



2ND ANNUAL
SIR IAN TURBOTT
LECTURE

Address By

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**DAVID BRAGDON
SIR IAN TURBOTT LECTURE
PENRITH NSW AUSTRALIA
15 JUNE 2004**

THANK YOU FOR WELCOMING ME TO PENRITH. I HAVE ENJOYED GETTING TO KNOW THE SYDNEY REGION SOMEWHAT OVER THE PAST WEEK, BUT AS IS SO OFTEN THE CASE, ONE DOESN'T REALLY GET TO KNOW A PLACE UNTIL ONE LEAVES IT. SO I HAVE TO SAY I REALLY GOT TO KNOW PENRITH BY LEAVING IT – SOME OF YOU MAY KNOW THAT AFTER SPENDING A COUPLE DAYS HERE LAST WEEK I TOOK THE INDIAN-PACIFIC TRAIN TO PERTH. INCIDENTALLY, I HAVE FOUND THAT FEW AUSTRALIANS HAVE RIDDEN THE TRAIN FROM SYDNEY TO PERTH SO LET ME RECOMEND IT.

ANYWAY, STANDING AT THE PENRITH RAILWAY STATION, I LOOKED TO THE NORTH OF THE TRACKS AND SAW THE DISUSED MILITARY BASE TO THE NORTH, JUST ADJOINING THE STATION AND THE DOWNTOWN. AND IT OCCURRED TO ME THAT WHAT COULD HAPPEN ON THAT SITE WILL HELP TO DEFINE NOT ONLY PENRITH, BUT PENRITH'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE REGION IN THE YEARS TO COME, CONVENIENT AS THE SITE IS TO THE RAIL LINE. WILL IT BE AN EXCITING COMPLEMENT TO YOUR CENTRAL DISTRICT, BUT WITH ADDITIONAL MIXTURES OF HOUSING AND NEW JOBS? HOW YOU MAKE THOSE CHOICES WILL BE IMPORTANT.

IT WAS AFTER I BOARDED THE INDIAN-PACIFIC THAT I UNDERSTOOD YOUR PLACE IN THE NATURAL WORLD. AS YOU MAY KNOW THE TRAIN PULLS OUT FROM CENTRAL TERMINAL IN SYDNEY, HEADING WEST AT THE START OF ITS 4000 KILOMETER TREK, AND FOR THE FIRST HOUR AND A HALF IT PASSES THROUGH THE SUBURBS OF SYDNEY – UNTIL IT PASSES THROUGH PENRITH AND CROSSES THE NEPEAN RIVER. AND AS SOON AS

IT CROSSES THAT RIVER, THE PASSENGERS ALL SENSE THAT THE TRANSCONTINENTAL TRIP HAS TRULY STARTED. AS THE TRAIN CLIMBS THE BLUE MOUNTAINS – JUST MINUTES FROM PENRITH – THERE IS THE SENSATION OF HAVING LEFT THE URBAN AREA.

SO THOSE WERE THE FIRST TWO VISIONS I HAD ABOUT YOUR PLACE IN THE REGION: ONE, THE POTENTIAL OF AN EXCITING URBAN PLACE IN YOUR CORE ON THE ABANDONED MILITARY SITE, AND TWO, YOUR PROXIMITY TO NATURE, IN THE FORM OF THOSE MOUNTAINS, TREES, AND THE RIVER. BUILT ENVIRONMENT OR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT – AND HOW YOU RELATE TO THEM – ARE BOTH PARTS OF REGIONAL PLANNING AND COMMUNITY PLANNING.

IN RETURN FOR YOU HAVING INTRODUCED ME TO PENRITH, I WOULD LIKE TO INTRODUCE YOU TO MY COMMUNITY, THE PORTLAND REGION. BUT JUST TO INCREASE THE NOVELTY, I WANT YOU TO PRETEND TO ARRIVE IN MY REGION NOT AS AUSTRALIAN POLICY-MAKERS AND SCHOLARS, BUT IN TWO DIFFERENT GUISES. NAMELY, FIRST, I AM GOING TO ASK YOU TO IMAGINE THAT YOU ARE JAPANESE BUSINESS PEOPLE. THEN I WILL ASK YOU TO PRETEND YOU ARE....FISH. (THAT’S RIGHT: FISH.)

FIRST I WANT TO INTRODUCE YOU TO OUR REGION AS IF YOU WERE THE SITE-SELECTION TEAM FOR A JAPANESE HIGH TECHNOLOGY MANUFACTURER. YOU COULD FIND YOUR WAY TO US ON A NON-STOP FLIGHT FROM TOKYO TO PORTLAND, A ROUTE THAT WOULD BRING PRECISION TO YOUR AWARENESS THAT WE ARE SOMEWHERE SOUTH OF VANCOUVER AND NORTH OF CALIFORNIA. (BY THE WAY, YOU WOULD BE AHEAD OF MOST AMERICANS IN KNOWING THAT – I HAVE FOUND THAT YOUR AVERAGE CITIZEN’S KNOWLEDGE OF GEOGRAPHY IS SUPERIOR TO THE AVERAGE AMERICAN’S.) NOW, ON THE GROUND, YOUR GEOGRAPHY MAY BE SLIGHTLY MORE HONED, BUT YOU ARE NOT GOING TO LET IT GET

TOO NARROW – BECAUSE YOUR REAL ESTATE BROKERS, BEING ASTUTE, ARE NOT GOING TO CONFINE YOUR SITE SEARCH TO THE CITY LIMITS OF PORTLAND PROPER, ARE THEY?

OVER TWO-THIRDS OF THE 1.3 MILLION RESIDENTS AND 100,000 HECTARES OF OUR REGION ARE OUTSIDE THE PORTLAND CITY LIMITS, BUT STILL WITHIN OUR URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY. THERE ARE 29 CITIES, SOME OF THEM WITH ONLY A FEW HUNDRED RESIDENTS, SOME UP TO 90,000 RESIDENTS.

I SHOULD ADD THAT THE NOTION OF INCORPORATED “CITIES” IS DIFFERENT IN THE AMERICAN CONTEXT THAN IN YOUR OWN. LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ARE FAR MORE POWERFUL IN OUR SYSTEM THAN IN YOURS, AND STATE GOVERNMENTS ARE CORRESPONDINGLY LESS POWERFUL IN OURS THAN IN YOURS. MANY OF OUR CITIES PROVIDE SERVICES THAT YOU DEEM STATE CONCERNS, LIKE LAW ENFORCEMENT, BUILDING CODES, AND EDUCATION. CHANCES ARE YOU HAVEN’T EVEN HEARD OF MOST OF THE OTHER TOWNS AROUND PORTLAND AT ALL, BUT ONE MAY BE RIGHT FOR THE FACTORY YOU ARE THINKING OF BUILDING. (FIVE OF THOSE CITIES ARE NOT EVEN IN OREGON, BUT IN WASHINGTON STATE ACROSS THE COLUMBIA RIVER.)

