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Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

URBAN MANAGEMENT IN MEDIUM-SIZED CITIES

**FINAL REPORT OF THE CASE STUDY
PORT OF SPAIN, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

This document was prepared by the consultant Mr. Timothy Moolledhar, under the project "Urban management in selected medium-sized cities of Latin America and the Caribbean" (ITA/92/S71), which is being carried out by the Human Settlements Unit of the Environment and Development Division of ECLAC, with the support from the Government of Italy. This document has been reproduced without formal editing. The views expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Organization.

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Abstract

Port of Spain is the capital city of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, and this role has encouraged an approach to its development as part of the national-level responsibilities, restricting the City Corporation's role to being an instrument through which the policies of the Central Government are articulated, rather than a decision-making vehicle satisfying the demands of the city's residents. The Corporation suffers from a lack of autonomy in all the critical areas of its operations. Whether intentional or not, the present erosion of authority of the Local Government has meant that the City Corporation does not possess the legal, institutional and organizational structures and the technical, human and financial resources to manage the city's problems adequately.

Port of Spain actually faces increasing urban problems: vagrancy, homelessness, loss of population, drift to the suburbs, decline of quality of life in the central area (downtown Port of Spain) after working hours. After the unsuccessful insurrection of 1990, new ways of partnership have been established between public and private sectors, which have had an impact on the rehabilitation of the city, in land development projects and city beautification programmes. These experiences convinced all participants of the efficacy of the partnership approach to urban redevelopment, and has given impetus to the City Corporation to pursue other projects in the city, utilizing the same approach.

Presentation

This report marks the completion of the first phase of the project "Urban management in selected medium-sized cities of Latin America and the Caribbean", which is being carried out in this city by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), with the support from the Government of Italy.

The project's rationale is the ongoing process of study on the present characteristics of urban development in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the role of local governments in this context.

As from 1986-1987 several research studies on medium-sized cities in Latin America have been carried out by various institutions, with a view to producing specific information on the role of local governments in connection with management and the construction of Latin American cities.

These works have pursued the double purpose of providing a global insight into the capacities, competence, restrictions and needs for technical assistance of local governments in managing intermediate cities, and meeting the demands of their inhabitants, particularly of lower-income groups.

The results of this endeavour show that the improvement of urban management in the region has to be considered in the framework of decentralization processes, since these allow local governments to assume a leading role in urban development.

The objectives pursued by improving urban management procedures are to increase productivity and urban efficiency; promote social and economic development; and assure urban development sustainability.

This project has as its main objectives to assist local governments of Latin American and Caribbean intermediate cities in implementing urban management processes through the design and application of proposals oriented to reinforce the models, systems and instruments needed.

With this in mind, the project has been structured around two major components: the analysis of the evolution of practices in urban management in the region, and the execution of activities of technical assistance in selected medium-sized cities in the region.

These two objectives will be achieved through the formulation of proposals and guidelines for devising urban management instruments adequate to the specific needs of the region's medium-sized cities, as well as through the design of urban management models and systems in six cities of Latin America and the Caribbean, which were selected as case studies: Córdoba (Argentina), Cusco

(Peru), Manizales (Colombia), Ouro Preto (Brazil), Port of Spain (Trinidad and Tobago), and Valdivia (Chile).

As to the project's first phase, the diagnosis and comparison of the case studies was carried out by national consultants, with the involvement of local authorities. The analysis of the reports produced has made it possible to make a diagnosis of the situation prevailing in the area of urban management. This is the first step in the process of defining management strategies for each case study, and elaborating adequate instruments to be used by local authorities in defining their priorities for reinforcing urban management procedures.

Among the activities to be undertaken in the second phase are:

- i) Design of instruments and urban management procedures for general application, in the form of manuals and software;
- ii) Direct technical assistance to national and international consultants in the introduction and implementation of the instruments agreed on with local authorities;
- iii) Direct technical support to local authorities in the implementation of urban management instruments; and
- iv) Technical assistance in the elaboration of future demands oriented towards the implementation of urban management procedures.

The results of these experiences will be disseminated in other countries of Latin America and the Caribbean interested in urban management policies and strategies, with a view to promoting higher levels of development in medium-sized cities.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago which is located off the South American mainland about 11.26 kilometres (7 miles) from its nearest point with Venezuela is the most southern of the Caribbean States. It comprises two islands which are separated by some 28 kilometers of water at their nearest point. The Republic occupies a land mass of 4 828 square kilometers and supports a population of 1.2 million.

Trinidad and Tobago has an oil-based economy which experienced a phenomenal boom in the 1970's. The State, one of the chief beneficiaries of increased oil revenue in the 1970's, was the single largest employer of labour, the largest consumer of goods and services and the major vehicle for the expansion and improvement of infrastructure and other capital works.

Expanded government revenue was accompanied by subsidization of a wide range of goods and services, increased employment in both the private and public sectors and an almost fourfold increase in the wage rate of salaried and wage earners. With the fall in oil prices in the early 1980's and the concomitant reduction in revenue, Government spending decreased. Contraction of the economy generated widespread unemployment and per capita income plummeted from US\$6 600 to US\$3 160. The official poverty level defined as households earning less than TT\$18 000 per year (US\$3 000) rose from 3.5% of households in 1981 to 21% in 1994.

The Nation's early population was drawn from the original inhabitants, the Amerindians; from Spain, France, Africa, India, China, England, Scotland, Ireland and Portugal. These were later joined by middle-easterners from Lebanon and Syria. The two largest population groups are currently the East Indians and Africans comprising approximately 40% and 39% respectively.

The Republic's population which is multi-ethnic and multi-cultural is dispersed throughout the two islands but concentrated in the cities of Port of Spain and San Fernando, the boroughs of Arima, Chaguanas and Point Fortin, and the main rural towns of Sangre Grande, Princes Town and Siparia in Trinidad and Scarborough in Tobago.

The greatest concentration of population is to be found in a 48 kilometre long urban corridor in the north-west. This East-West Corridor which extends from Carenage in the west to Arima in the east and includes the City of Port of Spain, is called the Capital Region and housed some 41% of the nation's population in 1995.

B. PROFILE OF THE CAPITAL REGION

The Capital Region is situated between the mountains of the Northern Range and the sea. It is a relatively thin strip of land which runs in an east-west direction for a distance of some 48 kilometres. Its narrowest points are between Carenage in the west and Laventille in the east. However, this natural corridor widens east of Laventille where the distance between the mountain and the sea is extended by the Caroni Plains. Additionally, the north-south oriented spurs of the Northern Range form a large number of valleys which ameliorate the constriction of the corridor.

The Capital Region is the most urbanized area of the twin island Republic. It houses the single largest concentration of population, manufacturing and commercial establishments, higher order social and cultural facilities and financial services.

The Town and Country Planning Division notes the following in its document, Planning for Development: The Capital Region:

- "i) The region provides a surplus of job opportunities to the rest of the nation. Thirty-two percent (32%) of the national working population reside here, but the region offers 53% of the job opportunities in the country.
- ii) Even more significant is the concentration of economic activity in the secondary and tertiary sector. Fifty eight percent (58%) of all jobs in the manufacturing sector and 63% of all jobs in service and commerce are located in the region. The petroleum and sugar industries, the mainstays of the national economy, are not urban based industries, but with the exception of these, the Capital Region lies at the core of the national economy.
- iii) The region is not a major producer in the total agricultural sector but it is responsible for the bulk of production in domestic food crops.
- iv) The region is the most highly urbanized in the country. Average population density is 25-30 persons per acre, but densities in local areas rise to 97 persons per acre in East Port of Spain.
- (v) The region comprises 10% of the country's land area but accommodated 43% of the total population in 1970."^{1/}

The Capital Region attracts new residents, both individual and corporate, principally because of its long history of association with Port of Spain as the primate city, its easy access to sea and air ports, the presence of some of the best physical infrastructure and the nation's widest variety of social, economic and recreational opportunities.

Urban expansion though, is extracting a heavy toll on the Region's physical landscape. Forested areas and agricultural land are being lost to built development as the Capital Region's urban area expands into the valleys and the foothills and slopes of the Northern Range. Moreover, slash and burn agriculture and squatting, particularly on the slopes of the Northern Range, have contributed greatly to perennial flooding in the lower reaches of the corridor.

The Capital Region contains some 52 000 hectares (130 000 acres) of which approximately 30% is urbanized. However, according to Town and Country Planning Division, "The built up area consists of a number of old villages and towns which grew up along the major east-west transportation route, and which have now expanded and coalesced into one continuous urban corridor stretching from Carenage in the west to Arima in the east."^{2/}

C. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES OPERATING WITHIN THE REGION

Located within the Capital Region are five (5) of the nation's 14 municipal authorities and these are Diego Martin, San Juan/ Laventille, Tunapuna/Piarco, Port of Spain and Arima. These municipal authorities, called regional corporations in Trinidad, all function under the Municipal Corporations Act, n° 21 of 1990 which replaced the County Councils Act Ch. 25:04; as well as the Corporation Ordinances of Port of Spain, San Fernando, Arima and Point Fortin.

The local governing authorities are the Local Highways Authorities and, in the case of Port of Spain, also the Local Public Health Authority. They are charged with a range of responsibility including maintaining streets and water courses; providing sanitation and garbage disposal services; establishing and maintaining cemeteries and crematoria, public conveniences and recreation facilities; approving building plans; granting licenses for display of signs, street vending and sale of foodstuff to the public; inspection of public eating places and food processing establishments and investigation of complaints of unhealthy, unsafe and or insanitary conditions in public buildings. They may undertake other activities with the approval of the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

The legislation which established the Regional Corporations was intended to rationalize the old county councils, to locate decision-making on development issues closer to those most affected by planning and development decisions and make more autonomous the new regional corporations. Based on discussions with representatives of the Port of Spain Corporation, it is generally felt that the legislation did not aid the decentralization of decision-making to the local level. Rather, it reduced the partial autonomy of the city corporations.

Unlike other municipal corporations many of which came into existence in 1990 with the new act, only the Arima Corporation and the Port of Spain Corporation within the Capital Region predate the 1990 Municipal Act. The Arima Municipal Corporation was established in 1880 when Arima was made a Borough.

The Port of Spain Corporation is heir to the Illustrious Cabildo established by the Spanish Crown in 1783 and the Town Council after 1840. In 1853, the name was changed to the Borough Council and in 1899 it was superseded by the Town Commissions when the Borough Council was abolished. In 1907 a Town Board was re-instituted and in 1914, with the change in status of Port of Spain to a city, the Port of Spain Corporation came into existence.

Between 1914 and 1956, the year Trinidad won internal self rule, the City Corporation exercised its greatest autonomy and played its most dynamic role in the development of Port of Spain. It was during this period that major developmental projects were undertaken; re-aligning and paving of the St. Anns river, duelling of Wrightson Road, expansion of the residential area of Woodbrook,

acquisition of the electricity generation plant and distribution facilities, control of the public transportation system and establishment of public housing.

However, by 1962 with the coming of independence, the role of the Corporation in the development of the city of Port of Spain began to wane as the new independent government took over more and more of the functions of the city' physical development.

Each change in the status of Port of Spain seems to have been presaged by conflict arising from differences between the residents of the city and the colonial administration which controlled the city government and subsequently between the operations of the local governing authority under the control of locals and the colonial administration with which it interfaced.

The five (5) municipal authorities within the Region are thus unequal in the tradition of local administration, municipal management, organizational arrangement and project implementation. While the areal extent of these local administrative areas also differ in size, urban complexity and resource base, they each contain commercial and industrial activities and service centres which provide for the local needs of their population. However, the areas over which these municipalities exert control have historically been within the sphere of influence of Port of Spain.

D. ROLE OF THE MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Ministry of Local Government is the central government agency responsible for overseeing the activities of the municipalities. In theory, it coordinates the activities of the municipalities ensuring that duplication of efforts are minimized, provides technical assistance in project planning and implementation, liaises with central government agencies to obtain resources which it funnels to the municipalities and works towards strengthening the technical capability of the municipalities to pursue with greater autonomy their development and management functions.

In practice, the Ministry of Local Government is little more than a pipeline through which financial resources are funneled to the municipalities. It does provide legal advice, financial and technical assistance to those municipalities who may require them. However, its own organization and resources are unequal to the tasks.

In the case of the Port of Spain City Corporation, the only assistance provided is in the preparation of the annual budget for submission to the Ministry of Finance. However, the City Corporation is responsible for defending its estimated annual budget (recurrent and development) before representatives of the Budget Division of the Ministry of Finance.

Formal consultations between the Ministry of Local Government and the municipalities occur at a single monthly meeting of Chief Executive Officers of the Municipalities and representatives of the Ministry. However, one major complaint of the City Corporation is that the meetings generally address issues relevant to the new municipalities with less resources and traditions. The formal mechanism is therefore felt to be inadequate to meet the needs of the City Corporation.

Co-ordination of the activities of the municipalities are not pursued by the Local Government Ministry. The municipalities major activity, acquisition of goods and services, is based on the use of

bonded contractors whose rates and prices are accepted by the Central Tenders Board and published annually for use by Statutory Boards and Municipal Corporations. The Ministry of Local Government merely provides an oversight function.

E. ROLE OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES OPERATING WITHIN THE REGION

A number of central government agencies also operate within the Region and are responsible for a range of activities which impinge on the role of the Municipalities. These include the Town and Country Planning Division of the Ministry of Planning and Development responsible for physical planning; the Ministry of Works and particularly the Divisions of Highways and Drainage and Traffic Management responsible for highways, drainage and traffic management respectively; and Statutory Agencies with responsibility for tele-communications, electricity, public transportation and water and sewerage.

The Municipal Act specifically calls for the establishment of Regional Co-ordinating Committees, since it anticipated the problems likely to be generated by the lack of co-ordination of activities within the different administrative areas. Each Committee is composed of the Mayor as Chairman, the Chief Executive Officer, a Secretary to be hired by the Committee, District or Regional heads of Utilities, Ministries responsible for main roads, drains, irrigation and health. Additionally other members of the Committee can include Officers of the Local Government Ministry and Central Government Agencies appointed by the Minister at the request of the Council.

In spite of the legislation, these agencies most of which are equipped with enabling legislation, pursue their responsibility with minimal regard to the role of the Municipalities in whose jurisdiction they operate. While some consultation takes place between the municipality and these agencies, the Port of Spain City Corporation feels particularly aggrieved since all attempts at establishing and maintaining its Regional Co-ordinating Committee have been frustrated by failure of the relevant officers or by any representatives from the appropriate agencies to attend meetings.

Representatives of the Council noted that the lack of effective co-ordination makes its role of providing a pleasant environment for its residents and visitors impossible. It also provides an image of the city which is inconsistent with its best wishes.

