

5-16-1958

Planning of Capital Improvements for Portland

City Club of Portland (Portland, Or.)

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PORTLAND
City Club
BULLETIN

Crystal Room • Benson Hotel
Friday . . . 12:10 P. M.

PORTLAND, OREGON — Vol. 38, No. 50 — May 16, 1958

The Topic:

THE GOLDEN GORGE

a panel on

the mid-Columbia's expanding economy

The Speakers:

WALLACE S. NELSON

Manager, The Dalles Chamber of Commerce

and

KENNETH FRIDLEY

General Manager, Columbia Ports Traffic Bureau

Portland's up-river neighbors whose hub of activity is pretty much the Columbia River, are experiencing industrialization and agricultural expansion that have called for organization and management to meet the challenges of this increasing activity.

The eye-opening potential of the Inland Empire's future can best be told by two representative and hard-working members of associations formed to direct the growth and meet the problems inherent in such expansion.

Mr. Nelson, affectionately known as "Old Man River", has served as The Dalles' Chamber of Commerce manager for the past 35 years, and is active in the Columbia Ports Traffic Bureau, the Mid-Columbia Recreation Council, and the Columbia River Development Association. Mr. Fridley, a recent appointee to the State Highway Commission, is Executive Vice-President of the Columbia River Development Association, General Manager of the Columbia Ports Traffic Bureau, and a past-president of the Oregon Wheat League.

The panelists will discuss the mid-Columbia's golden future in relation to power, flood control, navigation, industry, agriculture, foreign markets—including the barter plan for surplus wheat—and the inter-relation of their waterborne economy to down-river ports such as Portland.

PRINTED IN THIS ISSUE AND SCHEDULED FOR DISCUSSION FRIDAY, MAY 23rd: Report on PLANNING FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS IN THE CITY OF PORTLAND. The Committee: Malcolm A. Blanchard, Dean Connaway, Rodney S. Davis, Charles T. Dotter, M.D., Evan Kennedy, John R. Murtaugh, Alex L. Parks and Robert C. Shoemaker, *Chairman*.

REPORT
ON
PLANNING OF CAPITAL
IMPROVEMENTS FOR PORTLAND

TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

THE CITY CLUB OF PORTLAND:

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENT

Your Committee was assigned the task of inquiring into the methods followed by the Portland City government in planning for capital improvements. The inquiry should include but not be limited to such problems as the following: What advance planning is done for future needs such as buildings, streets, bridges and viaducts, parks, and public services in relation to estimated city growth and development? In which officials and departments does the responsibility for such planning rest, and what practices are followed in developing a coordinated program? What schedules or programs of needed improvements have been prepared as guides to future city action in this field, and to what extent are estimated time schedules and schedules of priorities maintained? Are estimated costs of desirable and required outlays available? Are these related periodically to probable available funds? What improvements in present organization and practice are indicated?

Since the committee was not restricted to the above assigned items of inquiry, it sought further pertinent information by looking into such aspects of the question as: To what extent is such planning by the city government contingent upon the planning of other tax levying agencies in Multnomah County and the functions and operations of various state departments? What effort has been made to correlate the city planning with these other agencies? In view of the city government's present financial difficulties, what are the chances of taxpayer support of a major capital improvement program?

FRAME OF REFERENCE — OF STUDY

Attention is invited to the fact that the committee's assignment called for a study of the **planning** of capital improvements for Portland, not an appraisal of needed improvement per se. The committee was concerned with specific capital improvements only wherein these provided information about mechanisms. In one paramount respect a needed improvement was considered — the need for **planning**.

NECESSITY FOR STUDY

As was the case when another City Club committee considered this same problem over a quarter of a century ago, nearly every witness interviewed by the present committee stated that Portland needs but lacks an effective mechanism for coordinated, long-range capital improvement planning. Though opinions differed widely as to how this should and even whether it ever could be achieved, the necessity was universally recognized. In the report which follows, an attempt has been made to provide insight into why so serious a defect exists, despite widespread recognition by those most directly concerned with the welfare of our city.

