt, Punter 2003).

TEAM set out to coordinate the improvement of the existing transit system and to support the construction of rapid transit in three corridors. This required them to work with the province and the region, and so progress was slow. However, they were able to change the City's processes for the regulation of development. This, along with an innovative program initiated by the newly formed GVRD, put the region on a new path.

The first reform period: 1972-1975

TEAM wanted to wrest control from the bureaucracy, but they were never going to achieve their goals without supportive staff. New and surviving planners were keen to work with the new agenda "without creating a crisis of disaffection among developers and architects" (Leo 1994, p. 678). New development regulation took the form of design guidelines that could be met through negotiation. The guidelines had fixed principles summed up by the watchword: 'neighbourliness'. These included streetscapes that were in scale with the pedestrian, access to sunlight, protection of view-lines, and provision of childcare and community halls to encourage people to live and work downtown.

The framework for negotiation set by these guidelines has proved remarkably robust and has been institutionalised through subsequent reviews of the planning process. It is now used, with varying design guidelines, to manage development applications in different neighbourhoods. Later changes have included requirements for 'non-market' housing and for a certain proportion of residential developments to be 'family housing' of a fixed minimum size located in the lower floors of high-rise towers. Thirty years on, 5% of the population of Greater Vancouver live in the 9.3 sq km downtown core (2001 census data quoted in GVRD 2002). This achievement reflects the planners' skills in choosing which elements of design are most important for reaching environmental or social objectives (and so are non-negotiable) and which, like additional floors in tower blocks (the so-called 'density bonus'), could be traded off to ensure sufficient developer profit.

The process:

imposes significant constraints on developers and [has made] a real impact on the appearance of the developments that result, thus giving a serious measure of

influence, independent of developers to citizens, citizens' groups, and the local state (Leo 1994, p. 683).

A full account of the history of the City of Vancouver planning processes and an evaluation of their outcomes can be found in John Punter's *The Vancouver Achievement* (2003).

The GVRD took time to find its place in the affairs of the region. The municipalities had first wanted it to handle things like the regulation of shopping hours and the creation of a uniform building code. The province wanted it take on bigger tasks like water supply, sewerage and, possibly, transport. Unilaterally, the province gave the GVRD responsibility for hospital planning and required it to find 40% of hospital capital costs through municipal taxes. The GVRD board established a Planning Department to help sort out its priorities, and the staff, under new chief Harry Lash, saw their job as the management of the process of growth and change, rather than the preparation of:

a comprehensive end-state plan depicting the glorious frozen moment in the future when the urban area will have solved all its problems and remedied all social ills (Lash 1976, p. 21).

The new Planning Department began with a landmark seminar of politicians and planners in 1970, at which the goals of 'livability' and a 'livable region' were first coined.

In their first forays in the public arena, the GVRD planners found themselves on the receiving end of hostility from residents who were disillusioned and distrustful of the directions that urban development had taken in the previous decade. Their reaction had far-reaching consequences for the city. Instead of the traditional approach in which:

the planners must know the goals first and so define the problems ... [GVRD planners went] to the public with as little 'inspiration' ... as possible [to] see how they responded (p. 54).

Planners analysed media reports to see what issues brought most citizen response, assembled statistics on those issues that seemed most pressing, and then went out and talked to people. In their public meetings, they found that while they had "guessed right" about most of the issues, they found that:

the mood of the region ... [was] quite beyond anything we expected ... [for many residents] the future looked bleak, they were angry and pessimistic ... opposition to growth astounded us (p. 56).

The results of this process were published in 1972 as the *Report on Livability*, and were an important factor in strengthening the resolve of the provincial reformers in 1973 to introduce urban growth boundary legislation known as the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). The first Livable Region Plan, endorsed by the GVRD in 1975, also followed the directions set by the 1972 report. It encouraged growth in jobs and housing in four regional town centres.

These changes in planning policy assumed a much greater role for transit, and a consensus began to emerge on how new transit should be delivered.

BC Electric, which had become a Crown corporation known as BC Hydro in 1961 (Berelowitz 2005), maintained its role as the major transit operator in Vancouver. The NDP Government offered more funding and BC Hydro was able to make a success of this windfall, partly because its system operated as a coherent network²³, and the patronage growth strengthened political support for transit expansion.

Investigations by the GVRD in 1973, initiated by the province, shifted the direction of transit planning away from heavy-rail subways (Leo 1977, p. 51). The Livable Region Plan proposed a mix of services including a light-rail rapid transit system linking the designated town centres, but no detailed program for construction was in place when Social Credit returned to power in 1975.

Contention between the province and the region: 1975-1990

Soon after the return of the conservatives to power at the provincial level, the consensus for rapid transit began to unravel. The press reported murmurings of a move to revive plans for the third crossing of Burrard Inlet (*Province* 10 March 1976). Downtown business lobby groups continued to call for rapid transit (*Province* 30 March 1976) and the province mouthed its agreement, but the moment for action slipped past.

²³ A 21% increase in route miles was translated into growth in patronage of between 7% and 10%, each year for the five years between 1972 and 1977, with 42% of operating costs coming from the fare-box (TransLink data and *Vancouver Province* 24 June 1976 & 13 Oct 1976, p. 49). This rate of change was well ahead of population growth (see Fig. 4.3).

In July 1978, the province announced that it was reorganising the “entire framework” of transit management in BC, in particular, the Vancouver region transit would be made a joint responsibility with local government (Bish and Clemens 1999). Commentary in the *Toronto Globe & Mail* (16 Sept 1978) argued that this would set municipalities against each other, and that the province would go slow on spending for rapid transit while appearing to give it political support. This is exactly what happened.

In January 1980, the GVRD finally approved an agreement on the new arrangements for transit administration and financing. Responsibilities were shared between the province and the GVRD in a structure with “endless opportunities for buck-passing” (Persky 1980, p. 172). Meanwhile, planning for a light-rail connection from Vancouver to New Westminster was grinding on through municipal processes, with a series of disputes about the details of the route. In reality, the project was going nowhere without a commitment from the province on funding.

New opportunities for transit in Vancouver came from a very different angle.

In the late 1970s, while the province was back-peddalling on transit, the retirement of some members of TEAM, and polarisation between remaining TEAM representatives and COPE, gave the conservatives on the Vancouver Council an opportunity to regroup. Jack Vorlich, who had been a member of TEAM, defected to the NPA and was mayor for two terms from 1976. In his second term, the NPA had a majority. With the Social Credit Government, Vorlich pursued big development projects in Vancouver. In January 1980, Premier Bill Bennett announced his Cabinet’s decisions to enter the international race for the Expo 86 world fair (Punter 2003).

The theme of Expo was transport, and it was “glaringly obvious” that Vancouver needed a new transit scheme to show to the rest of the world (Berelowitz 2005, p. 78). Soon, the city was awash with engineers’ fantasies: some wanted a ‘maglev’ system or cable cars, others raised the possibility of a tunnel to Vancouver Island, and the City Engineer called for ‘people movers’ that would operate on downtown streets “like horizontal elevators” (Persky 1980 & *Vancouver Sun* 7 May 1980). Eventually, the province’s favoured system emerged – an elevated, driverless, light-rail system, later known as SkyTrain, in which a handful of technicians at a central computer controlled all vehicles. It passed the ‘new toy’ test and appealed to Social Credit’s anti-labour sentiments. It was attractive in Ottawa because Bombardier, the designers of the system, was a Canadian company and construction would create jobs in troubled Quebec.

The GVRD Transportation Committee and some at Vancouver City Hall thought that the existing plan for conventional light rail was a better alternative. Mike Harcourt, who had come to politics as a lawyer representing communities affected by the 1968 freeway plans and had been a councillor for ten years, ran for mayor in late 1980. He refused to support Expo unless there was funding for a rapid transit system and for improvements in general transit operation (*Province* 20 & 25 Nov 1980). In an election stunt, he sent a telegram to the Paris organisers of Expo telling them they would not be welcome in Vancouver.

Harcourt ran a strong neighbourhood-based campaign and won the first of his three terms as mayor. His brinkmanship over Expo did not achieve a change in the technology of SkyTrain, but did ensure that when it opened in January 1986, it fulfilled the goals of the 1975 Livable Region Plan by linking downtown Vancouver to regional town centres in Burnaby and New Westminster. With a service frequency of around five minutes and coordinated feeder buses, it functioned as a central part of a working transit system, rather than just an event toy.

SkyTrain gave Vancouver the beginnings of its modern transit system, but friction between the province and the region made further improvements difficult to achieve.

The City of Vancouver and its allies at the GVRD had been able to win many of their battles over the implementation of the Livable Region Plan, but support was not always strong in the suburbs. Real estate interests found loopholes in the ALR – the provincial mechanism that controlled the Greater Vancouver urban growth boundary– “almost from its inception” (Berelowitz 2005, p. 35). And, with support from the Social Credit Government, suburban interests moved to overturn the LRP. These challenges grew more intense during a recession in the early 1980s.

The GVRD had the power to make general plans for land use in the region, backed by provincial legislation, and, in general, municipalities were not able to act against them. However, when the GVRD voted in 1983 to overturn an approval granted by a suburban municipality for a low-density housing on land recently excised from the ALR, the Speaker of the BC parliament said that the GVRD’s regional planning powers should be “dismantled”. Legislation to do this was introduced three days later (*Vancouver Sun* 5 & 8 July 1983).

The City and its allies did not give up their position, agreeing to continue cooperative planning on regional development and transport (*Sun* 9 July 1986; *Harcourt*). In 1986, 14 councils made a formal agreement to do this, and although this gave ‘growth management’ supporters a chance to regroup in defence of the ALR, it was a “very unstable arrangement”, which could not stop widespread development that was simply “shaving off hillsides and building boxes” (*Cameron*).

Wrangling between the province and the region over funding and management of transit also reached an impasse. While SkyTrain was being built, the province cut its contribution to transit funding, and transit managers were forced to cut services, triggering a fall in patronage. At the same time, the province took transit responsibilities away from the region. Operational management went to a new provincial authority called BC Transit (*Province* 24 Feb 1983). While this was a victory for the province, there was little change in the strategic approach to transit. Though service frequencies suffered through the 1980s, BC Transit oversaw incremental improvements in the reach of bus services into the suburbs and an extension of the SkyTrain line into outer-suburban Surrey.

In the late 1980s, the province tried to use its new planning powers to introduce a road-based plan called ‘Freedom to Move’. This was strongly rejected by the Vancouver mayor, Gordon Campbell, and his suburban allies (*Cameron*).

Cooperation re-established: 1990-2001

To win the tussle with the province over development priorities, the City of Vancouver and its suburban allies, including a progressive mayor in Surrey, Bob Bose (*Condon*), needed to renew their political mandate for their ‘livable region’ policies. Principles for a new growth management strategy were endorsed in *Creating Our Future* (GVRD 1990). These included ensuring that transportation investments reinforced regional goals and values, and giving priority to walking, cycling, transit, goods movement and, finally, to private cars.

To build support for *Creating Our Future*, the GVRD set up a public process including conferences, public opinion surveys and a wide range of work in political and technical committees to evaluate the viability of various planning options. Full details of the chronology and products of this process can be found in the GVRD’s Regional Strategic Review (GVRD 2006d).

The NDP's 1991 victory, through which Harcourt became premier, meant that the province became a cooperative player in the GVRD processes. They restored some of the GVRD's planning powers in 1995 with the Growth Strategies Act, which also committed "coordinated resources" from the province (*Harcourt*).

After more than six years work, the GVRD adopted a new Livable Region Strategic Plan (GVRD 1996). Alongside the new LRSP, the GVRD had written a new transport plan. Ken Cameron, then head of planning at the GVRD, says:

I was able to have the transport project housed in my office ... and seconded some of my staff to the transport planning process, so the LRSP and the transport plan evolved together, and iteratively, not one driving the other.

The long-range transport plan, *Transport 2021* (GVRD 1993a), is a remarkably coherent document that sets out a detailed plan to support the growth management policies in the LRSP by consciously allowing road congestion to grow and by improving transit service. In the international context, the intention to use congestion, particularly on bridges, as a tool for transport demand management was unusual. The negative impact of this policy, through increased costs for goods movement, was acknowledged, but the quantified estimate of these costs was seen as "tolerable" (p. 43) when compared with the wider benefits of reduced car use for passenger travel.

After long but cooperative negotiations over funding for transit expansion, Harcourt announced a 10-year plan for BC Transit in 1995. However, the next developments in transit were not those agreed to in these negotiations. They were imposed directly by the province and were initially opposed by the region because they were not included in *Transport 2021*.

First, the West Coast Express – a commuter rail service to downtown Vancouver from Mission on the Fraser River – was set up in 1995 because "the province wanted something up and running quickly" (*Leicester*). It was a peak service using a window in the Canadian Pacific Railways freight schedules to provide one-direction services for commuters. Although popular with its small patronage base (initially 8,000 per day), it is expensive and a "1960s solution" offering little to the multi-destination network the local planners wanted to create.

Glen Clark, the NDP premier who succeeded Harcourt in 1996, was less interested in cooperation with the municipalities. Before the 1996 election, he promised construction

of a single rapid transit project, using SkyTrain technology, and taking a route formed by combining parts of the two lines proposed in *Transport 2021*. This is now the ‘Millennium’ line. Its route was chosen to pass through the NDP’s electoral heartlands in East Vancouver, but its critics argue that it does not have the same potential for housing intensification as the routes identified in *Transport 2021*, and the greater cost, compared with the surface system initially proposed, has delayed other transit expansion projects (*Leicester, Cameron*).

Vancouver’s transport and urban planning policies have produced the high density downtown core that is so much admired by modern urbanists, but they have also created much dispersed suburban housing little different from that found in Australian and American cities. The gradual reduction in travel time for the journey to work, quoted in Chapter 2, shows that, perhaps uniquely for a modern dispersed city, Vancouver’s policies to keep travel distances short (that is, its policies for ‘self-containment’) are working, but there are continual negative pressures. About half of all recent commercial developments are on green-field sites outside the areas where transit improvements were planned (*Cadman, Leicester*), and the proportion of jobs in the GVRD’s growth concentration areas fell from 62.7% in 1996 to 60.8% in 2001 (GVRD 2006b).

And, the twisting path of transport and development politics in Greater Vancouver has continued in the past decade. The frustration with provincial interference in transport policy was clear when a long-time Vancouver City councillor took the chair of the GVRD in 1997 and immediately declared his intention to “wrest control of transit from the provincial government” (*Sun* 6 Jan 1997). At this time, too, the province was willing to look at ways to shed responsibilities for looming problems of road congestion for freight and a need to refurbish the trolleybus fleet (*Puil*).

The result was a bold new structure for operating and funding transport in metropolitan Vancouver established within the GVRD, but with a place for provincial representation on its board. TransLink²⁴ brought planning and operational management for both roads and transit under one umbrella, with a guaranteed funding stream and ambitious targets for patronage growth. It began large expansions in transit services and is building some additional road capacity.

²⁴ TransLink is the operating name of the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority (GVTA).

TransLink survived a difficult beginning, weathering a six-week strike by bus drivers in 2001. It has generated a big increase in transit patronage through initiatives such as the U-Pass²⁵, which typifies its transparent and interactive planning model.

Directions for the future in question: 2001 to the present

The continued expansion of the transit network is not immune from provincial politics. A third SkyTrain line, to the airport and Richmond, is now in construction as part of preparations for the 2010 Winter Olympics. The funding required for the project is beyond the resources of TransLink alone and so, again, provincial and federal contributions were necessary. It is being built, at the insistence of the Liberal Government, as a public-private partnership, and the distribution of risk is hotly debated.

Also controversial is the so-called ‘Gateway’ plan for expansion of suburban freeways put forward by an alliance of trucking interests with support from the province and several suburban councils. These proposals, and the road-widening projects already approved by TransLink, it is feared, could undermine the ability to reach targets for transit use, growth concentration and other sustainability goals.

In 2007, the Liberal Transport Minister, a supporter of the new road projects, continued the long political contention between the province and the region over transit management when he began a move to replace the TransLink board, most of whom are municipal councillors appointed through the GVRD, with his own appointees (TransLink Governance Review Panel 2007).

²⁵ Through U-Pass, students at the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University pay a compulsory levy that entitles them to ‘free’ 24-hour transit use. It provides TransLink with guaranteed revenue, used for service improvements, and allows the universities to use car parks for other purposes. Ridership to UBC has increased dramatically and transit’s market share is over 40%, despite UBC’s inconvenient location.

Comparing institutions, outcomes and critical periods of contention over transport policy

A comparison of the processes and outcomes of transport politics and policy development in the three cities, based on the three preceding narratives, will concentrate on three areas:

- institutions for the management of transport systems
- categorisation of the transport policy outcomes, using Vuchic's theoretical framework
- identification of periods of serious contention in transport politics at which the potential, realised or not, for changes in policy direction was greatest.

These provide the focus for the third part of the comparative analysis, to be found in Chapter 7, which looks at the behaviours of key actor groups in the contention over transport policy in the three cities.

Institutions for management of transport systems

The local forms of the institutions for the management of transport systems reflect the different structures of urban government in the three cities, but are also strongly influenced by international trends in thinking about public administration. Path dependencies, established before the emergence of competition with the car, exist in relation to operational characteristics, such as the approach to coordination and network planning, which play a central role in the performance of modern urban transit systems.

With Melbourne's longer history as a metropolitan centre and Victoria's particular history of executive government, the statutory authorities that provided urban services for most of the 20th century were very powerful and had strong rivalries. This institutional fragmentation and competition reached extraordinary depths in divisions between the organisations that managed different parts of Melbourne's transit system, and between these and the urban planning agency. In addition, the rural focus of Victorian governments in the 1930s may have slowed investment in transit and created a structural disadvantage for Victoria in the future availability of federal funds, although its smaller share of national road funding compared with other states may have more to do with the relatively short lengths of its rural highways.

In Perth, institutions for transit management followed the same historical patterns, but the fragmentation and competition was much less extreme, and the political settlement in response to WA's opposition to Federation gave it access to significant federal resources for future development.

In Vancouver, early transit operations were less diverse and management less divided, but future funding of major infrastructure would always require political accommodation between the municipalities and the province and, sometimes, the federal government as well.

In 1983, in the early 1990s, and again in 1999 and 2004, transit management in Melbourne was subject to significant administrative reorganisation with little substantive change in operational practices that lacked mechanisms for effective coordination between modes and had limited vision for future growth. In Vancouver, too, there were several changes in institutional arrangements, reflecting conflict between the province and the municipalities, but the operational focus on a networked system was not lost through these changes or through the construction of SkyTrain. In Perth, transit management has been subject to far fewer institutional changes, and the requirements of good transit policy appear to have been well understood.

The other significant institutional difference in the three cities is the absence of a powerful road agency in Vancouver. Having never started the process of urban freeway construction, it never created a strong and politically focused government agency that embodied the automobile-based urban planning agenda.

Transport policy outcomes

Using Vuchic's generalised model for categorising urban transport policy approaches that was described in Chapter 2, it is clear that the large increases in road capacity built in Melbourne since the 1950s are a significant 'car incentive'. Most plans have claimed that their intention is to improve transit. However, the outcomes of Melbourne's transit policy are typical of Vuchic's 'transit disincentive' classification. These include a willingness to accept falling modal share for transit, continuing fragmentation of service delivery, and the failure to replace the old commuter-oriented routes (the relevance of which peaked in the 1930s) with an urban transit network that meets the needs of a modern city.

Using Vuchic's classification, Perth policy-makers were clearly also on the CI-TD trajectory until the 1980s. Since then, there has been a slow implementation of successful 'transit incentive' policies through the modernisation of the small transit network, and recently there has been some engagement with the difficult task of building 'car disincentives' into a city that already has a virtually complete freeway network.

The continuity of policies in Vancouver that fit Vuchic's CD-TI classification and the serious pursuit of supportive urban development policies such as the urban growth boundary are the reasons for the region's achievements in urban consolidation and in transit performance that were described in Chapters 2 and 4.

In both Melbourne and Perth, there has been a mismatch between the stated intentions of successive official plans for contained, nodal urban development and the continued expansion of road capacity, resulting in extensive suburban expansion. This tension is also seen in Vancouver; however, without major road construction, the reality of urban growth has more closely met planning intentions.

The different trajectories in the three cities in broad directions of transport and urban development policy are consistent with the variation in trends in transit performance identified Chapter 4.

The broad phases in transport politics in the three cities since the 1950s are shown in Table 6.1, which can be found at the end of this chapter.

Periods of serious political contention over transport policy in the three cities

In Melbourne, considerable effort was required in the 1950s and 1960s to turn the desire for new roads into the institutional capacity to deliver their construction. Because of this, there was some degree of public dissatisfaction with the government, and transport policy was on the political agenda. While not a period of strong contention, it was significant for later policy conflicts because it contributed to emerging understandings within the roads policy network of the need to operate effectively in political arena.

From 1969 to 1977, there was strong civic reaction to the inner-city freeway proposals in the Transportation Plan, but this opposition was contained without causing significant electoral damage to the state government.