F. PORT OF SPAIN WITHIN THE CAPITAL REGION

The Town and Country Planning Division of the Ministry of Planning and Development noted in 1975 that "The Capital Region, a metropolitan region dominated by the National Capital, Port of Spain, comprises a number of contiguous urban settlements which lie along the foothills of the Northern Range. (...) This whole conurbation commands a hinterland covering some 203 square miles (52 000 hectares) and a population of 443 000."^{3/}

By the end of 1994, the estimated population of the Region was 515 525 or roughly 41.3% of the national population of which the City of Port of Spain accounted for some 46 012 or 8.9%.

However, population movement was mostly intra-regional as city dwellers migrated to new housing enclaves within the Region spurred by the conversion of agricultural lands to housing especially in the valleys of the Northern Range and the phenomenal increase in ownership of personal transportation. However, they continue to maintain their ties with the city for education, employment, services and recreation.

It is estimated that some 200 000 commuters access the city on a daily basis for purposes of employment, education, shopping and recreation. This five fold increase in the population generates daily demands for a range of services which the City Corporation is finding more difficult to deliver.

II. PROFILE OF PORT OF SPAIN

A. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Following its discovery in 1498 by Christopher Columbus, Trinidad the most southerly island in the West Indies, remained isolated and untouched by colonization until 1592.

Port of Spain (Puerto España) with a coastal location existed as a tiny fishing village and port of call for trading ships. A difficult, ill maintained Royal Road linked Port of Spain and St. Joseph, the then capital of Spanish Trinidad. Port of Spain had never been properly founded and had no Cabildo but its location made it the natural commercial shipping centre for the island.

In 1757 when the Spanish Governor removed his residence to Port of Spain, it contained about 300 to 400 inhabitants. Port of Spain became the capital of Trinidad under Spanish rule in 1784 with a population of about 3 000 persons chiefly due to French and African immigration since 1777. The total population of Trinidad in 1784 was 6 503.

The early land use pattern of Port of Spain up to about 1854 was basically of a mixed form. Various uses were grouped in largely residential structures, with the non-residential activities occupying the lower levels. During the early nineteenth century however, institutional uses started to concentrate around Woodford Square, and later such uses also began to move to the less dense areas to the north of Park Street.

As the town grew, the more affluent residents moved to the less crowded outskirts, thus freeing the central area for non-residential uses. A major commercial -wholesale zone developed along the harbour and an important retail sector also emerged, but still associated with residential use.

A distinct retail sector did not emerge until the latter part of the nineteenth century when Frederick and Henry Streets became the dominant retail core. Offices also began to occupy the upper floors of some buildings, and industrial growth started in South Laventille and on the Eastern Main Road.

The latter part of the nineteenth century also saw the introduction of a number of infrastructure facilities such as the electric tram (1845), garbage carts (1847), water from the Maraval River (1854), a sewerage system (1861), electricity (1894), telephones (1883), and the automobile (1900).^{4/}

The growth of the commercial sector, the loss of lands in residential use and the decay of dwelling units were all realities within downtown Port of Spain during the early twentieth century. By the early 1960's most of the houses in the downtown area had given way to modern office and retail establishments.

From 1783, when the Spanish government accepted foreign immigration, chiefly French colonists, under the Cedula of Population, there was rapid growth. By 1797 the island's population had reached 17 718 with most of the settlement taking place in and around Port of Spain and in the valleys surrounding the little town.

The focus of this colonization was plantation agriculture concentrated on sugar and cocoa. As a result, Port of Spain expanded rapidly as the main commercial, administrative and trading centre. By 1801 the population of the town was 7 151 which increased to 11 701 in 1838. In 1891 it had grown to 33 787, 1901 to 54 100 and 1946 to 92 793. The main reason for population growth during this period was expansion of the town within the physical limits to include the suburbs and constant rural to urban migration.

Port of Spain's early development was based essentially on its port and the function of a colonial society with its emphasis on export of primary products and import of industrial, commercial and domestic goods. As an entrepot, Port of Spain commanded pride of place in a colonial society. It was the seat of government and the centre of administration, the headquarters of the import-export agencies and major financial houses, the administrative centre of religious organizations, and the centre of urbane and gracious living.

Road and rail transport radiated from Port of Spain to other parts of the nation even as creature comforts and new developing technologies were first introduced in the embryonic urban landscape of Port of Spain. Piped water, electricity, mass transit, an ice factory and two and three level structures were all introduced to Port of Spain prior to dispersion to other parts of the country.

Port of Spain was the locus of power and authority; civil, religious, financial; and attracted from those very early days a relatively large and varied population of residents and visitors. Its geographic boundaries have expanded over the years but its role has not altered substantially over time and it continues to exert inordinate influence over its immediate hinterland, the Capital Region, as well as the wider society. It is both a regional and national centre.

Since the Second World War the population of the city has declined progressively:-

Table 1
POPULATION DECLINE BY SELECTED YEARS

<u>Years</u>	<u>Population</u>
1970	64 933
1980	57 048
1990	46 012

The main reasons for this decline include rapid transformation of inner residential districts to commercial uses, outward migration to newer sub-urban areas from the congested city, reduction in household size from 4.3 in 1960 to 3.5 in 1990, the growth of motor car ownership and availability of relatively cheap gas facilitating commuting.

B. PHYSICAL SETTING

Port of Spain is situated between the sea and the foothills of the mountains. The land area within the city limits is relatively flat with almost all of the land under 100 feet above sea level except for the eastern portions of Belmont and East Port of Spain which reach into the Laventille Hills. There is a gentle slope from north to south with two main drainage channels. One drainage channel, the East Dry River, drains East Port of Spain while the second channel, the Maraval River, drains the western area of the city such as St. Clair/Federation Park, St. James Cocorite and parts of Woodbrook.

The central districts of the city are drained by underground drains which empty along the coast between Invaders Bay and South Quay.

The existing drainage system is considered inadequate and inefficient for the present size of the city. This is due principally to inadequate capacity during heavy rains, siltation and deposition of non bio-degradable waste and debris, and outfall drains along the coast below the level of surge tides.

C. SPATIAL AND QUANTITATIVE DISTRIBUTION

In 1982/83 the Town and Country Planning Division undertook a spatial analysis of Port of Spain. This remains the only significant study to date of spatial patterns in the city and is reproduced in this section.

To a large extent, the current land use pattern reflects the past growth and evolution of the City as outlined in the previous section. The pattern is generally characterized by the concentration of commercial (trade and office) activities in the central core (Downtown and Uptown), the spread of residential development throughout the rest of the area, the scattering of social and institutional uses over the City, and the entrenchment of industrial activity in the south-eastern section.

Other significant components of the land use pattern are the dominance of the Queen's Park Savannah as the major open space element which separates east and west Port of Spain; the prevalence of mixed use sites throughout the area, and the persistence of the Port as a major land use element in the City.

Residential use is by far the most dominant use in the Study Area in terms of both land area and floor area. This use is particularly dominant in the outer sub-areas (Belmont, East Port of Spain, St. James/Cocorite, Woodbrook/Victoria and St. Clair/Federation Park/Ellerslie Park) which account for 92% of the total residential lands and 1.89% of the total residential floor area in the Study Area.

Although occupying a relatively small proportion of land, trade and office uses make up very significant proportions of floor area. This reflects the association of these activities with high intensity development forms. Downtown is the dominant centre of trade and office uses. This sub-area accounts for 32.6% of the total amount of land and 56.1% of the total floor space devoted to trade and office activities. However, the sub-area of St. Clair/Federation Park/Ellerslie Park, also accounts for a significant proportion (22.7%) of the lands occupied by office activities in the Study Area.

While recreational activity occupies a significant proportion of the land area in the City, it is to be noted that most of the recreational open space is concentrated in the north-central section of the City at the Savannah, and in St. Clair/Federation/Ellerslie Park. The other sub-areas have very little land devoted to recreation.

The 1 319 mixed use sites in the City occupy a significant proportion of the land area. These sites are prevalent throughout the study area. However, the highest proportions of sites and actual land area occupied are in Downtown and St. James. Most of the mixed use sites (67.6%) in the City have a residential component and in particular, the mix of residential and trade activities was quite prevalent in most sub areas. There is also a tendency for mixed use sites to be located along major arterials in the outer sub-areas.

Institutional uses occupy significant land area and floor space in the City. However, while the greater proportion (76.9%) of institutional lands are in the more residential sub-areas of Woodbrook/Victoria, St. Clair/Federation Park/Ellerslie Park, St. James/Cocorite and Belmont, by far the highest proportion of actual floor space is in Uptown (30.6%).

Industrial activity occupies small amounts of the land area and floor space in the City. This use is most dominant in the Sea Lots sub-area.

Vacant and partially used land and land under construction at the time of the survey account for 8.6% of the land area. Most of the vacant land (83.4%) is to be found in the residential areas of Belmont, Woodbrook/Victoria, St. Clair/Federation Park/Ellerslie Park, and East Port of Spain.

In terms of land area, the Downtown sub-area is dominated by four major land uses: trade, offices, transportation and communication, and mixed uses. The dominance of trade (40%) and offices (35%) in terms of use of floor space is however, outstanding. Spatially, these two land uses have also created distinct sub-districts in Downtown, with over 70% of the sites utilized for trade purposes located in the section east of Frederick Street and the majority of the office sites to the west of Frederick Street. This sub-area contains the highest proportions of all retail (59.9%), wholesale (61.2%), and vacant (61.8%) trade floor space. Of significance also is the fact that about 56% of all government offices are located in this sub-area.

Mixed use sites in Downtown are characterized by a high amount of office-trade, and residential-trade uses. It should be noted also that multiple use of some sites is represented by as many as six different uses. Land utilized by transportation and communication activities is occupied mainly by the Public Transport Service Corporation terminal in South Quay and car parking facilities scattered throughout the sub-area. Also, 47% of all warehousing floor space is located in Downtown.

Institutional use is represented mainly by three large secondary schools and by a number of primary schools and churches on small sites. Three large sites -Lord Harris Square, Prince's Building Grounds, and Memorial Park are devoted to recreational use. Mixed use sites consist mainly of offices combined with trade uses but the majority of mixed use sites have a residential component.

The other major uses (office, trade, residential) are scattered throughout the sub-area but with the tendency for land occupied by trade activities to be used more intensively south of Oxford Street.

Tranquillity also displays a diverse land use pattern with no clearly dominant use. The major users of land are institutional, mixed uses, residential, trade and offices; the latter three uses, dominate the floor space in the area. Offices are found throughout the area but are particularly evident on the larger lots to the north. Residential use is also located throughout the area but with a slight concentration on the smaller lots in the south-east. Trades uses and retail services in particular, are concentrated along Dundonald Street to the east of the sub-area.

Newtown displays a more residential pattern than Uptown and Tranquillity in terms of both land area (52%) and floor area (68%). Offices are the second most important floor space user and occur predominantly on the fringes of the sub-area, particularly along Maraval and Tragarete Roads, Queen's Park West, and to a lesser extent, along Marli Street. Trade sites are found scattered randomly in the sub-area with no real area of concentration except along Tragarete Road.

The residential areas are also characterized by the existence of significant quantities of land occupied by uses which support residential activity. These consist mainly of institutional, recreational, commercial, and other public facilities.

In the Woodbrook/Victoria sub-area for instance, there is a large institution-recreation zone in the south-west section. This non-residential zone crosses over into the St. James/Cocorite sub-area where the institution-recreation pattern continues. Another significant feature of the St. James/Cocorite sub-area, is the strong commercial strip along the Western Main Road. Industry is also important in this sub-area, taking the form of a heavy industry zone along the waterfront in Cocorite and a large number of small industrial sites scattered throughout the area consisting mainly of motor vehicle repair shops. Non-residential uses in the St. Clair/Federation Park/Ellerslie Park sub-area, generally hug the outer fringes of the sub-area. Examples of such uses are the Police Barracks, Long Circular Mall, and offices in the south-eastern blocks of St. Clair.

Most of the non-residential lands in Belmont accommodates schools, churches, health and welfare institutions. Trade activity tends to be scattered more or less randomly along major arterials. Non-residential uses dominate the southern section of East Port of Spain and consist mainly of industrial, office, and trade activities.

Sea Lots is the dominant sub-area in terms of industrial activity with one-third of both the total industrial lands and floor space in the City. Industrial activity -primarily in the light industry category- is widespread in the sub-area. Sea Lots is also the second most important warehousing area in terms of both floor space and land area.

Residential use also occupies a significant amount of land in Sea Lots and is concentrated in three blocks within proximity to the St. Ann's River and the sea.

The greater portion of the Port Authority sub-area consists of the passenger and cargo sea port. The other land uses in the sub-area form a very diverse pattern in the narrow belt between the Port and Wrightson Road. Industrial use stands out as the marginally dominant activity in terms of both use and land area. Other major uses are institutional, offices, and protective and health facilities.^{2/}

Since 1984 the land use trends identified in the section above have continued:

- redevelopment and conversion of use in the downtown area has expanded office and commercial use;
- the selection of Port of Spain as the Headquarters of the Association of Caribbean States is expected to stimulate further office development;
- movement of small offices and services, establishment of self employment business and conversion of residences to business in districts around the city core;
- increased informal business activity e.g. vending, personal services;
- increased demand on urban services and infrastructure sanitation, health drainage and transportation;
- deterioration of the physical quality of infrastructure, parks and urban spaces.

D. INFRASTRUCTURE

Notwithstanding increased development and business activity infrastructure has improved during the last fifteen years from a state of inadequacy in 1982 to an acceptable quality of provision:

Table 2
QUALITY OF INFRASTRUCTURE BY SELECTED YEARS

INFRASTRUCTURE	LEVEL OF PROVISION	
	1982	1996
Telephone	inadequate capacity and service	high quality, extra capacity
Electricity	inadequate and unreliable	reliable with improved capacity
Water	adequate but with periods of under supply	improved capacity but obsolete transmission lines in some areas
Sewerage	adequate but with some obsolescence	overloaded and generally poorly maintained
Drainage	inadequate with periods of flooding	inadequate capacity
Roads	congested and poorly maintained	improved traffic flows and better maintained wearing surfaces

Source: Author's own assessment of city infrastructure between 1982 and 1986.

E. TRANSPORTATION

The spatial distribution of land uses is influenced by a transportation network which relies exclusively on road transport. Roads are a significant user of land occupying about 16% of the total land area.

Roads exhibit a radial pattern from the city centre with four (4) main elements:

- The eastern arterials/highways such as Lady Young Road, Eastern Main Road and Churchill Roosevelt/Beetham Highways which bring traffic from eastern settlements in the corridor.
- The western arterials which bring traffic from western districts into downtown Port of Spain.
- The Queen's Park Savannah Circle which distributes traffic in a clockwise direction to all points west, north and east outgoing and downtown from west, north and south.
- Downtown Arterials which take traffic east/west across town.

