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Study of the Park and Greenery System in Melbourne, Australia

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to examine the history of the park and greenery system in present-day Melbourne to clarify the historical background and factors contributing to the formation of a park and greenery system. As a result of this study, it was found that public land secured when the city was founded served as the seedlings of future parks. With establishment of a park management system about 40 years after founding of the city, existing parks today have been maintained in a sound condition. While Melbourne's park and greenery plan temporarily experienced a period of stagnation, it later became legally adopted as a result of a call for wide-area greenery planning that developed along with the idea of controlling disorderly expansion of the city. Furthermore, in response to global environmental problems in recent years, there is now an active movement to improve the existing parks and greenery zones by linking them in a network, thereby showing an important direction in the creation of a sustainable and sound urban environment.

Purpose of Research

Today, Melbourne, Australia is known as a "garden city" due to its many parks and greenery zones. During its short history of approximately 150 years since settlement by immigrants from England, Melbourne has come to possess abundant parks and greenery zones as seen today. However, the process of their establishment is not widely known. This objective of this paper is to examine the history of the establishment of the park and greenery system of present-day Melbourne and to clarify the historical background and factors related to the establishment of a park and greenery system.

Research Method

First, the present condition and characteristics of the park and greenery system in the central business district (CBD) and inner Melbourne were examined. Next, through the study of archival materials, the concept of city planning since settlement by immigrants in 1835 until today and the philosophy of construction of parks and greenery zones were examined to determine the historical changes.

Results of Analysis and Discussion

The Present Park and Greenery System

Figure 1 shows the distribution of parks and greenery zones in Melbourne, and Table 1 shows their classification and area.

