

JAN 31 1928

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION OF PORTLAND, OREGON

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1928, Jan.

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THE PLAN-IT
January, 1928

OREGON
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This issue celebrates the first year of existence of the Plan-It. Twelve issues have been sent forth from the northwest corner of the City Hall. We started the experiment with some trepidation and a realization that there were already too many such sheets being written. However we felt that there were certain phases of city growth and particularly some angles of Portland's development which were not appreciated by the public as they should be. We believed that the City Planning Commission had a message that needed to be given to the city and that there was no other medium available for this work.

How well we reckoned with our problem, may be judged from the fact that the Portland dailies have given the Plan-It over 150 column-inches of comment. It has been extensively quoted in neighborhood weeklies and such publications as the City Club Bulletin and the Pacific Engineer. Some of the Plan-It paragraphs have been reprinted in magazines and bulletins of national circulation. The mailing list which is now over four hundred, is constantly growing by requests from interested parties.

STREET AREA IS NOT ALWAYS WHAT IT SEEMS

One angle of human behavior is often ignored in planning a street system. If there is heavy traffic between two areas, separated by any appreciable distance, most people consider the congestion of the routes connecting these areas as dependent upon the number of traffic lanes in those routes. Such is not exactly the case. Man is a creature of habit and is prone to retrace his path whenever he has the least opportunity to do so. Also man is apt to "follow the leader" whenever he has a chance. For these reasons it is found that of two or more separate and distinct routes of equal adaptability between centers of activity, one may become so congested as to entail serious loss of time to the traveling public, while the other equally usable route is almost deserted.

From a traffic standpoint, two separate streets eighty feet wide may not be nearly as useful as one street one hundred and sixty feet wide. In fact it is likely that a single street 120 feet wide will carry more through traffic than two parallel streets eighty feet wide. This phase of the traffic problem is one that has a special significance for Portland. We have so many streets of moderate width that there is actually a larger percentage of the area of the city in streets than in other cities. However all over the city we find one street congested, and a parallel street which should serve as a relief to the congested one, almost deserted.

Since it is so nearly impossible to distribute traffic uniformly over a number of parallel streets, the best way to prevent congestion is to have a skeleton system of very wide streets for the main transportation arteries of the city. These main streets should be made wide enough to provide for every possible contingency. They should be so wide that the majority of citizens would say they were wider than would be needed for about fifty years. Detroit's super-highways 204 feet wide, are perhaps the only American example of main arteries which are wide enough to take care of every traffic need. Once these skeleton streets are laid out, the remaining streets can be left to take care of themselves. They are merely neighborhood affairs.

STREET AND HIGHWAY SAFETY

The task of making the streets and highways of the nation safe for those who travel upon them, is the major transportation problem of the day. Any attempt to untangle the traffic snarl is doomed to failure if it does not allow for at least as efficient use of the highways as a transportation tool as we now have. The killing and maiming of people by the motor car must be reduced to an extent where it will be classed as one of the minor mischances of life, but we cannot hope to exist without the transportation which only the auto can supply.

Remedial measures are of two kinds, laws and rules--regulations and education to enforce and encourage a more efficient use of the present physical highway plant, and the physical changes in that plant to make it of itself a safer and more efficient tool. In this connection a brief glance at the evolution of the railway system of the country would be of great assistance to a proper understanding of the difficulties of the situation.

When railways were first built there was little or no regulation of their traffic. Trains ran without schedules and stopped at will. If two trains met on a single track, one backed up to a siding and the other passed on. Soon traffic became too dense for such operation. Schedules and time cards were arranged, but human hands and minds would ignore a schedule and greater speed made the consequence of such carelessness disastrous. The next step in railway evolution was the installation of automatic block signals and interlocking switches. While such devices were found to increase the safety, in fact they practically eliminated unsafe conditions, a consequence was that most of the track was working only half of the time. The next step and the true solution was the building of double tracks and grade separations; the latter being the only way in which one moving line of traffic can cross another line of traffic without interruption to either.

This is the lesson that the designer of highways can learn from the railways. No ordinance or law can make an intersection work for both lanes more than half the time. One lane must be standing still while the other is moving. As long as traffic regulation is considered a matter of laws and rules, so long will the public be fooled and befuddled, killed and maimed. If the public demands

the privilege of driving autos, they must either spend enough money on road construction and grade separation to make their driving safe or be content to kill and to be killed, to waste a large part of their time, and to sustain property damage of millions per year.

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The following comment on the "Major Traffic Street System" report is made in the Oregon Voter, January 19th issue,

"Portland City Planning Commission's report on a "Major Traffic Street System" should be given wide distribution throughout the city, should be the subject for club, luncheon and otherwise discussion, and thoroughly studied by seriously-minded property owners, corporation executives and everyone who has an interest in the Portland of 1950.

"The report is more than a report on a far-sighted plan of street development. It is also a simple treatise on necessity and merits of orderly city planning. At this time this last phase of the report is probably its most valuable contribution. The cover of the document admits that it is designed merely to furnish the basis for "discussion and recommendations," and somewhere in the text the further admission is made that obviously the city cannot underwrite immediately even a small fraction of the street development suggested as being ultimately necessary. The report, then lets the taxpaying public down easy--somewhat different in that respect from reports of semi-public bodies. No bond issues are urged, and no effort is made even to approximate costs of all projects listed. But if you are trying to steel yourself against a moderate longing for better traffic conditions in Portland, don't read the report. It is liable to soften your resistance to improvement of the city's layout.

"The introduction of the report preceding exposition of details of suggested widening projects and other improvements, is largely a resume of previous statements of the Commission on methods of financing arterial streets, use of setback lines, necessity for traffic plan adjustable to growth of city, future growth of Portland, which is illustrated by chart comparing population growth of Portland with that of San Francisco, Seattle, Los Angeles, and certain eastern cities. The chart shows an appreciably flattened growth curve for Portland between 1910 and 1920, at least flat in relation to growth of Los Angeles and Seattle during the same period."

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The Erskine Bureau of Traffic Research Report says its surveys have shown the burden the twenty-story cities throw on the two-story sidewalks. The demand for maximum sidewalk space has reached such a point that every attempt should be made to clear the sidewalks of all obstruction which impedes their free use. Free movement is rendered all the more important when it is considered that the inability of pedestrians to clear the street intersections rapidly is one of the principal causes of all traffic delays at corners. Trolley and light poles, mail boxes, fire and police telephones, petty merchandising, are only a few of the many obstructions to free use of the walks.

FORM PC-1
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THE PLAN-IT
 February, 1928

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THE SETBACK LINE DEFENDED

There has been some criticism of the setback lines suggested in the Major Traffic Street Report because often there must elapse a rather long period between the passing of the setback ordinance and the completion of street extension proceedings. During this period the property owner is deprived of the use of part of his property without recompense. That there is some truth in this claim is not denied. No change in existing conditions is made without working a hardship on some part of the community. Growth and progress are irresistible forces and eventually act for the betterment of the community.

In every direction, in every city, we see houses which were once fine homes and structurally are still beautiful dwelling places, but on account of the encroachment of business or multiple dwellings, they are worth only a fraction of their former value. The changes made by other property owners have made desirable residence neighborhoods become mere boarding-house districts. The man who changed his property to business use, took away a certain value from every householder on the street, but he did not reimburse the owner of the property so damaged.

Most of the streets for which setback ordinances are suggested are now predominantly residential. On a street of this character, the transition from residential to business takes a long period of time. As things are now, a few scattered owners, say one in a block, build stores or garages out to the present property lines. We say that such owners should be compelled to leave from fifteen to thirty feet in front of their store or other business. Our critics say this is taking property without compensation. However if "A" is allowed to build to the street line, he immediately depreciates the residential value of his neighbors, "B" and "C", on either side, yet the neighbor cannot well expect to make commercial use of his property for years. Therefore the present system allows the first owner in a block who builds a business building to take value from all other owners without compensating them. The result is that many business locations are built up years before they are needed, simply to get the advantage of being the first store or garage in a given neighborhood.

It is an open question whether the increase in value in the favored business sections of Sandy Boulevard is very much greater than the loss which has been sustained by other property owners

due to the encroachments of business. There are several places on Sandy Boulevard where a setback ordinance of thirty feet enacted in 1910 would have saved a large sum for the property owner who still owns a residence on that street. His own house is overshadowed and depreciated by a garage or store. He is also about to be assessed to pay for cutting off that neighbor's building. If the setback had been enacted in 1910 his residence would still be attractive and when a widening came up, he would pay only for the ground area taken and not for changes to improvements.

This protection to the one who does not use his property for business at once, is a point that seems to be ignored by nearly all who consider setback ordinances. Yet the amount of property falling in the class needing protection is many times as great as the portion which is built up for commercial use. There is roughly four percent of the frontage of Sandy Boulevard in business at present. Fremont Street, Interstate Avenue, Powell Valley Road, Foster Road, East 17th Street, East 52nd Street, Sixth Street, and West Clay Street, are streets which today are where Sandy Boulevard was fifteen years ago.

There are some few cases where the property facing a proposed setback line is fifty feet deep or even less. This is a serious problem but it is after all only bringing up now what must come up in a more violent form in the future. Surely if Portland is to have the growth which even the most pessimistic are willing to concede to her, there can be no argument as to the eventual certainty of every widening which has been planned for in the Commission Report. This means that in the natural course of events the owner of a lot fifty feet deep would be allowed to build an expensive commercial building which the rest of the street and district must buy at a good figure at some date in the comparatively near future.

The setback ordinance has simply brought a future acute condition into the present. Probably there are many such parcels of property which should be acquired at once. But if street extension proceedings on an "installment plan" were to be instituted to the extent of acquiring all such parcels where the portion taken is over thirty percent of the entire tract, the amount that would be spent plus high interest would be far less than the final cost of such parcels under regulation proceedings. To summarize, we contend that in the great majority of cases the proposed setbacks would be a protection to the property owners on a given street. In some few cases of shallow lots it works a hardship which must be recompensed some day, and the sooner, the less costly.

In the January issue of the American City Magazine, there is an article by W. H. Tiedeman, Asst. City Engineer of Seattle, Washington, who has recently made an investigation of street widths in most of the major cities of Europe and America. Mr. Tiedeman makes the statement that nearly all cities of three-quarter million inhabitants have found their streets inadequate, and that he believes that when other cities grow to the three-quarter million point, they also will find their thoroughfares inadequate.

"New cities such as ours did not grow compactly. Street car transportation and low rates of fare brought large outlying attractive areas into competition. It is natural that people should select slightly districts between five and eight miles out, if the prices for the property suit their means better and transportation service is good. That no doubt accounts for the scattered development of American cities. This condition naturally develops thoroughfares of extreme importance and of considerable potential real estate value. For many years, however, the conversion of all the frontage on such streets to business uses must be slow and disconcerting to the owners. As far as such owners are concerned the present street widths are sufficient, and they would oppose any immediate expenditure for future needs. However a review of the street widening programs of American cities proves that 70 and 80 foot streets will not long suffice. The problem then becomes one of making some provision for the future without premature expenditure.

"Our European parent cities, long ago, and inadvertently, showed us a way out of the dilemma. In common with the failings of other humans, we youngsters did not believe in the good example and ignored it. Setback requirements enforced for many years in England and Germany are our salvation today. When a street is already inadequate, immediate operation by way of eminent domain alone can give relief. Where the need is not immediate but will be acute in ten or fifteen years, a setback ordinance paves the way for such future widening without involving any expense at present, and that is a welcome fact along sparsely settled and already over-assessed thoroughfares. Such ordinances are operating already in Los Angeles and in Cleveland, and permit only of the erection of the first story of a building out to the present street margin."

In connection with this article is an interesting set of cross-sections of famous streets. These sections show that although modern traffic problems are not so acute in these old-world cities as in our American cities, nevertheless they have established more wide streets than we have in this country. Of twenty-three streets wider than 120 feet, nine are in the United States. The following statements are the keynotes of an address given before the National Recreational Congress at their October 7, 1927 meeting, held in Memphis, Tenn., by the president of the National Association of Real Estate Boards.

"Our organization is dedicated to bringing about a better utilization of the land resources of our country so as to bring out of that great, God-given commodity--land--the fullest opportunities for the benefit of humanity. So the slogan of our City Planning Committee is, "Building Better Cities for People to live in." . . .

"I have been impressed with the fact that in the early days of America, the men who laid out our cities originally were great city planners in many instances. In Boston they preserved that great Common as a public space. The little city of Lexington has its Green in the center of the city. In Memphis there is a little square in the heart of the city. . . I want to comment on the fact that the original plan of Louisville made in 1786 provided for fifteen solid blocks reaching from one end of the city to the other for park space. But it was only a few years later that some short-sighted city council sold off fourteen of those blocks for private buildings. . .

