

It would be naive to suggest that this static state has been brought about by controls initiated by the Urban Transport Act.

It is suggested that in the case with total travel demand, which was discussed in the earlier section, this lack of development in the CBD merely follows the dictates of economic prosperity. A similar situation is experienced in the other declared metropolitan transport areas.

Considering the other end of the transport chain, the residential areas, it is common knowledge that JOMET has an approved land use strategy. This provides for low density residential development in Sandton.

In spite of this declared policy what has been the recent experience in Sandton?

The halcyon days of one of South Africa's poshest residential area seem to be on the way out. Townhouses have cut a swathe through the gentlemen's estates of yesteryear - and set the trend which will change the once exclusive parkland image of Sandton.

For every new house built next year a townhouse will be erected.

It has recently been learnt that the new higher-density image of this once plush area is set on a irreversible path. The wave of townhouses is unlikely to be halted - but the old Sandton image is dying hard with a political row brewing over the future look of the town. A scathing attack was launched on the then chairman of the town's management committee and the present council. It accused them of destroying Sandton's 'inheritance' of lush parkland and turning the wide open spaces into blocks of faceless townhouses - a sorry 'legacy' for future generations, it was suggested.

It is questioned whether the planning of townhouse developments is of a high enough standard and suggested that there seems to be no inhibition of control in encouraging high-density projects.

Bitter residents too, have complained of the effect that burgeoning townhouse development has had in Sandton. The management committee chairman has warned that the direction taken by the town was irreversible. Sandton has to meet annual debts. Unless higher-density developments took place, Sandtonians 'would starve in verdant luxury' he said. The era of mink and manure is out of the window. Ten stables have moved out of the town in the last two years. 'The age of privilege has had to make way for the socio-economic realities of today', the chairman has said.

High-density is the policy being adopted by State and Province and it will, according Sandton authorities, continue whether or not present councils are ousted in local elections.

Houghton should become flatland in terms of the JOMET's strategy. The actual situation compared with this policy is somewhat different. Recent newspapers have reported along the following lines.

'Residents of Houghton, traditionally gracious suburb for Johannesburg's wealthy, fear their neighbourhood could become a townhouse developers' paradise.

A report by Johannesburg City Council's Town and Foward planners released to residents suggested that property owners be given the choice to subdivide their land or build more than one structure on existing property.

If townhouse rights are granted owners of the largest properties could become instant millionaires. Houghton is regarded as prime residential land because of its proximity to the Johannesburg CBD.

A property owner, who did not wish to be named but had played a leading role in the formation of the Lower Houghton Rate-payers' Association said:-

'I have been fighting this subdivision thing for a long time. Lower Houghton is unique. From the air it looks like a vast parkland. I don't believe even Beverly Hills can compare. Sure, you can make a lot of money by subdividing - but I believe people who own property in Houghton have a responsibility and should make sacrifices'.

Another angry, but anonymous, Lower Houghton resident claimed that any subdivision in the suburb would have a negative effect of the quality of life for the original owners.

Traffic problems, noise and the ruination of the aesthetic qualities associated with the suburb could be expected, she said.

'To me and to a lot of people like me Lower Houghton would not be the same - it would lose its attraction for me' yet another resident said.

The city councillor and MPC for Houghton, Dr Selma Browde, has supported the move to introduce subdivision.

The point again is obvious. Transport planners must understand what is acceptable to their public, what is desired of their public, what are the value systems of their public-

and then plan accordingly.

This is not to say that the urban transport initiative has been in vain. The Urban Transport Act has caused transport planners to think, to focus the thought process in a particular framework.

Unfortunately similar legislation, or a similar framework has not been brought about for the land use planners, as witnessed above in the last paragraph on Sandton's development. This lack of co-ordination means that while planners disagree over 'low density or high density', market forces will overtake and dictate future land patterns.

What effect do - or should - these experiences and influences have on the planning and government hierarchy.

Chapters 5 and 6 attempts to pull it together.

CHAPTER 5 : CURRENT INTER-GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

In regarding the development since the early 1970's of the Central Government's gradual involvement in urban transportation it becomes evident that the cities' initial call was for straight financial assistance, direct from the Exchequer, with no restriction or controls - apart from normal financial reporting.

It is equally apparent that Central Government's intention was to meet this call by enabling the cities, formed into metropolitan transport areas, to raise their own user finance, primarily through levy and permit systems, augmented by taxes on CBD properties, parking and goods off-loading.

The initial view on the solution to the urban transport problem was thus in total agreement - provide the necessary finance.