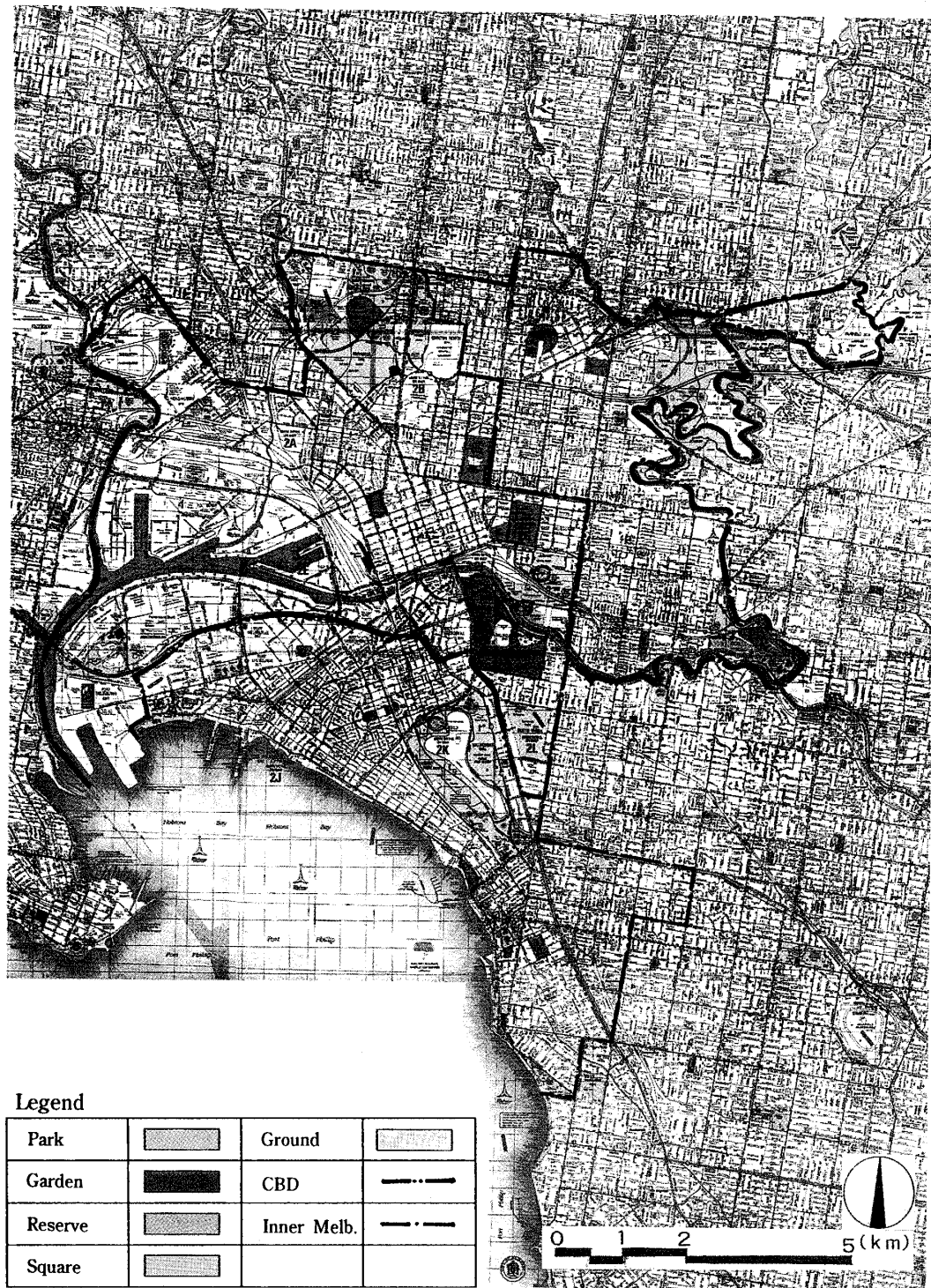


Fig. 1 The Present Park and Greenery System

Parks and greenery zones are classified into five types: parks, gardens, squares, reserves, and grounds. The characteristic of Melbourne is that large-scale parks, gardens, and reserves covering a sizable area, and long and narrow parks and reserves along waterways are distributed, encircling the CBD and inner Melbourne. Also, open space for relaxation, such as gardens and squares, are concentrated inside the CBD, whereas parks and reserves for sports and recreation are widely distributed within inner Melbourne. Park and greenery area per person is 114.1 m² in the CBD and 37.9 m² in inner Melbourne, which are extremely high figures compared with other cities around the world. In inner Melbourne, parks account for more than 50% of the park and greenery area, followed by reserves. On the other hand, in the CBD, gardens account for approximately 20% of the park and greenery area, with a smaller percentage of parks.

Table. 1 The area of parks and greens in Melbourne

	CBD	INNER MELB.	Total
population (number of person)	60,828	170,297	231,125
area of site (ha)	3,178	5,287	8,465
area of parks and greenery (ha)	694	646	1,340
ratio of area of parks and greenery/area of site(%)	21.8	12.2	15.8
area of parks and greenery/person (m ²)	114.1	37.9	58.0

Table. 2 The historical events of park system in Melbourne

Stage	A.D.	Events
Germinal	1835	Start of settlement
	1837	Urban construction based on planning Nine square miles of land was reserved by the government