"It seems to me as I have studied this question that at the beginning our people were sound on this question of city planning; that they appreciated the importance of open spaces in those days when the cities were small, but that later we went through a sort of dark age and for nearly one hundred years nobody gave much thought to city planning. . .

"It was my privilege the other day to be in Boston and see a plat of a subdivision up there which has been planned by Olmsted Brothers. There are golf courses, a riding academy, bridle paths, a polo field, ten tennis courts, a yacht harbor, casino, swimming pool, piers cut into the bay, croquet grounds, and places for quoits. It goes without saying that the promoter of that subdivision is going to capitalize on all those things and is going to charge for the remaining land at an added price that will recover the part that he is setting aside for public use."

The class of development herein described has not yet reached Portland. However it will, just as every other modern invention or change in mode of life finally spreads over all America. That is one of the great reasons that America is the best place on earth to live in although it has only started to be what it will be some day.

Just what does it mean when Jones buys that lot in Olmsted's new super-Addition to Chelsea? He pays \$3,000 for a lot that on first glance is worth \$1500. He puts \$1500 into company ownership of all those recreational facilities and he considers it a wise investment. In a few years more there will be chances to buy just such homesites near Portland. If its good business to buy such property, why would it not be good business to provide such recreational facilities in districts where no such provision had been made in the beginning? In such places these parks should be paid for by district assessments. There is an intimate relation between recreational area and street area. The city which has a niggardly policy in regard to parks will be likely to be short-sighted in regard to streets. A great deal of the value of parks and such open spaces is in the feeling of composure and lessened nerve strain which they bring to the person who passes through such districts.

In a like manner there is a value to wide streets with beautiful plantings which cannot be expressed in money but which can be definitely felt by any one who has come under their influence. It is said that tourists have spent in Paris many times the original cost of her pretentious boulevards. Who can say just how much of Paris's attraction lies in those same boulevards? Very wide streets in residential districts give room for truly beautiful arrangements of trees and driveways. If traffic conditions never need the width for pavement, the area is there awaiting development. Meantime it is a permanently worthwhile investment in beauty. Wide streets and ample grounds are a sort of insurance against obsolescence for the residential district.

An old fashioned house on a wide street with a generous yard is still desirable residence property. The same house on a narrow street with no trees to veil the ornaments of a bygone day is decidedly an eyesore and generally unrentable at a figure to show any profit to its owner. In 1957 the house of today will be just as much of a "white elephant" as the house of 1897 is today. Large districts of now thoroughly modern homes crowded on narrow streets and fifty foot lots will be a drug on the market where a little more spacious arrangement would have kept them livable for four or five generations.

Find a charming New England village with houses a hundred and fifty years old still attractive homes for commuters from the nearby cities. The street in front is arched with elms, themselves a century old. Picture a Rose City street sixty feet wide, the houses perhaps twelve feet apart and twenty feet from the sidewalk, in fifty years. It is a line of old houses not roomy enough to allow spreading trees and shrubbery to hide the superannuated shells.

Whether the city grows or whether it stands still, by 1957 the average Portland home will be a sad commentary on the attempt to crowd five homes on land that was intended for two.

This month we celebrate Washington's birthday. It should be a holiday of particular interest to city planners. George Washington was directly responsible for the masterly planning which l'Enfant did at Washington, D. C., one of the most far-sighted plans that the world has witnessed. Unfortunately the plans which were made for Washington, the capitol city, were not followed in their entirety. The 'dark ages', mentioned elsewhere in this letter set in, and "practical" people with their customary short vision allowed part of the national reservation to lapse.

The way which had been blazed by l'Enfant and Washington, was not followed in later additions to the platted city. It was because Washington had influenced l'Enfant to come to America to work on the layout of Washington, D. C. that the brothers l'Enfant were asked to make the original plans for Buffalo and Detroit, plans which were also allowed to fall short of fruition by the citizens of the next generation following the short age of idealism which initiated the American nation.

APR 2 1928

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION OF PORTLAND, OREGON

FORM PC-1
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1928, March

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THE PLAN-IT March, 1928

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In the early part of March, the author of the Plan-It, drove a car across the Columbia basin over the Continental Divide to Helena, Montana. This was his second passage over the same route in four years. Two changes, both somewhat interesting to regional or city planners were apparent. Every little town of a score of families, where the main buildings are an elevator, a general store, a garage, and a school, has somewhere on its outskirts, a golf course built in the last four years. The "greens" are generally smooth areas of sand or plain earth. The "rough" is hardly different from the fairways but the beginning of a community play-area is there.

This is the significant fact. Even in these small farm communities there is growing a realization that play is an actual necessity and that public provision for recreation must be made. The preparation of nine holes of sage brush golf at a central Washington wheat station is as much evidence of public spirit as the passing of a three million dollar bond issue for parks and playgrounds would be in Portland. It is this growing demand for play area that will probably cause some of us today to be called "short-sighted" by our immediate descendants because we did not provide the grounds when they could have been obtained cheaply, even as we ourselves are wont to complain at the lack of vision of our fathers who did not provide fifty years ago the streets that we need today.

Equally indicative of progress is the condition of roads in the mountains, the efforts that are made to keep snow plowed out and to make year-round use of these roads possible. Tourists are not plentiful in winter but there are a few. Each year there are more of them. Each year there are more local cars to use the roads, hence more demand for better road service. Only a few years ago no one would have dared to attempt to drive a car over the Rocky Mountains in the dead of winter. This winter it could be done, but with difficulty. In a few more years there will be well-improved roads where today there are trails. Passable roads in these back districts means an added burden of traffic for the metropolitan centers. The hinter-lands are rapidly making the improvements that are needed. It is imperative that the regions immediately surrounding the large cities be planned and rebuilt to fit the new conditions in a proportionately far-sighted manner.

City planning is needed and must be done but regional plans for these districts surrounding the larger cities will mean the difference between convenience and congestion in the next few years. Now that a great portion of the traveling is being done with automobiles, it becomes more and more necessary to provide convenient highways to by-pass the congestion points such as business centers. Tourists as a rule do not care to pass through the congested portion of a city--at least they would welcome a possible choice of routes through these cities, a chance to by-pass the congestion and to pass directly through to the main highway beyond the city limits. In many cases this means a widening and extension of existing city streets. Sometimes all that is needed is an intelligent system of signs directing the traveler just how to escape the central congestion without going a round-about route.

The highway system of the country may be said to be today about where the railroad system was forty or fifty years ago. At that time most of the cities had been connected up by single tracks, often barely passable, subject to "slow orders" on account of any rain or blizzard. Terminal facilities were of the most primitive sort. Interchange and belt lines about the cities were unheard of. All these improvements of the skeleton railroads of the seventies and eighties have been forced upon the railroads of today by the pressure of increasing traffic. There are hundreds of instances where the observer of today wonders why even better use of natural advantages was not made by the pioneer railway builders, but he knows that the pioneer did not dream of the vast tonnage so soon to be poured over his primitive line of rails.

However, they who are faced with the problem of expanding the highway and street system, making it suitable to modern traffic, should try to make use of the experience these railway builders. They should make fewer mistakes than the railroaders did. They should have a more daring vision of the future. It is the especial task of city and regional planners to provide the terminal and belt line facilities of the highway system of America. Let them be sure that they make a better solution of the highway problem than the railways did of the railway tangle, for the highway and street designer has had nearly half a century of costly instruction.

AN AUTOMOBILE CITY

The February number of the American City Magazine contains a description of the new city of Radburn which is to be built about $17\frac{1}{2}$ miles from New York City in northern New Jersey. It is to be a community designed for the use of the auto and embodies radical departures from the present horse vehicle layout which all cities cling to, though the horse has ceased to be an important factor in city life. The blocks, if they might be so called, are about eighty acres in area, being nearly a half mile long and over a quarter of a mile wide. There will be dwellings for about six hundred families in each block. The houses will have an automobile front on short dead end streets opening into the wide through streets which surround the blocks. The opposite

side of the house faces a garden which connects by foot paths with the public park and recreation ground occupying the center of the block. By this means every person in the block has a direct walk to the school and community center without crossing a single lane of auto traffic. Houses will not be subjected to the noise and stench of passing cars. The only cars coming into the dead end streets are those having business there.

This town is being built by the City Housing Corporation, a limited dividend company. It is an illustration of the Plan-It's often repeated statement that most of our cities are still horse-minded and that a modern city should be built to fit modern transportation devices. It is possible that in the comparatively near future residence districts of such a plan will surround the main business cities of the nation and that the present gridiron residence sections will become dead stock on the real estate market.

THE TAX DOLLAR AGAIN

Every so often someone starts a lot of talk, mostly of a complaining nature, about the tax dollar. The latest local effort in that direction is one of those pies cut up in an unnatural manner showing how the dollar that we spend with the genial sheriff is passed out to the various activities of the county, city, and state. It also shows how large a proportion of that dollar is not subject to the supervision of the Tax Conservation Commission. The implied thought seems to be that since only sixty cents out of the dollar is subject to a double scrutiny, the other forty cents is a matter of dire neglect and probably of woeful extravagance.

There is no intention here to quarrel with any of these statements or implications. The point that seems to be overlooked by all these tax experts and economic wizards, is that the tax is after all such a small part of the total expenditure of the public that it really isn't worth making such a lot of fuss about. According to an estimate made by the office of the City Planning Commission, the average home-owner in Portland pays a tax of about \$66.00 per year on the house in which he lives. If he has other property, that other property is generally paying a profit over and above taxes. The indirect tax which the home-owner pays is very hard to determine for the ultimate consumer must pay it all and if the electric light companies as they now assure us pay a little less than two million per year in tax, then those millions are in Mr. Householder's light bill and could fairly be taken from the light bill and added to the tax bill.

In the same way part of his grocery bill and fuel bill and every other bill is tax. It would require exhaustive study to determine just what it does cost the average family for its share of the public service which is paid for by the tax. If the total tax of the city is considered as paid by the approximately 75 thousand homes of the city, then the average household pays a tax, direct and indirect, of about \$210 per year, or about \$18.00 per month. For this \$210.00, the things Mr. Householder receives are much greater

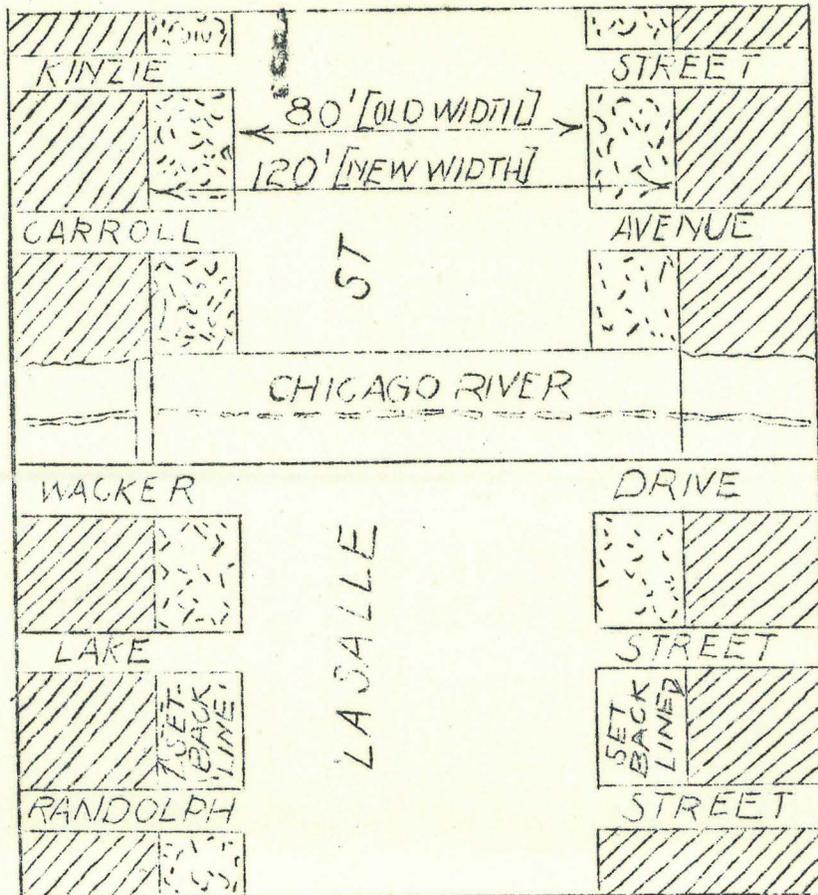
than for any other equal investment that he makes. He has the privilege of sending his children to school and college. The educational system uses almost one-third of the tax dollar. Try to replace it with private schools and see how much it would cost. He has the recreation furnished by the parks and highways--truly not a fraction of what they should be, but compare say a fourth of the tax bill, or \$50.00 spent in admission to shows, or dances, or other paid admission recreation to what we each of us receive from public recreation and it is at once apparent that the tax dollar has all the advantage. Police and fire protection, street cleaning, and the keeping of public records, are of almost incalculable value. They come out of that tax dollar.