Thereafter the views become more and more divergent as State Treasury pointed out that it should retain overall control of anything which was in the nature of a tax;

Province's pointed out that they had the constitutional rights to control licensing in the cities, which was in essence what the permit and levy system was aimed to be; and the Cities were reluctant to take action on the remaining alternatives.

One time Secretary of Transport Driessen retired immediately after the report bearing his name was published, four ministers assumed responsibility for the Transport portfolio in eight years, while Minister of Finance Diederichs died to be succeeded by Minister Horwood.

This lack of continuity, coupled with the rapidly changing short term national priorities and the public service empire building

mentioned earlier, led to a perception by Central Government that the Urban Transport Fund was merely a stop gap until the permit and levy system could be brought underway, while the cities continued to perceive that it was to be a source of financial largesse.

The aim remained the same - to obtain finance to resolve the cities transport predicament; the views on how this was to be achieved moved ever further apart. This occurred without the various groups even being aware of it. By the time the Urban Transport Act was promulgated, the Driessen Committee's original themes were bastardised beyond recognition though the pressures and resistances of the established hierarchy.

Controversy over the distribution of political power is older than the nation.¹⁵ The argument broke out as soon as South Africans began thinking about uniting their states, and it has not stopped since. The dispute about what power, lodged where, grew fierce enough in the 19th century to explode into Civil War, after which the notion of state sovereignty existed only as fantasy. Yet the issue has remained flammable enough in modern times to bring in several grave city-province-state confrontations, including several bloody ones in the case of 'riotous assemblies'.

The fuss is apparently going to last forever. Fortunately, it does sometimes fizzle down to a pleasantly inaudible buzz. In fact, the country enjoyed just such a lull in the years from 1910 to the 1960's. But then the lull was over. The oldest free-floating political issue in South Africa's history flared up again, fueled by accumulated resentment at that familiar, all-purpose ogre: the huge, inefficient, ever busy Central Government.

Concern about the workings and directions of the governing system has been climbing sharply and growing more articulate for the past few years, and not only among opposition parties. Says one urbanite, Johannesburg's Obie Oberholzer, 'The financial system of the country is in disarray.' The National Municipal Executive last year unanimously demanded that Parliament and Treasury create a commission to diagnose the whole governmental apparatus and

propose some sorting out of powers, particularly in raising finance. An equally urgent plea for realignment of powers came again last sitting from the Opposition, and have of course continually come from Black groups.

Given a more sympathetic governing body with a keen interest in the subject, this impressive chorus of discontent would probably inspire the appointment of study commissions and the production of all kinds of reports, analyses and perhaps even proposals for change. But what action is apt to occur? Is any important rearrangement of the central/provincial/city governments likely? The prevailing suspicion is voiced by several members of the President's Council in that they are not confident that anything substantial can be done to alter existing arrangements.¹⁵

Such caution is not necessarily cynical. It is common to anyone who keeps an eye on the realities of South African Government, as contrasted with the sentimental and doctrinaire preachings about it. One reality of political South Africa is the country's capacity and willingness to do whatever is ultimately deemed practically essential - while inventing the justifying doctrine as needed. The nation, operating under one Constitution has tolerated corporate trusts in one season but tabooed them in a later; let the Provinces oversee political parties at one time and taken them under the central wing in another. One flaw of the usual central government/provincial/city debate is that participants often overlook the adhoc evolution of the South African scheme of government; they imagine that governmental structures take their shape more from the niceties of theory than from the prodding of a society beset with messy problems. It can be said that the literature of provincial/state relationships is replete with myths that need to be demolished.

While the tangled problems of today's governments are far from mythical, the dialogue over realigning powers will predictably be shot through with mythology. Once again, the Provinces/Cities' rights catch phrase is being heard. But the Constitution assigns 'rights' only to individuals, none to the Provinces or that the Central Government has left the other authorities bereft of revenues. In fact, Provincial taxing powers are constitutionally limited only by their won Executive Committees, and presumably with popular approval.

An ever popular myth is that there once was, and might be again, a nice, neat division of powers and functions among central, provincial and local governments. This wistful notion, known in political science circles as the 'layer-cake absolute' - has never existed in reality but can be tracked back to some of the American pre-constitution positions that that great American James Madison expressed in the 'Federalist Papers'. Said 'The Federal Constitution forms a happy combination that great and aggregate interest being referred to the national, and local and particular to the state governments'. This closely parallels the South African ideal-freedom to quarrel about which interests are great, which aggregate, which particular, which local. Americans, as South Africans, have been arguing about them ever since, but the 'happy combination' has never taken place.¹⁵

The South African system was messy from the beginning. Literate South Africans were sharply aware of the confusion of powers the Constitution would create. Provincial rightists knew that a pre-eminent national Government was proposed. Indeed, arguments over the mess the Constitution was about to create grew so strenuous and disconcerting that original signatories later confessed they has been ready to support any tolerable compromise that was competent to sve the country from impending ruin.

