DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
HERBERT HOOVER, SECRETARY

A CITY PLANNING PRIMER

BY

THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ZONING

APPOINTED BY SECRETARY HOOVER

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PRICE 5 CENTS

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U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE, WASHINGTON, D. C.

UNITED STATES
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON
1928

FOREWORD

By Herbert Hoover, Secretary of Commerce

This city planning primer reminds us that city planning is going on about us every day in our cities and towns. Whenever a street is laid out, or a park or school site is acquired, or a home or factory or store is built, some one decides where it is to be located. The planning may be done bit by bit by private land owners and city officials, few of whom know, or can know, what the others are doing or have in mind. Or it may be done by the citizens and their local government working together through a permanent public planning body with a well-devised master plan, which they all use as a picture of how the whole city is developing.

In this primer the eminent members of the advisory committee on city planning and zoning of the Department of Commerce tell briefly why the people of some 400 American cities and towns are choosing the second course, with its greater economy and harmony, and less ugliness and waste. They also show how a city's physical development is bound up with that of a larger region about it, and why regional planning is fast earning a place in American life.

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A CITY PLANNING PRIMER

IS YOUR CITY SELLING ITS BIRTHRIGHT

Although every city is adjusted somewhat to the topography or natural features of the land on which it is built, and to the convenience and needs of its citizens, the inhabitants of most cities heedlessly get themselves into all sorts of unnecessary tangles in their use of land. This happens because to no one is assigned the responsibility of looking around or ahead when a street is extended or cut off, or when blocks are built up one after another with no space left for parks and playgrounds. Streets are laid out in hilly districts with little or no regard for easy grades and low cost of construction and maintenance, or for economy in grading lots and building houses upon them. Ill-arranged blocks and sporadic dwellings on lowlands near the railroads stand in the way of expanding industries. River fronts, which are of the greatest worth to a city for parks or boulevards flanked by fine buildings, are used for junk yards or for back yards which are little better in appearance, and ravines which would make ideal parks are used for ash dumps.

WHAT IS CITY PLANNING?

Good city planning aims to bring about order in the physical development of a city, town, or village. It brings the city government and its citizens together in preparing for their own future needs and for the probable requirements of their commerce and industries. A city or town is a place in which to live, to work, and to play, and should be planned systematically with these ends in mind, just as the location of buildings on a factory site is carefully determined.

In any community the local government, which means the organized citizenship, controls so much land in streets and public places, usually from 25 to 40 per cent of the total area, that it holds the key to the situation. Many communities double their population every 20 or 30 years, and the local authorities through their control of new developments, or lack of control, can largely determine for good or for bad the conditions that affect not only the present but coming generations.

In practically all cities in the United States large public and private investments are made each year in constructing buildings, streets, and public-utility lines and plants. Within 20 or 30 years the parts of cities now built up will probably have been largely rebuilt. Hence,

carrying out a city plan does not usually start with bond issues to cover improvements on a grand scale. The city government simply allots its expenditures so that each improvement represents a part of a logical plan. Under a wisely drawn city plan, for example, the yearly street-paving work contributes toward a network of well-paved major streets instead of adding a series of unconnected units. In the case of new subdivisions, good planning assures that the new streets and improvements, made largely at the expense of the private developers, go in the right place.

City planning may be good or bad. It is good where it is based on a good plan and where public and private developments are in harmony with that plan. Bad planning is less often the result of a bad plan than of piecemeal planning, when the layout of a new subdivision, the location of a public building, and so on, are regarded as separate problems without regard to the layout of the city as a whole. There is always city planning going on in every town, be it good, bad, or incomplete. It is not possible, therefore, for a community ever to say truthfully that it is not interested in city planning.

WHAT IS A CITY PLAN?

A comprehensive city plan with its maps and notes lies at the foundation of every good city-planning program. Since orderly development is the objective, the plan must anticipate probable future needs of the community well in advance as well as record existing development. Preparing the plan, therefore, involves studies of the trend of growth in residential, business, and industrial uses of land and the most desirable directions for such growth. It should include a good zoning ordinance to minimize conflicting and mutually injurious uses of land. It is concerned vitally with movement of all types to and from the city and within it, and therefore deals with major thoroughfares; street railways; bus lines, and other forms of rapid transit; railways, waterways, and harbor developments; and public utility plants, mains, conduits, and wires.