Formation	1840–80	Many sites of park which was designated as reserve and parks and greenery system were established
	1852	Establishment of a committee for the Imperial estate
	1854	Establishment of Park and Committee for development of Carlton garden and Fitzroy square by City Council
	1873	Establishment of cooperating trusties for establishment of parks and greenery system by City Council, National Land Bureau, and Works Agency
Establishment	1882	Establishment of the Committee of Management, Metropolitan Parks and Gardens
Stagnation	1917	City Council got the completely management from the government
	1929	A report related to urban planning was submitted by the Metropolitan Urban Planning Committee
	1949	The Urban and Regional Planning Act was framed by the division of metropolitan civil engineering in Melbourne
	1954	The Melbourne Metropolitan Plan was framed by the division of metropolitan civil engineering in Melbourne
	1968	The Urban and Regional Planning Act was framed by the division of metropolitan civil engineering in Melbourne
Regrowth	1980 ~ 1988	Leading to the tree-planting campaign Framing of The Metropolitan Park and Greenery System

Historical Changes of the Park and Greenery System

In this paper, based on the conditions leading to the establishment of a planning and management system for parks and greenery zones, historical changes of the park and greenery system since settlement of the city in 1835 until the present were studied according to the following five stages: germinal stage, formation stage, establishment stage, stagnation stage, and regrowth stage (See Table 2).

