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Delta Park Location for E-R Center; Council Manager Form of City Government

City Club of Portland (Portland, Or.)

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REPORT

ON

DELTA PARK LOCATION FOR E-R CENTER

AN ACT amending Charter to limit E-R Center location to Delta Park; prescribing minimums for structure size, arena, livestock show and parking areas, seating capacity; requiring war memorial, ice skating rink; permitting certain Park Bureau use; limiting expenditures; authorizing purchase, improvement, lease and sale of other property intended for profit.

Shall the Charter be so amended

Vote 54 Yes □ No □

TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS
THE CITY CLUB OF PORTLAND:

Your committee was appointed to report on an initiative measure to amend the city charter so as to require that the E-R* facilities be located at Delta Park. The measure is sponsored by a group known as the Portland Tax Savers. In addition to requiring a change in location, this measure would prescribe certain specifications as to size and type of facilities which must be provided, would designate cost limitations, and would expand the Commission's authority to acquire, improve, and dispose of property for purposes unrelated to its primary responsibilities. These matters are discussed in more detail below.

SCOPE OF COMMITTEE'S WORK

Earlier City Club committees have made exhaustive studies of the E-R Commission and of previous ballot measures affecting the Commission. These reports may be found in the April 23, 1954; May 4, 1956, and November 2, 1956, City Club Bulletins. We have tried not to duplicate the work of the earlier studies. Instead, we have attempted to confine this report to the single issue that is now before the voters, namely: Should the Commission be allowed to continue with its present construction of facilities at the Broadway-Steel Bridge site, or should it be required to locate the E-R center at Delta Park.

The committee interviewed Mr. Carvel Linden, Chairman of the Exposition-Recreation Commission; Mr. Joe Dobbins, President, Portland Tax Savers; Mr. Floyd Maxwell, Managing Director of the Oregon Centennial Exposition and International Trade Fair; Mr. Guy Taylor of Moffatt, Nichol and Taylor, consulting engineers for the Oregon Centennial Commission. In addition, information was obtained from the accountants and architects of the Exposition-Recreation Commission, the City Attorney's office, and the City Planning Commission.

* Exposition-Recreation Center.
THE E-R COMMISSION'S PROGRESS TO DATE

The E-R Commission's revenues, estimated to May 16, 1958, amount to $8,667,050.79, of which proceeds from the original bonds produced $8,003,808.00. The remainder accrues from interest on the invested funds and gain on the sale of securities.

By election day, May 16, 1958, the Commission's investment in the Broadway-Steel Bridge site will be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>Estimated Cost as of May 16</th>
<th>Percentage Complete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land acquisition</td>
<td>$1,720,000‡</td>
<td>95% (five properties not yet acquired)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demolition</td>
<td>25,373</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test borings and soil analysis</td>
<td>5,400</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topographical Survey</td>
<td>4,467</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographs, reproductions, etc.</td>
<td>4,187</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rough Grading</td>
<td>22,500</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water or Sewage Main relocation</td>
<td>49,730 (in escrow)</td>
<td>(Now in progress; escrow payments are for 100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architects, engineering fees</td>
<td>222,386</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (appraisal, negotiation, legal, consulting, site studies, etc. to March 31, 1958)</td>
<td>77,800</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$2,131,843‡</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‡ This figure includes cost of buildings on the land at the time of purchase.

§ In addition the Commission has spent $145,250 for administrative overhead from 1954 to May 16, 1958.

Land acquisition and demolition costs have run below the budgeted amounts of $2,160,000 and $60,000 respectively.

Estimates indicate that working drawings will be complete about May 30, that bids should be called about July 1. Construction will probably take about 18 months. The E-R center at the Broadway-Steel Bridge site should be complete about December, 1959 or January, 1960, if work continues on this site.

On May 16, 1958, the Commission will have on hand $6,411,000, together with the land at the Broadway-Steel Bridge site. Opinions vary as to the resale value of the land, but the Commission has placed a recoverable valuation of $913,500 on it. This is based on the City Planning Commission's estimate of $65,250 per acre for the fourteen saleable acres which is the size of the area exclusive of the dedicated street portions. This is over twice the price at which the last portion of the Guilds Lake industrial area sold.

CENTENNIAL COMMISSION'S REHABILITATION OF P.I. FACILITIES

One of the frequently voiced objections to the Broadway-Steel Bridge location for the E-R center is the asserted inadequacy of that area for large livestock shows such as the Pacific International Livestock Exposition. For years the Livestock Exposition and rodeo were held in the Pacific International Livestock Association buildings which were designed for such a show. With the passage of time, these buildings have deteriorated and by 1954 it was contended that they were no longer considered safe or adequate for holding a large crowd. Consequently, providing facilities "adequate" for such a livestock show has been advanced as one of the purposes of the E-R measure since its proposal in 1954. However, the importance of this purpose should be re-examined in the light of recent developments.
The Pacific International Livestock Association has leased its facilities to the Oregon Centennial Commission for a two-year period, October 7, 1957 to 1959 as a location for the Centennial Exposition and International Trade Fair. In return for the use of the structure and grounds, the Oregon Centennial Commission will perform the following for the P.I.:

1. Make the many structural repairs to the building necessary to bring it up to a safe standard.
2. Bring the water supply system up-to-date.
3. Make alterations necessary to comply with the fire protection code.
4. Renovate sewage disposal system.
5. Renovate electrical facilities.
6. Increase graveled parking facilities.

