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TRANSPORT IN THE CONURBATIONS

Resource Paper No. 9

The Organization of Metropolitan Transport Responsibilities

in the Netherlands

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THE ORGANISATION OF METROPOLITAN TRANSPORT RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE NETHERLANDS

INTRODUCTION

1.1 This is one of a series of resource papers produced in the course of a project commissioned by the six provincial Metropolitan Counties. The study is a contribution to the discussion of the proposals for the reorganisation of local government in the metropolitan counties contained in the White Paper "Streamlining the Cities," published in October 1983. It provides an independent review of the way in which the transport functions of the metropolitan counties are performed and of the likely effects of the proposed changes.

1.2 Our terms of reference required us to examine the patterns of demand within the metropolitan counties; the way in which all of the local transport functions are performed and relate both to each other and to the nontransport functions; to examine previous experience in this country and relevant experience abroad. Our main findings are presented in two reports, one of which sets out our results (1) and the other our conclusions (2).

1.3 There are nine resource papers in the series:

1: Background to the current arrangements
2: Current organisation of transport functions
3: Effective resource allocation
4: Cost effective provision of services
5: Patterns of transport demand
6: Public transport supply
7: The government's proposals
8: Organisational structures elsewhere
9: Transport organisation in the Netherlands

Each should be read in conjunction with the section of the report of results to which it refers.


2. CONTENT OF THIS REPORT

2.1 The first stage of the data collection exercise in the programme of which this work is a part consisted of a detailed examination of the range of local transport functions undertaken by the metropolitan county councils in England. In parallel with that, though in slightly less detail, we examined how those same functions were handled in the Netherlands. That work is reported here. In Resource Paper 8, and in less detail in Chapter 1 of the main report of the study we make comparisons of experience in England and the Netherlands and attempt to learn from them.

2.2 The data collected and the structure of this paper was made as far as possible comparable with the data collected from the English metropolitan counties. It was collected primarily by Professor Polak to whom the main credit for the paper should fall, and written jointly in a format consistent with the rest of the main study. The authors would like to thank R. Stoffelsma, B.A., for important contribution to sections 3 and 4 and to H. van der Wal, M.A., for important contribution to section 5. Professor H.J. Noortman is also most warmly thanked for his helpful comments and guidance.

2.3 In the next section of the paper we describe the general physical planning system in the Netherlands and discuss the relationship of the transport planning arrangements to that wider system. Later sections examine the extent to which responsibilities for the various urban transport functions are allocated to local, or to higher level, authorities. We deal successively with highways (section 4); parking and traffic management (section 5); public and community transport (section 6). As some of the arrangements are currently under revision special attention will be given to those alternative arrangements now being considered (section 7). Finally, in section 8, some general conclusions are offered on the organisation of local transport functions in the Netherlands.
3.1 There is presently no fully integrated system for transport planning in the Netherlands. Instead there exist several frameworks which have developed historically alongside each other and which interact in practice. This is particularly apparent at the local level where the responsibilities derive from two quite distinct sources. On the one hand there is the whole system of physical planning. This determines to a considerable extent the scope for local authorities to make decisions about transport. On the other hand, and separate from the physical planning process, there are several areas of "sectoral" planning and decision making, such as the planning and financing of the municipal road system and local public transport. As the physical planning process is well structured, albeit fairly intricate, it may be useful to start by sketching this as a background to the whole of the exercising of transport functions at the local level.

3.2 All procedures and regulations concerning physical planning are based on the Physical Planning Act (Wet op de Ruimtelijke Ordening). This Act provides for two kinds of plan, the regional plan and the land use plan. In the formulation of these plans central government provides guidelines and regulations to the lower level authorities in order to obtain coordination amongst authorities, to ensure adherence to central policies on issues judged of national importance and to obtain economies of scale in technical knowledge. The local authorities inject local information and ideas into the regional plan in order to obtain greater local democratic influence, better contact with the local public and more flexible decision making. (see Figure 1)

3.3 The main aim of the physical planning system is that the different sectors which lay a claim on space, like housing, recreation, and transport, should be integrated in an overall plan. This overall structural planning is called "aspect planning" as opposed to "sectoral planning". The integration of the different sectoral plans takes place at different levels.

3.3.1 At the national level general standards are determined by the third note on physical planning, and structure outlines (e.g. for urbanised areas) are determined.

3.3.2 At the regional level the regional plan is prepared, whilst the municipalities have the responsibility to produce local structure and land use plans.

Figure 1: Authorities within the Physical Planning and the Highway Planning system.

Central Government:
- Crown
- Government
- Minister of Transport
- Minister of Housing etc.

Advisory Council for Physical Planning [RARO]
- State Office of Physical Planning [R P D]
- State Commission for Physical Planning [R P C]
- Council for Public Works
- Commission of Consultation Highways

Provinces:
- Provincial Government:
  - Plenary Council [PS]
  - Managing Board [GS]
- Inspection Commission for Physical Planning
- Provincial Office for Physical Planning [PPD]
- Provincial Commission for Physical Planning [PPC]

Municipalities:
- Local Government:
  - City Council
  - Mayor and Aldermen
  - Alderman for Physical Planning
  - Alderman for Transport

--- → advice
--------- → responsibility
-------- → secretary
3.3.3 Sectoral plans, e.g. for transport, exist at both the national and local levels, and in some cases at the regional level. Nationally there are structure schemes for road and rail transport, for canals, for airports, etc., whilst at the local level there are traffic circulation plans.

**Figure 2A: Aspect Planning (Physical Planning)**

- **Land use plan:**
  - Crown
  - Minister of Housing and Physical Planning
  - Provincial Government [GS]
  - City Council (decide)
  - Mayor and Aldermen (preparation)
  - land use plan

- **Structure plan:**
  - Provincial Government [GS]
  - City Council (decide)
  - Mayor and Aldermen (preparation)
  - structure plan

authority to impose revision of a plan
authority to give directions as to the contents of the plan
3.4 Planning responsibilities at the national level.

3.4.1 Parliament provides the statutory framework, and has a deciding role through the procedure called "central physical planning decisions" (PKB).

3.4.2 The crown (that is the king in council) takes the final decision on aspect planning, may initiate the drafting of regional plans, can alter or revise a regional plan proposed by a province, can adjudicate on conflicts between authorities after taking advice from the State Council, and has the task of approving regional plans.

3.4.3 Co-ordination between the interests of different departments of government takes place in the Council of Ministers. Most issues of co-ordination of physical planning are prepared in a sub council of the Council of Ministers called the Council of Physical Planning and Environment Control (PROM). However, the Minister of Housing and Physical Planning has a special power to give directions on regional plans if they are not in conformity with national plans. These directions carry the power of assignment of the provincial funds required.