All comprehensive city plans give a prominent place to recreational facilities, particularly parks, parkways, and playgrounds. Finally, the plan deals with the general location of public buildings of all types, including the city hall, schools, and fire and police stations. The main features of the plan will ordinarily be stable, but it can and should be amended and developed as changing conditions demand. In a hundred different ways a city plan provides for better living conditions, better business, and a more attractive and agreeable city in which to live and do business.

HOW IS THE PLAN GIVEN EFFECT?

The plan is given effect by actions of both the city government and its citizens. Usually a city planning commission is set up and given advisory powers, with general responsibility for seeing that the plan is prepared and carried out. With the commission's advice, the city council and the city departments are the agencies which actually authorize and construct streets and other public works, acquire parks and playgrounds, and locate and erect public buildings. The council must enact the zoning ordinance before it becomes effective and the executive branch enforces it. The planning commission itself is usually given some authority over the layout of new streets in subdivisions. It also keeps the plan up to date and informs public utility companies, business concerns, and private citizens of the principal features of the plan so that they may plan their utilization of land and construction in harmony with it.

PLANNING RESTS ON LEGAL BASIS

Every square foot of land within a municipality is impressed with legal qualities, which are often more lasting than pavements or buildings or other physical structures. Once a strip of land becomes dedicated to the public as a street or park it is likely to remain a street or park for centuries. Sites for schools and other public buildings, owned by the city, commonly long remain its property. Privately owned land may receive a legal impress of more or less enduring character through limitations imposed by a zoning ordinance. The location of street railways, sewers, water-supply systems, gas and electric conduits, and overhead wires is based on legal sanctions.

The legal status given to land within a city forms the basis of a plan, whose value to the community depends mainly on the forethought that was used in the past in assigning legal qualities to land. Good and bad decisions become so embodied by force of law and by physical works that follow, that in many cases it is impracticable to alter them. Wise decisions now and in years to come depend mainly on proper planning, so that each step taken will be in accord with a consistent general scheme.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation enters into practically every phase of city planning, and a thorough study of the present and prospective daily movements of people, motor vehicles, and goods must be undertaken before the other phases may be worked out in detail. The principal object of the street system, for example, is to provide for free movement of

people and goods; parks and recreation facilities should be easily reached by those who use them. The zoning plan and the street plan are interdependent, for the traffic on streets varies materially with the use of land fronting on them. Certain parts of the city should be easily accessible to other parts, and to transportation terminals. The location of street railways, bus lines, railways, waterways, and their terminals is itself one of the most important planning problems.

THE STREET PLAN

The local government of a community controls the streets, which are its arteries. If they are adequate for present and prospective use they permit a free flow of the traffic, which is the community's life blood. If they are carelessly or inadequately laid out, they may, and frequently do, bring about serious and costly congestion.

A comprehensive plan furnishes a program for street changes and development, with the most urgent steps first on the list. It shows what land must be preserved for principal streets and how the opening of new streets will affect traffic elsewhere. It enables transportation companies and business men to place terminals and new buildings at strategic points, where the traffic can be efficiently handled. It aids in making parks and playgrounds accessible to those who want to use them.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE STREET SYSTEM

A system of wide, well-arranged thoroughfares is basic to good city planning. They should lead from the central part of the city to outlying territory, and there should be belt streets affording direct travel between one section and another without passage through the central business district. Nothing preventable should be allowed to interfere with the choice of the best routes for the main arteries of travel. Without a city plan and the machinery to enforce it, a whole section of a city may be crippled, and inconveniences may be heaped on thousands of people for years to come, by a new residential development in which the blocks run the wrong way or the main streets are too narrow, or by the arbitrary location of a factory or a cemetery.

If some cities were permitted by the Federal Government to develop their harbors on the same principles that they use in developing their land, extension of piers and other obstructions would soon make their channels impassable. An automobile map of a modern city and its environs will disclose to anyone not already convinced by disturbing experiences the expensive delays now put upon both the passer-through and the town resident himself by a lack of wise foresight in planning in the past.

The determination of principal routes for present and prospective traffic permits a consistent scheme for city development to be laid out to accommodate industry, business, and residence. The streets and thoroughfares to be used most can then be improved easily within a few years by applying each year's appropriations for paving in the right places. Without planning, heavy traffic is often diverted to less direct routes, because of isolated sections of good or bad pavement, and such a diversion may break down the light pavements on streets that would normally be but little used.