In 1981, the civic action against proposals for large cuts in transit services was strong, and its agenda was adopted by the ALP, which won government in 1982 with a broad reform agenda. In Melbourne transport politics, this period most closely meets the initial conditions for policy change identified by Bratzel. So, it and the early years of the ALP Government, when the momentum for reform was strongest, will be the focus for attention in the analysis of the behaviour of key actor groups in the following chapter.

In Perth, by comparison, the early road plans were implemented with little or no opposition, so less political sophistication was required of the roads policy network. As in Melbourne, it was strong civic action, combined with the election of a reformist ALP Government, which opened the way for change in transport policy in the early to mid-1980s.

Exploration of the differences between the membership, resources and behaviour of the key actor groups in Perth and in Melbourne during these periods of contention and reform in the 1980s forms a significant part of the next chapter.

Vancouver followed a significantly different path in transport politics.

The dramatic period of political contention over freeway plans in Vancouver from 1968 to 1972, and the subsequent reform period that continued most strongly until 1975, led to the creation of institutions with strong 'growth control' and transit agendas and substantial political support. Much has been written about the behaviour of key actor groups in this period. This literature and other material gathered during this project will be explored in the next chapter.

In many ways, the broad trajectory of transport and urban development politics in the Vancouver region from this point is a reversal of the typical pattern of challenge and resistance over transport policy. Supporters of car-based transport and urban development policies in Vancouver are often cast in the role of challenger, seeking to find institutional and political support for their policy prescriptions.

This has meant almost constant political contention over transport policy after the resolution of the initial freeway conflict. There were three main phases of this later contention. The first period was from 1976 to 1990 when the Social Credit Government provided an active base for the proponents of car-based policies. The second period was from 1990 to 2000 when the 'growth control' forces reasserted their political mandate in a process that ultimately led to the creation of TransLink. The third period, now in

progress, began with the moves by business and freight interests and the Liberal Government to widen suburban freeways and to gain control of TransLink.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that there have been significant differences between the broad approaches taken to transit management and to wider transport policy in Melbourne and those taken in Perth and Vancouver. These differences are consistent with variation in transit performance in the three cities.

The key turning-point in transit policy in Melbourne has been identified as the period in the early 1980s when this policy was widely contested in the public domain and a new government was elected with a strong mandate for transit reform.

The next chapter will look at the details of behaviours of different actor groups during this period of policy contention, and compare these to the activities of similar groups during the important periods of political contention over transit policy in the other cities.

	<i>Melbourne</i>	<i>Perth</i>	<i>Vancouver</i>
1950 – 1970	Road engineers assemble the resources to build new roads in the face of financial and institutional obstacles, culminating in 1969 Transportation Plan.	The ‘roads consensus’.	During the 1950s and early 1960s, civic engineers and politicians attempt to assemble the resources to build a freeway system. Strong civic action defeats these freeway plans in downtown Vancouver, and contributes to change of government at municipal and provincial levels.
1970 – 1980	Operational policies pursued by transit managers fail to arrest decline in transit use. 1973: Public opposition to inner-city road plans achieves some political success with government decision to cut back the 1969 Plan. 1974: Single institution (CRB) assumes responsibility for urban road construction. Political action against inner-city freeways continues till 1977, but was unsuccessful.	Transit decline continues but mitigated to some degree by operational decisions of transit managers. 1979: Strong civic action against Fremantle rail closure plan is unsuccessful, but its agenda is adopted by ALP in state elections in 1980.	Transit managers successfully use additional funds to increase per capita transit use. Mechanisms for ‘growth control’ established through the ALR, the GVRD’s Livable Region Plan, and City of Vancouver planning regulations.
1980 – 1990	1980: Large cuts to urban and rural transit services proposed. This was opposed by the MMBW in its 1981 Plan that argued for a stronger focus on district centres and transit. Strong civic action prevents most transit cuts, and promotes new transit agenda within the ALP. 1982: ALP wins state election and attempts to implement transit improvements. By 1985, the road construction agenda had re-asserted itself and transit reforms had stalled.	1983: ALP wins state election. Transit reforms are introduced gradually and achieve bipartisan and electoral support.	Conflict over regional growth controls grows between conservative provincial government and the City of Vancouver and GVRD. Cuts to service levels for existing transit system, but SkyTrain built and opened in 1986.
1990 – 2007	Tacit political and managerial acceptance that transit improvement is unlikely. Road construction dominates transport policy outcomes. Transit operations shift to private franchises.	By 2005, more than 15 years of growth in transit use contributes to political conditions for wider reassessment of transport and urban development policies.	GVRD re-establishes mandate for ‘growth controls’ and transit expansion. Cooperation between province; TransLink set up in 2001. Growth in transit use achieved under TransLink. Emerging conflict over suburban freeway expansion plans proposed by business groups and supported by the province.

Table 6.1: Broad phases in transport politics in the three cities

7. Actor groups in key periods of political contention: power relations, resources and strategies

This chapter completes the three-part comparative analysis of influences on transport policy outcomes in Melbourne, Perth and Vancouver.

It will investigate the power relations between key actor groups and the political strategies employed by them during the periods of political contention that, according to the 'challenge and resistance' model, offered the greatest potential for change in transport policy.

In Melbourne and Perth, the key times are similar. In both cities, the crucial window of opportunity opened around 1980 following strong civic action against plans to cut transit services, and continued through a period of administrative reform following the election of reformist state governments. In Melbourne, however, this window began to close around 1985; while in Perth, the policy changes begun in the 1980s are still bearing fruit. A major difference between the two cities was that there had been the potential for policy change in Melbourne after the release of plans for inner-city freeways in 1969, while Perth's first freeways were built with little controversy.

In Vancouver, a window of political opportunity for transport policy was opened in the late 1960s. Contention over inner-city freeways and other urban development issues, from 1968, led to changes in political representation at the municipal and provincial levels in 1972. This, in turn, paved the way for the establishment of a new policy network with a commitment to growth control and transit expansion. A second phase of successful engagement by pro-transit networks in Vancouver's ongoing contention over transport policy took place during the 1990s, when the political mandate for environmentally oriented policies was re-established. This ultimately led to the creation of TransLink and subsequent growth in transit use.

For each city, this chapter presents a narrative of major events and processes during these periods, and provides a brief outline of the impact of these events in subsequent years. It describes the membership and institutional bases of the key actor groups and the resources available to them. These resources are often not material, but include such things as active public mobilisation, and intellectual and political capital.

Each narrative explores the behaviour of the key actor groups, and examines the particular strategies chosen by them and their ability to maintain policy networks or to form new ones that could implement new agendas.

For clarity, the discussion of events in Melbourne is separated into two sections: one covering the period after the release of the 1969 freeway plans; and the other dealing with the major period of transport reform, from 1980 to 1985. This is done because events of the latter period can only be understood with reference to the politicisation of the transport debate after 1969, and because of the extent of the detail about events and motivations gained through the research. This detail is retained because of the interest it may hold for current and future participants in the transport debate in Melbourne.

As discussed in Chapter 3, policy networks are defined as the combination of individuals, often members of different actor groups, who are able to control problem definitions and negotiate policy outcomes on specific issues at particular times.

The key actor groups were initially identified through a mapping exercise for each city, using the template described in Chapter 4.

Melbourne: the politicisation of transport policy formulation after 1969

The main actor groups in transport politics in Melbourne were involved in different ways in the freeway conflicts that followed the release of the 1969 Transportation Plan.

Road planners and builders

With support from business, government and motoring groups, road planners from the MMBW, the CRB and Melbourne City Council drove the work of the Metropolitan Transportation Committee (MTC) from its inception in 1963. The MTC included the relevant ministers and the heads of all the competing authorities with an interest in transport. Each authority saw the Committee's recommendations as the opportunity to get big projects for their respective organisations written into what became the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTC 1969).

The 1969 Plan, with its grand proposals for a 5 km freeway grid across metropolitan Melbourne and its support for the downtown underground rail loop (to be discussed later in this chapter), provided the framework for the efforts of the road and transit authorities to lobby state and federal governments for funding. The engineers'

predictive modelling, particularly the diagrams of dispersed trip patterns, appeared to provide a compelling case for the inevitability of transit decline.

After 1969, there was intense civic action against the inner-city freeways. In 1971, the Victorian Government cancelled one freeway, through the well-heeled suburb of East Melbourne on the downtown fringe, and asked the MTC to modify its plan “with a view to minimising its sociological impact” (Davison 2004a, p. 199). The availability of federal funding from the Liberals in early 1972 forced Hamer, the new Premier, to come to a decision on the rest of the plan (*Delaney*, see also Lay 2003). In March 1973, Hamer, having received new advice from the MTC (Davison), ruled out some of the most contentious inner-city freeways but approved several others (Mees 2000, p. 274-5) using the cuts in federal funding announced by the newly-elected ALP Government in Canberra as a justification.

The MMBW, as the inner-metropolitan road construction agency, had borne the brunt of the civic unrest. Other scandals (Dingle and Rasmussen 1991) further weakened its position in the institutional manoeuvring associated with Hamer’s wider reforms to the structure of government and the role of public authorities. In 1974, responsibility for all major road construction in metropolitan Melbourne was handed over to the Country Roads Board (CRB).

Once it became the pre-eminent road construction agency, the CRB established a classic strategy of using its construction program to generate support for future works. John Cain, later Labor premier, described its approach in a memo to his colleagues:

It is planning by stealth ... the sequence is:

1. Plan in secret.
2. Announce a section to be built (preferably start in the outer suburbs where land is cheaper ... and create loose ends in the inner suburbs).
3. Emphasise traffic bottlenecks caused by the loose ends.
4. Put pressure on government for more linking sections.
5. Build links wherever you can.
6. Stimulate demand.
7. Go back to 1. and start again (Cain 1978).

The roads policy network also began a pattern of organising local political activity to encourage the Victorian Government to commit resources into a particular road project.

Local councils, with their traditional focus on road construction, acted as the nucleus of local lobby groups.

A road engineer with long experience in state agencies, at pains to be clear that this was simply good process, says:

we would make contact with local government early, that was step one ... well, it was before step one, actually.

Supporters, like Ken Ogden, saw the CRB as:

politically savvy ... intelligent and well-educated people doing their job well. They genuinely saw themselves as providing a community service.

Following Hamer's public disavowal of the contentious inner-city freeways, the head of the CRB, in a famous memo in October 1974, urged his staff to stick to the task and assured them that "the pendulum will swing back" (Anderson 1994, p. 248).

In helping the pendulum to swing, one task of the roads policy network was to find new funds to resuscitate the inner-city road plans. Money from Canberra was now scarce throughout the 1970s. First, after the historic election of the ALP in 1972, the radical Tom Uren became the Federal Minister for Urban and Regional Development. Uren was an active supporter of inner-city resident groups and he immediately cut back funding for urban freeways (Davison 2004a, p. 202). Later, when the Liberals returned to power in 1975, their in-principle support for urban road building did not translate into a rapid return of the federal cash-flow as the international recession led to tightened restrictions on borrowings.

The plans for large cuts in transit services put forward in 1980 were part of this search by the roads policy network for new sources of funds.

Public transport agencies

While the road engineers had their eyes on the major prize of the freeway network, the transit authorities were given free rein to determine their own priorities in the 1969 Transportation Plan.

The Victorian Railways, with its long traditions of influence within government, was partly blinded to the rising power of the road planners. It was an organisation with 2,000 employees working in its grand head office – "a monster edifice with stained glass and

14 foot ceilings” (*Russell*) – and a custom of placing “great emphasis on railway experience in selecting senior staff” (Winter 1990, p. 82). As an institution, the railwaymen assumed that they “would last forever and that no-one else mattered” (*Russell*).

In the 1969 Plan, the railways won support for a downtown underground rail loop that had been on its planning agenda since 1929 (Winter 1990). The main objective was to increase the capacity of the system to deliver commuters to the city at peak hour by running trains both through what is now known as the City Loop and direct to Flinders Street (MTC 1969, p. 34). The MMTB put forward a proposal for a tram line to Doncaster, along with a plan to put the trams underground in Swanston Street²⁶, but the railways, perhaps feeling a new Doncaster tram would be a boost for its competitor, argued that it should be heavy rail (Brian Harper, MTC Technical Committee, pers. comm.). That was how it appeared in the plan, but the implementation of the proposal was never pursued with much vigour (*Ogden*).

Despite recommending the creation of a modern urban transit network that would cater for the growing needs for local trips in the suburbs, the 1969 Plan entrenched the focus of transit planning on downtown commuter traffic. Delaney remembers the Victorian Railways’ Chief Engineer accepting that:

the workforce of central Melbourne would have to double to pay the operating costs of the Loop ... [but he] insisted that these figures could be met, so the figures that went into the plan were huge; [even then] they barely justified the Loop.

In short, in order to defend their funding bids, rail managers refused to recognise the demographic assumptions, and the implications of these for growth in suburban travel, that underpinned the 1969 Plan. They did not pursue the argument that growth in car-use could be slowed by network coordination and containment of suburban commercial development in district centres. From here, it was an easy step for proponents of car-based planning to argue that only their freeways could serve the future of Melbourne and, with no authoritative challenge, this became popular wisdom.

²⁶ The main arterial road through downtown Melbourne.

The City Loop project soaked up all available infrastructure capital for many years, and no progress was made on creating a “total network [that] forms a grid pattern over the whole area” (p. 44) as the 1969 Plan recommended.

The Tramways Board (MMTB) was in a more defensive position than the railways. Throughout the 1950s, it had, with tough leadership, seen off powerful calls for the wholesale scrapping of trams and their replacement with buses (Manning 1991). Through the MTC, the main agenda of the MMTB was to continue to reconstruct existing lines in concrete so that:

it was physically and politically difficult to shift them. Under the Tramways Act, if the trams were scrapped the government would have to [pay to] repair the roads (*Grigg*).

The 1969 recommendation that it was “unrealistic to scrap the tramways network” (MTC , p. 41) was sufficient victory for them.

Private operators, who ran 85% of the bus routes of the time, were not represented on the MTC. The final plan noted that rationalisation and amalgamation would be required so that buses could serve as an extension of the rail service, with schedules closely coordinating with rail timetables, but “no consideration was given to the means” (p. 44) to achieve this.

Not only did the tram and train authorities fail to argue the case for changes that would make their systems more relevant to the changing demographics of the city, they also supported the huge freeway network that would further undermine the future of transit in Melbourne:

[As the representative of the MMBW], I put up [a plan for] trimmed down freeways that I thought might be politically and financially achievable. But, [Frank] Kirby, later Chair of the MMTB ... said, ‘No, these are the needs – it is an engineer’s job to tell the government what the needs are – the government’s job is to find the money to do it. We don’t move.’ (*Delaney*).

With the recommendations of the MTC behind them, the Victorian Railways were able to finally get Bolte, who was initially “dead against” the Loop, to promise its construction before the last election he contested in June 1970 (*Delaney*). Despite subsequent critiques of the validity of their demand forecasts and the cost-effectiveness of the proposed track layout (Clark et al. 1970), construction began in June 1971 and

became a sorry saga. There were political scandals over property deals and ‘insider trading’ on the choice of locations for the new downtown stations (Sandercock 1975). Then, construction costs and timelines blew out: by early 1980, the project was two years behind schedule and the cost had trebled (*The Age* 29 Jan 1980). The national ALP Government was spending money on urban transit, but opponents of the Loop in the Canberra bureaucracy prevented any coming to Melbourne (Manning 1991, p. 92). The cost fell entirely on the state, the debt has been a brake on transit expansion ever since, and the outcomes for transit operations were mixed.²⁷

As transit patronage fell and operating deficits grew during the 1970s (operators’ Annual Reports), there seemed to be little confidence in government, or the transit authorities, that any real improvement was likely. And, the media was backing away from its previous support for projects like the City Loop, saying that it was a “foolish” investment (*The Age*, 8 Dec 1980) that would not “make a significant difference to rail patronage and finances” (*The Age*, editorial, 26 Jan 1981, p. 9). When the Loop was finally opened in 1980, there was press speculation that the transport minister might not even attend. He did, but he chose not to cut the ribbon.

The planning agency

As described in the previous chapter, the MMBW had accepted the freeways in the 1969 Plan as compatible with its 1971 Planning Scheme. However, in following years there was wide debate about the impact of road construction within the professional bodies representing transport engineers and planners (*Stanley*) that led to some questioning of the validity of this assumption (*Wale*). The MMBW’s 1981 planning framework took a stronger position on transit and urban consolidation and suggested that it would be better to find new passengers for existing transit services rather than make the drastic cuts proposed by road proponents. The MMBW’s came to this view gradually through the influence of what *Wale* describes as a “vigorous debate” begun by the “many prominent and thoughtful submissions from the Crows and others” to MMBW planning processes during the 1970s.

²⁷ It was ten years before trains ran in the first of the four tunnels, and the last new station did not open until 1985. The service pattern in the City Loop, though fascinating to rail buffs, is baffling to many users as routes to one suburb operate clockwise or counter-clockwise at different times of the day or the week. Today, the Loop is said to be approaching capacity, but this is because it is not being operated as originally designed: half the available tracks into the central city are unused (MTC 1969; Mees 2005b).

Civic action groups

The major anti-freeway civic action in Melbourne took place between the release of the 1969 Plan and Hamer's decision on the construction program in 1973. Davison (2004a, Ch. 8) gives a vivid description of the extent and strength of the opposition to the freeway plans. This opposition was found not just in the gentrifying inner suburbs, but also in working-class suburbs to the north and west, and in established wealthy suburbs along the Yarra River.

Campaigns against the freeways operated through a network of dozens of residents' groups and using typical civic action group methods of reports, letters and petitions reinforced by large, foot-stamping public meetings. Unity was maintained on a 'no freeways' platform because any bargaining over particular changes to one freeway would only shift the problem into another suburb where residents were already mobilised.

Alternatives to the freeway plans were never broadly agreed upon. There were calls to scrap the radial freeways, restrict commuter parking in the inner suburbs and create a dense network of rail, tram and bus services (Crow and Crow 1970). Other groupings of activists and local councils supported freeway developments in the outer suburbs (TCPA 1971) and even in the inner suburbs if the new roads ran on railway land or on stilts above existing arterials (CUA 1970).

This lack of clarity about objectives was never put to the test. Hamer's decision in 1973 to rule out construction of the most controversial freeways from the 1969 Plan, gave most residents what they wanted: no freeway in their backyards.

As described earlier, the supporters of road construction had learned important lessons. Since 1973, plans for metropolitan freeways have been introduced piecemeal thus avoiding the mass opposition that had been triggered by the release of the 1969 Plan. Residents in the path of each successive freeway section have argued against the construction plans, but from a much weaker position than in 1970.

Of the freeways that remained on the construction agenda in 1973, the first to be built was the Eastern Freeway that would run from the eastern 'dormitory' suburbs, through parkland around the Yarra River, to the edge of the inner city at Collingwood. When the CRB replaced the MMBW as the builders of this road, protestors:

a bit naively, saw this as ... a victory – we'd knocked off the MMBW, but ... quickly the CRB became a much worse instrument ... very narrow, very tough, very single minded (*Pullen*).

Since the 1960s, residents from transport and other activist groups threatened by the Eastern Freeway had been elected to inner-city councils. Many of the new councillors, including a cohort from protestant church organisations with strong social justice agendas, began careers in the ALP that took some to state and federal ministries, but at the time the ALP was divided and weak, and not ready to make strong running on 'quality of life' issues.

The protestors, with support from their local governments, had access to funds to employ campaign organisers, and were able to generate strong expressions of local support through public meetings and dramatic street protests in which old cars were used to form barricades against the bulldozers (Davison 2004a, Ch. 8). However, the alternative agenda of the campaigners was not clear or easily adopted by the political mainstream. They wanted a different transport system but their manifestos were short on detail and long on left-wing analyses of the corporate links between government road-builders and the oil and car industries (National Action for Public Transport 1976).

The protest groups remained politically isolated and unable to form useful alliances with either the mandarins of the Victorian Railways or with middle-class commuters to put explicit alternatives to the freeways, such as transit reform, onto the political agenda. The Eastern Freeway finally opened in 1978.

The emerging environment movement gave some attention to these issues. The leading national body, the Australian Conservation Foundation, based in Melbourne, devoted an issue of its monthly magazine to freeways and other development issues in inner Melbourne (ACF 1975). However, the ACF was always more strongly focused on nature conservation issues, and the freeway battles were largely left to local groups.

After the 1978 opening of the Eastern Freeway, the next freeway on the CRB's planning agenda was a 'missing' 5 km section of the south-eastern commuter freeway. In the early 1960s, the MMBW had built 6 km of freeway out from the inner city. Another part of the same radial freeway, built by the CRB, ran in from the suburban fringe. Gardiners Creek lay between the two unfinished pieces of road. Gardiners Creek was Liberal Party heartland, and it was not easy for opponents of the road to transplant the

methods of the inner-city campaigns to the new location. In any case, many of the resident concerns were about compensation for their compulsorily acquired houses rather than alternative transport policies (Davison 2004a, Ch. 9).

