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B38CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
OF PORTLAND, OREGON

J. C. AINSWORTH, PRESIDENT J. P. NEWELL, CONSULTANT

MEMBERS EX-OFFICIO

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ROOM 418 CITY HALL
ATWATER 4121
HOUSE 379MEMBERS
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OREGON
COLLECTIONTHE PLAN-IT
January, 1930

Theron R. Howser, Editor

This is the 37th Plan-It, the beginning of its fourth year. This year we hope to see Portland accomplish more than ever towards making it one of the world's best cities in which to work and live.

From the city planning standpoint, the greatest progress in the past year was the development of a greater recognition of values beyond the strictly utilitarian. 1929 witnessed a step forward in the quest for beauty, which has been slowly developing in the past few decades. Take two issues of any of the great advertising periodicals; one, the first issue of 1929, the other the first issue of 1930.

Studying the advertisements therein, the outstanding difference is found in the greater emphasis that today is given to color and form, the effort to make the product pleasing to the eye as well as serviceable. Observe the growth of interest in home decoration and especially note the way that the decorative interest has broadened from the inside of the house to the outside, the remarkable growth of landscape gardening which has been coming on for years, but which made more progress in 1929 than in any previous year. Logically, the next step is interest in the city's appearance as a city.

A local instance of what future historians are apt to call a dominant trait of the early twentieth century is the changing attitude of Portland concerning the west side waterfront. Originally the sewer and waterfront improvement were planned to protect and clean up the district, as a farmer might paint his barn or in the good old Yankee phrase, "red up" the stable yard; it was expected to make neat and orderly a place decidedly lacking in neatness or order. It was admittedly commercial in the "big business" way. The waterfront was to become a marketplace and a warehouse. Concrete was to replace rotten wood, streets were to be made wide enough to allow for traffic, but withal it was a move toward a more efficient business machine with no opportunity for consideration of architectural beauty as displayed in the great old-world cities, a thing for which we as citizens of a modern American city have heretofore shown little regard.

Only a little over a year ago a few of our far-sighted citizens began to talk of the possibilities of making something better, more appealing, to--let us not say a higher--but a different side of our nature. At first these ideas were more a cause of interested speculation than of action. However, in the remarkably short space of one year, there has come a change of mind on the part of many citizens of Portland. Today the chances of an outstanding development from the point of beauty are very favorable. If the suggestions of the local chapter of the Institute of Architects or something similar could be worked out, Portland could boast of one of the world's most beautiful instances of city building in a broad sense.

Whether this thing is done or is not done, the fact that it is being seriously considered by men who do things as well as men who plan things, is concrete evidence of a change that is coming over modern America, a change that we who are living in its time can hardly appreciate but that time will show to have been as much of a revolution in thought as any of the great changes of the Renaissance.

Portland might be a leader in this Renaissance of the city. Portland may wait until other more progressive centers have shown the way, but the day of cities built to express a massed desire for beauty that will endure for future ages to admire and say, "this our fathers did for us" is surely dawning. More significant than our endless scheming to make our cities fit the transportation devices of today is the beginning of a tendency to think that there are other things to do with a city than to make it a place to eat, sleep and pile up great fortunes.

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The City Planning Commission of Portland feels that the year 1929 did much to increase the favorable opinion which the citizens of Portland entertain towards its work. It feels that the public has come to know that its members are working for the betterment of the city with no idea of promoting their own interests.

The impersonal and impartial manner in which the Commission has made recommendations and decisions in regard to street widenings and extensions, the establishment of parks and recreation facilities, and for the use of the land area of the city as controlled by the zoning ordinance, has demonstrated that what was once regarded as an ineffective adjunct to the activities of the city has become an important means of making Portland one of the world's most livable cities.

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There is a world of good counsel for cities in the recent speech of a new and young president of the chamber of commerce of our sister city to the north. He announced that the slogan of Seattle for 1930 was to be, "no applesauce" and said that he was not sure that Seattle must ultimately become the largest city on the west coast, but that all in Seattle should endeavor to make it the best city on the west coast in which to live and die.

If the city of Portland, as the metropolis of the Willamette valley, would realize that its prosperity is dependent upon the agricultural growth of the valley to a large extent and that study of that agricultural problem and teaching ways of surmounting it are of paramount importance to Portland, there would probably come a realization that Oregon's rainfall is, to say the least, "unbalanced," that while it is a wonderful resource, if it had come at a different time as it now happens, it is mostly valueless. To date, man cannot change the time of the rain, but man can store the cold winter rain to flood his fields at the time of summer heat and thus produce abundant crops.

More water used for irrigation in the summer would work wonders for Portland and the Willamette valley. In "North America", J. Russell Smith says, "The Willamette-Puget Sound valley will some day be a land of cities." It is by nature and resources adapted to a dense urban population. Scientific utilization of the water resources of this region is one of the most important steps towards bringing this prophecy to pass. If this is to be a land of cities the present big cities will become high metropolises if they are given a chance. Part of that chance would be a comprehensive city plan. We would like to see Portland adopt an official city plan before 1931.

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The annual report of the Portland City Planning Commission for the year 1929 is printed as a supplement to this Plan-It. It recounts in brief form the activities of the past year. The small number of plats recorded is evidence, either of a very quiet condition of the real estate market, or else that the Portland district has at last all been platted. The latter is perhaps the most logical explanation.

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ANNUAL REPORT OF CITY PLANNING COMMISSION FOR 1929

Meetings: 9 Regular 5 Special

Routine business:	Petitions for change of zone	67
	" " fuel yards	12
	" " school locations	9
	" " church "	5
	" " garage "	1
	" " hospital "	3
	" " setback lines	<u>2</u>
	Total petitions considered	99

Matters considered:

Street widenings and extensions as referred by the city engineer	6
Street vacations as referred by the city engineer	10
Tentative layout for new subdivisions	7
Plats approved	5

General:

Distribution of monthly bulletin, Plan-It; Average - 410 copies per month	
Talks on city planning at Community and lunch clubs	16

As in past years the commission has been cooperating with the post office department by furnishing house numbers to residences outside the city limits in districts in which regular carrier mail service is rendered.

The office of the Planning Commission is somewhat of an orphan among city bureaus; many persons who desire information of various kinds are directed to this office. It has been our endeavor to answer all inquiries as far as possible regardless of the pertinency of their inquiries to city planning proper.

The Planning Commission was officially represented at the national conference on city planning at Buffalo, New York, at the northwest realtor's conference at Salem, Oregon, and at the northwest conference on city planning at Vancouver, B. C.

Special studies:

Studies on approaches to St. Johns bridge
 " " development north end Interstate avenue
 " " extension and widening East Morrison street
 " " street development Guilds lake area
 " " improvement west end Steel bridge
 " " extension of Front street
 " " widening Burnside street
 " " road width on St. Johns bridge
 " " model of approaches west end St. Johns bridge
 " " waterfront development
 " " connection to proposed super highway from
 Oregon City
 " " improvement along west side Willamette
 boulevard to open view of airport
 " " road from Jefferson street into city park
 " " road from Tacoma avenue to Johnson creek blvd.
 making direct route Sellwood to Mt. Scott

Budget:

	Personal Service	Op. & M.	Equipment	Special Studies	Total
Appropriations	8540.00	785.00	145.00	3275.00	12745.00
<u>Expenditures</u>	<u>8329.51</u>	<u>773.00</u>	<u>83.70</u>	<u>985.42</u>	<u>10171.63</u>
Balance	210.49	12.00	61.30	2289.58	2573.37

L. A. McClure
 Secretary

MAR 8 1930

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION OF PORTLAND, OREGON

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THE PLAN-IT
February, 1930

Theron R. Howser, Editor

EMINENT ARCHITECT URGES 100-YEAR PLAN

"Formulation of a definite city plan looking forward to growth and development for the next 100 years, is essential for every city of the United States to insure efficiency and to make it possible for city growth to take place without economic loss." C. Herrick Hammond, president of the American Institute of Architects made the above statement at a recent meeting of the Oregon Building Congress.

"Each city must develop the plan best suited for its needs and then rigidly observe it in future growth and public works. Only in this way can inefficiency and economic loss be prevented." Further remarked this nationally known architect.

The lack of interest in city planning displayed by those business men of the average American city whose prosperity is most closely interwoven with the operation of a city plan is one of the strangest and most disheartening conditions that the city planner has to contend with. No corporation investing its funds in any form of physical property and expecting thereby to sell some form of service for enough to pay dividends on its investment can venture to initiate such an investment without preparing the most careful plans for its ultimate development.

Real estate brokers are taking big chances in advising their clients in real estate investments in a city which has no plan, when the whims and vagaries of a few speculators or a change in the political complexion of the city can wreck their venture in a few months. Most real estate transactions which are investments, and not speculations on the chance that a "hot tip" is the real thing, are made with the idea of a long period between changes. The greatest possible stabilizing factor to the real estate business would be to be able to forecast the future development of part of the city.

If Portland, for instance, had a definite official city plan, a plan which said now, that some day this street

would be so wide and would extend to such a place; that when the street was so widened and extended a bridge would be built at a certain point with its terminals on certain, at this time defined streets; if that plan said nothing about the time of completion of that bridge, but absolutely precluded its building until the city had grown to a size where it became a traffic necessity; and if all these provisions were to be held as something final and practically unchangeable, then an investor in Portland real estate could feel certain no unforeseen change in the traffic or transportation system of the city would be liable to deprive him of any lawful profit in his investment.

The stabilizing value of a comprehensive city plan to the business of the city and especially to those forms of business which are most directly influenced by real property conditions can be well compared to the effect of a stable, conservative government upon the business of a nation.

WHAT ABOUT THE YEAR 2000?

A new addition to the bibliography of city planning is, "What about the year 2000?" It is an economic summary prepared by a joint committee of the Federated Societies on Planning and Parks. If the findings of these men are at all to be relied upon, there are many problems of the present which are not as pressing as we think. The year 2000 is only as far ahead of us as the civil war is back of us.

Seventy years ago, Kansas, Nebraska, the Dakotas, were a region where the buffalo grazed by millions, a few thousand Indians made use of all this empire--today, these states support a population of millions and produce the food for millions more.

At first glance it seems that the seventy years to come will bring changes as wonderful. The chances are that by 2000 our population will have become stationary at a figure near 200 millions. The future may see changes in transportation and methods of manufacturing that may make the change from the grain cradle to the combine harvester seem a short step, but the change from 30 million to 120 will always be more impressive than that from 120 million to 200 million. If indeed we are to begin to slow down in population, if the beginnings of that slackening are already upon us, city and regional planners should begin to think of effects of these conditions upon the future physical machinery of our cities and their environs.