THE APPROACHES TO THE CITY

Under modern conditions, a community may be approached by highway, by railroad, by watercourse, by airway, or by a combination of these four methods. Highway approaches are of enormous importance in these days of the automobile, and thought should be given as to whether roads shall lead only through the heart of the town or shall avoid congested districts by appropriate by-passes. Railroads are usually the basic means of contact between the city and the outside world. Their freight terminals, spurs, and sidings should be located and arranged for economical handling and trucking of the city's outgoing products, and of incoming food, merchandise, building materials, and raw products for industry. Passenger stations, or a single union station, if considered practicable, should be convenient and well served by local transit facilities. Property bordering the tracks should be well maintained and give a creditable impression of the community to passengers entering and leaving. Water approaches may be made effective in serving commerce, and where that is not practicable, may be made invaluable in serving the health and pride of the community. The air approach involves landing fields, which, if properly provided and located, may be of great advantage.

THE CENTRAL BUSINESS AND SHOPPING DISTRICT

Free movement to the central business and shopping district concerns the entire community, the housewife, and the merchant alike. Certain businesses naturally seek locations in central districts, which are accessible to, and commonly visited by, persons from the entire city and surrounding territory. Such are central banks, large department stores, certain hotels and principal theaters, the offices of the local government, and certain specialty shops.

On account of the great numbers of people traveling to and within this area each day its sidewalks should be broad. Retail stores want traffic movement facilitated and traffic congestion diminished, to protect the safety and convenience of their customers and em-

ployees, and to reduce delays in the trucking of the goods they receive and deliver.

Conditions in the central business district can not be improved overnight. By-passing of through traffic around the business district has proved effective for relieving traffic congestion, but it may be necessary to extend "dead-end" streets or to separate cross traffic at main intersections by means of viaducts or subways. Grade crossings of railroad tracks may need to be eliminated, or new crossings constructed, or new bridges may be desirable. The necessity for such expensive undertakings in the future may be avoided or diminished by a well-considered city plan. Adequate provision for rapid transit should be made in the plans of communities which are approaching or which have arrived at the conditions justifying such facilities.

Some light manufacturing or other uses of property may derive little or no special advantage from being in the central business district and at the same time may make for its unprofitable congestion. Owners of such establishments may be encouraged to move elsewhere by being shown the advantages of more suitable locations and by a proper zoning ordinance operating over a period of years. Moving of terminals or shifting of the wholesale district is sometimes a practical way to lessen traffic difficulties.

WHOLESALE AND WAREHOUSE DISTRICTS

Wholesale and warehouse districts, under ideal conditions, should be located directly between the water or railroad terminals and the manufacturing or commercial area which they serve. Too frequently, however, trucking to and from the terminal may have to pass through the most crowded part of the central retail business district. This is neither economy nor common sense. A good city plan is a means of insuring against a repetition of mistakes.

INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS

Heavy industrial plants usually require sites with railway sidings and, perhaps, a water front, yet convenient for employees to reach from their homes. In a well-planned city, residential development tends to leave such districts free and unbroken for use by industry. Light industries are more concerned with trucking facilities and with sites accessible to a large number of workers. A city gets along much better when homes and industry are kept separate but are at the same time easily accessible to each other.

PRODUCE MARKETS

The handling of perishable foodstuffs from their arrival in a city by freight car or truck to scattered retail stores is a very complex problem. If the distribution is prompt and efficient the people can obtain their

food fresher and at lower prices. A well-planned wholesale market, accessible to cars from all railroads and to the trucks of local farmers, is usually the first item. It permits quick inspection of goods by buyers, and cheap handling and loading, without cartage delays. Up-to-date cold-storage facilities should be near by. In too many cities the produce markets grow up and are shifted about in a hit-and-miss fashion and are awkwardly arranged or become badly scattered. They are often so situated that the vehicles passing to and from them add unnecessarily to street traffic congestion. In many cases, indeed, the loading vehicles stand in public streets and practically shut off all other traffic.