MOST OF THE SIGNIFICANT FACTORS YOU’RE CONCERNED ABOUT, AS THAT INTERNATIONAL INVESTOR, ARE INDIFFERENT TO THE JURISDICTIONAL LINES BETWEEN THOSE MUNICIPALITIES: WHETHER YOU’RE IN GRESHAM, JUST EAST OF PORTLAND, OR IN BEAVERTON, JUST WEST OF PORTLAND, YOU WOULD BE DEALING WITH ONE LABOR MARKET, WHERE WAGE AND SKILL LEVELS ARE FAIRLY UNIFORM – JUST AS I IMAGINE THERE’S A POOL OF WORKERS GENERALLY COMMON TO WESTERN SYDNEY – WHETHER INDIVIDUALS LIVE IN PENRITH OR CAMPBELLTOWN OR BANKSTOWN THEY ARE PART OF ONE LABOR

MARKET. AS THAT INVESTOR, YOU ARE NOT THINKING OF INVESTING IN ONE OF THOSE CITIES – YOU ARE FIRST AND FOREMOST THINKING OF INVESTING IN THAT REGION. YOU SEE A UTILITY GRID WHERE ELECTRICITY AND WATER AND GAS RATES DO NOT VARY GREATLY ACROSS THE REGION. TO SHIP YOUR PRODUCTS, YOU EXPECT A FREIGHT DISTRIBUTION NETWORK THAT EXTENDS FROM THE DOCKS AND AIRPORT AT THE CENTER OF THE REGION TO ALL THE INDUSTRIAL PRECINCTS OF THE SUBURBS.

AS THAT MODERN INVESTOR, YOU PROBABLY DON'T SEE MUCH VALUE IN THE ARTIFICIAL BOUNDARIES AMONG JURISDICTIONS WITHIN A METROPOLITAN REGION, PARTICULARLY OUR COUNTY BOUNDARIES WHICH WERE DRAWN IN 1854, THE YEAR BEFORE THE TELEGRAPH WAS INTRODUCED TO OREGON TERRITORY.

AS THAT JAPANESE SITE SELECTION TEAM, IN YOUR FINAL ANALYSIS YOU WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE CHOOSING AMONG THE 29 CITIES IN OUR REGION – RATHER, YOU WOULD BE CHOOSING BETWEEN THEM, ON THE ONE HAND, AND THE CONSTITUENT CITIES OF SOME OTHER METROPOLITAN REGION SOMEPLACE ELSE, ON THE OTHER HAND – PERHAPS THE REGION AROUND THE UNIVERSITIES OF NORTH CAROLINA OR PERHAPS THE REGION NESTLED AT THE FOOT OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS OF AUSTRALIA.

NOW, COME BE INTRODUCED TO THE PORTLAND REGION AGAIN. THIS TIME, THOUGH, IMAGINE YOU ARE A CHINOOK SALMON, RETURNING FROM THE PACIFIC OCEAN, SWIMMING UP THE COLUMBIA AND WILLAMETTE RIVERS, TO TRIBUTARIES IN THE CASCADE MOUNTAINS. YOU FIND THE SURFACE OF THE COLUMBIA PHYSICALLY UNMARKED BY THE STATE BOUNDARY BETWEEN OREGON AND WASHINGTON, A LINE WHICH HUMANS HAVE CHOSEN TO DELINEATE ON MAPS SINCE 1889, BUT

WHICH SALMON HAVE YET TO RECOGNIZE. YOUR SALMON-BRAIN WOULD FIND THE TRIBUTARIES SIMILARLY UNMARKED BY CITY AND COUNTY BOUNDARIES, AS IMPORTANT AS POLITICIANS SEEM TO FIND THEM. YOU MIGHT WONDER WHY THE WATERSHED SEEMS TO BE PROTECTED BY INCONSISTENT STANDARDS, WITH BANK ENCROACHMENT AND POLLUTION ALLOWED MORE IN SOME AREAS THAN IN OTHERS. PERHAPS BECAUSE YOUR SALMON-BRAIN HAS NOT HAD A POLITICAL SCIENCE CLASS, YOU DON'T REALIZE THAT POLITICAL FRAGMENTATION ON THE LAND HAS SOMEHOW ALLOWED A LACK OF CONTINUITY IN PROTECTION OF YOUR WATER – BECAUSE POLITICAL JURISDICTIONS ARE NOT USUALLY DRAWN ALONG WATERSHED LINES. AS FOLKSINGER TOM LEHRER SANG IN THE COFFEE SHOPS OF SAN FRANCISCO IN THE 1960S, “THE GARBAGE YOU THROW INTO THE BAY / THEY DRINK FOR LUNCH IN SAN JOSE.”

CAPITAL INVESTMENT, LABOR FORCES, FISH – AND FOR THAT MATTER, AIR POLLUTION, RECREATIONAL PURSUITS, CULTURAL INTERESTS, AND MOST OTHER FEATURES OF OUR MODERN WORLD -- ALL HAVE SOMETHING IN COMMON: THEY TRAVEL FREELY ACROSS THE OLD GOVERNMENTAL BOUNDARIES OF AN URBAN METROPOLITAN REGION. THAT'S OBVIOUS.

YET, ALTHOUGH MOST U.S. METROPOLITAN REGIONS TODAY ARE ECONOMICALLY, ECOLOGICALLY, AND SOCIALLY INTEGRATED, THEY REMAIN POLITICALLY FRAGMENTED. AND WHILE I HAVE FOUND THAT AUSTRALIAN METROPOLITAN REGIONS ARE MORE UNIFIED THAN THEIR AMERICAN COUNTERPARTS, THEIR COHESION IS RARELY THE RESULT OF REGIONAL SELF-DETERMINATION BUT INSTEAD IS USUALLY DRIVEN BY A STATE GOVERNMENT – AN INSTRUMENT WHOSE JURISDICTION EXTENDS INTO THE BUSH AND WHOSE INTEREST IN (AND PROXIMITY TO) URBAN AFFAIRS MAY WAX AND WANE. AFTER ALL, THE NEW SOUTH WALES

GOVERNMENT IS LOOKING OUT FOR BROKEN HILL AND DUBBO AND A HUGE AREA IN ADDITION TO GREATER SYDNEY.

THE RELATIVE DEARTH OF EFFECTIVE REGIONAL INSTRUMENTS IS PARTICULARLY PARADOXICAL BECAUSE EVEN THOUGH MOST AVERAGE CITIZENS WOULD AGREE -- IF ASKED, WHICH THEY RARELY ARE -- THAT MANY POLITICAL *PROBLEMS* HAVE DEMONSTRABLY BECOME REGIONAL IN SCOPE, IMPOSSIBLE TO SOLVE PIECEMEAL – YET THOSE SAME CITIZENS RARELY EMBRACE POLITICAL *SOLUTIONS* WHICH INVOLVE CHANGES TO A GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE WHICH IS ITSELF PIECEMEAL, IN THE CASE OF THE U.S., OR HIGHLY DEPENDENT ON THE STATES, IN THE CASE OF AUSTRALIA.