METHOD AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION

In the course of this study the committee interviewed the following:

LLOYD KEEFE, Director, Portland City Planning Commission.
 JAMES C. YEOMANS, Chairman, Metropolitan Public Improvements Coordinating Committee.
 WALTER SMITH, Executive Secretary, Multnomah County Tax Supervising and Conservation Commission.
 ORMOND BEAN, Commissioner of Finance, City of Portland.
 WILLIAM A. BOWES, Commissioner of Public Works, City of Portland.
 CITY PLANNING COMMISSION in joint session with our committee.
 J. H. SROUFE, Chairman, City Planning Commission.
 W. C. WILLIAMS, State Highway Engineer for Oregon.
 TERRY D. SCHRUNK, Mayor, City of Portland.

In addition to personal interviews, the committee studied published and unpublished material, including:

"A report on procedures for capital improvement programming," City of Seattle Planning Commission, February 1, 1957.

"Summary of six-year capital program," Mayor's Citizens' Capital Budget Committee, Denver, Colorado, March, 1957.

"Schedule of projects for which bonds are to be voted," City of Dallas, Texas, Bond Fund Improvement Program, January 31, 1956.

PREVIOUS CITY CLUB REPORTS RELATED TO THE PRESENT STUDY

Since 1925, ~~fifty-six City Club reports have dealt directly or indirectly with capital improvements for Portland.~~ The reports have varied widely in scope, approach, and content, including ballot-measure recommendations, the appraisal of plans proposed by city-hired experts and City Club-inspired investigations in several areas dealing with capital improvements. While most of the fifty-six reports concerned specific improvement projects, broad range programs were covered in three reports: "Long-Time Public Improvement Program" (October, 1931); "The Moses Plan" (January, 1944) and the "Ten Year Capital Improvement Levy" (October, 1954). Though quite dissimilar, these three programs attempted to attain virtually identical objectives. The first dealt with the coordination of improvement project activities concerning the City of Portland, School District No. 1, and the Commission of Public Docks. The Moses plan was designed as a study "to advise on the means of bridging the gap between the end of the war and the full resumption of private business," and, though broad in scope, it was not intended to be "an over-all intergrated plan for our city." The 1954 Capital Improvement Levy, a ten-year, \$2,000,000 per year levy, was aimed toward a "loosely-specified", over-all improvement program.

The City Club committees that studied these divergent approaches to major capital improvement programs recommended approval of the first two because of their multi-faceted approach to the problem and their inherent recognition of the need for correlated, long-range, itemized planning. Rejection of the tax levy of 1954 was recommended because it lacked coordinated planning. ~~Previous City Club reports were unanimous in their view that adequate planning was a necessary feature of any capital improvement program. Such a program should:~~

1. Embrace all fields of capital improvement.
2. Be set up on a long-term basis.
3. Be brought up to date each year.
4. Be correlated to the programs of tax-levying agencies in the county.
5. Establish project priorities.
6. Contain a tentative time table of accomplishment.
7. Be predicated upon careful cost-estimates.
8. Have the backing of responsible civic groups and be understood and endorsed by the tax-paying citizenry.
9. Utilize the services of qualified staff agencies and professional planning bodies.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS OF OTHER CITIES

Capital improvement programs have been adopted by many U.S. communities, including the thirteen cities shown in the following (incomplete) tabulation:

City	Program Period	Authorized by	Amount
1. Baltimore Maryland	6 years	Charter	
2. Boston, Massachusetts	6 years	Ordinance	
3. Cincinnati, Ohio	5 years	Resolution adopted by Council	
4. Detroit, Michigan	6 years	_____	
5. Milwaukee, Wisconsin	6 years or more	Resolution adopted by Council	\$116,855,600
6. New Orleans, Louisiana	5 years	Charter	
7. New York City, New York	5 years	Charter	
8. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	6 years	Charter	\$366,283,186
9. Raleigh, North Carolina	6 years	_____	
10. Richmond, Virginia	6 years	Ordinance	
11. San Francisco, California	6 years	Charter	\$135,781,636
12. Denver, Colorado	6 years	_____	\$ 55,128,300
13. Dallas, Texas	2 years	_____	\$ 41,000,000

Boston and several other cities further provide that their Planning Commission annually study their plan with a view to necessary revision. Detroit provides for promotion programs in order that the plans of the Commission may gain the support of the populace. Several cities, including Toledo, New York and Cleveland, require a four-fifths vote of their City Council to override the recommendations of their City Planning Commissions.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING FACTS DEVELOPED RE CURRENT STATUS

The following information concerning what is and is not being done to establish a coordinated program for capital improvements in Portland was largely developed through interviews with representatives of the organizations considered. In all instances, witnesses were cooperative and appeared to be in sympathy with the committee's desire to obtain facts from them as well as their personal viewpoints.