Within the umbrella organisation of state and local environment groups, then called the Conservation Council of Victoria, a group led by Ruth and Maurie Crow set the agenda for active lobbying on urban issues. Building on the Crows' earlier work for the Communist Party (Crow and Crow 1970), this group articulated a version of the planning theories of urban 'self-containment' and 'linear cities' in a model for urban development and transport systems for Melbourne in an influential book, *Seeds for Change* (White et al. 1978, Ch. 6). These ideas were characterised later in the slogan: 'cluster and connect' (for example in CCV 1983). Through various seminars and submissions to public processes, the 'cluster and connect' concept was taken up by some urban planners in the MMBW who recognised that "roads weren't really the answer" (Wale). But, it was not enough, given the prevailing political and institutional climate, to cause a wholesale rethinking of the wider freeway plans. The focus of the *Seed for Change* group on land-use through changes to MMBW planning policies represented a change in emphasis from the Crows' earlier calls for more attractive public transport (1970, p. 45).

Train travellers formed their own lobby for better services, the Train Travellers Association, in 1976 (SLV, Manuscripts Collection, Ephemera, PA BOX 60). This group and its much smaller 'siloed' companion, the Tram & Bus Travellers Association, were based chiefly among middle-class commuters, a distinctly different constituency to that of the leftist anti-freeway groups from the inner city (*Sowerwine*).

Unions

There were individual unionists involved in freeway protests of the 1970s, and Trades Hall, the peak Victorian union body, did adopt some anti-freeway policies, but there was no direct engagement of union 'muscle' on social issues comparable to the powerful 'green bans' of Jack Munday's Builders Labourers' Federation in Sydney (Burgmann and Burgmann 1998). The majority of union leaders at this time, like the Victorian ALP to which Trades Hall was closely linked, were generally focussed on traditional forms of industrial conflict and, in any case, had little political power in relation to the dominant conservative state government (see, for example, Cain 1995).

Melbourne: reform of transport management, 1980-1985

With the scene now set, it is time to turn to the crucial period from 1980 to 1985 when the opportunity for change in the direction of Melbourne's transport policy was greatest.

The political contention over transport policy in Melbourne in the 1980s began with proposals for huge cuts to urban transit services. Strong opposition to these cuts contributed to the election of the reformist ALP Government in 1982.

Key actor groups in this contention gathered a variety of political resources during the 1970s. After describing the positions of the different groups at the end of the 1970s, the narrative below describes the political contention during the 1980s from the perspective of the main actor groups during each of three main phases:

- the formulation of plans to cut transit services
- the civic action against these plans
- the reform process in the first years of the ALP Government.

It concludes with a summary of transport policy outcomes in the period from the late 1980s to the present, when transport policy networks have been relatively unchallenged.

The consecutive stages of this key period of contention over transport policy in Melbourne are described below. Greatest attention is given to the first term of the ALP government from 1982 to 1985.

Road planners move to take over transit resources

The strongest group in Melbourne's transport debate in the late 1970s was the road policy network, but it was facing some difficulties in gathering the resources to continue the implementation of the 1969 Plan. In this context, the growing transit operating subsidy, which by 1980 reached over \$57.4 million for the trains alone (Victorian Railways Annual Report, 1981/82), and the investment of \$500 million in the City Loop (MTA 1982) were motivations for the road policy network to pursue changes in transit policy (Mees 2000, p.276). The rail authority was also keen to pursue reforms to cut its huge workforce and introduce other changes, particular in its rural freight business, although, of course, they wanted any savings put back into its own enterprises.

The Victorian Transport Study, which was popularly known as the Lonie Report after the prominent business executive who chaired it, was the means through which these

issues were taken up. In a sign of the balance of power in transport policy networks at the time, the author of much of the final report was the CRB's Robin Underwood, whom Ogden describes as "savvy about metropolitan politics" and who was known to be a savage critic of public expenditure on urban transit (*Delaney*). He had strong support from Liberal Transport Minister Rob Maclellan and from key sections of the media.

As Mees describes (2000), the VTS began its work in concert with a media campaign in which prominent *Age* journalist, Claude Forell, complained that:

85% of Victorians who never, or hardly ever, use trains and trams have to pay up so that the other 15% may ride regularly or frequently at well below the cost of travel (VTS 1980b, p. 37).

The VTS floated the idea of closing down the whole tram system, but finally recommended scrapping eight lightly-patronised suburban rail lines and seven tram routes. These cuts were based on the principle that service levels should be cut to match falling patronage, and that "government subsidy ... should be withdrawn as soon as possible" (VTS 1980a, p. 101). On the other hand, the VTS concluded that road construction should continue "within realistic funding limits, which could be higher than at present provided for" (p. 133).

The VTS was out to make a splash. The Transport Minister told a colleague:

nobody has any idea what I have in store. By Christmas, everyone will be screaming for my blood and by New Year, I will probably be doing something else. [The Premier] will have to replace me with someone who appears nice and moderate to smooth over my straightening out (*The Age*, 10 December, p. 2).

The railways authority was generally in support of the proposals to deal with the deficit by cutting jobs and services. Alford remembers its Chairman saying "it would be good if [the union opponents of the plans] went on strike for longer – we'd save more money".

The tramways, on the other hand, stood outside the main conflict. Grigg recalls the Lonie proposals being easier to fight than the wholesale tram shutdown that they had successfully defeated in the 1950s:

we had enough political clout ... [with] Hamer it was a more gentle era ... a bit more sympathetic to public transport.

Civic action against the Lonie proposals

The proposed transit cuts dominated Victorian politics in 1980 and 1981. Over 80,000 people signed petitions against the cuts, and street marches attracted up to 3,000 people (*The Age*, 1 Oct 1980, p. 5; 20 March 1981, p. 3).

The groups that organised these protests had a different base from those that had led the earlier anti-freeway fights.

For a start, the cuts would affect transit users across most of Melbourne and in country areas as well. Membership of the transit users' lobby groups in the mid-1970s grew rapidly, and they operated in both Liberal and ALP electorates and they formed alliances, particularly with the tramways union, and successfully mobilised parents of students in the many rich private schools along tram route No. 69 (*Sowerwine*).

The transit unions were actively engaged in defence of their members' jobs, and their industrial power came to dominate the campaign.

Some leaders of the Railways Union were willing to broaden their agenda beyond wages and conditions. In fact, they saw little choice:

you couldn't just say 'no' to cuts ... the government and the rail manager had a long-term plan ... [they could], for example, run down a particular line so passenger numbers would fall ... and what could you say – revenue was 25% or 20% of the cost of running the line (*Alford*).

The rail union consulted passengers and workers and articulated popular alternative plans to rebuild passenger and freight operations. They came up with new tactics, including a 'no fares' day on the suburban system, which required a new style of organising and enabled the union to inform the public about its alternative plans in a positive way.²⁸

As the dispute continued, Alford says that the union leadership decided that:

²⁸ A detailed description of the campaign can be found in Alford's unpublished monograph from 1982. Copies are held by Alford and by the author.

we had to get meaner [and so we began] black-banning certain container freight – the big money spinners ... dozens of trains had a ban ... two or three thousand people were stood down. The place was in chaos.

This campaign won a further inquiry into the cuts, which recommended fewer closures. Later, as the election approached, “the railways decided to wait” (*Alford*). The Lonie proposals could not be pursued without damaging the Premier’s ‘quality of life’ agenda. None of the planned suburban closures took place and, after the election, most the country passenger services were reinstated. Maclellan and the anti-transit forces in the CRB had been forced to back away from their radical plans in the face of the well-organised protests from the unions and from middle-class transit users and opposition from some sections of the bureaucracy, including the MMBW.

The ALP reforms: Crabb’s role as political entrepreneur

After the change of government, Steve Crabb, who had been the Shadow Transport Minister during the Lonie controversies, took control of the implementation of the ALP transport policy. Before exploring the way that Crabb engaged with the task of transport reform, it is worth making a short aside to describe the general approach to administrative reform taken by the Cain Government.

The ALP victory in 1982 ushered in a period of great optimism among the many social movements that had worked for the change of government. The new government set out to implement a well-developed reform agenda with an enthusiasm reflecting the many years that it had been in opposition.

Part of this enthusiasm included a strong desire to assert authority over the public service and the statutory agencies. In a letter to Cain a few months before the election, John Mant, a senior official in Labor governments in South Australia and New South Wales, warned:

Cabinet all too often becomes the weekly meeting of powerful satrapies attending to trade vetoes ... take, for example, the Main Roads Minister. He is part of a professional power chain that goes vertically from the Council Engineer through to the minister in Canberra. As a result, the local councils and state and federal cabinets play virtually no role in road programs (Mant 1982)

To counter this tendency, Cain established strong cabinet processes to direct the broad reform agenda.

In their contributions to histories of the Cain era, Considine (1992) and O’Grady (1985; 1983) put the approach of the Victorian ALP into the context of administrative theory and practice of the time. They identify three administrative tools used: the employment of ministerial advisers to help ministers assert policy control, an attempt to create a reform-oriented bureaucracy, and the use of ‘strategy packages’ to manage negotiations with interest groups.

The appointment of advisers was centralised. In the early years, they were generally a “partisan meritocracy” loyal to the government rather than particular ministers (Considine 1992, p. 194), although some ministers came to their portfolio with a handpicked team of senior officials and advisers who had been part of social movement organisations that had a sophisticated analysis of the policy area (*Russell; Andrews*). Later, policy specialists were replaced by “political aspirants and factional bosses” (p. 195).

The attempt to create a reform-oriented bureaucracy was a formidable challenge, not least because the ideal reform-government public servant – “non-partisan, operationally active and politically sensitive” (Weller 1983) – is a rare beast. It was hard to prevent a drift towards administrative form over policy content and process over outcome.

Considine describes the ‘strategy package’ as a bridge between the bald statements of principle in the party platform and the detail of the particular initiatives entrusted to the bureaucracy for implementation. The process subjected a broad policy area to research by the bureaucracy, sometimes as a formal inquiry. It differed from more conventional policy reviews in its engagement with party policy committees and sympathetic interest groups, and provided a structure to manage the horse-trading between the government and chosen interest groups before an implementable program was given authority by ministerial endorsement and the launch of a glossy publication.

Returning now to Crabb’s role in shaping the ALP’s transport reforms, it was clear from the start that he was not going to follow the template described by Considine that many of his colleagues were using. To make the narrative easier to follow, his approaches to transit, freeway construction and urban planning are described separately.

Transit

Although it had backed away from implementing many of the Lonie recommendations, the Liberal government's credibility on transport issues had been severely damaged. The ALP's election platform in 1982 included commitments to do things differently, largely through following the union agenda of new rolling stock and line extensions.

Crabb, as a leading member of the ALP Right faction, was part of the small group that had developed Labor's strategy for the election. He had been given the Shadow Transport Ministry several years earlier because he had "a commuter electorate and ... got on well with the railway unions" (*Crabb*). His colleague Rob Jolly describes him as:

a very political person, who believed that transport was important politically [for the new government] ... he was creative, stimulatory in getting things done.

There were no formal 'strategy package' negotiations over policy detail, and his advisers were not policy experts. With his background in the UK trade unions (Browne 1985) and his professional training as an actuary, Crabb says that he felt able to deal with the political and intellectual challenges of the job with little outside assistance.

The program to revitalise the operation of the existing transit system had political momentum. On this, Rob Jolly says:

public transport was always in theory important to the Labor Party, but the Lonie closures were the catalyst for making sure the ALP took up the issue.

Crabb was prepared to put his best efforts into reforming existing transit operations. Immediately, he created two new transit agencies under his direct control: one for country freight and passenger services and another for passenger transit in Melbourne ('the Met'). He brought in new managers, some with reasonable business pedigrees (though he says: "we didn't get a lot of good applicants") but none with experience of successful transit operations. He kept the chairman of the dismantled railways authority as head of the new Transport Ministry.²⁹

The first initiative, which provided a sign of renewal, was to order new trains and trams, but other changes were more elusive.

²⁹ Alan Reiher, who held these positions and would have been a valuable source of material for this research, died in August 2003.

Crabb says that he understood that he was taking on a complex task and that he read everything he could. He was unimpressed with most assertions of overseas transit success after visits to Ottawa and Paris, where he felt that the “claims turned out to be bullshit”.

Much of the reform agenda came from Crabb’s individual perspective or from the unions after Crabb gave planning jobs in his new transit agencies to officials from all the competing unions (Alford 1986). The union structures mirrored the deep divisions between different functions between the tram and train authorities and, like the managers, many in the union hierarchy were suspicious about some of the administrative and operational changes proposed:

they could see coordination was essential, but they worried about what it meant for coverage and rationalisation [of job numbers] (*Alford*).

Crabb understood some of the important principles of modern transit planning that are required to achieve patronage growth, for example:

you have got to go to ‘memory timetables³⁰’, but the bloody engineers can’t help themselves. They just want to squeeze another [train] in and [you end up with] erratic timetables.

He got little support from his staff. In the newly organised Transport Ministry, road planners were being called on to work on transit issues about which they knew little and cared less. One recalls:

I was called to the Minister’s office and told: ‘You are in charge of a project on fares’. I’d never been near fares. In the lift ... the head of the Met growled: ‘What do you think you are doing on my patch?’. I just let him talk – I didn’t really want to be there myself. ... In the meetings, Crabb always asked: what would Mary [his wife] do? We just thought: you’ve got a government car – Mary won’t be doing so many of those things.

A project that Crabb considered a success was a pilot of bus service reorganisation in the provincial city of Geelong:

³⁰ With ‘memory’ or ‘clock face’ timetables, trains operate at regular intervals throughout the day. These help to improve transit use because travellers quickly learn that train departures are at the same times in each hour.

It was a dream. Three bus companies were going broke. I got them to paint all the buses the same colour ... changed the routes, flat fare, memory timetables. Patronage went up; people thought that there were twice as many buses. It was wildly popular but nobody did it anywhere else. There was so much inertia.

A number of interviewees suggested that an important reason for this inertia was the dominance that the old railways managers held in the new organisation (*Grigg, Ogden, Russell, Sowerwine*). There is other evidence of the ways in which these managers resisted change in operational practices. In 1981, Maclellan, the Liberal Minister, had introduced the first stage of a multi-modal ticketing system as recommended by Lonie. He only overcame “substantial resistance ... [from] the heads of the rail and tramways” by threatening them with dismissal (Wilson 1999). In the new administration, advice given to Crabb downplayed emerging evidence of patronage growth from multi-modal ticketing (Mees 2000, p. 277). Crabb insisted and the multi-modal ticketing system was strengthened, but the rail managers continued to put forward justifications for their previous opposition (*Grigg*) and few other opportunities were taken to improve transit performance through coordinated service planning of the type recommended by the MMBW nearly 30 years earlier.

Grigg described attempts made by Crabb to cut the workforce in both suburban and country rail operations through voluntary redundancies, but says that, in his opinion, this led to a loss of older, more conservative staff which only served to make later industrial conflicts more intense.

Freeways

The ALP platform also included a promise to stop the expansion of the suburban freeway network, a commitment that dated from the earlier conflicts. However, in Crabb’s view, the potential for growth in transit use was limited. He felt that he was “stuck with the ‘no freeways’ policy”, not least because of the position of the Premier, John Cain, who as Shadow Minister for Planning during the 1970s had written trenchant anti-freeway memos to his colleagues (1978) denouncing the role of the CRB in promoting the freeway agenda.

Like most of the people from whom he would have taken advice, Crabb saw Melbourne continuing to grow around increasing car-use. He deplored the decision made in the 1970s to build the radial Eastern Freeway with wide medians to facilitate later

construction of the East Doncaster rail line, saying in the research interview: “you had put the freeway there, so who is going to want to get on the bloody train?”

The freeway proposal on the table when the ALP came to government was, as described earlier, in the Gardiners Creek valley. It was a 5 km gap in over 25 km of already constructed road serving the main growth corridor in the south-eastern suburbs. Faced with this issue, Cain, the freeway sceptic, ruefully says:

we were tempered by pragmatism – a bit like Lady Macbeth – [sometimes you are] so far up the track that you can’t turn back. We were trying to find a sensible mix, but perhaps not able to be as starry-eyed as we would have wished when we were in Opposition.

Only a few weeks after the election, Crabb told an amazed group of road engineers to ignore the ALP’s ‘no freeways’ policy and to continue work on a ‘missing’ Gardiners Creek section of the South-Eastern Freeway (*Eriksson*). While it was a surprise to the engineers, this was completely in keeping with Crabb’s approach:

I fixed [that] for them: it just had to be done – two bits of freeways and traffic wandering through suburban streets.

The road planners chafed under Crabb’s public position that it would be a “freeway over his dead body” (*Evans*), but the road was built as an ‘arterial’ with traffic lights at major cross-streets (Davison 2004a). This compromise maintained the letter of the policy, but the new road was designed and built so that one day it could become a full freeway. This is exactly what happened after the ALP lost office in 1992.³¹

Another road put on the agenda in the Crabb years was the western section of the Ring Road. In 1985, road economist John Stanley argued that there were economic development benefits for the disadvantaged north-west of Melbourne in building the Ring Road. At the time, this project was not on the road-builders’ 10-year plan, but Crabb intervened to push it up the list (*Stanley; Crabb*).

³¹ These works could also easily have included grade separations for an adjacent rail line at several points but, to the road engineers’ amazement (*Evans*), rail planners didn’t push the case. Surprise and indignation from road planners at the lack of initiative or long-term thinking among rail planners was a common theme in the research interviews.

Urban planning

The ALP's 'no freeways' policy had been created during the controversies of the early 1970s. For people like Jolly and Cain it was an article of party faith, and so, even though there was little organised political pressure that could force its implementation, Crabb was working around the constraints of a policy he disagreed with but could not easily overturn.

In these circumstances, it is little wonder that there was no process to negotiate a formal transport strategy or a new urban planning policy.

The combination of the lack of external political pressure, the opposition of the principal political entrepreneur, and the reluctance of the roads policy network to risk a challenge to the dominance of the 1969 Transportation Plan are sufficient explanation for the absence of any process to review broad urban planning policies, but there was yet another factor at work.

In urban planning, an unintended consequence of the ALP reforms of the statutory authorities was the weakening of the institutional base of MMBW planners who, under the influence of the Crows and others, were developing a stronger analysis of the need for stronger transit policies. With different leadership, this group might have helped to challenge the dominance of the roads policy network.

The ALP had historically been committed to reform of the MMBW as way to create a new tier of metropolitan government, but this was not a priority for the parliamentary leadership in 1982. In March 1981, a recommendation was put to the ALP State Conference, then a serious forum for policy debate, to:

replace the MMBW with a democratically elected Metropolitan Authority whose responsibilities would includes the strategic planning of the Melbourne metropolitan area (Victorian ALP Urban and Regional Affairs Policy Committee 1981).

Cain's copy of the conference agenda papers (*Cain papers*, SLV, 1326Y, Box 26, file 7) has a pencilled note that reads: "this paragraph subject to deletion and/or redrafting in consultation with [senior party strategists and factional leaders]".

For the new ALP Government, the priority was to assert its authority over the powerful and autonomous leaders of the MMBW, who had pursued their own agenda for decades

(Dingle and Rasmussen 1991). Staff in the MMBW planning branch “could see the writing on the wall” (*Evans*) and drifted away to jobs in the new ministries or elsewhere.

The new Ministry of Planning became the formal metropolitan planning authority. However, the new minister was junior in Cabinet to Crabb, and any planners in the new department who might have wanted to continue to promote the transit-oriented urban consolidation themes of the 1981 MMBW plan were in a weak position in relation to road planners in the Ministry for Transport.

More broadly, John Stanley argues that the professional bodies representing transport planners resented the assertion of control over policy direction by politicians during the Cain years, and responded by turning away from wider debates on the impact of road construction that had had currency in these circles in the 1970s to more technical questions. Whatever the reason, there were fewer active voices of doubt about the wisdom of road-based transport policies inside the government’s new ministries than there had been inside the old authorities.

It was five years before the new government unveiled a planning strategy, *Shaping Melbourne’s Future* (Victoria 1987), which, as described in the previous chapter, turned planning practice on its head with its intention to create new orbital ‘corridors’ of commercial development centred on a new ring freeway. This plan was itself shaped by the economic strategy of the ALP Government (Victoria 1984). A central plank of this strategy was strengthening Melbourne’s place as a national and regional freight hub for road, rail and shipping. The case for road construction, including the outer ring road and the central city ‘bypass’ freeways, had been made by the Ministry of Transport in their arterial road strategy released in the previous year (1986). Road planners were sensitive to the new political direction and clever enough to shift the strategic justifications for these roads from the previous focus on commuter traffic to the needs of the freight industry.

The response of ‘pro-transit’ civic action groups to the ALP reforms

While the unions had a place inside the reform process in the new Transport Ministry, other groups were less able to find an influential voice. In the ALP years, there were three broad groupings that attempted to maintain civic action.