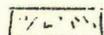
The nub of the question is that after all taxes are paid to keep up our greatest co-operative effort, inefficient as much of the spending may be, by its constitution it must be able to pay immeasurably greater returns than activities which lack this co-operative feature. If people who are forever finding fault with the spending of the tax dollar would try as hard to find what is wrong with the spending of the rest of our dollars, their service to society would be infinitely more valuable.

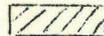
Of course the multitude of articles on taxes and public expenditures does have the effect of keeping public officials up to the mark and does increase their efficiency, but really the public servant as a class does more for his money and is a more efficient spender of the money entrusted to him than the leaders of the private business world.

One of the commonest complaints is based on the super-numerous city, county, or state employees. A citizen goes into a public office and sees a clerk or other employee with his "nose off the grindstone." The citizen immediately has a lot to say about inefficiency of "tax-eaters," etc. Did that citizen ever complain of the fact that there are in Portland today easily three times as many gas stations as are needed; that the auto drivers of the city are paying two-thirds of the "gas station" employees of the city to loaf on the job. Many other forms of business are just as inefficient but there is no habitual complaint over the part of the gas dollar or the grocery dollar or the jewelry dollar or the clothing dollar which is wasted.

Perhaps a little more fair-minded investigation of such leads might result in increasing the number of tax dollars and greatly increasing the amount of service that the public could get out of those tax dollars. Right now the Portland Metropolitan district could well afford to invest a few million such tax dollars in some wider rights-of-way for arterial highways and for some future park areas.



 PROPERTY ACQUIRED FOR WIDENING

 BUILDINGS

PREPARE FOR FUTURE

Cities which do not now need wide avenues can prepare for the future by reserving adequate facilities. This drawing shows a street widening project under way in Chicago.

An ordinance passed a number of years ago by the City Council resulted in the requirement that all new buildings on several blocks of LaSalle Street be set back 20 feet behind the old building line. This made it unnecessary, when widening recently started, for the city to demolish or tear the fronts from any buildings erected since that time, since all these new buildings were built to front on the widened street.

--Chart by courtesy of Universal Portland Cement Co.

APR 28 1928

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION OF PORTLAND, OREGON

FORM PC-1

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9P83Pl
1928-april

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THE PLAN-IT
APRIL, 1928

OREGON
COLLECTION

There are two articles in the February issue of the American City Magazine showing the trend of design for cities and emphasizing the Plan-It's oft reiterated statement that we are still building our cities to fit the horse, though the horse as a factor of modern life is as important as the tallow candle.

One describes the findings of the Regional Planning Department of Milwaukee County, Wisconsin. These findings almost exactly corroborate the conclusion of the Chicago Regional Planning Association that fifty feet of business frontage is correct for each hundred population. The Milwaukee organization has developed a plan for the necessary business district on the arterial highway. This, which might be called a business nucleus, is to be a short section having a through traffic street in the center separated on either side from a local business street by a narrow parked strip. Diagonal parking is permitted in these local business streets. They become bays off the main arteries of traffic.

It is the intention to allow business to develop in these centers but not along the artery connecting them. Whenever there is a demand for more business frontage the portions of the artery which have been zoned for residential use would be expected to establish similar street arrangements as a condition of changing the use of their property. This is a revolutionary plan of platting, an actual attempt to make a street which is adapted to the use of the automobile.

This and the New Jersey development referred to in last month's Plan-It are examples of a condition that we have been talking of since we started this publication. Many people do not realize the change which has been brought about by the universal use of the auto. Practically no actual constructive efforts to change the plan of our cities and dwellings to fit the auto have been made. A new method of transportation demands a decided change in the plan of streets and houses. When all street traffic was slow and mostly local in character the gridiron system of street layout was really the most adaptable to the traffic problem of that time.

However today a large share of street traffic is non-local. It is long-distance transport taking the place of trains or street cars. This class of traffic needs highways adapted to

its needs and those highways are seldom desirable residence streets. Therefore the idea of dead-end residence streets opening off these arterial streets is liable to become very popular.

GRADE SEPARATION

The Plan-It has consistently held that traffic regulation is a matter of providing adequate facilities for the flow of traffic and is not a matter of regulation by laws and rules. Examples that this view is being taken by a growing number of communities and the extent to which they are beginning to spend their money to solve the traffic problem by grade separation are to be seen in the March number of the American City.

o o o

The Westchester County Park Commission has jurisdiction over all the highways of Westchester County, New York, the county called the vestibule of New York City. This Commission has proposed 165 grade separations for the principal highway intersections of the county and they have constructed 32 of them.

o o o

The grade separation committee of the Chicago Association of Commerce has also prepared a design for a grade separation serving a standard rectangular block intersection. This is an elaborate over and under structure. Cook County has agreed to build one the present year, and is studying other methods and intersections with a view to extending the number of two-level crossings later. There is also a description of a proposed super-highway to be built from the heart of Chicago to the northwest limits of the city, a distance of ten miles. The highway will be 210 feet wide with no cross traffic or left hand turn in the entire length. It will cost sixty million dollars. It will reduce the travel time from the northwest corner of Chicago to the heart of the city from twenty to forty minutes. The cost of sixty millions will be--thirty-eight millions for construction and twenty-two millions for land and building damages.

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In a report of the Fairmount Park Association of Philadelphia, this statement is made, "It has been remarked that under-planning is the universal rule and over-planning, the unheard of exception in the building of cities. Fifty years from now a width of 150 feet for each of the traffic arteries on the banks of the Schuylkill will be considered as too narrow, but we recommend that that width be laid out now and that additional areas on each side for immediate use for landscaping be obtained whenever possible, to be used hereafter, if necessary for traffic purposes."

Surely Portland has as much right to expect an increased traffic as Philadelphia, and just as surely the recommendations of the Planning Commission which some people are inclined to criticize as being a little too visionary, are in reality decidedly conservative. The widths which have been recommended for the

various arteries of the city are not expected to give magnificent parks and beautiful drives. They are the minimum widths to allow the traffic of 1970 to circulate with the maximum amount of bearable inconvenience. They are just as narrow as they could be and be allowed by the citizens of that day. Every indication of the future growth of traffic has been heavily discounted in making these plans. And it is instances like this one in Philadelphia or the one in Chicago mentioned in that last Plan-It, which prove that these are facts and not promoter's dreams.

ANOTHER PROBLEM FOR CITY PLANNERS

Beginning in the eighties with sand courts and outdoor gymnasiums for children in the Charlesbank area of Boston, the so-called playground movement for children expanded into the recreation movement comprehending all-age groups in the two succeeding decades. This expansion had a very important effect on the feeling of the people in regard to their parks. It was natural that with their growing demands for public areas and public supervisory service, they should turn to the only public grounds which then existed and to those whose duty it was to administer these grounds. This caused an evolution of the true park with its beauties of nature and man, kept as a thing to delight the eye and thus effect recreation by contemplation, into the playfield, the municipal golf links and all the kindred activities of the present park departments of the modern city.

The administrator whose only human contact had been the design of a "keep off the grass" sign, the sublimated public gardner became the playground director, the trained leader of the recreational portion of the public's time. The profession of playground director being one of the most intimately human in its contacts, demands a more adaptable personality than regular teaching. Coincident with this change in demands upon parks came a realization that many parks did not pay worthwhile dividends to the public, that the recreation furnished was entirely too costly, because of great capital expenditures for small service; and this realization grew a demand that our parks should give a more readily appreciable service to their communities.

Man is essentially an outdoor animal. As far as we know at present he has always been found in comparatively open country. The prevalence of sun worship in primitive religions is proof of the predominating influence which this outdoor environment has had on the evolution of the race. However in the last century man has started to become to a very large extent a dweller in houses, who works and lives entirely within doors, and as such he is beginning to show the weakening influence of the lack of sunlight.

The history of the race is a story of civilization bred in cities and overrun by barbarians reared in the open. Today we have no barbarians left to overturn our civilization, but we are threatened with internal decay which may end our culture and

leave no conquering barbarians to pick up the smoky torch of progress, to trim the wick and replenish the oil and carry the renewed flame to greater heights than ever before.

Druggists of today say that the six months' sale of codliver oil--"liquid sunshine"--is greater than in ten years before the war. Codliver oil is a good substitute, but it's only a substitute for sunshine. If this culture of ours is to persist and carry on, there must be a renaissance of the worship of the body as the true temple of the soul. We must give men, women, and especially children, an increasing measure of leisure time for recreation. We must provide the facilities for the spending of all that leisure in the open air, absorbing the life-giving sunshine.

The great part that parks and playgrounds are to play in this effort to preserve the virility of the race is just beginning to be acknowledged by city planners and kindred authorities. Thus it seems that the city planning movement is about to enter on a third step before either of the first two is completed.

The nineties saw a movement called the "city beautiful," aimed to rescue our cities from the slough of ugliness into which utilitarianism seemed to be dragging them. This was followed by city planning as a solution of the traffic tangle born of the automobile. Neither of these tasks is finished. The proposition has only been stated. It is yet to be demonstrated. Now comes the third phase--the idea of constructive provision of recreational area as a means of safeguarding the vitality of the race. Doubtless the next few years will see this latest burden on the city planner become the greatest reason for the existence of such commissions.

Public health and sanity are becoming inextricably interwoven with the planning of our cities. The provision of recreation space for the communities is becoming as vital as the provision of traffic space. The city planning commission has been a potent influence in providing a zoning ordinance for this city. This ordinance is helping to assure a more beautiful city. The major traffic street plan when adopted will do much to solve the problems of traffic congestion. A comprehensive park and recreation area plan for the metropolitan district of Portland would be the means of guarding the city's health and vigor.

JUN 2 1928

FORM PC-1

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1928, MayCITY PLANNING COMMISSION
OF PORTLAND, OREGON

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MAY, 1928THE CITY PLAN

Recently some old plans and maps pertaining to the Bennett Plan of 1912, were unearthed in the City Hall. It is interesting to see the proposals that have been made at various past times for a reformation of the street system of Portland. How much effort has been put into devising proposals to give Portland a few wide and imposing streets! How far any actual construction has always fallen short of the projected plans!

There is a fairly large and decidedly influential body of citizens who are prone to criticise all plans of the least vision or imagination on the score that, "It's better to wait until the city of a million or more is here and let them provide their own wide streets and parks. It will be easier for the people of 1980 to pay the high price of that day than it is for us to pay the present price."

A few instances of what has happened in other cities where "business methods" have prevailed over visionary plans, might be illustrative of just how much can be lost by trying to save at the wrong time. In 1875, it was proposed to widen Grand Avenue, St. Louis, at a cost of \$5,000. In 1925, a less extensive widening was being done at a cost of $1\frac{1}{2}$ millions. What would have cost \$5,000 in 1875 would cost five million dollars in 1925. In Los Angeles there is a jog at Ninth and Figuereroa. Twenty years ago this could have been eliminated at a cost of \$1,000 but 'dollars and cents business judgment' said, "No", and today it is about to be done at a cost of over nine hundred thousand dollars. These are extreme cases, but scores as extreme can be cited and hundreds where good banking interest has been forfeited.

There are some fundamental principles of building that we think can hardly be gainsaid. First, nothing can be built without a plan. That is, nothing as complex as a modern building, or machine, or city. The buildings of the past, without plumbing, or heat, or wires, could grow as the great cathedrals grew, with very little plan. So could the city of the middle ages. It had no transport save ox-carts, and men's own bodies, no sewers, no lights, nothing but huddled houses. However, a building of today must be worked out in infinite detail on paper before the first shovel is lifted for its construction, or else the story of its construction is a record of "build in and tear out." Just so must the modern city be planned instead of allowed to grow. That there is vital need of a city plan is agreed by almost all of us. What to do with the plan, is the place where the argument starts.

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The next principle is not so well understood. No paper designation of a certain system of streets as arteries of a city will make the streets so designated, become arteries. Streets become arteries of travel because of physical conditions and if they are so because of the establishment of an ordinance, then just as easily they can cease to be so by the enactment of another ordinance. But the growth of the city, the public interest demands, that certain arteries be established and that they shall continue to be the main routes of travel through the city.

There must be a physical reason for these streets to be used as the arteries of the city. They must be more direct and wide, more easily traversed than other routes between the same centers. This means that a city plan to really affect the growth of a city must pick out some arterial streets and arrange to make them stand out as the arteries of the city. A plan that simply designates routes about a city where there are already many routes equally inefficient--a plan that merely designates some one of several equally possible streets as the major artery--a plan that does not provide for actual physical change in some of these routes to make them the main arteries of the city, is only a beautiful dream.