It is a fact that Portland does not possess a workable program for the comprehensive, coordinated, long-range planning of capital improvements. Bluntly stated, our City lacks a blueprint for progress. Certain coordinating agencies exist but thus far have been unsuccessful in many of their efforts, principally because their function is purely advisory.

Metropolitan capital improvement involves the expenditure of tax-derived funds in the acquisition of the tangible assets of community life. Among the many projects usually falling within its scope are the acquisition and development of land for current or future community use and the construction or acquisition of public buildings, roads, bridges, parks and sewer systems, etc. Present Portland procedure with respect to capital improvements may be outlined as follows:

A. Through the Council

1. Initiation by Council and/or commissioner with council approval.
2. Commissioner in charge of the department involved must submit the proposal to the Planning Commission for study.

3. Planning Commission recommends Council action (not necessarily favorable action).
4. Council may take action pro or con or may table completely, irrespective of the Planning Commission's recommendation.

B. Initiated by the Citizenry

1. Citizen or group of citizens may secure the sponsorship of a Commissioner.
2. Citizen or group of citizens through petition may place a measure on the ballot.

It is conceded that lack of comprehensive planning has not denied Portland the essentials and many of the refinements of community life. Exploration of the problem to be overcome in achieving coordinated long-range planning involves consideration of the capital spenders in the Portland area. Brief summaries of certain efforts toward coordinated spending will follow under appropriate headings. These, and the detailed consideration of the Planning Commission which follows, reflect opinions of the members of the committee. Much of this material is treated in the discussion rather than in this section of the report.

CAPITAL SPENDERS IN THE PORTLAND AREA

There are 42 separate tax-levying bodies in the metropolitan Portland area. In addition to these 42 in Multnomah County, there must be added an undetermined number of tax levying bodies in Washington and Clackamas Counties, all of which by their very proximity to the metropolitan Portland area, affect its capital improvements and planning. Obviously, any integrated capital improvements and planning program must take cognizance of these additional tax levying bodies.

The tax levying bodies within Multnomah County alone include Multnomah County itself, the Port of Portland, the City of Portland, the Commission of Public Docks of the City of Portland (The Commission is generally considered a semi-autonomous tax levying body itself), the Cities of Gresham, Fairview, Troutdale, and Wood Village; six school districts, including School District No. 1 (the largest tax levying body within the county); thirteen water districts; fourteen rural fire protection districts; and the Tualatin Hills Sanitary District.

The vast bulk of taxes levied and collected within Multnomah County by the various tax levying bodies falls within the municipal limits of the City of Portland. For example, during tax year 1956-1957 total taxes levied amounted to \$50,619,074.12. Of this amount 92% or \$46,682,964.94 was levied within the corporate limits of the City of Portland.

It would be an error to conclude that an intelligent planning program could be inaugurated merely by making reference to the major tax levying bodies. Many separate and different departments are included within each major tax levying body. Many of these departments play a vital role in any program of capital planning. For example, under Multnomah County, the following funds are established which relate to capital planning:

Hospital Building Fund, Library Fund, Assessment Districts Improvement Fund, Morrison Street Bridge Construction Fund, Road and Bridge Construction Fund, Sewage Facilities Revolving Fund, and the Playground Development Fund.

An even greater number of funds is established under the City of Portland. Those specifically relating to capital planning improvements are as follows:

Water Construction Fund, Golf Fund, Public Auditorium Fund, Sewage Disposal Fund, Public Recreational Areas Fund, Sewage Disposal Bond Sinking Fund, Municipal Buildings Fund, Municipal Paving Rotary Fund, Playgrounds and Parks Fund, Fire Equipment and Building Fund, Disaster Relief and Civil Defense Fund, City of Portland Zoo Fund, Exposition-Recreational Center, Street Lighting Fund, Urban Renewal-South Auditorium.

Under the Commission of Public Docks' separate portion of the City's budget are included such items as:

Special Fund for Maintenance, Rehabilitation, and Acquisition of Facilities, Construction Fund, Revenue Certificate Fund (referrable to the modernization of Terminal No. 4 and grain handling facilities), Harbor Modernization Bond Fund.