3.4.4 The Commission on Physical Planning (Rijks Plannologische Commissie, RPC) gives advice on request or at its own initiative to the Minister of Physical Planning and Housing in exercising the power to give directions for the regional plan, in local government physical planning problems, and in the local land use plans and other physical planning issues of national importance. All departments have representatives in this council.

3.4.5 The Advisory Council on Physical Planning (RARO) is composed of representatives from various sectors of society (e.g. agriculture, recreation, transport, etc.). This council gives advice on request or at its own initiative to the Minister of Housing and Physical Planning on basic principles of physical planning of national importance. The Minister of Housing and Physical Planning is obliged to consult the RARO in main issues of physical planning. The RARO is responsible for organizing hearings and consultations where these are part of the procedures for physical planning.

3.4.6 The State Office for Physical Planning (RPD) is a central government body mainly responsible for the preparation of physical planning policy. It further supervises whether various regulations are being followed and has an advisory task with respect to the RPC.
Figure 2B: Aspect Planning (Physical Planning)

Regional Plan:

Crown

Minister of Housing and Physical Planning

communication

Provincial Gov't Plenary Council [PS] (decide)

Managing Council [GS] (preparation)

Regional plan

National plans:

Parliament

Minister of Housing and Physical Planning

National Physical Planning

\[\text{authority to impose revision of a plan}\]

\[\text{authority to give direction as to the contents of the plan}\]
3.5 **Planning responsibilities at province level.**

3.5.1 The main responsibility of the provincial level of government concerns regional planning. Provincial government has the power to establish the regional plan (which might apply to the province as a whole or to parts thereof), as well as notes and other policy documents on physical planning at the regional level.

3.5.2 The Managing Council of the Province (GS) is responsible for preparation and implementation of plans and for approving the land use plan. The Council also has the competence to assign or alter the land use in a way which is more in accordance with the higher level plans. The minister has, in this way, an indirect power to give directions for the land use plan via the power of direction of the province in the land use plan.

3.5.3 The Provincial Commission for Physical Planning (PPC) is composed of representatives of local authorities, local government officials and representatives from various local interest groups. The commission is the provincial body for coordination in physical planning and gives advice to the Provincial Managing Board (GS) on its own initiative or on request.

3.5.4 A Provincial Office for Physical Planning (PPD) advises the Managing Council of the Province on matters of physical planning and performs studies in the physical planning at the regional level.

3.6 **Planning responsibilities of the municipalities.**

3.6.1 At the local level Municipal Councils take decisions on land use plans and structure plans, describing intentions as to the long term development of spatial structure. The Council of Mayor and Aldermen draft the land use plans and implement them. A wide range of other bodies are used for advice, coordination and consultation but these bodies are different among the various municipalities.

3.7 **The instruments of physical planning**

3.7.1 At national level there are "aspect" and "sector" plans. Government policy concerning this aspect of physical planning is laid down in White Papers. Added to this are "structure outlines", which contain the planned spatial development of areas of specific nature for the long term (e.g. rural or urbanized areas). In addition to the White Papers on physical planning there are "structure schemes" containing the intended development for a special sector of the government policy (e.g. transport) for the long term, insofar as relevant for physical planning. The central physical planning decision (PKB) is the final government decision on the main issues contained in a structure scheme. It is of some importance to point out that in principle the structure schemes are part of aspect planning (looking at certain sectors from a particular
aspect e.g. physical planning). In practice, however, structure schemes and other plans based on them tend to assume a life of their own which causes the distinction between "aspect" and "sector" planning to blur. The Minister of Housing and Physical Planning may (after consultation with the RPC) instruct a provincial government to revise or redesign a regional plan. In the last resort, the Crown may declare void decisions taken by regional or local government where they are judged to be contrary to national level policies or to be against the public interest.

3.7.2 At regional level the regional plan is intended to set out the framework for regional spatial development. It contains a description of the desired future spatial development; maps; and the necessary explanations. The plan is for a ten year period over which it gives guidelines for the local area land use plans which must be consistent with it. Any objections against the regional plan may be registered with the province. The Minister of Housing has powers of approval and amendment as set out above.

3.7.3 At local level the structure plan describes the intended development over a ten year period at the municipality scale. There is no general legal obligation on the municipality to prepare a structure plan, though the province may instruct it to prepare a plan or revise an existing one. Municipalities are, however, under a legal obligation to prepare a detailed land use plan. Such a plan would zone land for particular activities and would also impose regulations on the various kinds of land use. The land use plan is legally binding for the public and is enforced through land use regulations and building licences. The land use plan itself is the starting point for any necessary expropriation procedures. The province has to approve the plan and the municipalities may lodge objections with the Crown. The province is entitled to give certain directions as to the contents of a land use plan as is the Minister of Housing and Physical Planning.

3.8 Transport responsibilities in context

3.8.1 The arrangements for the performance of the transport functions at the metropolitan level can now be examined at the background of the general political and physical planning structure discussed above. The present allocation of responsibilities for transport and traffic between local government and central government in the Netherlands may be described as follows. Both the formulation and the implementation of an integrated policy for transport at the urban level is a task for the municipalities in the first place. The role of central government is to provide the main instruments for the execution of this task, notably:
- covering the deficits of urban public transport;
- providing subsidies for improving urban transport infrastructure;
- establishing rules for the use of these facilities within the framework of national traffic legislation;
- steering towards an integral planned approach consistent with central government policy, mainly through setting guidelines for circulation plans.

In addition, a system for setting norms for the level of urban public transport is being developed.

3.8.2 In the co-ordination of policy between central government and provincial and municipal governments an important role is played by the national transport plans. These consist of a long term plan, the "Structuurschema Verkeer en Vervoer" (SVV), and a medium term plan, the "Meerjarenplan Personenvervoer" (MPP), which serve as guidelines for the lower level authorities.

3.8.3 In the course of the consultation procedure preceding the establishment of the SVV the suggestion was made by the Consultative Council for Physical Planning that co-ordination between different levels of government should be sought through the implementation of "policy norms". The government, in its reaction to this suggestion, distinguished between structural norms - which would determine long term transport policy by the lower level governments, especially in relation to land use - and norms for the operation of transport. In the event it was not considered possible to introduce structural norms because of the great differences in the geography of the cities, and because norms of this kind were believed to be too restrictive on lower level governments' land use planning.

3.8.4 The existing situation reflects the traditional Dutch view of local government as it has responded during the last ten years to the special centralising pressures of co-ordinated planning and increased revenue support to public transport. During the last two years, however, the new government has shown a desire to reduce the degree of centralisation of powers, and to reallocate responsibilities accordingly. In Section 6 we discuss the directions that are now being sought and the progress that has been made so far in these directions of organisational change.

4. HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE

4.1 There are three main classes of highway for administrative purposes in the Netherlands:

- primary highways (corresponding broadly to the British trunk roads and motorways);
- secondary and tertiary highways (corresponding broadly to other classified roads);
- quaternary, or non-plan highways (corresponding broadly to unclassified roads).

We discuss the planning system for each of these categories of road in turn, and then go on to discuss maintenance arrangements and financing.
4.2 Highway construction planning for primary highways.

4.2.1 The general structure here is that central government (represented by the Ministry of Transport) produces a long term highway structure plan and medium term multi-annual programs and budgets, into which a procedure of short term planning involving both central and provincial governments is fitted.

4.2.2 The long term plan, SWV, (Structuurschema Verkeer en Vervoer) contains a statement of general sector policy and highway development plans and maps covering a 20 to 25 year period. The plan has no legal basis but is expected to provide the framework for long term policy. The drafting procedure, "Planologische Kern Beslissing" (PKB) involves an initial commitment from the Council of Ministers to development of a plan, inter-departmental consultation, publication and public participation, and a second deliberation within the Council of Ministers on the preferred plan prior to Parliamentary consideration and the publication of the definitive plan. In the course of these procedures particular attention is paid to advice from the central government Commission of Physical Planning, lower levels of government, and the Advisory Council for Physical Planning.

4.2.3 The resulting state highway plan covers a period of ten years. In its turn it is subject to interdepartmental and public consultation before ministerial decision. (see Figure 3). The relationship between the long term highway structure plan and the "structure scheme" for road and rail transport (SWV) is a somewhat loose one. This may be explained by the fact that the practice of producing long term highway plans had been going on for many years before the SWV came into existence.
Figure 3: Sector planning for Transport and Highways

1 Long term planning (10 years)

Central Government:

Parliament (decide)

Minister of Transport (preparation)

1) Structure Scheme for Transport and Traffic (STV)

Minister of Transport

Directorate for Public Works

preparation

State Highway plan

approval

advice

advice

State Commission of Physical Planning (RPC)

Council for Public Works

Province:

Provincial Government

a) Managing Council (CG)

b) Plenary Council (PS)

decide

Secondary and Tertiary Highway plans

1) Results in: "Central Physical Planning Decision"
The inclusion of a highway in the plan is only binding for central government itself. It does not involve any legal obligation for the provinces and municipalities to include it in their plans, though the Ministry of Housing does have some statutory powers to enforce the inclusion of specific roads in the plans of the provinces and municipalities.

4.2.4 In the medium term, multi annual programmes, consistent with the SVV are drawn up by the Ministry of Transport. Financial responsibility for these plans rests with the Ministry and provision is made within the Ministry budget.

4.2.5 Short term planning procedures attempt to embed the general road plan within an overall land use planning framework. The procedure, which has no statutory basis has three phases:

1. the design phase commences when the Directorate for Public Works of the Ministry of Transport (Rijkswaterstaat) instructs the provincial states (PS) to make a design of the general road plan and continues until a formal proposal goes from the Rijkswaterstaat to the minister to adopt a specific proposal. During this phase Rijkswaterstaat is free to involve interest groups and other possible participants, though the consultation is not totally open and participants are heard individually.

2. the phase of establishing the general road plan starts with the submission of the preferred plan by Rijkswaterstaat and continues until its acceptance by the Minister of Transport. During this phase the proposal is sent to the Raad van de Waterstaat and to the Commission of Consultation on Highways. These representative bodies are able to force Rijkswaterstaat to make supplementary studies, and eventually the Raad van de Waterstaat advises the Minister.

3. the implementation phase starts when the Minister makes his decision and continues through to plan implementation. This is the phase of detailed project planning, specification and estimation. A programme is determined and public funds reserved for it.

4.2.6 Parallel to the general road plan procedure there is a land use plan procedure which allocates space to specific activities. Due to their separate historical origin these two procedures are not well co-ordinated, and opposition to the road plan often only emerges after the plan has been approved and is being fitted into the land use plan. Pressure groups may appeal against the road plan even at this late stage if they believe that the local authority responsible for implementation has not properly weighed the different interests. The structure of the medium and short term planning arrangements is set out in Figure 4, and the relationship between the different plans in Figure 5.
2) **Medium term planning**  
(4-8 years)

Central Government:

- **Minister of Transport**
- **Directorate of Public Works**
- **Programs**
- **Province:**
  - Consultation of other government offices

3) **Short term planning**

- **Council for Public Works**
- **Commission of Consultation**
- **Draft note for road design**

When the note on road design has been decided upon by the Minister of Transport, it has to be incorporated in the regional plan and the land use plan.

b) Part of the budget of Ministry of Transport

a) Possibility to instruct bringing changes in the note for road design
Figure 5: Relations between the different plans

Central Government:

- National physical planning
- Structure outline, e.g., for urbanisation
- Structure scheme, e.g., 'Transport and Traffic'
- Implementation plan, e.g., State Highway plan
- Policy notes, e.g., for parking, etc.
- Projects

Province:

- Regional plan
- Provincial implementation plan, secondary and tertiary plans
- Projects

Municipality:

- Structure plans
- Land use plans
- Projects, implementation plans
- Sector plans (e.g., for traffic)

facet plans
sector plan
4.2.7 A further problem is that the municipality, which has to approve the land use plan, also has the responsibility for implementation of that plan. The Minister of Transport is able to influence the land use plan only in a very indirect way through a delegation of powers from the Ministry of Housing and Physical Planning. Hence there is scope for conflict between local and central authorities.

4.2.8 A procedure for public consultation is provided under the Physical Planning Act, but the municipalities have considerable freedom to interpret it, and there is a great deal of local variation. Expropriation procedures are also statutorily specified.

4.3 Secondary and tertiary highways.

4.3.1 Secondary and tertiary highway plans, which have a ten year time horizon, are the responsibility of the provinces, and are the basis for the financing of secondary and tertiary highways by central government. The Minister of Transport can give guidelines for these plans, has to approve them ultimately, for this approval to be given the Minister must be satisfied that the plans are in harmony with the national highways plan. During the process a period of thirty days is allowed also for public inspection of the plans.

4.3.2 The detailed procedures for plan preparation are very similar to those for the primary highways, described above.

4.4 'Non-Plan' Highways.

4.4.1 Within the municipalities the following classification of highways exists:

- the main road system;
- roads for the opening up of urban districts;
- roads for the opening up of neighbourhoods;
- local streets.

Responsibility for all categories lies with the municipal authorities (as, in some cases, sections of the main road system are part of the provincial or state highway networks).