LET'S ASK OURSELVES THREE QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS PARADOX:

- WHAT ARE THE NEGATIVE ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE METROPOLITAN FRAGMENTATION IN THE U.S., OR THE MIXED RECORD OF METROPOLITAN PROBLEM-SOLVING MECHANISMS IN AUSTRALIA?
- WHY DO REGIONS REMAIN POLITICALLY FRAGMENTED, EVEN WHEN THE PROBLEMS THEY FACE ARE CLEARLY REGIONAL?
- AND IF GREATER REGIONALIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES AND PUBLIC POLICY-MAKING WOULD BE DESIRABLE – AN ASSERTION WE NEED TO PROVE, NOT JUST TO ACADEMICS BUT TO OUR FELLOW AMERICANS AND AUSTRALIANS –HOW WOULD A REGION GO ABOUT ACHIEVING THAT APPROPRIATE REGIONALIZATION?

THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS HAS BEEN STUDIED REPEATEDLY, WITH INTELLECTUAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND SOME STRUCTURAL INNOVATION

ORIGINATING IN AUSTRALIA DATING BACK OVER FIFTY YEARS, AT LEAST IN THE CASE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA. IN FACT, WITH YOUR STATE STRUCTURE AND CONSOLIDATION OF MANY MUNICIPAL SERVICES, YOU ARE AHEAD OF US IN REGIONALIZATION IN MANY RESPECTS. NONETHELESS, THE DIFFERENCES AMONG REGIONS (AND NATIONS) IS INSTRUCTIVE, BEARING IN MIND THAT ALL REGIONS ARE DIFFERENT AND NO STANDARD GOVERNANCE MODEL WILL FIT THEM ALL. THE DIFFERENCES AND COMMONALITIES BETWEEN U.S. METROPOLITAN REGIONS AND AUSTRALIAN METROPOLITAN REGIONS IS PARTICULARLY INTERESTING SINCE WE ARE POLITICAL COUSINS, DISTANT HEIRS OF A COMMON BRITISH PHILOSOPHICAL TRADITION, EACH WITH BIG PLACES TO HAVE SETTLED, WITH MORE IN COMMON WITH ONE ANOTHER THAN EITHER OF US HAS WITH ANY OTHER COUNTRY.

THE PLANFIRST INITIATIVE IN NEW SOUTH WALES, THE MORE RECENT UNDERTAKING OF A “METRO SYDNEY” STRATEGY, AND THE GREATER WESTERN SYDNEY INITIATIVE’S REGIONAL PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK THIS PAST FEBRUARY, ARE ALL ATTEMPTS TO MOLD GOVERNMENT TO FIT THE SIZE OF THE PROBLEMS HERE. DR. JAGO DODSON AND DR BRENDAN GLEESON OF THE URBAN FRONTIERS PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN SYDNEY DESCRIBED THE STATUS QUO IN THEIR 2002 RESEARCH PAPER: “GOVERNANCE IN SYDNEY IS PROVIDED FROM ‘BELOW’ BY A BALKANISED SYSTEM OF LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES AND FROM ‘ABOVE’ BY A STATE GOVERNMENT WHOSE RESPONSIBILITIES EXTEND WELL BEYOND THE METROPOLITAN AREA.” MIGHT I SUGGEST, FIRST, THAT A DIALOGUE (NOT A CONFRONTATION) BETWEEN THE STATE AND THE LOCALITIES IS GOING TO BE THE CRITICAL FIRST STEP TO DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT YOU SOLVE YOUR DILEMMA?

YOU'LL NOTE I FIND IT MOST SEEMLY, AS A FOREIGN VISITOR, TO CONVEY EVEN THE MOST GENERIC CRITIQUE OF MY HOSTS ONLY IN THE FORM OF A QUOTATION FROM THEIR OWN PROFESSORS! BUT IT IS IN THE TRANSITION FROM ACADEMIC THEORY TO IMPLEMENTATION THAT THE TRUE PERILS EXIST. BECAUSE REGIONALISM DOES NOT FAIL BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF IDEAS OR IDEALISM. THE LESSON IS THAT THE POLITICAL PRACTITIONERS – MAYORS AND CABINET MINISTERS – MUST BE ON BOARD. AND SO MUST PUBLIC OPINION. THEORY IS NOT ENOUGH.

IN MY COUNTRY, IN THE 1920S AND 1930S EMINENT PLANNERS SUCH AS LEWIS MUMFORD ADVOCATED FOR REGIONAL PLANNING. DESPITE ARTICULATE ADVOCACY, LEGISLATION TO CONSOLIDATE OR COORDINATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT WAS ROUTINELY DEFEATED ACROSS THE COUNTRY THROUGHOUT MUCH OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, DESPITE THE ASTONISHING CHANGES IN OTHER TYPES OF INSTITUTIONS (PARTICULARLY CORPORATIONS) IN THE SAME ERA.

THE MOST TANGIBLE IMPACT OF THE REFORM IMPULSE OF THE 1920S WAS THE CREATION OF THE REGIONAL PLAN ASSOCIATION IN THE NEW YORK CITY REGION – SIGNIFICANTLY, A VOLUNTARY, NON-GOVERNMENT “ASSOCIATION,” NOT AN AUTHORITY, ONE WHOSE STUDIES MIGHT INFLUENCE LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL ACTION BUT BY NO MEANS DIRECT THEM.

IN THE 1970S, AS THE WHITLAM GOVERNMENT RAISED REGIONAL CONCEPTS IN CANBERRA, GOVERNOR JERRY BROWN MOUNTED AN “URBAN AGENDA” IN CALIFORNIA WHICH WOULD HAVE INSTILLED REGIONAL PLANNING IN THE GOLDEN STATE’S METROPOLISES. A GLIMPSE AT THE LOS ANGELES BASIN OR BAY AREA THIRTY YEARS LATER IS THE EVIDENCE THAT HIS PROPOSED POLICY LACKED POLITICAL MOMENTUM.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF REGIONALISM'S FAILURES ARE EVIDENT IN MORE THAN THE LANDSCAPE. AS PETER CALTHORPE AND WILLIAM FULTON WROTE IN THEIR 2001 BOOK THE REGIONAL CITY, "THE MISMATCH BETWEEN REGIONAL ECONOMIC REALITY AND LOCAL POLITICAL FRAGMENTATION OFTEN LEADS TO SUCH SEVERE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INEQUALITY ACROSS A REGION THAT IT CANNOT FUNCTION WELL EITHER AS AN ECONOMIC UNIT OR AS A SOCIAL UNIT."

TODAY, THE VISUAL BLIGHT THAT CALTHORPE AND FULTON TERM "SPATIAL SUICIDE" IS ONLY THE MOST GLARINGLY VISIBLE EVIDENCE OF OUR FAILURE TO PLAN REGIONALLY. THE CONSEQUENCES ARE FAR DEEPER THAN SPRAWL: THE REINFORCEMENT OF SOCIAL DISPARITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS SPENT IN RANDOM FASHION, THE INABILITY TO FIT THE SCOPE OF SOLUTIONS TO THE SCOPE OF PROBLEMS, DUPLICATION OF SERVICES – ALL ARE OBVIOUS DISADVANTAGES TO THE BALKANIZED SYSTEMS OF GOVERNANCE WHICH PERSIST IN MOST AMERICAN URBAN REGIONS, AND TO SOME EXTENT IN AUSTRALIA.

