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## Preparation of Comprehensive Downtown Plan

Portland (Or.). City Planning Commission

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## PREPARATION OF COMPREHENSIVE DOWNTOWN PLAN

The steps the City Planning Commission expects to follow in preparation of a comprehensive or general improvement plan to make the downtown area more accessible, attractive and affluent are here outlined.

It is most timely to undertake this work now. The Metropolitan Origin and Destination study (survey conducted by the State Highway Department) will shortly be available for detailed analyses in the downtown district. The latest census of business has now been published. The fate of the South Auditorium parking field is hanging in the balance. The Mayor has asked the Planning Commission to study the Pioneer Post Office situation, to consider a Civic Center plan, and to investigate a possible urban renewal project for the area between 3rd and Front Avenues.

### Objectives of the Plan:

In preparing the improvement plan, we would devote our attention primarily toward these items:

#### 1. Comprehensive Parking Plan

Immediate attention would be given to a first-stage program, to legislative needs, and to a financing plan. The assistance of the City Attorney and bond attorneys would be required.

#### 2. Traffic Circulation Plan

#### 3. Mass Transit Improvements

There needs to be city-wide consideration of this problem at the same time.

#### 4. Pedestrian Circulation Plan

A solution to the vehicle-pedestrian conflict where loading across sidewalks occurs, as well as at street intersections, is a must. How to keep the pedestrian dry needs serious consideration.

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### 5. Amenities and Appearance

The problem of overhanging signs, disreputable street fixtures, street lighting, clean-up and modernization of building fronts, street trees, litter disposal, and other features required to make the downtown area more pleasant and attractive, would receive attention.

### 6. The Pioneer Post Office

The plan for a better utilization of this block and adjoining blocks would be studied.

### 7. Renewal of Third to Front Area

It is quite possible that federal urban renewal money would be available for modernization of this area as well as preservation of the Skidmore Fountain area.

### Data and Facts Required:

So that all concerned can start with a common understanding of past trends, problems and prospects, it will be necessary to prepare maps, statistics, charts and to analyze a considerable volume of research information. Particularly needed are the following:

1. An adequate base map of the downtown area showing each building.
2. Floor area use survey.
3. Building condition survey.
4. Location and utilization of loading facilities.
5. Underground utilities survey.
6. Location and utilization of sidewalk vaults.
7. Land use patterns and trends.

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8. Real and personal property assessed values and sales data.
9. Building permit trends.
10. Number of people working downtown.
11. Parking facilities, prices, usage, trends.
12. Transit problems, usage prospects.
13. Comparison of traffic origins and destinations (1946 with 1960) and relate to floor area usage.
14. Pedestrian count analyses.

All of this information would be compiled in a FACT BOOK clearly presented and for full distribution to DPI membership.

### Time Required

It is difficult to estimate precisely the man-power required to prepare the Comprehensive Downtown Plan. The quality of some of the research material needed is as yet unknown. A tentative estimate is  $6\frac{1}{2}$  man-years. Downtown Portland, Inc. will furnish funds to employ one person at the City Planner level for a 2-year period.

The Planning Commission's contribution would be  $4\frac{1}{2}$  man-years, approximating \$33,500 at present salary rates. In addition, the Planning Commission would furnish stenographic services, office supplies, and other incidental expenses.

### Comprehensive Plan Committee

The purpose of this committee is to decide the approach to preparing the plan and to guide the Planning Commission's technical staff along every step of the way. The Committee is composed of six Downtown Portland, Inc. representatives, two members of the City Planning Commission, and those technical public officials who would be involved in carrying out the plan. The total committee are the following:

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Public

Fred Fowler, City Highway Coordinator  
Robert Keith, Metropolitan Planning Commission  
John Kenward, City Development Commission  
Raymond Perkins, Manager of Rose City Transit Co.  
L. H. Rosenthal, City Engineer  
Lloyd Shaw, State Highway Department  
William Weller, City Traffic Engineer  
Carl Wendt, City Transit Coordinator

Planning Commission

Herbert Clark  
Lloyd Keefe  
Harry Sroufe

Downtown Portland, Inc.

William Brewster  
Henry Cabell  
Pauli A. Murphy  
William Roberts  
A. E. Rosenberg  
C. B. Stephenson

PROGRESS OF COMPREHENSIVE DOWNTOWN STUDY  
December 19, 1961

The Comprehensive Downtown study has entered its initial phases. The agreement of cooperation between Downtown Portland, Inc. and the City of Portland became a practical reality on December 1, 1961 with the employment of a full-time Junior Planner, whose salary will be paid out of DPI funds. A part-time employee will also begin work on the downtown study during the first week in January, 1962.