4.4.2 The planning procedure for 'non-plan' highways derives its structure from the physical planning system, for which the land use plan forms the central framework. The function of this plan is to allocate land to specific uses, and the local road provisions should be integrated within this framework.

4.4.3 The land use plan contains a formulation of the objectives of the municipality for the medium term and the necessary maps. Once it has been approved by the relevant authorities its contents are binding for all concerned.
4.4.4 The full procedure for establishing the land use plan falls into two parts.

- a formal procedure, as laid down in the Act on Physical Planning
- an informal procedure for which there is no statutory basis

4.4.5 Under the terms of the Act on Physical Planning the following steps have to be taken:

- technical preparation of the plan;
- publication of the plan in the press and in the Official State Journal;
- deposition of the draft plan for public inspection and participation;
- revision of the plan and adoption of an acceptable revise by the municipal council;
- transmission of the plan to the provincial government for further consultation and provincial approval;
- adoption of the plan by the provincial government on the basis of its harmony with the structure plan and regional plan;
- provision for those objectors during the earlier stages to register objections with the Crown;
- final decision by the Crown.

4.4.6 The completion of these formal procedures is followed by an informal phase in which the details of the road plan are filled in. This also includes provision for public consultation before final determination by the province. While for the main categories of roads there are separate highway planning procedures, for 'non-plan' highways the only process is within the framework of the land use plan.

4.5 Evaluation of highway planning at the local level.

4.5.1 The main characteristics of the system described are that it is procedurally lengthy, involving repeated involvement of public consultation and participation. There is a firm statutory framework within which this takes place, but there is also some scope for local variation in processes.

4.5.2 The advantage of this protracted, and localised procedure is that road planning is kept in close touch with local circumstances. There is easy contact with the local public and a high level of democratic influence at the detailed level, which allows flexible decision making.

4.5.3 The main disadvantages of the system concern the problems of co-ordination between contiguous authorities; a certain discontinuity in the process due to the total financial dependence on higher level authorities (see section 4.6); the different procedures that are involved in land use and highway planning; and the very long time scale involved.
4.6 Financing and Management of Highway Construction and Maintenance.

4.6.1 Within each level of government a separate agency exists charged with the maintenance of highways, though this obligation may be delegated:
- from one municipality to another (with the approval of the province);
- from province to municipality (with the approval of the Minister of Transport).

Wherever the responsibility for implementation lies, however, most or all of the costs are ultimately met by central government.

4.6.2 For state highways all costs are met from the state highways fund. The income to this fund is derived from a surcharge on motor vehicle tax and an allocation from the national budget. The continued existence of this special earmarked funding has been a matter of controversy for some time.

4.6.3 For non-state highways outside urban areas funds are allocated to the provinces on the basis of guidelines from the Act on Grants for Highways. This system is also presently subject to criticism on the grounds that subsidies are not proportional with the costs of maintenance, and that there are no such funds for non-plan highways.

4.6.4 For municipal road infrastructure there are five different sources of finance for maintenance and construction.

- specific grants are provided for by the Act on Grants for Highways. They are channelled through the provinces, though the original source of the funds is the budget of the Ministry of Transport. Under the present trend towards decentralisation the intention is to move to a system of general financial support to local authorities within which they would have greater freedom concerning the use of funds;

- the general municipal budget is used for local roads. Municipalities may raise their own revenue from the sale of land for housing purposes and from property taxation, and are also partly financed from the national "Municipalities Fund";

- special grants for local highway projects are available from the Ministry of Transport under a special decree where local projects are deemed to be of more than local significance (as for example with circular roads or connectors to the primary network);

- the Bank of Dutch Municipalities is able to raise loans for the municipalities, although they do not have powers of direct access to the private capital market.
special subsidies from the Ministries of Economic and Social Affairs may be available for projects which are deemed necessary to stimulate employment or to assist in regional or national economic growth.

4.7 Cleaning and lighting of urban highways is the responsibility of the municipalities, with finance coming from the general municipal budget.

5 PARKING AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

5.1 Parking

5.1.1 Since 1975, when the government produced a paper on parking policy as part of its budget statement, parking policy has played an increasingly important role within the national traffic and transport policy. Provincial and municipal governments also consider regulatory action appropriate in this respect. As national transport policy interacts closely with national land use policy, parking policy has to be implemented within that wide legal and administrative framework.

5.1.2 Certainly since 1975 central government has in principle considered parking policy as a very important instrument in its striving for a "selective car use", especially in urbanised areas. However, implementation of parking policy is viewed primarily as a duty of the municipalities and the role of central government is seen as that of furnishing suitable instruments for the execution of municipal policy. The parking facilities which arise from the policy have to be consistent with the urban land use plans and, especially, with inner city renewal plans. The costs originating from parking have to be covered, in principle at least, by the financial proceeds of parking and the municipality is required to enforce the policy in an efficient manner.

5.1.3 For the practical elaboration of municipal parking policy it is important to distinguish between the regulation of existing parking space and the creation of new parking space.

5.1.4 For the regulation of existing parking space the municipal instruments consist mainly of:

- the granting of parking permits;
- mandatory prohibitions under the Road Traffic Act;
- the power to charge a fee for parking on public roads.

5.1.5 For the creation of additional parking spaces the municipal instruments consist mainly of:

- the land use plan procedures laid down in the national Land Use Planning Act;
- the provisions of the Housing Act, which makes it
mandatory for the municipality to frame a municipal building bye-law in which the municipality can, and usually does, make the grant of a building permit conditional on the requirement that the applicant is obliged to make adequate provision for expected parking need.

5.1.6 The financial management of parking space by the municipality is facilitated through the Motor Vehicle Tax Act. This act gives the municipality the power to charge a fee for parking on public roads, and on grounds adapted for that purpose, by the following means:

- parking meters;
- parking ticket issuing machines;
- the letting of parking space to interested parties.

5.1.7 In principle the municipality can use these instruments to pursue whatever policy it wants. In practice that autonomy is curtailed:

- through legal constraints on the municipalities;
- by virtue of the fact that government grants to support parking policy in the municipalities are often made dependent on very specific policy content requirements.

5.1.8 A number of ministries have a responsible interest in parking policy, namely:

- the Ministry of Transport, for whom parking is viewed as an important restraint policy instrument in urban areas;
- the Ministry of Housing, Land Use Planning and the Environment, which is particularly concerned with the consequences of parking provision on land use planning and the environment;
- the Ministry of Home Affairs, which is concerned with administrative competences;
- the Ministry of Justice, which is concerned with the apparatus for the enforcement of parking laws, especially municipal bye-laws;
- the Ministry of Economic Affairs, which has an interest in the contribution of parking to the economic functioning of the inner city areas for which it is responsible;
- the Treasury.