The first civic action grouping was built around transit users who had been active in the Lonie campaign. They came together as the Public Transport Users Association (PTUA) in 1984 as a loose assembly of transit enthusiasts operating from a “user’s frustration with things not working properly” (*Powell*). They saw their constituency chiefly as middle-class commuters from the eastern suburbs, and so felt uncomfortable with publicly endorsing the broader societal critiques put forward by the more avowedly left-wing groups (*Sowerwine*). Crabb gave their representatives a place on the Met board and on other advisory committees. Sowerwine was one of these appointees, but, he was faced with defeatism among rail managers who he felt had “given up on independent thinking”, and so saw little opportunity for progress on big issues such as coordination between transit modes. His work on these committees focussed on issues like the new ticketing arrangements and operational issues such as the location of turn-around points on inner-city tram routes.

While Crabb dismissed the PTUA representatives as being interested only in “finding some little detail they could write to the papers about”, others in the PTUA were equally disenchanted with the new Transport Minister, very soon regarding him as an opponent who “was not good for public transport” (*Powell*). Powell was also part of a ginger group of inner-city councillors and ALP branch members that wrote a strong critique of Crabb’s approach to transport reform (Melbourne Transport Study Group 1983) and which attempted to use this to organise “street pressure” similar to that exerted during the Lonie campaign. Without the fears of looming transit closures, a repeat of the anti-Lonie mass campaign was a non-starter, but no better tactics were found. As time passed, the PTUA returned to its roots as an escape valve for users’ frustrations. It eventually fell out with its erstwhile allies in the unions, holding a public rally outside the Railways Union office in December 1986 to point out the impact on users of the growing frequency of strikes (see PTUA material in Riley and Ephemera Collection, SLV).

Among this group, some believed that the emerging international reality of the oil crisis and a local political defensiveness as a result of after the conflicts of the early 1970s had together created a climate in which large-scale freeway construction was no longer a real threat (*Sowerwine*).

Others who may have been less relaxed about the freeway threat and who felt that Crabb was not doing enough to reduce car-dependence included the *Seeds for Change*

group at the Conservation Council. They also wrote a critique of the directions of government's urban policies in 1983 (CCV). This critique pointed to many shortcomings of the government's performance on urban issues and recommended that the formal processes of amendments to the MMBW Planning Scheme be used to address the perceived problems.

This approach was consistent with the successful lobbying of the MMBW undertaken by the Crows during the 1970s. It also reflected the growing antipathy towards Crabb and the stronger relationships that existed between the activists and the Planning Minister, Evan Walker, and backbencher Andrew McCutcheon, who had previously been an MMBW Commissioner (*Powell*). However, it was very unlikely to succeed given the weakness, described earlier, of the planning portfolio in government and in the bureaucracy.

The emphasis on planning policy also failed to provide a detailed analysis of existing transit management that might have helped to formulate advocacy positions on transit reform that went beyond the oft-repeated calls for better coordination.

The third civic action grouping comprised the leftist resident groups and others who were attempting to organise against the ALP's road projects. They had lost a great deal of their momentum since the inner-city campaigns of the 1970s and were fighting a losing battle against a minister who was covertly operating against ALP policy and who ensured that there was no politically sanctioned debate over wider urban-planning strategy. Worse, they had few influential allies, with almost no authoritative voices in academia or in the bureaucracies arguing that alternatives based on significant growth in transit use were achievable. Many different organisations came and went in the 1980s and 1990s, but they all suffered greatly from internal dissension, in addition to the large strategic obstacles (*Healy, Connellan*).

Beyond the issues of urban transport, civic action groups campaigning to protect forests in eastern Victoria did find ways to maintain the pursuit of their agendas within Cain Government policy processes. They used new forms of 'professional' activism learned from the successful national campaign against a dam on the Franklin River that concluded in July 1983 (Anderson 2006; Green 1984). It is beyond the scope of this research to compare the nature of the institutional and political obstacles facing the activists working on nature conservation issues with the challenges faced by those pursuing change in urban planning and transport. However, the choices of techniques

for the mobilisation of civic action made by three Melbourne urban activist groupings in the 1980s may have contributed to their lack of access to policy-making processes.

In Perth, the evidence of newspaper column-inches and political backing shows that civic action for transit was more effective in harnessing community concerns than was the concurrent campaign against woodchipping and, in BC, some of the biggest mass protests against logging took place alongside the effective mobilisation of support for transit improvements (Magnusson and Shaw 2003).

As an aside on the question of the separation between the ‘smoggies’ and the ‘greenies’ in Melbourne, a 1999 history of the Australian environment movement (Hutton and Connors) observes that large organisations within this movement have tended to focus on issues of preservation of nature, while urban issues, including transport, were largely left to local groups. The authors suggest two inter-related reasons for this. First, they recognise the ‘wilderness ethic’ of key activists in the larger groups. Second, they argue that, following failures to build effective alliances with unions on issues such as uranium mining in the late 1970s and early 1980s, these activists took the strategic decision to build their political base through the mobilisation of public opinion in middle-class marginal electorates. Organisers of local or metropolitan campaigns for better public transport or against particular freeway projects in Melbourne have never found a way to successfully adapt this style of campaigning to their issues.

Hutton and Connors’ book reveals the broken thread between the early urban campaigns and the activists whose story it tells through its omission of any mention of the work of the *Seeds for Change* group within the Conservation Council of Victoria (CCV). It wrongly argues that the first serious involvement of Victorian conservation groups in urban transport issues came as late as 1989 with joint action, described below, by the CCV and the PTUA.

The window closes: after 1985

In retrospect, Crabb acknowledges that:

too much depended on me being the driver [but] ... cultural revolution in an organisation like the railways ... is a life’s work.

However, he did not have a life-time in the job. After only 18 months, he took on the industrial relations portfolio in addition to transport. After the ALP’s second election

victory in 1985, Crabb was moved from transport, partly because of his failure to keep to budget limits (*Jolly*) and partly because industrial relations required more attention.

Under the new minister, Tom Roper, whatever fragile change there might have been in the direction of transit management was lost in the mire of attempts to substantially reduce the rail and tram workforce. A new senior manager, with good connections to the Premier, was brought in to smooth the process, but the result, as Greenaway (1990) graphically documents, was widespread demoralisation. Crabb and Roper began to publicly blame each other for transit problems (Cain 1995).

A formal process for transit planning, typical of the government's strategic planning exercises described earlier, was set up in 1988 to provide a framework for negotiations with the unions over job cuts. The workforce changes were long overdue, and confrontation with the unions was inevitable, but the cooperative approach built by Crabb with the progressive faction in the union leadership collapsed, and more militant unionists, called the 'troglodytes' (*Alford*), gained strength and contributed to the rise of destructive factionalism and the eventual collapse of the government (Cain 1995).

Cain knew he was in for a fight over these workforce reforms, but believed that there were "few contentious issues about which Cabinet was so well informed by written material" (1990), and Jim Kennan, the ALP's third transport minister, told unions he was "playing for keeps" (Kennan 1989).

The conflict between the government and the unions was played out over two transit reforms: the conversion of some train lines to light rail, and a new ticketing system to allow the removal of tram conductors and station staff. Cabinet supported these new programs with the intention of redistributing resources from 'transit rich' inner suburbs to the disadvantaged urban fringe (*Jolly*).

Crabb, in his individualist way, says that he took up the idea of light-rail conversions on the advice of "an academic from Sydney who rang me", although the PTUA and its predecessors had been lobbying for such a change since 1981. Two short rail lines were converted to tram operations during the ALP's second term; the major benefits were intended to be reduced cost and simplified union negotiations over staffing arrangements (*Stevenson*).³² Whatever the merits of the changes on the Port Melbourne

³² The new tram services used the old rail reserve in the suburbs and entered the downtown area via the street network, instead of running direct to the central station as the train service had done.

and St Kilda lines, it was in the next phase – the conversion of the longer Upfield rail line in the northern suburbs – that the government ran into trouble. Users and ALP-dominated local governments were not convinced that it was a good deal: they argued that their trains and trams served complementary functions and that the resulting hybrid would lose vital features of the existing system. The issue was further complicated by a plan to put a freeway on what would become redundant railway land. Internal ALP conflict drew in the local federal MPs. In addition, community support for the rail line was well organised. Eventually, the government backed down (Saul and Moore 1994). The ‘scratch’ Met Ticket was an interim measure to remove conductors before a later planned introduction of automated ticket machines.³³ It was hugely unpopular with passengers (Wilson 1999), and tensions between the Tramways Union and the government boiled over into a strike that saw depots occupied by workers and dozens of trams blockaded into the main shopping and business streets in the central city for several weeks (Sparrow and Sparrow 2004). The ticket was withdrawn and conductors stayed on the trams.

Cain and his Cabinet felt the conflict was simply about union resistance to cuts in job numbers:

The reform program in transport was progressively dismantled ... and we moved to a policy of adhocery and perceived populism ... This killed stone dead a range of programs for work practice changes in other areas of the public sector (Cain 1995, p. 217).

However, there was another problem. The solutions offered to government by its transit managers were fundamentally flawed. With poor advice on issues such as the Upfield light-rail conversion and ticketing, Cain and his transport ministers were undermined in their confrontation with unions because they could not maintain public confidence in their management of the transit system.

Around this time, there were some signs of a different way forward. The transit lobby group, the PTUA, developed a stronger analysis of the reasons for the failures of transit management, and it was supported in its campaigns by the Conservation Council of Victoria, where the author was a member of the campaign staff. This new analysis was

³³ The Met Ticket used lottery technology: instead of buying a ticket from a transit employee, a traveller scratched off the time and date to validate a ticket bought at a newsagency.

based on Mees' comparisons of transit use in Melbourne and Toronto and it identified differences in the service quality, seen from the perspective of the user, as the explanation for Toronto's better performance (PTUA 1991). In the face of this critique, rail operators were forced by the minister to experiment with an increase in train frequency on one line. After the changes, an internal departmental newsletter (held by author) reported that the experiment had failed. In fact, the increased patronage more than paid for the extra service (Machin and Stone 1995; Stone 1993). This was a repeat of the behaviour of transit managers in 1982 after they were forced to introduce multi-modal ticketing.

There was also a government inquiry into the construction of a train line to Doncaster as an alternative to further extensions of the Eastern Freeway. This found that the heavy-rail option had merit, but transit managers attempted to pour cold water on the idea by presenting much higher costings than those suggested by the community organisations. The inquiry was therefore unable to make a clear recommendation for construction of the railway. It could only ask for an independent cost review and, as a result, it lost any momentum it may have had (Russell 1991, p. 81-83 and interview).

Any potential that might have existed for greater reforms to grow from these small positive steps was lost in the general collapse of the ALP Government in 1992.

With a huge majority and a strong leader, the Liberals carried forward many of the transport policies favoured by the roads policy network and, through this network, business leaders. These policies included constructing inner-city freeways as private toll roads, and formalising plans for orbital freeways and other extensions of the road system. Most other interest groups were totally excluded from policy processes.

Transit operations were in disarray following the industrial conflict in the last years of the ALP Government, and the Liberals were ready to proceed with the workforce cuts that had defeated the ALP. The new Minister for Transport, Alan Brown, established a secret link with the Tramways Union and made a deal that traded the jobs of conductors for keeping some tram lines open. John Andrews, then with the ARU, says that this deal, when it was made public, made blood boil in the ALP and in Trades Hall. The rail unions had no choice but to try to come to a similar understanding. As one of the union negotiators, Andrews says that these talks were "surprisingly constructive", resulting in an agreement to keep all suburban services open. Even the perennially vulnerable Upfield line survived, and Brown later ensured that it stayed open during the

construction of the City Link freeway. The road builders had, for their own convenience, wanted to close the line and run buses for six months or more because the freeway was to be elevated above a station and more than a kilometre of rail line. A shutdown of this duration would have decimated patronage and probably would have spelled the end for the service altogether. At Brown's insistence, the engineers found a way to keep the trains running during the freeway construction.

As described in Chapter 5, the transit plan in the Liberal's 1996 'integrated transport strategy' *Transporting Melbourne* (DOI) was limited in its scope and overshadowed by dramatic new road projects, but a new corporatised structure for transit operations, with a much-reduced workforce, did provide a basis for future improvement. Government leaders maintained a very strong neo-liberal agenda, but the full-scale privatisation of the transit system was only introduced in 1999 after Brown had left the government, suggesting that he may have had some reservations about this course of action. In retrospect, it may be that the time and energy spent in designing and defending the new franchises would have been better spent addressing the problems in the quality of transit management that were left unaddressed during the Cain years. The privatisation process has entrenched the long-standing fragmentation of service planning.

The ALP was returned to government in 1999 but it has shown little interest in reshaping transport or planning policy networks. Within the DOI, the Government's target of 20% of all trips by public transport by 2020 was being referred to as 'aspirational'. The virtual disappearance of the target from the 2006 plan, *Meeting Our Transport Challenges* (Millar 2006), can be largely explained by the continuing influence of these old networks and their view that there is little potential for significant growth in transit patronage in Melbourne. And, as described in Chapter 6, there is still no agency with clear responsibility for the fundamental task of modern urban transit network planning. More generally, urban planning policies to counter the pressure from commercial interests remain weak. Both transit management and urban planning processes continue to be overshadowed by plans to build new freeways.

Perth: reform takes hold, 1979-1993

As there was little or no contention over transport policy in Perth until the announcement of the plan to close the Fremantle rail line, there was, in effect, only one transport policy network in existence. It included transit managers as well as road planners. This narrative is divided into three parts. The first looks at the strategies and resources of this network and its challengers while the plan to close the Fremantle line was in dispute. The second part traces the evolution of a new approach to transit management in the years after the election of the ALP from 1983 to 1993. The third part looks at the consolidation of the new transit-oriented policy network since 1993.

Transport planners and their opponents: conflict over the Fremantle line

For the established transport policy network in the late 1970s, the future for transit was marginal at best. Hicks describes the position that he and his colleagues held at the time:

Faced with the ageing diesel cars [on the suburban rail system], it seemed almost automatic that the railways would die ... we were a sophisticated modern city and we didn't need little diesel cars. As patronage continued to fall, it was the quite strong political view and, it seemed, the community view that the railways would be closed down, starting with the one to Fremantle, which had the least patronage.

A number of individuals came together to form Friends of the Railways (FOTR). These included two young academics, Peter Newman and Jeff Kenworthy, for whom this campaign was the beginning of the work that has since brought them international recognition. Newman was also a recently elected councillor of the City of Fremantle, but his great contribution at the time, and since, has been his writing and public speaking in which he frames transport choices as fundamental to the wider health of the city. The group also included Darryl McCaskell, a retired railways engineer with technical expertise and good connections into the existing transport policy network, as well as members of the railway unions and wealthy business people. Importantly, FOTR had organising ability. Rick Grounds, its full-time convenor, was a recently graduated

student with access to resources available in the environment movement. Women from ‘grassroots’ groups like school councils provided another level of organising strength.³⁴

For Newman, the planned closure was concrete evidence that his desired future for the city was being foregone. Grounds had been part of attempts to organise against the Court Liberal Government on issues like uranium mining and woodchipping, but had felt marginalised. He saw that, while freeway construction had popular support, “pulling up public transport infrastructure was quite different”.

Though FOTR had good connections in political circles, the group had little idea what they might achieve or what support they might be able to build:

we just knew that we had to do something, and it just gathered momentum to the point where it became a major issue (*Newman*).

Through the rail unions, petitions could be distributed at every station; and the WA Environment Centre, funded by the Whitlam federal government, had a printing press and graphic designers. From this base, they drew in:

more and more civil society groups: parent groups from local schools, the Royal Agricultural Show and the football league – four of its five venues lay along the rail line – and ordinary folks ... they just appeared and said they wanted to help (*Newman*).

FOTR had a positive message: the way to save the railway was to electrify the whole system. In April 1979, FOTR presented the Minister for Transport with a petition of 99,840 signatures (*West Australian*, 24 April 1979) – from a population of less than 900,000. Then, in May, it produced a detailed analysis setting out how electrification could be achieved at a reasonable cost and arguing that this had been grossly over-stated by the government (*West Australian*, 15 May 1979). The national daily called the closure “the biggest public issue [in WA] in three years” (*Weekend Australian*, 19-20 May 1979), and FOTR began to find support in parliament.

Although the ALP’s federal MP for Fremantle had helped to kick-start the group by calling an initial meeting of potential activists and offering the resources of his electorate office, the state parliamentary ALP were slow to take an interest in the

³⁴ Men from FOTR, when interviewed for this research, acknowledged without prompting the importance of the contributions made by these women, but couldn’t remember their names.

campaign; party leaders generally shared the views of the transport policy network. But, as the campaign gained momentum, the prospect of taking shots at the government became irresistible. They were able to follow the lead of the Liberal MP for Subiaco, Dr Tom Dardour, who said the closure of the line in his electorate put the “government on a suicide course” (*West Australian*, 16 May 1979). Outside the parliament, there was support for FOTR from both conservative and ALP-led councils, all along the line, and even from the editors of the *West* who wrote that it was “unfair and politically unwise for the government to ignore the depth of public disquiet” (16 May 1979).

Grounds used “a willing media to keep things running along”. The *West Australian* and its afternoon stable-mate, the *Daily News*, had ambitious journalists based in Fremantle, keen to run FOTR material. Grounds recalls his:

habit of dropping a press release into the *West* in the late evening. It would usually get in the morning paper without a response from the government. Radio would pick this up and they knew that they could ring me for a 6.00 am grab ... that frustrated the government.

Disaffected members of the rail bureaucracy leaked to FOTR an internal Westrail memo from a senior engineer confirming the FOTR estimates for the cost of electrification of the suburban rail system – less than half that claimed by the government (*Daily News*, 7 August 1979) and the *West* again editorialised in favour of FOTR (9 August 1979).

With less than a month till the closure, Rick Grounds announced his plan to seek preselection for the ALP for the safe Liberal seat of Cottesloe, saying: “only a change of government will save [the line]” (*West Australian*, 11 August 1979). In response, Court used his regular column in the *West* to argue that elected governments must resist the emotional voice of pressure groups that were conducting an “offensive against democracy” (*West Australian*, 25 August 1979, pp. 1 & 7).

The government’s “petulance” (*West Australian*) in the face of the FOTR campaign reached a high point at a public meeting organised by FOTR and the conservative Cottesloe Council, just before the closure. Before the rail supporters arrived, their opponents had filled the hall to disrupt the meeting. Newman’s recollections illustrate something of the ‘small town’ nature of Perth’s elite, of which he is part:

I just stood and looked at them as they all came out and no-one would look me in the face. A relative of mine, a member of the Liberal Party, saw me and came up and [whispered]: ‘keep it up, don’t let these bastards win’.”

Newman remembers this meeting as a moral turning point in the campaign, even though victory was still four years away.

The final weeks of the campaign were frenetic: FOTR letter-boxed 50,000 copies of a broadsheet along the line; a *Daily News* opinion poll put support for retention of the railway at 82%. The ALP called for an early election; and the unions threatened to take control of the trains and keep them running. Despite everything, the line closed as planned on 2 September 1979.

Court called an election early in 1980. The ALP promised to reopen the Fremantle line immediately and to electrify the suburban rail system in three years (*West Australian*, 24 Jan 1980), and gave the Fremantle closure a prominent place in its newspaper advertising. The election result showed a swing against the government, but this was largely concentrated in safely held seats. Court was returned losing only one seat to the ALP, but this election did demonstrate to some in the ALP that urban transit could be a vote winner.

When Burke’s revitalised ALP won the next election in February 1983, the policies for renewal of transit remained in place, although they did not have the same public prominence in election advertising as in 1980. Even so, the issue was on the Premier’s reform agenda.

The reform of transit management in Perth, 1983-1993

The changes in transit service achieved in Perth after 1983 were the work of many people. In direct contrast to Melbourne, there was leadership from a strong political entrepreneur, a passionate community activist able to work inside government and a skilful reform bureaucrat. This activity inside the government and the bureaucracy was much more important than the work of civic action groups like FOTR, although this did continue.

After his 1983 election victory, Premier Burke had promised that transit reform would not happen quickly, but the reopening of the Fremantle line did happen quickly – the trains were running again four months later. Stuart Hicks, who as Deputy Director

General of Transport had “had the file” for both the closure and for the reopening, remembers the operators “cobbling together” enough salvaged rolling stock to run the new service. Newman felt that “their hearts were not in it” and he was not invited to the reopening:

I went along and watched with a smile on my face, but no way were they really recognising us.

Within the transport policy network, the strong view remained that rail was outdated. An unnamed WA “railway official” told an ANU researcher:

Court should have waited a little longer, ended freight and passenger services [to Fremantle] simultaneously, and torn up the line so that restoration of passenger trains would be impossible. In the end, the line had to be kept open indefinitely for the sole use of poorly patronised passenger trains that paralleled a bus route operated by the MTT (Stevenson 1987, p. 108).

The ALP did not make wholesale sackings at the top of the transport and planning bureaucracies, but “indirectly, [it was] made clear to us” that change was on the way (*Woodward*). New people were brought in where it could be done easily. John Knox retired as DGT and his replacement, John Taplin, was “more at ease with the idea of an electric rail system” (*Newman*). A new head of the planning authority was appointed in 1984. The powerful Don Aitken remained as head of the DMR.