LOCATION OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS—CIVIC CENTERS

The dignity and attractiveness of a community and the convenience of its citizens may be served by thoughtful location of public and semipublic buildings. These will ordinarily include the city hall, courthouse, public library, art museum, churches, high schools, and, perhaps, university buildings. Each building of this type becomes more impressive when part of a well-arranged group, especially when it can be seen from long street approaches. But in such an arrangement special care should be taken to preserve a practicable street plan. In smaller communities the principal public buildings may form a single group, while in larger cities there may be a principal civic center, a principal educational and art center, and a number of outlying community centers.

RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

In most communities the districts where the people dwell are far greater in area than those in which they work and do business. Different families have different desires in the way of homes. Most prefer to live in one-family houses, on quiet streets, with grass and trees about them. Many families that can afford these advantages, more often those without children, still prefer to live in apartments, frequently to avoid personal responsibility for upkeep of the dwelling and to have easier access to the city center. Others assume this more cramped manner of living because of lack of houses for rent, the short term of their residence in one city, or other circumstances. The fact remains, too, that many existing dwellings in our cities do not conform to the standards of the single-family homes that most families would prefer.

Wise city planning can do much to make one-family houses available to more families. It encourages a better distribution of centers of employment, and thereby reduces the number of employees who must live near the business center. By providing an adequate,

coordinated street system it reduces delays in transit and so makes wider areas for dwellings available within a given time for travel between home and work. Hence, the success with which the automobile enables city populations to spread out depends largely on good city planning.

While some broad avenues and wide streets are necessary to care for through traffic and to give access to a residential district, minor streets with narrow roadways and inexpensive pavements are adequate for the traffic serving the immediate neighborhood. A narrow paved roadway need not lessen the distance between the houses on the two sides of the street. It permits wider grass plots, and thus makes the streets more attractive. At the same time development of the land is cheaper and more families are enabled to own their homes.

Certain appurtenances go with every residential district. Neighborhood stores should be grouped at points convenient to all, but either they should be off the main traffic highways or arrangements should be made through widening the roadways, or providing other parking spaces, so that they will not cause congestion of through traffic. The location of schools is even more important. When the school board can use a good city plan showing the probable character of development and the location of major streets it is better able to choose adequate school sites in new districts. The type of site usually desired will be convenient to the families that are expected to move into the neighborhood, and at the same time be off the main thoroughfares with their noise, confusion, and dangers from heavy traffic. Ample space is needed around schools for playgrounds as well as for light and air. It is therefore good business for the city to anticipate its needs while land values are still low and there is a good choice of large sites not yet built upon.

THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY

Sparsely built-up territories, particularly those on the outskirts of the city, allow the best scope for good development as to streets, recreation spaces, and public improvements in accordance with a logical plan. Foresight in planning such districts is important not only for its inherent benefits to the new localities, but for the convenience of all who pass through them, and for its effect on conditions at the center of the city.

PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS

Adequate recreation space, although often overlooked, is of great importance to a community, and provision for it rightly belongs in a good plan. A lawn around the home is the best place for very small children to play, but public playgrounds and athletic fields

are needed for organized games for larger children and adults. The increasing dangers imposed by rapidly moving traffic further emphasize the hazard of streets as play space, and the need for enough well-located playgrounds to care for every child. The distance that children of various ages will customarily travel to playgrounds should, of course, be recognized, especially in apartment house neighborhoods, where even the smallest children must be provided for. The need of more public open spaces of all kinds is one of the consequences of apartment house living and must be borne in mind as apartment house areas develop.

A great country park, desirable as it is, is now generally recognized as a supplement to, not a substitute for smaller parks convenient to the people who need ready access to trees, grass, and open space. Thus all the breathing spaces for fresh air and sunshine provided by recreation space are an integral part of a city plan. Adoption of a park and playground program frequently results in the donation of land for park purposes by public-spirited citizens, or by landowners who discern the advantage thus obtainable for their adjoining subdivisions.

Public recreation facilities are as important to the village as to the large city. Many a farm community has no public parks or playgrounds; hence the children must be trespassers to play, and adult athletic contests are hampered by inadequate, makeshift facilities. Good playgrounds and athletic fields lead to better physical development and a spirit of team play, while every form of wholesome recreation for adults helps to check unwise movement of population to large cities.