The eastern and western arterials are linked via Wrightson Road and other collector roads such as Park Street and Picadilly Street to provide east-west access for traffic by passing the city.

The system suffers from several major problems some of which are identified below:

- High demand for roadspace in downtown areas during peak and business hours.
- Traffic conflict arising from local and through traffic.
- Demand for central area parking on city streets.
- Over reliance on private car/taxis due to inadequate local bus transportation within city.
- High generation of trips from areas outside the city to employment, school and business.

Road transportation by private car and taxis account for most of the traffic which is exacerbated by a high number of trips:

- almost all home to work trips are by car/taxi, with 50% of travel by private motor car;
- over 65% of trips to school are by private car/taxi/bus;
- a high percentage of business, shopping and recreation trips are made by private car/taxi.

In 1981 it was estimated that over 21 800 private vehicles were parked on the streets or in public car parks.

The intrusion of sedan and maxi taxis into downtown areas created tremendous congestion at terminal points and within the main downtown streets.

Since 1982 a series of traffic management systems have improved traffic to a tolerable level.

- relocation of maxi taxis to terminal facilities;
- creation of a maxi taxi free zone in downtown;

- relocation of sedan taxi stands to the edges of downtown;
- provision of public car parking and restrictions on street parking.

Additionally, the lower level of national economic activity, development of facilities outside the city and technological advances have reduced the number of trips generated to the city.

F. ECONOMIC STRUCTURE AND EMPLOYMENT

Port of Spain is the largest single economic centre of employment in the country. It accounted for 83 662^{6/} job opportunities or about 20% of total employment in the country in 1982 which was some 388 000 jobs in 1980. Due to an economic recession during the period 1983 to 1990, total employment declined to 365 700 and has since gradually risen to pre 1982 levels. In 1995 it was estimated that there were some 429 150 job opportunities. Port of Spain has reflected the national situation with present employment estimated to be similar to 1982 levels.

Most of the employment is concentrated in the tertiary sector which accounts for 75% of all jobs. Secondary jobs account for 24% of employment while primary sector employment is less than 1% of total jobs. White collar jobs; clerical, banking, administrative and professional comprise 54% of jobs.^{7/} This employment structure has remained relatively stable over the last 15 years.

Within the city limits, employment is concentrated in the core areas of Downtown, Uptown, Tranquillity and Victoria. These sub-areas account for 72% of employment. St. James/Cocorite accounts for about 15% of employment:

It is estimated that Port of Spain has 1.4 million square metres of floor space devoted to economic activity. This floor space is located on about 150 hectares of land. Table 3 provides an estimate of the different categories of economic activities.

Table 3*
ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES BY LAND AREAS AND FLOOR SPACE

ECONOMIC LAND USE ACTIVITIES	LAND AREA (ha)	FLOOR AREA m ²
Distributive/Retail	45	575 000
Warehousing	12	75 000
Manufacturing	25	200 000
Office	46	612 000
Transport/Communications and others	22	38 000
Totals	150	1 400 000

* Table 3 is based on the Land Use and Building Survey 1981/82 of the Port of Spain Land Use Plan. Taking into account city development since 1982, the author projected floorspace to 1996, so table 3 is his own derivation.

Some 75% of this economic floorspace is concentrated within the Downtown, Uptown, Tranquillity and Victoria sub areas which offer greater accessibility and face to face contact with customers and between firms.

Intense competition to settle within the central area has meant that trade and office activities which can afford higher rents and which use space more productively have tended to concentrate within the downtown area where one can find the large Corporations, Banks and Government Ministries.

The basic pattern of distribution of floorspace within the city can be summarized as:

- i) A relatively dense urban core, within the downtown area comprising offices and concentrated retail activity in convenience and comparison goods. Comparison goods account for 75% of retail floorspace.
- ii) Smaller sub-centre office locations in Victoria/Tranquillity/St. Clair and around the Savannah sought by Corporations and Insurance Companies which desire more pleasant locations.
- iii) Small business locations within residential areas and along commercial strips.
- iv) A shopping floorspace hierarchy of:
 - widest range of comparison goods in the Central Business Area catering to the national population;
 - sub-regional centres at shopping malls e.g. Long Circular Mall and Ellerslie Court which service residential areas;
 - strip commercial centres along main arterial roads e.g. St. James (Western Main Road), Ariapita Avenue, Woodbrook. These centres service adjacent residential areas and through traffic to other residential locations;
 - neighbourhood shops.
- v) Wholesaling is concentrated on the southern fringe of the Central Business District near the port. The concentration of this activity is decreasing and other uses primarily offices, services and shops, are beginning to transform the area into part of the Central Business District.
- vi) Increasing tendency of small business enterprises to locate on collector/arterial roads leading out of the Central Business District. About 34% of small business is located within the business core while 66% is randomly located with a growing percentage in residential districts such as St. James and Woodbrook. Home based activity is clearly more economical because of the rent difference between the city centre and outlying areas. Accessibility and availability of car parking in residential areas are also important.
- vii) The rapid growth of informal commerce such as vending within the central business district. A survey by the Town and Country Planning Division identified about 823 vendors in 1983 in the city made of two categories:
 - permanent vendors on vacant premises, car parks, side setback spaces of buildings and on sidewalks;

- itinerant street vendors who occupy the sidewalks and the streets and whose location on any given day depends on the volume of pedestrian traffic.

In recent years, self-employment through vending has become institutionalized at several locations such as the People's Mall and Tent City where vendors can rent space. Additionally, several thousand craftsmen, confectioners, newspaper, food, drink and other vendors can be found throughout the central core and other commercial districts.

What is extremely significant about employment in the city is that while it provides 83 662 jobs only 16 471 city residents (71% of the employed city labour force) work in the city. Thus 80% of employment is filled by residents from areas outside the city mainly from the East/West Corridor, Chaguanas and San Fernando. Thus Port of Spain is a net importer of labour.

III. PROFILE OF THE PORT OF SPAIN CITY CORPORATION

A. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CORPORATION

The City Corporation has had for almost all of its existence an uneasy and sometimes antagonistic relationship with the Central Government; initially with the Colonial Office and subsequently after Independence with the Central Government. The City Fathers of the 19th and early 20th centuries were strong, independent minded, property owning individuals whose approach to local government was hinged around the notion of satisfying the needs of the people of Port of Spain.

The holders of office in the late 19th and early 20th centuries were generally professionals engaged in private practice, usually law and medicine, and merchants of some importance. Such a composition guaranteed independent judgement and individual assertions of strongly held opinions. But the constant challenge to colonial impositions was so irritating to the Colonial Office that the City Corporation was abolished in 1899. However, due to agitation by the residents of the City of Port of Spain, the Council was re-established in 1914.

By the early 1960's, Party Politics had become so entrenched in the Corporation that the decision making process was dominated by the views of the party. In a political environment in which a new independent government felt compelled to centralize a whole range of activities for a variety of reasons including economies of scale and efficiency, the Central Government had little patience for independent thinkers in an autonomous City Government.

The traditional conflict between Central Government and the City Fathers then as now, revolved around the collection and utilization of revenues generated within the precincts of the City. However, the conflict became progressively muted as robust individual judgements and independence of action gave way to party politics. Like its colonial predecessor, the Independent Government of the 1960's viewed the Council as a nuisance and systematically reduced its autonomy.

Partly due to the need to impose party discipline and to remove those activities which were felt to be more appropriately handled by a Statutory Body or a Central Government Agency, the Central Government exerted greater control over the activities of the City Council. The result was a diminution of the presence of strong independent minds at the Council. The City Corporation subsequently became the instrument through which the policies of the Central Government were articulated rather than a decision making vehicle satisfying the demands of the city's residents.

Challenges to rigid Central Government control of the Corporation's finances, and therefore its autonomy, have been mounted over the years by a few enterprising Mayors but few concessions have been won. Indeed, the Corporation's power to act is now so ensnared in Central Government bureaucracy that the City Corporation appears to have lost the will to assert its authority even in those areas where it still maintains some independence of action.

B. ENABLING LEGISLATION AND AUTHORITY

The Port of Spain City Corporation comprises two arms, the political and the administrative. The Municipal Act of 1990 and its several Amendments state that the "powers of the Corporation shall be exercised by its Council, and subject to the provision of this Act, the Council shall act through its Chief Officers and staff (...)"^{8/} The policy making arm, the Council, consists of the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors while the administrative arm, the Executive, comprises the Chief Executive Officer, the City Treasurer, the City Engineer, and the Medical Officer of Health as Heads of their respective Departments.

In the execution of its responsibilities, the Council is organized around 9 Standing Committees composed of Finance, Assessment, Institutions, Welfare, General Purpose, Planning and Development, Assembly Hall, Public Health and Down Town Carnival. Each is chaired by a Member of the Council and meetings are held once per month at which the appropriate Department Head is expected to be in attendance.

With the waning authority of the Council over the years, Local Government elections generally do not attract much attention as candidates of national prominence. Elected members of the Port of Spain Council, like the other local governing bodies, are invariably popular community personalities, party supporters and well-intentioned residents with little conception of the role of Councillors.

The use of Aldermen, that is, non-elected representatives, who are nominated by the Political Party with a majority in the Council, is intended to expand the knowledge and introduce specialist competence to the ranks of Council members. Over the years most of the Mayors of Port of Spain have been drawn from the ranks of Aldermen.

With few exceptions, these Councillors are not adequately informed to formulate policies or effectively articulate the problems which beset the city. By and large, their sights are set on the most immediate concerns of their constituents namely, street lighting, road re-surfacing, garbage collection, repairs to drains and watercourses, construction of retaining walls, recreation facilities and the like.

The Standing Committees which the Councillors chair are unable and/or unwilling to address the larger issues of city management, resource generation and allocation, and urban decay of selective areas of the city. Operating within a party structure which does not tolerate dissent and equipped with an approach to service delivery which is extremely narrow, the Council directs the Executive more towards maintenance and repairs than towards the larger concern of management and development of the city.

C. OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE ARM

The current Administrative Arm is organized around the functional departments of City Clerk (Chief Executive Officer), Public Health, City Engineer, City Treasurer, City Assessor and the City Police.

D. THE DEPARTMENT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The Chief Executive Officer is the administrative head of the City Corporation and the Department which she heads is responsible for the overall management and administration of all Departments. The Department of the Chief Executive contains the Personnel and Industrial Relations Unit, the Printery and the Secretariat which services the Council. The Department has a labour force of 94 employees of which 65 are monthly paid staff.

This department is the link between the Corporation and the Government Ministries, the Council and the public, and the Council and other Departments. As the Secretariat, the Department is responsible for the preparation of Minutes, Agendas and Reports of all Council and Standing Committee Meetings.

As an employee who has been with the Corporation for almost 40 years, the Chief Executive Officer has witnessed its erosion of autonomy over the years. Specifically since the introduction of the Municipal Act of 1990, the Ministry of Local Government has attempted to treat the City Corporation as simply one of the new Regional Corporations.

This department recognizes and accepts the policy making role of the Council and the appropriateness of political decisions guiding the Corporation's activities. However, it is of great concern that Council Members accept Party directives which lead to contravention of the laws under which the Corporation functions and, generally by inaction, work against the interest of the City and the Corporation.

The Department also has tremendous difficulties with the Central Government bureaucracy with which it interacts. The Ministry of Local Government is not seen as equipped to offer any real assistance to the Corporation and does not act as an effective intermediary with other Government Departments. The Ministry has been unwilling or unable to assist in ensuring that meetings of the Regional Co-ordinating Committee established by law to encourage co-ordination of activities being pursued by several agencies and government departments, are attended by members of the Statutory Boards or Central Government Ministries.

The Local Government Ministry has organized neither meetings with policy makers at the national level nor articulated a policy and programme for decentralization of functions to Regional Corporations. There are no national policies on many of the social ills which the city currently confronts and the Corporation has had no indication that the Local Government Ministry is attempting to develop positions which can be discussed with the cities and boroughs.

In spite of grand statements of politicians at the national level about effective local governing authorities, the reality is a continuing erosion of local decision making power and the concomitant belief that the local Council must merely acquiesce to policies formulated at the national level.

E. PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

The Public Health Department operates under the Public Health Ordinance Ch. 12/4 of 1950 and is the designated Local Health Authority for the City of Port of Spain. Its functions are executed by 1 Division and 2 Units with a work force of approximately 289, most of whom are daily rated workers.

The major Division is the Public Health Inspectorate. The two Units are the Health Visitor Unit and the Public Health Education Unit. However, it labours under an organizational structure which is inappropriate and with a legislative mandate which is obsolete.

The Public Health Inspectorate carries out its responsibility under the Food Surveillance Unit, Occupational Health and Safety and, Physical Environment Units. This Division provides the traditional range of services which include routine and regular testing and inspection of food preparation premises for prepared and raw food and food products and liquor, as well as the issuance of badges and licenses as appropriate; review and approve building plans, water applications, change of use of premises, or ownership and issuance of building completion certificates and licenses for the establishment of pool rooms, gaming houses and video clubs; vector, rodent and canine control; emptying of cesspits, septic tanks and provision of chemical toilets for functions in parks and other open areas controlled by the City.

At the Port of Spain abattoir which is owned by the Department, services such as weighing, lairage, slaughter, conveyance and incineration are provided.

The Public Health Visitor Unit is responsible for health promotion and prevention and control of diseases. Its functions include counselling on health matters, clinical examination of children in schools and execution of the Immunization Programme.

The Public Health Education Unit offers education programmes involving lectures and audio visual aids to primary and secondary schools, churches and private organizations. It also provides inputs, including training, in all outreach programmes pursued by the Corporation. It works in conjunction with the Ministry of Health on national campaigns such as aids, vagrancy, family planning and drug addiction and collaborates with international health agencies in the recording and reporting of communicable diseases.

Most of these services are provided free of charge or at a nominal cost to the user. As a consequence, this Department expends a tremendous amount of funds but generates minimal income. It is therefore a major cost centre within the Corporation.

The existing technical and para-professional staff of this Department are generally well trained because of the specialist requirements. However, it currently operates at 75% of its manpower strength and this is likely to worsen since the six (6) positions of trainee Public Health Inspectors

have not been filled over the years. Moreover, the Department is losing staff to some of the newer Municipal Corporations whose remuneration packages are more acceptable.

While the Public Health Department is independent and can act on its own initiative, many of the public health challenges facing the city today are not addressed by the existing laws. Air pollution from excessive amounts of dust created by construction and vehicle emissions; water pollution from the discharge into the public waterways of industry generated effluent; noise pollution from vehicles, sound systems and construction sites; toxic substances in air-condition ducting and paints; vagrancy, homelessness and street children, teenage pregnancy and drug addiction are all fairly modern issues which the Department is attempting to confront with antiquated Public Health Ordinances.