The same general multiplicity applies equally to School District No. 1 and to the Port of Portland.

It appears that coordination between the various departments of the major tax levying bodies and the governing body itself poses a very serious problem. This is noticeably the case with respect to the City of Portland. In fact, even to this date the City of Portland has not submitted its report to the Metropolitan Public Improvements Coordinating Committee.

Coordination means planned cooperation and integrated effort among separate subordinate departments as well as the major tax levying bodies.

In addition to the tax levying bodies in the counties of Washington and Clackamas, still another tax levying body operates within the Greater Portland Area, which has perhaps the most profound effect on capital improvements and planning. This is the State of Oregon. It requires but a moment's reflection to see that the tremendous highway expansion program of the State of Oregon has a dramatic impact upon capital improvements and planning, as implementation of the highway expansion program would necessarily result in considerable dislocation and adjustments in the construction of any capital improvement on or adjacent to a proposed route for a new highway or improvements in existing highways. This is particularly true with respect to bridges crossing the Willamette River which touch or have connected access to the existing Harbor Drive. The State of Oregon must make, and is making, extensive improvements, additions and changes in its major arterial highway program in order to conform to the new requirements laid down by the Federal Government in its large-scale highway improvement program. Such compliance insures continuing Federal aid, and were it not for this compliance, Federal funds would not have been secured at all.

The unexpected development of the Federal highway program is the best possible illustration of how long-range capital improvements and planning programs can be drastically upset. Such long-range planning as has been done by the metropolitan and state bodies concerned, necessarily was put together without reference to the possibility that the Federal Government might invade the field. The sudden instigation of the Federal Highway program points up one of the principal requirements in any well-formulated capital planning and improvements program: that is, the requirement that any program devised must be flexible to fit radical changes in the fiscal situation.

As another example of the need for flexibility, it is submitted that the Federal Highway program has increased (as it affects Oregon on the interstate system) 67% since it was originally proposed in 1954. In 1954, the allocation to Oregon was an estimated \$375,000,000. A need survey in 1957 adjusted this figure to the present estimate of \$628,000,000. Twelve percent of this 67% increase is attributable to increased wages and cost of materials, but the remainder is caused by the vast revision required by the 1956 Road Act with its very high standards of design and construction. In Oregon this meant miles and miles of four-lane highway where original plans called for two-lane. (Oregon is somewhat above the average national increase in this respect, the national average being about 40%).

MULTNOMAH COUNTY TAX SUPERVISING AND CONSERVATION COMMISSION

This Commission was formed in 1921. Its members are appointed by the Governor; the Commission has jurisdiction in Multnomah County only. Its main function is to hold public hearings on the budgets of the major tax-levying bodies. While it is an advisory group and exercises its power mainly through public opinion, it also has plenary authority over the unconstitutional expenditure of public funds.

The Commission has authority to check the books of municipalities and to hold public hearings. Should unlawful expenditures be found, the District Attorney must be informed. The Commission publishes a report of budget facts and financial statistics of all units of local government, including the budgets for the forthcoming fiscal year.

METROPOLITAN PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS COORDINATING COMMITTEE

This permanent committee was formed in 1954 by the Chairman of the Multnomah County Tax Supervising and Conservation Commission (under the authority of State law) and consists of representatives of the major tax-levying bodies in Multnomah County. Its purpose is to study and make recommendations for a comprehensive, integrated, financially-realistic program to meet present and projected needs of the metropolitan area. Its principal effectiveness lies in public opinion, for the committee possesses no legal means of implementing its requests or recommendations. The Metropolitan Public Improvements Coordinating Committee has called for the current budgets and five-year projected needs of the respective tax-levying bodies. To date, five-year plans have been obtained from four of the five major tax-levying bodies concerned — School District No. 1, the Commission of Public Docks, the Port of Portland and Multnomah County. The Committee's efforts have thus far been blocked because the City of Portland has not yet furnished its plan. (However, two of the City's Commissioners have submitted proposed plans of their own).

Your Committee was advised that with the exception of the City of Portland, each tax-levying body customarily sends not only a policy-level representative, but also a staff expert to the meetings of the Metropolitan Public Improvements Coordinating Committee.