SO, IF WE HAVE ESTABLISHED THE DISADVANTAGES OF BALKANIZATION AND THE ADVANTAGES OF REGIONALISM, THE SECOND QUESTION LOOMS: WHAT INHIBITS THE LOGICAL IMPLEMENTATION OF MORE REGIONAL GOVERNANCE IN U.S. METROPOLITAN AREAS, AND WHAT MIGHT THE LESSONS BE FOR AUSTRALIAN ONES? WHAT ARE THE OBSTACLES BETWEEN THEORY AND REALITY THAT PREVENT GOOD IDEAS FROM BEING IMPLEMENTED?

HERE'S ONE OBSTACLE: WE'VE TALKED ABOUT POWERFUL ECONOMIC FORCES, LIKE GLOBALIZATION, AND THE IMMUTABILITY OF NATURAL FORCES, LIKE CONTINUOUS RIVER CORRIDORS. BUT THERE IS ANOTHER POWERFUL FORCE, AND THAT IS HUMAN NATURE. HUMAN NATURE, AS

EXPRESSED IN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT, HAS A COROLARY TO NEWTON'S LAW THAT BODIES IN MOTION TEND TO REMAIN IN MOTION AND BODIES AT REST TEND TO REMAIN AT REST. IN GOVERNMENT, THE LEADERSHIP AND THE MANAGEMENT OFTEN HAS A BUILT-IN INTEREST IN REMAINING AT REST – NOT IN SLOTHFUL TERMS, I MEAN, BUT IN TERMS OF RESISTING INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE.

AN ASTUTE OBSERVER RECENTLY TOLD ME (AND REMEMBER, I MENTIONED TO YOU THAT LAW ENFORCEMENT IS LARGELY A CITY FUNCTION IN THE U.S., RATHER THAN A STATE FUNCTION AS HERE) THAT A PROPOSAL TO GAIN ECONOMIES OF SCALE BY COMBINING EIGHT SMALL POLICE DEPARTMENTS IN OREGON WAS DOOMED FOR SEVEN REASONS: THE SEVEN CHIEFS WHO WOULD BE RENDERED REDUNDANT BY THE CONSOLIDATION. ANOTHER FORMER ELECTED OFFICIAL EXPLAINED FURTHERMORE THAT EACH COMMUNITY FELT COMFORTED BY HAVING AN OFFICER WITH ITS TOWN NAME ON HIS SHOULDER PATCH.

THEN, SECOND, THERE ARE THE PARTIES WHO BENEFIT FROM DYSFUNCTION, OR EXPLOIT LOCAL GOVERNMENT'S FRAGMENTATION. DEPENDING ON FISCAL STRUCTURES, IN SOME REGIONS OF THE U.S., DEVELOPERS PLAY DIFFERENT MUNICIPALITIES OFF AGAINST ONE ANOTHER, CAUSING THEM TO COMPETE FOR A NEW STORE THAT WILL BRING TAX REVENUE WITH IT. WHILE COMPETITION AS A GENERAL RULE PROVIDES GOOD DISCIPLINE, IT CAN BECOME COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE WHEN A GAME SUCH AS THAT IS ZERO SUM FOR THE REGION.

THIRD, REGIONAL PLANNING EFFORTS SOMETIMES REMAIN CONVERSATIONAL FODDER FOR A POLICY ELITE, FAILING TO DEMONSTRATE POPULAR BENEFITS TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC WE SERVE. REGIONAL GOVERNMENT CAN SOUND IMPERSONAL OR ETHEREAL. REGIONALISM WHICH SMACKS OF "MORE GOVERNMENT" OR "AN

ADDITIONAL LAYER OF GOVERNMENT” – OR CAN BE DESCRIBED AS SUCH BY ITS DETRACTORS – IS DOOMED IN PUBLIC OPINION EVEN IF IN THEORY IT WOULD RESULT IN BETTER OR MORE EFFICIENT GOVERNMENT. WHILE LOCAL GOVERNMENT IS A FAMILIAR INSTITUTION MOST LIKELY STAFFED BY “US,” REGIONAL GOVERNMENT IS A NOVELTY WHICH BY DEFINITION ENCOMPASSES MORE OF “THEM.” AND IN DEMOCRACIES IT IS GENERALLY BETTER TO BE ONE OF “US” THAN ONE OF “THEM.”

YOU ALREADY KNOW THESE OBSTACLES, SO LET’S TURN TO REMEDIES. AFTER ALL, I HAVE BEEN INVITED HERE BECAUSE I LEAD A GOVERNMENT WHICH HAS, TO A GREATER EXTENT THAN ANY OTHER IN AMERICA, OVERCOME SOME OF THESE OBSTACLES. WHAT LESSONS FROM THE BANKS OF THE WILLAMETTE MIGHT BE BROUGHT ASHORE ON THE BANKS OF THE NEPEAN TO HELP ANSWER THE THIRD QUESTION: WHAT ELEMENTS ENABLE THE SUCCESSFUL REGIONALIZATION OF PLANNING?

I’LL DESCRIBE THE PORTLAND MODEL, BUT YOU MUST AGREE TO TWO CONDITIONS BEFORE YOU TAKE NOTES.

THE FIRST CONDITION IS THAT YOU RECOGNIZE THAT WHILE WE HAVE INSTITUTIONALLY PROGRESSED FARTHER THAN OTHER AMERICAN REGIONS, OUR METRO COUNCIL IS A RELATIVELY YOUNG AGENCY, STILL LONGER IN PROMISE THAN IN ON-THE-GROUND ACHIEVEMENT. AS HE LED THE CHINESE REVOLUTION OF 1949, MAO ZEDONG WAS ASKED WHAT HE THOUGHT OF THE RESULTS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION OF 1792. MAO REPLIED, “IT’S TOO EARLY TO TELL.” SO STUDY PORTLAND ONLY AS A WORK IN PROGRESS. (IF WE BECOME A GREAT CITY, THAT ITSELF WILL SIGNIFY WE ARE A WORK THAT IS NEVER FINISHED.) SECONDLY, PLEASE NOTE FOR THE RECORD THAT I NEVER PRESCRIBE PORTLAND’S MODEL FOR ANYONE ELSE, BECAUSE EACH REGION HAS ITS OWN HISTORY, OWN POLITICS, OWN DEMOGRAPHICS, AND OWN OPPORTUNITIES. PORTLAND IS

NOT PITTSBURGH OR PARRAMATTA OR PERTH. REGIONS CAN ONLY FIND THEIR WAY TO REGIONALISM IN THEIR OWN TIME.

SEVERAL CONDITIONS PECULIAR TO THE PORTLAND REGION IN THE 1970S ALLOWED US TO GET AHEAD OF MOST OTHER METROPOLITAN REGIONS IN OUR COUNTRY. ASK YOURSELF IF THESE CONDITIONS EXIST IN THE WESTERN SYDNEY REGION, OR WHETHER THEY MIGHT BE REPLICATED HERE:

FIRST, NOT UNLIKE YOU, WE HAVE A RELATIVELY YOUNG AND HOMOGENOUS BODY POLITIC, COMPARED TO THE OLDER METROPOLISES OF THE U.S. EAST COAST AND MIDWEST, WHERE LINES ARE OLDER AND MORE OFTEN DEMARCATED IN ETHNIC AND RACIAL TERMS. THE SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC GAP BETWEEN THE CENTRAL CITY OF PORTLAND AND THE SUBURBS IS SMALL COMPARED TO THE SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC GULF WHICH SEPARATES CITIES SUCH AS DETROIT OR PHILADELPHIA FROM THEIR RESPECTIVE SURROUNDINGS. THOSE CULTURAL COMMONALITIES ALLOW THE LEADERSHIP TO TALK WITH ONE ANOTHER.