The consulting engineers state that with the above improvements, the P.I. facility will be in better condition than it has ever been in the past, even when new. It is the engineers' considered opinion that the P.I. buildings should last indefinitely if adequate annual maintenance is provided in the future. They should again be adequate for large livestock shows and for those few exhibitions requiring an unusually large area.

**COMPARISON OF FACILITIES**

The initiative amendment prescribes certain minimum facilities and standards which the E-R Commission must provide. Following is a comparison of the amendment's provisions with the facilities which are now being designed for the Broadway-Steel Bridge area:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ballot Measure</th>
<th>E-R Commission Plans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Location</td>
<td>Delta Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Seating capacity</td>
<td>&quot;Not less than 8000&quot; 8500-13,500, depending upon use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Arena size</td>
<td>&quot;130 feet by 260 feet&quot; 120 feet by 247 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. War Memorial</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Exhibit area</td>
<td>Not less than 400,000 sq.ft. &quot;must be suitable for livestock shows&quot; 120,000 sq.ft. indoors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ice Skating</td>
<td>&quot;throughout the year&quot; full arena will be equipped for icing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Sport facilities</td>
<td>&quot;indoor and outdoor sporting and recreational activities of a participation character&quot; no outdoor sporting facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Parking area</td>
<td>50 acres paved (7000 cars) 2500 cars off street, paved; plus 1500 on street within 3-block radius of perimeter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Permissible cost</td>
<td>&quot;not to exceed $8,000,000 plus interest . . . and other funds available prior to completion.&quot; $8,000,000 plus interest plus other funds available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above items 2, 3, 5 and 8 on the ballot measure are identical with the specifications in the P.I.'s 1955 statement of its requirements.
PROPERTY ACQUISITION

This amendment expands the present powers of the E-R Commission so as to authorize it to acquire "any other property . . . which may reasonably be expected to return a profit to the Commission."* It may "drain, fill and otherwise improve such property, and may sell, lease for a term not exceeding 99 years, rent or otherwise dispose of such property." At present the Commission's authority to acquire property is limited to (1) that east side property suitable for the site or sites of its facilities, (2) real property for the purpose of exchange for a suitable site, and (3) such excess property adjacent to the site as is necessary, appropriate or convenient for protection, improvement or access to the site. The present authority is adequate to enable the Commission to perform its functions.

ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST THE MEASURE

Arguments which have been advanced in favor of the initiative include:

1. The measure is necessary to carry out the intent of the original act—that the facilities be adequate for expositions, including large-scale livestock expositions, and sports, including both indoor and outdoor activities of a participation character.

2. The Delta Park site will permit the installation of adequate parking which cannot be provided at the Broadway-Steel Bridge site.

3. The Delta Park site offers greater opportunity for expansion and grouping of facilities to comprise a gigantic, integrated recreational area.

Arguments which have been voiced against the measure include:

1. A close-in site will encourage maximum local uses and convention uses which are necessary if the facility is to be self-supporting.

2. Adequate parking will be available at the Broadway-Steel Bridge site.

3. The restoration of the P.I. facilities by the Oregon Centennial Commission now underway will make unnecessary the provision of facilities for a livestock show in the E-R center.

4. The Commission is already well along with the development of the Broadway-Steel Bridge site and has spent over $2,000,000 at that site, much of which would be lost if the Center has to be moved to Delta Park. Change of site will also result in a 9- to 12-month delay in completion.

DISCUSSION

In earlier reports the City Club has criticized the vagueness of the charter amendment which originally established the E-R Commission. Two years ago our report pointed out that "there was no clear conception as to the type of facility contemplated. Promoters of the [1954] measure were promising all things to all people. The facility was to be the answer to such widely diverse desires as a convention center, a livestock show, a war memorial, an ice arena, a place to hold boxing matches, symphonies, basketball games, auto shows, track meets, baseball games and water carnivals. Obviously to design and locate a single or connected facility which would be most suitable for each of these purposes was impossible, and it was likewise impossible to provide all of the facilities called for and stay within the $8,000,000 provided."

The promoters of the present amendment are guilty of the same sort of misleading hoopla. They have held out a Delta Park E-R Center as the answer to just about every conceivable recreational or civic desire. Despite all of the broad language of Section 14-103 and all of the generous promises of the Portland "Tax Savers," the fact remains that the voters have only authorized an $8,000,000 bond issue to build these facilities. The proposed amendment does not enlarge that limitation.