Stuart Hicks remembers that, within the ALP at the time, suburban rail was:

a bit of a fringe issue ... there were enough energetic terriers floating around with energy inside the ALP for it to end up with a platform that talked about using the railways in the future ... it was rather vague [as these things] can be from Opposition, [there wasn't] a mandate to spend a lot on the railways.

The new minister, Julian Grill, was the MP for the mining region of Kalgoorlie. A lawyer from the ALP Right, he was ambitious and well connected to the resource industries. Regardless of his later notoriety (O'Brien 2007), he is described as:

a dealmaker ... a person who can accumulate the forces that are needed to make things happen and a very good listener to his own backbench and his senior bureaucrats (*Affleck*).

Grill was a little surprised to be given the transport portfolio, but thought “there was a feeling that I was a little too close to the resources sector”.

His main interest in transport was to make the mining and farming industries more efficient. This meant reforms to cut jobs in rail freight. Obviously, the rail unions were reluctant to embrace the change. There was a tense period of negotiations in the early days. The unions went to Burke to have Grill pulled into line, but the Premier backed his minister. Eventually, Grill found enough union leaders who saw that the changes were inevitable. He got Treasury support for an inventive translocation and redundancy package for railway workers, and a deal was made. Central to this deal was Grill’s agreement to support improvements to transit in Perth. He says:

the formal driving forces for further upgrading ... and the electrification came out of Taplin’s office, but without that trade-off with the unions, I don’t think it would have happened.

With these arrangements sorted out behind the scenes, Grill announced an inquiry led by Taplin to look at the “possibility of electrifying the suburban rail system ... [and of] a railway serving the northern suburbs” (*West Australian*, 26 April 1984).

This study never really looked at the northern suburbs proposal: it was enough of a task to bring the policy networks around to imagine a future for the three existing rail lines. Newman was the FOTR representative on the committee that managed the study. He recalls as an “extraordinary breakthrough”, at the end of 1985, the consultants’ conclusion that it would be cheaper to electrify than to keep operating the old diesel system. The study was launched just before the state election in early February 1986. By this time, Newman had joined the ALP and had been working in the Grill’s office for several months. Newman remembers priming him to respond to inevitable media questions about the northern suburbs line by announcing another study. This was just one part of intense FOTR lobbying to ensure that the ALP and the bureaucracy took electrification and rail expansion seriously.

Before the 1986 election, the ALP promised a master plan to implement electrification and a detailed study on the northern suburbs railway. This may have been an issue for some voters who stayed with Labor in the swinging seats on the northern fringe of Perth, but the promise of a new rail line got no coverage in the *West Australian* whose report of the ALP policy launch included three transport policies and only one related to

Perth. This was to extend the Mitchell Freeway “to the edge of the present built up area of the northern suburbs by 1988” (*West Australian*, 7 Feb 1986, p. 46).

There was opposition to rail expenditure from inside the ALP. Newman recalls Grill savagely rebuffing one senior ALP official who argued that it was ridiculous to spend money on the railways and who assumed that it was simply a useful election promise with no firm intention behind it. From within the bureaucracy, supporters of a ‘busway’ alternative were feeding their arguments to cabinet members.

After the election, the electrification proposal still faced a tough fight to get cabinet approval. Grill had taken on other portfolios, but he retained a nominal involvement with transport. He shared an office with his successor, Gavin Troy, for several months, ensuring a smooth handover and a continuation of his reform agenda for rural freight operations at Westrail. In the end, he was able to deliver on the deal that he had made with the unions, and Cabinet agreed to suburban electrification.

As Newman says:

a strong minister can do that ... often they don’t take on Treasury, they don’t do the final step. Grill was able to do it.

Work began soon after, and electric trains eventually started running in 1991.

FOTR were also pursuing the next item on their agenda – extension of the suburban rail system. This was another long political fight.

Until 1986, the issue of the northern suburbs line was just something for transport planners to discuss in general terms. Opponents had said that there was no land reservation available. Newman and his colleagues had shown this to be wrong: engineers had been instructed to allow space for rail by the Tonkin ALP Government in the early 1970s.

By 1987, Newman had left the Minister’s office to return to academia, and the northern rail line idea was going backwards: stuck in a bus versus rail wrangle among transit planners. In a survey that asked people to choose between a railway with a 30-minute frequency and a bus service of equivalent comfort and speed running every 10 minutes, 70% of people chose the railway (Hannaby 1987). This convinced Troy, the new minister, but the senior transport planner, Hugo Wildermuth – a ‘bus man’ – brought in

consultants to do a study that painted the busway as the cheaper and more effective option (Travers Morgan Pty Ltd 1988).

This created a political problem: both the minister and the public wanted rail, but the study said the opposite. Newman was brought back and he recruited the well-known American transit engineer, Vukan Vuchic and David Howard from British Rail to work with him to critically assess the first study's assumptions about costs and about the extent to which people would make transfers from feeder buses to rail (Newman et al. 1988).

As described in Chapter 6, the spending for the northern suburbs rail line was approved by Cabinet at the third attempt, and the media and public support for this decision helped the ALP scramble over the line in early 1989 in its first election after the WA Inc scandals.

There was more to the successful funding of rail projects than the lobbying efforts of Newman and his FOTR colleagues and the internal ALP deals made by Julian Grill. Even more significant was the acceptance of the role of transit in the future of the city inside the transport policy network. This change began in the offices of transport planning agency, the Director General of Transport (DGT), and the principal transit operator, the Metropolitan Transport Trust (MTT), while Grill was minister.

In the eight years between the reopening of the Fremantle line and the electrification of the rail system, the MTT improved services and slowed the decline in per capita use of transit. It also legitimised and extended the public advocacy for better transit to maintain the future health of the city begun by FOTR.

The creation of a policy network that was interested in and capable of making improvements to Perth's public transport system owes much to Stuart Hicks. Grill felt that, of the senior bureaucrats working in transport at the time, Hicks stood out as "much more politically attuned than the others".

As described earlier, Hicks played a part, as Deputy DGT, in both the closure of the Fremantle line in 1979 and its jury-rigged reopening in 1983. His change of direction on the future for public transport in Perth began through his interactions with Grill and Burke, especially after the Premier made it clear, privately, that he was looking for significant reform of Perth's transit system.

Hicks felt that Grill was sceptical about the possibilities for the suburban transit system, but found the Minister's argumentative style "stimulating". He became engaged with the intellectual task of responding to repeated challenges to suggest actions that would:

reflect the platform of the newly-elected government ... I was a convert, I suppose. In the process of the [Fremantle] closure, I had my crisis of conscience ... as a bureaucrat, where you are not sure that [what you are doing] is adding to the good of mankind. Peter [Newman] and I were protagonists ... and we built a relationship in that process.

Newman says:

he didn't want me around in the early days ... [but] intellectually, and in himself, he is very strong ... he was not threatened by having an academic in the Minister's office who claimed to know more about rail than he did.

The new government created an environment conducive to new ways of thinking. Hicks recalls that:

it was a very heady atmosphere, a young government ... with a sense of empowerment, and, in those early days, of privilege and, almost, humility ... it [was] adventurous [and] that contributed to it [later] coming so terribly unstuck.

After a year or more of constant exchanges with the minister and with Newman, it was a different Hicks who in late 1984 was offered work in Melbourne, his hometown. In response, Grill suggested:

that I might like to go and run the Perth public transport system, saying ... in effect, 'If you are so damned smart – you do it'.

Hicks moved to the MTT in January 1985 and became Chairman in June:

The minister and the Premier [had great] enthusiasm for somebody who could say 'here's a big picture ... here's a way to make this work' ... they would say it was financially impossible ... and I would come back with [new leads].

At the MTT, Hicks saw the need to "break down the wall between the bus and rail guys". The problem he had was illustrated by Westrail commentary on a train drivers' strike in 1986:

Westrail is fighting for its life against road transport for goods and against the MTT for suburban transport (*West Australian*, 10 Jan 1986, p. 4).

Without changing the statutory arrangements, he established Transperth as the marketing name for unified management of the buses and trains: the public face of this change was a common livery for all buses and trains and one set of timetables for all services. Internally, cooperation improved through the relationship between Hicks and Jim Gill, a young Burke appointee who became Westrail Commissioner.

For Hicks, the main task was to get “enough people to suspend disbelief and back you to make something happen”. By 1988, he assembled a board that “could help run the strategic discussions”. This group included Peter Newman and a popular ABC radio current affairs presenter. He felt that his agency had to:

stand up and be counted in the community debate ... about what happens if we continue to rely on the car and keep extending the freeways and get [a city that is] 250 miles long ... To tell that story over and over again requires savvy in a media and communication sense.

Hicks also believes that if the transit agency had not become:

a policy influencer ... a marketer, a manager of big infrastructure ventures, financially astute, and so on ... there would have been no driver to bring the desired system to reality and make it operate.

This process of pushing forward an agenda for change from inside a government agency was not without its pitfalls, and on at least one occasion Hicks recalls being chastised by his minister for getting ahead of government policy, but generally he was able to manage the conflicting demands of his position.

Hicks’ success in reorganising transit operations and reframing the public debate allowed the ALP to use the northern suburbs rail promise to weigh against the WA Inc. scandal at the 1989 election.

Internal reform was tackled pragmatically, without big structural changes, which Hicks thought would be counter-productive:

it wouldn’t have worked to bury the past and start a new organisation. [Those sort of changes] create public cynicism and ... internally [the restructure] dominates ... that’s all that happens.

Hicks brought in new staff to complement the existing group who ran the rail system. After electrification, feeling “a bit cheeky”, he rang a colleague at the Hong Kong transit authority, “talked up” the Perth system, and persuaded him to come to run railway operations.

Hicks’ success led to him being given the task of managing the construction of the northern suburbs railway. This new venture was dependent, in part, on his ability to bring high-profile opponents (in this case, the author of the original planning scheme for Perth, George Stephenson) into the process, deal with their objections constructively, and build a stronger consensus for the final direction for the project.

Building on success: transport policy in Perth after 1993

With the Liberals in power from 1993, Hicks (as DGT) dealt with their ideological economic agenda by offering a model of privatisation that included tendering for the operation of bus services by the private sector in a way that did not:

sacrifice the single, seamless system for public transport in Perth ... We were able to come through that period without [privatisation] becoming the main game, as it seems to have been ... in Melbourne [it did not overshadow] what we are trying to do with the city.

Successful construction of the northern line, on time and under budget, and, even more important, rapid success in attracting passengers when it opened in March 1993 helped to create a climate of bipartisan support for transit. The Liberals were willing to contemplate a new southern railway to Mandurah, and commenced planning for it.

After the ALP returned to power in February 2001, Hicks again played an important role in resolving conflict about the route for the Mandurah line. The ALP, the Liberals and the City of Perth all had significantly different, and strongly held, views on the route by which the new line would enter central Perth. The decision to take the symbolic and practical direct route is a good indication of the change that has been achieved in Perth in less than 25 years.

The current Minister, Alannah MacTiernan, has the political capital with which to try to take Perth’s transport systems and its planning strategies to a new level with the significant commitments to public participation and sustainability goals through the

‘Network City’ process. Peter Newman continues to be a strong advocate inside and outside these processes.

Reflecting overseas trends, a major debate among transit professionals in Perth has revolved around the question of whether buses could perform the long-haul component of the city’s transit network at a fraction of the cost of rail. Bus proponents got support for the construction of a new downtown terminal in the 1980s and construction of a busway in the median of the Kwinana Freeway that will be superseded by the Mandurah rail line, and they were prominent in the debate over all the major rail expansion decisions.

Hugo Wildermuth stands by his opposition to the northern rail line because of the high cost of rail track construction and other ‘hardware’. He also believes that the decision to scrap the Fremantle line in the 1970s was:

technically right, but [its proponents] were naïve in selling it, and so were knocked over by the public led by Newman and FOTR.

The local and international evidence is against Wildermuth because, even though it is expensive, rail appears to be necessary, at least in the developed world, to ‘anchor’ a transit network in the public mind and to provide a sufficiently attractive level of service (see for example Vuchic 1981; 2005).

Even so, it is worth noting that the sustained growth in transit use in Perth from the early 1990s has been greatest on the bus services that have been built up in tandem with the rail improvements. There are legitimate concerns about a potential lack of resources to expand the bus network to take advantage of the growing rail network. A full analysis is outside the scope of this thesis, but it would be valuable to understand more about which aspects of the enhanced bus-rail network have been most successful.

Peter Woodward, a road advocate who was the senior transport engineer in the WA Planning Commission in the 1970s, is still affronted by what he sees as the change, begun under Burke, to a “politically-motivated approach” to planning that “is not necessarily based on the best technical advice”.

The historic absence of significant political opposition or even competing priorities in the planning of almost all major roads projects has meant that there has been no need for the transport policy networks to develop the same political sophistication as they did in Melbourne. Newman thinks that the roads proponents:

had got soft ... they did not realise what was going to hit them [in the 1980s] and it has been hitting them ever since.

Newman may be overstating the case. As described in Chapter 6, significant extensions to Perth's freeway network were built during the 1980s and 1990s. Only one significant freeway route from the early plans, the Stephenson Highway east of central Perth and its associated 'second crossing' of the Swan River at Fremantle, has failed to get political support, and the reality of road development in Perth seems to fall short of both Newman's hopes and Woodward's fears.

Newman says that:

Julian Grill wanted everything – he wanted freeways, he wanted railways. He was going to be the minister who did more in his term than anyone, and he probably did.

Grill was able to manage any conflict that his ambitions for “everything” might have created, and he says that Don Aitken, the Court-era head of the Department of Main Roads (DMR), worked well with the instigators of transit reform, Taplin and Hicks. In any event, Grill was in the fortunate position of having sufficient money to back both horses. There was enough money available from Canberra that he could transfer some funds that were initially earmarked for roads to passenger rail projects without undue opposition from the roads agency.³⁵

In relation to the continued construction of freeways in the Perth suburbs, Hicks understood that:

people on the outside were saying that the money for roads ought to be reduced ... I didn't pursue that ... we needed to earn our cred ... [by] making public transport relevant to this city. That had to be our focus, rather than engaging in battles with the roads lobby which was very powerful

In any case, with historically favourable funding arrangements and Grill's successful techniques in dealing with Canberra, Hicks knew that he was not “fighting over the same pie [with DMR], so there was no need for a fight to death”.

³⁵ Grill says he was carefully to maintain a good relationship with the federal transport minister. He knew that other states had lost funding after disagreements about the size of signs acknowledging the source of construction budgets, and made sure that his staff were sensitive to such issues.

It was only later in the 1990s, after Hicks and his successors at Transperth had demonstrated concrete results for their transit improvements, that the current approach to transport planning could be adopted.

Vancouver: key periods in continuing contention, 1968-2007

Five periods in the ongoing contention over transit policy in Vancouver can be identified, starting with the decisive defeats of two sets of freeway plans in 1968 and 1972. This was followed by a period of reform, most notably in planning institutions that strengthened the urban development framework in ways which would, over time, support improved transit performance. From 1975 until the late 1980s, there was a period of wrangling between the province and local government over transit funding and management. The only achievement in this period was the construction of SkyTrain as a part of the city's working transit system.

In the early 1990s, the GVRD re-established a political mandate for transit improvements. The final period examined in this narrative, from the late 1990s to the present, includes the positive steps to implement this new mandate through TransLink and various contrary moves from the province.

The freeway fights: 1968-1972

Politically and institutionally, the late 1960s and early 1970s saw significant change that went well beyond the transport debates. From rising concern about the local and global environment, civic action groups were emerging to raise questions about the nature and pace of high-rise housing developments and other urban planning issues, and their representatives were elected to municipal and provincial government.

The pivotal political contention over transport policy in Vancouver at this time – around the proposals for urban freeways – took place predominately within the processes of the Vancouver City Council, through which attempts were being made to find the resources for freeway construction from federal, provincial and local sources. There was no established urban road construction agency. The principal agency in transit management was a subsidiary of the Crown corporation, BC Hydro, operating through the municipalities. The newly formed GVRD was finding its place in the political and civic landscape.

The strategies of the main actor groups are now described in turn.

The freeway proponents

In the mid-1960s, the resources for freeway construction seemed to be falling into place. The province, while still refusing to directly fund roads in Vancouver itself, was persuaded, along with the federal government, to upgrade the Trans-Canada Highway, which ran through the suburbs and passed within 6 km from the city centre, and to build a bridge over the Second Narrows of Burrard Inlet. These projects were both part of the projected suburban network.

Canadian Pacific Railways, a large private company that owned land ripe for redevelopment, and the federal government, through its responsibility for major ports, came to the table with the City in negotiations about a third crossing of Burrard Inlet and the waterfront section of the downtown freeway. New laws allowed Ottawa to contribute to “transportation aspects” of urban renewal programs, and so the way was open for federal support for the east-west and north-south radials, in ‘renewal’ corridors through inner East Vancouver. In 1965, local voters approved \$10 million in a plebiscite to replace the dilapidated Georgia Viaduct with the freeway that would take the east-west radial into the heart of the downtown commercial district.

The City Manager and consultants hired by him generally put forward the engineering details and the intended funding arrangements. Only small pieces, like the funding for the Georgia Viaduct, were open to electoral scrutiny and these, by definition, lacked the context of the original freeway plan. The whole plan was never made public.

Neighbourhoods that were “red circled” for redevelopment were run down and houses were compulsorily acquired with minimal compensation (*Harcourt*). Citizens groups became suspicious of a series of council property acquisitions that made no sense unless seen as part of a hidden agenda being run by City staff (*Cameron*).

Strong civic action led to the political defeat of the wider freeway project in early 1968, although the council restated its commitment to building the Georgia Viaduct as a freeway.

The freeway proponents shifted their attention to the third crossing of Burrard Inlet. Federal funds were still on the table, and the crossing could be used to revive the rest of the freeway plan.

Over the next few years, consultants for the various proponents drew up plans for the new crossing and its links to the rest of the anticipated freeway network. This process

took place largely out of the public spotlight. The only question thought appropriate for public debate was whether the six-lane crossing would be a bridge or a tunnel, and this issue came before the council in 1971.

Civic action groups

When the first freeway plans were put to Vancouver Council in June 1967, they immediately became the focus for growing dissatisfaction with the heavy-handed style of the council and its staff on many issues. Those standing up against the freeways included middle-class residents of the westside of Vancouver led by UBC academics and members of the business community who had been shut out of development opportunities; and working-class and Chinese eastside residents who hired Mike Harcourt, then a young community lawyer, as their spokesman. The freeways also became a cause for the 'counter-culture', then at its height. Vancouver was a centre for the Canadian manifestation of this 1960s social protest movement, with many young Americans coming across the border to escape the Vietnam War draft. The freeway protestors in 1968 included many of those who later founded the first Greenpeace group in 1971 (Weyler 2004).

This widespread opposition was too much for the disparate grouping of freeway proponents who were facing political opposition for the first time, and the plans were shelved.

The sense of intellectual ferment in Vancouver at this time is clearly captured in planning lecturer Setty Pendakur's memoir (1972) which describes the long-lunch debates among academics and business people that led to the formation of TEAM. With no strongly entrenched government institutions, planning and transport policies for the City and the region were fluid and it was possible for many of the new ideas to find their way onto the political agenda. Among TEAM's new councillors were several planning academics who were articulating their own interpretations of the ideas of Jane Jacobs and other critics of American freeways and suburban expansion policies (Tennant 1981).

Civic opposition to freeway plans rose to a greater pitch when the Burrard Inlet crossing plans became public in 1971, and the TEAM councillors provided a focus for this. In addition, more downtown developers, notably CPR, now favoured rapid transit

Newly formed advocacy groups pointed out the benefits of public transit and argued that costs for freeways that would have to be borne by residents of the City of Vancouver would be huge. A march on the provincial parliament in Victoria presented 21,000 petition signatures against the crossing to the Social Credit Government, whose commitment to the project was wavering as financial contributions from other sources became less certain (Pendakur 1972).

New politicians and new alliances

Timing for the move to build the crossing was determined by a federal election due in 1972. A key player was the federal environment minister, from Vancouver's North Shore, who saw the crossing as a way to attract local votes for his government that was facing a critical drop in support in the west (Leo 1977).

In response, COPE councillor Harry Rankin saw the freeway issue in stark terms:

once Vancouver embarks on a freeway system ... there will be no chance for decades of introducing rapid transit: this is the watershed – it must be stopped now (Gutstein, p. 165).

Rankin and the TEAM councillors, although still in a minority, pushed for a municipal plebiscite on the crossing as splits emerged in federal Cabinet and among the NPA councillors.

In face of accusations of incompetence and even drunkenness, Mayor Tom Campbell was having trouble maintaining his usually solid NPA majority on the freeway issue, as well as more generally (Tennant 1981). In December 1971, in a move to get approval for the City's share of the crossing costs, Campbell sought to avoid the customary plebiscite by trying to find the \$12 million from general revenues. He just managed to find the numbers, but the vote gave him only a quarter of what he had asked for.