According to this summary, the greatest change in conditions which is due for the next seventy years is the further urbanization of the population. It may easily come about that the great grain growing states will have even less population than they now have. Certainly it would be possible to raise

the wheat of Kansas with a fraction of the present farm population of that state. The great cities of the future may be expected to cover much greater areas than they now do. A stationary population is very apt to be a population of increasing standards of living. Progress is expressed not by making places for more men to live, but by making better places for those who are now living to continue to live.

The especial significance of these theories to Portland and the northwest is that the Willamette-Puget Sound valley is almost certain to become a region of cities, and that the time to plan those cities is before they are built. Further consideration of the tendencies of a non-increasing population to be more luxurious in its standards of living would make that planning more spacious and more attentive to esthetic values.

Books like this are of course the reaction of a certain theoretical type of mind to the life of today. Discount this fact as much as we may, the uniform emphasis which is given to recreation and beauty is evidence of a coming change in the attitude of the average citizen in regard to the use of the land of this nation.

THE CITY OF TOMORROW

The above is the title of a late and somewhat radical book dealing with the city planning problem. Its author, LeCorbusier, is a French architect. These are some random excerpts from the work.

"Man walks in a straight line because he has a goal and knows where he is going; he has made up his mind to reach some particular place and he goes straight for it. . . .

"The pack-donkey meanders along, meditates a little in his scatter-brained and distracted fashion. He zigzags in order to avoid the larger stones, or to ease the climb, or to gain a little shade; he takes the line of least resistance. . . .

"But man governs his feelings by his reason. Man works that he may not perish. In order that production may be possible, a line of conduct is essential, the laws of experience must be obeyed. Man must consider the result in advance. . . .

"The park-donkey's way is responsible for the plan of every continental city. . . .

"The great city is a recent event and dates back barely fifty years. . . .

"The great city is born of the railway. In the past, the city was entered by gates in the ramparts. Traffic both on

wheels and on foot split up and was dissipated on the way to the town's center. There was no particular reason for congestion at the center. But the railway led to the construction of stations right in the heart of great cities. Now these centers are generally formed of a network of extremely narrow streets. Into these narrow streets crowds are precipitated by the railways."

Query, does not this mean that the automobile with its revival of individual transport will tend to stop the growth of the center of the cities?

"We have seen practically every horse cleared off the streets of Paris, but the motor is still thought of as a luxury. But if we consider the important part played in our urban existence by the motor truck, we shall see that we must devise streets which take the truck into account. . . .

"The vital thing is to have an idea, a conception and a program. And the means? Do we not possess the means? Louis XIV made do with picks and shovels, even the wheel barrow had just been invented. Haussmann cut immense gaps right through Paris. It seemed as if Paris would never endure his surgical experiments. And yet today does it not exist merely as a consequence of his daring and courage?"

APR 8 1930

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THE PLAN-IT

March, 1930

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Theron R. Howser, Editor

A NEW ROAD TO AN OLD TOWN

Several of the early issues of Plan-It cited the need of Portland and the adjacent territory for a topographic survey which would make possible the production of an accurate large-scale topographic map of the area. Each year that passes without such a survey and map, piles up more instances of its possible service to the community. The latest and perhaps one of the most emphatic cases where such a map would be an invaluable aid to the community is the discussion of the possible locations for super highways from Portland to the Upper valley.

At a recent meeting of the Professional Engineers of Oregon, Colonel Birdseye, president of the Aerotopograph Corporation of America, explained a new method of making the surveys for such maps by means of airplanes, special cameras and stereographic devices for interpreting the negatives obtained by the cameras into maps.

Briefly, with these new machines it is possible to obtain maps at a cost of about one-fourth of the cost of maps of similar scale and accuracy when made by the ordinary methods of survey using transit, tape, stadia and such orthodox engineering tools. For seven hundred dollars per square mile it is possible to obtain a map on a scale of 400 feet to the inch with a contour interval of five feet. This map is sufficiently informative to enable sewer drainage systems and street grades to be designed from it.

There is a large district just outside the city limits where the population is getting so dense that sewers and sidewalks must be designed and constructed soon, whether the inevitable absorption into the corporate limits of these areas comes immediately or in the distant future. To such districts an accurate topographic map would mean the difference between having large sums of money wasted by being compelled to rebuild improvements; or knowing that an improvement once made was made for all time. It is only a matter of time when all this area must be so mapped, for only by the use of such a map can a drainage system or street grades be designed.

Since there is this eventual necessity and certainty, why not have the service and convenience at once? Because a few passable roads can be dropped on the ground "as is, where is" without this initial outlay, is not proof that its cost would not be saved many times even in the present state of improvement. Certainly it is only by the use of such a map that every improvement of the time when a suburban district is country can be made to fit with the development of the city that will take the place of that country.

Seven hundred dollars per square mile was given as the probable cost of such map where quite a large area is mapped at one time. This is less than thirty cents per lot of average size. Surely no home owner or owner of prospective homesites anywhere within ten miles of the city limits of Portland can deny that it would be worth many times this small sum to be able to make an intelligent estimate of the grades that will finally be established in front of his property.

In places like Park Rose, Powell Valley Road, Base Line Road, Brentwood, Capitol Hill, Multnomah, it would be worth ten times this estimated cost of thirty cents a lot to be able to build the sidewalks at a grade that would not be changed when the country road became a city street.

CITY PLAN AS OTHERS SEE IT

Louisville, Kentucky, a city of just a trifle less population than Portland, has just published a major traffic street plan. The plan is the work of Bartholomew and Associates and is a fine example of the modern city planner's art. One of its most interesting statements is as follows:

"Those who were responsible for the design of the early city set a precedent in establishing street widths which might well have been followed more closely by later authorities. Main, Market and Jefferson are ninety (90) feet in width and Broadway is one hundred and twenty (120) feet wide for most of its length. With few exceptions the streets that have been established in recent years have been sixty (60) or fifty (50) feet in width."

How often do we find this condition! The Victorian age was an age of pettiness and narrowness, at least as far as streets are concerned. All over the United States there are cities in which the streets platted before 1840 are wider and show more vision and imagination than streets in the same city platted from 1840 forward, and especially was the period from 1860 to the present marked by a fever of town lot speculation that left America covered with such instances of lack of foresight as we have in the streets of Portland.

The recent tragedy at the county library is an illuminating example of the truth that there is another and even better reason for wide streets than ability to take care of traffic. If Tenth street had been 120 feet wide, the elms could have lived. With Tenth street 80 feet wide, no tree can be tolerated. Surely no street in America need be denied the beautification of trees until our population is increased many times.

The city planning commission of Cleveland has just published its annual report for 1929. Significant figures are that since the adoption of a thoroughfare plan, Cleveland has widened and extended many streets, some to 120 feet wide, some to 100 feet and many to 86 feet. The advantage of 86 or 90 feet over 80 feet is a point seldom appreciated by engineers and traffic authorities. Six lanes of traffic can barely be squeezed into fifty-six feet of paving. Fifteen foot sidewalks are certainly a minimum, 15 feet solid if for business, 15 feet with five or six feet solid if in a residential district in order to allow for the growth of street trees.

Cleveland is today perhaps three times as large as Portland, but there are more reasons for Portland to expect to become a city of millions than there are for Cleveland. Portland does not need to widen or extend any street to 120 feet now, in fact Portland can probably get on with a relatively small amount of street widening for the next ten or 15 years; but Portland should widen what she does widen to city widths, and Portland can well afford to say today what streets are to be widened to in the future and how much.

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The appalling loss of life in street traffic accidents caused directly by imperfections in the city plan, by railroad grade crossings, by blind intersections, by street jogs, by dangerous curves, by inadequate street widths not adapted to the traffic load, is an even more potent argument for major street planning. From these defects in the street system and from reckless driving, pedestrian carelessness, and other automobile causes, arise one-fourth of the almost 100,000 annual deaths from accidents in the United States.

Even though the human factor in street accidents can never be eliminated by planning, nor entirely by educational campaigns such as those conducted by the National Safety Council, circumstances can be made favorable, by providing proper traffic channels and appropriate traffic regulations, for an immense saving of life and limb. --Hubbard & Hubbard,
"Our Cities Today and Tomorrow", 1929

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The last month's Plan-It made a statement in regard to the stabilizing value of a comprehensive city plan. Some people seem to think a comprehensive plan has little such value. They point to cities in America where development has been rapid and where fortunes have been made in real estate, cities which had no plan and seem to think that these instances prove that there is little value in such a plan.

The fact that some of the best cities in the nation from an investor's standpoint are among the small number of cities where there was an early plan that has been a continuing factor in the community's development seems to escape their notice. Buffalo with its plan made by Le Enfant in the opening years of the 19th century is a notable example. Lewis Mumford in "Sticks and Stones", a study of American architecture and civilization says,

"In the development of the city itself, the gridiron plan was added to the list of labor-saving devices. Although the gridiron plan had the same relation to natural conditions and fundamental social needs as a paper constitution has to the living customs of a people, the simplicity of the gridiron plan won the heart of the pioneer. Its rectangular blocks formed parcels of land which he could sell by the front foot and gamble with as easily as if he were playing cards, and deeds of transfer could be drawn up hastily with the same formula for each plot; moreover, the least competent surveyor, without thought or knowledge, could project the growth of New Eden's streets and avenues into an interminable future. In nineteenth-century city planning the engineer was the willing servant of the land monopolist; and he provided a frame for the architect--a frame in which we still struggle today--where site-value counted for everything, and sight-value was not even an afterthought.

"In street layout and land subdivision no attention was paid to the final use to which the land would be put; but the most meticulous efforts were made to safeguard its immediate use, namely, land-speculation."

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Theron R. Howser, Editor

The most potent single recent influence on city planning in the United States is undoubtedly the establishment by President (then Secretary) Hoover in the United States Department of Commerce of a Division of Building and Housing, with an Advisory Committee on Zoning later expanded in scope as the Committee on City Planning and Zoning.

As a result of this committee's work, standard zoning and city planning enabling acts have been issued and used widely as a basis for enabling legislation, and thousands of copies of the Zoning Primer and the City Planning Primer have been circulated wherever communities have undertaken zoning and planning enterprises. Public confidence in planning as a legitimate sphere of municipal activity has been enormously increased. This recognition by the federal government of the economic value of planning as a means of eliminating waste and as a necessary business of community expansion, and the recognition by the courts of planning as a legitimate means of promoting social welfare, have effectually laid the restless ghost of "the City Beautiful" and are now placing in the minds of hard-headed legislators the conviction that haphazard city development is more expensive as well as less attractive and less socially desired.