Most Prime Ministers, regardless of philosophical sentiments, have wound up with similarly practical attitudes. Smuts did not let his qualms about provincial/city autonomy keep him from reaching into Johannesburg to stamp out the Miners' 'Red' Rebellion. Present Governments did not let their expressed earnest convictions about limited separated power keep them from high handedly concluding the 'independence' of four black states. Most of South Africa's recent Prime Ministers ritualistically approached their appointments with fine intentions of curtailing central bureaucracy, but a search of history turns up no examples whatever of success.

History itself debunks the myth that the South African scheme of government was supposed to evolve toward the fulfilment of some neat blueprint that existed in the minds of the founders.¹⁵ They were smart, but hardly prophetic enough to foresee the ever fluctuating economic, social, racial and environmental difficulties that have given the governmental machinery its present tangled shape. The reality of those problems, and government's response to them, debunks the idea that the central government establishment has grown constantly because of the influence of some special cabal of consecrated nationalists. Indeed governmental growth has been administered by conservatives and liberals - even by such a devote believer in Provincial rights as Louis Botha.

Dwight Eisenhower, American Republican president of note, supported States rights. The story of his subsequent practices may be useful to ponder during this South African debate. By 1957 Eisenhower was explaining why he had abandoned his stand against federal expansion: 'In each instance state inaction or inadequate action has forced emergency federal action'. Hoping to strengthen the government of the United States he established the Joint Federal - State Action Committee; to conduct precisely the kind of study discussed in the South African content earlier: a re-appraisal of government with an eye to realigning powers. The commission's proposals were hardly fundamental. Example: the U S might 'consider' abandoning aid to states for the building of

sewage - treatment plants. Suddenly Eisenhower had to deal with governor Orval Faubus of Arkansas, who had activated the National Guard to thwart the execution of a federal court order for the desegregation of Little Rocks' Central High School. Eisenhower, who had always refrained from speaking against state resistance to integration, did what he had to do: he federalized the National Guard. So much for personal sentiment; so much for states or provinces rights.

No segment of South Africa has ever managed to be entirely faithful to doctrine in the central/provincial/local issue. Over the years, every economic interest, every geographical section, and almost every authority, has expounded a theory of rights to justify its opposition to the prevailing policies of the central government.

Likewise, every interest, section and authority has at sometime supported some central government measures of a strongly nationalistic character.

In the 1980's the revived argument over central vs local powers is provoked by many issues as contentious and revolutionary as those of the past. However, the main provocation is simply - complexly, perhaps - the workings of the 40 or so Acts of Parliament by which the Central Governments aids, stimulates, coerces and and sometimes distresses the Provincial and local governments. It may be that movements for reform can lead to some useful improvements and adjustments in the workings of such programs. It is even conceivable that some rearrangement of functions among governments may result.

Any reform movement, however, is headed for disappointment if it sets out to overhaul the whole system with the intention of dismantling central powers to increase those of the 'lower' levels. 'The hopes of those who would do this' says George Sternlieb, a specialist in public policy at Rutgers University, 'are illusions'. Mere adjustments in the system will remain difficult as long as Government must respond to the needs of a

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society always in flux, particularly when ostensibly local problems continually accumulate into national problems.

It has always proved impossible, as a practical matter, to achieve even crude symmetry in the distribution of governmental powers. Perfection is quite out of the question, even as an idea. In reality, it is hard to assemble a dozen people, citizens or theorists, who agree precisely on what South African government has been or ought to become. The only indisputable thing about the nation is that its form persists as part of the South African creed, which is exactly why debates over it tend to grow so inflamed.

Indeed, because of the mythic roles of the ideas of devolution/nationalism - the power of the mere notions enough to arouse strong sentiments - every South African leader must embrace them in one way or another to serve the necessities of his times.

By now, every realist should see that the South African constitution is a wonderfully loose garment that allows the system to seem properly dressed no matter what system of arrangements the governmental apparatus is pushed into. It may be true that the provinces sometimes seem just administrative agents for the Central Government. That cannot be so awful. The Central Government, for its part, is nothing but an administrative agent for the people. Most of those people are like the original signatories to the constitution most of the time, willing to settle for any arrangement that is competent to protect them from ruin and assure their right to a decent existence.¹⁵

Where does that diatribe bring us?