These interests may well be in conflict, and there is a belief that it is necessary to secure better co-ordination between these diverse interests.

5.1.9 As it stands parking policy is not very effective in attaining goals of traffic and transport policy, largely because of inadequate enforcement policies in the larger inner city
areas. Despite the fact that central government has explicitly emphasised the importance of this policy area and studies aimed at improving the situation are under way, the prospects are not viewed as favourable.

5.2 Traffic Circulation Plans

5.2.1 There is no legal obligation whatsoever for the municipality to (periodically) draw up a traffic circulation plan (TCP). However, the Ministry of Transport makes financial grants to municipalities, as a condition of which it requires that the request submitted by the municipalities has to be accompanied by a TCP. These grants concerned are:

- financial grants to municipalities on the basis of the so-called "Ministerial Decree concerning grants for Traffic and Transport Provisions", which provide for up to 50% of the cost of park and ride facilities and of the provision for goods transport loading and unloading facilities;

- financial grants to municipalities which explicitly are meant to cover deficits of local public transport, executed either by a municipal transport undertaking, or by a regional bus company in mutual agreement with the municipality in question.

5.2.2 The TCP's are subject to the Ministerial Regulation on Traffic Circulation Plans (1981), which in a very detailed manner provides guidelines for the overall framework and contents, the periodicity, the preparatory procedure, and the final design procedure. Whilst a TCP is described as an autonomous decision of the local authorities, in which the municipal traffic and transport policies are laid down it has to be consistent with premises and goals of the provincial and, where appropriate, the national traffic and transport policies, and has to link up with the national land use planning policy.

5.2.3. After the municipality has drawn up a TCP fully in accordance with the guidelines and has submitted it to the ministry of transport, it is put to the test by the interdepartmental Committee for Grants for Traffic and Transport Provisions in respect of the first type of grant mentioned above and by the Steering Committee on Traffic and Transport in respect of the second.

5.2.4 Moreover, the Ministry for Housing, Land Use Planning, and Environment can require an "environmental paragraph" from a TCP, before municipalities can obtain financial assistance for any reconstruction measures aimed at controlling noise levels of traffic modes in conformity with the national Noise Nuisance Act.

5.2.5 Municipal autonomy and the stringent guidelines of the Ministry of Transport for the TCP's are not consonant with each other. Probably for that reason in the draft Passenger
Transport Bill presently under discussion these guidelines have been dropped. However, the obligation to provide a TCP as a basis for grant for covering the deficits of local public transport will be given a more secure legal basis, though, it is to be left to the municipalities to determine the shape and detail of the plan.

5.2.6 It appears that the larger city municipalities have the impression that the central government does not know what to do with the TCP's submitted, especially as regards testing the consistency between the municipal and the national traffic and transport policies. These municipalities question the need for a statutory TCP, because they are of the opinion that agreement between the traffic and transport policies of the "big cities" and the national level policy is needed only in broad terms. They accept the general policy obligations, such as promotion of the use of (inner-)urban and regional public transport; stringent parking policy, especially with regard to long-term parking in the old city areas; promotion of the use of the bicycle; promotion of an environmental quality in residential areas. But they claim that the existing TCP's already conform to these general aims, and question whether obligatory TCP's are not inherently in contradiction with the desire of the central government for decentralization of authority and for greater municipal autonomy.

6 PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

6.1 National policy on urban transport

6.1.1 As mentioned previously in section 3.6, the Structure Scheme for Traffic and Transport (SVV) contains the foundations for traffic and transport policy till the year 2000, and especially its consequences for land use and planning. Its formal status is that of being the approved framework for land use, adopted by government and approved by Parliament. It sets out the proposed structure of the national highway and railway networks. No networks are included for regional transport or for urban public transport. In particular the planning of urban public transport is reserved for the municipal level of government, although the SVV states that co-ordination between municipal and central government actions will be necessary.

6.1.2 The multi-annual plan for passenger transport (MPP) covers a period of 5 years and contains;

- financial framework for the planning period;
- decisions concerning the main highways and railways to be implemented during the planning period;
- general policy lines for urban transport and specific references to the points of action which fall to government.

The MPP is based on policy in the SVV, though there is no formal link between the two.
6.2 Municipal public transport.

6.2.1 9 municipalities have their own public transport operations; 42 act as the planning organisation, but have contracts for operation with the regional transport operating companies; whilst for the other (smaller) municipalities public transport is provided as part of the regional transport network.

6.2.2 Municipal authorities are responsible for licensing public transport by bus within a single municipality under the Act for motorized passenger transport. They are also required to hear the committee for transport licenses (CVV) which considers repercussions for inter-communal transport. In the case of lines crossing municipal boundaries the procedure is as for regional transport, where CVV grants licenses and approval of time tables is the responsibility of traffic inspectors. For tram and metro lines licensing is by the Crown under the Local Railways and Tramway Act 1900. Time-tables are approved by the Minister of Transport. Authority for licensing trains and metro-lines has been put in the hands of the Crown because of its importance for urban structure. As urban transport was judged to be purely a matter in which the municipalities are autonomous, the legislation contains no rules for hearing the public with respect to service levels and fares.

6.2.3 Since 1980 there has been a uniform fares structure for urban and regional transport throughout the country. Fare levels are fixed by the Minister of Transport subject to approval by Minister for Economic Affairs within general prices policy. Fares proposed by public transport companies have to be approved by municipal councils.

6.2.4 The corollary of this fares control is that deficits on public transport are fully covered by the Treasury under a regulation of 1 January 1976 for municipalities either with a public transport enterprise of their own or subsidizing urban public transport. As a condition, however, no additional subsidies for public transport are permitted from municipal budgets. The agreement between the Minister and municipalities contains a number of conditions for controlling the development of costs. Uniform accounting schemes (Uniform Verantwoordingssysteem, UVS) for budgets and for financial results are required. This agreement that central governments covers all deficits on urban public transport implies however that all extensions of the level of service have to be approved by the Ministry of Transport from whose budget the support is taken. Continuity of finance at determined levels on the budget of the Ministry of Transport is currently granted for three years. Further financial aid for public transport to support measures for improving the provision of transport (e.g. priority measures, new infrastructure, required because of change in network or change in transport technique) are available under a ministerial decree of 1981.
6.2.5 A number of consultative bodies have been created with the general purpose of promoting public transport interests common to the individual municipalities. These operate at three levels:

a) Municipal authorities

- one grouping of the (9) municipalities having their own public transport company ("Beleidsorgaan Openbaar Vervoer", B.O.V. - "Policy Organ Public Transport")

- a similar grouping of those municipalities (42) having a contract with (regional) public transport companies to provide urban transport ("Beleidsorgaan openbaar vervoer subsidierende gemeenten", B.O.S. - "Policy Organ of Municipalities subsidizing Public Transport").