OREGON ALSO HAD A TRADITION OF INNOVATION AND OPENNESS TO NEW IDEAS, AND AN ETHIC OF EXPERIMENTATION. OREGON HAS OFTEN BEEN AMONG THE FIRST TO PIONEER NEW WAYS OF DOING THINGS, FROM BEVERAGE CAN RECYCLING TO PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED SUICIDE, SO PROPOSALS TO INSTITUTE LAND USE PLANNING, WHICH MIGHT SEEM OUTLANDISH IN OTHER STATES, WAS MORE LIKELY TO BE GIVEN A TRY IN OREGON. SINCE MORE THAN HALF OF OUR RESIDENTS WERE BORN ELSEWHERE, THEY ARE SOMEWHAT SELF-SELECTED EXPERIMENTERS, LESS WEDDED TO OLD WAYS.

THE IMPETUS FOR LAND USE PLANNING IN THE 1970S WAS ALSO DRIVEN BY A MORE BASIC FACTOR: THE DOLLAR. WE ARE TALKING ABOUT AMERICAN POLITICS, AFTER ALL, AND NO DISCUSSION OF AMERICAN POLITICAL PHENOMENA MAKES SENSE WITHOUT REFERENCE TO MONEY. IN OREGON, THE ORIGINAL CONSTITUENCY FOR PLANNING INCLUDED RURAL ECONOMIC INTERESTS WHO SAW THEY HAD SOMETHING TO LOSE UNLESS SUBURBAN SPRAWL WAS CONTAINED. IN THE 1970S, THE STATE'S TWO MOST SIGNIFICANT INDUSTRIES WERE FORESTRY AND AGRICULTURE, AND BOTH RELIED UPON SIGNIFICANT LANDS INCREASINGLY BEING THREATENED BY UNCHECKED METROPOLITAN GROWTH. WHILE SOME FARMERS WANTED TO SELL THEIR LAND FOR URBANIZATION – AND BY THE 1990S, FAR MORE WANTED TO THAN IN THE 1970S – THEIR OFFICIAL ORGANIZATIONS WANTED TO PRESERVE FARMING.

MEANTIME, MORE LIBERAL (IN THE AMERICAN, NOT AUSTRALIAN, SENSE OF THE WORD LIBERAL) VOTERS IN THE URBAN AREAS – WHO MIGHT ON MOST OTHER ISSUES HAVE LITTLE IN COMMON WITH RURAL VOTERS – ALSO SUPPORTED LAND USE PLANNING, BUT FOR DIFFERENT REASONS. THEY LIKE LOOKING AT FARMS, AS AN AMENITY VALUE, BUT THEY WERE PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH THE URBAN SIDE-EFFECTS OF SPRAWL: TRAFFIC CONGESTION, AIR POLLUTION, AND DISINVESTMENT FROM ESTABLISHED NEIGHBORHOODS. THE LOOMING THREAT OF SPIRALING POPULATION GROWTH, FUELED BY TRANSPLANTS FROM CALIFORNIA WHO, IT WAS FEARED, WOULD SOMEHOW BRING THAT STATE'S DEGRADED LANDSCAPE AND DYSFUNCTIONAL POLITICAL CULTURE WITH THEM, PROMPTED OREGONIANS TO URGE THEIR REPRESENTATIVES TO ACT. TODAY, YOU CAN USE SIMILAR PROJECTIONS OF POPULATION GROWTH IN GREATER SYDNEY – I HAVE SEEN THE FIGURES, AND SEEN THEM RIGHTFULLY CITED AS A MOTIVATION FOR THE METRO SYDNEY EFFORT – TO PERSUADE YOUR CITIZENS THAT ACTION IS NEEDED.

CAPITALIZING ON PUBLIC OPINION ALSO REQUIRES STRONG, VISIONARY LEADERSHIP AT THE RIGHT TIME. OR PUT ANOTHER WAY, PRESENTS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ASTUTE POLITICIANS. IN THIS RESPECT OREGON ALSO HAD A CONVERGENCE OF FACTORS IN THE 1970S. A REPUBLICAN GOVERNOR OF THE STATE, TOM MCCALL, AND A DEMOCRATIC MAYOR OF PORTLAND, NEIL GOLDSCHMIDT, BOTH CHAMPIONED PLANNING – ONE OF THEM MORE TO PROTECT RURAL INDUSTRIES AND ONE OF THEM MORE TO CONSERVE INVESTMENT IN THE CENTRAL CITY – BUT BOTH OF THEM IN CHARISMATIC TERMS THAT SPOKE TO ALL OREGONIANS’ EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT TO LANDSCAPES THAT WERE THREATENED TO DISAPPEAR BENEATH NEW SUBDIVISIONS AND SHOPPING MALLS UNLESS ACTION WERE TAKEN. THIS ARTICULATE LEADERSHIP GOT THE ISSUE ON THE FRONT PAGES OF THE NEWSPAPERS.

THE INSTITUTIONAL FORM THAT REGIONALISM TOOK, IN THE METRO COUNCIL, IS ALSO INSTRUCTIVE ABOUT WHAT MAKES REGIONALISM WORK. A DESCRIPTION OF OUR STRUCTURE, AND OUR PORTFOLIO OF RESPONSIBILITIES, IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO UNDERSTAND THE ASSUMPTIONS BEHIND IT.

THE FIRST KEY IS THAT OUR SEVEN MEMBER COUNCIL IS DIRECTLY ELECTED BY THE PEOPLE. SIX OF US ARE ELECTED FROM GEOGRAPHIC DISTRICTS (WHAT YOU WOULD CALL WARDS IN YOUR VOCABULARY), AND I AM ELECTED BY THE METROPOLITAN AREA AT LARGE, FOR FIXED FOUR YEAR TERMS. IT IS SIGNIFICANT TO SAY THAT OUR METRO COUNCILORS REPRESENT PEOPLE, NOT CITIES OR COUNTIES. OUR COUNCIL HAS A FUNDAMENTALLY DIFFERENT SOURCE OF AUTHORITY (THE PEOPLE) THAN THE WESTERN SYDNEY REGIONAL PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE HAS (LOCAL GOVERNMENTS). THAT DIRECT ACCOUNTABILITY MEANS THAT OUR CONSTITUENCY CONSISTS OF

CITIZENS, WHO LIVE REGIONAL LIVES, RATHER THAN CONSISTING OF OTHER GOVERNMENTS, WHO MAY HAVE AN INSTITUTIONAL STAKE IN FRAGMENTATION.