In late January 1972, the council voted to hold public meetings to explain the project, but at the same time Campbell invigorated his opposition by telling the press that the crossing was being sabotaged by “rangitangs, hamburgers, pinkos and trouble-makers” (Pendakur 1972).

Eventually, three meetings were planned in the city and suburbs. But, when 900 people, including the traditional NPA supporters from the Downtown Business Association, came to the first meeting strongly in favour of rapid transit, the crossing plan was dead.

The support for transit by the Downtown Business Association was a first sign of the influential role that the GVRD would play in Vancouver transport politics. Together with BC Hydro, it had commissioned a report in 1970 which had argued that four subway lines were feasible in Greater Vancouver (De Leuw Cather & Co. 1970).

The 'community' takes power: 1972 to 1975

When TEAM won control of Vancouver City Council in a landslide in 1972:

the outpouring of citizen protest and participation had faded ... TEAM assumed office in a certain isolation – facing a suspicious civic administration while lacking the enthusiastic support ... that would have been there had the party assumed office in 1968 or 1970 (Tennant 1981, p. 140).

As described in Chapter 6, TEAM moved quickly to replace the City Manager and five of the 14 department heads who were seen as the drivers of the old agendas in transport and urban planning, and to bring in new staff keen to work with the new programs. Together with the reformist NDP, progress was made on planning reform and suburban growth controls.

However, there were casualties. The continuation of loud and energetic criticisms from resident groups and individuals that followed the introduction of the new planning system shocked some members of TEAM and probably led to their early departure from office.

Harry Lash, who observed the arrival of TEAM at City Hall from his position as head of planning at the newly created GVRD, wrote later that some councillors expected “gratitude and honest, cooperative talk across the council bar” and that they were “affronted” when new forums for citizen participation were filled with “furious outbursts of intemperate complaint”. Lash saw this as:

human reaction to previous feelings pent-up in the city [but councillors became] much more cautious and arms-length ... [seeing] the bogey of radicalism or activism in the dark corners of every meeting hall (1976, p. 29).

Some of Lash’s colleagues and politicians on the GVRD Board and Planning Committee were similarly uncomfortable with his consultative approach to regional planning, saying that:

people expect planners to tell them [the answers] ... most people have no opinions, no knowledge, so we weren't likely to hear anything worthwhile (p. 55).

So, Lash says, the final decision to go ahead with the open-ended *Livable Region* planning process was “hard fought”.

Councillors like Rankin and Harcourt, and his ally Darlene Marzari, were able to work constructively in this climate of community hostility and uncertain outcomes. These connections with civic activists would prove invaluable during the tortuous course of transit politics over the next three decades.

Making SkyTrain a success: 1980

From 1975, when Social Credit returned to government, transit politics entered a period of five years of unproductive prevarication and wrangling over future investments, until the province and councillors representing development interests in the City of Vancouver put together the proposal for a futuristic rapid transit scheme to show the world at Expo 86.

Even after the flurry of bizarre technological fancies had settled on what would become SkyTrain, there were political interventions from the province attempting to take the route of the new rapid transit line away from the links between downtown Vancouver and its emerging satellite centres. There was a suggestion from the BC Minister for Municipal Affairs and former mayor of Surrey, Bill Vander Zalm, and others that it should run through their constituencies from Surrey to Richmond (*Cameron*).

Harcourt's challenge to the provincial agenda for Expo and the rapid transit proposal was mounted through his candidacy for mayor in late 1980. He says that he was “a distinct underdog until the last six weeks”. His campaign had support from middle-class liberals and from a coalition of labour and community groups, including Citizens for Rapid Transit, which had been in operation since the reversals on rapid transit in 1976. They collected 20,000 signatories to a petition supporting Harcourt (*Sun* 2 Dec 1980).

Harcourt's victory and his success in making SkyTrain a central part of Vancouver's transit system were dependent on the strong neighbourhood connections he had built up over more than ten years, and on the ability of the leaders of the civic action groups to mobilise strong support for his campaign.

The ultimate achievements of SkyTrain also required transit managers, in BC Hydro and its successor BC Transit, to be able to design and deliver the rapid transit service of SkyTrain itself and its accompanying bus feeders. As during the period of patronage growth in the in the 1970s, the competence of the transit managers allowed them to turn political opportunities into improved transit performance.

Establishing a new mandate for growth control and transit: 1990-1996

SkyTrain aside, the province continued to keep transit funding on a tight rein during the 1980s and patronage fell following services cuts. In 1983, the GVRD went to the province saying that the complex management arrangement made in 1980 was “a three-headed monster”; in response, Vander Zalm, now Minister for Transportation, said, “I agree – you are gone” (*Cameron*).

Having lost its powers over both urban planning and transit management, the GVRD, through councillors from the City of Vancouver and their suburban allies, notably in Burnaby, were at the centre of the efforts to rebuild the political mandate for the growth control and transit agendas.

Gordon Campbell became mayor on the NPA ticket in 1986 and remained in the job until the end of 1992. He was a former assistant to Art Phillips, TEAM’s first mayor, and had since worked in the Vancouver development community. Campbell was persuaded to head the GVRD’s planning committee and this helped to give the issue political priority (*Cameron*), the process beginning with *Creating Our Future* in 1990.

The GVRD is now justifiably proud of the process that delivered the *Livable Region Strategic Plan (LRSP)* and *Transport 2021*. However, its beginnings were contested, as Harry Lash’s planning process had been in the 1970s. During the early 1990s, some politicians were sceptical of the value of processes that were open to the public at an early stage and were not controlled by ‘expert opinion’. It took a strong stand by planning staff, using evidence from polling and market research, to demonstrate the extent of community support for an open process and to get political support for it (*Cadman*).

The analytic work done to support the *LRSP* and *Transport 2021* processes included transport and land-use modelling exercises using standard techniques. What was different in Vancouver, compared to many other cities, was that those feeding data and assumptions into the models were not using the normal biases that road engineers use to

give their freeway projects an advantage (GVRD 1993b). So, the results showed the potential benefits of transit investments, which are now coming to fruition.

Compared with the planning processes of the 1970s, the 1990s processes had less crucial input from ‘activist academics’ like those who had been part of TEAM. The institutional changes at the City of Vancouver and the GVRD had been sufficient to create a body of planning professionals who were able to successfully manage the political and community engagement required to build support for the *LRSP* and *Transport 2021* (Condon).

Cameron says:

the *LRSP* was not written to be a legally applied document. It was very good to be evolving this consensus-based plan and to have it contribute to the province’s ... new growth management legislation, so we could have the iron hand inserted into the velvet glove.

The final legislation did not give the GVRD the power to act independently to enforce the *LRSP*, and the consensus around its adoption was not complete. Three suburban municipalities objected to the draft plan, and only supported the final vote on the *LRSP* after the signing memoranda that “clarified the interpretation of the plan” (GVRD 2006c). These municipalities, led by Mayor Doug MacCallum in Surrey, soon began to back-pedal. MacCallum said that Surrey would “pursue a development pattern that is in the best interests of the city – regardless of what the GVRD wants” (*Sun* 19 Sept 1997). Later, he even contemplated a formal “separation” from the GVRD (*Sun* 6 June & 16 Dec 2000), though the costs for Surrey in replacing GVRD services in water, waste and hospitals would have been enormous.

Alongside the new *LRSP*, the GVRD was working on a new transport plan. Ken Cameron, then head of planning at the GVRD, says:

I was able to have the transport project housed in my office ... and seconded some of my staff to the transport planning process, so the *LRSP* and the transport plan evolved together, and iteratively, not one driving the other.

Translink and the ‘Gateway’: transit growth and continuing contention after 1996

Although cooperative, the negotiations between Harcourt’s government and the GVRD over funding for the implementation of *Transport 2021* took some time. After many

compromises, Harcourt announced a 10-year plan for BC Transit in 1995.

Remembering his loss over the technology for SkyTrain, he saw this as “his opportunity to do things differently” (*Leicester*). The plan required the municipalities to find between a third and a half of the capital costs for three surface rapid transit lines to be built by 2006.

However, as described in Chapter 6, provincial political imperatives drove the new NDP Premier, Glen Clark, and funding went to the West Coast Express commuter rail service, which was not a recommendation of *Transport 2021*, and the ‘Millennium’ line SkyTrain, which was not built as described in *Transport 2021*. Leicester believes that the political decision³⁶ to use SkyTrain technology, rather than the surface system initially proposed, has delayed the transit extension west of the Expo line on Broadway until at least 2015, leaving passengers to use extremely congested buses and trolleys. Others are less concerned by the convoluted path of transit construction: Harcourt has dropped his opposition to SkyTrain and, while he thinks that the city is “ten years behind where it should be”, he is confident that in the future a subway will be “punched through” beyond Granville towards UBC. Officially, TransLink plans state that this corridor is the next priority for rapid transit after the airport and Coquitlam projects are completed, although no conclusion on the technology has been reached, and that planning should be commenced to allow construction after 2013 (GVTA 2005, sect. 6, p. 53).

A way through these perennial conflicts between the province and the region came with the negotiations over TransLink. These were made possible by the good fortune of a ‘meeting of minds’ between long-time NPA Vancouver councillor, George Puil, who took the chair of the GVRD and the NDP Transport Minister, Joy McPhail.

The crux of the negotiations over TransLink was the establishment of a guaranteed source of funding for capital projects to prevent future upheavals like those associated with the construction of the first and second SkyTrain lines. These questions of funding and taxation were exercising transport professionals across Canada at the time, and the

³⁶ Part of the incentive for the province to build a second SkyTrain line was the promise of export earnings from a local plant built to manufacture the Vancouver SkyTrain vehicles. These orders evaporated and the factory is now closed, raising questions about the cost of supply of future rolling stock for Vancouver.

mechanisms considered in the Vancouver negotiations were given legitimacy through debates within the Transportation Association of Canada (TAC 1993).

The basis of the new arrangement was an attempt to fund transport investment from transport revenues. Transit fares, a parking tax and a percentage of provincial petrol taxes made up about 75% of the necessary income. The initial plan was to raise the balance from a levy of \$75 per car. Agreement was almost reached between the province and the GVRD negotiators, but some suburban mayors were never happy with what they saw as an unfair burden being placed on the more car-dependent residents of their municipalities. Radio talk-show hosts galvanised public opposition against the vehicle levy and the issue gained traction in municipal and provincial election campaigns. The NDP was facing a huge defeat with their popularity falling after a series of scandals:

the calculation I heard from the NDP was that they were at 16% in the polls ... approve the vehicle levy and go into the polls at 6%, don't approve it, and maybe go in at 18% (*Cameron*).

Replacing the vehicle levy with a property tax finally saved the TransLink deal.

Cameron puts this last-minute crisis down to a tendency of GVRD politicians to ignore:

the constant process [that is required] to keep people on board ... they need to be in the corridors of power as decisions are made – virtually hour by hour. They have tended to send the letter and [think] it will be OK.

He also saw the near failure of the deal as a lesson in managing regional politics:

if you have a process ... but you don't really get through, and then you make a decision, you can get a backlash ... you haven't uncovered the scabs and got them out in the open ... you have one set of people who believe they made the right decision, with the right process ... being opposed by people who ... decide to use the issue as a wedge.

The creation of TransLink has not ended contention between the province and the region. The current Liberal Government's support for suburban freeways in the 'Gateway' project is the latest battle between the growth control and transit policies of the GVRD and the City of Vancouver, and the suburban developers and freight interests. New civic action groups are emerging to try to create the political momentum

to prevent any unravelling of the *LRSP* and *Transport 2021* agenda. These groups worry about the tensions created inside TransLink by the conflicting ambitions of supporters of road and transit futures. They feel that the senior management of TransLink are too willing to go along with the Gateway project agenda, and that there has not been sufficient engagement between the GVRD and the province over potential contradictions between the intentions of the *LRSP* and *Transport 2021* and the provincial agenda (*Price, Straatsma*). Against this, Harcourt and others see the road projects as necessary for future transit and private vehicle travel and believe that increasing strength of the sustainability agenda will lead to technical solutions for current problems of fossil fuel use.

Another fear, identified by Cameron in 2005, is that TransLink's structure is:

an inheritance for the Liberals [from the NDP], with all the aura of disrespectability that attaches to the work of a previous government.

This fear has proved real with the move by the provincial transport minister, in March 2007, to replace the TransLink Board with his own appointees.

So, the twisting path of transport and development politics in Greater Vancouver continues.

Summary of the key differences in actor group behaviours and outcomes in the three cities

The three narratives have identified five principal actor groups that shaped transport policy outcomes in the major periods of political contention in the three cities. These are the senior officers in the various agencies responsible for planning and operations for roads, transit and urban development; the leaders of civic action groups; and the politicians who led various reform processes.

Taking each of these actor groups in turn, the key differences in the strategies employed in the contention over transport policy, the resources each group was able to mobilise, and the outcomes they achieved in the three cities can be identified.

Road planners and builders

In Melbourne, road planners learned effective political skills in the 1950s and 1960s in order to overcome the difficulties created by its fragmented base in state government

agencies and in local government. These skills were honed by the training received in the USA and through the response to public opposition to inner-city freeways after 1969. The planners maintained solid support from business interests and built alliances with local governments and road-user groups. They built a strong institutional base in the statutory authorities in the 1970s and maintained this through the administrative reforms of the 1980s. They came to control the transport and urban planning agenda.

In Perth, provision for the car completely dominated the urban planning agenda in the 1970s and road planners were able to roll out their construction agendas with little need for sophisticated political activity. Since the 1990s, their influence in broad urban planning processes has gradually waned, as transit-based policies have gained political and public support.

Road planners never established an institutional base in either the City of Vancouver or the GVRD after the political losses in 1968 and 1972 prevented the establishment of a freeway-building program. Development and freight interests have had political support in suburban local councils and at the provincial level for freeway construction, but have been in the position of relatively weak ‘challengers’ to an environmentally oriented policy network in urban and transport planning.

Transit operators and planners

Defensive and inward-looking, transit managers in Melbourne built few alliances with political entrepreneurs or civic action groups. A range of features of the transit system, including its size, complexity and age, have been used by transit managers to build arguments in favour of their established operational and investment preferences. The technical deficiencies of transit managers are seen in many examples from the refusal of rail managers to acknowledge demographic trends during the preparation of the 1969 Plan, to the opposition to Crabb’s suggestions for passenger-oriented service planning, and the debacles of the Upfield line and the ‘scratch’ ticket. An outdated and fragmented approach to transit planning and operational practice remains in place despite repeated reform of transit management institutions. In the wider political debate, transit managers tacitly accepted the idea that Melbourne’s primary transport needs would be met by the car, and offered little leadership on alternative visions for the city. Over time, political leaders and the general public have lost confidence in the ability of transit managers to rebuild the transit system.

The improved transit performance in Perth since 1990 was achieved through a significant shift in the approach of transit managers. This began in 1983 and was the result of active engagement between transit planners and political leaders, consistent public advocacy by the leaders of the transit agency, and an internal focus on coordinated transit operations and effective management of capital projects. Changes took place largely within existing institutional structures.

Vancouver's relatively small transit system has been managed with a consistent understanding of the need for coordinated operations, even though institutional structures were changed several times. The success of this approach has helped to maintain political support for transit programs. New initiatives for expansion of the transit system have had a variety of political motivations, but consistent cooperation between transit planners and urban development planners has helped to achieve enviable outcomes in the performance of transport systems in the region.

Urban planners

Although in a much weaker position than Melbourne's road planners, urban planners in the MMBW in 1981 did raise a challenge to proposals for transit service cuts and accelerated freeway construction. The institutional base for this challenge was unintentionally lost when the administrative reforms of the ALP Government brought both transport and urban planning under much tighter ministerial control.

In Perth, planners have, in recent years, been able to build political and public support for new approaches to urban development on the operational and popular success of transit programs.

A new and unusual policy network was established in the City of Vancouver and in the GVRD after the political changes of the early 1970s. This network adopted innovative processes to advance its planning agenda. These processes demonstrated and built public and political support for environmentally oriented planning policies. The policy network had sufficient power to withstand strong challenges from the provincial government and suburban councils and re-established political support for its planning and transit agenda in the 1990s.

Civic action groups

The anti-freeway groups in Melbourne achieved some successes while they were able to present a united front against the all-encompassing 1969 Plan. After 1973, when the freeway program was recast by its proponents as a series of local construction projects, opposition was weakened through its physical location in the heartland of the electorally weak ALP, the choice of 'leftist' rhetoric and tactics, and because some activists felt that oil price rises and local political pain would prevent the Liberals from pursuing a wider freeway construction agenda beyond a few already-committed projects. Later, pro-transit groups built an effective public opposition to proposed service cuts in 1981 using a range of innovative tactics largely instigated by the transit unions.

After ALP's victory in 1982, transit union officials were given places inside the new transport agencies, but their agenda for change was limited and not substantially different from that of the managers.

The three main civic action groupings that remained engaged with transport and urban planning issues after 1982 were unable to build productive relationships with politicians or bureaucrats. The proponents of the 'cluster and connect' concept found themselves with fewer and weaker allies inside the restructured public agencies and, in any case, their agenda did not address in sufficient detail or clarity the problems of transit management in Melbourne. The PTUA leaders were more comfortable discussing the details of transit operations, and the anti-freeway groups were internally divided and lacked any obvious pathway to political influence.

When the transit reforms began to falter, there was a time when the potential may still have existed for significant policy change within the ALP. However, the various civic action groups could find neither the internal cohesion nor the tactical alliances and organising methods needed to mount an effective challenge to the established transit managers nor the roads policy network that enjoyed clear, if covert, government support and had established direct influence over transit management policy. New agendas for transit reform were established in the late 1980s, but neither these nor the objections to continuing major freeway extensions have gained any effective political backing.

The pro-transit group in Perth was of quite different character to the PTUA or the anti-freeway groups in Melbourne. FOTR built wide public support for the retention of the Fremantle line through the broad base of its activist membership and its skilful use of

orthodox techniques for community engagement. It was much less dependent on the unions for its tactical expertise and its organisational structures. After the election of the ALP, FOTR was inevitably much smaller than it had been at the height of the Fremantle campaign. However, its remaining members kept up the intensity of their activism and adapted their tactics to work successfully with the ALP and the government agencies.

Opposition to freeway plans was present through the 1970s and 1980s. It was based both in objections to the broad direction of transport policy and, more strongly, in local concerns about the location of specific construction works. Most freeway plans received political backing, but the second crossing of the Swan River was never built, chiefly because of the difficulties of finding a locally acceptable route. Later interaction between civic action groups and the transit and planning agencies created the climate in which the Roe 8 road reservation could be cancelled and new directions for planning policy could be canvassed.

In Vancouver, civic action against the freeway plans of 1968 and 1971 took place in a very wide range of social contexts. This breadth of support gave the policy challengers great political strength, and key members of these reform groups took political office in the City of Vancouver and in the emerging GVRD. Their actions shaped the policy networks that took urban planning, and later transport planning, in a new direction.

Civic action groups remained important in periodic mobilisations around various political conflicts and institutional processes. But, over time, leadership from civic action groups became less central.

Political entrepreneurs

The key reformist politician in transport in Melbourne after 1982 held a strong view in favour of the status quo in the balance between road and transit and took a very individualistic approach to policy formation and the restructuring of transport administration. His engagement with transport was short-lived but, in the process, much of the government's political capital had been expended and transit management became mired in the detail of cost-cutting exercises. In particular, the failure to reach a political settlement with transit unions over staffing cuts undermined later reform initiatives and led to a critical weakening of the government as a whole.

In Perth, the first ALP transport minister maintained his involvement in transit reform for several years and ensured that his successor understood and supported the reform

agenda. Although it was not his principal focus, Grill was able to shepherd many of the proposals of transit managers and the key civic action group through the often-fraught processes of Cabinet and Treasury. One of the important ways in which this was done was the agreement with transit unions that Grill was able to negotiate and deliver. This settlement played an important role in the maintenance of political support for new transit initiatives until they were able to achieve tangible changes in transit performance. Continuing electoral support for transit improvements has made it easier for subsequent ministers to champion further projects.

The key political entrepreneurs in Vancouver were based in local government and were engaged in the contention over transport policy for decades, going back to the strong action taken in the early 1970s to bring in many new staff in the City of Vancouver and the GVRD. They became familiar with the detail of the transit-planning agenda that was clearly articulated by the various planning agencies and were skilful enough to find opportunities in the ongoing contention over transport expenditure to ensure that the built outcomes were as close as possible to the original intentions.