The B.O.V. and B.O.S. both serve internal consultation and consultation with third parties such as national government, railways, or regional transport).

b) A consultative body for top management of public transport companies ("Coordinating Committee Public Transport", Coordinatie-commissie Openbaar Vervoer, C.O.C.O.V.) consisting of the railways, B.O.V. and the Association of regional transport companies (E.S.O.) engages in tripartite consultation with Ministry of Transport and C.V.V.

c) At the official level consultation takes place on service and facility integration and the preparation of the granting of new licenses through the Geinstitutionaliseerd Overleg Openbaar Vervoer (G.O.O.V.) (Institutionalized Consultation for Public Transport).

6.2.6 In some cases there is a common planning and/or management of public transport among different municipalities belonging to a single metropolitan area (Amsterdam, Eindhoven, 's Hertogenbosch, Rijnmond, Utrecht, Zwolle). No specific legal basis exists for these forms of cooperation, which are all local initiatives. A variety of arrangement has therefore emerged, including:

- a Council for Public Transport (Zwolle), consisting of the metropolitan area authority ("gewest"), the central city, a number of provinces, representatives of employers and employees. It is part of and responsible to Metropolitan Area Council.

- a Steering Group for Public Transport ('s Hertogenbosch) which is part of the metropolitan area authority.

- a Metropolitan area council (Eindhoven) chosen by direct elections and exercising the functions of Transport Authority.
Regional Consultation on Public Transport (Amsterdam) with membership restricted to the 27 municipalities within the Greater Amsterdam area. This body is purely consultative and an alternative suggestion has been made for a stronger body, with its own board of management, powers, finance and possibly even its own transport company. The reservation has been made by Amsterdam however to keep purely local ("intra-urban") transport separate from the regional cooperation.

6.2.7 Wider agreements do exist. In the region of Utrecht an informal cooperation between the municipality of Utrecht, the body for cooperation within the Utrecht conurbation, the railways and the cooperating body of regional transport companies has been functioning. A more formal structure is being considered which will consist of an advisory body supported by working committees formed by civil servants, with separate consultation at the level of the management of transport.

6.2.8 For the Rijnmond area (Rotterdam and 15 other municipalities) in 1983 a regulation has come into force to strengthen cooperation in the field of public transport. The participants are the 16 municipalities, Rijnmond public body and the transport companies operating in the area (two regional bus companies, Rotterdam municipal transport and Netherlands Railways). It is intended that the Rijnmond Council will advise on all activities concerning public transport (including infrastructural measures) planned either by the transport companies or the municipalities. The advice of the Rijnmond Council will be based on consultation within a special Advisory Council for Public Transport. The division of power in this Council is, however, somewhat unequal, the transport companies not having a voting right. On the basis of this Regulation parties have pledged themselves to act according to the judgement of the Rijnmond Council. As far as Rotterdam Municipal Transport is concerned this point has only been accepted for matters not purely relevant to the municipal territory, which leaves room for differences of interpretation. Initial experience with this new form of cooperation among different municipalities has not been very favourable. In the case of a public transport connection with one of the other municipalities Rotterdam has been reluctant to follow the judgement of the Advisory Council.

6.2.9 The arrangements for urban public transport can be summarised thus. In principle responsibility for urban public transport rests with the municipality. But as a consequence of increasing public transport deficits there is a central government commitment to cover them. This can only be kept under control by close central monitoring of performance and control over level of service offered. The effectiveness of local control is also affected by the proliferation, and diversity in size of, the municipalities. Despite the will to technical cooperation, and coordination at the management level, the firmly entrenched traditions of municipal autonomy has so far
prevailed the emergence of a strong conurbation level strategic transport authority.

6.3 Other public transport modes

6.3.1 For taxis operating within one municipality responsibility for licensing rests with the municipalities subject to appeal to the provincial authorities on issues of law (but not of policy). There is no coordination at a national level. The organisation of companies in professional transport (KNVTO) wants competences to be at national or provincial level, because the area served is usually larger than area of municipalities. They have also pleaded for norms for licensing policy and the Minister is considering putting licensing at the provincial level.

6.3.2 For contract hire excursions and tours there is a national level licensing system. A certificate of approval is required for each trip in order to protect public transport. In fact, nearly all requests are granted and effective competition is with the private car. KNVTO propose replacing the authorisation procedures by documents to be filled in by the firm itself, with control exercised by taking samples.

6.3.3 There is only instance of a ferry, that of Amsterdam, which is operated by a municipal transport company, directly responsible to the municipality.

6.3.4 Ambulance transport is financed on the basis of social security laws. Financing by municipalities as part of public health care has recently been suggested, though in the opinion of KNVTO this will have the disadvantage of a lack of a coherent national policy.

7. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN ORGANISATION

7.1 The background to change

7.1.1 New ideas on the distribution of responsibilities for local transport in the Netherlands developed rapidly in recent years.

7.1.2 The following important events may be mentioned:

- the commissioning of a report on possibilities for decentralizing transport functions. This report, which appeared in 1982 under the auspices of the Council for internal administration, (Raad voor het binnenlands bestuur, RBB) includes a range of practical recommendations.

- the publication by the Ministry of Transport of two consultative papers, one on regional and urban transport, another on other forms of professional passenger transport (excluding railways).
the publication, in 1983, of a report on taxi-transport.

- the publication of a draft Act on Passenger Transport, in January 1984. This Act is intended to give a new structure for the allocation of responsibilities for transport to the various layers of government. As such it will replace a number of existing, separate regulations, including the 1939 Act on Motorized Passenger Transport.

In Section 7.2 a general evaluation of the existing arrangements is given. Then the main proposals put forward by government to remedy existing deficiencies will be summarized in Section 7.3. Finally in Section 7.4 attention will be paid to the ongoing public debate on the views and proposals of the government.

7.2 The present allocation of responsibilities

7.2.1 At present there is no general law on urban transport. As a consequence responsibilities are defined either:

a) by the legislation on land use planning (e.g. regional plans), or
b) on the basis of regulations of a partial and specific nature (e.g. licensing policy; subsidies for public transport).

7.2.2 A brief diagnosis of the present organizational structure has been given by Visser (2) and is also included in the preamble to the draft Passenger Transport Act. These diagnoses identify four main deficiencies, namely:

1) central government busying itself to much with details (especially in financial matters, as a consequence of which there is too little stimulus to efficiency at the local level, both for municipal authorities and for transport companies);

2) regional transport dealt with at too high a level viz. by an autonomous central agency (CVV, see also section 6.2.2) too far removed from provinces;

3) structures for urban transport, regional transport and (national) rail transport are different, thus hampering coordination. The main criticism there is separation of PT/road/traffic management responsibilities;

4) insufficient coordination with other fields of policy.