Portland has had several such dreams. They have passed on and the city is still a nightmare as far as adaptation to modern transportation devices is concerned. It is as easy to direct the flow of water through parallel canals in alluvial earth as to direct the growth of a "checker-board city" where all the streets are the same width. Streets should be designed for the load they are to carry, even as irrigation or drainage ditches are designed for the water they are to carry. A city must have certain arterial streets. If these are not emphasized by width and alignment which will insure their pre-eminent importance as the city grows, they will lose that place to other streets. Such a loss, although of benefit to the property-holder on the second street, is an actual loss to the city and in the interests of the general public should be prevented.

As outlined in the report now receiving consideration by the people of Portland, a large number of streets have been suggested as the major arteries of the city. It was not the intention of the City Planning Commission to urge the immediate widening and improvement of all these streets, but to point out what seem to be the indispensable requirements of a rapidly developing city. The recommendations of the Commission are conservative, and much less ambitious, than the plans now being advanced for other cities of less possible growth. That there could be any appreciable reduction in the proposed Portland plan seems quite improbable to any one who believes in the future of Portland.

There are numerous eighty foot streets in downtown Portland. They are so crowded that there is no comfort or convenience in doing business upon them even now. The sidewalks are too narrow for our city of 350 thousand and a dozen or so modern buildings. What will be the condition with a population twice, or three times as great?

True, downtown Portland has much more street area compared to building area than the average city but the fact that there is no one of these streets wide enough to take a position as the main street and maintain that position has perhaps been a contributing factor to the movement of our business district, which being more erratic than in other cities has been a source of loss to property owners as a body. More and more students of traffic and city planning are coming to the idea of wide streets and large blocks with dead-end streets inside the blocks for the residence portion of cities. These main streets are to serve the future city as the street railways served the city of a generation ago. There is as much reason for having all streets the same width as there would have been for a street car on every street.

RECREATIONAL AREAS

No phase of modern city planning is more vitally important to the future of our cities than the provision of recreational areas. The growth of the cities which has come about in the past generation or two, has to a large extent been provided for by some form of multiple dwelling. These new types of homes erected by investors trying to get the greatest possible return from the ground area which they control and forced by competition to increase the number of people per acre in order to decrease the per capita cost of housing, are tending to eliminate the old-fashioned single family dwelling with its large yard from American cities.

Portland, Oregon, is more fortunate than many eastern cities because in this city of homes we still have a large percentage of single family houses with their yards furnishing recreation for young and old, but the increasing number of apartments, the growing use of the streets for fast automobile traffic, precluding the use of these streets as a playground by the children, makes it necessary for Portland to consider the problem of recreational area more seriously.

Those who are studying the increase in auto registration are trying to devine its effect upon the streets of our future. They are certain that we must revamp these horse and buggy streets to fit the auto, they believe that we must obtain by some means a restriction of the use of the land which will insure proper places for recreation for the crowded inhabitants of our city.

The larger the city grows, the more intense is the per acre population. The more intense the per acre population, the more necessary the reservation of some of these acres for recreational purposes. A municipality is given the power to sell bonds, to go into debt for such projects, a method whereby the citizen of the future may be able to enjoy the benefits of the foresight of the citizen of today. We have betrayed our trust, we have been false to generations yet unborn, when we refuse to make use of this power to buy land now for future parks and playgrounds.

WHAT PORTLAND BUILDS RIGHT, BUILDS PORTLAND

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 1928-june

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION OF PORTLAND, OREGON

JUN 30 1928

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THE PLAN-IT
 JUNE 1928

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CONSERVATISM AND VISION

In the record of a discussion of vehicle tunnel operation, held before the American Society of Civil Engineers less than ten years ago, there may be found an interesting contrast between engineering foresight and the subsequent facts. A speaker who had unusually complete knowledge of local problems estimated the capacity of a pair of two-line tunnels, carrying traffic at 3 and 9 miles per hour respectively for the slow and the fast line, at some 40,000 vehicles in twelve hours. This, he added, "is five times the traffic required at their completion and would be ample for the traffic in 1942." But last year, when the Holland tunnels were opened, the speed of traffic almost at once adjusted itself to about 20 and 35 miles per hour--as against the engineer's prediction of 3 and 9.

The traffic volume began with a one-day figure of about 50,000 and soon settled to an average of about 20,000 against the 8,000 foreseen. Thus it appears that the judgment of eight years previous proved to be absurdly inadequate. In part, no doubt, this is because the forecast was intentionally conservative; the engineer notoriously tends this way, and by the very necessities of his work in planning improvements he must be so, since overoptimistic forecasts would jeopardize the soundness of large expenditures. But it is well worth considering whether conservatism is not sometimes out of place.

In foreseeing the future it is possible to err as gravely through inadequate vision as through exaggerated expectation. Lack of vision is frequently charged to engineers as a fault, and it may often prove a fatal fault. The prime mission of the engineer is to foresee truly, to appraise future happenings neither too high nor too low, but with precision. Admitting the difficulty of maintaining sound conservatism in harmony with hopeful vision, we are bound to recognize that the engineer's training and career urge him so steadily toward conservatism that he is likely always to be in need of cultivating vision. Imagination is a faculty which the engineer needs as much as any other man; perhaps more.

--Engineering News-Record

The proposed major traffic street plan, published by the City Planning Commission about four months ago has been the subject of constructive criticism on the part of the general public. These criticisms have been a powerful aid in the deliberations of the Planning Commission as to further action. Sooner or later we must construct a system of wide and usable arteries for this city. We shall be compelled by the

pressure of traffic to rebuild our "horse and buggy streets" to fit the auto. Changes come about quickly in these days of rapid transportation. Property values are apt to rise so fast that the rise in values due to some change in the traffic conditions of the city will repay the cost of the improvements that caused the rise in a much shorter time than the life of a municipal bond issue.

In the past there was much truth to the objection, often raised to extensive programs of street widenings and improvements, that it was putting the present in debt for the benefit of the future. Today, due to the rapidity of growth of the modern city, this objection has been largely overcome. Increases come so rapidly that the one who pays is almost sure to be the one who reaps the reward.

Men who are studying the trend of growth of our nation are almost unanimous in their predictions of the development which is imminent for the Pacific Northwest. Prof. J. Russell Smith, the economist and geographic student of Columbia University, Roger Babson, the statistical expert, and other such authorities, unite in predicting this increase for the cities of the Pacific Northwest. The time for Portland to make some definite plans for that growth is right now. Failure to make some actual constructive preparation for being a city three or four times its present size, is not being conservative. It is simply neglecting an opportunity.

The only real criticism that seems to be directed at the proposed plan is the matter of street widths. Every so often some one says, "Why make this street, or that street, more than eighty feet wide?" In other words, why not just say that Sandy Boulevard is an artery as it is and that it will continue to be so. That is not planning any thing. To plan is to prepare to build. The narrow street we already have. If it is all we will ever need then there is no need of a plan. The city is built. All we need is to persuade a million people to come and live in it.

Just as an example of what is being done in other places, the Planning Commission has just received a copy of the proposed major street report of the city of New Orleans. Now New Orleans is only a little larger than Portland, having an estimated population of 424 thousand, against our estimate of 357 thousand. Our river positions are very similar. New Orleans has the richest hinterland, but Portland has the greatest foreign trade area in front of her gates. There is little doubt that Portland has much the greater possibilities of future growth.

Plans are liable to be the work of men who see visions so we can't be too much influenced by them, but the thing that catches the attention in this plan is not its many proposed changes to very wide streets but the great number of streets which are already wider than any that we have proposed for Portland. There are about 185 miles of streets considered as major streets in New Orleans. 125 miles of these streets are deemed wide enough. 40 miles are to be widened and 20 miles of extensions are proposed. In the present width we find street after street with widths of 107 to 186 feet, and even as wide as 724 feet. Many streets having a present width of 80 or 85 feet are to be widened

to 104 or 128. Dozens of very narrow, 49 foot streets, are also to be changed to 128 feet.

This is a report which has been endorsed in principle by resolution of the New Orleans Commission Council. When the further fact to the great difference in quality of population in favor of Portland, New Orleans, being about one-third colored, and not quite so liable to own automobiles as our western people are, it seems that our plan is a little too conservative.

OVERTAXING THE EYES

In the daily more obtrusive question of making road traffic safer, (or less dangerous) the increasing tax on the vision and attention of the driver is coming to be a serious matter. Are we making the eyes responsible for an undue proportion of road safety?

There is a limit to the burden that can be put upon a single sense. Light signals, by day and by night, have multiplied so much that they monopolize the eyes of the man at the wheel. Heavy additional demands are put upon them by blind corners, side roads, private driveways, rough grade crossings, bad shoulders, curves of unwarned sharpness, traffic officers, and glaring headlights. This is a threatening total, quite aside from such minor distractions as guide boards and advertising signs. If we have not reached the limit of dependence on the driver's power of vision, we are very close to that limit. For a change, we have to look in the end to improved engineering in the adjustment of the road to operating requirements.

--Engineering News-Record

Such statements as these cause those who realize the gravity of the traffic problem in our cities, and who are aware of the fact that in the long run the solution of that problem means a reconstruction of our traffic ways, to think that the importance of right of way for future streets and highways can not be exaggerated. From every side we get new facts showing the imperative need of a larger area for the traffic arteries of the nation. None of the measures which are being urged for more efficient highways are hindered by wide right of way. Nearly all are dependent upon ample room for some new form of construction. The average driver, if he will but stop and analyze his reactions when he drives over an occasional stretch of wide pavement, where his safety is not so much a question of alertness, will speedily be convinced that he could well afford to pay a little more for the privilege of having more arteries of this kind.

The average car is costing the average driver so much that only a very small fraction saved on the annual cost of the car would be sufficient to finance a tremendous program of arterial street and highway reconstruction. The saving to the car driver which would result from more efficient traffic arteries is shown in many ways--the decreased wear on cars, the increased mileage of gasoline, and tires, the lessened chance of accident, and hence the lowering of the cost of insurance. All these work together to justify an expenditure for arterial construction that staggers the imagination. The first requisite of reconstruction is wide right of way. The first step in getting such right of way is the adoption

of an arterial street and highway plan with wide mapped streets and set back reservations preventing buildings in the future street areas.

In a recent report of the chief engineer of the Board of Estimate and Apportionment of the city of New York, there is a lengthy description of arcaded sidewalks in European cities. There are illustrations of such sidewalk treatment in Paris, Florence, Nice, Venice, Genoa, Bologna, Milan, and other cities of Europe and of the new Telephone building in New York. This last, a fine example of the stepped-back style of office building architecture, has an arcade on the Vesay Street front which is very attractive.

The argument is made that contrary to the usual opinion, the arcade is really a very desirable feature, giving protection from winter storms and summer sun. Instances of arcades in these European cities where they have not been forced on account of traffic needs, but are voluntary construction because the building owners find the system desirable, are shown. It is said that in places where the walk is partly under an arcade and partly in the open, the arcaded portion seems to receive the major percentage of the pedestrian traffic. Places where the arcade of one story seems to give a cramped aspect to the building are being overcome by extending the arcade through two stories.

Arcading might be a decided help to obtaining wider pavements in the business district of Portland.

JUL 31 1928

FORM PC-1

*35 R. 71 R
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1928, July

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THE PLAN-IT
JULY 1928

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THE REGIONAL PLAN

Recently the post office department extended carrier service to a large area just outside of the city boundary on the north and east. The City Planning Commission undertook to devise a house-numbering system for these districts. The streets are the usual hodge-podge resulting from the lack of a regional plan during the time when the country was being platted. One subdivider thought that the proper way to sell his land was in 100 foot by 200 foot tracts; the next one perhaps divided into 25 by 100; one made his blocks square; another made long blocks north and south; the next made long blocks east and west. Each named his streets to suit his particular fancy.

To try to fit any reasonable extension of the city house-numbering system to such a layout is practically impossible. Public utilities are forced to much extra expense to give service because it is impossible to lay out a scheme of mains or wires which is simple and direct. Such layouts are a vivid illustration of the truth that the fundamental law of the country which gives an owner the right to sell his property in any form that he can find a purchaser for it, should not apply to land which is destined to be as thickly settled as these metropolitan districts.

Wherever people dwell so closely together that it becomes practical to supply them with co-operative service such as water, electricity, gas, or telephones, the rate at which they pay for that service is dependent upon the cost of installation of the utilities. This cost of installation is largely dependent upon the arrangement of property lines. Thus it is plainly seen that the value of all the property in a large district can be depreciated by the lack of cooperation on the part of a few subdividers, and the necessity of regulation of platting becomes apparent to everyone. The damage has been done in most of the districts near Portland, but Portland is certainly growing. There is a belt just a little farther out which will be platted in the near future.