In an effort to gain a clearer understanding of the basic factors involved in the downtown study, conferences have been held with people who are interested in the orderly development and planning of the area. Following are some of the people with whom conferences have been held:

Carl Wendt, Transit and Public Works Coordinator  
Eugene Allen, Exec. Director, Downtown Portland, Inc.  
Craig Kelley, Exec. Director of Building Owners' and  
Managers' Association  
Jack Lowe, Director of Civil Defense  
Jim Sechser, Director, Retail Trade Bureau  
Robert Keith, Director of Metropolitan Planning Com-  
mission, and  
Miss Marian Rushing, City Attorney's office.

Data which is pertinent to the downtown study that was developed from the Origin and Destination surveys might be made available to the Planning Commission in the near future as a result of recent action taken by the Technical Advisory Committee. Final approval of this action must now come from the Coordinating Committee for the Metropolitan Transportation Study. The Technical Advisory Committee is a group composed of representatives from the Planning and Engineering Departments of the State, County and City units involved in the transportation study. Since this committee is interested in the use made of its data, monthly progress reports of the downtown study will be made to them.

Comprehensive Downtown Planning Committee

The Comprehensive Downtown Planning Committee is composed of six DPI representatives, two members of the Planning Commission, and nine technical public officials who are involved with carrying out the plan.

Several meetings of the entire committee have been held and most discussion has centered on the establishment of priorities for the various phases of the study. Certain members representing the retail interests of the DPI group have expressed concern with the parking problem downtown and felt that initial study should be involved with the planning of several parking garages for the use of shoppers. Several members of the DPI group are presently investigating the legal and economic problems of creating a special assessment district in the downtown area for the purpose of building parking facilities.

#### City and Public Agencies

On December 6, the city officials on the Downtown Study Committee met for the purpose of discussing the immediate and long-range approaches to the study. General agreement was reached that while parking was, indeed, a pressing problem for downtown, a critical need exists to develop basic factual data to support any short or long-range development plans. Certain data, notably the Origin and Destination survey data and downtown street capacity and traffic flow, will need to be gathered and understood before any parking facilities may be planned or located. About six months would be needed before an initial attempt at locating parking facilities may be made.

The aid of several public agencies will be required in some of the development of basic factual data as follows:

1. City Engineers:
  - a. Location of sidewalk loading facilities
  - b. Survey of underground utilities
  - c. Location of sidewalk vaults
2. Bureau of Buildings:
  - a. Building condition survey
  - b. Building permit trends
3. Traffic Engineers:
  - a. Parking facilities location
  - b. Mass transit movements
  - c. Automotive traffic flow and street capacities

4. Metropolitan Planning Commission:
  - a. Land use patterns and trends
  - b. Floor and ground area use survey
  - c. Number of people working and shopping downtown
  
5. City Development Commission:
  - a. Coordination and advice on urban renewal of Third to Front area
  - b. Urban renewal or federal aid in other portions of downtown.

Portland City Planning Commission

The Planning Commission will carry out the following:

1. Coordination and direction of the factual data research
2. Drafting of maps and charts to illustrate the factual data
3. Writing all reports
4. Development of future development plans under the guidance and advice of the Comprehensive Downtown Planning Committee.

At the present time, the Planning Commission staff is preparing a work program for the data research and has already started the drafting of a base plan from which reproducible plans may be printed. The reproducible base plans will be at a scale of 1" = 100' and will be suitable for wall map illustration or reduction into reports. A partial list of the plans anticipated to be drawn up is as follows:

1. Central core district
2. Retail core district
3. The freeway and the CBD
4. General office area
5. Public office area
6. Financial space use
7. Retail space use
8. Hotels, amusements, eating and drinking space use
9. Parking facilities
10. Buildings
11. Building condition

12. Building and property value
13. Building and property use
14. Ground floor area use
15. Office building vacancies
16. Ground floor space vacancies
17. Vacant space in the CBD
18. Vacancy rates in the CBD
19. Loading facilities
20. Sidewalk vaults
21. Underground utilities
22. Street capacities and traffic counts
23. Mass transit movements
24. Pedestrian counts
25. The CBD growth trend

Some of the above plans and factual data, together with the Origin and Destination data anticipated to be released, will aid us in evaluating the need for a ramp from Harbor Drive into SW Ash Street as well as serve the basis for determining a solution of the overall problem of access to the downtown area from Front Avenue and Harbor Drive. In addition, the Mayor and the City Council have directed the Planning Commission to make a detailed study of the Pioneer Post Office and to make recommendations as to the best ultimate use of the site. The study of the Harbor Drive and Front Avenue traffic access to downtown, as well as the study of the Pioneer Post Office, will be included as proper and appropriate parts of the Comprehensive Downtown Plan.