The old organizational structure of the Department has been modified over the years with the assistance of the Organization and Management Division (O&M) of the Prime Minister's Office. In 1984, organizational structure proposed by O&M was designed and submitted to Cabinet but has not yet been approved. Therefore, no new positions have been created to deal with modern approaches to public health. However, the Department courageously attempts to tackle new problems in public health for which it has neither the appropriate manpower nor the financial resources. Indeed, where the Ordinance is found to be deficient, the Public Health Department tries as far as possible to do what is necessary to ensure public safety.

The Public Health Department has embarked on a number of new initiatives in the last few years. An ambulance service was recently commissioned at its central location in downtown Port of Spain for the use of residents of the city. It has begun a National Cancer Register and a Register of Congenital Defects as well as research projects on infectious diseases, infant mortality and vagrancy.

The Department has also submitted a proposal to the new Regional Health Authority for the restructuring of the Public Health Department and has developed special relationships for training and execution of joint projects with the University of the West Indies and the National Institute for Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (NIHERST).

The Department sees the recent introduction of the Environmental Management Authority as useful since it is intended to streamline the operations of some 28 agencies involved in various areas or aspects of environmental management. This agency will set and monitor standards of environmental health and has the power to co-opt personnel of other Agencies for use as Environmental Officers.

Decentralization of health services to Regional Health Authorities and establishment of the Environmental Management Agency are seen by the Department as positive signs that more relevant public health standards will soon be available and programmes in environmental health will be offered to support the Corporation's efforts.

F. THE CITY ENGINEER'S DEPARTMENT

The City Engineer's Department executes its functions through four (4) Divisions and a myriad of sub divisions and units. The major divisions are Buildings, Works, Institutions and Transport and Cleansing. It contains roughly 78% of the Corporation's labour force with most of its activities executed by some 1 670 daily rated workers.

The operational headquarters of many sub-divisions are dispersed within Port of Spain and are often managed directly by personnel who rose through the ranks and have had no formal training in management. One consequence is the lack of discipline among the work force.

The Building Inspection Division is responsible for approving building plans and monitoring building construction, investigating building code violations, identifying illegal structures including unauthorized extensions and modifications, and issuing building permits and maintaining records and plans of all buildings. The Division is also responsible for preparation of plans for repairs or reconstruction of drains, roads, retaining walls and other physical structures which are constructed by the Department's own construction crews.

The Works Division is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of all physical infrastructure of the city including parks, roads, sidewalks, drains, city buildings, markets, cemeteries and the abattoir.

Administration of all institutions falls under the Institutions Division. These institutions include the markets, crematorium, cemeteries, the Dining Shed and recreational facilities such as the hard courts for basketball, netball and tennis.

The Transport and Cleansing Division is responsible for maintenance of all the Corporation's vehicles as well as the cleaning of the city, the Corporation's many buildings, parks, squares and other open spaces. Sanitation including garbage collection, consumes an inordinate quantity of human and material resources while the entire Division is plagued by poorly maintained and obsolete equipment and an inappropriate organizational structure.

The daily-rated workers are a large and indisciplined labour force which is organized into three groups. The permanent workers are those who are full time and are thus guaranteed 10 days work per fortnight. Those designated "regulars" are guaranteed 9 working days per fortnight. Casual workers are employed on any given day as substitutes when the "regulars" are absent. This system of redundancy accepts the high rate of absenteeism and unproductive utilization of labour.

The Department's energies are directed almost totally towards maintenance of existing facilities rather than development. While this may well be a function of chronic financial insufficiency, the Department appears to be overwhelmed by its task of maintenance of physical facilities and has little energy or resources to engage in major development works.

More than ten years ago a study of the drainage in the city was conducted by a private consultancy firm at a cost of approximately TT\$10 million. However, the City Engineer's Department has been unable to utilize the document as anything more than a reference manual to supplement drainage plans.

G. THE CITY TREASURER'S DEPARTMENT

This Department is responsible for the management of the Corporation's finances and it executes this function through six sections; namely Cashier, Administration, Payroll (Daily Rated), Paysheet (Monthly paid), Abstract and Payables. The Department is staffed by 58 employees of which 53 are monthly paid staff.

The Cashier's Unit is responsible for the collection of all payments made by the public and the disbursement of funds to employees through a petty cash voucher system.

The Administration Unit looks after the department's requirements for supplies and maintains all records of staff attendance, vacation and the like.

The Payroll Unit organizes wages for the daily rated, fortnightly employees of the Corporation. It calculates wages based on a time card system and makes deductions for purposes of income tax, national insurance, credit union etc.

The Paysheet Unit organizes salaries for the monthly paid staff essentially along the same lines as the Payroll Unit, except that time not worked during the payment period is not deducted from monthly salaries.

The Abstract Unit extracts income and expenditure data from the various books kept throughout the organization. It is essentially an information gathering unit which is responsible for recording income and expenditure of the Corporation under the appropriate heads and sub-heads of the Annual Budget.

The Payable Unit processes all payments for goods and services made by the Corporation.

Financial responsibility is absent in this Division and financial regulations are observed more in the breach. No Annual Accounts have been prepared since 1989 and bank reconciliations have been done only to 1992. There are as well, outstanding liabilities to the State including Pay As You Earn (PAYE), National Insurance Scheme (NIS) and Health Surcharge deductions, as well as pension for retired officers and gratuity payments due to former employees. To date, these liabilities amount to over \$15 million (\$2.5 million US) and the Department is unsure that, that is the full extent of the liabilities.

Financial management is reduced to meeting the next wages and salaries bill, staving off irate pensioners and other former employees, placating angry suppliers of goods and services for whom payments are long overdue, maintaining constant contact with the Corporation's bankers to ensure that the TT\$0.5 million overdraft limit is not too rigorously enforced and exhorting personnel at the Ministries of Local Government and Finance to release the funds to meet the Corporation's fortnightly and monthly financial obligations.

The problem of cashflow, perennial within the Corporations emanates from the imbalance between the Corporation's revenue and expenditure, the fetters placed on the Corporation's planning and budgeting procedures by the Central Government and the Central Government's system of budgeting and allocation of funds to the Corporation.

Annual Budget Estimates submitted by the Corporation are generally reduced by the Ministry of Finance. Since government only makes up the shortfall between the Corporation's projected revenue and expenditure, should the Corporation collect additional funds, Government subvention would be reduced accordingly. As such, the Corporation is no better off financially.

This cash flow problem will be perpetuated unless the Corporation can match its expenditure with its own revenues or Government allocates additional funds. Representatives of the Corporation are generally inclined towards the former option but points to all the other obstacles which will have to be removed by the Central Government if financial autonomy is to be achieved. Representatives of the Local Government Ministry, on the other hand, appear to be convinced that a proper case cannot be made by the Municipal Corporations for such autonomy since they are unable to manage the funds that they now control. Moreover, they are convinced that autonomy is not wanted by these organizations.

The Treasurer's Department is the only one within the Corporation that has begun the introduction of computers to its operations. To date, only Payroll is computerized, but it is seen as a first step with the second being computerization of the general ledger functions. A Consulting firm is currently engaged in the computerization exercise but the Consultants were unable to obtain its term of reference or its schedule of implementation.

Computerization will make some of the positions within this Department redundant. However, there is acceptance that retraining and re-deployment of staff will need to be undertaken in the face of extreme resistance to change by employees who are comfortable with and accept a tedious, pedantic system which has been in place since colonial times.

H. THE CITY'S ASSESSOR'S DEPARTMENT

The Assessor's Department is a single unit with one function; to determine the rates and taxes that should be levied upon each structure within the Municipality once every three years. Operating with a 70% vacancy rate, this Department is incapable of meeting its statutory obligations for assessment of properties now or in the near future if appropriate action is not taken.

The Department consists of one Acting City Assessor and one Acting Deputy Assessor assisted by nine daily rated (temporary) workers, of which six conduct field work and three perform clerical duties in the office. The four (4) positions of technicians have been vacant for several years and there appears to be little hope of having them filled in the near future. Moreover, the City Assessor's position has not been occupied by a trained professional for the last three years.

This Department is the least equipped in a Corporation in which all Departments are anaemic in support resources. The Department is without vehicles for the use of its untrained field staff or other visible office equipment. Data on rates and taxes are still manually recorded in the House Rates Book which is physically passed between the Treasurer's Department and the Assessor's Department.

The method of property assessment utilized by the Department is called the Annual Rateable Value (ARV) and rates and taxes are by law placed at 1% and 5% of the fair market value for

residences and commercial properties respectively. However, the mechanism available for seeking relief by property owners is seen to be cumbersome. Where properties are assessed and approved by the Council, the owner may appeal to the Chief Executive Officer (City Clerk) who must pass the appeal to the Commissioner of Valuations at the Ministry of Finance. The Commissioner of Valuations may either confirm, reduce or increase the value as he sees fit. Should the owner still be dissatisfied, he may appeal to the Tax Appeal Board which has the same power to confirm, reduce or increase as the Commission of Valuations. A final appeal may be submitted to the Court of Appeal.

The Assessor's Department cannot effectively pursue what is generally regarded as a major problem, namely improving the Corporation's revenue position through effective assessment of its property base. This general condition of lethargy in making the Department more functional is seen by some as purposeful and politically motivated.

Indeed, it is generally felt that a systematic approach to property assessment and revenue collection is not desired and not welcomed by an organization whose policy makers have blocked at every turn, the Division's attempt to become more professional in its undertaking. Since the three year assessment period generally coincides with local government elections, there is a disincentive by politicians to encourage property assessment.

A few observers of the Corporation's activities support this sentiment by pointing to the fact that the signing of warrants which is a necessary step in the procedure for putting up for sale the properties of delinquent owners have remained outstanding for too long. Refusal to sign these warrants are specifically disallowed in the Corporation's enabling legislation and this breaking of the law by the policy makers of the Corporation has generated distrust for the policy makers and cynicism for their stated position of financial self-sufficiency.

From the perspective of the City Assessor's Department, Port of Spain is a dying city. In spite of an increase in the boundaries of Port of Spain, the number of assessed buildings decreased from 12 000 four years ago to 10 000 and the number of vacant lots has increased to over 700 over the same period. Moreover, the frequency of flooding in downtown Port of Spain has increased during the rainy season and this has reduced property values.

Vagrancy, the increased incidence of begging, the dilapidated conditions of the People's Mall and Woodford Square, uncontrolled vending and the explosion of crime in the city have acted in concert to reduce the attractiveness of the city. Migration of business places out of the city center has therefore further eroded the Corporation's tax base.

Currently, a study is being undertaken with the intention of possibly changing the basis of assessment of property values in the Municipalities and a Canadian-based consulting firm has been engaged by the Central Government. The proposed instrument to replace the ARV is the Improved Capital Value. Ostensibly, the fixed percentage of the assessed value will be replaced by a flexible value based on capital improvements of a property. The rates to be applied to each property will be the funds required to run the city divided by the total number of properties, where each property is taxed on the basis of its improved capital value.

The Assessor's Department is opposed to this approach since it sees it as inappropriate for this country.

There is spare capacity within the City Corporation for increasing revenue because the current level of rates and taxes is well below the formula set.

I. THE MUNICIPAL POLICE SERVICE

The Municipal Police Service is responsible for protecting the residents and visitors of the city, preventing crimes and apprehending and charging law breakers. It operates under the Municipal Authorities Act as well as the Statute laws of Trinidad and Tobago and the Police Service Act.

The Municipal Police Service is equipped with a staff of 76 police officers from an establishment of 83 positions. But it is supplemented by 26 Special Reserve Police.

The Service which is headed by an Assistant Superintendent (ASP) is supported by 2 Inspectors, 4 Sergeants and 9 Corporals. The Department is currently understaffed and has been so since the last study carried out by the Organizational and Management Division of the Prime Minister's Office in 1984. At that time, it was expected to have a force of 100 and it has since fallen further behind.

Most of the police officers are engaged in protection of the Corporation properties, traffic duties and foot patrols. However, their effectiveness is considerably reduced by the lack of equipment and the absence of Bye laws. The Service lacks vehicles, fire arms, protective gear including bullet-proof vests, and radio communications facilities especially two-way radios.

The absence of Bye-laws are particularly onerous. There are gaps in the law due to the lack of Bye-laws since enactment of the new municipal legislation. It would be necessary to rectify this in order to deal with the purely municipal concerns. Bye-laws which specifically address vagrancy, littering and dumping of garbage, the illegal use of the city parks, squares and other open spaces and the establishment of a Municipal Court will render more effective the actions of this Police Service.

Vagrancy is a major problem in the City and around 1985, the Municipality attempted to deal with it by removing vagrants from the streets and sending them to institutions. However, legal advocates and a few civic organizations cited violations of human rights and the programme was aborted. A number of initiatives were subsequently taken by Central Government agencies, but these too, were unsuccessful since the force of law was not included in a general humanitarian and voluntary approach to the problem.

The majority of crimes currently prosecuted are illegal vending, possession of or trafficking in drugs and shoplifting. The establishment of a Municipal Court is seen as necessary for several reasons. First, it will accelerate the prosecution of municipal crimes and allow the magistrate to take the breaking of these laws more seriously than they now do. Second, it will reduce the time spent in court on any single case by Municipal Police Officers. Third, it will allow payment of fines by those convicted to be retained within the Municipal Authority and so increase the revenue of the Corporation rather than be sent to the Consolidated Fund of the Central Government.

Currently the Municipal Police are engaged in youth development programmes for children 5-18 years. The organization provides courses in karate, steelpan music, handicraft and academic

disciplines. It runs a cadet training programme as well as a common entrance examination programme. The target groups are mainly from underprivileged areas of the city and the programmes are intended to redirect the focus of the youth away from crime and to foster self-esteem and confidence.

J. COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION OF MANPOWER

The Corporation's Establishment consists of 2 385 employees of which 80.5% (1 920) are daily rated employees and 19.5% (465) are monthly paid staff. There are however, 269 vacant positions of which 24% (89) are monthly paid staff and 9% (180) are daily rated. Table 4 identifies distribution of manpower by Departments.

The 1 920 daily rated workers are composed of 1 306 semi-skilled/unskilled workers, 190 drivers/equipment operators, 133 artisans and 111 foremen/charge hands. However, only 1 740 are currently employed and the Consultants were unable to determine the present skilled and unskilled composition of the labourforce. Table 5 shows composition of the labour force.