--Hubbard & Hubbard, "Our Cities Today & Tomorrow", 1929

The distinguishing feature of the major traffic street plan, proposed by the Portland planning commission in 1927, is that it limits its scope to a conservative working frame-work for a business city. It does not say that the city beautiful is not desirable for the business of Portland, it does not say that we should not keep on observing the Bennett plan for a civic center, it simply points out the minimum street requirements for a city of a million people. It is distinctly in line with the newer conception of city planning which has been effectively championed by the United States Department of Commerce.

There are many in Portland who have never been made aware of the major traffic street plan proposed by the planning commission in 1927. There are some who may not appreciate that the proposals embodied in this street plan are truly conservative. To all these citizens it is earnestly recommended that one of the most profitable and pleasant of civic duties is the study of the history and development of city planning. Such a study will soon convince them that

one of the most fruitful causes of general inefficiency in our social machine is the haphazard uncontrolled growth of our great cities, and one of the crying needs is the formation and adoption of a proper city plan by Portland.

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Oswald Spengler, author of the Decline of the West, says, "Even now the world-cities of the Western Civilization are far from having reached the peak of their development. I see, long after A. D. 2000, cities laid out for ten to twenty million inhabitants, spread over enormous areas of country-side, with buildings that will dwarf the biggest of today's and notions of traffic and communication that we should regard as fantastic to the point of madness."

Within the last few days comes the announcement of new building materials suitable for the filling walls of steel frame buildings but weighing less than half the weight of the material now used. It is confidently predicted that the near future will see buildings of 100 floors as common as those of 40 now are, and that in a like manner our smaller cities will have many buildings 40 to 50 stories high.

Just now Portland and most of her sister cities of the West are feeling a little less jubilant over growth than they did a few months ago. But though our immediate past was not what we thought it was, the inevitable conclusion to be drawn from a study of modern cities and city growth is that the day of a Portland of a Million is not unlikely of realization by those who are now active participants in the building of the physical structure of the city. That these builders of today will become more vigorous and effective in the immediate future, is just as certain as it is that their actions will be less beneficial to the city of tomorrow, unless they now avail themselves of the aid of a comprehensive, broad-gauge, optimistic plan for the streets, highways and transportation systems of Portland.

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There are many indications that the Fremont street bridge will be authorized at the May primary election. If it is, then the city is presented with the immediate opportunity to build the Foothill boulevard and to make this bridge the most important traffic factor in the transportation machine of the city, if not of the state. The city of Portland is a constriction on the Pacific highway. Tourists bound north or south from Canada to Mexico or reverse, are met at the city boundary of Portland with a Chinese puzzle, even the best solution of which leaves much to be desired. But if the tourist entering Portland over the Interstate bridge could look straight ahead down a wide avenue leading toward the city, a true boulevard with pavement for four lanes of traffic on either side of a center parked strip, how much more favorable would be his first impression of this city.

The center strips of this rejuvenated Interstate avenue should be parked as a perpetual exhibition to these tourists of the ability of Oregon to surpass the rest of the United States in the raising of flowers, shrubs and ornamental trees. This parkway continued from city limit to city limit along Interstate avenue, 20th street, Fremont bridge, Foothill boulevard and Terwilliger boulevard would easily become one of the world's famous streets.

The Fremont bridge will be so high above the Willamette that the traveler can look down on the masts of the ocean-going vessels in the harbor. There are other harbors more busy and more grand. It is doubtful whether there is another chance to stand on such a bridge and look at a harbor full of shipping and a cluster of skyscrapers backed by evergreen hills with their many beautiful homes. The scenic possibilities of the trans-Portland highway can not be excelled. But great as would be the value of the Foothill boulevard-Fremont bridge-Interstate avenue highway as an advertisement for Portland, it would be even more valuable as a means of expediting the traffic and hence the business of those who live here. It is easily possible that over a term of years this highway would have an advertising value greater than that of an equal cost in printer's ink, billboards or talks. It is certainly a fact that the added convenience to life in our city of such a by-pass and circulating artery for our downtown district has an incalculable value.

There has lately arisen a revival of the idea of a street through the reservoir block on Sixth street. There has also been some decidedly hopeful talk of the project which would create a great city park of the hillside at the south of the Park blocks. This last is another almost unequalled chance to make Portland an exceedingly beautiful city. The schemes fit together like parts of a beautiful mosaic. The time seems to be here for Portland to do something constructive and beautiful. It would be a magnificent way of showing the world that we of Portland believe in Portland. The street through the reservoir block should be dedicated, opened and improved on a scale to fit into this boulevard plan at once. It would make a fine object lesson of the possibilities of a similar street seven miles long.

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The annual report of the director of town planning for the province of Alberta, Canada has just been received at this office. This is extremely interesting illustration of the actual attempt to apply regional and city planning to the development of a large area can affect the living conditions of the inhabitants thereof. It seems to an outsider to be a decided help.

One of the most illuminating bits from a Portland standpoint, is a series of pictures showing how the main street of Calgary, Alberta has been widened by arcading the building occupied by the largest department store in the city. The arcade is an attractive building feature and the new street space is a wonderful aid to congested traffic.

Another fine report just received is the annual report of the city plan commission of Detroit, another city that is not only talking and drawing pictures of wide streets but is actually building such streets, some of them 204 feet wide, many of them 120 feet wide and is laying down building lines for many more miles of such streets which they expect to grow into in the future. The mileage of these wide streets is particularly significant to us in Portland where 80 feet seems to be looked upon by many as of ample width.

JUN 6 1930
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CITY PLANNING COMMISSION OF PORTLAND, OREGON

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THE PLAN-IT
May, 1930

Theron R. Howser, Editor

THE BY-PASS ARTERY

The recent traffic tragedy at the famous kink in the Schenectady (N.Y.) Gateway Bridge, the Planning Foundation of America says, emphasizes the change in the point of view of merchants in that and other cities on through motor traffic on main city streets. The bridge is said to be the only one in the world with a mid-channel angle. The change in direction is 41 degrees. Many accidents, beside the most serious traffic congestion, have occurred on the bridge and the last one a day or two ago involved six motorists two of whom were probably fatally injured.

The new bridge was originally planned to route traffic into a street which would by-pass the main business thoroughfare and relieve congestion in that narrow street. The retail merchants, believing that this would interfere with business, objected. The New York State Engineer opposed their claims but the merchants' demands were granted. The bridge, half built already, was swung over at the angle mentioned to connect with the main street terminal.

The result is now admitted to be chaotic. State Street had to be widened and for months was impassable. When the thoroughfare was again opened, the congestion was so terrific that immediate relief was necessary. An old bridge connecting with a by-pass street, although it had been sold to a local traction company, was re-opened to the public. There is now a demand for the creation of other new by-pass streets so that the State Street traffic can be further relieved and local motorists get into the business section for trading purposes.

"This situation" the Planning Foundation states "is one of the most striking examples on record of what lack of comprehensive traffic planning can produce. It is fair to state, however, that recent experiences show the belief that a traffic-jammed street means business activity is now largely a relic of the past. The old idea was due to a lack of facts. The Foothill boulevard in Portland would be a fine example of the beneficial results of a by-pass street on downtown business and traffic.

GROWTH--THE REASON FOR PLANS

All plans are made because there is a conviction on the part of the planner that there is going to be growth which will make his project a necessary part of the social machine. The pioneer planned, cleared the land and built a cabin because he was sure that coming growth in the nation would make his venture a necessary and profitable part of the country. The manufacturer plans and builds a plant or enlarges an old one because of an idea that an increase in demand will make his product salable.

So, in the final analysis the ability to predict future population is the most valuable thing that can be had by every planner, whether he is a business executive or a city planning engineer. In an attempt to understand the course of action of a large and complex evolution it is imperative that the investigator does not allow his breadth of vision to become limited by a too much eagerness to examine the details of the picture.

The future population of a city is the result of the interplay of many forces, but if we attempt to predict too closely the effect of any one of these forces upon the case in question we are apt to overlook the effect of still another and hence have a final result which is valueless.

If we in imagination place ourselves at any past date and examine the attempts of the people of that time to pierce the veil of their future, which is our present, we are struck with the almost universal certainty that what should have been the deciding factor in these past predictions has been overlooked by nearly everyone at the time of its emergence. Perhaps the most accurate forecasts of the wonderful mechanical development of the age in which we now live were made by the fiction-writers of the age immediately preceeding us.

Verne, Bellamy, Lytton and such authors were really better prophets than contemporaneous statesmen. The novelist free to use known facts without hair-splitting attention to figures is often more correct in his prognostication than the statistician, the engineer, business expert or statesman. The romancer sees a tendency, a direction of growth, he builds a complete structure upon that tendency. The statistical expert is so enwrapped with his figures that he misses some essential element in the problem. His exact prediction is liable to be a laughable guess.

Experts built a structure of figures from the number of water services, telephone installations and like data. They forgot the increase in knowledge and wholesale "debunking" of the past decade or two, things which tend to steadily decrease the size of family, and to increase the scale of luxury in which we live.

The plan that will really serve its community must be based on estimate of future population that will be found approximately accurate when that future becomes the present. Perhaps the greatest factor in the unprecedented changes of the standard of living in the last thirty years is the automobile. It has opened up such opportunities for recreation; it has so increased our speed of living that in almost no particular is life of 1930 what was confidently expected by the people of 1900. Perhaps many results of putting our nation on wheels are not realized even at this time. Who can say how much of the drop in the birth rate in the United States from 25 per 1000 in 1915 to less than 20 in 1928 can be attributed to the automobile?

The airplane, the further development of the automobile, the spread of government regulation farther into the field of business, these are factors which will influence the growth of population in the future--factors which any one can see.

The possibilities in chemical production of power and of food, the free spread of biological knowledge, the conquering of tropical diseases, these are a few of the unguessed and unthought-of factors which may change the course of population growth and hence of all city and regional growth in the next century. Many people will say this is all theorizing. We are not interested in 15 or 20 years from now; we want to know how to manage our affairs for today. Let the future solve the future's problems. The very recent past did let the present solve its traffic problem with results that are distressfully apparent.