Conclusion

This investigation of the differences in actor group behaviours concludes the comparative analysis of the conditions in which contention over transport policies has been played out in the three cities. The next, and final, chapter will bring all the parts of the comparative analysis together to explore the reasons for the stagnation in transit use in Melbourne that were put forward in the research hypothesis

8. Conclusions

This thesis began with the desire to understand the disappointing long-term trends in Melbourne's transit performance. This performance, despite the city's extensive rail and tram systems, did not meet the expectations of improvement raised through the statements of intent of successive governments since the 1970s. In the first stage of the analysis, it was established that transit performance trends in any city are dependent on the broad package of transport and planning policies that are pursued over the long term, and that political factors were most likely to be the determinants of these policies. So, the investigation proceeded to explore the formal and informal structures and processes of urban politics and policy formulation, particularly those within the institutions which develop and implement transport policy, to understand the reasons for observed outcomes of conflicts between the proponents of different conceptions of desirable policy in Melbourne and in other cities.

These "structures and processes" have been explored from several angles, based on the theoretical perspectives behind the 'challenge and resistance' model and on the logic of the research design, which required a search for differences between three closely matched cities – Melbourne, Perth and Vancouver – in a range of theoretically derived variables.

Important differences between the three cities have been identified in the preceding chapters. In this concluding chapter, these differences are used to present a multi-faceted explanation for Melbourne's disappointing transit performance and an assessment of the relative importance of various causal factors suggested in the research hypothesis and through the course of the investigation.

Following the presentation of this explanation, the detailed findings from the three case studies are linked back to the theoretical perspectives of Chapter 3 and the 'challenge and resistance' model. This allows a discussion of the ways in which these findings support or deny particular aspects of the general theoretical literature on policy formulation in the urban context, and of the specific theoretical and empirical approaches to the study of urban transport politics. This shows the strength of the 'challenge and resistance' model as a tool for the study of the processes of contention over transport policy.

The thesis concludes with a consideration of the implications of the research for future action to improve transit use in Melbourne, and a discussion of useful directions for future research into the conduct and outcomes of urban transport policy contention in Melbourne and elsewhere.

Explanations for Melbourne's transit performance

In Chapter 3, the conceptual 'challenge and resistance' model was formulated and used to describe variables that might create opportunities or obstacles for transport policy change. Then, differences between Melbourne and the other two cities in relation to these variables were investigated. These differences form the basis for the following discussion of the reasons for Melbourne's transport policy trajectory and its relatively poor transit performance. The discussion is organised around three main themes that relate to the various aspects of the model, starting with the area of greatest difference – the strategies and resources of actor groups who were pursuing change towards environmentally oriented transport policies.

Actor group strategies and resources

One of the most striking differences between Vancouver and Melbourne is the strength of Vancouver's urban planning policy network and its ability to maintain a reasonably consistent political and public consensus in support of its environmentally oriented agenda over more than three decades. Perth is in the process of building a policy network with a similar agenda. In Melbourne, a road-planning policy network has remained in control.

As shown clearly in Chapter 7, there were great differences between Melbourne and the other cities in the strategies and resources employed by influential actor groups in the contention over transport policy and in the struggles to reshape policy networks.

While road planners in Melbourne have achieved dominance by building their technical expertise and by developing effective political alliances, established transit managers were conspicuous at many levels for their absence or ineffectiveness in political debates and their lack of expertise in technical matters.

The process of establishing Vancouver's atypical urban planning policy network began with strong civic action. Unlike in Melbourne, many of the individuals at the centre of the Vancouver freeway conflicts were also participants in other emerging environmental

debates. This contributed to a broad framing of the reasons for opposition to the freeway that generated support across a wide range of groupings in Vancouver society. The new political leaders were drawn directly from the civic action groups and so were disposed to take decisive and to support the efforts of new appointees to senior planning positions. These planners were able to adapt modernist planning tools to build a strong rational basis for their interventions and maintained, if only narrowly, political support for the processes used to build public confidence in the new directions. In Melbourne, 'progressive' urban planners seldom had any influential political patronage and, as will be discussed below, the ALP's administrative reforms took away what little power they had through the independent status of the MMBW. A full analysis is outside the scope of this thesis, but the weakening of urban planning practice in Melbourne since the 1980s through its neglect of both rational analysis and robust processes for public consultation appear to have assisted the road-planning policy network to maintain its power.

Civic action groups made two important challenges to the road-planning policy network in Melbourne. In the first, in the early 1970s, opponents of the 1969 Transportation Plan had a base in community groups across the many suburbs through which freeway lines had been drawn. They achieved some re-drafting of the freeway planning maps and a change in government rhetoric, but they did not break up the policy network that had written the Plan. In the second challenge, in 1981, the dominant challenge group was the led by the transit unions whose background paralleled the fragmented and competing organisation of the transit authorities and whose broad policy agenda for transit reform, except on staffing levels, could be accommodated by established managers.

Since 1982, community groups that attempted to challenge the dominant road-based planning agenda or build support for a different approach to improving transit services in Melbourne have had little success. The critique of urban planning based on the 'cluster and connect' model articulated by environmentalists in the 1970s may have been useful for some planners in the MMBW. However, its proponents did not have a detailed analysis of the problems of Melbourne's transit management and so their prescriptions did not address operational issues that might then have been built into civic action group campaigns. Even those groups that have concentrated solely on transit issues have found themselves in opposition to established transit managers and

the transit unions, although the nature of this conflict may not have been fully apparent to the protagonists.

The most serious missed opportunity for external advocates for policy change was the failure to establish a presence in the right circles when new directions for transport policy were set in 1982. This would have been a difficult task, given Crabb's idiosyncratic style, but the consequences of being 'outside the tent' at this time were enormous. There is little evidence of organised attempts that failed; rather it seems that either the need was not recognised by anyone who might have been in a position to act, or, if the need was recognised, no appropriate mechanism could be found.

Other oppositional groups formed and reformed in response to particular road construction proposals that emerged through the deliberately restricted agenda for public processes established by the road-planning policy network. These groups were often riven with internal conflict and had operating styles that, in contrast to FOTR in Perth, made them unattractive to potential participants. More broadly, the Perth experience suggests that, given the huge imbalance in power, direct challenges to the road-planning policy network represented a quixotic strategy without first giving serious attention to the reform of transit management.

In the late 1980s, the PTUA was unable to build on its insightful new analysis of transport policy problems. This was largely because this new analysis did not emerge until after the ALP's opportunity to shape a reform agenda had passed.

Because the focus of this thesis is on events that took place inside the major 'windows' of political opportunity, the question of possible alternative strategies for civic action groups in Melbourne at this time has not been investigated in detail. It is possible, based on the author's experience in activist groups in Melbourne at this time, to speculate about internal factors that may have contributed to the failure to gain traction for this new analysis. These include limited resources; the difficulties in making a clear tactical choice between pursuing improvements to transit operations and opposing the emerging freeway plans that ultimately became City Link; and, perhaps, the inability of group leaders to find ways to adapt to the urban context some of the organising techniques used by successful nature conservation campaigners of the time.

In Melbourne, there was only a short period of political focus on reform of transit management. Under the leadership of the individualist Crabb and without external

pressure of the type exerted by Newman in Perth, the design and delivery of transit operations did not change sufficiently to reflect the needs of users in a modern dispersed city, and so patronage did not grow. Because there was no political settlement with the unions on the need to reduce the transit workforce, this issue ultimately consumed and defeated successive ALP transport ministers.

The comparisons made in earlier chapters between this catalogue of missed opportunities in Melbourne and the actions taken by Newman, Hicks and Grill in Perth, or by the reformist planners and politicians in Vancouver, make it clear that the strategic choices made by the different actor groups in Melbourne were vitally important to the outcomes for transit performance. However, it is likely that other factors would have made the process of transport policy change in Melbourne comparatively more difficult than in Perth or Vancouver, even if the strategies and resources of actor groups had been different.

The role of institutional structures for urban government and management of transport systems

Further explanations for Melbourne's transport policy outcomes were found through investigation of the similarities and differences in the structures for urban government and the institutions for the management of transport systems in the three cities.

In the first half of the 20th century, the public agencies responsible for delivering transit services in Melbourne were much larger than those in Perth and Vancouver, and long periods without effective accountability to either parliament or the public allowed them to become very powerful, but also, over time, they became fragmented, inward looking and defensive. With the advent of serious competition between road and transit agencies for capital in the 1960s and 1970s, Melbourne's transit agencies used their established, though diminishing, power to entrench old rivalries and out-dated thinking about operational priorities and future investment requirements for their complex and ageing systems, and so were never able to successfully challenge the roads policy network.

As noted in Chapter 4, care is needed if Melbourne's greater size compared to Perth and Vancouver is invoked to explain differences in transit performance, but it is unremarkable to assume that Melbourne's size and the complexity of the rivalries between its entrenched public agencies made changing transit policy more difficult. Agents for change in transport policy in Perth and Vancouver did not operate in such a

complex institutional environment where difficult path dependencies were at work and so, when new actors gained political and institutional power, it was easier for them to steer transport policy in new directions.

The City of Vancouver and the GVRD have provide environments that were more congenial for politicians and planning professionals wanting to build a new policy network than those found in the state governments in WA and Victoria where urban transport policy is only one of many functional responsibilities. The local and regional government institutions were able to dominate the field of professional planning and transport policy development because, by comparison, the province had no serious bureaucratic machinery for promoting urban road construction or for initiating or defending urban planning policy interventions that its politicians may have wanted to pursue.

The City of Vancouver, through its size, geography, commercial and cultural history, and aspects of its legislative base had a degree of independence from the provincial government. This independence, together with a particular combination of academics and activists who made up the TEAM electoral grouping, allowed the beginnings of a new planning policy network to be created after the defeat of the 1968 and 1971 freeway proposals. The strongest council in Melbourne – the City of Melbourne – has seldom won its political battles with the state government. Exploration of the reasons for this is beyond the scope of this thesis, but it is probably as much to a result of the way councillors have approached these conflicts as a product of the particular constitutional arrangements. In any case, in urban transport debates the MCC has been an ardent supporter of freeway-based policies.

The parallels between the structures and roles of the GVRD and the MMBW as sites for the coordination of regional policies and the delivery of technical services are interesting. In planning, the MMBW had some successes in consolidating and directing the location of urban growth in the 1960s. Since 1954, it recognised the need for different approaches to transit service planning. In the 1960s, its road planners led by Joe Delaney were more open to broader strategic thinking than were CRB under Robin Underwood. By 1981, the MMBW was openly critical of moves to cut transit services and to accelerate the freeway program. Compared with the GVRD, these tendencies in the MMBW never had the political opportunities to form the base for a strong planning policy network similar to that which had grown up in the GVRD by the 1990s.

Vancouver councillors and their suburban allies, through their positions on the ruling board, supported the GVRD staff in their first innovative forays into regional planning. The MMBW had no such steel among its commissioners, nor such leadership from its senior staff. In addition, at the point when the ALP came to power in 1982, it was a target for administrative reforms that further weakened the political position of internal supporters of environmentally oriented planning policies.

The ALP had a clear need and mandate to rein in the power of the various statutory authorities. However, in transport and urban planning, the dismantling of the MMBW and the move to departmental structures with strong ministerial and cabinet control over policy was done in a way that led to an erosion of the public accountability of policy-makers. The way that Crabb, as the ALP's first transport minister, handled the contradiction between the ALP's public policy and his own personal position on freeway construction may have provided a model for departmental staff behaviour that has become widespread in subsequent transport and planning policy development in Melbourne. Since the 1980s, public statements of government policy are regularly prepared by anonymous officials and include general expressions of intent while, inside the department, those same officials take actions that produce quite different results.

In Perth, transit policy officials had greater independence, partly due to the status of Transperth and its predecessors as statutory authorities, but also because of the expectations of the nature of relationships between politicians and members of the bureaucracy. In the research interviews, Hicks and Affleck both remarked on these expectations. Hicks says that Perth transport managers "built up a tradition of thinking outside the box", which reflected a more general approach in WA "where we find our own solutions and don't follow the eastern states".

Affleck noted:

a belief that thorough analyses of policy options and the adoption of [their] outcomes ... is an important part of government ... The way that government works here is more thoughtful ... than the way it is done in a lot of other places ... Government has been prepared to employ the people to do this work and to pay for it. They are still doing it.

Affleck believes that this approach was important to the revitalisation of the suburban public transport system. He also saw it in the way that the regional rail system was

protected from the worst impacts of the deregulation of road freight transport in the 1970s and 1980s:

A massively thorough analysis ... was done ... The outcome was...a plan [that introduced reforms] over a sufficient time that that Westrail could absorb the changes and survive ... it was given the opportunity to respond in a positive way, rather than just being massacred by the advent of sudden competition.

Governing coalitions and broad economies

A third theme found in the challenge and resistance model relates to the role of governing coalitions and the economic context in the formation of urban transport and planning policy. The research hypothesis included the possibility that the nature of governing coalitions and the influence of the various interests created by Melbourne's particular economic base may have played an important role in transport policy outcomes and in transit performance.

The broad patterns of parliamentary representation at the state level in Victoria and WA since the 1950s are quite similar. In both states, there was an upswing of popular support for progressive political agendas in the early 1970s. In Victoria, the well-established conservative governing coalition survived this period through a change of political leadership and because the ALP was particularly weak, while in WA, an ALP state government took a frail grip on power for one term from 1971 to 1974, but this resulted in little significant change in the directions of the governing coalition. So, in both Melbourne and Perth, control of urban policy from the 1950s until the early 1980s remained in conservative hands, and the road-planning agenda was dominant.

Business interests broadly supported the reformist politicians who took power in Victoria and WA in the early 1980s, but the shape of the reform of transit operations in Perth was the work of those inside government and the transport planning agencies and their civic action group supporters that. There is no suggestion from the research material that business did anything substantial to support or oppose this agenda through its positions of influence within the governing coalition.

In Vancouver, a popular mood for change was strongly evident in the early 1970s and this led to new political representation at both provincial and city level. There was sufficient support from business interests to allow a new governing coalition to be established and for important parts of a popular reform agenda to be enacted. There was

a second, reasonably stable, period of reform-oriented government in power at a provincial level and in the City of Vancouver during the 1990s. Again, as in Perth, the political, institutional and civic players shaped the transport reforms during these two periods. Vancouver also had institutional advantages in strong local government in the City and a functioning apparatus for regional cooperation on urban planning policy. Business was not required to provide essential leadership. Instead, business support grew from the opportunities created by the new agendas introduced by urban planners and their allies. For example, downtown property and retailing interests in Vancouver became supporters of transit-based planning policies after planners offered them what appeared to be a credible alternative to the freeways in 1970.

As described in Chapter 5, Melbourne's economic base is more diverse than that of either Perth or Vancouver. All three cities share an economic base in freight movement, commerce and the services sector. Melbourne has a larger, although declining, manufacturing base, and Vancouver lacks the public-service employment that the Australian cities have through their place as state capitals. While it is possible that the greater size, complexity and diversity of Melbourne's economic base did make it more difficult for a clear voice supporting transit improvements to emerge from the business community, such a voice was unlikely to exist in the absence of leadership from planners and transit operators or their political and community champions.

Does geography play a role?

Cities have an obvious spatial context, and this raises the possibility that particular characteristics of that spatial context might affect transport policy outcomes.

In Melbourne and Perth, there are few physical barriers to outward expansion of urban growth. Because its location on a flat sand-plain, Perth has had the luxury of being able to build its freeways cheaply, and, through the patterns of its early settlement and its later planning schemes has not had to face the conflicts over building new roads or railways that politicised transport planning in Melbourne after 1969. Still, the scale of Perth's linear extensions north and south along the coast have been one motivation for the rethinking of urban planning that is now in progress.

In contrast, Vancouver faces the all too obvious physical barriers of sea, mountains and scarce arable land. These factors are likely to have helped focus the minds of its decision-makers. Even so, it is not the only physically constrained city in the world. Its

institutional structures and the relevant actor group strategies again come to the fore as explanations for the ways in which the city's spatial context was dealt with.

In Melbourne, the major port facilities have been built in close proximity to the central city, while Vancouver has had the option of relocating its major freight operations from the downtown shores of Burrard Inlet to the Fraser River on the urban fringe. The virtual co-location of major destinations for freight movement and passenger travel in Melbourne made the freeway network appear attractive to a range of interest groups. However, the transport policy outcomes were determined more by the way this co-location was used by the roads policy network in shifting its justifications for new road projects depending on the audience and the political circumstances, rather than by the geographical facts themselves. Few attempts have been made in planning processes to separate freight and passenger transport needs or to seek solutions that did not lead to induced demand for private car travel as the freeways have done. As we have seen, in Vancouver during the preparation of the second LRSP, the increased costs of freight movement that flowed from the conscious policy of allowing road congestion to grow were quantified, compared to the costs of alternative scenarios, and finally adopted as an acceptable trade-off.

Avenues for change in transport policy in Melbourne

In a city as large and complex as Melbourne, transit and planning policies and operational cultures for public bodies of the kinds found in Perth or Vancouver need to be fostered by appropriate institutional structures, as well as being modelled by leading actors. Structures that impose greater public accountability on policy-makers than those that have existed in Melbourne since 1982 appear necessary for the development and implementation of coherent transport policy.

Vancouver provides an example of a more successful structure for urban government and the management of transport systems, of which the key features appear to be:

- A local government entity (in this case, the City of Vancouver) of sufficient size and sophistication to assert and maintain political independence from higher levels of government and to provide leadership for the smaller suburban councils
- a forum for regional cooperation among local governments which has primary responsibility for urban planning policy

- institutions for the management of transport systems that have some independence from direct political control.

Clearly, institutional structures with these characteristics cannot guarantee the actions of the individuals who work within them, nor the processes and policies that are adopted. In drawing conclusions from this research about the needs for reform of Melbourne's institutions, it would be wrong to argue that no improvement in transit performance is possible without massive changes to the structures and powers of local government or the creation of a new tier of regional government. However, there are two useful institutional reforms whose implementation is much more within the bounds of probability.

First, a new statutory authority for transit planning is, in the context of Melbourne's institutional and political history, an idea that could be easily grasped by the public and by professionals. With the right support, its creation could be sufficiently unthreatening to the power base of state politicians for there to be a realistic chance of implementation. It would have the potential to make a noticeable difference to transit performance if it had a political champion in government, and if it had clear objectives, the independence to enable it to participate freely in public debate, and the professional competence to do this transparently and without defensiveness.

Second, a new forum for debate and development of urban planning policy would face greater obstacles to implementation, but there is growing recognition of its need, and a worsening of urban environmental, social and economic conditions may change the climate for acceptance of such a proposal.

In that absence of these changes, the hopes for modification of current transport policy and for subsequent improvements in transit performance must rest on changes in the strategies of actor groups operating within existing institutions. Perhaps one of the most important might be a greater assertion of the power and influence that is available to local governments even under current structural arrangements.

Reviewing the basis for the 'challenge and resistance' model

It has now been established that a robust explanation for Melbourne's lasting commitment to road-based transport policies, and therefore, of its disappointing transit performance can be found in the behaviour of key actor groups inside the city's fragmented institutional environment. So, it is appropriate to return to the conceptual

‘challenge and resistance’ model from Chapter 3 to determine whether the findings of the research might require rethinking of theoretical perspectives that supported its development. This will be done by looking in turn at five aspects of the policy process that were identified in ‘challenge and resistance’ model as key factors in shaping the trajectory of urban transport policy in a particular city.

In summary, these factors were:

- the need for change in the membership of governing coalitions and the difficulty of achieving such change
- the significance of business interests in a governing coalition
- variation in structures of government responsibility
- historical patterns of transport investment and urban development
- political and institutional responses to crises in the legitimacy of existing urban transport policy.

It is not possible to completely disentangle the impact of the various theoretical perspectives discussed in Chapter 3 on the formulation of the ‘challenge and resistance’ model. However, in order to facilitate the discussion of the theoretical implications of the research findings, somewhat artificial distinctions will be made between the different theoretical approaches. The discussion begins by returning to the theoretical debate over the relative influence on urban policy directions of economic structure versus political agency.

Regime theory, governing coalitions and the difficulties faced by ‘challengers’

The research findings provide clear endorsement of the need to pay attention to processes of political agency that is recognised in theoretical arguments, such as those of Giddens (1984), and in the more empirically based work of Stone (1989) that underpins the insights of regime theory into the ways that economic forces are mediated through local political activity. A number of aspects of the regime theory approach to understanding processes of urban politics influenced the formulation of the ‘challenge and resistance’ model and their validity is largely confirmed by the research.

At the broadest level, the establishment of a ‘progressive’ governing coalition in Vancouver in the 1970s and the continuation of more conventional growth-oriented

regimes in Melbourne and Perth fit with the Walton's (1990) review of the characteristics of cities that had made progressive responses to global economic pressures. The active participation of civic action groups in politics in Vancouver, the region's relative economic and political independence, and the degree of intergovernmental cooperation are all examples of the factors that Walton identified as correlates to 'progressive' outcomes. By contrast, political centralisation and the dominance of economic ideologies, both characteristics of the politics of Melbourne and Perth, were found by Walton to be negative correlates to progressive outcomes. Even Perth's incremental improvements to transport policy can be seen to fit Walton's model. According to the correlations quoted by Walton, Perth's geographic isolation from the rest of the country would make progressive outcomes more likely.