[Germinal Stage]

Figure 2 shows Melbourne's town plan designed two years after the settlement of immigrants in 1835.

The grid area shows the city limits at the time of settlement, which corresponds to the present CBD. According to this city plan, in view of future expansion of the city, nine square miles of land, equaling approximately three to four times the town area, was secured for public use on the outskirts of the town. It is understood that this secured land served as the seed stock for future parks and greenery.

[Formation Stage]

Fig. 3 shows the formation order of parks and greenery zones established since settlement up to the 1880s.

In the 1850s, as a measure against public health problems caused by rapid increase in population brought by the gold rush, waste and night soil were buried in land secured for parks. Thus, various parks and greenery zones were laid out from the CBD to the town outskirts. In the early years, in particular, many gardens, including the Flagstaff Gardens, Royal Botanic Gardens, and Fitzroy Gardens, were constructed in the town. Then, with expansion of the town area accompanying the increase in population, from the 1870s, demand for sports and recreation increased, leading to the development of many parks, such as Princess Park, Royal Park, Albert Park, and Studley Park, in the outskirts of the town, around the present-day inner Melbourne area.

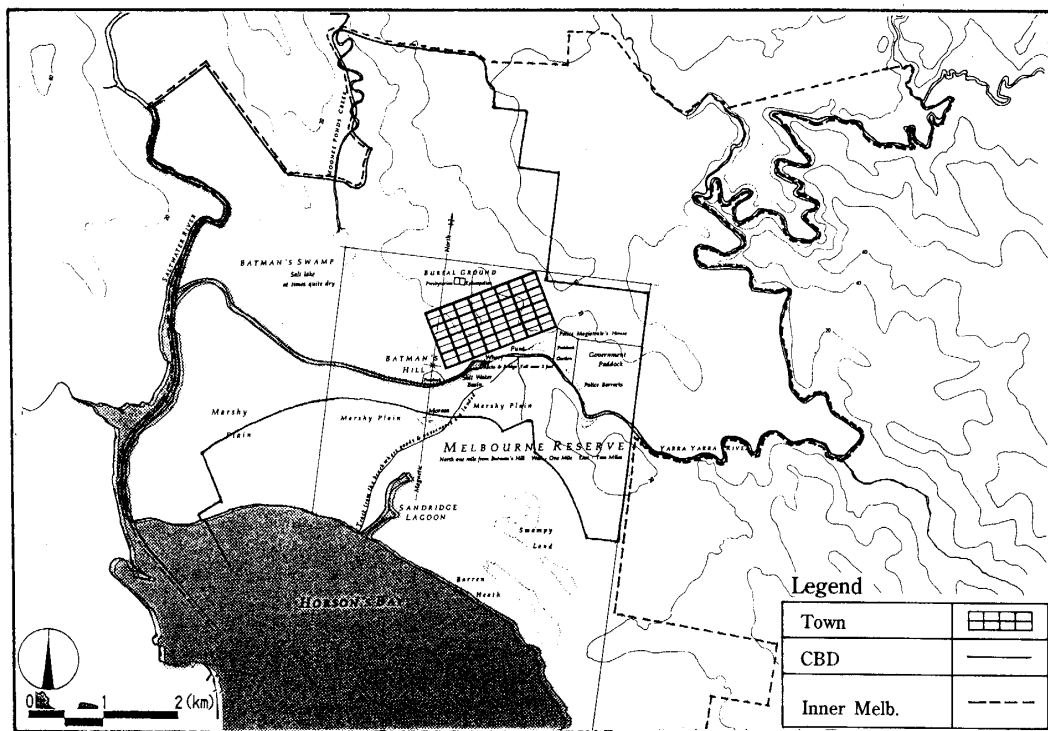


Fig. 2 Melbourne's City Plan in 1835

During this stage, parks and greenery became socially recognized as a part of urban infrastructure; thereby the period between the 1850s and 1870s is considered as the formation stage.