We might have not been able in the early nineties to foresee the automobile as the reason for wide streets. We should have been able to foresee the need of more space for trees along the streets if we were to live in comfort. Parking strips intended for trees to live in could be used for street area without the cost of street extension. Area zoning that spreads population today because it seems to be in keeping with an enlightened sense of community health might prove the salvation of an airplane-using population in 1970, at least it could not harm any one.

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Another addition to the rapidly increasing number of books on city planning is "Mastering a Metropolis" by R. L. Duffus. It is an ambitious effort to solve what is beginning to be recognized as the real problem of city and regional planning, to convince the people of the need of a plan. The New York Regional Plan, a monumental work must be "sold" to New York just as the need of a plan must be sold to Portland. The book is entertainingly interesting, giving the history of New York and its plans and never missing an opportunity to show that practical value of plans that reach far into the future. A significant bit of history from the book follows.

"Norton's committee got together and published a series of reports by the city's engineers on harbor facilities, building heights, and congestion. It also, in Norton's words, "met in a beautiful room in the City Hall once or twice and wisely resolved to give advice only when it was asked for, which was never." It began to be evident that, though whatever was to be done in the way of planning would have to be carried out by the governments of the communities concerned, the task of getting and presenting the necessary enthusiasm among the citizens, would call for volunteers from private life.

Mr. Norton now turned his thoughts in this direction.

"There could be found in and near New York (he wrote, in a memorandum drawn up in 1915) a hundred citizens--teachers, architects, artists, engineers, bankers, merchants, social workers, lawyers, editors--men and women whose names would be recognized from Maine to California as being specially expert in the subject of city planning. No American city is so rich in competent personnel. None has so superb a situation or presents so great an opportunity for a noble city plan."

Why, then, when other cities, both abroad and in the United States, were adopting magnificent civic programs, did New York lag behind? Mr. Norton believed he had found the reason. No plan, he pointed out, "has ever been projected here on a scale vast enough to capture the interest and the imagination of this group of cities, towns and villages that is New York." Everything that had been done so far had been done piecemeal, enlisting in each case the interests of only a fraction of the population."

JUL 9 1930

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THE PLAN-IT
June, 1930

Theren R. Howser, Editor

The city planner is often called upon to act as a surgeon to try to remove a cancer from the frame of a city, but he is almost never allowed to prescribe a system of growth that would insure a pleasant old-age for a municipality. As a surgeon, the engineer designs subways because there is no room for trains to run in the light of day, but if a man of vision had been allowed to direct the platting of the city in the beginning there would have been ample room to circulate without such an unnatural device as a subway.

We try to re-route our freight, to devise methods of handling and distributing it to get rid of congestion that has grown up on account of lack of foresight and regulation, but almost never is an engineer-planner asked to design the streets of the town of today so that the city that will take its place will be a comfortable and livable abode for its inhabitants.

The time to plan is before growth has made constructive forethought prohibitive in cost. Small western cities are fortunate in that they might profit by the example of older, bigger places and escape much city surgery in the future. Modern medical practice is to a large extent prophylactic measures. Modern city planning would better serve the nation if it were used prophylactically.

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Thirty-nine years ago this June, an election was held in Portland, Albina and East Portland to determine whether there should be a city, Portland, Ore., or a collection of small towns. The election was held June 2, 1891. Annexation won by a vote of 10,126 to 1714.

Some street extensions which had been authorized by the city council of Albina and East Portland were never finished by the consolidated city, notably, the extension of Interstate avenue directly north of the section line to the north line of the city. What a wonderful thing it would have been if that election of 1891

had adopted an official map showing the lines of a system of wide arterial streets for the new city! How much money could have been saved to the city of today, how much energy that must be spent in endless disputes concerning the proper street plan for Portland of today might have been devoted to more productive projects!

The streets and the general plan of Portland in 1930 are not as suitable for the population and conditions of 1970 as the plattings of 1890 were to the needs of today. But while we do not know just when Portland will be a city of a million, we do know that it is inevitable that a city of that size must be here some day. Also it is very evident to one who reflects on the increasing comfort and beauty of our homes that that city of a million will demand and get an amount of street and park area which can hardly be realized as justifiable at this time.

Study of the prices of 1891 shows that as far as land alone is concerned there would have been little gained by buying in 1891 the land that is needed in 1930. It is only the cost of improvements which are allowed to be erected upon land which the future will need for public purposes that causes a waste of public money. In other words, the building line and the official map are the true guardians of the public purse.

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The Plan-It has often spoken of the advertising value of beautiful streets, parks and buildings. It has consistently maintained that no city of the present importance and future prospects of Portland can afford to neglect making some plans for a few pretentious streets, even if traffic never required the extra area. No one can become acquainted with the tendency of modern civilization to build more and more beautifully artistic homes and surroundings without being forced to realize that the time when the city will be made a much more beautiful place is almost upon us. No narrow street can be very attractive, and an eighty foot street is not a wide street.

There are many eighty foot streets in the business district of Portland. The minimum traffic requirements for paved width have so constricted the sidewalks that even with today's business these streets cannot be said to have much claim to civic beauty. The primary requisite of a beautiful street is that it appears open, free and adequate for more people and vehicles than there are upon it. Not all streets of a city need have the air of dignity and calm that a trifle of extra area gives; but surely some few main streets should be wide enough to become fitting lobbies or parlors, reception rooms of the city, as they might be termed.

A recent article in the Atlantic Monthly entitled, "Beauty and the Booster" has many sound arguments for the value of city beauty. The author of this article argues that newspaper advertising, "boosting" for a city is idle boasting and will get less and less attention as time passes. He intimates that the day of high pressure salesmanship of cities is about over, that the city that serves and is an enjoyable place to live in is the one that will ultimately grow. The article deserves serious consideration by citizens of cities that are adaptable to the ever-increasing percentage of the population who are seeking a town to LIVE in.

One of the results of the development of the machine age that is just beginning to be recognized is that it will greatly increase the percentage of retired or leisure population. Practical operation of an industrial society under the laws of supply and demand will inevitably bring about not alone the short week and the short day, but the short working life.

Men will have "done their bit" by middle-age, and be able to retire to the leisure class. High wages which make possible high consumption, make for early saving of a competency. This portion of the population which has never been at all important in any other age or civilization is going to loom large in the twentieth century. Cities that by climate and recreational advantages are especially adaptable to becoming the home of such a population would do well to heed the ideas of opinions like this one on "Beauty and the Booster."

Portland would be making a very wise provision for her future to adopt immediately an official plan which provided a few wide boulevards--"front-door streets" of a future city of beauty. Take, for example, Sixth from the Union station to Burnside and the Foothill boulevard as starters.

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There are two schools of thought on traffic congestion. One believes that traffic congestion and attendant motor problems will always be with us; the other, led by Wayne county Michigan, believes that pleasant city motoring is assured in the future. This later group offers as proof the broad streets, wide roads and elevated street and road intersections found in increasing quantities in the Detroit area.

Reduced to comprehensive figures, there are, in the two superhighway districts in the Detroit region, 93 miles of double concrete pavements, some of them with a combined width of 88 feet. Before this year is ended, 49 miles more will be in service--a total of 142 miles of comfortable and safe motoring.

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AUG 4 1930

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THE PLAN-IT
July, 1930

Theron R. Howser, Editor

A VISITOR'S VIEWPOINT

Friday, July 11, 1930, Gordon Whitnall formerly Director of City plans, Los Angeles, spoke before the City Club of Portland. Some of the high lights of his talk were:-

"As cities grow larger they become less livable. The task of city administrative bodies is to balance up the increase in population with a corresponding increase in livability. They can never succeed in this endeavor, they can only approach success as a limit."

"The citizen by accident of birth cannot claim the reasons for interest in the city that the citizen by choice can."

"The business district is a cubage, the product of the factors of length, breadth and depth. Most of us know the length and breadth but not one in twenty knows the correct value of the depth factor, the average number of levels of use in the district. This reservoir is filled and emptied each day by the vehicles and people whose actions we call business. The filling of this reservoir by means of pipes called streets must be reasonably easy or the reservoir will not be filled, but if the central reservoir is not filled then the business will be done somewhere else in some decentralized region."

"Cities are like people, each one is unique and has some characteristics that make it different from all others. The successful city from the standpoint of growth is one that determines what its individual characteristics are and then selects those individual characteristics that are most valuable from the standpoint of livability and proceeds to build up a feeling of pride in these features on the part of its citizens."

"I can't say what is Portland's most unique feature, but I can say that one thing that made a very distinct impression upon me, as I was driving from California to Puget Sound, was the fact that I could not find a clearly defined route thru your city from south to north and that it seemed that you were trying to make every one who passed through your city help to increase the congestion of your business district."

"The citizen by accident of birth cannot claim the reasons for interest in the city that the citizen by choice can."

"The business district is a cubage, the product of the factors of length, breadth and depth."

The Plan-It has often said that the Foothill Boulevard as a link in the Portland section of the Pacific Highway is the most important project that can be advocated for Portland. No street widening; extension, bridge or park which has ever been advocated would do as much to ~~make~~ this a livable city.

Mr. Whitnall said, "City Planning is like salvation, it must come from within; if Portland can't make up it's own mind and determine to live up to a plan then no outside influence can ever make city planning for Portland effective."

"The archives of the cities of this nation are filled with plans, filed for further consideration, collecting dust but not gaining respect from the people of the city."

A very apt comparison of the building of a city to the building of a home by an individual was made. The most important consideration on the part of the home builder is his financial condition, his ability to pay now and to perform on a program of future payments, in the same way the foundation of city building is the ability of the public to pay for proposed projects and make good on its promise to pay at some future date.

Just as a logical home is a growth, so is an efficient city one which grows, but growth must be directed or else it is apt to choke itself, or to waste its strength in things that must be changed or removed at a future date to allow more desirable growth to come about. Hence the one thing without which no city can have continual vigorous growth is a long time program of public work.

Since there is always a right and reasonable unwillingness on the part of the great majority of the citizens of the community to support measures calling for increases in their taxes, highly desirable as the improvements proposed may be, any method by which improvements in the city as a place to live could be started without great expenditures of public money would be a boon to the city of today and even more to those who are to come after us.