To the situation that we, as transport planners, must provide the infrastructure for that decent existence - through the provision of mobility and accessibility as required, practically cutting through political stances and the philosophies of forms of government.

How I view this can be best achieved is provided in the next chapter.

CHATER 6 : CONCLUSIONS

This concluding chapter is divided into three sections, viz the first dealing with general observations from the author's own experience, the second suggesting a future *modus operandi*, and the third stating the conclusions drawn from the report in as far as they pertain to the title.

6.1 General Observations

We have seen that there is a need for all levels of government to address the urban transport problem for effective results.

It is suggested that the discussion in earlier chapters, as well as common knowledge of the development of urban transport provision in South Africa over the years since the passing of the Urban Transport Act, leads to the following conclusions:-

Local government has the benefit of local knowledge and historic awareness of the development of an area;

Provincial government has this benefit as well as the greater power of being practically able to raise finance either through the tax base or other specific source such as licence fees;

Central government has the advantage of being able to perceive differences from a distance, without having vision clouded through parochialism, and the power to direct finance where needed.

One can continually argue about systems of government from the national centre downwards through decentralisation, versus systems of local government with full executive control, delegating by consensus those tasks they feel incompetent to handle upwards.

The Driessen Report highlighted a weakness in South Africa of which all transport planners are aware - the shortage of qualified manpower.

We, as a profession, must cut through the political stances. We must plan pragmatically to best utilise the limited resources available to address both the urban transport problem, looming ever larger, as well as meeting the requirements of inter-metropolitan and productive rural traffic.

There exists at present an inclination for local government planners to reject anything that smacks of control from above, while there exists at central government level a tendency towards mistrust of the intentions or abilities of local government. Although both of these biased views are wrong, they lead to a reluctance to permit lower levels the freedom to plan, and provide, as they see necessary.

There is no doubt that the Driessen Committee intended to operate within the constraints of the South African Constitution. But there can also be no argument that with the, proposed majority of finance coming from the Urban Transport Fund, the Committee intended central government to be the senior partner.

This concept of centralisation has been proved impractical, and inefficient, throughout the history of management, excepting in very simple systems.¹⁵ By the same token however, one can not adopt the approach of the various guide plan committees around the country wherein a committee of officials attempt to prescribe a guide plan for an area, without any financial contribution whatever. Such efforts, as good intentioned as they may be, are merely wasted.

To obtain sufficiently disaggregated planning, and to meet the demand of grass roots public participation, the decisions must be taken as near to implementation level as possible. Planning, prioritising and execution should therefore be undertaken at local government level. The metropolitan concept must be supported for transport, just as much as for water, sewerage and electricity reticulations. The demands of transportation do not cut off at municipal boundaries.

The cities problem is one of finance, not one of day to day ability to plan adequately. For this reason the powers to raise finance should not be used to interfere with the production process in the form of blanket levies. Charges should be allocated as directly as possible to the user.

The nearest practical system to this is a fuel levy, followed by a vehicle permit and levy system. Power to implement such funding should be allocated to the cities, while Provinces should be willing to follow the Cape's example and contribute towards those routes carrying interurban traffic in proportion to the amount of such traffic carried.

The funds for this contribution should be raised from the general vehicle licence base.

For public transport operations the MTAB's should have executive powers and the ability to call for annual tenders for the provision of services along specific routes. The powers for controlling these routes can be provided by incorporating the Local Road Transportation Boards into the MTAB executive.

Where does this leave Central Government?

It is becoming increasingly apparent that a portion of the GNP should be spent on transportation in the long term - both on transportation as a whole (some 16 - 19%) and on the provision and maintenance of infrastructure (approximately 4%). These amounts are historic. Spend less and the country is heading for trouble.

The amount needed in excess of that raised by local government and Provincial licences to meet this figure of 4% should be raised by Central Government in fuel tax and Parliamentary appropriations.

The Central Government's role should be an overseeing one, restricted solely to the preparation of national standards where it is recognised that a need for these exists, and to the undertaking of 80% financed demonstration projects where it is apparent that local politics are preventing the natural course of provision (e.g. the South-West Busway linking Soweto to Johannesburg). If areas wish to go it alone without any centrally funded demonstration projects they should be permitted to, with it being made clear that other areas will benefit from the central contribution.

In short the Urban Transport Act and Road Transportation Act already carry most of the powers necessary for effective transportation provision. The Financial Relations Act needs to be amended to give local authorities fund raising powers.