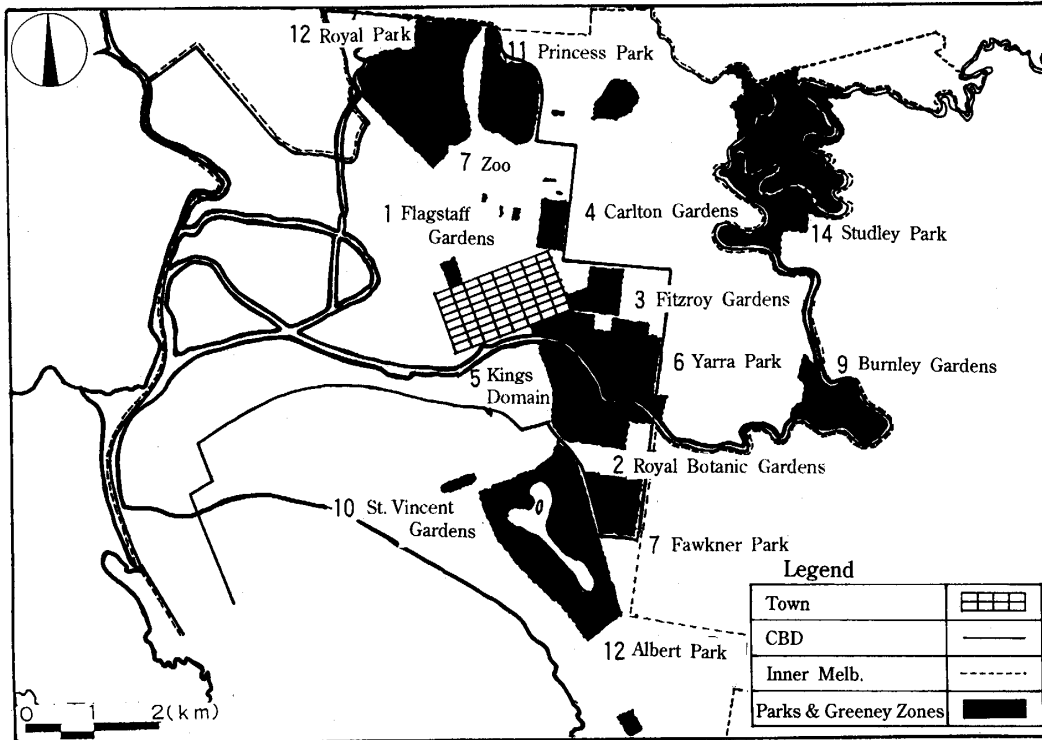


Fig. 3 The formation order of parks and greenery zones

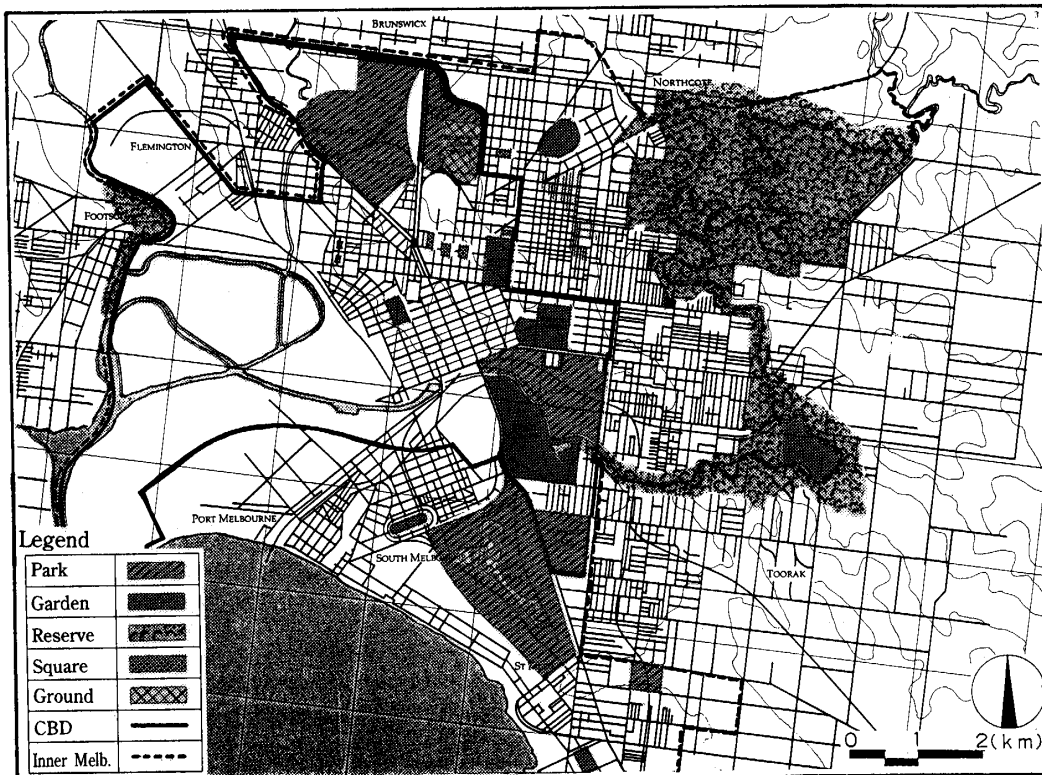


Fig. 4 The parks and greenery system in 1890

[Establishment Stage]

Figure 4 shows the parks and green zones established by the 1880s and the city plan at the time.

By the 1880s, approximately 80% of the parks and greenery zones in existence now have already been formed. In response to crisis for a management system for these parks and greenery zones, in 1882, the Committee of Management, Metropolitan Parks and Gardens was set up, and a joint management system by the Government and City Councillors, including a budget plan for parks and greenery zones, was introduced. As a result, parks and greenery zones that had belonged to the Government and City Councillors separately until then came under single management. This system continued until 1917. As the management system became legally established in terms of budget, this is considered the establishment stage of parks and greenery zones. However, due to the economic depression of the 1900s, the budget was cut back, and the government later completely withdrew from the management of parks and greenery zones, leading to gradual stagnation of the system.

[Stagnation Stage]

In the 1920s, population began to drift from the rural areas into the city, resulting in gradual expansion of the urban area. Figure 5 shows expansion of the urban area at the peak of growth between the 1950s and 1970s.

In response to expansion of the urban area that began in the 1920s and the need for an integrated plan, the Metropolitan Urban Planning Committee was set up in 1922. In 1929, a report on "Land Utilization Zoning," "Metropolitan Network of Major Roadways," and "Quantitative Expansion of Parks and Greenery Zones" was submitted by the Committee, and the