Stone identified agreement on purpose and the availability of sufficient rewards and punishments, both individual and collective, as the principle mechanisms for the formation and maintenance of the informal bonds that sustain a governing coalition in the face of on-going oppositional movements. Stoker and Mossberger (1994) refined this perspective by focussing on the use of culture and symbols in the processes of assertion of shared purposes at times when a regime is under sustained pressure. In Transport and urban planning policies were used as part of the unifying discourse on direction and purpose that sustained the governing coalitions in Melbourne and Vancouver. In Melbourne, the freeways became symbols of the governing coalition's agenda of economic growth and wealth creation; while in Vancouver, SkyTrain and the downtown high-rises represented progress towards the 'livable region'.

The observations of regime theorists in relation to the difficulties faced by challenge groups are also confirmed by the research. Challengers could not counter the power of freeways in Melbourne as a symbol for economic progress. Another problem, predicted by regime theorists, was the difficulty of building sufficient support for the task of re-orienting urban planning and transport policy towards containment and transit. This was a much bigger 'purpose' than the construction of a series of freeway projects for which the justifications were carefully limited to measures such as the economic benefits of improved local traffic flows. Further, as Keating (1991) noted, limited access to resources is a problem for challenger groups and one which was certainly relevant in Melbourne. In Vancouver, on the other hand, it was the pro-road suburban developers who found themselves without access to institutional resources.

Only a few previous researchers have explicitly used regime theory to explore urban transport politics. Docherty (2000) used Stoker and Mossberger's (1994) typology of urban regime types in his investigation of difference in the transport policies of regional governments in two case studies from the UK. He found that, although both regimes supported transit investment, the form of this investment differed markedly in line with the purposes around which each regime was organised: one favoured symbolic projects, such as an airport rail link, while the other was geared to more tangible economic returns. In the current research, variation in transit priorities based on differences in the purposes around which competing groups were organised was clearly seen in Vancouver in the conflict over SkyTrain in the 1980s. However, the success of particular transit projects in relation to objective environmental or social measures also relates closely to the detail of project design, and so the skills of the transit planning professionals and their relationship with regime leaders is at least as important as a regime's organising purpose in determining the ultimate outcomes.

Bratzel (1999) is another researcher who has used regime theory in shaping his analysis of relatively successful moves towards environmentally oriented transport policies in some European cities. His observations of the importance of the establishment of new governing coalitions in cities that have made a shift from road-based to environmentally oriented transport policies through "social crises and impressive political mandates" (p. 177) were central to the formulation of the 'challenge and resistance' model. In the current research, the Vancouver case study fits Bratzel's model closely, although the period over which decisive political decisions were taken was slightly longer than was the case in Bratzel's cities. In Perth, the incremental progress towards transport policy change does suggest that other paths, besides those argued by Bratzel, might be possible. However, the questions raised by these factors are more relevant to the use of the concept of policy networks in the 'challenge and resistance' model than they are to the use of regime theory, and so will be dealt with later.

For regime theory, which operates at a broader level, the research findings confirm the difficulty of forming a governing coalition around a new purpose. In the case study cities, a very strong civic challenge to established transport policy was a necessary, although not sufficient, condition for re-orientation of transport policies around improvements to transit

The significance of business interests to the transport policies of a governing coalition

As would be expected, business interests held influential positions in governing coalitions in all three cities examined in this research. At the crucial times when windows of opportunity appeared in relation to transport policy change, shifts in the party political allegiances of some business interests occurred that allowed new governing coalitions to come to power, and these power shifts, in turn, allowed various transport and planning reforms to be enacted.

However, in Vancouver and Perth, where new directions in transport policies were taken, these changes were made through the work of politicians, professionals and civic action group leaders. Their leadership was the key to winning support from business leaders, not the reverse. Hicks' comment that, in Perth, he was asking people "to suspend disbelief" while he attempted to rebuild the transit system is a good illustration of this point. The same was the case in Vancouver: the shift among property developers towards support for transit projects began after the GVRD and the transit operator prepared proposals for new transit infrastructure in 1970.

Part of the research hypothesis was that:

The complexities of competing (business) interests within successive governing coalitions in Melbourne may have made it more difficult for political entrepreneurs to sustain arguments for change in transport policy and to assemble support during 'windows of opportunity' for change.

The evidence, however, tends to support the regime theorists like Stoker and Mossberger who give greater weight to the place of professionals, especially in governing coalitions in cities outside the US, and Leo (1998) who emphasises the importance of the role of other civic actors in the workings of 'progressive' governing coalitions.

Variation in structures of government responsibility

The research results, particularly those from the Vancouver case study, have shown how competition between overlapping jurisdictions and the fragmentation of functional responsibilities of government institutions shapes policy outcomes. The structures that operate in a particular city or region can shape the range of strategic and tactical options open to those who are attempting to bring about policy change. And, by bringing the analysis of change in transport policy in Perth and Vancouver together with the

evidence from Bratzel's study of European cities, it is clear that significant change is possible in a variety of structural and institutional patterns of urban governance and transport management.

The centralisation of control over urban policy and resource distribution held by the Victoria state government, and its structural dominance over weak local governments in Melbourne, were hypothesised reasons for the lack of success of transport policy challengers. The case study of Vancouver, where the distribution of functions and responsibilities is much more mixed provides some confirmation of the speculation that a greater balance between overlapping jurisdictions tends to create conditions that give challengers to established transport and planning policy more chance of success. It is certainly true that supporters of the environmentally oriented transport policy package were able to build an institutional base in the GVRD and at the City of Vancouver that survived when their opponents held sway at the provincial level. However, the experience in Perth, where structures of urban governance are broadly the same as those in Melbourne, suggests that actor group behaviours are ultimately more important than the structures of the institutions of urban governance in transport policy outcomes.

The research also sheds some oblique light on the broader theoretical debates over what level of government is the most appropriate for different functions or responsibilities.

A normative conception of federal structures, called subsidiarity, favours:

wherever possible, powers [being] given to the least aggregated level of government; only when a particular task cannot be undertaken adequately by a 'low' level of government will it be handed 'up' to a higher level (McLean and McMillan 2003).

Subsidiarity has its origins in Catholic social theory, and its use as a quasi-constitutional concept in some federal political systems is more recent. Particularly in the European Union, it provides a rationale for the allocation of powers between various levels of government (Keating 1998).

The case studies in this research show that most environmentally oriented transport policies emerged in the city where a greater degree of responsibility for transport policies rests with local or regional levels of government. This gives some comfort to supporters of the subsidiarity principle.

Historical patterns of transport investment and urban development

It is clear from the research that very strong path dependencies, as conceptualised by Woodlief (1998), were at work in Melbourne and contribute to the city's suboptimal urban transport policies. These path dependencies include both material factors such as historical investment decisions, and intellectual and behavioural factors that established particular patterns of problem definition and ideas about potential solutions within institutions. So, it is not surprising that Melbourne provides much of the case study material for the analytic work on transport policy formation that relies most strongly on path dependence to explain negative outcomes (Low et al. 2003, 2005).

However, if the purpose of research is to direct attention to the most important factors in achieving transport policy change, then the analysis of path dependencies has some limitations. It is useful in understanding the extent of obstacles to change, but as Woodlief himself acknowledges (1998, p. 431) it is the skills of political entrepreneurs that will determine whether established paths of thought and of material investment can be changed, and understandings of this question are best developed through other analytical frameworks.

Melbourne's path dependencies, both historical and intellectual, are important obstacles to change, but the way that reform processes were driven in the other cities suggests that overcoming the intellectual barriers is the most important challenge. Whatever physical or practical obstacles exist, no city will be able to reform its transport systems without leadership that can take a long view and build wide support in order to take some measure of political power. It will need to articulate the necessity for change, demonstrate the practicality of alternative transport policies, and develop the technical competence necessary to deliver them.

Building political and institutional challenges: the conditions for changing urban transport policy

Two theoretical concepts that relate to the processes of policy formulation and implementation were especially useful in this research.

The first is the policy network. This is the "capillary system through which things get done" (Considine 2005) among the tight group of civil servants, legislators and interest

group leaders who have long-term involvement with a particular policy sector, and is seen by Rhodes and Marsh (1992) and others as the principal site of resistance to policy change.

The theoretical understanding of the strength of resistance to change that can be exerted by established policy networks are supported by this research, both in the case of the road-planning network in Melbourne and in the urban-planning network in Vancouver after the 1970s. In none of the case study cities was a well-established policy network directly challenged and defeated. In Vancouver, although the anti-freeway forces were unusually well organised, the early road proponents were not as strong as their counterparts in other cities. The Vancouver road proponents never established the institutional momentum provided by the freeway construction programs that helped to entrench roads-planning policy networks in Perth and Melbourne. In Perth, the incremental successes of the transit managers have created an alternative policy network to the road planners, but road proponents never had to use sophisticated political strategies to achieve their objectives, and the process of reformulating the city's long-term urban development directions around significant reductions in car-dependency is only just beginning.

The second useful theoretical concept from the policy process literature centres on ideas of political opportunity and descriptions of the conditions under which it is more likely that attempts to overcome resistance to policy change will succeed.

Sabatier (1999) saw opportunities for change emerging when political entrepreneurs are able to bring new problem definitions and policy solutions into the political process. As mentioned earlier, Bratzel (1999) found that a common feature of transport policy change in his empirical sample was a political crisis in relation to transport policy that was resolved through moves to a new governing coalition with an impressive political mandates for change. For policy-network analysis, the subsequent phases observed by Bratzel are, perhaps, more interesting. He noted changes in the occupancy of key political and bureaucratic positions, and saw that political support for these new policy network leaders was maintained over a sufficiently long period to overcome resistance to the introduction of new practices.

Consistent with Bratzel's observations, there was a very strong civic challenge in Perth to the plans to close the Fremantle line. Without such a public 'crisis', it is unlikely that Burke and Grill would have had sufficient motivation to create the political

opportunities for new transit policies. However, there was no rapid or wholesale change in the bureaucracy in Perth as there was in Vancouver or in Bratzel's cities. Changes in personnel did occur, but over a longer period. Some key individuals remained in powerful positions but, over several years, their policy perspectives shifted in a fundamental way. Both Jenkins-Smith (1991) and Stewart (1991) remind us to be suspicious of the depth of shifts in policy position in such circumstances: their observations show that such changes can, at times, represent only strategic positioning in the face of new political circumstances.

Some aspects of the Perth case might explain its trajectory without undermining the validity of the general conclusions drawn from Bratzel and the other authors with a more theoretical focus. Perth's transit system in the 1980s was so small that reform could take place away from the political spotlight. The process of renewing the transit system did not directly threaten road construction programs and so there was no organised opposition to transit reform from the road-based transport policy network. However, the unusual climate for reform and policy analysis established within the Burke government did force the various protagonists in the transit reform debate to engage in ways that researchers like Sabatier (1991) have observed is most compatible to policy-oriented learning and change. Key issues of transit reform (such as electrification versus diesel railcars, or bus rapid transit versus rail in the northern suburbs) were technically tractable. The protagonists were forced by political circumstance to resolve these issues in professionalised forums for which they were temperamentally and intellectually well suited. Simply, an unusual constellation of events and personalities shaped Perth's transit reforms.

Future directions for research

The 'challenge and resistance' model, as it was described in chapter 3, has proved to be a robust tool for this investigation, and it should prove useful in attempts to understand the transport policy paths of other cities. It recognises that, in general, policy development is the outcome of long-lasting contention between prescriptions based on different views of the world, rather than a gradual accretion of new policy learning. The model directs analytic attention to two important sites of resistance to policy change: the broad level of the governing coalition of an urban region; and the smaller, but equally impervious, policy network. Strong as these sites are, policy change does occur. The model describes the circumstances in which opportunities for such change might exist,

and focuses on the behaviours of political actors that are most likely to turn these opportunities into lasting change in policy.

It is hoped that this research will encourage further study of the particular strategies and tactics that are available to policy actors in any city that is attempting to reform or improve its transport systems. In some cities, it may be valuable to use similar research techniques to those used in this study to reflect on what positive institutional and behavioural change has been achieved in transport policy networks in the past and to determine how these can be protected and strengthened in the future.

In other cities, like Melbourne, where the policies of automobility remain strongly entrenched, new research will be needed to understand what techniques might be effective in the face of modern political realities. The basic principles of the ‘challenge and resistance’ model are likely to remain central to future processes of change, but the specific political context will be different. Crucial reforms to transport policies began in Vancouver in the late 1960s and in Perth in the late 1970s, and it is apparent that political and social conditions specific to those times were partly responsible for these changes. What strategies and tactics are appropriate for actors in current political conditions?

It would be valuable to complement the understandings gained through this research with investigations of cities where challenges to entrenched automobility are in their infancy. The new transit management structures that have been put in place in Brisbane in recent years suggest that this city is one in which in-depth research into the actions of key political and institutional figures could be important.

This thesis has identified that transit performance can be improved in a variety of institutional settings, although the importance of regional transit authorities and strong local government involvement identified by other researchers has been confirmed.

The value of urban planning as a professional approach to the resolution of serious environmental and social problems has been reasserted through this exploration of the Vancouver example, and more research that can help to strengthen understanding of the ways that this was achieved may prove invaluable.

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Appendix: Interview subjects

Melbourne

<i>Name</i>	<i>Primary role in urban transport politics</i>	<i>Current role, if any</i>	<i>Interview date</i>
John Alford	Employed by the Australian Railways Union in the late 1970's and a key organiser of the campaign against the rail service cuts proposed in 1980. As a union representative, he worked in the new transport planning agencies established by the ALP after its election victory in 1983.	Public policy academic	1 March 2006
John Andrews	Set up a group called <i>Environmentalists for Full Employment</i> in the 1970s and was contracted by the ARU in 1980 to document the wider social benefits of maintaining freight services on rail. He represented the union in transit planning processes during the later period of the Cain government, and was part of the union team that negotiated workforce reductions with the Liberal Transport Minister Alan Brown after 1992	None	11 November 2005
John Cain	ALP Premier of Victoria from 1983 to 1990. Shadow Minister for Planning during the freeway conflicts of the late 1970s.	Retired	10 March 2006
Steve Crabb	Transport Minister during the ALP's first term as State government from 1983. He had been Shadow Minister for Transport for several years before this, and was a member of the ALP Right faction and part of the parliamentary leadership group.	Retired	31 January 2006
Jo Connellan	A member of various civic action groups in the 1980s and 1990s that were attempting to prevent the implementation of government freeway plans.	Local councillor	23 June 2005
Joe Delaney	A road engineer and town-planner with the MMBW and the CRB before becoming technical director of the Melbourne Transport Study in 1963. He moved to the Commonwealth Bureau of Roads in 1966.	Retired	16 May 2006
*Sven Eriksson	A road planner in the CRB and its successors from 1969 until 1993.	Retired	20 February 2006

<i>Name</i>	<i>Primary role in urban transport politics</i>	<i>Current role, if any</i>	<i>Interview date</i>
Bob Evans	A road planner, initially with the MMBW and the CRB, he moved to the new Transport Department in 1983 as a senior strategic planner. Oversaw public consultation and planning for projects many large road projects during the 1980s and 1990s.	Consultant	24 August 2006
John Grigg	A civil engineer, he started work with the MMTB in 1953 and did postgraduate studies in traffic engineering at Yale in 1956. He became a senior suburban railways operations manager in the ALP's new transit agency in 1983.	Retired	31 May 2006
Kevin Healy	An inner-city ALP councillor during the freeway conflicts of the 1970s; a member of many anti-freeway civic action groups; and a member of the board of the ALP's new transit management agency in 1982.	Local activist	16 June 2006
Rob Jolly	ALP State Treasurer, from 1982 to 1990.	None	5 December 2005
Ken Ogden	An academic civil engineer at Monash University for 27 years from 1970 and a supporter of Melbourne's road-based transport plans. Seconded to write the Liberal government's <i>Transporting Melbourne</i> policy in 1995. Moved to road lobby group, the RACV, as public policy manager in 1996.	Retired	13 June 2006
† Ivan Powell	Active in the North Melbourne residents group in the early 1970s, where he was influenced by the ideas of Ruth and Maurie Crow. A Melbourne City Councillor from 1975 to 1980, and later a leader of the transit users lobby groups from 1980 to 1984.	None	7 October 2007
Barry Pullen	An inner-city resident in the early 1970s, he joined civic action groups opposing government 'slum clearance' and freeway plans. Through this, he joined the ALP and was elected to local government. In 1983, he became a State MP and was minister for both housing and the environment at different times before the ALP's election loss in 1992.	Retired	15 December 2005

<i>Name</i>	<i>Primary role in urban transport politics</i>	<i>Current role, if any</i>	<i>Interview date</i>
Bill Russell	Senior public servant who led reform of state government energy authorities after 1982. In 1991, he chaired a review of transit alternatives to freeway construction in suburban Melbourne. Later, he has worked as an academic with an interest in public policy and governance, and has led several other reviews of government transport programs.	Public policy academic with interest in transport; advocate	15 July 2005
Chips Sowerwine	An American academic who had been part of urban action groups in San Francisco and Paris, he came to Melbourne in the early 1970s and was a member of transit user groups from the late 1970s until 1984.	None	17 October 2007
John Stanley	A transport economist who advised ALP Transport Ministers during the 1980s.	Head of the private bus operators' industry association.	30 June 2005
Jim Stevenson	Trained as a road planner and engineer, he has held numerous positions in transit planning and management in State government agencies.	Retired	22 February 2006
† Neville Wale	Planner at the Town & Country Planning Board from 1966. He worked in the MMBW Planning Office Research Group in 1971 and in state planning agencies until 1992.	Retired	5 October 2007

* - part of group interview with six retired road planners

† - interviews conducted by phone

Perth

<i>Name</i>	<i>Primary role in urban transport politics</i>	<i>Current role, if any</i>	<i>Interview date</i>
Fred Affleck	Policy analyst and academic specialising in Australian freight rail reform. Currently, he is head of PATREC (the Planning and Transport Research Centre) – a collaborative project of four Perth universities.	Academic	5 August 2005
Tony Costa	Suburban stationmaster active in the civic action against the closure of the Fremantle rail line. Later, he was Mayor of small inner-city suburb of Subiaco.	Stationmaster	4 August 2005
Julian Grill	An influential figure in the State ALP, he was Transport Minister from 1983 to 1986.	Consultant outside transport politics	12 October 2006
Rick Grounds	An environmental activist in the late 1970s, he became a key figure in the Friends of the Railways campaign to keep open the Fremantle rail line.	None	24 January 2006
Stuart Hicks	A transport planner who was part of the ‘roads consensus’ in the 1970s, but later became an influential figure in the re-building of the Perth transit system. He was head of the MTT in the 1980s and later the state’s chief transport planner.	Consultant	3 August 2005
† William McDougall	Consultant transport planner: author of 1988 report supporting busway for Perth’s northern suburbs	Consultant transport planner in Melbourne	29 July 2005
Peter Newman	A planning academic and Fremantle councillor at the time of the proposed closure of the Fremantle rail line. He has built a local and international career as an academic and commentator on the importance of good transit for healthy cities. Also very active in transport politics in Perth as a ministerial advisor and consultant.	Academic and activist	1 August 2005
Hugo Wildermuth	A transit planner in Perth since the 1970s, he is a strong advocate of bus-based rapid transit systems.	Transit planner	4 August 2005
Peter Woodward	A road planner who has worked in Perth since the 1970s. Later, he was president of the local motorists’ lobby group, the RACWA.	Retired	3 August 2005

Vancouver

<i>Name</i>	<i>Primary role in urban transport politics</i>	<i>Current role, if any</i>	<i>Interview date</i>
† David Cadman	Worked for the GVRD as a planner during the early years of the LRSP process. Later, he was a Vancouver City councillor representing COPE.	Councillor	12 September 2005
Ken Cameron	Head of planning at the GVRD during the development of the LRSP and <i>Transport 2021</i> in the 1990s.	Public servant	22 September 2005
† Patrick Condon	Activist and urban design academic at UBC since the early 1990s.	Academic	30 March 2007
Mike Harcourt	A lawyer employed to represent the eastside Chinese community during the freeway conflicts of the 1960s. Later, he was a Vancouver City councillor who served as mayor from 1981 to 1986, and was NDP Premier of BC from 1991 to 1996.	Consultant and commentator	15 September 2005
Glen Leicester	A senior transit planner at BC Transit and TransLink.	Transit planner	9 September 2005
Doug MacCallum	Conservative Mayor of the suburban city of Surrey from 1996 to 2005, and Chair of the GVRD in the early years of TransLink.	Unknown	21 September 2005
Gordon Price	Pro-transit activist who served six terms on the Vancouver City Council in the 1990s representing the NPA.	Academic and activist	8 September 2005
George Puil	A Vancouver City Councillor representing the NPA from the 1980s to 2002, he was a key negotiator of the new structure for transport management that became TransLink.	Retired	20 September 2005
Michael Rochleau	Head of the Canadian Union of Transit Associations, based in Toronto.	Remains in that position	4 October 2005
Ray Straatsma	Pro-transit activist with several civic action groups from the late 1990s.	Activist	12 September 2005