AT THE SAME TIME, OUR CHARTER GUARANTEES CLOSE COORDINATION WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT, BY ESTABLISHING A METRO POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (M.P.A.C.), CONSISTING OF LOCAL MAYORS AND OTHER OFFICIALS. OUR COUNCIL IS REQUIRED TO SEEK THE ADVICE OF M.P.A.C. ON MAJOR DECISIONS, AND WE CANNOT TAKE ON ADDITIONAL FUNCTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES WITHOUT THEIR CONSENT. THIS VISIBLE CHECK AND BALANCE ASSURED LOCAL OFFICIALS THAT THE METRO COUNCIL WOULD NOT DOMINATE THEM.

THE M.P.A.C. FORUM ALLOWS LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO DEVELOP NOT ONLY BETTER BILATERAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE METRO COUNCIL, BUT ALSO MULTI-LATERAL RELATIONSHIPS AMONG THEMSELVES. THIS PEER PRESSURE IS THE MOST INFLUENTIAL UNOFFICIAL TOOL WE HAVE. ULTIMATELY THE EXISTENCE OF M.P.A.C. MEANS THAT REGIONAL AGREEMENTS ARE NOT ONLY AGREEMENTS THAT INDIVIDUAL CITIES MAKE WITH THE METRO COUNCIL, BUT ARE AGREEMENTS THAT CITIES COLLECTIVELY MAKE AMONG THEMSELVES.

PERHAPS MORE SIGNIFICANT FOR YOU, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A METRO COUNCIL (AND M.P.A.C.) HELPS TO FORMULATE A REGIONAL VOICE FOR DEALING WITH OUR STATE GOVERNMENT IN SALEM OR OUR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN WASHINGTON D.C. – LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT WHICH MIGHT NOT PAY MUCH HEED TO INDIVIDUAL CITIES BUT IS MORE LIKELY TO LISTEN WHEN WE MARSHAL ALL OUR CITIES' VOICES IN ONE REGIONAL CHORUS. THINK OF HOW YOUR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE IN CANBERRA ABOUT THE ABANDONED MILITARY

BASE MIGHT BE DIFFERENT IF IT WERE NOT JUST PENRITH TALKING, BUT THE WHOLE WESTERN SYDNEY REGION.

IN OUR CASE, THE KEY INTERGOVERNMENTAL BALANCE INTRINSIC TO THE METRO COUNCIL IS THE ONE BETWEEN REGIONAL AUTHORITY AND LOCAL AUTONOMY. IN YOUR CASE, I WOULD SUGGEST, THE MORE IMPORTANT BALANCE TO STRIKE WILL BE THE ONE BETWEEN YOUR REGION AND YOUR STATE. (I AM FLATTERED TO HAVE TWO MEMBERS OF THE NEW SOUTH WALES PARLIAMENT HERE TONIGHT, SITTING WITH YOUR CITY COUNCILORS. THAT IS A GOOD SIGN.) MY ADVICE IS TO APPROACH THAT EXERCISE – OF DEFINING REGIONAL-STATE RELATIONS – AS A PARTNERSHIP. YOU WILL FIND THAT SORTING OUT THE PROPER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES REQUIRES SOME EXPLICIT AGREEMENTS AMONG THE DIFFERENT LEVELS, BUT ALSO SOME ON-GOING MECHANISM FOR DIALOGUE THAT ENABLES (OR BETTER YET FORCES) THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONSHIP TO EVOLVE.

SOMETIMES, THIS BALANCE CAN BE HARD TO DEFINE -- BUT KEEP IN MIND, AS A COROLLARY, THAT DESPITE HAVING SPENT TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTEEN YEARS AS A NATION WITH A CONSTITUTION, WE YANKS (WHETHER COMMON CITIZENS OR SUPREME COURT JUSTICES) STILL CANNOT BRIEFLY DESCRIBE TO YOU HOW FEDERAL RESPONSIBILITIES INTERSECT WITH STATE GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES.

ONE OF THE CHALLENGES IS TO ACHIEVE ENOUGH CONSOLIDATION OR COORDINATION SO THAT YOU ENJOY EFFECTIVENESS, EFFICIENCY, AND ECONOMIES OF SCALE, WHILE STILL ALLOWING SUFFICIENT DEVOLUTION RECOGNIZING THAT “ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL” AND THAT SOME LATITUDE SHOULD EXIST FOR APPROPRIATE EXPERIMENTATION AND SERVICE DELIVERY IN DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES. THERE IS NO CORRECT ANSWER BETWEEN THE EXTREMES OF STULTIFYING CENTRALIZATION

AND CHAOTIC BALKANIZATION, BUT THE SEARCH FOR THAT ELUSIVE ANSWER IS ITSELF ONE OF THE RICH REWARDS OF REGIONAL INTERACTION.

WE KNOW “REGIONAL PLANNING” DEFERS FROM “LOCAL PLANNING” AND CAN CITE SOME EXAMPLES OF HOW. YOU MIGHT WANT TO THINK CAREFULLY ABOUT THE DELINEATION YOURSELF. SIGNIFICANTLY, THE METRO COUNCIL DOES NOT PERFORM LOCAL ZONING OR ISSUE BUILDING PERMITS, AND THE LOCAL CITIES RETAIN THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR WHAT WE CALL COMPREHENSIVE PLANS. PROPERTY OWNERS NEVER DEAL WITH THE METRO COUNCIL ON PARTICULAR MATTERS, AND DEAL ONLY WITH THEIR LOCAL CITY. BUT THE LOCAL CITIES’ COMPREHENSIVE PLANS MUST COMPLY WITH WHAT WE CALL REGIONAL FUNCTIONAL PLANS, PROMULGATED BY THE METRO COUNCIL. FUNCTIONAL PLANS ARE A FORM OF PERFORMANCE STANDARD OR MINIMUM REQUIREMENT. FEATURES OF OUR FUNCTIONAL PLAN STANDARDS INCLUDE MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM DENSITIES (TO ENCOURAGE COMPACT URBAN FORM AND THE CONSERVATION OF LAND), THE MIXTURE OF ZONING TYPES (TO ASSURE THAT EACH JURISDICTION HAS A RANGE OF HOUSING LEVELS AND NON-HOUSING ACTIVITIES), MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR STREET CONNECTIVITY (TO ASSURE THAT ARTERIALS ARE NOT OVER-BURDENED), OR THE DISTANCE THAT NEW BUILDINGS MUST BE FROM SENSITIVE STREAM BANKS. THESE STANDARDS ARE MANDATORY AND BINDING ON ALL THE CITIES WITHIN OUR BOUNDARIES.

BEYOND LAND USE PLANNING, THE METRO COUNCIL’S OTHER PORTFOLIO OF SERVICES IS ALSO SIGNIFICANT, BECAUSE WE ARE NOT ONLY AN ABSTRACT “PLANNING AGENCY” BUT ALSO DELIVER SELECTED TANGIBLE, POPULAR SERVICES. ONE DIRECTLY LINKED TO OUR FUNCTIONAL PLANNING FOR LAND USE IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY FOR

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING UNDER THE FEDERAL LAW. WE ARE THE ALLOCATING BODY FOR ALL U.S. GOVERNMENT TRANSPORTATION FUNDS WHICH FLOW INTO THE REGION. INCREASINGLY WE USE THAT AUTHORITY TO INVEST IN PROJECTS THAT REINFORCE THE DESIRED LAND USE OUTCOMES. YOU MIGHT ASK YOURSELF, IN YOUR CASE, BY WHAT CRITERIA YOU WOULD LIKE YOUR REGION TO BE ABLE TO GUIDE THE AWARD OF NEW SOUTH WALES STATE TRANSPORT FUNDS WITHIN WEST SYDNEY. HOW CAN YOU, AS A REGION, OPTIMALLY DIRECT THE STATE'S INVESTMENT OF THOSE FUNDS?