In order to obviate such mixups as now exist both within and just outside the city, a regional plan should be worked out to control all platting within a metropolitan district which should include all property within thirty or forty miles of the court house. The law creating a regional planning commission should be similar to law under which the Regional Planning Commission of Los Angeles is created. Under this act the Regional Planning Commission would have power to prepare a map of the region and it would be impossible to transfer title to any parcel of property which was mapped as future street area except by the approval of the commission.

Under existing conditions, the City Planning Commission has jurisdiction over platting within six miles of the city boundary. This is not enough. First, because the limits are not wide enough. Second, it is legally possible to evade all supervision by selling by metes and bounds. It should be possible to head off this method of selling unless the right of way left for public use conforms to the regional plan.

There is a law, or at least a maxim among designers that any thing that looks right, that violates no standard of drawing or art, is apt to be structurally and inherently good design, whereas any thing that appears awkward, that offends the eye of the beholder, is probably economically and structurally unsound. This criterion could well be applied to the planning of cities. An addition which looks wrong on paper is almost sure to be wrong on the ground. Sometimes the map looks nice and does not fit the topography, but a map full of jogs and unconformities can never produce either a beautiful or an efficient city.

"The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways, they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings."
--Nahum, II, 4.

This was written 2500 years ago by the prophet Nahum talking of the city of Nineveh. The description seems to fit the city of today. Will the city of today follow Nineveh in other respects? Is it possible that men shall leave these crowded hives of today and build themselves new homes with more space and beauty of surroundings?

Your "Bad Roads Tax" is 22.3 Cents per Gallon of
Gasoline Consumed on the Rough Highway

"Motorists of the United States pay a bad roads tax equivalent to 22.3 cents on every gallon of gasoline consumed on a poor highway, states the American Road Builders Association. It will cost that much more to consume a gallon of gasoline on poor roads than if the same car were driven on good roads, according to the Association. The figures were derived from the results of elaborate experiments conducted at Washington State College, Iowa State College, and the North Carolina State College. They are estimated for a car making ten miles to the gallon on a rough highway.

"On a basis of a speed of thirty-three miles per hour," the Washington report states, "the test shows that the cost in gasoline and tires per 1,000 miles over a certain rough road for an average four-cylinder car weighing 3,500 pounds loaded, was \$35.10. At the same speed, the cost for the same car over a very smooth improved road was only \$12.80.

"To attain the highest degree of economy for highway transportation it is essential that road-construction methods be standardized in order that roads may be built which will handle traffic at a minimum of cost. An effort is being made to standardize county road construction through a County Highway Officials' Division of the American Road Builders' Association. An important national meeting of this organization was held in Washington on May 11."
--The American City, July 1928

The amount of extra wear and depreciation caused by frequent and violent stops which are made necessary by the large number of intersections in our city streets has not been investigated. If research similar to the work done in regard to the cost of rough roads was to be

directed to the problem of reducing the cost of operation of a car in city use, it would be likely to verify the estimate that the capitalized cost of starting and stopping would more than equal the cost of building grade separations and elevated structures to enable the city traffic to flow in continuous streams. Sooner or later the auto driver is going to begin to reckon the real cost of his transportation, he will begin to make a careful analysis of the items that go to build up that cost. He will find that he has been spending billions for cars that lasted but a few years, when a few hundred millions spent for better facilities to use these cars would have doubled their period of usefulness.

The common complaint against grade separation structures and elevated streets and all such devices is their cost, but actually the motor-using public is paying the cost and is not getting the building. The cost is being absorbed to build the vast piles of wrecked autos which are to be seen all over the country. Grade separations of all sorts demand wide right of way, the first step in any reconstruction program for the streets and highways of the nation is getting room to build on. The start of that step is the establishment of city and regional plans with power to see that the plans are used. It is not altogether for our children's sakes that we should have such plans and build such streets and roads but that we ourselves may get more lasting use out of the dollars we spend for cars, and get more miles of travel out of each gallon of gas. Eventually gas consumption will be the measure of the tax contribution for all costs of arterial roads and perhaps the major street projects; then there will be more vital reasons for reducing the gas consumption as low as possible.

In a recent article on the road situation in the United States, G. S. Brown, President of the Portland Cement Association says, "There are less than eighty thousand miles of first-class paved roads in the United States, exclusive of city streets." According to the municipal index there are about fifty thousand of paved roadway. There are now registered about twenty-three million cars in the U. S. A., or about one hundred seventy-five cars for each mile. This means that if every car in the country was to form in two lines on the paved roadways of the nation, the cars would be car behind car, sixty-two feet apart, incoming and going on every paved street or road in the nation.

There will be approximately eight thousand miles of pavement built on the highways in 1928, and perhaps half as much in the towns but the auto registration will increase by nearly five millions.

"To make present highway plans solely on the basis of existing conditions without far-sighted provision for future growth is folly," continues Mr. Brown. "I would recommend purchase of one hundred twenty feet right of way for all new roads and the requisition of as much property as possible along highways already constructed. In many cases more than one main highway will be provided between given centers. The highways in the more congested centers will be paved to four and six car widths."

Surely the arterial streets of Portland should be as wide as the highways of the country.

WHAT PORTLAND BUILDS RIGHT, BUILDS PORTLAND

AUG 30 1928

*352.712

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
OF PORTLAND, OREGONP 83 pl
7 1928, Aug.MEMBERS EX-OFFICIO
GEO. L. BAKER
MAYOR
FRANK S. GRANT
CITY ATTORNEY
O. LAURGAARD
CITY ENGINEERJ. C. AINSWORTH, PRESIDENT
J. P. NEWELL, CONSULTANTC. A. MCCLURE, SECRETARY
THE BILADY HALL
1700 MARKET ST.
AUGUST 1928
WATER 628
HOUSE 60MEMBERS APPOINTED
BY THE MAYOR
J. C. AINSWORTH
HENRY E. REED
B. W. SLEEMAN
COE A. MCKENNA
JOHN A. LAING
C. W. NORTON
H. E. PLUMMER

-: PLANS WITH VISION :-

"Make no little plans. They have no magic to stir men's blood, probably will not themselves be realized. Make big plans. Aim high in hope and in work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistency. Remember that our sons and grandsons are going to do things that would stagger us. Let your watchword be, order; and your beacon be, beauty."

These words of Daniel H. Burnham, the master city builder, might be taken as the first commandment by city builders. This paragraph is an epitome of the art of city building. Portland is getting well started in an attempt to fit the streets of yesterday to the traffic of tomorrow. It would indeed be well for those upon whom rests the responsibility of deciding the guiding policy of this change to consider carefully those words of Burnham's.

ADVERTISING

The Richfield Oil Company has been granted a revocable permit to erect an electric sign on Healy Heights. This sign will be seven hundred feet long and sixty feet high. It will be one of the largest electric signs in the world, costing over \$60,000. The electric signs on the roof of the Utility Building cost over \$20,000. If business can afford to pay such sums for the abstract idea of having its name "shine before men", is it not reasonable to think that thousands of dollars of the cost of proposed street widenings on future business arteries might well be charged to advertising and know that it was money well spent?

Even factory owners of today are finding that it pays to embellish their grounds with shrubbery and flowers. No amount of paint or ornamental finish or shrubbery can give the effect of spacious design, and after all the most powerful element that the artist can handle is space or mass. Nothing can convey the idea of power and grandeur like height or bulk. There is a feeling of elation and expansion of the spirit that comes over the person who enters a room of wide proportions or passes through a street of imposing width. This has an advertising value which can not be obtained for the same investment in many other directions.

Large and airy rooms tend to give a broad and beneficent attitude to the mind. An instinctive appreciation of this fact has guided

the building of halls of congress and churches. Mean little capitols and court rooms would tend to favor the plans of small and narrow-visioned men. Much the same might be said of the streets of a city. It might well be said that a few main streets of a city laid out on a rather extravagant scale would be a wise civic expenditure for advertising value if they could not be justified in any other way. There are thus two very strong reasons for widening streets which are not used by most of the local advocates of wider streets--beauty and advertising value. The advertising value was clearly recognized at a recent meeting of the Council where the property owners of East Seventh Street went on record as being in favor of widening that street to 100 feet from Burnside to Hawthorne, "because we wish to make it the outstanding business street of the east side if not of the whole city."

From a traffic standpoint, this street has no more reason to be 100 feet wide than have a dozen other streets of the city. It should be, but so should the others. The advertising value would be no greater for East Seventh Street than for several other streets. Wide streets will perhaps be like the lighting systems which we have been installing on Portland's streets. The first one took a great deal of persuasion and was much talked about, but after that first "white way" the other streets were made white ways as a matter of self-preservation. Very much the same thing is apt to happen in regard to street widening if ever the first really wide street is built.

METROPOLITAN MOSAIC

In the August 11th issue of the Saturday Evening Post there is an article, "Metropolitan Mosaic" written by Albert W. Atwood. It is a most interesting and entertaining review of some phases of city growth, why cities grow at certain places, why they do not grow in other places, how things are done by cities as organization which no one of its constituent parts would allow in their own business, how the selfish interest of the few are continually allowed to inconvenience the many.

Some of the high points are, "What private business would tolerate the congestion in the aisles of its factories that daily fills our streets as a matter of course and yet counteracts and deadens the most splendid examples of private enterprise."

"It is true that increased population and new inventions have brought tremendous improvements and construction--highways, bridges, railroads, factories, homes, schools, parks, public utilities, and countless other necessities and conveniences of modern life. But this development has come without plan for the city as a whole, and mostly without regard to system and order. There has been planning, of course, endless planning. But nine-tenths of it has been the planning of individual owners, anxious to get the largest possible profit out of the fewest possible acres, not at all concerned in whether ten or fifteen years after they have sold their land is to be bisected by an arterial thoroughfare or a back alley."

"The city has grown like an old farmhouse, a section at a time, to meet immediate needs, without regard to unity or ultimate requirements. This modern city, this multiplex urban disorder, is comprehensible enough if we look back a moment. It has the veins of a child and the body of a leviathan. These veins, otherwise streets, are as worthy of thought as a cathedral, which should endure for centuries. They should be carefully planned and deliberately projected. In reality they are the unconscious accident and petty circumstance of village childhood. . . In New York the street beginnings can be traced to Indian trails to some extent. These lines were later modified by the wanderings of cattle and other simple needs of the early settlers, before they become frozen into their permanent mold."

Many of Portland's streets doubtless have a similar history.

"More and more we must learn to keep residential streets narrow, so that property owners and taxpayers can afford adequate width for the streets required to serve through traffic and more intensive building. . . Obviously the future will see increasing numbers of dead-end or cul-de-sac streets in residential neighborhoods. Naturally these cul-de-sacs will lead out into an arterial highway. . . Once the streets were used for walking, playing and general congregation, which is perhaps one reason we have so many of them. Now they have become almost the equivalent of railroad tracks. Thus it would appear sensible to build largely on the perimeters of land spaces leaving the interiors for safe play areas."

THERE IS TIME FOR EVERYTHING

There is a phase of the life of a city which is generally overlooked by those who try to be leaders in its development. These public-spirited citizens are wont to propose some worthy improvement, some idea that would result in a grand and beautiful and useful feature of the city structure. The recently advanced plan to widen Sixth Street to 160 feet from Burnside to the Union Depot making a formal front door for the city is a typical example.

Many times a project does not meet with instant approbation from the public. The sponsors are apt to begin immediately to hedge and "try to get half a loaf if we cant get a whole." They forget that in the life of a city a year is as an hour of their own lives, and that a delay of a year in the building of a street is as an hour's pause to talk over some future activity in their personal affairs. They quit when the battle has only started. These civic leaders have assumed a certain responsibility as well as a privilege. Let them not be too easily swerved from their purpose. The life of a city is many times the life of the individual.

WHAT PORTLAND BUILDS RIGHT, BUILDS PORTLAND

OCT 2 1928

FORM PC-1

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 6 1928, Sept.

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION OF PORTLAND, OREGON

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 CITY ATTORNEY
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 CITY ENGINEER

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 C. A. McCLURE, SECRETARY
 ROOM 418 CITY HALL
 ATWATER 4121
 HOUSE 60

MEMBERS APPOINTED
 BY THE MAYOR
 J. C. AINSWORTH
 HENRY E. REED
 B. W. SLEEMAN
 COE A. MCKENNA
 JOHN A. LAING
 C. W. NORTON
 H. E. PLUMMER

OREGON
 COLLECTION

THE PLAN-IT
 September, 1928

WHAT is a Wide Street?