As was so tersely and truly said by our visitor from Los Angeles, as cities increase in size they tend to become less desirable as places to live in. The principal reason that a city of half a million is not so pleasant to live in as the town of five thousand is lack of room in the city. In the last analysis it will be found that the deciding factor in this lack of livability is lack of street width. Of course street area can be misplaced and a city with a large percentage of poorly designed street area may be less livable than one with a much smaller percentage of street area which has been distributed approximately in accordance with traffic requirements. But on the whole

the question of livability simmers down in the end to the amount of public area per capita, and that is why the larger city is less livable than the smaller one. There can be no question that in nearly every other characteristic save the one of space the larger city is the more desirable. The sanitation, the lighting, the paving, the provision for public and private amusement, the ability to have a myriad of friends or to live the life of a hermit, in numberless ways the larger city the more desirable it is. But in that one most important detail, room to move without bumping, there the big city falls down and the larger it is the harder it falls. The streets are always designed to suit the town of 5000 and when time has over burdened them a hundred fold then arises the complaint of the undesirability of the larger city.

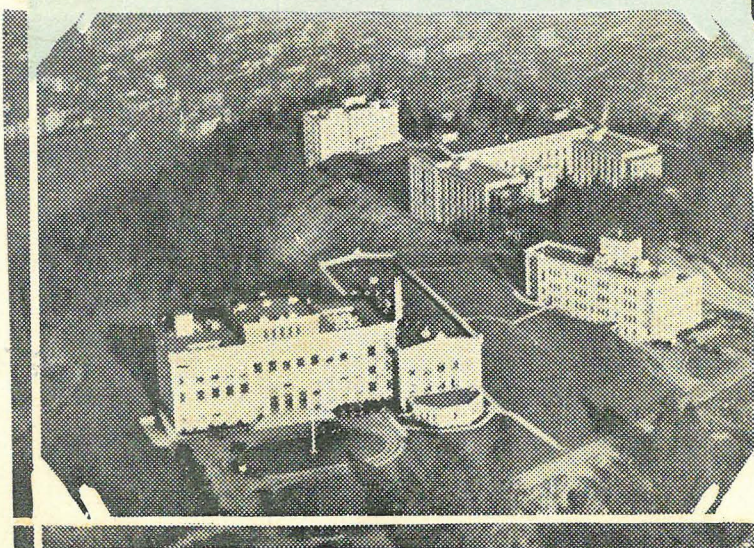
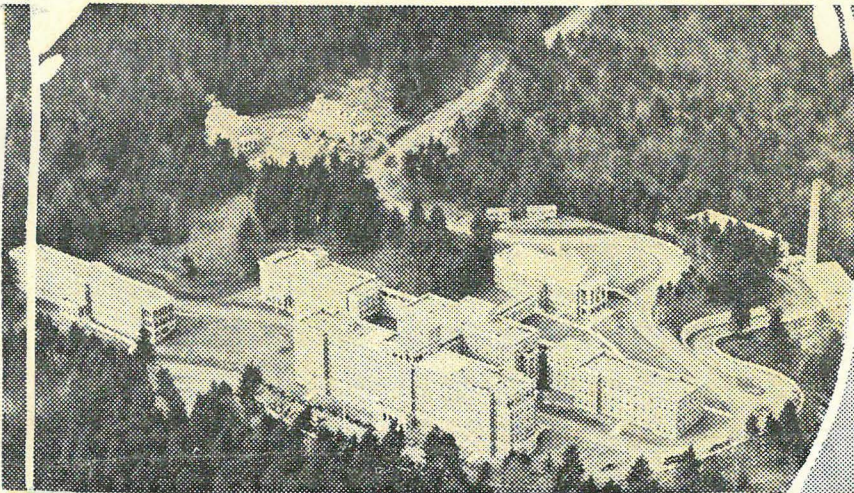
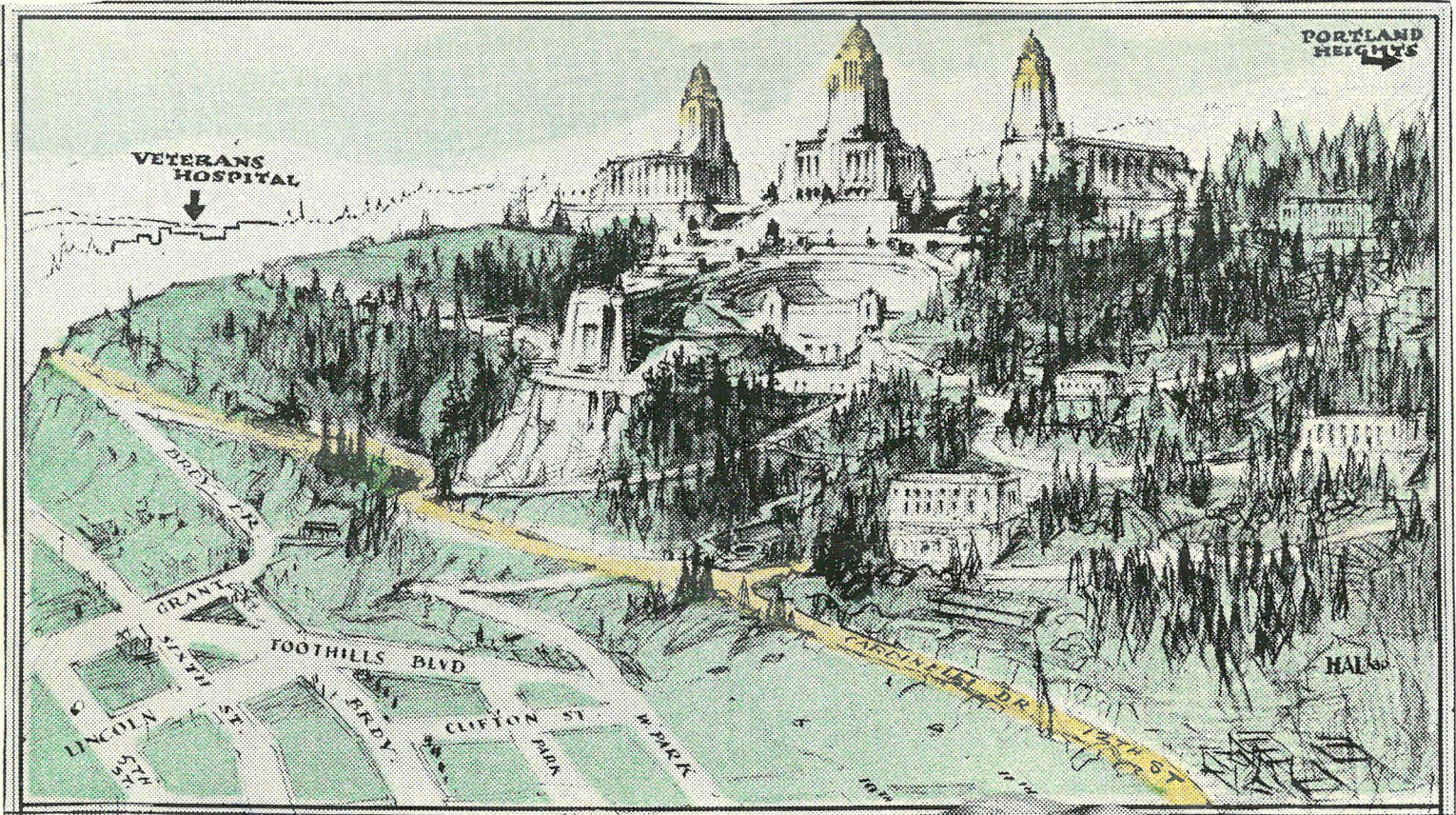
If we could just preserve, the streets of the village with room to circulate without jostling, when we grew to city size! It can be done, there could be street preservation lines laid down in the beginning so that the streets of the city of a million would fit with the same happy human air of room enough that is found in the country village that was thought so livable.

Street preservation lines, lines laid down on a map to preserve for all time the livability of a city. Lines that would give to every city some day the sort of ease and dignity now illustrated in Salt Lake City with its four rod wide streets. Brigham Young was not a landscape architect but there existed no selfish reason for him not to make the streets of Salt Lake City as wide as they could be used, and so in the days of the ox cart he built a city that fits the automobile very well.

CARRYING OUT THE PLAN

The cost of city and regional plans is relatively small, but when made and completed, they exist merely on paper. The task is to bring them to life and to see that the public improvements are made, during ten or twenty years of time, in accordance with the coordinated plans and in the right order of sequence. The factors involved in promoting a city plan are a thorough study and scientific appraisal of all needs and a sound financial program to cover all capital expenditures, projected ten or twenty years into the future. Decision as to capital expenditures should be based both on the city plan and a sound budget.

SEP 6 - 1936



ABOVE is a picture of State and National Memorial as proposed by Mr. Max Loeb, to be built at the south end of Portland's park blocks, by Memorial Park Society. A portion of the land was donated to the city for Park purposes. The money required for the proposition is not to be acquired by taxation, but by popular Subscriptions and Endowments.

The smaller pictures are of the present Federal and County Hospitals, with the State Medical College, which could be joined to the Memorial Park by beautiful boulevards and roadways.

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THE PLAN-IT

~~September~~, 1930

(August)

Theron R. Howser, Editor

M E M O R I A L P A R K

The proposed park, on the hills just south of the park blocks, a project which has been brought to the attention of Portland many times in the last few years is again receiving some serious and well merited consideration, by a number of influential citizens.

This park, which has for its proposed location a site which can claim an individuality and beauty that would be difficult to equal has been the life long avocation of one of Portland's sincerely patriotic citizens. Here is an opportunity for Portland to have a park of supreme beauty and utility, if accessibility to a large body of population can be called utility for a park. Within walking distance of a harbor for sea going vessels, is an almost unused tract of land of nearly 60 acres rising up to an elevation of over 500 feet above sea level, giving a view of city and river and mountains of unsurpassable beauty. There is a natural site for an out door theater, room for a center of civic art and culture at once easily accessible to the heart of the city and near enough to a focal point in the arterial and street railway system that it would be usable by all of Portland.

This park would be an ideal setting for a group of memorial buildings, monuments and similar structures, as well as an excellent site for museums either of art, industry or nature.

The plan of the promoter, Mr. Max Loeb, is that the land which can now be obtained very reasonably should be purchased at once by a foundation, financed by popular subscription, in the soliciting of which stress is to be placed upon the number rather than the size of subscriptions. It is intended that the most humble citizen should give some small part of the purchase price of this land, not so much to make the burden more easy to bear by dividing it up but to insure that each and every citizen of Portland shall feel that this park is a thing in which he has had a part and in which he therefore has a proprietary interest. Men and organizations of wealth and power may build memorials and monuments with-in its boundaries but the land upon which they shall stand shall be the gift to Portland of a vast majority of her citizenship.