OUR OTHER SERVICES ARE COMPLEMENTARY AND CAN BUILD A POSITIVE POLITICAL PROFILE FOR THE AGENCY. WE OWN AND MANAGE ABOUT 4500 HECTARES OF GREENSPACES AND NATURAL AREAS, SOME OF WHICH ARE SLATED TO BECOME RECREATIONAL PARKS. WE OPERATE THE OREGON ZOO, ENJOYED BY OVER A MILLION PATRONS PER YEAR, AND THE OREGON CONVENTION CENTER, PERFORMING ARTS CENTER, AND EXPOSITION HALLS. WE ARE ALSO RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL SYSTEM AND RECYCLING EDUCATION, A NON-GLAMOROUS BUT ESSENTIAL UTILITY. ALL OF THOSE FUNCTIONS, OF COURSE, ARE MORE EFFICIENTLY PERFORMED AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL THAN THE CITY LEVEL. ASK 29 MAYORS IF THEY WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THE METRO COUNCIL MANAGE ONE LANDFILL OR INSTEAD HAVE 29 MAYORS TRYING TO SITE 29 LANDFILLS, ONE IN EACH COMMUNITY, AND YOU WILL SEE WHAT I MEAN.

I HOPE THAT DESCRIPTION OF PORTLAND'S SITUATION ALLOWS US TO HONE IN OUR THIRD QUESTION: WHAT DO THE SUCCESSFUL ATTRIBUTES OF THE PORTLAND REGIONAL SYSTEM IN PARTICULAR TEACH US ABOUT REGIONALISM IN GENERAL? WHAT ARE THE PRINCIPLES WHICH COULD BE APPLIED IN WESTERN SYDNEY OR ELSEWHERE TO MAKE REGIONAL PLANNING WORK?

I SUBMIT FIVE PRINCIPLES OF REGIONALISM FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION:

- THE FIRST IS BASED ON TOQUEVILLE’S BASIC PREMISE ABOUT WHAT MAKES AMERICAN POLITICS WORK: “SELF-INTEREST PROPERLY UNDERSTOOD.” IT TAKES A 19TH CENTURY FRENCHMAN TO EXPLAIN THAT FORCE TO US 21ST CENTURY AMERICANS AND AUSTRALIANS. FOR REGIONALISM TO BE SUSTAINED, ALL THE PARTICIPANTS IN IT NEED TO GET SOMETHING FROM IT – AND EVERYONE NEEDS TO GET MORE BY BEING PART OF THE GROUP THAN HE OR SHE WOULD GET BY TRYING TO ACT IN ISOLATION. A GENUINE MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF INTERDEPENDENCE IS A NECESSARY FOUNDATION FOR EFFECTIVE REGIONALISM. IT’S ALSO LIKE A FAMILY: YOU MAY SQUABBLE AROUND THE DINNER TABLE, BUT IT’S STILL BETTER BEING AT THE TABLE THAN TRYING TO FORAGE FOR SCRAPS BY YOURSELF OUTSIDE.
- DEMOCRATIC LEGITIMACY IS THE SECOND. THE FACT THAT THE VOTERS INSTALLED US IN OFFICE (WHILE NOT PLACING US BEYOND THE CONTEMPT OF THOSE VERY SAME VOTERS) DISTINGUISHES US FROM THE LEGENDARY “FACELESS BUREAUCRATS” AND OTHER ANONYMOUS SOCIAL ENGINEERS, WHO MIGHT EVEN BE IMAGINED TO BE STALINISTS OR VEGETARIANS, REPUTED TO POPULATE AN AGENCY WITH THE SINISTER HABIT OF REGIONAL PLANNING. YOUR OWN AUSTRALIAN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE, HOUSED AT THE UNIVERSITY HERE, MAY GIVE YOU SOME THOUGHTS IN THIS REGARD: HOW DO YOU CREATE “REGIONAL CITIZENS?” HOW DO YOU CREATE A LINK BETWEEN THE AVERAGE CITIZEN AND YOUR REGIONAL PLANNING EFFORT?

- THIRD, OUR ACCOUNTABILITY TO CITIZENS RATHER THAN CITIES FREES US TO LOOK OUT FOR THE REGIONAL PUBLIC INTEREST, RATHER THAN SIMPLY TOTE UP TO CUMULATIVE INTEREST OF DISTINCT JURISDICTIONS. THE REGIONAL INTEREST IS NOT THE SAME THING AS THE SUM (OR LOWEST COMMON DENOMINATOR) OF ALL THE INDIVIDUAL CITIES' INTERESTS. THE WHOLE SHOULD BE DEMONSTRABLY GREATER THAN THE SUM OF THE PARTS. FOR EXAMPLE, A REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN SHOULD BE A COHERENT INTERDISCIPLINARY STRATEGY, NOT A DOCUMENT WHICH MERELY COMPILES WISH LISTS FROM DIFFERENT JURISDICTIONS IN THE REGION AND STAPLES THEM TOGETHER.
- FOURTH, PUBLIC OPINION ALSO CAN DRIVE DEMAND FOR CHANGE, PARTICULARLY WHEN A CRISIS OR EMERGENCY IS PERCEIVED AS A FAILURE OF EXISTING MECHANISMS. IN ATLANTA (THE CITY THAT HOSTED THE OLYMPICS FOUR YEARS BEFORE SYDNEY SHOWED THE WORLD HOW TO REALLY DO IT RIGHT), IT WAS AN AIR QUALITY CRISIS WHICH CAUSED BUSINESS INTERESTS – NOT NORMALLY THE TYPE TO BE DEMANDING “MORE” GOVERNMENT – TO INSIST THAT THE SPRAWLING, DISJOINTED CITIES AND COUNTIES OF THE ATLANTA REGION JOIN TOGETHER IN A REGIONAL PLAN. FOR SALT LAKE CITY – A CONSERVATIVE PLACE IN AMERICAN TERMS – IT WAS THE RECOGNITION THAT UNRESTRAINED GROWTH PATTERNS WERE THREATENING THE MOUNTAINS NEARBY THAT CAUSED CITIZENS AND BUSINESSES ALIKE TO DEMAND A NEW REGIONAL PARADIGM ABOUT GROWTH.
- FINALLY, REGIONAL PLANNING ONLY WORKS WHEN IT IS LINKED TO REGIONAL INVESTMENT. FOR YOU IN THE AUSTRALIAN SYSTEM, THAT MEANS THAT CLARIFYING THE STANDING THAT YOUR REGIONAL PLAN WILL HAVE IN THE EYES OF STATE BUDGET-