Table 4
DISTRIBUTION OF MANPOWER BY MAJOR DEPARTMENTS

	N° of monthly paid staff	% of total monthly staff	N° of daily rated employees	% of total daily rated workforce	% of total labour force
City Treasurer's	53	14.1	5	0.26	2.53
Public Health	82	21.81	207	10.80	11.96
City Assessor's	2	0.53	9	0.47	0.48
City Engineer's	89	23.67	1 670	86.96	77.24
Municipal Police Service	85	22.61	-	-	3.70
Chief Executive Officer	65	17.28	29	1.51	4.09
Total	376	100.00	1 920	100.00	100.00

Source: These figures are constructed from incomplete data provided by the City Corporation. There are inaccuracies since there were inconsistencies and incompleteness in the data provided. However, they provide a general idea of the staffing of the major departments.

Table 5
COMPOSITION OF LABOUR FORCE BY SKILL CATEGORIES

MONTHLY PAID	N°	WEEKLY RATED	N°
Professional	5	Artisans	133
Technical	102	Driver/Equipment Operators	190
Clerical	125	Unskilled/Semi-skilled	1 306
Secretarial	24	Supervisors (Charge hand/foremen)	111
Administrative	7	Vacant positions	180
Manipulative	28	Total	1 920
Security	85		
Vacant positions	89		
Total	465		

Source: Compiled from written data and discussions with representatives of the many departments. Some inaccuracies exist since the written data provided was generally incomplete and inconsistent with information reported by Department Heads.

However, the composition of the labour by skills suggests the dominance of the unskilled category of workers and the ratio of the monthly to daily rated employees.

Concentration of daily rated workers is greatest in the City Engineer's Department where approximately 87% is employed. The other Department with a significant force of daily rated workers is Public Health with 10% and the City Treasurer and City Assessor share the remaining 3%.

Daily rated employees are controlled directly by the Corporation. However, their terms of engagement and remunerations are negotiated between the Chief Personnel Officer for the Central Government and the Amalgamated Workers Trade Union which is the recognized bargaining unit for the daily rated workers. The Corporation is present at these negotiations but its views and concerns may or may not be considered by the personnel of the Chief Personnel Officer. However, once a settlement is reached, the Corporation is responsible for administering the Collective Agreement.

Monthly paid staff of the Corporation are filled by the Statutory Authorities Services Commission which is responsible for recruitment, promotion and discipline. Conditions of

engagement and remunerations are the province of the Chief Personal Officer based on collective bargaining with the Public Service Association which is the public servants' Trade union.

Management is generally thin throughout the Corporation. The span of control among the daily rated workers averages 1 supervisor per 17 workers. For the monthly paid staff, it was not possible to determine the span of control since the relevant information was not made available.

K. FUNDING SOURCES AND EXPENDITURE PATTERNS

Funding of the Corporation's recurrent and development activities is based on revenue collected by the Corporation and subventions provided by the Central Government. The State, in theory, meets the shortfall between annual revenue of the Corporation and the projected annual expenditure. In practice, the Corporation's annual budget is the revenue it generates plus whatever is made available to it by the State.

The main revenue base of the Corporation is the collection of house rates which amounts to approximately TT\$12 million. Other income producing activities include license fees, rental of property and fees for services. These other sources of revenue are expected to yield roughly TT\$8 million in 1996.

Thus while the Corporation's annual budget for 1996 is \$84 million, the expected shortfall is \$64 million. Wages and salaries alone accounts for TT\$66 million or roughly 80%. The remaining TT\$18 million goes towards goods and services and the major cost items are fuel, oil, spare parts and garbage bags.

The 1996 budget of TT\$84 million carries a recurrent expenditure of TT\$81.8 million and a development programme of TT\$2.2 million.

Fiscal measures are perhaps the most effective means by which Central Government controls the activities of the City Corporation. Income to the Council comprise a minuscule proportion of the costs incurred in running the Corporation in order to sustain the status quo. Budgeting in such an environment is therefore, restricted to recurrent expenditure estimates while the Council and Central Government continues to battle over the freedom of the Corporation to raise new money.

Developmental Budgeting is therefore, non-existent at this time. However, new avenues for raising revenue are in the exploratory stage. The catalysts for these new approaches are founded on the lands presently owned by the City Corporation.

As the largest land owner within the City, the Corporation is seeking to rationalize its land usage in an effort to free lands for future development. The Council has the option of converting these lands most of which are standing idle into development which can provide investment revenue.

The objective is to realize immediate capital returns from a developer willing and able to develop the lands while securing longterm returns in the form of house rates from properties within the City. Disposing of lands outside the City may either realize immediate capital gain or longterm income flows.

Additional longterm income flows may be enhanced by the freedom of the Corporation either to proceed with updating its house rate records to reflect current annual rateable values, or by reforming their property taxation systems so as to provide equity in the system while increasing the tax take.

The City budget is subject to control by the Budget Division of the Ministry of Finance. Estimates are submitted at the appropriate time by the Corporation and includes all collections made by the City except the Mayoral Fund. The Mayoral Fund is disbursed at the sole discretion of the Mayor and subject only to his probity.

Expenditure of public funds by the City Corporation is based on the same principles as other Ministries and Departments. The Corporation is expected to spend in accordance with the schedule of suppliers of goods and services established by the Central Tenders Board with the Central Tenders Board being the ultimate controller of expenditures.

L. PRIORITIES FOR LOCAL ADMINISTRATION AND CURRENT POLICIES

Inspired by the Government's programme of Reform of the Public Service, the Corporation with assistance of Central Government, held a series of meetings of Department Heads to foster team building and to generate a Strategic Plan. The draft document was formulated for presentation to the previous administration. The Mission Statement notes that the "Port of Spain Corporation is in the business of transforming the City of Port of Spain into an ultra-modern Municipal centre." Its Vision is one in which "(...) Port of Spain is the leading Municipal Body, competently empowered, technologically advanced and results-oriented to provide a range of services in a safe and healthy environment".^{9/}

The Corporation hopes to become autonomous by raising its own revenue and being responsible for its staffing and by providing all services within its boundaries with the exception of Electricity, Tele-communications and Water which it recognizes as better handled by the relevant statutory bodies. It also expects to become involved in cultural activities through the provision of a hall or auditorium where plays or recitals can be performed.

With the ability to hire and fire its own staff, the Corporation envisions the provision of a range of new services such as drug rehabilitation and psychological counselling for its employees. The modernization of rate collection and complete computerization of its activities were also among the priorities for the Corporation.

The Corporation's Outline of Strategic Plan delineates its values, its major functions and sub-functions and its strategic objectives. It recognizes the qualities which its employees and supplier must possess, the nature of the technology it should acquire and utilize and the level of service it must deliver to its residents and visitors.

This document which was prepared with the assistance of the Organization and Management Division outlines the desired state of the Corporation into the 21st Century. However, while a Strategic Plan needs to be fully developed, the Outline provides an adequate base to begin restructuring the Corporation.

All strategic planning was suspended with the change of government in November 1995 as the Corporation awaits the enunciation of the present administration's policy on Local Government. However, without external assistance, the Corporation will be unable to fully develop its Strategic Plan.

IV. PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING OF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

A. THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS

1. The political level

Within the City Corporation, a system of decentralized decision-making is formalized through the mechanism of the several Standing Committees comprising members of the Council and the Administration. At the regular monthly meetings of the Committees, decisions are made generally by consensus among Councillors with information provided by Heads of Department. Ratification of decisions by the Council is usually automatic providing the Deputy Mayor or Mayor was present at Committee Meetings.

Decision makers at the Council, however, do not possess the ability to have decisions executed and lack executive authority to elicit the appropriate response from some Department Heads. In a real sense, Chairmen of Standing Committees and even the Mayor cannot exact obedience since they are incapable of invoking sanctions against employees engaged in tardy practices. Indeed, the actions of some Department Heads appear to be a stonewalling of the decisions of the Council or defying the will of the Councillors.

Very often, implementation of decisions requires the creation of informal relationships with subordinates of some Department Heads, especially those who are directly responsible for executing the decisions. These informal relationships however, often lead to conflicts between subordinates and their Department Heads and generate low morale within Departments.

For non-routine matters, a small group of Council members develop ideas which generally are discussed with the policy makers in the Party. Decisions are then made at the Council consistent with the known wishes of the Political Party to which the majority of Council members belong. However, to the extent that these decisions are seen as inconsistent with the law or not in the best interest of the Corporation, they often induce non-response or negative responses from Department Heads. These conflicts appear to have engendered a lack of cohesion among the political and administrative arms of the Corporation and have reduced the possibility of a team approach to formulation of solutions. Additionally, the Corporation is ill served by what appears to be a dysfunctional political process.

There is no mechanism for formal participation in the decision-making process at the political level by citizens. Representatives of the Council sometime hold informal discussions with members

of the business community to obtain their comments on some specific scheme or elicit their participation in a particular project. However, these meetings are generally ad hoc.

While members of the public can submit petitions at the monthly Statutory Meetings of the Council, debate by the public on issues being dealt with at these meetings is not encouraged. Moreover, there are no representation of civic or community organizations at the Standing Committees. Nor are there representatives of selected government departments.

2. The administrative level

At the Administrative level, decision making is highly centralized in Heads of Department. The quality of manpower below the level of Department Heads except in the Public Health Department, has been partially responsible for this centralized system. This is most obvious in the Departments of the City Engineer, the City Treasurer and the City Assessor.

Job specifications for daily rated employees of the Corporation are either non-existent or so obsolete as to render them useless. In the absence of formal techniques of on the job training for new employees, learning is essentially by observations of repetitive tasks with explanations provided if and when necessary by a senior employee or supervisor. Very often Heads of Department are unable to delegate authority for non-routine tasks.

For monthly paid officers, job specifications are also dated and there are no mechanisms for training of supervisors and middle-level managers either within the Corporation or externally. Because the peculiarities of the Public Health Department require specialist training, there is a core of well trained middle level supervisors. However, the Consultants were informed that the Corporation's inability to hire and train staff as additional public health inspectors will reduce the quality of middle level managers in the future.

Given the general lack of manpower planning, human resources development and career path planning in the City Corporation, an appropriate chain of command in most departments is not organized on the basis of expertise. Thus those non-routine matters which demand decisions are invariably executed by Heads of Department.

3. Technical tools

The most important tool used in the decision making process for development purposes is the Annual Budget. Other tools used with less frequency are the Corporation's information base and the application of new technology. These are elaborated below.

a) The annual budget

The major tool utilized by the City Corporation in the planning and programming of its internal and external activities is its Annual Budget. The Corporation's Annual Budget comprises its projected income and expenditure for the year beginning January and ending December. It is based on the aggregated activities of Departments proposed over a 12 month period.

The Annual Budget, which is a requirement of the Central Government for funding of government departments and statutory bodies, allows the City Corporation to plan its activities and to determine its priorities on an annual basis. However, few development projects are pursued and the budget exercise is essentially a prioritizing of recurrent activities.

The cycle which begins in April of each year for the following year, is a long process in which draft department budgets are compiled and sent to the Chief Executive Officer. These are then collated by the City Treasurer's Department and a single budget is submitted by the City Corporation to the Ministry of Local Government for review and possible modification. Based on observations by the Ministry of Local Government, it is revised generally downward by the City Corporation and then resubmitted to the Ministry of Local Government for submission to the Ministry of Finance by July of each year.

The Ministry of Finance reviews the City's budget submission and generally holds discussion with its representatives around September at which point the City Corporation is again expected to defend its submission. It is informed of its approved budget in late December or early January of the next year with publication of the Central Government's Draft Estimates of Revenues and Expenditures for Statutory Bodies and Agencies.

Projects and programmes identified some eight months earlier for execution in the budget year are generally adjusted in the first month or so of the budget year based usually on reduced funding allocated to the City Corporation by the Central Government. While modifications of project or programme can be undertaken within the Corporation, expenditure of funds on projects or programmes not identified in the budget must be approved by the Central Government.

The length of the budget cycle, significant reduction in budgetary allocations, the untimely receipt of funds from the Central Government and the inflexible conditions imposed on expenditure of funds, restrict the ability of the City Corporation to respond quickly to changes in the environment.

Even changes in project or programme priorities which require reallocation of funds from one budget heading to another by the Corporation cannot be undertaken without the approval of the Central Government.

Heads of Department who are responsible for executing the Corporation's programmes and projects see preparation of the Annual Budget as an exercise in futility. Reductions in budget requests made by Central Government bureaucrats are often arbitrary. Actual disbursement of funds is generally less than the amount allocated in the budget and usually follows no predictable pattern. Thus maintenance of timeframes and work schedules prepared for execution of projects and programmes are rendered virtually impossible.

b) The information base

The City Corporation's information base consists of a Drainage Study of Port of Spain undertaken by a private consulting firm in the early 1980's, copies of building plans of all modifications to existing buildings, construction plans of new buildings within the City submitted by builders and designers and information compiled by the various departments in ledgers, rate books and the like.

The Drainage Study which reviewed the drainage system in Port of Spain and prepared conceptual designs for drainage improvement, is utilized by the City Engineer's Department for maintenance and repairs of existing drains as well as construction of new ones.

Two copies of all building plans are submitted to the City Engineer's Department from the four copies sent to the Town and Country Planning Division along with a request for final planning approval. These plans are reviewed by the City Engineer essentially for structural integrity and for the issuance of building permits for construction once they have satisfied the Corporation's requirements.

The plans are also reviewed by the Public Health Department for public health requirements such as natural light, venting of plumbing lines and air circulation, and waste water disposal including both storm and grey water. They are also used by the City Assessor's Department for purposes of assessment of values of new structures or re-assessment of values of improved buildings.

Information is routinely collected by the Public Health Department on a range of public health related issues. This information is shared with both national and international agencies and are used in the planning and execution of health programmes and public health education campaigns.

Complaints by the public on illegal structures, health nuisances, potential threats to public health or safety and unhygienic conditions in public places provide an important source of information. This information which is recorded manually, generally activates a process of investigations by the relevant departments. However, with the exception of the Public Health Department, the Consultants were unable to determine the extent to which this information forms part of the City Corporation's permanent data base.

c) The application of technology

New technology in data processing, storage and retrieval has not yet been adopted throughout the Corporation. The Ledger is still the major instrument of recording information and these records are manually kept. Review of data by any department requires the physical acquisition of these ledgers. Computerization is in its nascent form in the Treasurer's Department and two lap top computers are to be found in the Public Health Department and the Chief Engineer's Department.

A contract was awarded by the Corporation to a private firm to computerize the City Treasurer's Department. However, this project has been proceeding rather slowly and the Consultants were unable to obtain information on the Firm's likely target dates for completion.

The persistence of manual operations means that data is lost in collection, collation, storage and retrieval with few exceptions. The general absence of a computerized data base also suggests that a number of decisions are being made without the benefit of data by some departments.