The picture which is a part of this issue of PLAN-IT is an artists conception of what this hill might be when fully developed. A wonderful vision of beauty but withall a dream that can easily come ture. This is a copy of the back of a petition form which is now being circulated in Portland. A copy of the petition is attached hereto and if you care to sign it and return it to room 418, City Hall, it will be joined to the original petition.

DREAMS THAT DID COME TRUE

In Cleveland, Ohio, some thirty years ago, a couple of poor young men embarked on a real-estate promotion which centered about the development of a large tract of unimproved land near the city. Today Cleveland can boast of one of the finest railway passenger terminals in the world, a project which exceeds in size the Grand Centoral Station in New York. Also as a part of the rebuilding of The Square in Cleveland there has been brought together one of America's best examples of what the city of the future may be. There is a group of skyscrapers housing offices, stores, theaters, restaurants and shops, every form of business that goes to make up an American city of the million class. All these buildings are connected to each other and to the main rail-way terminal by a system of subterranean streets so that one might spend years of work and play in the city and never step out from under a roof or come in contact with automobile traffic. A great garage is one unit, it is possible to go from the garage to any office or store in all this city within a city without crossing a traffic street. The buildings have been built with the idea of bridges over streets at upper levels as a further means of making inter-building communication easy and of removing traffic from the streets. The story of the operations of the Van Swerigens in Cleveland reads like a Horatio Alger novel. When it is realized that O. P. Van Swerigen is only 51 years old and that he and his brother two years younger gained their first knowledge of Shaker plateau by carrying newspapers to the then sparsely settled district which they afterward developed as a residential suburb, that the transportation problem of this suburb drew them into the railroad industry and then step by step they became one of the foremost railroad families in America, how all this has happened in such a short period, there is ample justification for dreamers to vision what might easily happen to Portland, Oregon, if a few active visionaires were to start working here.

There are a number of places in the immediate vicinity of Portland that offer opportunities for a suburban development as fine as any in America. Portland has the climate and resources, the location on one of the world's main arteries of commerce to justify anything in the way of growth. A man with the vision is the one thing lacking.

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WHEN THE WATER IS LOW PREPARE FOR THE FLOOD.

Significant news of the day is the lowering in price and the raising in quality of the American automobile. There is every indication that one of the first results of a return of easy spending will be an unprecedented increase in the number of cars, great as is the present number of cars in cities of 1930, there are likely to be two or three times as many in the next ten years in several great car using cities of which Portland is a notable example. This will probably mean that either the down town business centers must revamp their buildings to fit such an increase in car use may bring about thru its urge toward decentralization of business. People will use cars, and they will use them where convenience is offered. The metropolis of 1940 may easily become a loosely connected system of small business centers. The issue will largely be determined by the intelligent foresight with which those centers which now hold the premier situation, act to hold their advantage. The time is ripe for at least a thorough investigation of the possibilities of a radical change, such as second story or subterranean sidewalks or arcading as a way to make the down town district usable by a vastly larger number of cars.

If you or your friends are interested in this project, please sign this petition and return to Room 418, City Hall.

We, the undersigned, endorse the organization of a State-Wide Memorial Park Association, to acquire and develop the property south of the Park Blocks running up and over the hill and extending from Penneyer Park to and including the scenic knoll easterly, overlooking the city.

We believe that such an association, non-sectarian and non-political, is needed to stimulate the erection of the long belated War Memorial for the State and City, and to make possible a satisfactory handling of other Memorials of varying character.

The site proposed is close in, scenic, and is beautifully wooded with a fine bit of virgin forest. It can be made easily accessible, and should, when developed, become a symbol of pride in our City and State that has as yet not been made articulate.

This development, for many years the dream of Mr. Max Loeb, we believe is worthy of community and State support (especially as a large portion has already been promised), and we pledge ourselves to assist in its consummation.

OCT 6 1930

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THE PLAN-IT

SEPTEMBER, 1930

T. R. Howser, Editor

PREACH YOUR PLANS

"It is perfectly amazing, the stir that we sometimes think we are making in the world about something, and then the following day and the following week and the following month we meet people who never heard of the stir or the great thing that has so energetically agitated us. Even among our friends we find individuals to whom the whole thing is entirely new. So I would remind you of that in connection with your future program, and of the necessity of rounding up the whole community in support of it. You must have a continuous pressure to secure public interest, understanding and support. So it behooves you all to preach your plans, to constantly repeat in relation to them. Every time you talk about them you may interest additional people, and among those previously interested you will be able to gather and to get together and to coordinate some additional help."

General John F. O'Ryan, President
Colonial Airways Corporation, N. Y.,
in "Planning a Metropolitan System
of Airports", an address delivered
February 6, 1930, at the Seventh
Annual Meeting of the Chicago
Regional Planning Association.

To some it may seem an indication of lack of imagination that allows the PLAN-IT to constantly revert to the Foothill Boulevard. Perhaps it is more a realization of a local instance of what General Ryan has pointed out in his address.

Any map is evidence that Portland is the gate between California and Canada. It would be rather difficult to lay out a route from the south to the north without following the Willamette Valley to the Columbia, crossing the Columbia at a point above the mouth of the Willamette and below the Cascade gorge.

That a city has grown across this gate is a natural and inevitable result which in no way lessens the reasons for locating a route of travel through that gate. That the original designers of the city of Portland should have overlooked the item of an adequate street through their town from north to south does not seem so queer when it is recalled that at the

time that the city was platted it was thought that the Willamette River was itself the artery for such north and south movement. The railroad and still more the automobile as means of long distance travel were not expected ever to supplant the boat on water ways that ran parallel to the direction of travel.

But boats alone cannot meet the requirements of the speed loving twentieth century. The automobile has grown in less than twenty years to carry passengers and freight in volumes that would have seemed absolutely impossible to people in the middle of the last century.

The development of the automobile has so far outstripped the growth of the highways that the roads of the nation are filled with traps and bottle necks, impediments to circulation.

The condition that automobiles going from the Willamette Valley to Washington are practically forced to go thru the most congested part of the city of Portland, thus adding further congestion and decreasing the facility of transaction of business for those who are in that district to trade, as well as being themselves slowed up in their journey is an aggravating one, but withal one which can be duplicated in nearly every city in America.

The by pass artery, the ringstrasse, the boulevard of Europe, all have their reason for existence in this condition. Portland is fortunate indeed, that the construction of less than four miles of street and one bridge would at once provide a direct way for traffic to pass thru our city without tending to produce any undue congestion and at the same time be a most valued adjunct to the circulation system of the city as a self sufficient entity.

A highway following the natural line of grade change of the west side hills would be of inestimable value as a time saver for persons coming from the south and southeast residential areas bound for any point on the west side flat. It would make it very illogical to concentrate traffic in any one or two streets. The traffic in each street would be directly proportional to the business in that street, it would flow evenly from distributor street to the various streets of the downtown area.

The Foothill Boulevard extending from Second and Arthur Streets thru the Reservoir Block at 6th and Lincoln crossing Jefferson Street with a viaduct just east of the Vista Avenue Bridge, dodges the hills west of the Multnomah Athletic Club with a 600 foot tunnel and continues to the St. Helen's Road at 30th Street with a widened 20th or 21st Street as an approach to the Fremont Bridge. This could be built for less than six million dollars, compared to other late expenditure of public funds it would be buying dollars for two bit pieces. It is perhaps the only street project which has been advocated for this city which would have an immediate beneficial effect on traffic congestion where congestion really troubles.

- THE CITY OF TOMORROW -

Several months ago the PLAN-IT quoted some parts of Le Corbusier's "The City of Tomorrow", Le Corbusier, an architect, attempted to show that

the automobile had made necessary the replanning and rebuilding of our cities. The main proposition of his plan was that the multilevel building of today and the greater size of supporting district which the auto has given to our business centers, had made reasonable a multilevel street and that the entire ground area of the inner business center of our cities should be given up to the automobile. The properly designed building for an automobile city would be a skyscraper standing on stilts so that autos might huddle beneath its shade. As has been said before, the romance of today is the history of tomorrow, those who would call Le Corbusier a romancer may be doing him unintentional honor.

Another book of very similar title and nature is Hugh Ferriss's "The Metropolis of Tomorrow". Ferriss is like his French fellow artist, an enthusiast for the skyscraper. He visions a city of lofty towers spaced far enough apart that there is light and air for every side of every building, with all the ground given up to the autos and the pedestrians traveling in an entirely separate set of second and third story levels connected by bridges over the streets.

Ferriss's book is largely a set of pictures of buildings of today and impressions of what might be tomorrow. The number of such drawings and articles published in the last few years is proof that there is a rapidly increasing group of architects, engineers, and technicians, as well as daring leaders of the industrial world, who are beginning to realize that the days of the horse are over, that people are gradually beginning to think in terms of power even as they are already entirely habituated to the use of power in their daily lives.

The extent to which America has become a nation of power users, although most of the citizens of America are still thinking of streets, buildings and land in terms of hand and horse usage can be partially indicated by a review of a few power figures. There are in the United States over 30 million automobiles with an actual horse power of well over 600 million. The stupendous size of this composite engine that we have built up in very little over 20 years can be compared to the amount of potential horse power in all the rivers of the United States, a total of less than 40 million, or to the total locomotive horse power of American railways, less than 125 million.

There has lately been some talk of arcading the main streets of the business district. Why not go a step farther? Why not arcade the second story, build pedestrian bridges over the streets and give up all the ground floor to the use of the auto? The first city to actually rebuild itself to fit the auto will reap a harvest of publicity that will be worth millions.

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
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Theron R. Howser, Editor

"Great roads the Romans built that men might meet,
And walls to keep strong men apart--secure.
Now centuries have gone, and in defeat
The walls are fallen, but the roads endure."

By Ethelyn Miller Hartwich

If it were not so pathetic it would be laughable to listen to the amount of consideration that is given to a few walls, in the form of buildings that have actually out-lived their period of productivity, whenever it is proposed to change the 'horse and buggy' platting of any of our cities to fit the vehicles of today.

No one will deny that if we were to start with the banks of the Willamette river as they were in 1845 and with our present knowledge of city design build a city for half a million automobile-using people, that city would be utterly and absolutely different from the city we now have. The percentage of street area might be less than it is now, but its distribution would be entirely different.

Briefly, the city built for the automobile would have fewer and wider streets, and a decidedly smaller number of intersections. The buildings that men built in the eighties and nineties are not fitted to the business of 1930 and as rapidly as there is demand for new space the old buildings come down and modern ones go up. The street lines that were laid down in the fifties are just as ill-adapted to 1930 but they can not be changed because of an undue respect for a collection of buildings that can not be collectively junked, although everyone knows that they will be individually junked in a very few years.