CARRYING OUT THE CITY PLAN

The preparation of a good city plan requires skillful handling of details, clear vision into the future, good judgment in deciding what is practicable, and a spirit of fair play in adjusting interests that may appear to conflict. Once formulated, the plan needs to be kept up to date, and its execution is never completed while the city is growing or rebuilding. Placing the general responsibility in the hands of a continuing body of well-informed, influential men is the best means so far devised for securing efficiency in city planning. Carrying out the plan often requires courage on the part of the city government, for free departures from it may result in promoting just such disorder and uncertainty as it is designed to prevent. Its integrity can be assured only by a strong and continuing public opinion, and this is best maintained by having leading men in the community at the head of the work.

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION AND ITS WORK

A separately organized city planning commission is usually the best agency for assuming the general responsibility for preparing the plan and to aid the city government and private individuals in carrying out its essential feature . Such a commission usually consists of from 5 to 11 members. It may include the mayor, the city engineer, a representative of the city council or similar body, and prominent citizens serving without pay. The citizen members should always be in a majority. It should be authorized by the city council to expend funds for preparing a plan, and to call on all municipal officials, including the city engineer, the city attorney, and others, for advice and data. The city council, in turn, ordinarily derives its power to grant such authority from an enabling act passed by the State legislature. Such acts are already in effect in many States, and a standard act [1] with full notes to explain its provisions has been prepared by the Department of Commerce advisory committee on city planning and zoning, to serve as a guide to those preparing such legislation.

Where such authority has not been granted, unofficial commissions, sometimes appointed by the mayor, or sometimes representing unofficial civic bodies, may be organized, and often accomplish a great deal, particularly if they succeed in raising private funds for preparing a plan. Such a plan may be followed in many features by the city government.

Practical results are much more readily attained when the commission has official advisory powers.

The official city planning commission, however, should not be charged with executive functions, such as the administration of the park system or some of the usual construction or administrative functions of the city. Past experience indicates that such duties are better left in the hands of regular executive departments and administrative boards.

Since the city planning commission's final responsibility is to see that a good city plan is carried out, one of its functions is to determine how the city's financial resources and expenditures may best provide for its planning needs.

TECHNICAL PLANNING SERVICE

The commission requires competent technical service, not only when the first comprehensive survey is made, but later. A city planner who has acquired wide experience in dealing with the problem of other cities is usually employed to prepare or to direct the prep-

[1] A Standard City Planning Enabling Act, issued by the Department of Commerce, 1927.

aration of a general city-planning report. In some large cities a qualified employee of the city acting under the commission's supervision directs all the work.

An accurate compilation and portrayal of the city's physical assets is requisite. This involves adequate topographic maps, and maps showing existing streets, transit facilities, railroad and water transportation lines and terminals, parks and other recreational facilities, and building development, as well as studies of traffic movement, population growth, and the like. Employment of experienced city planners at the inception of the works helps to eliminate wasteful effort, and expedites the accumulation of necessary information and its interpretation in the making of actual plans.

In the final stages of preparing a comprehensive plan the commission makes a careful study, and arranges for public hearings. After considering and harmonizing, as far as possible, the views presented there, the commission formally adopts the plan. It may, and should, be subject to such amendments as changing conditions warrant from time to time, but the plan nevertheless establishes a continuity of policy.

The commission will continue to need technical aid after the plan is adopted. Many cities employ a special permanent planning force. This works well as it promotes continuity of program. In some smaller cities the commission uses the part-time services of a city employee working under its direction and calls in an expert planner at periodic intervals or when special circumstances make it advisable.

Sometimes there is misunderstanding as to what adoption of the plan by the planning commission signifies. Such adoption does not commit the city to expenditures of money involved in the various projects, or to executing projects in any given order. The council retains its powers to decide how the city's funds shall be expended, and the administrative structure for carrying out public works is unchanged. Formal adoption of the plan by the commission distinguishes its mature recommendations and put on record a recognized guide for officials and citizens.

EXECUTING AND FINANCING THE PLAN

Once the plan is adopted, it should be followed, subject to amendment, unless the city council or other local legislative body takes specific action to the contrary. In some States a vote of a majority of the full membership of the council or some other portion more than a majority is required before the council may overrule the planning commission on departures from the plan. Such a provision is an advisable protection of the plan. Plans of streets to be deeded to the city are referred to the commission for its approval or disapproval.