Scarce space which can and should be used for more functional activities are being utilized for the storage of books and paper in a haphazard manner throughout the Corporation. This was most noticeable in the Police Department where documents were sitting on the floors and on the tops of filing cabinets.

The Public Health Department engages routinely in the testing of food sold for public consumption. However, it takes samples which are then tested by the Government Chemist. It has no facilities of its own nor does it possess portable equipment for on-site testing of specific foods. However, the Consultants were informed that requests from the City Corporation to the Government Chemist are generally dealt with quickly.

B. ROLE OF THE CITY CORPORATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Development planning in the City of Port of Spain is outside the purview of the City Corporation. The Town and Country Planning Division of the Ministry of Planning and Development is responsible for physical planning throughout Trinidad and Tobago. Thus the Port of Spain Plan of 1984 prepared by Town and Country Planning Division is the major policy guide in making decisions on applications for physical development within the city.

During the preparation of the Port of Spain Plan there was consultation between the Town and Country Planning Division and the City Corporation. However, inputs from the City Corporation were minimal as the Plan was presented as a draft document over which the City Corporation felt it had no control. Moreover, given the absence of planning expertise within the City Corporation, consultation was, for the City Corporation, a mere formality.

The City Corporation does not perceive this Plan as its own and has little commitment to its implementation. Indeed, a copy of this Plan is not used as a guide in the preparation of the City Engineer's Department's annual recurrent or development activities.

At a general level, the development objectives of the Port of Spain Plan (1984) were supported by most of the various sectors and interest groups in the city since they were generally not site specific. Clearly all groups can and do support goals such as the following:

- To improve the quality of the physical environment and to enhance the image of the City.
- To provide for quick, efficient safe and convenient access to a wide range of activities and facilities within the City and between the City and the rest of the Country.
- To arrest the drift of the resident population away from the City.
- To ensure the viability of the City economy while controlling its growth consistent with national policy.
- To upgrade the level and distribution of physical infrastructural systems serving the City in order to improve its attractiveness as a centre of business and residential activity.
- To provide the widest choice and diversity in, and access to, opportunities for self development, cultural development, leisure pursuits, health and protective facilities.

- To achieve a stimulating, yet orderly, safe and convenient disposition of land uses which will promote the efficient functioning of all sectors.^{10/}

It is at the point of translation from general proposals to specific development projects that there is a not insignificant concerns about the relevance of the Plan by property owners, developers and even the City Corporation. As recent as, Wednesday 20th March 1996, at a symposium hosted by the Minister of Housing and Settlement on the future development of East Port of Spain, the Mayor lamented the continued loss of population and the lack of pro-active planning policies to arrest the drift to the suburbs and the attendant decline of life in the Central Business District after working hours.

There is no substantive communication between the Town and Country Planning Division (T&CPD) and the City Corporation on the nature and extent of the City's development problems and the strategies to cope with them. Nor is there periodic discussions on the issues germane to the provision of services by the City Corporation. Additionally, the Plan has failed to address in any significant manner the erosion of the City's tax base while it insists on maintenance of the dominant single family residential character of much of urban Port of Spain.

Most developers perceive the City Corporation as having little authority over development projects. Developers will hold early and substantive discussions with T&CPD on development projects in their attempt to secure planning permissions. But they place little emphasis on seeking comments from the City Corporation.

It is not unusual for even Government Departments to neglect to inform the City Corporation of likely projects. Indeed, the earliest contact that Developers have with the City Corporation occur when a final building application is submitted to the T&CPD which is required by law to transmit two copies of the plans to the City Corporation for its consideration of building regulations and public health.

There is a co-ordinating committee comprising T&CPD, City Corporation and other statutory bodies which meet in an effort to expedite decisions. However, there is little evidence to suggest that this forum is used, or can be used, by the City to explore its vision for development or make particular comments on the nature of a development proposal. Co-ordination is limited to ensuring that each agency makes a timely decision on its area of responsibility.

Discussions with a wide cross-section of Corporations, property owners and development professionals confirm the perception that the activities of City Corporation is not a guiding light when it comes to formulation of development projects, the main concern being to minimize conflict with the Building and Public Health Departments of the City in building construction/renovation.

C. STRATEGIES FOR GUIDING URBAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Prior to 1990, the City Corporation had attempted unsuccessfully to engage in a series of initiatives to improve the urban fabric of Port of Spain, to generate additional funds in its quest for financial self-sufficiency, and to intervene actively in the development process through partnerships with

selected firms. However, it was only in the aftermath of the insurrection in 1990 July, did conditions emerge for the general acceptance of such an approach.

In preparing an Interim Report on the re-construction of Port of Spain for the Government of Trinidad and Tobago after the unsuccessful insurrection, the National Insurance Property Development Company (NIPDEC) which was commissioned by the Government to receive and estimate proposals for reconstruction of lower Port of Spain, noted the following:

"It was evident that from all discussions held that the Port of Spain Central Business District had begun to show signs of decay for over twenty (20) years. The migration of office activities from the downtown to the residential areas of close by (Uptown, Newtown, Woodbrook, Belmont and St Clair), coupled with the loss of commercial activity to a plethora of mall developments both in the suburbs of Port of Spain and other urban centres, have reduced economic activity significantly within the major centre. The growing number of decaying and abandoned buildings, vacant sites, failure and closure of shops, all have contributed to the general loss of confidence in the city as a viable economic entity.

At the same time, vehicular congestion and pedestrian conflict have increased because of inadequate and inappropriate transportation systems and management techniques. The drainage system has continued to malfunction. The vagrant population especially of the mentally ill, criminally minded and violent individuals has increased dramatically. The number, type and complexity of criminal activity has grown to seemingly alarming proportions.

All of these factors have contributed to a loss of public and investor confidence in the city which manifested itself in the general atmosphere of neglect. The events of 27th July, 1990, which destroyed approximately (4%) four percent of the operating business in the city seemed to heighten the pessimism which surrounded the future of downtown Port of Spain."^{11/}

In discussions with NIPDEC, its representatives noted that it became obvious to all participants of those early discussions that a partnership between public sector agencies and private sector firms was the only practical method of achieving the creation of an acceptable urban system. This approach made possible for the first time, a series of sustained meetings with the City Corporation, key Central Government Agencies and Utilities, members of the business sector including merchants, financiers and major corporations along with the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago and NIPDEC.

Several projects have since been developed on the basis of a public sector-private sector partnership approach. These include beautification of the city, construction of a public transport hub, resuscitating of urban parks and initiation of land development projects.

The first and most dramatic beautification project involved the pedestrianization and greening of Independence Square, an 11 block linear park along which is located some of the most expensive real estate in the country. This space, in reality a traffic median separating east and west bound traffic, once served as an urban park in the downtown core and around which most of the privately-operated public transportation routes into the city coalesced.

Over a period of two decades or so, the park's character was changed. Portions of this linear park were used for parking of privately-owned cars and maxi taxis, illegal vending by itinerant

vendors, squatter housing and sales outlet for artisans engaged in the manufacture of leather goods and jewelry of local materials, and as a daytime congregation area for some of the residents of nearby privately-run nighttime shelters for the City's homeless.

After 20 years of rejecting the City Corporation's efforts to remove the illegal occupants; of tolerating the increasing squalor of the shacks used for both sleeping and retailing in the face of increasing protestations by the Corporate business establishments closest to the site; and increasingly hostile public sentiments after the insurrection, the Central Government became instrumental in leading the beautification programme.

1. Establishment of the Brian Lara Promenade

Rehabilitation of this park, which was renamed the Brian Lara Promenade, involved relocation of the existing occupants, reconstruction or rehabilitation of public toilets and electrical sub-stations, landscaping of the area with both hard and soft materials, construction of an elevated stage for public performances and installations of lighting and seating accommodation for relaxation and passive recreation.

Financing was initially provided by a group of firms engaged in the energy sector for the first phase of the project. For subsequent phases, financing has been provided by business firms whose properties front the areas of the promenade under construction.

A private firm has been established to manage the promenade and it is funded by business establishments whose entrances are oriented towards the Promenade. Additionally, a Management Committee comprising representatives of these businesses supervise the operations of the management firm which is responsible for security, maintenance and authorization of use of the elevated stage.

This programme is continuing and on completion will provide a space which enhances the downtown core and which was designed for use by residents and visitors to the city of Port of Spain and effectively managed by a private sector firm.

After initial meetings to which the City Corporation was invited, the Central Government took full control of this project and the City Corporation's role was relegated to that of an interested bystander.

2. Creation of an off-street public transit hub

To relieve traffic congestion and the general chaos attendant on the use of some of the streets (Broadway, Henry Street, Chacon Street, Independence Square North between Chacon and Abercromby Street) as maxi taxis terminus, two off-street facilities were constructed. The first of these facilities for westbound transport routes to Diego Martin, Petit Valley and Carenage from the city centre, was constructed on land donated by a private firm and funding of the project was provided by a major Port of Spain based Corporation while construction was undertaken by NIPDEC.

The second and more elaborate facility, called City Gate, the Public Transport Hub, was built on land of the Public Transport Service Corporation (PTSC), the site of the old railway station and from which the PTSC operates a national bus service. This Transit Hub combines access to public transportation services offered by private maxi taxi operators and the public owned bus company along with convenience shopping in a mall type atmosphere.

This facility currently handles well over 150,000 passengers per day and at completion has the potential to be a major activity centre for transportation, shopping and entertainment at one of the major entrances to the city.

Funding was provided by the Central Government. The facility was constructed by NIPDEC and is designed to be financially self-sufficient, with fees to be paid by the public transport providers and mall tenants.

The facility is expected to be administered by a Board comprising representatives of the Central Government, PTSC, and the Maxi Taxi Association with day to day administration of the facility being the responsibility of a private firm.

While the permanent management structure is not yet in place, the PTSC has been providing day to day administration for a management fee which is currently paid by the Central Government. The mall has also attracted some major food outlets, a number of small specialty shops and an automated banking facility. Though incomplete, the facility has been well received by the travelling public.

The City Corporation had agitated over the years for relocation of the maxi taxis. When the Central Government eventually implemented the scheme there were no significant inputs from the City Corporation.

The creation of the Brian Lara Promenade at Independence Square and the Transit Hub at South Quay, has successfully begun to change the urban landscape in downtown Port of Spain. It has also convinced all participants of the efficacy of the partnership approach to urban redevelopment and has given impetus to the City Corporation to pursue other projects elsewhere in the City, utilizing the same approach.

3. Establishment of permanent vending facilities

Widespread vending in the urban core had mushroomed to unmanageable proportions and with the partial and total destruction of some 84 buildings during the insurrection, buildings gutted by fire had posed a serious risk to vendors and pedestrians. Establishment of a space for vending was seen as a legitimate development activity particularly in light of high unemployment and underemployment. Moreover, both resident and itinerant vendors were vociferously objecting, including recourse to the court, to the City Corporation's attempts to curtail their activities or relocate them away from areas of heavy pedestrian traffic.

Tent City, initially a collection of gaily coloured tents with lighting and temporary toilets, was erected on the traffic median at Independence Square and offered to vendors at a minimal rental fee.

The City Corporation permitted use of the land and simultaneously began enforcing the law against vending on city streets elsewhere in the city.

Subsequently, a permanent structure was built on Independence Square South for itinerant vendors on land rented at peppercorn rates from a private company. Construction financing was made available by the Central Government while construction was undertaken by NIPDEC. Additionally, vendors who were actually residing in illegally constructed retail outlets on the traffic median were relocated to a new structure on city-owned land in east Port of Spain. This structure was financed by the Central Government and constructed by NIPDEC.

Management Committees were established in these facilities after initial management and maintenance by NIPDEC. Currently Vendors Association are successfully operating these facilities with utility services and rental of the Independence Square site being paid from rental income of vendors who are renting booths in these facilities.

4. Rehabilitation of selected city parks

The City Corporation is incapable of financing adequate maintenance or security of its several parks particularly those in the downtown core. They have deteriorated overtime as a result of vandalism and through use by vagrants and the homeless as permanent residences.

The City Corporation has solicited assistance from the private sector in the rehabilitation and management of these parks. To date, two parks, Victoria Square and Lord Harris have been "adopted" by major corporations. Additionally, the City Corporation is holding discussion with other firms to farm out another four parks, namely, Woodbrook playground, Seigert Square, Adam-Smith Square and Tamarind Square.

So far Victoria Square has been rehabilitated. The fountain has been restored, vegetative cover, mostly grass and hedges, has been replanted and large shady trees have been pruned, the public toilets and lighting system are once again functional and outdoor furniture has been replaced. Maintenance and security are provided by the Company and the park is once again being utilized by residents and visitors for passive recreation.

5. Land development programme

The City Corporation owns large parcels of undeveloped property throughout the corporate area of Port of Spain as well as outside the City. Within the last few years, it has made a decided attempt to engage in land development through partnership with private sector firms. It is the Corporation intention to offer long term leases on the land and obtain revenues through the collection of rates and taxes.

The services of private consultants were obtained on a "success fee" basis to assist the Corporation in achieving the development of three (3) parcels in the Woodbrook/St. James area. The first site, an 11 acre parcel, which is currently utilized by the Corporation's Transport and Cleansing Division was identified by the City Corporation for development.

Through its Consultants, the Corporation invited proposals for development of the site and received eight (8) substantial project proposals consisting of mixed development of offices, middle income housing, shopping, recreation and entertainment.

These proposals are currently being evaluated and the Consultants were informed that a decision on the most acceptable package is imminent.

The two other sites currently under review for development are at Ocean Avenue and Westmoorings. Ocean Avenue is a site of roughly one and a half acres (1.5 acs) with extended sea frontage in an area where high rise luxury apartments are currently being constructed. With reclamation works, it is possible to increase the size of the site to approximately eleven acres (11 acs.). Such a site which is just outside the city's western limit is likely to attract development activities.

The Westmoorings site which is approximately 34 acres, is located adjacent to a high income, medium density residential community. This site is also just outside the city's western boundaries and has a fair market value of roughly \$20 million dollars. Given its proximity to a well established high income community, it is likely to attract favourable responses from private sector firms engaged in land development.

Given new actions taking place within the City, the Corporation's land development initiatives are likely to elicit a positive response from the new Administration. The success of this venture will certainly increase its revenue base, encourage further physical development and give to the Corporation a sense of achievement which is so sorely needed. However, as previous projects suggest, there is the risk that such initiatives may be appropriated by Central Government via an authority such as NIPDEC.

V. SUMMARY OF THE PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES FACING THE CITY CORPORATION

A. LIMITS AND CONSTRAINTS

1. The national level

It has not yet been appreciated in Trinidad and Tobago that many of the problems of development cannot be successfully solved by a sectoral approach. The problems are so closely linked that only a national development policy which goes beyond physical and spatial planning and towards a more explicit integrated strategy is likely to succeed. In general, Central Government perceives itself as both the policy maker and the implementer of policy. There is still a strong motivation for Central Government to be seen to be doing things hence it is not surprising that the City Corporation, as with other Local Government Units, has been relegated to the role of a bit player.