PORTLAND PLANNING COMMISSION

The City Planning Commission was established in the City of Portland in 1918, under the home rule authority pursuant to Section 2-102 of the City Charter. In 1919, the City Planning Commission Enabling Act was passed by the State legislature. It is not entirely clear whether the City Planning Commission operates under the State Enabling Act, or under the City Charter. Under the State Enabling Act, all city departments and bureaus, and the City Council, are required to refer all proposals for public buildings, streets or highways, public improvements, purchase of property, parks, etc., to the Planning Commission for recommendation before a project or purchase can be authorized. It fails to spell out whether or not it is applicable to School Districts, the County, the State, the State Highway Commission or the Port of Portland with respect to referral of projects or purchases of property within the City of Portland. As a result, there is no compulsion on the part of these agencies, so they do not necessarily refer projects to the Planning Commission. Under the City Charter, the status of the Commission is that of any Board authorized by the Council.

The present planning commission has nine members who serve without salary. They are appointed by the Mayor without the necessity of confirmation by the Council. The following occupations are represented: Banking, Electrical Contracting, Marketing, Business Administration, Engineering, Teaching, Law, Architecture. The members appear to be conscientious and objective in the performance of their duties. The salaried staff consists of Lloyd Keefe, Chief Planner, and twenty-six others, eight of whom are exclusively concerned with urban renewal and are not paid from City of Portland funds. Mr. Keefe considers the staff and financial support adequate under present conditions.

The Commission was created by ordinance and its powers and duties are contained in the Planning and Zoning Code. For many years, it appears that the primary function of the Commission and staff was the solution of zoning problems. Recently the emphasis, particularly at the staff level, has shifted away from zoning into planning, but the Commission itself still has the burden of many petty details of zoning.

The City Planning Commission activities are restricted to the geographical limits of the city; problems arising in the adjacent areas are left to the County Planning Commission. Common interests have allowed the two Commissions to operate in harmony.

At present, eight staff members are studying economic prospects in the Portland area, embracing population-growth and employment status through 1975. As a result of these studies, information is being developed to aid in long-range planning for the City. Until recently, the City Planning Commission staff took no action in preparing a capital improvements program. Their interests were primarily related to making the City a good place in which to live, particularly in preventing industrial encroachment on residential areas. The Mayor has requested each City Commissioner to submit a statement of the needs of the various administrative divisions for which he is responsible. The Council in turn has ordered the Planning Commission to consolidate this data into an over-all program. It was intended that a unified report be produced by January 1, 1958, to enable the Council to include desired portions of the program on the May, 1958, ballot. The deadline of January, 1958, has been extended, although all departments have submitted some form of report. They vary from sketchy to detailed.

In defense of the incumbent administration, it should be stated that insofar as your committee knows, this is the first time that even this much of a cooperative effort toward comprehensive planning has been made. The environment for such planning is, and always has been, lacking.

DISCUSSION

In the light of information gained, your committee feels that most of the questions in its assignment can be reliably answered.

Previous advance planning for capital improvements, to the narrow extent that it has been accomplished at all, has mainly consisted of sporadic, specific, uncoordinated proposals made by various Commissioners in response to immediate problems usually of their particular departments. This practice has repeatedly shown itself to be ineffective, inefficient, and inadequate to meet the needs of our community. It may be likened to a situation where a household roof is repaired one shingle at a time, as the sporadic result of rain actually dripping in on individual family members, financed on a "get-when-you're-wet" basis and resulting in a costly patchwork of remarkable appearance but little protection. A head of the family is needed for Capital Improvement Planning in Portland, not the present, "single-shingle" approach. Early in his term of office, the Mayor requested each City Commissioner to prepare and submit to him a comprehensive plan for his department, including estimated costs and priorities. Finally, all have been submitted, and are now under perusal by Cyrus Nims, a planner assigned to the capital improvements field. It is too late to be effective at the coming election, however.

The responsibility for over-all, long-time planning is in fact not borne by any single individual or commission within the city government. Commissioners appear to be concerned primarily—if not solely—with their respective departments. Other organizations involved in coordinating efforts appear to be largely concerned with purely financial matters.

The City Planning Commission, though actively interested in a comprehensive capital improvements program, lacks the authority and assigned responsibility to do the job in spite of the fact that its staff appears to be well qualified for spearheading a major planning effort.