Within twenty years hardly a building now standing in the district between Second street and the river will still be used. But a proposal to junk all of them at once and in rebuilding to throw the area now used as First street into a wide Second and a wider Front street would be branded as visionary, impractical, a dream, and so on, by nine-tenths of the people who own property in that district.

In a sense the verse at the top of the first page is true. Nothing endures and continues its influence on civilization like a road or a street. If we could lose some of our veneration for walls and gain more admiration for roads, life in the cities of today would be more enjoyable, and perhaps more profitable to some property owners.

TREES, A MOST DESIRABLE THOUGH OFTEN UNAPPRECIATED CITY ASSET

Portland is spoken of by Portlanders as a city that has never boomed, a city of slow, conservative, steady growth. It is interesting to look at an airplane view of the downtown district, especially the southerly portion thereof, taken in 1925 and to compare it with a recent view of the same area. There has been much building, much progress, of which we are justly proud. The Pacific building, the Utility building, the Masonic building, the Medical-Arts, the Terminal Sales, and numerous apartment houses that stand out of the 1930 picture are each represented by a clump of trees in the 1925 pictures. And it is this unnoticed but rapid denudation of the city that brings a slight twinge of regret to one who has loved the city because it had so many beautiful trees. A few more years and the west side flat will be practically treeless. There are things whose values can not be set out in dollars. There are places where the cold hard rules of interest and depreciation, of income and investment, do not apply; and a tree is one of those places.

Perhaps one of the most logical reasons for wide streets is that wide streets put off for many years, some times forever, the day when there will be no trees to give the passerby something to look at, to think about, to bring home to his mind a realization of the effortless beauty of nature, and how it surpasses the most beautiful efforts of man.

If the eighty-foot streets of the west side had all been 100 feet wide, some few of them would now have pavement and sidewalks using the entire width, but most of them would have remained tree-lined avenues while they were built up with great apartments, hotels, office buildings and so on. And the added length of life of an apartment or hotel building which has a charitable screen of greenery in front of its passe architecture might actually be a good return for the supposititious cost of the wide street.

It's too late now to replat Portland or Couch's Addition. It's not too late to apply their lesson to Eighty-second street or Killingsworth avenue or a dozen other streets in the city. It's not too late to try to preserve as many little clumps of trees in the downtown district as possible. The old Post Office block deserves much consideration on that score before it is allowed to become the side of another cubication of concrete and steel.

A CHANCE TO WORK FOR PORTLAND

Just at present there is a somewhat belated realization of the seriousness of what is called the unemployment situation, accompanied by a frantic search for chances to relieve it. The southwest approach highway to Portland which might be constructed by a utilization of the abandoned right of way of the Southern Pacific suburban line is certainly a fine opportunity for some emergency work of this sort. Any given amount could be reasonably expended on this highway, greatly augmenting the comfort and convenience of a large portion of Portland's supporting area, and giving a chance to put several men at work for the winter months.

There are several large timber trestles on this route which will require extensive rebuilding to fit them for highway use, an appreciable use of lumber and mechanics being part of that process. If these trestles be not so rebuilt and put in use in the near future they will rapidly deteriorate and require more extensive repairs and additions. Just as a vacant house seems to go to ruin faster than an occupied one, so does it seem that an unused trestle or timber bridge decays faster than a used one.

The earth work for this highway could be conveniently done by railroad equipment working on the present rails which will probably be taken up in the next year or so. There is a world of such equipment idle in this city. There are men looking for the chance to do the work. There is the work crying to be done. And the benefited district would probably be willing to pay the cost if it had the chance. The city engineer's office has estimated the cost of rebuilding these bridges and grading and paving at about \$270,000.00. The district immediately benefited just outside the city is well over 8000 acres, or a benefit of about \$35 per acre if all were paid for by this benefited district. Besides a large part of the cost should be borne by a district within the city, and some could be justly assessed to the county road funds.

The old reservoir block at Sixth and Lincoln is another location for some emergency work that would be a premanent gain for the car drivers of the city. This relic of the old Portland Water Works has lain unused and unproductive for many years. There have been several sporadic attempts to make it productive of taxes by selling it for an apartment site, the proponents forgetting that if an apartment is built there, then some other vacant lot of private ownership must be idle for another term of years. It would seem more just to allow the man who had paid taxes on his vacant lot a chance to get something back.

If this property could be opened up as a connection from the Ross Island bridge and Terwilliger boulevard traffic to Broadway, it would relieve Sixth street of some congestion and be an entering wedge for the Foothill boulevard. It is possible to start this construction project and put a fairly large force of men at work for some time with no expenditure except for materials and labor, both of which would be a direct stimulus to business.

THE BEGINNING OF ANOTHER AGE OF PERICLES

The world-wide depression, coupled as it is with a superabundance of most of the basic raw materials, is beginning to cause men to think. The rapid increase in the amount of space in conservative organs which is being given to discussion of the necessity for some plan of shorter work-days or more luxury consumption, is evidence that the world is about ready to commence an age of vast construction projects fathered to in a large measure by the necessity of keeping men at work. If so, why not rebuild our cities of brick and concrete and make them marble!

If Pericles and Augustus could build Athens and Rome so lavishly that those cities yet remain objects of awe to an age that has the ability to surpass their efforts a thousand-fold, what could be done in New York or Washington or Chicago? If America once decided to bend her resources of men, machines, and materials towards the raising up of surpassingly beautiful cities, and if the fever of such work once started in one or two of our major cities, who can say where it would stop? It might easily be that temples of education and amusement would dot this land as once they did the shores of the Mediterranean. A proper preliminary for such a period would always be a complete, comprehensive and decidedly ideal city plan.

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THE PLAN-IT

November, 1930

Theron R. Howser, Editor

"'Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have
loved at all."
--More

"No question is settled until it's settled right."
--Lincoln

City planning is to a large degree a matter of the plan and width of streets. A city might have very wide streets and have them so poorly fitted to the topography that they are almost useless. Still if a city is to be built starting with virgin land there are practically no cases where the happiness and comfort of the citizens of the city will not be increased by making the streets in the original platting wider than estimates of the requirements by ordinary standards at the time of platting would seem to require.

Salt Lake City, with its streets eight rods wide was long an example of too lofty ambition. Today Brigham Young is universally acclaimed as one of the world's real city planners. It is the improvements and not the land that cause expense when it becomes necessary to widen a narrow street. It costs practically as much to take a slice off a building as it does to take the whole building.

Therefore no street widening project is reasonably managed if it stops with less width than one that seems wider than there can be any possible need for at the time. It would be far better for the general welfare of the city if the proponents of the wide street would refuse to compromise and thereby block all action until a few more years have taught the people the necessity for wider thoroughfares and the folly of inadequate widening measures.

Most of those who drive over Sandy boulevard daily are now of the opinion that the original scheme of making it 100 feet wide, which was killed by a small remonstrance in 1920, would have been much better for all concerned. Without doubt either Sandy boulevard will see a second widening within the lifetime of those who did this one or else construction of some other route for the Northeast district to reach the center of the city. Such a project as an automobile highway down Sullivan gulch would of course be the same as an extra widening of Sandy.

The only excuse for recalling past errors is to point a way to escape present mistakes. There is more reason for 82nd street to become an arterial highway, with the present unbelievable concentration of traffic, than there is for Sandy boulevard to outgrow its 80 foot width. There is a definite limit to the territory tributary to Sandy boulevard. The whole Columbia valley traffic does not drain through Sandy. Base Line or Burnside are more efficient for a large district that is often counted as tributary to Sandy. California and Washington can well be said to exchange traffic via 82nd street. There is a fear on the part of many property owners along 82nd street that a wider street means an increased demand for paving to care for the future traffic, a demand which they will be forced to supply at considerable expense, and with little chance that the increased traffic will bring an increase in the revenue-producing power of their property.

Such contentions in many instances are just and there can be little doubt in the mind of the impartial observer that the time will come when major traffic highways will be built largely, if not entirely, at the expense of the traveling public. Few, if any of the property owners facing such a street as 82nd may ever receive enough benefit from the traffic on that street to justify their paying any substantial part of the cost of widening the street or of paving it after it is widened. Arterial highways are not always a benefit to the abutting property. They are a part of the modern transportation system, should be so considered, and largely so financed.

Knowledge of this condition is spreading rapidly. Along with this knowledge comes a realization that the only matter of interest to the property owner on such a highway is the price he will get for the property that the public takes from him. He is not to decide how much property is taken, nor where. He only has to sell to the only possible buyer the remains of an often unfortunate investment.

For all over the land, in every meeting of realtors, in every gathering of investors, in every conference of planners, the same story is heard. Increased traffic on an arterial highway is not a benefit but a detriment to the abutting property. There is no way that certain streets and highways can be kept from being arterial, therefore the only hope of the property owner on such a street is to sell to the public at a figure that will stop his loss. This is not true of every part of every arterial highway. It is increasingly true of a growing portion of every such an artery.

THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST PLANNING CONFERENCE

The Pacific Northwest Association of Planning Commissions held its third annual convention in Tacoma, November 14 and 15. There were many interesting talks and papers; these were the inspiration for some very valuable discussions. Mr. Bollong,

traffic engineer of Seattle, read a paper on traffic congestion which contained many thought-provoking statements, of which the following are a few.

"Stop streets, or main arteries should not be closer than half a mile apart. Fewer and wider arteries should be the rule of city planners."

"Stop and go signals at intersections should never be installed when the peak traffic rate through an intersection is less than 500 vehicles per hour, of which at least 125 must come from the less traveled road."