The question as to what constitutes a "wide street" is again being actively discussed in Portland with an apparent tendency to assume that 80 feet is wide enough for an arterial street. We have many eighty foot streets in our business section on which it is quite apparent that neither the sidewalk nor the pavement is wide enough. Fifteen foot sidewalks are adequate for streets where most of the buildings are only three stories in height. Fifteen foot sidewalks are decidedly too narrow for ten-story buildings. Of course we have them and we must put up with them until conditions become absolutely unbearable. Then we will arcade or build second story sidewalks.

Why not provide width enough on a few of the future important streets that they can grow without bursting their bounds? As we have said before, any street where there is business on both sides needs parking space and this practically uses up at least thirty, if not thirty-two feet of the paved strip--seven feet to park in, and 8 or 9 feet as an intermittent lane to go out and in from the parked lane. In a business district, parking should be for a very short interval and this means a constant shifting of the parked vehicles. Forty feet of sidewalk (two twenty foot walks) is no more than enough for ten-story business and ten-story buildings are certainly conservative.

Thus at least seventy feet of street width is needed for business without any traffic. On an eighty foot right-of-way either the walk is sacrificed as it is in Portland, or there is room for only one lane of free traffic. If the street is 84 or 86, a lane each way can be squeezed in. An 86, or better, a 90 foot street, is therefore able to carry almost 25 per cent more traffic than an eighty foot street. Col. Waldon, the traffic expert of Detroit, is so thoroughly convinced of this condition that he recommends no widening of streets to eighty feet. He recommends 60 feet, then 86 feet, then 100 feet, as being the logical steps for street width. Even the 100 foot street gives barely room for double track street cars and one line of moving traffic in each direction next to the street cars.

Such streets as East 82nd and East Burnside, will probably be used by two lanes of fast through traffic in the center, a lane of bus and slower traffic next to the fast center lanes. The parking and intermittent traffic will use fifteen feet more on each side. This means that when traffic develops as it surely will in less than

fifteen years, 82nd Street and East Burnside Street will need at least 100 feet of right-of-way. The additional cost of 100 foot right-of-way for these streets above the cost of eighty foot right-of-way including interest will be nominal compared with the cost of making over these streets to their required width within the next few years.

Cities with less potential cause for growth and improvement are planning arterial streets 120, 150 and even wider. Surely Portland should have a few arterial streets 100 feet wide. East Burnside Street is the great axial thoroughfare for the whole east side and with the Burnside bridge and West Burnside Street, is the most important highway in the city even now, and is daily growing in importance to the whole city. East 82nd Street, due to the fact that it runs just east of Mt. Tabor and just west of Rocky Butte, is about the only possible north and south street east of 52nd and west of Craig Road or 102nd. This is a belt nearly three miles in width.

Portland has just opened to use her one wide arterial street. Interstate Avenue has had a long and checkered history and has lain dormant for many years. Would any one suggest to-day, that it be cut down to eighty feet? East Burnside and 82nd Streets are much more important to the Portland of the future than Interstate is to-day.

Mr. O'Shaughnessy, city engineer of San Francisco, says that city is now widening to 100 feet an artery which he had widened to eighty feet only ten years ago.

A PARK Half Done

Just south of the Park blocks where Park Street and West Park Street meet the hills, there is a large tract of unimproved property. This is a rather steep side hill running up to a comparatively flat hilltop overlooking the city. From the summit, a view can be had which can hardly be equaled within the corporate limits of any city. As things are now, it is difficult to reach this vantage point. Once it is reached the person who has had the ambition to search out the wonderful view, is a trespasser. The viewpoint is the seat of an ancient and deserted farmstead. There is one man in Portland who has become almost obsessed with the possibilities of making a park in this location. He would have the steep hillside made into a natural park with winding drives and paths leading to the summit, which he would crown with a public memorial building, or some such structure.

The project is worthy and feasible. It would not cost much now to get about 12 or 15 acres of land in this locality. The topography is not suitable for residence development. It is entirely too steep for building without almost prohibitive amounts of retaining wall. It would be to the best interests of the city at large to acquire additional park area in a place where it could be made into one of the most notable parks in the country. It need not be improved just now, but the present owners will be forced to try to improve their property before very long. These improvements will greatly increase the cost of the project.

There is an unused piece of park property, Governor's Park, adjoining this vacant property. The proposed acquisitions would join this park to the Park blocks.

Two kinds of parks should be acquired in Portland. The city should by all means increase the number and size of the sidehill parks on the steep west hills. The community is better served by a park use of such area than by any other use. Macleay and Fulton parks are an excellent start in the right direction--but they are only a start.

A queer situation in regard to parks is that in a city which owes its very existence to maritime activity, there is no park which makes water its predominant feature. There is no place for boating and canoeing except a river which has been allowed to become so foul with sewage and so covered with oil that no one can enjoy such sports upon it. There are several sites which might be used for such a park. Probably the one most ideal from a topographic standpoint is Ross Island and the land east of the Oaks amusement park. A system of dikes and flood gates could be built here so that there would be large bodies of calm clean water. The shores could be landscaped to make this the most beautiful and perhaps the most useful of Portland parks.

There are several places north of Columbia Slough just outside the present city limits which are suitable for the construction of aquatic parks. Mock's Bottom is also a possible park site of this kind. The main point is that such a park is an essential part of the public recreation system of a city the size of Portland. There are few, if any, cities in the country as large as Portland without either a river or lake park. Portland not only has nothing to call a water park now, but there has been no attempt to provide for such a park or parks in the future.

DON'T LET a little "Back Water"
near the shore

DECEIVE you as to the current in the Main Stream
Portland is about to decide on the initial steps in a campaign to rebuild her "horse and buggy" streets and make them fit for automobile use. The things that are done in the next six months are likely to decide our street widening policy for many years to come. It is unfortunate that these decisions are being made at a time when public sentiment is rather pessimistic.

Recent school registration figures, bank clearings, shipping records and construction news, are influencing people of a naturally gloomy disposition to think that those of us who have been talking of the great future in store for Portland were seeing their desires rather than their sober expectations. The doubters are having their day. They are croaking dismally that it is all right to spend money in other cities where they have harbors and sunshine and "climate", but Portland is not in that class.

The whole fabric of modern business is built up on the idea that liberal spending makes ability to spend. High wage makes possible the paying of high wages.

If all the country were to go on the plan that these croakers advocate, if no one bought an auto except when he could pay cash for it and immediately proceed to realize eight per cent on his investment, if every one wore his clothes "to patches", the automobile factory and the clothing factory would be turning off men. These men would be retrenching in their living. That would cut down business some more. The merchants would turn off a few clerks, and so it would keep going.

Portland is bound to grow. Portland is going to need a system of wide arterial streets. Let's not decide this issue with a view to a policy of retrenchment. Let's build now for a city of a million that we can be sure will be here in spite of the "conservative" policy of those who would have us wait until the guests arrive before we build the tavern. However if the tavern be not built, the guest is apt to go on to the next village and the tavern is never built.

To a very large extent population attracts industry and is attracted by desirable living conditions. Wide streets, designed for automobile use are a decided advantage and of great advertising value to a city. Let Portland be imbued with some of the western spirit of optimism. Let us build as if we were sure that the million would be here in ten years. It is not impossible for the dream to come true. However, if it does not come true in ten years, it will in twenty, and meantime we shall have had some worthwhile advertising.

CAN SPENDING be Saving?

The city that stays well under its bond limitations and invests very sparingly but invests that foolishly and without any particular attention to the future, is much more apt to end up disasterously than the city that invests liberally as to amount but invests according to a plan based on the future needs of the city. The latter city will in the end pay off its debts and be the best place to live in. If Portland buys an eighty foot right-of-way in 1923 on a street that will certainly need a 120 foot right-of-way in 1940; in 1940 the cost of the other forty feet will be practically the same as if the initial widening had never been made. Let no one think that interest on the additional cost of the extra width from 1923 to 1940 would equal the saving.

The basis of the idea that there is wisdom in buying city real estate is that the increase in value will be faster than the increase in the worth of the purchase price by compound interest. Of course property on an arterial street which needs widening will increase faster than that average for the city as a whole. It must be a good investment for the public to buy right-of-way on arterial streets and hold it until the right-of-way is needed or else there are no worthwhile investments in the city.

If we have any faith in the future of the city, why not take advantage of that future for the good of the public? If we can not afford to buy for the community on our most important streets, how can we justify buying for personal account in places less apt to increase in value?

WHAT PORTLAND BUILDS RIGHT, BUILDS PORTLAND

NOV 2 1928

FORM PC-1

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 1928, Oct.

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION OF PORTLAND, OREGON

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OREGON
 COLLECTION

THE PLAN-IT
 OCTOBER, 1928

DOCUMENTS
 COLLECTION

"Several years ago I spoke before the annual meeting of the freight traffic department of one of our great trunk line railroads. These men came from all parts of the country and assembled for their meeting in one of the cities on the Atlantic coast which has built up a wide reputation as a year-round resort and is one of the terminals of this railroad.

These men were gathered together for business. Their purpose was to further promote the shipment of freight over their line, and it was intensely interesting to note one of the leading points in their discussions. In brief it was this. Induce the men back in your territory to come to this garden spot for their vacation; induce them to come down here where they can rest, play and enjoy all the sports of a seaside resort. When they return home, they will be more inclined to ship their freight over the railroad which carried them personally to such a delightful vacationland. That is a fact; now for a story.

A spinster was once talking to her beautiful and happily married sister and asked her why she had never found the man who would suggest that they travel the remainder of life's highway together.

To which the sister replied: "Jane, I guess it's because you haven't acquired that come hither aspect."

Developing the "Come Hither" Aspect in a City

These two references, one a fact and the other a story, illustrate the one thing that I want to emphasize in regard to attracting those people and industries to our community that we want to attract. It can be done more effectively by indirection through the development of a come hither aspect. A city can and should sell itself through indirection, just as effectively as the above-mentioned railroad can, and it is just as imperative, from the standpoint of lasting results, that this come hither aspect be developed in a city as that it be developed in the realm of personalities--and then advertised.

To put this in other words and, in fact, in the concrete words spoken to me by the president of a concern which is known in every city in the land: "Direct your community advertising to the men and women of wealth, power and influence. Induce them to visit your city, and when they have seen its advantages from the points of view both of charm and of commerce, the business end of the deal is more likely to follow.

He is a far-sighted man and understands the art of city building through indirection but assumes, of course, that that city has the come hither aspect.

It means that we must put our own house in order first and give it the come hither aspect if it is not already so blessed--and most of our cities are not. A city planner not long ago, said to me that if we arranged our home the way that we arranged our cities, we would put the bath tub in the parlor, the beds in the kitchen, the washing machine in the bedroom and bring our guests in through the coal chute. He's right. That is just about the way our cities are laid out, and in case it applies to your particular city, the first task you have in the art of city building is to arouse public sentiment behind a comprehensive city planning program that will put the right thing in the right place and not bring the city's visitors in through the city's coal chute or back alley."

The above is taken from an article by George H. Cless, Jr. Executive Secretary, Chamber of Commerce, Glens Falls, N. Y. in the American City Magazine for October, 1928.

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It is the habit of the average American citizen to endeavor to reduce every thing to a "business" basis. He continually talks of the value in dollars and cents of this or that or the other. Portland is just about to vote on the first unit of what we hope will be a continuing program of major traffic street widening. The projects that are to be authorized on November sixth are the beginning of a system of adequate streets that will remodel this "horse and buggy" city and make it somewhat adaptable to modern vehicles. For these reasons we are being told that the expenditure of over six million dollars is good business. It will save so much money in other ways. It will increase the assessed value of property, hence add to the tax roll. All these claims have been repeated until every one knows that some of us believe them.

All this is commendable and we believe the statements made by the partisans of adequate streets are founded on facts. But after all is said, there are many reasons for adequate streets which can not be exactly measured in dollars. The above quotation from a very readable article in the October issue of the American City, is an attempt to show that in the final analysis it is intangible things, almost undefinable things, which make the "personality" of a city, even as the same class of characteristics go to build up the "personality" that attracts or that repels people.

One of the most valuable points in favor of adequate streets is that streets which are adapted to auto traffic are an attraction to the tourist or visitor, a lure to make them wish to settle here. As above stated it is all very well to talk smoke-stacks and factories, but the city that is the most attractive as a living-place has many points in its favor. If Portland could do things to make Portland as attractive to the visitors as is Los Angeles, Portland would have done much to have made herself equally as attractive to industry.

Our climate does not particularly lend itself to exploitation--we must find some other points to stress. Civic beauty we could develop to a point unsurpassed on the American continent. The reputation of being the most beautiful city in the United States would be almost as much of

a "come hither" as "sunshine". Adequate streets would be perhaps the first step towards such a reputation. From a standpoint of beauty there can be no argument. No narrow mean little street can be very beautiful. A narrow lane for small vine-clad cottages, that is beautiful and fitting, but for the arterial streets of a city, let us have width that seems extravagant.