Portland badly needs a long-range, capital improvements program. Under the situation that has existed to date, no one other than an individual councilman or an individual of the Planning Commission staff has presented anything but single projects. No over-all, integrated program has been developed or proposed, although sporadic attempts have been made. In the City Council, coordination of individual plans and programs, if any, appears to be carried on strictly through informal discussion and voluntary agreement between the proponents of respective projects.

Although occasional attempts at comprehensive planning have been made over a long period of time, tangible results are lacking for the following reasons:

- (1) Lack of adequate financial base for the City of Portland.
- (2) Lack of coordination among the subordinate departments of the tax levying bodies, particularly the City of Portland, with the result that the subordinate departments compete among themselves for funds from a common source.
- (3) Lack of coordination on the part of the major tax levying bodies themselves—and again, the City of Portland is the chief offender.

Even with the efforts which have been made by the incumbent elected city officials, it is the Committee's opinion that unless plans are placed on a much broader basis, the best attempts of planning are faced with extreme difficulty and are likely to fail in the future as they have in the past.

Inasmuch as a broad planning program does not exist at this time, there is and can be no meaningful program for time or priority schedules.

Wherein capital improvements projects have been undertaken or proposed, reasonably accurate cost-estimates have usually been available in advance. Notable exceptions have occurred, particularly in the promotion stage. The City Planning Commission has been confined to formulating its recommendations without reference to the availability of funds.

An impoverished City Government represents a constant major obstacle to successful attempts at organizing, let alone putting into effect a comprehensive long-range Capital Improvements program. Financial expediency necessitates the subordination of planning to the ever more urgent demands of the operation and maintenance of the City. The public, observing the consequences of this, has been understandably reluctant to provide the funds for sporadic programs submitted to it. There have been notable exceptions wherein specific requests for additional tax support were granted realistically (School District No. 1) and others in which funds were voted for some package project of fairly universal appeal (Zoo, E-R Center).

It would appear to be a duty of the City Council to search ceaselessly for the increased revenue which they correctly believe is desperately needed in order to offset the ever-spiralling cost of government and replace the City's present stop-gap special-levy financing with a sound program capable, for example, of maintaining her old sewers as well as building needed new ones through comprehensive planning. The public is likely to continue to reject requests for an increased tax base or the alternative special levies or bonds until convinced that a realistic, well-planned program will result.

Thus far, such a program has not been presented to Portland voters. Except for the City Council, no officially constituted group has the authority to conceive and carry forward plans encompassing the overall needs of the City. Since at present the Planning Commission reports to the Council only through the particular Commissioner under whose jurisdiction it then finds itself, it is subject to possible pocket veto and delay. It appears to this Committee that consideration of Planning Commission recommendations would be assured by requiring that they be submitted to the Council through the City Auditor, who shall be required to place them on the Council's agenda within a reasonable time. Otherwise, the welfare of many is entrusted to the hands of one individual. Furthermore, other than by its reports to the Council, the Planning Commission is unable to advance arguments in support of its recommendations, unless specifically requested by a Commissioner to do so. Thus, the Planning Commission lacks the right of rebuttal. Criticism of the Planning Commission stems from the practice of planning without adequate knowledge or advice concerning current or projected resources available to the City. Its programs have been criticized as being unrealistic.

A STRENGTHENED CITY PLANNING COMMISSION COULD BE THE ANSWER

There is no provision for the Planning Commission actively to promote projects or programs which it has decided are desirable for the community. Broad-range capital improvement programs may seem costly at first glance even though the opposite is true. If the public is to be given the decision concerning such programs, it should also be given an explanation. While recognizing that any government-controlled promotional effort bears certain hazards, your committee believes these would be minor in comparison to an electorate uninformed, poorly-informed, or misinformed concerning the matter to be decided.

Thus, while commercially-motivated pressure groups often fill the air with pre-election propaganda clearly not in the interest of the welfare of Portland, its government (lacking official means to argue its cause) remains inarticulate, an easy prey to misrepresentation. Thus far, it has also remained without a capital improvements program. It is the opinion of this committee that the Planning Commission's responsibility should include the exploration, development and proposal of plans in the City's interest.