Then, within existing frameworks, all resources can be meaningfully directed towards resolving the problems of urban transportation, but without any one party dominating or dictating to another.

6.2 Concluding Summary

This dissertation has aimed to identify what has been the role of central government in urban transport provision in South Africa and, in the light of the country's experience, tried to identify what its role should be.

The opening chapter, it is felt, identified that an urban transport problem as defined by JD Thomson, and as recognised by the World's transportation specialists, was developing. While perhaps not yet as great as in some of the large cities of the western world the individual symptoms, if not addressed timeously, will grow.

In recognising the developing situation, the South African Government appointed the Committee of Inquiry into Urban Transport Facilities in the Republic (the Driessen Report); accepted many of its recommendations as policy, as contained in a White Paper; and provided for the implementation of these policies in law, through the Urban Transport Act.

The development of this recognition/implementation process took from 1970 to 1977 and is discussed in chapter 2. The intended central government urban transport policy which emerged from the process is also discussed in that chapter and is compared briefly with other national policies in the United Kingdom, the United States and in France.

It was seen that the envisaged policy formed a sound basis for practically addressing developing problems in the American framework, which is to establish organisations, standards and firm policies, and then finance these towards providing facilities to meet expected future transport demand. While the policy recognised the importance of public transport, its financial emphasis lay in providing more road space to be paid for by the user.

We then looked at the actual, practical expression of this philosophical policy and how it was influenced by political positions and stances with time.

Chapter four identified that, in those areas where a co-ordinated endeavour was evident - where a real need existed - for example in the realms of research, education and public involvement, central government action had been positive and beneficial.

It also identified that in the practical provision of transport systems and in the influencing of living patterns, central government has in the short term been ineffective. Development has occurred both in land and transport usage as it would have whether central government had been involved or not.

However, more positively, it was submitted and shown that its involvement had introduced a measure of objectivity and rationality into the planning and decision making process. Again an area where a need existed.

In discussion in chapter five we identified that no three level system of government can hope to be cut into neatly tiered slices, with their own levels of responsibility and clearly defined roles to play.

It is concluded that no single authority can meet the transport needs of the urban areas of the Republic. This obvious observation must be recognised by all participants. The available talent exists at local government level; the available power to raise vehicle and local taxes and distribute these amongst urban vs rural areas lies with the Provinces; the ability to observe from a distance and, if necessary, raise national financing to address real needs, rests with central government. No single party can do it all.

We must recognise the complementary and supplementary roles we play in parallel, and utilise our total resources to the maximum benefit of the transport users of South Africa.

Coercion through negotiation must remain our common modus operandi.

6.3 Report Conclusion

The questions at the end of Chapter 1 : Section 1.2 (page 10) need to be answered in the light of the investigations covered in the report .

Despite a great deal of talk about the need, and many conferences aimed towards inducing the same, there has been no shift from private to public transport in the Republic since the Driessen Report was first published. This situation is aggravated in that there has been no change in planning philosophy, nor has there been a shift in investment patterns. The private motor car continues to reign supreme.

Transport planners continue to plan for the motor car - and this would have been the case had central government become involved in South Africa's Urban Transport initiative or not. On the positive side planning is now undertaken on a metropolitan basis, rather than by individual town. This is a direct result of central government intervention and is to be welcomed.

However, the lack of a meaningful financial contribution from the Urban Transport Fund has meant that not one project has been undertaken which would not have been undertaken in any event - apart from demonstration projects. Unfortunately the effect of the demonstration projects chosen for assistance does not appear to be influential in anyway.

Central Government involvement in the planning process has led to greater objectivity in the ranking of projects. However, it must be conceded that, apart from or few noteworthy exceptions, the cities have not enthusiastically adopted the Department of Transport monitoring system. This is attributable both to the lack of a big stick in the form of a substantial monetary contribution from central government, and to the lack of staff or lack of recognition of the benefits of the system at local government level.

The result is that the ranking of problems and the choice of decision for solution remains subjective, albeit on a metropolitan rather than individual town basis. The roles of the different levels of government have been extensively discussed in the report and particularly in the previous section. They will not be further elaborated upon, apart from making the statement that the current level of funding effectively reduces the role that central and provincial government could play in alleviating the urban transport problem.

It is hoped that this report in some way serves to provide an overview of central government involvement in urban transport in South Africa, and provides information to enable a successful approach to be made to the necessary parties to ensure a more effective and efficient role for central government than we have in the past.

The Driessen Committee's work deserves more recognition and support than it has to date if we are to avoid congested chaos in our metropolitan areas.

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Author Copley P J

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