An explicit development strategy would enable a re-orientation of the Central Government economic and sectoral policies to reduce conflicts and provide clear goals and objectives against which to assess the impacts of policies and programmes. If this were understood or accepted by Central Government then the roles would become clear. Central Government would formulate the development strategy and strengthen the capability of Local Government Authorities such as the City Corporation to formulate and implement effective solutions to local problems within the context of a national development strategy.

Whether intentional or not, the present erosion of authority of Local Government has meant that the City Corporation does not possess the legal, institutional and organizational structures and, the technical, human and financial resources to manage the City's problems adequately.

There seems to be little understanding particularly on the part of Central Government that there is a downward spiral in effective management at both Central and Local Government levels. Thus Central Government attempts to do almost everything, ineffectively, most of which could be efficiently performed by the City, while the City Corporation languishes.

In the final analysis, the human and financial resources of Central Government are inadequate and too impersonal to deal with local development issues while the City Corporation fails to gain expertise, authority, exposure and the confidence necessary to tackle local problems. The annual budget exercise is symptomatic of this malaise.

To intervene successfully in development issues, the Corporation, as the body which can incorporate citizen participation and self-help augmented by enhanced political, institutional and financial resources, should be the main agent of change in dealing with the City's problems.

2. The city level: the Corporation

Although the City Corporation was initially involved in discussions on the redevelopment of the city, it has been unable to make its presence felt in the process of urban regeneration. To a large extent, the City Corporation's attempts at intervention in the development process has been thwarted by three mutually supporting conditions. First, the role of Port of Spain as the nation's capital has encouraged a hands on approach to development by national policy makers who perceive development of the capital city as part of their responsibility. Second, policy makers within the City Corporation are bereft of a vision which encompasses the operations of a complex urban system. Third, the City Corporation is anaemic in financial resources, weak in political resolve and archaic in its administrative machinery.

As the nation's capital, national policy makers generally do not recognize a role for the City Corporation as managers of the capital's urban system. Proximity, political and physical, has conspired to marginalize the role of city government. Through its technical agencies and ministries, the Central Government has assumed responsibility for the delivery of infrastructure within Port of Spain. Moreover, the City Corporation is perceived to be simply another Central Government Agency responsible for the provision of an increasingly narrow and restricted range of services.

The initial response of an Independent Government to strip the City Corporation of many of its functions has been superseded by an ambivalence to the role of local governing authority. Thus while a relatively clear statement of areas of responsibility for City Government is articulated in the Municipal Authorities Act of 1990, it is hedged with Ministerial oversight and approval requirements.

Independence of action by the City Government is thus constrained by the coincidence of habitation of political and physical space by both the City and Central Governments. This circumstance is buttressed by a lack of action on the part of the Central Government to systematically develop and implement a coherent plan of decentralization consistent with an integrated approach to local government.

The policy makers at the city level do not comprehend the nature of the urban system over which they preside nor is the City Corporation equipped to manage the complex system that is the City of Port of Spain. The absence of a vision of the city as a living organism which responds to a range of stimuli, restricts purposeful action by the City Corporation and has left a vacuum which the recently established Urban Development Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago can be expected to fill.

The City Corporation has emasculated itself by not pursuing a role of urban managers. Given the past and continuing problems of preparation of Local Area Plans by a beleaguered Town and Country Planning Department, a real opportunity was available for the City Corporation to develop a plan of its vision of the city and aggressively pursue a partnership approach to its phased implementation. Its failure to act boldly and decisively left a gap for the creation of yet another state agency to impress its management on the City of Port of Spain.

Dependence on the Central Government has become part of the organizational culture of the City Corporation. While the Corporation's inability to act independently is restricted in some significant respects by statute law, there are avenues available for decisive action.

Although the City Corporation is very constrained by Central Government in attempting to institute revenue raising schemes, it has failed to assess properties methodically or to utilize the law at its command to ensure compliance by property owners in the payment of rates and taxes. This lack of political resolve to collect its revenues has not only meant its own infringement of the law but has placed it in a position of financial dependence.

The City Corporation is bankrupt. Its annual expenditures are chronically greater than its income but tremendous energies are spent on trying to extract more funds from the Central Government rather than in collecting revenues from its tax base. This constant battle to resolve its cashflow problems has generated ancillary problems of reorganizing its labour force, engaging in revenue generating development activities and restructuring of its administration to deliver relevant services to residents and visitors.

The current lack of decision-making power and access to financial resources lead to frustration and continuing criticism of the City Corporation for insufficient, inefficient and ineffective services. This unfortunate scenario further reinforces the perception that the Corporation is incapable of handling increased responsibilities.

The major constraints to effective operations of the City Corporation are organizational, financial and legal.

a) Organizational

The Corporation's functional organizational structure flows from the Corporation's enabling legislation which allows Heads of Department, all professionals in their respective disciplines, to execute their statutory responsibilities with general oversight and co-ordination by the Chief Executive Officer. Departmental functions are highly specialized and department heads are equipped with a great deal of autonomy in the execution of their functions. However, routine activities tend to consume their energies.

Because policies of the Council do not challenge Department Heads to engage in new and non-routine matters germane to the development and well being of the Corporation as well as the City, its residents and visitors, organizational atrophy has set in. Traditional functions and organizational structures have not been modified over the years in several departments.

Most of the Corporation's personnel interviewed have given little, if any, thought to new ways of doing old things or engaging in totally new activities which are in the best interest of the Corporation or of the City. There is an air of despondency which pervades the Corporation and which may account, in part, for the high rate of turnover of trained staff as well as the high level of absenteeism among daily rated employees.

Exceptions are the Public Health and the Treasurer's Departments. In the former, a number of officers are grappling with new problems such as aids; vagrancy and hopelessness; drug abuse,

occupational health and safety; and air, water and noise pollution. In the latter, attempts are being made to computerize all activities.

While there is general dissatisfaction with the prevailing situation in which the Corporation finds itself, only a few Councilors and Department Heads identified the immensity of the task faced by both the Corporation and the City. The most pervasive complaints within the Corporation are the inadequacy of funding and insufficiency of trained personnel. It was therefore generally believed that financial autonomy and the filling of vacant positions were the answers to the Corporation's problems.

Specific concerns were also expressed by different Department Heads. However, what emerged was a plethora of ills which included antiquated public health legislation, inappropriate functions residing within one or more departments, perennial cash flow difficulties, absence of by-laws which restrict the effectiveness of the policing arm of the Corporation, inaction in the collection of revenues from assessment of buildings and erosion of the power and authority of the City Corporation.

Representatives of some departments have pointed to the cumbersome appeal procedures which some property owners utilize to delay payment of increased rates and taxes or to reduce the increase in payment. The appeal process is seen as frustratingly long and works against the interest of the Corporation.

The City has not been able to retain professional staff in some Departments for any sustained period. For example, the last fully employed Chartered Valuation Surveyor severed ties with the Council several years ago, the current Treasurer is less than a year in the position and the City Engineer's position is temporarily occupied by the Deputy City Engineer.

The Corporation has been stopped by Cabinet Decree from revising existing property rates in the city. They may affix rates to new properties at Current Annual Values or review the rates on buildings which have no improvements other than normal maintenance and decorative work. The Corporation is unable to function productively when a Cabinet decision appears to affect the substantive law which governs one or more of its activities but equally problematic is the inability of partisan local government to question directions arising out of a Central Government controlled by a common political party.

The City Treasurer's Department also has difficulty in enforcing the law with regard to the collection of revenue owed to the Corporation. Under the Municipal Corporations Act the Treasurer may advertise properties for sale if rates and taxes are outstanding for two years or more. Having duly advertised properties and given notification, the Treasurer may put up for sale by auction any properties whose rates and taxes remain outstanding. A warrant authorizing this action must be signed by the Mayor. However, the Mayor's willingness to sign such warrants may well be controlled by the political administration which suzerainty over the Council which he leads.

Most of the work undertaken by the City Engineer's Department is reactive or restorative. 'Development' projects usually do not cost more than TT\$0.5M and two projects previously undertaken were the replacement of old 9 metres (30 ft.) circular drain cylinders in Belmont with box type drainage cylinders, and, the construction of a retaining wall for slipping land in the area of the recreation ground in Gonzales.

The City Engineer's Department believes that the Transport and Cleansing Division does not belong in an Engineering Department and would like to see it relocated since it is felt that the City Engineer's Department should only be responsible for engineering-related matters. Moreover, the Department's organizational structure has not been so modified due to the continuance of a Union-Management Collective Agreement which appears to place emphasis on continuation of the status quo.

b) Financial

The City is financed directly through its own efforts of revenue collections and indirectly through Government Subventions. In so far as it is financed through Central Government, the City, like any other Government Department, must submit its estimates of expenditure in detail to the Ministry with responsibility for Local Government. This is submitted to the rigorous scrutiny of the Ministry of Finance and the final estimates entered into the budgetary proposals for the year to which it applies. Theoretically disbursements are made quarterly to the Corporation.

All expenditures are to be accounted for in the same way as any other Government Department and subjected to similar controls and scrutiny by the Central Government. The one area that control is less rigid is the Mayoral Fund.

Temporary solutions to the cash flow problems which beset the Corporation consume the energies of the Treasurer. There is little or no time to reflect on improving management structures, reorganizing systems and procedures for collection and disbursement of funds, or introducing new technology to reduce the burden of pervasive manual operations inherited from a different era.

The Corporation is bankrupt. Its annual expenditure is roughly four times its revenue in any given year and it therefore has to rely on the Central Government to make up the shortfall. In circumstances of reduced revenues and or poor cashflows to the Central Government, financial resources are not provided to the Corporation in the agreed quantity or on a timely basis.

c) Legal

The Municipal Corporations Act, N° 20 of 1990 was drafted during the political administration (1986-1991) of the National Alliance for Reconstruction Party (NAR) with the expressed view that Local Government bodies should be autonomous. However, the word "Minister" appears more than 100 times in the Act with regard to ministerial oversight.

Regional Corporations require the approval of the Minister to borrow money, to arrange the frequency of meetings, to establish a Mayor's Fund, to borrow funds, to alter the allocation of funds within the budget and the like. This level of oversight secures control by the Minister of the local governing body and is contrary to the professed intent of succeeding Governments to provide some autonomy to Local Government.

The Peoples National Movement Party (PNM) which assumed power from the NAR in 1991 also supported the ideal of autonomy for Local Government bodies. Nonetheless, bye-laws to increase Market fees for the Municipalities have been sitting in Cabinet since 1993 without approval. The Act N° 20 of 1990 has been under review since 1993 but the 72 suggested amendments to remove Ministerial oversight are still in the preparation/discussion stage between the Ministry of

Local Government and the Municipalities. Interestingly, Section 269 which gives the Minister power of veto is not being amended.

The current joint administration of the United National Congress Party (UNC) and the National Alliance for Reconstruction, (NAR) also wholeheartedly supports Local Government autonomy. Its policy is stated as "Autonomy and Empowerment with Rationalization of Resources". But one of the present Minister's first acts, after being in office for less than three months, was to seek to suspend an advertised "Invitation for Proposals" for lease and development of lands belonging to the Port of Spain City Corporation. His action were reportedly made on the basis that the proposed project had not been discussed with him. However, the Minister subsequently withdrew his actions and the Corporation's effort is continuing.

The staff of the Local Government Ministry believes that its function is merely of an advisory nature -that of facilitators or a medium between the municipalities and Central Government. The Ministry's stated Mission is that "the Ministry of Local Government is in the business of providing specialized support to Municipal Corporations to facilitate efficiency, effectiveness and accountability in the delivery of high quality services."

The Ministry provides occasional training programmes for the staff of the municipalities in addition to reviewing development projects, plans and budgets, giving legal advice and assistance in staffing. The Corporation's current Legal Adviser was provided through the Ministry.

Currently there is an established Boundaries Committee sitting to decide whether the boundaries of the Municipalities should be changed. There are two representatives from the municipalities on this committee and not necessarily from the affected municipality.

It is the general feeling that the City Corporation is worse off with the enactment of the new Municipal Authorities Act. The City Corporation sees the Act as reducing it to a Regional Corporation rather than providing it with the requisite authority to carry out its functions as a City Government.

3. The neighbourhood level

The socio-economic and physical evolution of the City has and is occurring with little direction or influence by the legal authority responsible for the management function of the Capital City and is a contributing factor to the continuing decline of the urban fabric of the City. This decline is most evident in the erosion of the tax base of the City and the inability of the City Corporation to structurally influence economic development.

Over the past 30 years, Port of Spain has and is continuing to be subjected to dynamic structural changes to the economic and physical fabric. These changes are seen in the decline of the resident population, transformation of old buildings to new and different commercial uses and the rapid conversion of traditional single family residential activities in such areas as St Clair, Newtown and Woodbrook some of which are on the fringes of the traditional commercial core of the City.

In the traditional high income residential settlements in north-western Port of Spain where average lot size is 1 000 square metres and family residences generally contain over 300 square metres

of covered space, encroachment by businesses such as Professional Practices, Advertising Firms and Insurance Companies is widespread. This is due principally to the sale of property occasioned by changes in the family's life cycle and the increasing cost of property maintenance. Ageing property owners, usually couples and/or a surviving partners, are relocating to newer and smaller, though no less exclusive, residential areas where townhouses meet their current needs.

In the face of this natural evolution of the urban system, the Town and Country Planning Division's land use policy is attempting to maintain relatively low density residential land-use in what are slowly becoming transition zones on the city's fringe. One result is that approximately 95% of the change of use from residential to commercial occurring within Newtown and Woodbrook is unauthorized development. The City Council, particularly in Woodbrook, normally does not object to the change of use because it represents potentially higher rateable values and a concomitant increase in its revenue base.

Because of the locations of these properties in relatively quiet neighbourhoods and pleasant surroundings, they are commanding high prices which can be more easily afforded by commercial establishments. Additionally, the intensity of use being permitted by the Division on these parcels of land where developers wish to maintain residential use, is generally too low to provide an investment opportunity for them. However, to the extent that the Land Use policy restricts commercial and high density residential use of high priced land, the Division's goals of continued residential use in these communities are not being realized.

Unfortunately, the City Corporation is not benefiting from the potential increase in property tax. Even though the City Corporation has the power to increase the rates on these unauthorized commercial uses of property, it chooses generally not to do so on the ground that to do so may confirm recognition of illegal uses.