Portland has a climate peculiarly adapted to the growth of ornamental shrubbery. America is just entering an advanced cultural stage of urban development. There is great and growing interest in landscape gardening and landscape architecture. It is a historical fact that as a civilization becomes settled and the last wild land is subjugated to man's use, the general interest in formal gardening and landscaping tends to increase rapidly. America is about to enter that era. Twenty years ago there were almost no gardening magazines in this country; today, their number is legion.

Portland could easily be the mecca of the landscape gardeners of the nation. This would be an advertising factor of constantly increasing value. Adequate streets are absolutely necessary preliminary steps to the acquiring of such a reputation for our city.

Playing the Game

The United States of America is the greatest and most prosperous nation that the world has ever seen. A great, if not the greatest cause of this condition, is our national aptitude for fighting for an issue until by means of an election or some expression of public opinion we know the will of the majority. But when once this will of the majority has been expressed, the whole people is willing to support the program thus decided upon and work together for its success.

We as a nation may fall short of perfection in many respects. But we may make a strong claim to the trait of "playing the game". All through our national history, idealists have advocated measures that might have made this a much better place to live than it is. Reactionaries have scoffed at these proposals and the net result has been compromise after compromise, which once made, differences were forgotten and the nation has made a whole-hearted effort to get the most possible satisfaction out of things as agreed upon.

We have just witnessed a local example of this national trait. Many of us were, and perhaps still are, of the opinion that adequate streets for the Portland of 1940 can not be built on an eighty foot right-of-way. We believe that now is the appointed time to get that wider right-of-way just as fast as possible. We are sure that the eventual outcome of failure to get adequate right-of-way immediately will greatly increase the ultimate cost of the things that must be done. Others are just as positive that eighty feet is right-of-way enough for many many years if not forever that we have no right to spend maney now to make things more livable for generations yet unborn and that it will be easier for the larger city of the future to buy the right-of-way that that city needs in the future, than it is for us to buy it now at much smaller price.

The arguments as to what should be done and how, were prolonged and bitter. At one time it appeared that the whole program might be discontinued. Then a committee of fifteen was appointed and after a few days of intensive work they recommended a compromise program. It is not an ideal program, but it is one that every progressive citizen of Portland can support. It is a start in the right direction. Very likely it will not be many years before we shall be wishing that we had been more ambitious in the projects proposed. However, if we waited to start until every one was convinced of the need of adequate streets, we would be likely never to start. Progress in the growth of cities is slow. It is made by small steps. Often things done by installments cost several times what they would if done all at one time. People can be persuaded to vote for installments where they will not support the whole development at one time.

No one can find any fault with the proposal for Burnside Street. It is the most important traffic artery of our city. It must be widened at once. Most city planners would have extended the widening much farther west, to 23rd Street probably. But that must come eventually and this first bite will show what can be done. Union Avenue as the longest street in the city, well-located for an east side bridge-head street, should surely be wider than Fifth Street or Sixth Street on the west side. But eighty feet will give a large measure of relief and is certainly a worthwhile step in the right direction. The program is commendable and should be supported by any one who desires to "play the game". When this game is over probably the players will all be willing to revise the rules a bit before the next one starts. That does not mean that this game will not be a source of satisfaction to all concerned.

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1928, November

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION OF PORTLAND, OREGON

DEC 12 1928

MEMBERS EX-OFFICIO
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MAYOR
FRANK S. GRANT
CITY ATTORNEY
O. LAURGAARD
CITY ENGINEER

J. C. AINSWORTH, PRESIDENT
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ROOM 418 CITY HALL
ATWATER 4121
HOUSE 60

MEMBERS APPOINTED
BY THE MAYOR
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HENRY E. REED
B. W. SLEEMAN
COE A. MCKENNA
JOHN A. LAING
C. W. NORTON
H. E. PLUMMER

THE PLAN-IT

NOVEMBER, 1928

OREGON
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THE GLORY THAT MAY BE PORTLAND'S

Cities of the United States are waging a keen competition for greater population. Some of us believe this is a healthful condition. Many of us are skeptical as to the ultimate benefit to the citizens of the community to be obtained from mere increase in size. It is evident that numbers without quality are not particularly desirable. The city that makes the strongest appeal to people who possess spending power in excess of enough for the bare necessities of life is the city that will eventually be the most prosperous. If we can make Portland a city of highly paid and successful workers, able to own homes that a few years past would have been called luxurious, we will have done much to make it the metropolis of the west coast.

The average chamber of commerce, realtor's association, or other civic body has many "boosters." They admit it gleefully, boastfully, and vociferously. They are always confident that they are "business men," that everything must stand by a dollar and cent justification or be condemned as "visionary," "impractical," or "theoretical." These are pet terms of anathema to "boosters."

Does some one propose to make some public improvement which has as its main reason the possibility of beautifying and making attractive a portion of the city? It is impossible. Public money should not be spent for mere aesthetic reasons. Yet the great body of American citizens who are able to make their homes wherever they care to are exceedingly apt to be influenced by that very condition. These people of wealth are able to spend a large part of their income to make beautiful their homes and surroundings. Such homes are dependent to large measure for their attractiveness on what might be called the civic beauty of the community in which they are placed. People of this class are greatly influenced in their choice of city by intangible things--by an atmosphere of beauty or culture which they often do not stop to analyze.

If the visitor to Portland for instance, comes in by train, he gets off at the Union depot and starts up a dingy, narrow street leading to a business district of more narrow, crowded streets. He is reminded of an article that he has read concerning Portland's narrow streets. He thinks the article was at least founded on facts. He has received an initial impression of Portland which it will take a long while to counteract. The chances are that if he is only traveling, studying the country, he cuts his stay in Portland shorter and has less likelihood of being permanently settled here than he might have had if his first impressions could have been more pleasing.

If Portland could see fit to make an entrance plaza from the Union depot to Burnside street, if Portland could open the Park blocks entirely through the city, if the old Post Office site could remain a spot of perpetual green in the midst of towering business buildings, if the area between the waterfront and Fifth street could be re-designed as a business district to fit modern means of transportation--how much more beautiful our city would be! If these property owners near Front street could be so unfortunate as to have a general fire and clean the area of all improvements, they would be likely to rebuild on a plan to insure their prominence as the shopping, theater, hotel, center of the city. Why not have the benefit of such a fire without its destruction of salvagable property?

Let us develop some of these aesthetic features. Let us make our city the most beautiful one in America. Let us spend money liberally to increase Portland's appeal to this growing appetite for beautiful and luxurious surroundings. It will all come back in increased population of the kind that makes a prosperous city, for it is people of means that make a city a place of prosperous business, that give employment to the wage-earner. Let us make space and color and grandeur the watch-words of our civic policy, take advantage of the opportunity which nature has bestowed upon us, and bend every effort towards making Portland, Oregon, a city such as Rome or Athens might have been had Romans and Athenians had the aid of modern machinery and materials.

America is standing in the dawn of an era of luxury, of productiveness, of the ability to rear monumental edifices and cities such as the world has never seen before. In truth, it is only by the creation of such cities in the future that we may absorb the energy and power of a large portion of our population. Let Portland be a leader in this age of magnificence which is almost upon us.

HOW TO GET A REGIONAL PLAN

During the middle decades of the twentieth century, America is to witness the most impressive change in living conditions that the world has ever seen. All economists who have made research into the probabilities of future developments of this nation agree that, what has been called the urbanization of the country has only started. Many students of affairs believe that by 1975 only 10% of the population will live on farms and 90% of the people will be dwellers in cities. This change will inevitably cause our cities to be rebuilt or deserted. In the latter case new cities will be built to take their place. In either case the most urgent demand of today in preparation for the cities of tomorrow is a regional plan. Every metropolitan district in the country should be preparing a regional plan. The sooner these regional plans are made and the more strictly they are adhered to, the smaller will be the cost of the changes that inevitably must be made.

After the regional plan is made and adopted there must be some administrative body to insure that the provisions of the plan are not ignored by property holders in the district who cannot see the value of abiding by the plan. Under the present law the metropolitan district of Portland has a city planning commission, but this commission has

only advisory power over a district six miles beyond the city boundary. We should have a regional plan prepared by an impartial body able to vision the ultimate possibilities of the whole area. Legislation creating such a regional plan commission is an immediate necessity for this district. This commission should be appointed in such a manner as to gain the confidence of the people in the region under their jurisdiction. After such a commission has been created and has made its recommendations, its plans are so many scraps of paper if there is not some legal method of forcing the property owners of the region to co-operate and observe the restrictions of the regional plan.

This means first of all, that there must be a constantly functioning executive department charged with the administration of the regional plan. This department must have legal power to enforce the plan. One of the first steps in the development of this power would be the enactment of legislation making it impossible to record transfer of title for small parcels of real estate in the region affected unless the transfer had been approved by the regional planning commission. Approval of a recorded plat would of course be approval of all transfers based on that plat. Laws of this kind have been enacted by the State of California. Speaking to the Portland City Club, Mr. Hugh Pomeroy, executive secretary of the Los Angeles Regional Plan Commission, said that their plan had already given to Los Angeles over 85 miles of highway 150 to 200 feet wide. A regional plan should lay out a system of arterial highways to fit the possible development at least fifty years in the future. No building should be allowed to be built in the bed of any future street or highway. No street should be allowed to be dedicated any narrower than it would ultimately be needed.

It is exceedingly difficult to convince some property owners that there is a practical certainty that the side lane between cow pastures of today will be an artery of the community ten years hence. Farmers who have seen the village of the seventies grow into the metropolis of today, are apt to think that growth has reached its limit. They look back at the "booms" of the past, and believe that the like can never come again.

Growth of today is actually more rapid over a period of years than it ever was in the past. Cities are co-operative enterprises. The older and more highly developed, the larger they grow; the more insistent the demand for regulation, the more the individual must surrender his ancient privilege for the common good. Witness our zoning laws, building codes, health codes, traffic laws, and all the restrictions upon free and untrammelled existence which city people take as a matter of course accompaniment of their community life.

THE LOCATION OF THE ST. JOHNS BRIDGE

A typical instance of the service which a regional plan can give to a community is the selection of a site for the new St. Johns bridge. The bridge will be paid for by Multnomah county. Long before the bonds are retired, parts of the country now almost uninhabited will have become populous, wealthy, tax-paying districts. A reasonable selection of the site would be one which would make it of the most service to the county of 1940 to 1950 which will to a large extent pay for the bridge.

If the probable arteries of the region of 1940 were laid out on a regional plan, the bridge should be located to serve those arteries rather than with any consideration of present traffic or enhancement of real estate values that would be caused by its location in a certain place. Viewed in this manner, the first fact which the scientific designer of street and highway layouts perceives is the chance which any projected highway improvement has to relieve congestion of traffic.

Traffic congestion, that thing which after prohibition and the weather, is the ever-interesting subject of conversation of today, is mainly a problem of the business centers of the country. Any thing which will prevent cars from passing through business districts when they desire only to reach some point beyond those districts, will reduce traffic congestion to a certain extent. The highway engineer has one great advantage. He can see how the railroad engineer solved his problem and can adapt the railroad solution to highway conditions. After the railroads began to develop heavy traffic, they first double-tracked their lines between cities, eliminating congestion between terminals. Then they found themselves gorged with traffic at points of interchange and terminals. The next step was the construction of belt lines surrounding all points of heavy traffic concentration.

The railroad engineers also found that the only way to allow full use of intersecting tracks was grade separation. Grade separation structures are one of the major construction activities of the railways today. Highway engineers might well be on the alert to make use of such devices at every possible opportunity. No bridge can be fully efficient to handle modern traffic which does not provide an opportunity for traffic parallel to the river to cross the bridge traffic at a different grade.

The highways and streets of today are in a position similar to the railroads of twenty-five years ago. The greatest relief that can be obtained for the least money is by the construction of by-pass and ring streets such as the proposed Foothill boulevard. One of the factors to be considered in the location of the St. John's bridge should be its relation to a future by-pass artery to allow traffic up and down the Columbia River highway to go through the city without adding to the traffic congestion of the city.

JAN 9 1929

FORM PC-1

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION OF PORTLAND, OREGON

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1928, Dec

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OREGON
COLLECTION

THE PLAN-IT
December 1928

DOCUMENT
COLLECTION

WHERE IS THE AUTO TAKING US?