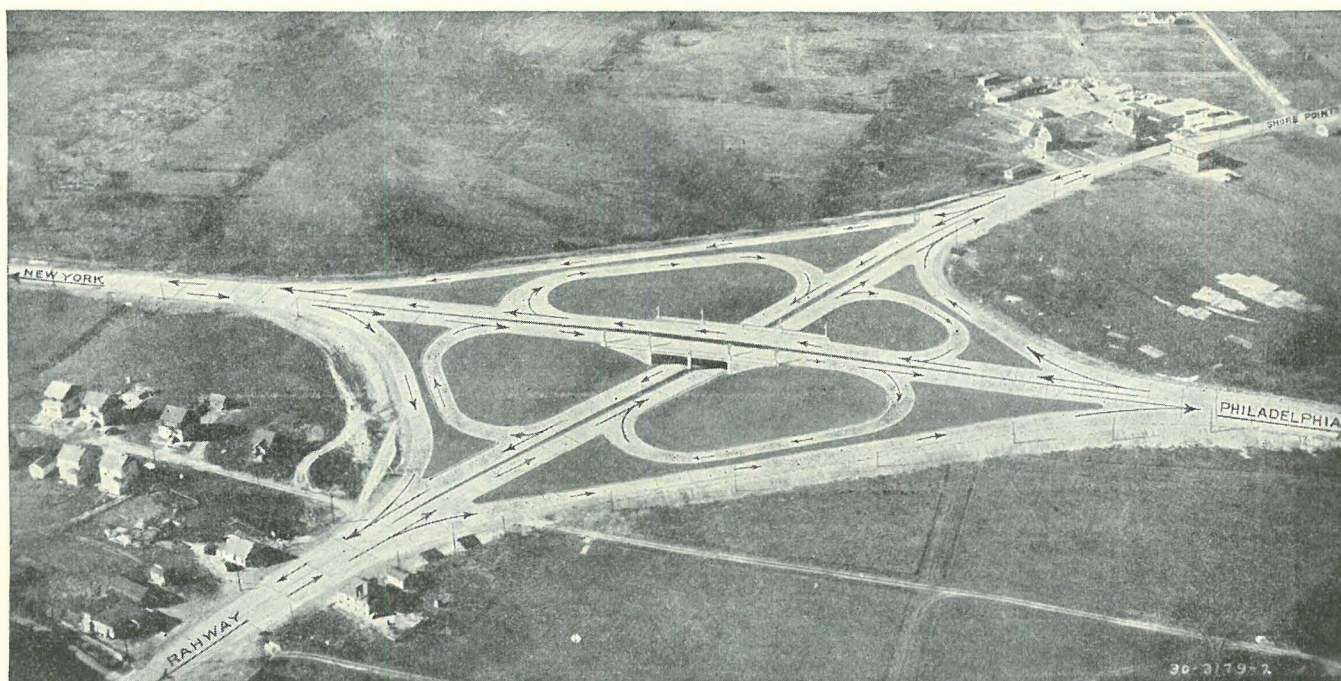
Mr. Bollong described the Electro-matic signal, a device which automatically gives the "go" signal to either route when the other route is unoccupied. This, a rather costly form of electric control, does away entirely with waiting for a "go" sign when there is no other car in sight, a common and exasperating feature of most traffic control systems.

"It is only a matter of time until downtown parking is absolutely prohibited," he said.

In the discussion following, a prominent business-property owner and operator of Seattle, with a quarter century of experience, said, "You may prohibit parking in the downtown district, you may be right that most of the parked autos are not customer's autos; but of a certainty, the increase in difficulty of parking is being paralleled by a rise in percentage of business in the neighborhood centers. Chicago's experience may not apply to a western city."

Another, a city official, said, "The downtown property owner may be compelled to change his methods of development in order to maintain his property's importance, but he will do so rather than allow the outlying business centers to become supreme."

Professor Buck, of the University of British Columbia, gave a paper on the Relation of City Planning and Higher Education. He said that the power of a comprehensive city plan to act as an educating force for the citizens of a city is not generally realized. Parks, civic centers, boulevards and such projects have a subtle and unceasing tendency to raise standards of appreciation and to increase civic pride and patriotism. Professor Buck quoted quite extensively from the Plan-It in pleading for high standards of art in public construction work.



An Almost Perfect Highway Intersection

This picture, furnished by the Portland Cement Association, shows how an intersection can be built so that there is no chance for delay to any line of traffic and no possibility of an accident caused by an intersection. As shown by the arrows, traffic flows through this intersection in continuous streams in all directions.

This principle could be used to great advantage at Sixth and Sheridan, Bertha, Broadway, and Interstate, and many other places in and around Portland.

JAN 20 1931

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THE PLAN-IT
December, 1930

Theron R. Howser, Editor

PORTLAND WILL HAVE A PLAN

Significant of the modern trend for planned and directed city growth was the action of the Multnomah County Tax Conservation Commission in allocating \$22,000.00 of the 1931 budget to partly defray the cost of an arterial street and waterfront plan for the city of Portland. Eight or ten thousand dollars additional will be needed to pay Mr. Harland Bartholomew, of St. Louis, for his work. This amount will be easily and quickly raised by popular subscription from public-spirited citizens of the city.

Portland should have an official arterial street plan adopted by 1932. At least by 1932 we shall probably see a revival of construction activity in this region, and when that revival comes it will find Portland with a definite route already surveyed and mapped out. There need be no hesitancy, no stopping to figure out how one project will fit in with another. The future of every part of the city will be an open book.

Just as the zone ordinance makes it certain that a given district will remain residential for many years and guarantees the builder that he will not have a store or commercial building in the immediate vicinity of his house within a few years after he builds it, so will an arterial street plan enable the builder who wants to build in the swirl of traffic to do so, or it will point the way to calm and quiet districts where the home owner can be certain that no real estate speculator can drum up an agitation for an arterial street to wreck the neighborhood financially and physically.

Portland should have had such a plan years ago. In fact Portland did have a plan years ago, and if Portland had seriously and steadily worked to make that plan a part of its life, Portland might easily be the leading city of the west coast. The Bennett Plan was, and with a very little natural change is, as good a plan for Portland as could be desired. It was expected to work its magic unaided.

The Bartholomew Plan cannot help but be much better. It will have the immense advantage of almost twenty years of blundering to show what it should not be, but the Bartholomew Plan will not work magic, it can only show the way for the workers to direct their efforts.

Portland may never reach the place that it might have occupied if it had had the inspiration of a used city plan during the past fifty years. But if it does it will be largely because it adopts an official plan now and keeps that plan in the limelight of public attention from now on. It will be because no street or highway is built from now on that does not fit the plan. It will be because no temporary advantage to be obtained by some speculative interest will be able to influence the location or time of initiation of any project.

STREET AND HIGHWAY WIDTH

A review of past issues of the Plan-It shows that street width is the main interest of whoever dictates its policy. There has been continual argument in favor of fewer and wider streets. It has been repeatedly stated that major traffic arteries can seldom be made less than 100 feet wide without waste of public money and effort.

So it is with extreme pleasure that we read in the local papers of the final plans for a super highway from Oregon City to the Portland city limits. This super highway is to have a right of way 120 feet wide. It is to be paved with two strips of paving, each forty feet in width. It will have a center strip ten feet wide and sidewalk strips fifteen feet wide. The state engineers and federal engineers have agreed that this width is absolutely necessary in order to provide for the growth in traffic which they are certain is just over the horizon.

If the width of 120 feet is justifiable for an arterial highway leading into a city, how can any one deny that the street into which it debouches should be at least as wide? If the state is going to require a 120 foot right of way for the Oregon City highway, then there should be a 120 foot right of way for the whole route through the city by way of the Ross Island bridge, the proposed Foothill boulevard, the new Fremont bridge, and Interstate avenue.

This would make possible a tourist route through Portland by means of which the visitor could gain a fair idea of the size and development of our business district without adding to its congestion or being bewildered by the complexity of the route laid out for him.

The engineer who designed a pipe line with a two-foot main carrying water from a three-foot main to supply a four-foot main, would not be rated very highly. Some highway and street engineers are perfectly willing to run 120 foot streets into 60 foot streets; the general public pays the bills because it pays no attention.

There is a block of property owned by the water bureau, unused for many, many years. It lies directly in the path of the Foothill boulevard. It could be an emergency job for some of our unemployed workers. It ought to be made a connecting link between south Sixth street and south Broadway. As the first block in the Foothill boulevard and a small segment in the future super highway through Oregon, it should be constructed at least 120 feet wide.

THE MOST FAMOUS CITY IN AMERICA

Cities in general, and western American cities in particular, have for years been engaged in a competition, by word of mouth "boosting" or boasting, by advertising and to a certain extent by working, they have all been endeavoring to get talked about. In the great majority of cases the criterion of success has been growth in population. If a city could claim great size it was tacitly acknowledged to have won the game.

An interesting sidelight on this situation, is the recently announced comparison of the actual population of several American cities, as shown by the 1930 census and the pre-census estimated size by their respective secretaries of chambers of commerce. Of the ten cities which had estimates within two percent of the truth, only one was a western city--San Francisco. What a wonderful thing it would be if some city could become the most famous city in the world and not need to boast about its size.

The first city in the world to actually provide a business district built to fit automobiles would have a logical claim to such fame. There is no city in the world of the size of Portland having as high a percentage of automobile-using citizens. There is no other city that has as large an area of outgrown buildings all in one group and centrally located.

If the people who own the waterfront area would become "merger minded"; if they would combine all the property from Fourth street to the river and from Jefferson to Glisan into one ownership; they would trade their property for stock in a holding company. If then that company would decide to develop its holdings according to a plan that took into account the needs of the automobile it could easily become the most talked-of building project in America.

A business district built to fit the automobile! A place where all the ground level is given up to the motor car, where all the buildings sit up on stilts, where the business is carried on the second floor, where the sidewalks are a system of balconies and bridges, where there is absolutely no chance for an accident caused by a car and a pedestrian disputing for right of way.

The City of Tomorrow, written by Le Corbusier, describes such a city. The chance to build the first such city is still open.

A NEW PLAN FOR AN OLD CITY

There has just been received at the office of the Planning Commission a report on a thoroughfare plan for Boston, Mass., prepared by the Boston City Planning Board, Robert Whitten, consultant. The following random statements from the report are especially instructive in regard to the growing solidarity of thought on modern transportation problems.

"This legislation should also provide for safeguarding the integrity of the Plan by preventing by some equitable means the blocking of projects contained in the Plan by the erection of costly buildings within the lines of streets laid down thereon. This can be done in some cases by the establishment of a building line easement and the payment of damages caused thereby. . . . Supplementing these methods the City should use a fund of, say, \$500,000 a year for a period of years to buy in advance of imminent building operations, land that will be needed for future projects."

"Knowing that within the next ten years a particular lot will be needed for an express road or parkway it is surely the height of inefficiency to stand by while an expensive building is being erected upon it."

"A street system should not be designed to promote either centralization or decentralization. It should be designed to promote safety, comfort and speed of movement between all parts of the community. . . . A serious slowing down of the traffic movement in any part of the main arterial system affects injuriously the whole community. The city's street system should be adapted to the requirements of a motor age. The art of street design and construction has lagged far behind the art of vehicle design and construction."