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City Plan Committee

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A City Plan Committee was appointed sometime prior to October, 1912. Marshall Dana was Chairman, members were Albert G. Clark, George H. Howell, Ellis F. Lawrence, and William A. Marshall. They secured the services of Edward H. Bennett of Chicago World Fair fame and produced the Greater Portland Plan published in 1912 and adopted by vote of the people November, 1912.

The Planning Commission continued as an unofficial body supported by private subscription until late in 1918 when an official Planning Commission was appointed pursuant to an Enabling Act which was being advocated and was passed by the legislature early in 1919.

The Portland Planning Commission thus became an official body with power to make recommendations on all matters affecting the physical plan of the city and has had a continuous existence since that time. Many of Portland's busiest and most influential citizens have found time to serve on the Commission. Among others are the late J.C. Ainsworth, Ellis F. Lawrence, A. E. Doyle, Phillip Patterson, Cole McKenna, Henry E. Reed, Frank S. Grant, O. Laurgaard, and a host of citizens among them

John A. Laing, David B. Simpson, E. B. MacNaughton, Guy L. Jaques, Ernest Willard, Leslie D. Howell, Bert Sleeman, Donald Woodward, Sidney Woodbury, and many others.

Among the outstanding activities of the Planning Commission was the retention of the late Charles Cheney as Consultant in 1919. Following Mr. Cheney's technical advice, the Commission recommended to the City Council a comprehensive zoning ordinance. It is interesting to note that it was quite similar to the ordinance now being advocated by the Commission and to ordinances which have been adopted in many cities in the past few years, but it was rejected by vote in 1920.

A committee of the Commission and Portland realtors prepared a second zoning ordinance which was adopted in 1924. The Commission prepared an outstanding report on major streets in 1927. This report was the reason for the retention of Bartholomew & Associates who prepared a Major Street Plan in 1930. This failed of adoption. Its presentation at the beginning of the Depression was the probable reason.

The Commission prepared a report on Public Recreation Areas in 1936 which has become a

famous example of planning technique. It was followed by an acquisition program in 1938 which has been the means of securing for Portland one of the best distributed and most comprehensive park acquirement programs in the nation.

The Commission is now engaged in the revision of the 1924 ordinance.