

State Sustainability Strategy

Submission from the Department for Planning and Infrastructure

Introduction

This is a submission to the State Sustainability Strategy currently being developed by the Sustainability Unit within the Department of Premier and Cabinet. The submission is structured into four sections:

1. Definitional issue.
2. Sustainability Issues.
3. Current and proposed DPI initiatives to achieve sustainable outcomes.
4. Suggested Portfolio structural processes to achieve sustainable outcomes

In addressing the issue of sustainability a conscious decision was made not to differentiate between the metropolitan and regional areas. While specific circumstances will dictate the level and type of land use and transport response and activity, the objectives outlined below are for both metropolitan and regional areas of the State; the nature of the issue and the responses to the issues makes this differentiation.

1. Definitional Issue

The development of the Sustainability Strategy contains two inter-related components that are reflected in the definition used by the Governor of Oregon:

Sustainability is: “using, developing and protecting resources at a rate and in a manner that enables people to meet their current needs and also provides that future generations can meet their own needs”; and

Sustainability requires: “simultaneously meeting environmental, economic and community (social) needs”.

(Oregon Progress Board, 2000)

The combination of sustainability and triple bottom line considerations are included in the following submission.

2. Sustainability Issues

The following sustainability issues are provided to give direction and context to the current and suggested interventions available to the Planning and Infrastructure Portfolio to achieve sustainability and the triple bottom line. The list does not necessarily cover all sustainability issues.

- Homogenous, low-density urban sprawl with low employment self-sufficiency, poor access to services and issues of infrastructure funding.
- High and increasing levels of car dependence and limited public transport use.
- Difficulties in providing alternative transport solutions (public transport, walking, cycling) in expanding regions, with resource constraints, and conflicting community and industry demands.
- Increasing resource consumption and ongoing pressure on environmental assets, especially bushland and the coast.
- Some middle ring suburbs and centres in decline: property values, employment, centre failure.
- The need for individuals to consider and behave in a more sustainable manner in such areas as their choice of travel mode, trip patterns and destination.
- The inflexibility of urban form in adapting to changing demographic and employment trends.
- Shifting populations in regional centres with loss of employment opportunities and social infrastructure in some areas, and issues of growth management in others.
- Land degradation from clearing and agricultural practices.
- Need for new and innovative approaches to natural resource management.

3. Current and Suggested DPI initiatives achieving sustainable outcomes.

This section is divided into key intervention areas or groups of actions designed to achieve sustainable outcomes. Each key intervention area has an objective and a representative list of actions or current initiatives, followed by opportunities and suggested initiatives that could be considered during the development of the State Sustainability Strategy

- Urban and regional growth management.
- Revitalisation of key declining centres and suburbs.
- Land use transport integration.
- Balanced use of public and personal transport systems.
- Freight transport systems.
- Environment and natural resource management.

3.1 Urban and regional growth management

To create a sustainable balance for employment, transport and housing choice, and community development by managing urban and regional growth, including population change, through better urban structure.

Current Actions:

- Progressing the State Planning Strategy through Future Perth to develop visions for the long term future of the South West Urban systems.
- Finalising the Liveable Neighbourhoods Policy as the mandatory policy for structure planning and subdivision and continue its place based application at key major projects on the Urban Fringe of Perth and in key regional centres.
- Developing models for the provision of community consultative district level transit supported development based on implementation of Brighton Charrette outcomes for Satterley/Landstart/JV land in the North West Corridor.
- Coordinating infrastructure with land supply through the mechanism of the Metropolitan Development Program and the Country Land Development Program.
- Providing a strategic development framework for local areas by coordinating and developing Local Planning Strategies with local government.

Opportunities

- Require all government and development projects to be based on Liveable Neighbourhoods until the policy is mandatory.
- Involve Landcorp and Department of Contracts, Information and Technology in a model service industry and small business incubator project at Brighton as a catalyst for 'growing' employment in new areas.
- Use Future Perth processes as a mechanism to generate region wide community debate on urban growth and test implementation options to achieve optimal employment, residential and center location.
- Develop strategies to proactively manage the location of urban development, including consultative agreements with local government on land release and using the Metropolitan Development Program to match land supply to the cost efficient provision of infrastructure.