The desires of the policy makers and those who are expected to manage the City are in conflict. High rise residential structures in these areas may well encourage a return to the city of some portion of the sub-urban population, reduce the pressure for residential construction outside of the city and significantly increase the city's tax base. But there have been no significant concerns expressed to the Town and Country Planning Division by the City Corporation on a matter so germane to its own financial viability and the economic fortunes of the city.

While the Division's policy acts in many instances not only as a constraint to balanced development, it also influences artificially the value of property within the City. In the absence of policies which attempt to guide by incentives rather than restrict by control, this evolution will continue to the detriment of both the City Corporation and the City's many distinct neighbourhoods.

B. CAPACITY TO EXERCISE INDEPENDENT CONTROL AND AUTHORITY

The City Corporation, by law, has the independence of action to assess and increase property rates and taxes, determine and enforce acceptable standards of building designs, approve temporary closure of local streets, planting of utility poles and fire hydrants on city sidewalks and restructure its decision making procedures to include citizens' participation. That it has not utilized this authority suggests

not only a lack of confidence in its power and an absence of the will to do so, but perhaps its too easy acceptance of directives and guidance from the political party to which its policy makers belong.

Much has already been said on the ability of the Corporation to increase its annual revenue. However, its policy makers will need to be guided more by the law and not by party directives. Political resolve to do what is right for the Corporation as opposed to what is expedient will need to be established as an inviolate principle of City Government.

The Mayor's Fund which is already in effect can be used at the discretion of the Mayor. There are no limits imposed on this fund nor the manner in which it can be used and accounting for money expended from this Fund is made after the fact to the Minister of Finance. While the possibilities of utilizing this fund are enormous, the Consultants were informed that it is generally utilized periodically for minor activities.

The Corporation approves building plans but generally does not demand the use of outdoor space for public purposes, the use of eaves and overhangs for shelter or the establishment of public toilets in commercial establishments. It has focused on its approach on structural integrity and public safety but has generally ignored the convenience to the public or the aesthetics of the structures.

The closure of local streets is within the ambit of the City Corporation but it has only utilized this power periodically to establish temporary pedestrian ways in the downtown core, for construction purposes or to facilitate social activities and parties in neighbourhoods. This power can be used to create permanent pedestrian ways, restrict penetration of commercial vehicles in the downtown areas to specific periods of the day, develop on-street metered parking on selected streets and create a more organized and friendly environment for users of the city.

As owners of the local road system, the City Corporation is the agency responsible for approving the planting of utility poles, the installation of telephone kiosks and fire hydrants. The formal procedures identified in the Act appear to be ignored by both the responsible Utilities and the Corporation. The Corporation seems to accept the location of these facilities as a matter of course without regard to aesthetics and pedestrian convenience. The Corporation will need to be more aggressive in restricting the haphazard location of utility facilities.

By responding negatively to requests for approval to carry out these works or by suspending works not authorized by the Corporation and by insisting that such approvals can be obtained at the sitting of the Coordinating Committee, the Corporation can force the presence at meetings of representatives of these agencies.

The Corporation has the authority to coopt members of the public, representatives of special interest groups and individuals with specific skills to membership of its Standing Committees as non-voting members. It can also establish advisory committees comprising members of the general public and experts to advise it on any and all matters pertinent to its activities. To date, the Corporation has not used this authority in a formal manner to obtain the assistance it so sorely needs.

In discussions with the Vendors Association and the Downtown Owners and Merchants Association (DOMA), representatives indicated that they are prepared to be part of a formal decision making structure organized by the City Corporation. DOMA's representative indicated that the

Mayor consults him informally and periodically but his organization would welcome the opportunity to be a permanent part of the Corporation's decision-making process.

Structured participation in the deliberations of the Corporation by non-corporation members can only be pursued if the Members of the Council are prepared to open up the decision making process by reorganizing the way the Council does business. Its failure to do so in the past is no reason for not doing so now.

C. SOME POSSIBILITIES FOR THE FUTURE

Circumstances in the international community are forcing national policy makers to radically alter their ideological positions on a range of development issues. Privatization has begun to make inroads into the thinking of decision makers on the appropriate and relevant areas of activities for Central Government Agencies and Departments. Outsourcing of non-core services is now being viewed as a relevant approach to doing business by some quasi Government agencies while the establishment of profit centres even within some Government Agencies is quietly gaining currency among some national policy-makers.

Large central government bureaucracies are under increasing pressures to downsize as international funding agencies impose public sector reform as a condition of loan agreements. Moreover, international donor agencies having accepted that Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) can and do play useful roles, are utilizing them with increasing frequency in implementation of local projects.

Plagued with increasing cash flow problems, Central Government is encouraging statutory bodies to become more self sufficient and to take greater responsibility for the management of their affairs. Indeed, decentralization in its many guises is compelling quasi-government institutions to sever their relationship of financial dependence on the Central Government.

These changes are being wrought locally and are likely to offer opportunities for total autonomy for local governing authorities like the City Corporation in the near future. However, while these changes have not yet reached the local governing authorities, there are several areas in which the City Corporation currently can act independently. Some of these were identified in the preceding Section.

Purposeful action now by the Regional Corporation may well encourage an acceleration of the devolution of power and authority to them including the City Corporation. But, prepared or not, the Corporation may well find itself being weaned rather abruptly from government controls as momentum within the Central Government builds, fueled by outside forces, for greater control of development at the local level.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From a review of the City Corporation and the City of Port of Spain, the entire mechanism for city management and operations of the Corporation is simply not equal to the task. Deficiencies were found at all levels of the Corporation and management of the urban system was absent.

The City Corporation is likely to remain ill-equipped to manage the urban space under its control unless action is taken in the short and medium term to improve its capability. Indeed, the Corporation will need to cultivate a positive image of itself if it is to realize its vision of a major institution which is "competently empowered, technologically advanced and result-oriented to provide a range of services in a safe and healthy environment."^{12/}

The City Corporation in its Strategic Objectives has defined its desired state as follows:

- "1. To make the Corporation an autonomous organization.
2. To make the Corporation financially stable.
3. To improve and maintain the physical and social infrastructure of the City.
4. To maximize the revenues of the Corporation.
5. To provide high quality efficient services."^{13/}

The attainment of these objectives requires a radical transformation of the City Corporation; a transformation which is possible with external assistance.

The recommendations are organized around a number of requirements which must be met if the Corporation is to be transformed.

A. CREATING A PARTNERSHIP

A new and different relationship is required between the Political and Administrative Arms of the Corporation and between the City Corporation and the residents of the city. In both cases, a productive partnership must be cultivated and it can only be based on mutual respect and teamwork.

The Political Arm needs to be given an orientation programme to ensure that the decision makers understand the nature of the role they are expected to play as policy makers of an urban environment. Such an orientation will of necessity include the role of the city of Port of Spain in the socio-economic life of the nation; the nature of Port of Spain as an urban centre and the relationship

among land uses, population movement and built development; the role of the Administrative Arm in the execution of policy and the legal framework within which the City Corporation functions.

The development of a meaningful partnership can evolve between the two Arms of the Corporation if their respective roles are clearly understood and there is adequate communication between the two groups.

The Corporation needs to strengthen its relationship with its individual and Corporate residents through modification of its decision-making process. Extending membership on the Standing Committees to individual residents, representatives of non-government organizations, business firms and professional associations can introduce to the deliberations of the Standing Committees expert advice, collateral information and specific concerns of residents and interest groups which function within the city. Such an approach can also aid in conflict resolution, improve the decisions which are eventually made by the policy makers and encourage transparency and trust in the Corporation's decision-making process.

Periodic meetings with representatives of business, developers and professionals should be hosted by the Mayor to report to some of his major corporate citizens, elicit support or assistance and encourage the dissemination of information. The Mayor, as the first citizen of the City of Port of Spain, will be visible and authoritative and can thus enhance the status of the Office of Mayor and by extension, the City Corporation.

The ceremonial activities associated with the Office of Mayor of the City of Port of Spain are not well known by residents and even when these activities are performed, they are not properly publicized. Pomp and pageantry should be made a high profile activity such that the Mayor's Office is recognized as a credible institution in the urban fabric. Well publicized ceremonial occasions must be re-activated. Visitors of international status, visiting dignitaries and citizens who have attained national and international prominence and stature must be invited to City Hall with all the pomp and ceremony at the Corporation's command.

B. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Autonomy is necessary if the Corporation is to function effectively. The Municipal Authorities Act 1990 should be modified to make the City Corporation totally responsible for its financing, staffing and sourcing of goods and service. However, the Corporation will need to establish a tendering procedure to ensure transparency and equity in the acquisition of its goods and services.

The Public Health Ordinance needs to be updated to reflect concerns and responses to the new challenges in environmental health and to give the Public Health Department the powers necessary to confront and resolve the current problems.

Bye-laws in respect of the Municipal Authorities Act must be enacted as a matter of urgency to provide the needed legal basis for the enforcement actions of the Municipal Police Service.

A Municipal Court should be established and should form part of the new institutions of City Government.

The Corporation should prepare as quickly as possible guidelines for internal management of its affairs. These guidelines should be well publicized within the organization such that all decision-makers are aware of the rules which govern their relationship with staff, the procedures for co-opting members of the public for participation by members of the public during Statutory Meetings of the Corporation.

C. ORGANIZATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

The Corporation's organizational structure is obsolete. A new structure is required and it should be one which is based on the role to be played by the City Corporation as managers of the City of Port of Spain. As such, a structure which allows preparation of local area plans, implementation of local development projects and services and policing of an upgraded, local health ordinance and municipal laws must be designed and implemented.

Autonomy in recruiting, promotion and disciplining of staff by the Corporation is critical to its role a manager of the urban system. This will require, among others, the detailing of job descriptions, performance standards and entry level academic qualifications.

D. HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Manpower planning and human resource development for the Corporation have been neglected by the Central Government Agency responsible for recruitment of monthly staff for the Corporation. A new organizational structure will need to correct these deficiencies and ensure that the Corporation's role of urban manager is supported by an organized programme of timely recruitment, training and career path development.

A human resource unit will need to be established to pursue these functions to ensure that the Corporation's new management structure is continually reviewed to keep it relevant and effective.

The Corporation's human resource base is skewed towards manual operations both in its maintenance and repairs of physical infrastructure and office support. A re-organized resource base needs to be established such that greater use is made of the current technology by appropriately trained staff. This will mean reduction in the present labour force principally through retrenchment and the establishment of retraining programmes for some of these daily rated employees who are capable of adapting to a new and different work environment.

The Corporation will need assistance in negotiating a different collective agreement with the trade union which represents these workers. It will also need to generate funds to meet the severance payments of retrenched workers.

E. CONTRACTING SERVICES

A number of activities which are currently pursued by the Corporation need to be reviewed to determine the extent to which they can be contracted out. Some of these are garbage collection,

repairs to selected physical infrastructure, maintenance of utility vehicles and upgrading of tracks traces and property access roads.

Decisions on the farming out of these services will influence the size and cost of the current labour force and point to the manpower requirements of its future organization.

F. LAND MANAGEMENT

The Corporation is perhaps one of the single largest owners of land in the city but the practice of land management is not established. A survey of the Corporation's properties both within and outside the city needs to be undertaken as a matter of urgency to determine locations, sizes and quality of land which it owns. A determination of their current fair market value and their possibilities for use must also be undertaken.

Properly organized, such a unit can proffer advice on the manner in which the Corporation's land portfolio can be manipulated to provide longterm income streams, control the price of land in some areas of the city and encourage or control urban growth through a system of land banking. In support of these activities current technology in geographic information systems should be acquired and utilized.

G. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

A training programme for existing and new staff is required. The Staff needs to be trained to improve their performance levels and to be motivated to reduce their level of absenteeism. Training courses with direct relevance to tasks need to be developed and implemented. Orientation programmes which stress service to the public are to be designed and implemented for both current and future employees.

External training in management for Department Heads and Supervisors is essential. Management training should target existing supervisors in all departments and the training must be consistent with the level of staff being supervised and the role of the manager as one who executes activities through others, should be stressed.

Attachments of personnel to external agencies and to City Governments in North America can be used as an integral part of organized training for Supervisory Personnel in the technical and administrative areas.

Skills development in the use of computers for routine tasks, data storage and retrieval for all employees is required. However, special and urgent attention should be given to selected employees within the Department of the City Treasurer and City Assessor.

H. PROPERTY ASSESSMENT

It is possible that the system of property assessment may change in the future. But the property assessment activity is so vital to the Corporation's financial well being, that immediate steps should

be taken to provide proper training for those who are currently executing the functions. In the future efforts will need to be made to recruit staff with the appropriate academic foundation.

I. EQUIPMENT SURVEY

A survey of vehicle and equipment needs of the Corporation is necessary to determine the type of vehicle and equipment being utilized and the quantum which needs to be replaced or upgraded and new ones to be introduced. Such a survey has to be consistent with the new activities which the Corporation will pursue. The general absence of protective and safety gear and equipment, especially for daily rated employees and members of the Police Service, considerably reduce their level of effectiveness. However, outfitting of the Police Service be addressed as a matter of priority.

J. FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS

Within the Corporation, financial activities have to move beyond control of cashflow crises to management of its resources including investment. Assistance will need to be provided to the Corporation to overhaul its operations and establish an environment in which its vital financial resources can be deployed in a more effective manner.

The intent of the above recommendations is to improve the capacity and efficiency of the City Corporation to begin to re-organize itself to tackle the local issues of development.

The recommendations respond directly to the findings of the Consultants and the objectives set by the Corporation in its Outline Strategic Plan. If implemented, the Corporation will become central to the development of the City.

Notes

- 1/ Town and Country Planning Division of the Ministry of Planning and Development, Planning for Development: The Capital Region, Port of Spain, 1975, p. 13.
- 2/ Ibid., p. 35.
- 3/ Ibid., p. 9.
- 4/ Ministry of Planning and Reconstruction, Town and Country Planning Division, Port of Spain Land Use Plan, POS 1987. Much of the information in this section was abstracted from pp. 13 and ff.
- 5/ Ministry of Planning and Reconstruction, Town and Country Planning Division, The Port of Spain Land Use Plan: Survey and Plan Formulation, POS, 1987, pp. 14 and ff.
- 6/ Compiled from 1980 C.S.O. Census Data.
- 7/ Town and Country Planning Sample Survey 1983.
- 8/ Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago, The Municipal Corporations Act: 1990, POS, 1990.
- 9/ Port of Spain City Corporation, Outline of Strategic Plan: 1996-1997, POS, n.d.
- 10/ The Port of Spain Land Use Plan, op. cit., pp. 139 and ff.
- 11/ NIPDEC, Reconstruction of Port of Spain: Interim Report, October 1990, POS, p. 11.
- 12/ Port of Spain Corporation: Outline of Strategic Plan: 1966-1977, POS, n.d. P. Frontispiece.
- 13/ Ibid., p. 7.

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