MAKERS IS VERY IMPORTANT. DODSON AND GLEESON REPORTED THAT THE NEW SOUTH WALES REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS OF COUNCILS ARE VOLUNTARY AND DO NOT UNDERTAKE PLAN MAKING OR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION. IN THAT CASE, ONE MIGHT FEAR THAT THE R.O.C.'S WORK MAY END UP GATHERING DUST ON A SHELF UNFULFILLED, WITHOUT HAVING BEEN BOLSTERED BY STATE EXPENDITURES (OR MORE LIKELY UNDERMINED BY THEM). I UNDERSTAND NEW SOUTH WALES UNDERTOOK AN INITIATIVE CALLED "PLANFIRST" BUT I CAN ONLY HOPE THAT YOU FOLLOW IT WITH "AND INVEST A CLOSE SECOND." MINISTER KNOWLES' RECENT SPEECH IN THIS REGARD IS ENCOURAGING, BECAUSE HE SPOKE OF TRANSPORT INVESTMENT BEING TIED TO A STRATEGIC PLAN. FOR THE PORTLAND METROPOLITAN REGION, TARGETED INVESTMENT HAS BEEN AN IMPORTANT VALIDATING MEANS OF IMPLEMENTING OUR REGIONAL OBJECTIVES. FOR EXAMPLE, WE HAD A PLAN TO PROTECT KEY NATURAL AREAS, BUT IT WAS THE VOTERS' APPROVAL OF A U.S.\$135 MILLION BOND MEASURE IN 1995 THAT ENABLED THE METRO COUNCIL TO ACTUALLY GO OUT AND BUY OVER 3000 HECTARES OF LAND. WE ALSO TARGETED TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT TO MAKE OUR PLAN REAL, FOR EXAMPLE WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF LIGHT RAIL LINES TO OUR MAJOR REGIONAL CENTERS. THE STATE OF VICTORIA HAS UNDERTAKEN A SIMILAR STRATEGY CALLED "TRANSIT CITIES" IN THE MELBOURNE REGION. I HOPE THE FACT THAT MELBOURNE IS DOING IT DOES NOT DISCREDIT THE APPROACH IN SYDNEYSIDERS' MINDS! (SOMETIMES OUR RIVALS CAN TEACH US SOMETHING.)

IN SUMMARY, THE MOST USEFUL REGIONAL PLANS MUST BE PARTICIPATORY, INCLUSIVE, AND BACKED WITH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INVESTMENT. THEIR REGULATORY ASPECTS MUST HAVE SUFFICIENT

TEETH TO ALLOW ENFORCEMENT, BUT THOSE TEETH MUST ALSO DO A LOT OF SMILING AND RARELY SNAP TOO QUICKLY OR TIGHTLY.

I WANT TO CLOSE WHERE ALL PLANNING SHOULD BEGIN AND END: WITH THE NEIGHBORHOOD. IT MAY SEEM COUNTER-INTUITIVE TO TALK ABOUT REGIONAL PLANNING IN TERMS OF NEIGHBORHOODS, BUT ULTIMATELY NEIGHBORHOODS ARE A BIG PART OF WHAT IT ALL NEEDS TO BE ABOUT. TO BE SURE, REGIONAL PLANNING SERVES OUR ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS, THE EFFICIENCY OF SERVICE DELIVERY, AND THE RATIONALIZATION OF INVESTMENT, AND ALL THOSE “REGIONAL” THINGS. BUT TO BE EFFECTIVE, AND WIN POLITICAL SUPPORT, REGIONAL PLANNING MUST ALSO PROTECT NEIGHBORHOODS, WHICH ARE THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF A REGION.

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT REGIONAL PLANS BE PERCEIVED AS A COMPLEMENT TO NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITY, NOT A UNIFORM PRESCRIPTION WHICH WOULD ROB THEM OF THAT IDENTITY. IT DOES SEEM COUNTER-INTUITIVE, BUT TRULY, THE REGIONAL PLAN, WHILE REGIONAL IN SCOPE, MUST BE SEEN AS SOMETHING THAT ALLOWS THE NEIGHBORHOODS THEIR OWN CHARACTER AND SOME DEGREE OF SELF-DETERMINATION, NOT THREATEN THEM.

REGIONAL PLANS DO NOT NEED TO MEDDLE IN THE ZONING OR DETAILS OF PARTICULAR NEIGHBORHOODS. A REGIONAL GOVERNMENT OR STATE AGENCY SHOULD NOT DICTATE THAT A CLOTHING SHOP BELONGS ON THIS CORNER IN CLAREMONT MEADOWS OR AN ITALIAN RESTAURANT SHOULD BE INSTALLED ON THAT CORNER IN FREMANTLE. INSTEAD, REGIONAL PLANNING SHOULD CREATE THE OVERALL CLIMATE WHERE THOSE FEATURES EVOLVE ORGANICALLY. KEEPING NEIGHBORHOODS STRONG SHOULD BE AN EXPLICIT – BUT BROADLY CONSTRUED -- GOAL OF REGIONAL PLANNING. AND THE BIGGEST THREAT TO STABLE AND

SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS IS NOT “EXCESSIVE” OR OVERWEENING GOVERNMENT, BUT UNPLANNED GROWTH AND THE EXTERNALITIES IT BRINGS, LIKE CUT-THROUGH TRAFFIC AND OVERBURDENED INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE JURISDICTIONS NEXT DOOR. THOSE EXTERNALITIES CAN ONLY BE DEALT WITH REGIONALLY. SO ULTIMATELY THE VALUES OF THOSE NEIGHBORHOODS MUST BE PART OF WHAT ANIMATES THE VISION OF REGIONAL PLANNING.

LAST MONTH, PORTLAND WAS HONORED WITH A VISIT BY JANE JACOBS, THE EMINENT URBANIST AND AUTHOR OF THE LIFE AND DEATH OF AMERICAN CITIES AND OTHER SEMINAL WORKS IN THE FIELD OF URBAN PLANNING. SHE TALKED ABOUT BOTH VALUES AND VISION, AND IN GIVING US A COMPLIMENT SUGGESTED THAT WE RELY MORE ON VALUES THAN ON VISION. SHE SAID, “PORTLAND OBVIOUSLY HAS A VERY STRONG SENSE OF VALUES.....VALUES DON’T GO OUT OF STYLE NEARLY AS FAST AS VISIONS DO.”

YOU SEEM TO HAVE BOTH VALUES AND VISION HERE IN WESTERN SYDNEY. I URGE YOU TO BE TRUE TO THEM BOTH, AND IF MY HUMBLE ADVICE FROM THE NORTH ASSISTS YOU IN YOUR THINKING, I AM PLEASED TO HAVE BEEN PART OF THE GREAT CONVERSATION WITH YOU. I HOPE TO RETURN SOMEDAY. I LOOK FORWARD TO STEPPING OFF THE TRAIN AT PENRITH STATION IN THE FUTURE AND SEEING THE EXCITING NEW NEIGHBORHOOD THAT MAY EMERGE THERE, AND LOOKING UP TO THE WEST AND SEE THE BLUE MOUNTAINS WATCHING OVER YOU.

THANK YOU.