Furthermore, inasmuch as Planning Commission recommendations may be overridden by simple majority vote of the City Council, the margin of safety protecting the planning future of Portland is, perhaps, a little thin in this respect. This defect could be corrected by requiring the Planning Commission's recommendation to be adopted by the City Council unless overridden by a strong majority vote of the Council. This is not a new idea; it is done in several other cities in the country where Planning Commissions operate. It reduces the possibility of politics assuming too-dominant a role in functions which are properly delegated to the experts of the Planning Commission and at the same time tends to diminish pressure brought to bear upon City Council members by vested interests. In cities which have adopted this provision (for example, Columbus and Toledo, Ohio), it has worked to the benefit of the City Council, the Planning Commission, and the City as a whole. If the Planning Commission is to be given broader powers, however, it follows that the Mayor's appointments to the Commission should be subject to confirmation by the City Council, in order to safeguard against "packing" the Commission.

A third apparent weakness lies in the fact that supervision of the Planning Commission can be passed from one Commissioner to another by order of the Mayor. Commissioners are not always in agreement; consequently any of the four Commissioners not administratively responsible for the Planning Commission might be reluctant to turn over his suggestion to the Commissioner who was responsible. Furthermore, if it were nevertheless transmitted, it could be unduly delayed before reaching the Planning Commission. If the Planning Commission were to become the administrative responsibility of the Council as a whole, this problem would be solved. Every capital improvements suggestion should be submitted by the Planning Commission and its recommendations transmitted directly to the Council. In this way, the Council would be clearly responsible for progress or stagnation in the capital improvements program.

Raising funds for capital improvements is a major problem. Promotional fund-raising activities are necessary for the success of any capital improvements program, and indeed it appears unrealistic not to provide for such a program. This may mean the addition of a qualified fiscal expert to the Planning Commission staff.

Common sense demands that a capital improvements program be related to a sound plan for paying for it.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Your Committee early in its research realized that a study to propose drastic changes in our city government was not within its sphere. It concentrated instead on considering the creation of a strong Planning Commission responsible for all engineering and research necessary for the capital improvement of the City of Portland. This body would also participate directly in budgetary matters.

However, recognizing the present straitened financial condition of the city, certain weaknesses in the charter of the city, ambiguities in the state law on the subject and other allied problems, your Committee concluded that a program to operate within the framework of any city government would better serve the immediate need for capital improvements planning. The committee is confident that if the Planning Commission were fortified with a better environment in line with the following recommendations, the Commission's efforts would be more effective. Irrespective of the form of Portland's city government, it is the feeling of your committee that the basic objectives herein outlined are relevant and desirable.

Therefore your Committee recommends that a charter amendment be enacted to accomplish the following:

1. Elevate the status of the City Planning Commission from that of a Board or Department which can be abolished at will, to that of a Commission with the degree of autonomy which would give to the Planning Commission the independence it needs to be effective. The Commission should be empowered to:

- a. Investigate, analyze, develop and propose a master plan for capital improvements of greatest benefit to the City as a whole;
- b. Revise annually the master plan thus developed and proposed;
- c. Actively promote the plan or projects developed and proposed by it and approved by the Council, in order that the voters may be adequately informed, and
- d. Include in all proposals actual cost estimates and supporting fiscal data.

2. Require confirmation by the City Council of all appointments to the City Planning Commission.

3. Require the Mayor to appoint a member of the City Planning Commission or its director to serve in an advisory capacity with a member of the City Council, on the Metropolitan Public Improvements Coordinating Committee.

4. Direct that all City Planning Commission proposals be submitted to the City Council through the City Auditor who shall be required to place them on the Council's agenda within a reasonable time in order to insure that such proposals be brought to the attention of the public.

5. Make all City Planning Commission recommendations and programs automatically a part of the City's master plan unless vetoed by a four-fifths vote of the Council, and insure that no public funds be expended for capital improvements not embraced within the City's Master Plan unless approved by a four-fifths vote of the City Council.

Respectfully submitted,

MALCOLM A. BLANCHARD
DEAN CONNAWAY
RODNEY S. DAVIS
CHARLES T. DOTTER, M.D.
EVAN KENNEDY
JOHN R. MURTAUGH
ALEX L. PARKS
ROBERT C. SHOEMAKER, Chairman

Approved May 7, 1958, by the Research Board for transmittal to the Board of Governors.

Received by the Board of Governors May 12, 1958, and ordered printed and submitted to the membership for discussion and action.