7.2.3 Furthermore, a serious imbalance exists, insofar as responsibilities concerning public transport are much concentrated with central government, while those for highways are more evenly

spread over the various levels of government. There also is a difference in the nature of the responsibilities at the central level: those for highways mainly dealing with planning aspects, whilst those for public transport deal more generally with finance.

7.2.4 Thus, though variation exists between subsectors of transport the general picture may be represented as the existence of a wide range of implementation at the local level with real decision-making often being in the hands of central government.

7.3 New government proposals for passenger transport: the draft passenger transport bill

7.3.1 In January 1984 a draft for a new Passenger Transport Act was published. The Bill is intended to remedy the main deficiencies in the present organisation of policy making for passenger transport. Its guiding principles are decentralisation; efficiency and transparency of policy-making; greater freedom for the transport enterprises; and deregulation. The main subjects dealt with in the Bill are:

- the division of responsibilities for policy among the various levels of government
- the structure for the financial relationships.

7.3.2 The classification of categories of enterprises operating in the passenger transport market has been simplified to distinguish three market segments namely:

- public transport
- bus transport for restricted groups
- taxi transport.

7.3.3 Against the background of the presently existing situation four problems dealt with in the Bill may be considered particularly relevant for the urban transport situation:

- intra-urban public transport, responsibility for policy and the solution for the problem of finance;
- the problem of dealing with transport within agglomerations i.e. crossing municipal boundaries;
- the responsibility for policy concerning taxi transport;
- the planning structure

7.3.4 For public transport within the municipal boundaries no change of responsibility is proposed, with municipalities remaining in charge of licensing and of establishing the level of service.

7.3.5 For the municipalities where deficits on public transport occur a system of specific grants deriving from the budget of the Ministry is being proposed. The method for establishing the level of grants is differentiated according to the distinction in municipalities as mentioned in section 6.2.1.
Two main aspects of this proposed system deserve attention here. In the first place, the opportunity to bring grants for urban public transport within the present general municipal fund has been rejected. The argument is that using the existing criteria for this fund would lead to a fairly significant reallocation of means among the municipalities, as present criteria do not take account of transport costs. Secondly, however, the proposed system of grants differs from the present system in that municipalities will have the liberty to spend this money on public transport according to their own priorities. The normative character of the new system is being stressed. It is clear that this will greatly reduce the detailed preoccupation of central government with levels of service, choice of techniques of transport and the like. If the operation of transport leads to deviations from the amount accorded by the government, these differences will fully bear on the municipal budgets.

7.3.6 Of crucial importance to this system are the norms on which grants to the local authorities are to be based. A definite solution for this has not yet been found, though a number of studies have been commissioned to this end. Initially the level of the grants will be based on the extent of the use and on the costs of public transport in a base period. In the annual revision of the amounts the development of demand will play a role and in addition the possibility of introducing certain objective supply-side characteristics is being examined. The possibility for providing grants for investment purposes is also incorporated into the Act (replacing the presently existing separate ministerial decree of 1981, mentioned earlier). Though municipalities operating their own transport company are generally held responsible for investments the often irregular shock-like nature of investment is considered to be adequate reasons for providing additional finance.

7.4 Metropolitan transport

7.4.1 While for purely local transport the main problem may be seen as the proper organization of the financial relationship between central and local government, the more important question for metropolitan transport is what can be considered a workable model for policy formation. Under the new proposals it would be the Minister of Transport who bears responsibility for what are called "agglomeration lines" (defined as public transport services between separate municipalities in urbanized areas) instead of the independent licensing authority (CVV) as at present.

7.4.2 The draft Passenger Transport Bill permits the Minister to transfer his authority in two different ways.

7.4.3 Firstly, among a number of municipalities operating "agglomeration lines" one "central" municipality may be designated. Powers regarding all agglomeration lines - licensing, fixing time-tables - are transferred to the latter, whether the lines be within the central municipality or not.
This central municipality has the obligation to consult the other municipalities concerned in the fixing of time-tables and if no agreement results, the Minister will use his original authority. All supporting finance destined for the agglomeration lines will accrue to the central municipality.

7.4.4 A second possibility is for a number of municipalities to transfer their authority for local public transport to a separate public body. A body of this kind may be created on the basis of a so-called "common arrangement". The Minister can also transfer his powers concerning regional transport within the area to the latter. The "common arrangement" will then:

- exercise the powers of licensing and fixing time-tables;
- act as the recipient for public transport subsidies.

This solution comes close to that of a separate "Agglomeration Transport Authority", though it can only be created by the "private initiative" of the municipalities. The proposed procedure would have the effect of 'decentralizing' the difficulty of choosing regions which are functional from a transport point of view.

7.5 Taxi transport

7.5.1 For several years in the Netherlands a policy of popularisation of urban taxi transport has been followed and the proposal in the draft Passenger Transport Bill to transfer power from the municipality to the provinces is seen as a step in this direction.

7.5.2 Three reasons are adduced for this change:

- differences in policy among municipalities in the same region have led to unequal competitive conditions for taxi enterprises from adjacent municipalities;

- the difference in competitive condition has led to differences in fare levels, thus creating a confusing situation for the users;

- creating more efficient operating conditions for taxi enterprises, by releasing them from the constraint of restricting their activity within given municipal boundaries.

7.5.3 Provincial authorities will be entitled to delegate their powers with regard to licensing and fixing fares to municipalities which have created a "common arrangement".

7.6 The new planning structure

7.6.1 Under the new arrangements smaller municipalities will be relieved of the obligation to prepare traffic and transport plans (though they may continue to do so if they wish).
larger municipalities the obligation to produce a 10 year plan remains, though they will be given greater discretion than previously concerning the contents of the plan.

7.7 Intra-municipal decentralisation

7.7.1 The 1983 Municipalities' Act provides for intra-municipal territorial decentralisation within the largest municipalities. The main objective of creating urban districts which are partly self governing is to improve the functioning of local democracy and to increase the efficiency of local government. Experiments to exploit this power have been going on in a few cities (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Zaanstad). The following discussion is based on the situation in Amsterdam.