City departments submit to it for consideration important questions affecting streets, highways, building setbacks, sewers and water pipes, conduits, bridges, viaducts, tunnels, parks, playgrounds, the water front, public buildings, private buildings on public land, transit lines, and public utilities and franchises. These departments are required to comply with the adopted plan, unless the planning commission finds it wise to accept suggestions by amending the plan. Otherwise the department must take the matter before the council; and the council may not act in such cases or on any other matters affecting the plan, without first calling for the recommendation of the commission. The adopted city plan is not to be lightly set aside or altered.

The commission should recommend the order in which public improvements ought to be made, and may well suggest ways of financing them, with a fair distribution of cost between the government and owners of specially benefited private property. The widening of a street or the creation of a public square, for example, may increase the value of abutting property; part of the enhanced value of such property, therefore, should justly be levied upon to help pay for the improvement.

CONTROL OF NEW SUBDIVISIONS

The control of the layout of new subdivisions is a vital part of the day to day administration of planning. Without adequate control worse mistakes are apt to be made in new subdivisions than were made in the center of a city, for new streets in outlying districts are usually not a matter of public attention until some time after a mistake has been made and when changes are difficult to make. Developers of new subdivisions usually are glad to conform to a good plan, but in some instances both tact and resourcefulness may be required on the part of the city authorities to make sure that the street layout does not interfere with the major thoroughfare plan and that enough and proper land for parks and playgrounds is set aside. Supporting citizens' organizations are frequently most helpful in securing voluntary adherence to the plan. The main trouble in most cases in the past has been the lack of a comprehensive plan and the consequent handicap upon both city authorities and enlightened private subdividers in connection with opening up new subdivisions.

ZONING

A zoning ordinance is a vital part of city planning. It protects owners in the use of land and promotes the welfare of the citizens by dividing the city into different districts in which the height of

buildings, the area of the lot that they may cover, and the uses to which they may be put are regulated. A well-drawn zoning ordinance,[2] adopted after all interests have had full opportunity to state their opinion, results in such utilization of land that each neighborhood can maintain or promote its appropriate use.

A street system has certain limits in the amount of traffic it can carry, and if the height and use of buildings in a district are not properly regulated the capacity of the streets becomes insufficient, throwing a burden both on the occupants of the district and on the general public. With no limit at command on the height, ground area, or use of buildings, the city planner can not design a good street system. It is like trying to design a bridge without knowledge as to possible loads.

The advantages of zoning in protecting the home owner from unnecessary loss through intrusion of factories or apartments into his neighborhood, in stabilizing property values, in reducing taxes, and in avoiding the wastes arising from misplaced construction, are discussed in A Zoning Primer.[3]

A CITY PLAN ELIMINATES WASTE

By anticipating the probable needs of the city for streets, parks, playgrounds, schools, and police and fire stations the city can save large sums through securing its rights and purchasing land before it is built up. Small investments in park lands have proved profitable to many municipalities through the enhanced taxable values of the adjoining neighborhoods. The early setting-aside of land for playgrounds and for other public purposes may prevent the high subsequent expense of removing buildings to obtain such locations.

A city may often save much of the cost of widening streets, where the need is plainly indicated, by requiring or encouraging all new structures to be set back a given distance from the street line. Thus, when the abutting structures are rebuilt, the city is able to obtain the land needed for widening without unnecessarily paying for expensive buildings.

Most real estate men, land development companies, persons proposing to erect large buildings, and the like, welcome a city plan, for it enables them to proceed with greater confidence and assurance that their investments in improvements will be of a more permanent and desirable character. Large sums of money have been wasted and are still being wasted in many cities where piecemeal street opening and other projects are undertaken without relation to a comprehensive city plan.

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[2] See A Standard State Zoning Enabling Act, published by the Department of Commerce.
[3] See A Zoning Primer, published by the Department of Commerce.

A CITY PLAN PROMOTES SAFETY

A city plan frequently provides for the utilization of stream beds, parkways, and boulevards to divide a city into several districts which greatly reduces the dangers of a general conflagration in the city. Through good planning of street intersections and of transit facilities it helps to reduce traffic accidents. Similarly, it is frequently able to insure that the streets adjacent to schools will not carry heavy traffic.

REGIONAL PLANNING AND THE BORDERLAND BEYOND THE CITY

That a good city plan should not stop short at the city limits is obvious. The automobile is having a profound influence upon the character of city growth. Cities are spreading over greater territory. This brings about a need for planning over wider areas and creates new problems of design, such as the layout of outlying commercial centers where traffic congestion problems already occur.

