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TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING BOARD

STATEMENT OF PLANNING POLICY FOR URBAN WATERWAYS AND ENVIRONS

February, 1977

Discussion Paper: Policy Goals and Work Programme

1. INTRODUCTION:

- 1.1 The work programme for the preparation of a Statement of Planning Policy for Urban Waterways and Environs was commenced in December, 1976. As much preliminary work has already been done on waterways, in particular the National Estate "Melbourne Metropolitan Waterways study", (not yet released) it was decided that only a short-term research programme would be necessary before formulation of a draft policy.
- 1.2 It is anticipated that the research programme would be completed in three to four months, and that a draft policy would be prepared by mid-year.

2. THE PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

- 3.1 Urban waterways form an extensive natural system in the Melbourne metropolitan area and are a significant natural feature in many other urban areas. Within the urban framework, waterways and their immediate environs are not only part of the drainage system but also form an extensive open space network through the built-up area. As such, waterway environs provide a significant proportion of undeveloped land remaining in urban areas, and demands for its use are increasing.
- 2.2 Urban development has resulted in changes to the runoff pattern, requiring waterways and their floodplains to carry greater peak volumes of runoff and reduced volumes at other times. Development on the floodplain itself has resulted in changes to the flooding pattern.
- 2.3 As waterways and their valleys are a significant topographic and landscape element, the open space is in demand for use as recreation areas, although its value in this regard depends on accessibility, water quality and the engineering methods used for drainage works.
- 2.4 As urban areas have grown, the open space along waterways, being of a linear nature, has become a prime location in terms of social and economic costs, for new transport routes and service easements.
- 2.5 There have been numerous controversies over the use of urban waterways. The Statement of Planning Policy would enable the Government to declare its broad policies for the use of this land. In preparing the policy, the needs and priorities of Government departments and agencies, municipal councils, and the public would be considered. The policy would set the priorities for use of waterways and environs, and would provide guidelines to be used in resolving land use issues involving conflicting or incompatible proposals.

3. GOALS

3.1 Principal Goal

That the future planning of urban waterways and their environs should primarily have regard to their function as both a major drainage system and an invaluable open space resource.

3.2 Sub Goals

To define those areas within the environs of urban waterways where demands for new and extended works or development can most appropriately be met.

To ensure the retention and enhancement of open space adjacent to urban waterways as a major recreational resource.

To set down guidelines for resolving the problems of conflicting demands for the use of waterways and open space in their immediate environs.

To define and provide for the protection of those parts of the urban waterways system that are recognised as having landscape or nature conservation significance.

4. THE POLICY AREA

4.1 The policy will apply to the immediate environs of all waterways within the urban areas of Melbourne and other urban areas within the State (which will be defined in an appendix to the Policy), where waterways, are defined as being all rivers, streams, lakes and other water bodies within or bounding urban areas. The environs of the waterways have been broadly defined as the extent of the existing open space, or the floodplain, whichever is the greater.

4.2 The relationship between the area covered by a Statement of Planning Policy for Urban Waterways and Environs, and Statement of Planning Policy No. 4, River Yarra, will require careful definition.

5. AUTHORITIES AND ORGANISATIONS CONTACTED

5.1 Letters of notification regarding the preparation of a Statement of Planning Policy for Urban Waterways and Environs have been sent to the following:-

- (a) Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works
- Dandenong Valley Authority
- State Rivers and Water Supply Commission
- Country Roads Board
- State Electricity Commission
- Gas and Fuel Corporation
- Victorian Railways Department
- Public Works Department
- Port Phillip Authority
- Melbourne Harbour Trust
- Ministry for Conservation
 - National Parks Service
 - Fisheries and Wildlife Division
 - Land Conservation Council
 - Environment Protection Authority
 - Soil Conservation Authority

Ministry for Water Resources
Department of State Development (& Tourism)
Mines Department
Department of Crown Lands and Survey
Premiers Department - Garden State Committee
State Co-ordination Council
Department of Agriculture
Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation
Ministry for Transport - Metropolitan Transportation Committee
Health Department
Northern Melbourne Regional Organisation of Councils.

- (b) All municipal councils within MMBW area.
- (c) Conservation Council of Victoria - Urban Creeks Campaign
Australian Conservation Foundation.

- 5.2 Letters of notification are also being sent to municipal councils in urban areas outside Melbourne. These letters are to be accompanied by a questionnaire seeking information about waterways in each urban area.
- 5.3 A method for a wider distribution of information about the programme to the public is being considered.
- 5.4 Meetings are being held with officers of all metropolitan councils in the next six weeks, in order to explain the policy programme, to have an initial exchange of ideas, and to answer any queries. Meetings with Government authorities will be arranged as and when required.

6. RESEARCH REPORT WORK PROGRAMME

- 6.1 The research programme aims to give an accurate picture of the existing conditions of the waterways and their environs, together with information on potential demands and priorities for use of the open space.

Preliminary work carried out on a sample of six catchments in the metropolitan area indicated that proposals for use of waterways and their environs came from several sources. Further information will be gathered on each of these. Much of the required information already exists and will only need to be brought together and interpreted within the framework of the policy programme.

- 6.2 The following sections are proposed for the Research Report:
 - (a) General Description of Metropolitan Waterways System.
 - (b) Open Space Survey
 - (c) Recreation and Parkland Areas
 - (d) Transport Routes
 - (e) Utility Services
 - (f) Drainage, Flooding and Water Supply
 - (g) Areas of Conservation Significance
 - (h) Study of Urban Waterways outside Melbourne Metropolitan area.
 - (i) The Management and Planning of Urban Waterways and their Environs.

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