7.7.2 By municipal decree in 1983 two 'urban district councils' have already been introduced, and the extension up to a final total of 16 districts is under discussion. Amsterdam has opted for a model where districts councils are elected, have their own staffs and budgets which will have to be fixed by the council of the municipality. It is intended to create norms for the allocation of funds to the districts and further leave the latter free to operate within the limits of their budgets. All powers now in the hands of the (central) municipal government are being transferred to the districts, unless otherwise stated. The following distribution of powers emerges:

- Some powers have to remain with the municipal government because of a provision in the Municipalities' Act (approving budgets and accounts, decrees containing sanctions and raising certain taxes).

- An "A-list" states explicitly powers excluded from the transferring operation.

- A "B-list" identifies powers to be transferred, but where the municipal government retains the right to give directives (in practice relating to matters at the supra-district level).

- A "C-list" (called the "starting-package") states the powers to be transferred at the outset.

- A supplementary "D-list" outlines powers further to be transferred at the request of the districts.

7.7.3 All the main transport functions - highway construction and maintenance, traffic management and parking, public transport - are involved in the decentralization process, though urban transport policy would remain a matter for the central (municipal) government and districts would be charged with policy for their own areas. The main problem is making this distinction operational. Initially, it was intended to keep all responsibility - planning, maintenance - for the main routes (both for private and for public transport) at the central level.
This would include preparation of a Traffic circulation plan for the whole urban area which would be restricted to through routes. Responsibilities for the districts would be thus:

- road maintenance;
- traffic circulation and parking - making traffic circulation plans and parking plans for the district area whilst the central level would, however, retain the authority to give instructions which would be binding for the districts;
- the total aspects of public transport including stop location and proposals concerning the routing within a given district so long as they are neutral from a budgetary point of view.

7.7.4 Presently a proposal is under discussion which would rather drastically change the 'mild' transfer of powers described above. Though in principle the municipality would remain the competent authority, according to this proposal all main infrastructure would become the responsibility of the districts with the municipalities only responsible for certain guidelines and formulating objective norms for planning, maintenance etc., in order to guard municipal coherence. The main exception to this far-reaching degree of decentralization would be public transport which would remain a centrally directed matter. The reasons for the retention of public transport at the municipal level is the close financial ties with central government and the importance of a rail network (trams playing a prominent part in Amsterdam public transport; Amsterdam also has a single metro line while Rotterdam has a more extensive network).

7.7.5 Although on paper a workable arrangement thus appears to have been created, a recent (June 1984) evaluation of the functioning of the two urban districts presently existing has produced some rather negative comments. The main shortcomings pointed out are:

- the scope for urban districts to conduct a policy of their own is in practice small due to restrictive regulations imposed by higher level authorities and due to the unwillingness of the officials of the central municipality to transfer powers;
- recommendations from the urban districts are given very little attention by the municipality;
- members of the urban district councils get little support from their political parties and from colleagues in the municipal council.

Furthermore, the aim of improving the functioning of local democracy, in particular through greater participation of the population, is not attained, the councils being inclined to monopolise the exercise of such power as is transferred to them.
7.7.6. It remains to be seen whether these difficulties are in the nature of "growing pains" or whether they are of a more structural and hence more permanent character. At any rate it should be concluded that the ultimate success of intra-municipal decentralisation — not only in Amsterdam but also in Rotterdam where the experience is of a similar nature — is still uncertain.

8. CONCLUSIONS

8.1 In assessing the efficiency of the present organisation for the performance of local transport functions in the Netherlands two crucial questions need to be considered:

- How effective is the allocation of transport functions among the different levels of government?
- How well are the closely related fields of transport planning and physical planning tuned to each other?

8.2 Allocation of functions between authorities.

8.2.1 In general terms the role of central government is confined to that of creating the framework for the implementation of policies determined at the local level. Neither long term nor medium term plans existing at the central level make any prescriptions for the policies of the local authorities. Thus, in principle, a strong degree of local autonomy is the dominant characteristic of the organisation.

8.2.2 To this broad picture a number of qualifications need to be added, however. Firstly one should note that the organisation of functions for the different subsectors have different historical origins so that there is no absolutely uniform allocation of functions between levels of government across subsectors. The clearest example of this is the complete separation of the organisations for highway and public transport functions which has sometimes caused difficulties in the co-ordination between them.

8.2.3 A second qualification is that the municipal autonomy which in principle exists in the design of policy for public transport has been much eroded as a consequence of the growth of large deficits on public transport. In accepting responsibility for these deficits central government has imposed stringent guidelines for the municipalities, such as the obligation to draw up TCP's, including detailed controls on public transport services provided.

8.2.4 It is possible to conclude therefore that the structure of allocation of functions is much more complex in practice than in principle and that the task of integrating policy for the different subsectors of transport into a coherent overall plan puts heavy demands on the local authorities which, given the
absence of proper guidelines or subsector co-ordination, adversely affects the efficiency of performance.

8.3 Inter sector co-ordination

8.3.1 In contrast to sectoral transport policy the physical planning process has been set up as a coherent whole. There is no formal co-ordinating mechanism, however, between policy decisions concerning transport stemming from the area of physical planning and those with a typically sectoral nature, such as the determination of fare levels, of service levels and of levels of finance.

8.3.2 The problem of co-ordination is the more difficult as the provinces have an important task in physical planning while their role in transport planning is practically nil.

8.4 The search for an improved structure

8.4.1 The organisational problem which is being confronted at the moment in the Netherlands may thus be summarised as follows. Whilst both the formal allocation of responsibilities and the aspirations of both central and local authorities, would suggest a great deal of local autonomy, the practical problems of ensuring that central finance is fairly allocated and efficiently used has seriously attenuated that autonomy. Rectifying that deficiency suggests a restoration and strengthening of local powers which has been approached by the proposed Act on Passenger Transport.

8.4.2 On the other hand, however, the need to secure co-ordination between physical planning and transport planning seems to suggest that a common structure of organisation and a common allocation of the relevant powers is desirable. But insofar as physical planning comprehends interaction over a wider area than that of the smaller municipalities, or the urban districts, then an organisation at the level of the city region has its merits. Even some aspects of transport operational organisation (such as the control of taxis) is seen to have this same spatial dimension. So there are some pressures to create effective transport planning units at a level higher than that of the smaller municipalities.

8.4.3 In short, the picture of the Netherlands is rather mixed. Evaluations of the functioning of the existing system are essentially of a qualitative nature, but do suggest some inefficiencies which current proposals are intended to address. In particular means are being sought to allow functions to be performed at the lowest possible level and to reduce the amount of detailed supervision exercised by central government in public transport policy. But the attitude of government is still somewhat ambivalent. On the one hand there is a wish for decentralisation whilst on the other it is still felt necessary to give norms and guidelines to lower level authorities. In addition improved co-ordination between aspect planning - in
particular physical planning- and sectoral planning for transport will remain an area deserving more attention than it has thus far received.