The growth of automobile registration is of equally vital interest to city planners and traffic officers. It has been repeatedly asserted that autos are the dominating feature of life in the twentieth century. A correct prognostication of the future of any business, the growth of a city, the development of a state, the future value of a parcel of real estate --all are dependent upon the use of the auto. Judging the future by the past, it seems that the number of cars is due to keep on growing until every person who has any reasonable use for a car will be driving one. This means that ultimately there might be a car on the highways for each of the adult population of the nation. This is the real saturation point. It is probable that we shall never come to it as an actual fact. Several automobile authorities have predicted that by 1940 there will be 38 million cars in use. One of the foremost business analysts says there will be a registration of seventy million by the end of the century. There have been yearly estimates of a "saturation point" for the past decade. Each year the use of cars has increased more than was expected. Each year the saturation point has been placed further in the future. In fact such predictions have been much less freely indulged in in 1927 and 1928 than in previous years.

If there are to be any such numbers of cars in use, there must be highways for the machines to be driven on. The auto came in the first decade of the twentieth century to a nation of earth-roads. It was quickly apparent that the auto was of little use except on improved roads. Cars were not used as a utility. They were a recreation device. But the desire for the pleasure of driving fostered an interest in "hard roads" and between 1908 and 1918 roads were constructed at a rate that, measured by our present ability to build, makes the progress of 1918 to 1928 seem childish. The improvements and inventions of dirt moving and concrete making machinery in the past ten years, have made it possible to build roads so much faster and with so much less human labor that we should have increased our "hard roads" as fast as we did our cars.

The increase in cars in eight years has been over 100 per cent. The mileage of paved highway has increased by a much smaller percentage. The chances are that once a majority of the population gets to appreciate the automobile as a utility to an extent that they will actually estimate what it costs them to drive a car they will begin to realize that the cost of driving could be greatly reduced by a very liberal policy of highway and street construction. As things are now the most costly item in running a car is the depreciation. Depreciation is greatly augmented by poor road surface and quite heavily influenced by the number of starts and violent changes in speed to which a car is subjected.

It has been estimated by many investigators that the average cost of running a car is about ten cents per mile, whereas experiments at the University of Iowa seem to show that the cost of running a car at a uniform legal speed once it is in motion is less than half of this amount. The high cost of starts, changes, and bad roads is at once apparent. Therefore if we could persuade ourselves to rebuild the static portion of our transportation machine making it as nearly perfect as the moving portion is, we could save a very large portion of the cost of that rebuilding by the reduced cost of operating our cars.

The relation of all these statements to city planning is that to an overwhelming extent city planning has come to mean traffic artery planning. A man is as old as his arteries, and a city is as large as its arteries. A city can not grow after its arteries have become overloaded. Cities must either go forward or backward. When they cease to grow they begin to decay. So it is of vital interest to the city of today to endeavor to prepare its major traffic streets now for the number of cars that will be upon them in the future that will inevitably become the present before the construction work has been completed. Any haphazard hit or miss program for the development of an arterial system for the city can not hope to be successful. It will not get a system that will meet the demands of traffic, and it is certain to cause expenditures greater than the cost of a planned system would have been. The streets of a modern city are perhaps the only construction projects of major magnitude which have been allowed to go along without a definite plan.

THE SKYSCRAPER--ANOTHER OF TOMORROW'S QUESTIONS

The following is clipped from "The City that died of Greatness" in the November issue of Vanity Fair, written by Deems Taylor.

"In a district less than 200 yards square, stands--or will stand, shortly--a group of skyscrapers whose floor space totals nearly 100 acres and whose tenants outnumber the combined population of Cheyenne, Wyoming; Brownsville, Texas; Reno, Nevada; Emporia, Kansas; and Albuquerque, New Mexico. (This comparison is not fantastic. The combined population of the cities mentioned, according to the census of 1920, was 64,066; by no means an exaggerated estimate of the skyscraper population in the crowded Grand Central District of New York City.)

"Just what is going to happen when all these new congeries discharge their inmates upon streets already stuffed like a Strassburg goose is a question that has at last caused a certain amount of uneasiness in high circles. There was a meeting not long ago of an organization called--aptly enough--The forty-second Street Property Owners and Merchants Association, to discuss traffic problems. One member reported that it had taken him twenty-eight minutes to go from Seventh to Lexington Avenue--a distance of half a mile--in a taxicab. Another more conservative soul had taken a cross-town car, and had spent twenty-five minutes in traversing the three-quarters of a mile between Second and Eighth Avenues. These adventures, they pointed out, had befallen them in the middle of the afternoon, when traffic was by no means at its most acute stage of congestion. But Mr. George W. Sweeny, president of the organization, supplied the optimistic note without which no meeting of any group in America to discuss anything could ever properly end.

"However," said Mr. Sweeny in part, "I have faith in the future. A way will be found to solve this and other problems arising from the magical developments of this district, when the time comes that they must be solved. Forty-second Street is on its way, and nothing can stop it."

"The skyscrapers, New York's invention and America's proudest architectural boast, may yet be the ruin of New York and many another American city unless we do something about them. They are another proof of the fact that man's cleverness is generally far in advance of his intelligence, that his ingenuity in devising new instruments of civilization is by no means accompanied by any resourcefulness or imagination in handling them. The skyscraper was born of the sudden realization that if you pile floor-space vertically, instead of spreading it horizontally, you can easily house an acre-full of people in a hundred-foot square. (The daily population of the Woolworth building, for instance, would ordinarily be a city of ten thousand population, covering several square miles of territory.)

"Like all brilliant discoveries, this was a simple one; and if it had been intelligently handled, would have made New York or any other city a paradise to live in; for if only part of the space so liberated had actually been left free, if the skyscrapers had been spaced five hundred feet apart, as they should have been, the American metropolis would have comprised a series of towers surrounded by vast areas of parks, gardens, and drives."

Of course Portland is not New York now and it is possible that Portland will never be as large as New York; but the difficulty that New York has brought upon herself by allowing unlimited privileges of development to property owners are already upon Portland to a certain small degree and the nearer we get to the large city size, the more acute becomes the congestion, and the more uncomfortable it is to try to do business in the downtown district. Just as New York is liable to be choked by the free and unlimited construction of skyscrapers, so is Portland's business district liable to make some erratic move because of the unnecessary impediments to the free circulation of traffic which are the results of a short-sighted policy in the original platting of the present business district. If half the blocks in that district were to be turned into parks and the cost of such reconstruction assessed against the remaining property, the chances of maintaining the present pre-eminence of the high value district would be greatly enhanced.

THE TRAFFIC PROBLEM IS A PHYSICAL PROBLEM

Local interest in the matter of traffic safety has been intensified by the recent activities of the traffic bureau. The heedlessness of Portland's drivers is a thing which must be stopped and the police authorities deserve the support of all patriotic citizens in their efforts to teach Mr. and Mrs. Portland to obey the laws and rules which have been laid down to promote their safety and that of other users of the streets. But it is not at all amiss at this time to say that laws and rules can not change physical conditions and that the inadequacy of our streets and highways to handle the traffic of today can not be changed except by spending money for right of way, paving, bridges, and highway structures in a volume that would compare somewhat favorably with the amount which has been spent for cars.

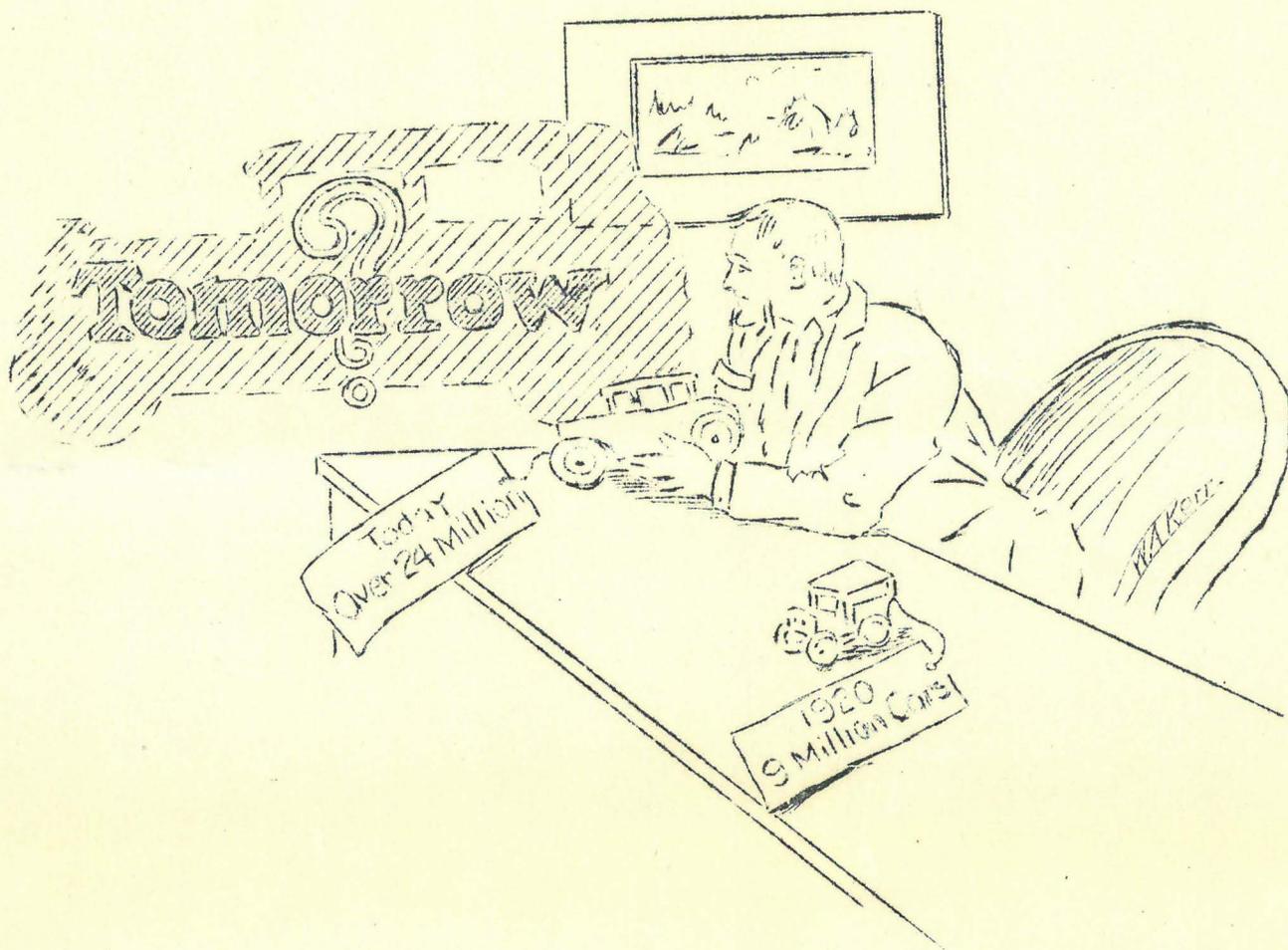
There are almost 25 million cars licensed to run on the streets and highways of the United States. The original cost of these cars and the ones that have been discarded in the last five years must have been not less than 20 billions of dollars. Since 1916 the various states of the Union have voted less than one and one quarter billion dollars for road bonds. The county and other direct tax expenditures would probably bring up this amount to less than three billion. Allowing for that portion of the city paving which could be called part of the arterial system of the nation, a liberal estimate of the cost of the entire system would be five billion.

There are a little less than three million miles of highway in the United States. This includes all dirt roads, macadam, paved, gravel, etc. The average cost of these highways was probably well under \$4000 per mile--a total of less than 12 billion dollars for the value of the road-beds of the nation.

If the nation can afford to spend 20 billions for "rolling stock" can it not expend an equal amount for "road-bed"? If there could be a nation-wide program of wide highway construction, bridge construction, grade elimination and elimination of congestion by actual construction, perhaps our police and traffic authorities would be better able to cope with their problem.

WIDTH OF HIGHWAYS

We have passed the point where hard surfaced roads alone are sufficient in the densely populated states. We must provide wider rights of way along our strategically important arteries than have ever been considered necessary in the past. Motor vehicles require new traffic standards. The foundation of the whole structure is the width of right of way. The very first operation, therefore, and one that should precede or be coincident with the laying of the first improved road surface should be the acquisition of the necessary land to provide for successive widenings in keeping with the strategic importance of the route. A narrow pavement in a wide right of way may be increased at any time; but a narrow pavement in a narrow right of way through a congested district is well nigh hopeless. Acquiring these rights of way will not happen of itself. It must be brought about through the preparation of a logical plan that will not only set up the necessary legislative foundation, but will effectively unite the active interest and support of all the officials best able to carry the plan through to a successful conclusion. --Detroit Rapid Transit Commission, Feb., 1927.



Nearly a year ago the Universal Portland Cement Company ran an advertisement in engineering and contracting periodicals which showed by graphic methods the growth of automobile use from 9 million in 1920 to 20 million in 1927, and made the question of to-morrow's use of cars the controlling factor in the amount of highway construction and therefore of cement consumption. The growth of automobile registration is of equally vital interest to traffic officers and city planners.