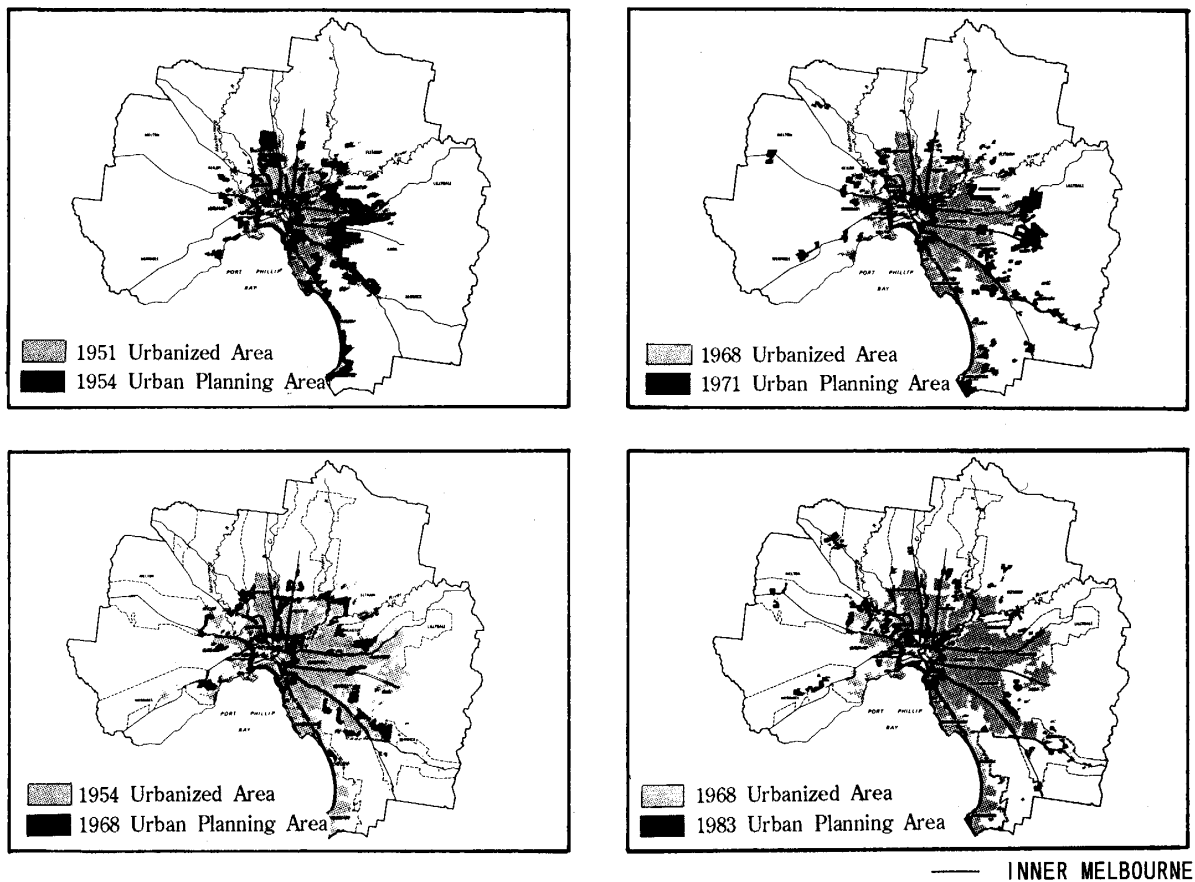


Fig. 5 The expansion of the urban area between the 1950s and 1970s

metropolitan and greenery zone plan was incorporated into urban planning to control disorderly expansion of the city. Despite such efforts, however, under the pressure of urbanization, the report never passed the proposal stage. It was not until 1954 that the Melbourne Metropolitan Plan was approved by the City Council for the first time, and the plan started to materialize after the Urban and Regional Planning Act was enacted in 1968. On the other hand, in the inner city area, due to deterioration of the living environment caused by increased population, the need for parks and greenery zones to improving the living environment and stimulate the economy became great. However, not much progress was seen in the actual construction of parks and greenery zones.

During this stage, while the Metropolitan Greenery Zone Plan was being incorporated into urban planning for the first time, and parks and greenery zones were recognized to be important in controlling urban sprawl and effective in improving the living environment in the inner city area, the pressure for urban development was far greater, resulting in little progress in the actual construction of parks and greenery zones. Thus, this period is considered as the stagnation stage of park and greenery zone construction.

[Regrowth Stage]

In the 1970s, environmental problems, such as waste treatment, water pollution, and destruction of the natural environment, were brought into focus, resulting in gradual increase in interest toward the environment. The functions of parks and greenery zones for preserving the environment and improving urban landscape came to be emphasized, leading to the tree-planting campaign of the 1980s. In 1988, in response to such social changes, the Metropolitan Park and Greenery Zone Plan for parks and greenery projects was prepared by the state government. Because of these new developments, this period is considered as the regrowth stage of park and greenery zone construction.

Figure 6 shows the future plan of parks and greenery system in Melbourne. According to