There is no real line of separation, no "twilight zone," between interests of the city and of the country surrounding it. Obviously the plan of the city and that for surrounding territory should be consistent. Every growing town or city within an agricultural or undeveloped belt about it not only needs good highway connection with the country, for example, but desires to forestall the strangling effect of ill-planned or unplanned suburbs. To some suburbs and towns the maintenance of clear roadways and good rapid transit facilities which pass through other jurisdictions is of most vital importance. Inadequate approaches to an important bridge in one municipality may become an intolerable burden to the citizens of others. Objectionable uses of land in one community may adversely affect another, as in the case of slaughterhouses with their offensive odors, or of factories set directly next to a city residence district.

Orderly development from the point of view of the region as a whole must come eventually through comprehensive planning by regional commissions, which define and analyze regional problems, and devise practical measures for carrying them out. Voluntary regional planning bodies are proving helpful in a number of regions, and even without them the planning authorities of one city may always cooperate with those of neighboring local governments, and with principal landowners. Such contact may, for example, serve to coordinate highway improvement programs and secure conformance to an extension of the major street plan in new subdivisions beyond the city limits. Occasionally the city is given authority by the State legislature to control planning features and to prescribe

zoning regulations for the territory within 3 to 5 miles or more of the city limits.

Many States, fortunately, provide in their laws that regional undertakings, such as the handling of water supply and sewer facilities for a number of communities, may be carried out jointly by sanitary and utility districts. Organization by considerable territories to handle flood control and land drainage problems is another example. Developments of large natural parks and forest reserves by county and State governments have proved successful and have their counterpart in the interstate and national parks which are used by persons from many States. Regional planning of roads is receiving an impetus through the studies of State highway commissions, and of the National Government in connection with its Federal aid appropriations for roads.

Although all of these measures bring a regional point of view into planning and execution of improvements, they are not real regional planning, any more than the separate plans and projects undertaken by separate departments in a city government constitute real city planning. Comprehensive planning, whether for city or region, involves the relation to one another of all the various planning features that affect the given territory.

The most logical first steps toward regional planning are deciding the boundaries of the region, and creating a regional planning commission [4] to survey its present and future needs and define the problems which are of a regional, and not purely local, character. With the regional problems clearly in mind, the commission can prepare a regional plan and advise with local, county, and State agencies about the location, character, and extent of highways, and other public works, utilities, open development areas, and planning features which cut across municipal boundaries. It can also aid the various local governments in coordinating highway improvement programs and harmonizing zoning programs of adjoining towns, and can recommend the creation of special-purpose districts or intercity compacts which may appear necessary for executing specific projects. The initiative for the creation of such regional commissions will ordinarily be local, but laws providing for their creation and the setting up of State informational and service bureaus can do much to aid and encourage regional planning and to bring the local governments together in executing regional planning measures.

[4] Provision for creation of regional planning commissions is included in A Standard State City Planning Enabling Act, by the Advisory Committee on City Planning and Zoning, Department of Commerce, Washington, D. C.

MODERN PLANNING HAS MET THE TEST OF EXPERIENCE

The experiences of hundreds of American communities have been carefully analyzed to find out how city planning actually works out in practice. The answer is emphatic—"Planning pays."

Proofs of the difficulties which arise from neglect of the elementary principles of city growth are numerous and convincing.

In the past, especially in other countries, certain splendid public improvement projects have been planned without regard for the comfort and convenience of a majority of the inhabitants of the city. It is also true that a misconception of city planning as a purely aesthetic measure did the movement some harm at one time. But the best modern planning, while promoting beauty and aesthetic effects, aims primarily at utilizing the land area of a city along sound engineering lines, so that the citizens may find it a better, healthier, more economical, and more attractive place in which to live, work, and play. Its value is well demonstrated by a visit to any of the new towns which have followed carefully developed plans.

City planning fosters a feeling of unity and civic pride. Citizens feel that they are really part of a community and take more interest in its affairs when they have a conception of its plan and how they can contribute to its logical development.

CONCLUSIONS

1. American cities have found that following a well-considered city plan is far superior to the usual haphazard growth.

2. The cost of preparing such a plan is so reasonable and its advantages are so great that the arguments for it are unanswerable.