3.2 Revitalisation of Key Declining Centres and Suburbs

To revitalise key existing centres and suburbs that are in decline to improve their economic base and social viability, and ensure sustainable use of existing infrastructure and services, including leverage off proposed government investment.

Current Actions

- Using the participative Enquiry-by-Design process; promote community decision making in investigating revitalization options for centres and suburbs, using the Liveable Neighbourhoods approach (as per Armadale, Midland, Claremont, Mirrabooka). Develop implementation frameworks for local government, and match with co-ordinated government investment.
- Developing the Middle Neighbourhoods Study as a model for measuring the relative performance of suburbs against design and sustainability indicators.

Opportunities

- Develop a series of indicators that enable more targeted government intervention and investment into local government areas of decline and opportunity, through an ongoing program of revitalization workshops, such as in Balga, Girrawheen and Koondoola.
- Consider establishing Place Managers between state and local government to co-ordinate implementation of revitalization workshop outcomes: design, social, economic development, environmental.
- Initiate training programs and a pool of facilitators (possibly certified) to run community participative planning processes.
- Progress higher density residential development by linking the provision of government infrastructure (infill sewerage program and underground power) and services (expanded public transport) to local commitment to urban consolidation.
- Integrate these processes into a new integrated transport funding process links urban renewal initiatives with transport infrastructure funding.

3.3 Land Use Transport Integration

To maximise the opportunity to increase residential, employment, retail, community and entertainment activity around key transport nodes and major centres.

Current Actions

- Examining options for existing stations where transport land use integration can be improved and implemented through the 'Building Better Stations' program, in consultation with the inter-government committee and local communities
- Examining opportunities for maximizing population and employment at future stations on the SouthWest Metropolitan Railway.
- Using the "Building Better Stations" program to maximize the benefits of government investment into wider local precincts, through participative community and local government Enquiry-by-Design Workshops (Bassendean).
- Providing more effective decision making and local monitoring processes by combining regional planning and transport strategies and management committees.

Opportunities

- Actively prioritise new station precincts where better integration is possible (Leda).
- Research and document vehicle trip behaviour by household, to establish if current engineering model of 10 trips/day is realistic, or is resulting in roads being over designed. Reissue new guidance if this is the case.
- Research parking demand at suburban centres and where appropriate encourage shared use of parking as a mechanism to deliver more mixed land use.
- Identify and implement incentives and disincentives to discourage major office developments locating in service industry and business parks isolated from main public transport networks.
- Develop programs that increase mix-use development in strategic and other regional centres with good public transport provision.
- Provide for flexibility in residential zoning, which allows small businesses and "corner shop" retail facilities to locate in existing suburban communities.
- Develop a policy framework to stimulate development in key regional centres where there is capacity to exploit inter-regional transport links.
- Assist local government to develop their Local Planning Strategies and coordinate with their other activities, such as works programs and parking management, to achieve the land use transport integration objective.

3.4 Balanced Use of Public and Personal Transport Systems

To achieve a more sustainable balance between car usage and other transport options through the promotion and provision of efficient and effective public transport and non-motorised personal transport alternatives.

Current Actions

- Reviewing and monitoring achievement of targets for mode split shares and reduced average trip lengths established in the Metropolitan Transport Strategy (MTS), the overarching transport policy.
- Preparing sub regional Integrated Transport Plan which prioritise improvements over 5,10,20 year time-frames to public transport, cycling, and walking facilities as their main focus, in consultation with the local community.
- Ongoing implementation of TravelSmart Individualised Marketing to promote behaviour change.
- Developing capacity in local government to deliver their own TravelSmart/MTS target initiatives.

- Implementing priority infrastructure and services contained in the 10 Year Better Public Transport Plan which lead to travel choices which are competitive with private car travel; these products include bus and train services, bus priority facilities and interchange facilities.
- Continuing the introduction of alternative fuel vehicles into the State's bus fleet and foster use of Australian Design Rules to introduce better vehicle emission controls.