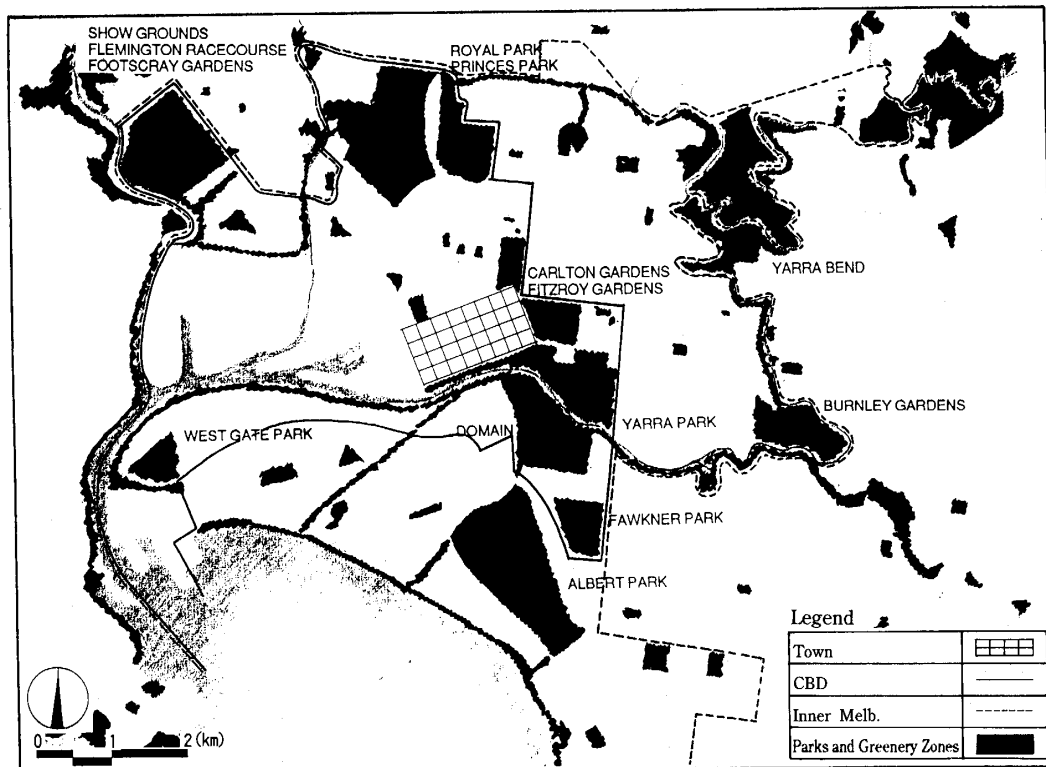


Fig. 6 The future plan of parks and greenery system

this plan, land along the rivers is preserved and linked with existing parks and greenery zones for further improvement of the metropolitan park and greenery system. In addition, concrete plans are under way to construct new gardens in the inner city area, connecting the Domain, Yarra Park, Fitzroy Gardens, and Carlton Gardens, thereby increasing the total visual effect, and to create a new park along the waterway, facilitating access to the parks and greenery zones.

Conclusion

Table 2 summarizes the events related to the construction of parks and greenery zones from the germinal stage to the regrowth stage.

In the germinal stage, the significant point is that the land reserved by the government for future urban expansion facilitated the formation of parks and greenery zones.

Then, in the early years of the formation stage, many parks and greenery were constructed independently by the Government and City Councillors, but later in 1882, the Committee of Management, Metropolitan Parks and Gardens was set up jointly by the Government and City Councillors to establish a management system, including budget planning, for parks and greenery zones.

Thereafter, due to economic depression and urban expansion policies, the construction of parks and greenery zones stagnated temporarily.

In 1929, a report on metropolitan urban planning was submitted by the Metropolitan Urban Planning Committee, emphasizing the functions of parks and greenery zones for controlling urban sprawl.

At the same time, aggravation of the living environment caused by population increase in the inner city area led to greater expectation toward parks and greenery zones in improving the living environment and economy. However, during this stage, top priority was placed on urban expansion and economic growth, and little progress was made in the actual construction of parks and greenery zones.

Then, in 1954, the Melbourne Metropolitan Plan was approved by the City Council for the first time, and the Metropolitan Plan gradually began to materialize after the Urban and Regional Planning Act was enacted in 1968.

Furthermore, increasing interest toward the environment during the 1970s led to the tree-planting campaign of the 1980s, resulting in revitalization of park and greenery zone construction from the viewpoint of preservation of the environment and improvement of urban landscape. Amid these circumstances, in 1988, the first Metropolitan Park and Greenery Zone Plan for parks and greenery zone projects was prepared. While preserving land along waterways, efforts are being made to resecure land lost in the course of urban expansion and development, and to link existing parks and greenery zones to create a network of parks and greenery zones.

Present policies adopted by Melbourne's administration make it possible for parks and greenery zones to demonstrate their various functions more effectively, giving an important example of a direction for creating a sustainable and sound urban environment.

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