3. A good plan is devised with the public welfare in mind. It promotes the legitimate interests of (*a*) householders, (*b*) business and commerce, (*c*) manufacturing, (*d*) public utilities, and (*e*) the city as a landowner.

4. City planning improves the street and transportation systems for persons and merchandise within the city, and to and from the city.

5. A plan aids citizens in selecting and developing land for homes, business, and other purposes by showing the relation of different districts to one another.

6. The zoning ordinance, which belongs in every city-planning program, protects the public health, convenience, and safety, and secures the owner who invests in sound improvements in harmony with the plan.

7. A good park and playground program, which the citizens of every community owe their children and themselves, is best achieved through a comprehensive planning program.

8. To obtain such results, the plan must be consistently carried out during a long period of years. This ordinarily requires:

(*a*) A responsible and continuing planning commission, with a technical force to prepare the plan, and to keep it up to date.

(*b*) Public hearings, at which all citizens or property owners may be heard, while the original plan is being made, and at intervals thereafter.

(*c*) Cooperation of the officials and employees of city departments.

(*d*) Careful adherence to the plan, and consideration of the planning commission's advice, by the city council, or other legislative body, in all appropriations for public works, approvals of street layout, purchases of city property, and other matters affecting the city's physical development.

(*e*) Contact with neighboring governmental agencies to secure coordination within the region.

9. Support of the city plan by citizens is needed, and is ordinarily given generously. They may—

(*a*) Consider the broad features of the plan in selecting and developing sites for various purposes,

(*b*) Support adequate appropriations for the preparation of a comprehensive plan,

(*c*) Support the city council in measures to execute the plan,

(*d*) Encourage other property owners to conform to the plan, and

(*e*) Personally advocate city planning.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
WASHINGTON

PUBLICATIONS ON CITY PLANNING, ZONING, BUILDING CODES, HOUSING, AND AIRPORTS

[Printed documents, for which prices are noted in each case, may be obtained from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., payments to be made by money order or New York draft; currency at sender's risk. Postage or foreign money not accepted.

Single copies of mimeographed material may be obtained upon request to the Department of Commerce, Washington, D. C.]

City Planning and Zoning.

BH11. A Standard City Planning Enabling Act. To be published, 1928.

BH3. A Zoning Primer. 7 pages. Price, 5 cents.

BH4. A Standard State Zoning Enabling Act. 13 pages. Price, 5 cents.

The above three publications are by the Advisory Committee on City Planning and Zoning.

Zoning Progress in the United States: Part I, Zoning and the Courts; Part II, List of State Zoning Laws, and names of zoned municipalities (mimeographed).

For details of papers relating to zoning and health, lists of zoned municipalities arranged according to size, city planning progress, references to city planning commission enabling acts, and later material, inquire of the division of building and housing, Department of Commerce, Washington, D. C.

Building and Plumbing Codes.

BH1. Recommended Minimum Requirements for Small Dwelling Construction. 10 pages. Price, 15 cents.

BH6. Recommended Minimum Requirements for Masonry Wall Construction. 57 pages. Price, 15 cents.

BH7. Minimum Live Loads Allowable for Use in Design of Buildings. 38 pages. Price, 10 cents.

BH8. Recommended Practice for Arrangement of Building Codes. 29 pages. Price, 10 cents.

BH9. Recommended Building Code Requirements for Working Stresses in Building Materials. 53 pages. Price, 10 cents.

The above five publications are by the Building Code Committee.

BH2. Recommended Minimum Requirements for Plumbing in Dwellings and Similar Buildings. 260 pages. Price, 35 cents. By the Subcommittee on Plumbing.

Housing.

BH4. How to Own Your Home. 28 pages. Price, 5 cents. By John M. Gries and James S. Taylor, with a foreword by Herbert Hoover.

Present Home Financing Methods (mimeographed). By the division of building and housing.

Airports.

Airport Construction and Ratings. 2 parts (mimeographed). Information Bulletin No. 2.

The Airport and the City (mimeographed). Information Bulletin No. 9.

Air Marking for Cities (Single sheet diagram). Information Bulletin No. 38.

State Laws (mimeographed). Information Bulletin No. 41.

These and other bulletins relating to commercial and municipal airports may be obtained from the air information division, Aeronautics Branch, Department of Commerce, Washington, D. C.

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