Opportunities

- Introduce parking management strategies in regional centres with good public transport services.
- Increase the efficiency of the public transport system through a comprehensive network of public transport priority facilities.
- Expand travel behaviour change programs such as Local Government TravelSmart officer program and Green Transport Plans.
- Introduce distance based variable road user charges and selective cordon charges.
- Develop a coordinated transport pricing policy for the metropolitan area that incorporates different modes and prices such as parking.
- Extend use of Australian Design Rules to cover noise and other environmental issues to cars, trucks and other commercial vehicles.
- Encourage the use of energy efficient vehicles through fiscal incentives and mandating a proportion of these vehicles in the government fleet.
- Work to remove inequity of taxation treatments and salary packaging arrangements that impact on public transport usage.

3.5 Freight Transport Systems

To achieve an integrated and safe freight transport system that is economically and environmentally sustainable and minimises community conflicts.

Current Actions

- Accreditation for the road transport industry.
- Undertaking strategic planning initiatives to support rail in limited markets.
- Participating in national processes to achieve uniformity of regulations and standards.
- Managing the Freight Network Review in close consultation with the community and industry.
- Introducing the new Australian Design Rules for vehicle emissions.

Opportunities

- Support the adoption of new Australian Design Rules for truck noise and lower noise limits for existing trucks.
- Investigate potential improvements to the environmental performance of light commercial vehicles and taxis.
- Define the external impacts of road transport (safety, greenhouse, emissions) compared to rail and sea and the scope for externality charges.
- Develop a mechanism to manage conflicts between freight and residential activity, using zoning options to create economic incentives for property owners.
- Identify opportunities and criteria for Government investment in freight rail infrastructure to effect modal change

3.6 Environment and natural resource management.

To support the sustainable protection of environmental and conservation assets and innovative natural resource management through asset acquisition, planning mechanisms and management initiatives.

Actions

- Preparing Statements of Planning Policy for the effective management of sensitive regions
- Implementing the Bushplan program to preserve and enhance remnant urban bushland.
- Implementing the Coastcare program to preserve and enhance coastal areas.
- Wetland and water mound protection where urban growth is planned to occur.

Opportunities

- Recognise value of coastal nodes for economic-social values; and need to fund maintenance of conservation assets.
- Develop and implement planning mechanisms, such as town planning schemes, to help preserve areas of high natural resource value.

4. Proposed Portfolio structural processes to achieve sustainable outcomes.

The adoption of the Machinery of Government Taskforce recommendations by the current State Government has lead to the creation of numerous Portfolios. This has seen, in the case of the Planning and Infrastructure Portfolio, the creation of a central agency (DPI) that is responsible for policy and planning, regulation, steering service agencies and delivery of a number of whole of Portfolio services.

The creation of DPI and the Planning and Infrastructure Portfolio provides a number of opportunities to achieve sustainable outcomes and the triple bottom line. These opportunities include:

- Bring together land use and transport planning and policy making. For example, the ability to integrate place based planning (ie Enquiry by Design) with transport infrastructure is more likely to progress urban renewal of key urban centres into reality.
- Ability to integrated the various levers of infrastructure provision (ie land, networks, services and non-built solutions), regulation, pricing and building community capacity.
- Integration of project evaluation into a Portfolio wide assessment process and alignment of these projects to desired whole of Government outcomes. The traditional approach tends to only deliver coordination within agencies.
- Better alignment and integration of the outputs delivered by service agencies.
- Ability to move, where appropriate, from demand satisfaction paradigms to demand management paradigms. This is reflected in effective strategic asset management.

To facilitate and deliver these opportunities there is a need to develop and implement a process:

- That defines the desired outcomes (such as the State Sustainability Strategy). The setting of State desired outcomes with regional strategy outcomes “nested” in these State outcomes provide direction and relevance to the different regional situations.
- Integrated planning process, such as advocated in the Government’s pre-election transport policy. For example, the following commitment was made prior to the election:

“Labor will develop local transport plans for each transport corridor in Perth and regional WA in active consultation with the community. These plans will be amalgamated into Regional Transport Plans that will highlight projects required to create more livable communities and will assist communities to identify transport priorities” (ALP Transport Policy, 2001, p14).

- A project assessment method coupled with integrated transport funding that encourages multi-modal planning and place based planning. This can result in infrastructure provision being done in conjunction with regulation, pricing and capacity building. An effective assessment method and aligned funding decisions also encourages achievement of land use objectives, such as urban renewal of key centres.