* Emphasis added.
By this amendment, Portlanders are not being asked to rule on the location of all future recreation needs of the community. They are only being asked to decide upon how this particular $8,000,000 is to be spent. It is important that they keep this distinction in mind. If the E-R Commission is allowed to continue with its proposed development at the Broadway-Steel Bridge site, other facilities such as a baseball field, a football stadium, a race track, a golf course, a water sports center, and a helicopter landing area can still be located at Delta Park or wherever else is deemed appropriate for the specific facility when funds become available for them. For the moment we should decide which of the two locations is better for the particular facilities now proposed. We know of no reason why all of these diverse and unrelated facilities need be located at a single spot. There is reason to believe that the interests of the people of Portland will be better served by several developments separately located and separately financed than by continuation of the deceptive vote-seeking proposal to do all things for all people at one site for $8,000,000. For these reasons we believe that the repeated criticism by the proponents of the measure that the Broadway-Steel Bridge facility contains no provision for outdoor sports is unwarranted.

The provision of facilities "adequate" for the Pacific International Livestock Exposition is no longer an appropriate issue because the Oregon Centennial Commission is now in process of rehabilitating the P.I. facilities in a manner which the Commission's engineers say will put those facilities in better than original condition, meeting all necessary standards of structural safety, fire safety and sanitation. This has removed any need for locating or designing the E-R facilities to accommodate the P.I. or to provide a center with "400,000 square feet" of exhibit area. The taxpayers are already rehabilitating and partially supporting one livestock exhibition area (in addition to the county fairgrounds). They should not be asked to provide another. The $8,000,000 should be spent for facilities that will serve needs that cannot be adequately served by the rebuilt P.I. facilities.

We believe that the people of Portland should not pour any more tax dollars than necessary into the annual operation of the E-R center. Insofar as possible the facilities should be self-supporting. Furthermore, we believe they should be put to maximum use—being used as many days as possible for as many purposes as possible. The E-R facility is not being built just for the three or four large exhibitions per year such as the auto show, the home show, or the boat show. It should be used for large and small conventions, rose shows, ice hockey, basketball, public skating, boxing matches, community meetings and many other events that won't fill the house but will keep it occupied. Many of these events will not be served adequately by a fringe area facility. For example, a center that is to be useful for conventions and trade or professional association meetings must be close-in. The same applies to a center that is to attract youngsters either as participants or spectators. The Standard Research Study shows that from 10 to 40% more people attend events at centrally located sites than at fringe area sites, and three to four times the number of events are staged at close-in sites over fringe area sites. Ninety-three per cent of the people in the city live within a five-mile radius of the Broadway-Steel Bridge site.

The Delta Park advocates insist that their site provides adequate parking, while the Broadway-Steel Bridge site does not. While it is true that fifty acres of parking (7,000 cars) might be necessary at Delta Park, it does not follow that the same acreage would be necessary at the Broadway-Steel Bridge site. The City Planning Commission states that at a close-in site, fewer parking spaces are required than at a fringe area site because of the availability of public transportation. Parking space for approximately one car for every three people attending is required at a fringe area site such as Delta Park, whereas at a close-in site only one car space for every five people is needed. Therefore, at the Broadway-Steel Bridge site, the on-site parking for 2,500 cars should accommodate 12,500 people, and the 1500-car on-street parking would accommodate an additional 7,000 people. This is nearly as many as the 21,000 people that could be accommodated by the Delta Park facility and is adequate in terms of the attendance which the facility could otherwise handle.

The City Planning Commission also states that vehicles could be dispersed faster from the Broadway-Steel Bridge site than from the Delta Park site.

The change in site will result in a construction delay of nine to twelve months which will be costly to the city. According to conservative estimates, construction costs are increasing about 4% per year.

* Stanford Research Institute survey of 27 facilities throughout the country.
In addition, the Commission has already spent over $2,000,000 on the development currently in progress. Of this amount, $309,000 represents architectural and site development expenditures for the present location which would be completely written off in the event the Commission is required to change the site and building design to conform to the ballot measure requirements. $1,720,000 represents land acquisition costs, the recovery of which would require resale at roughly $140,000 per saleable acre. Opinions vary as to that possibility, but the Committee considers it unlikely that the full amount could be so recovered, particularly since the Commission would have to make a prompt sale in order to realize funds for use in building Delta Park facilities.

In our considered judgment, Portland voters should allow the E-R Commission to complete the multipurpose center at the Broadway-Steel Bridge location without further waste and loss of time and money. They can do this only by voting "no" on the Delta Park E-R amendment.

RECOMMENDATION

Your Committee, therefore, unanimously recommends that the City Club go on record as being opposed to the initiative measure, and urges a vote of "54 No."

Respectfully submitted,

DON J. CAMPBELL

JACK W. SELF

ROBERT F. YOUNG

GEORGE D. DYSART, Chairman.

Approved April 9, 1958, by the Research Board for transmittal to the Board of Governors.

Received by the Board of Governors April 14, 1958, and ordered printed and submitted to the membership for discussion and action.
REPORT ON COUNCIL-MANAGER FORM OF CITY GOVERNMENT

CHARTER AMENDMENT changing city government from Commission to Council-Manager form in 1959; establishing procedures; full-time mayor, eight part-time councilmen, comprising legislative council to appoint city manager controlling departmental administration; incumbent mayor, commissioners, continue present terms; appointive comptroller and finance director replacing elective auditor; change or replace various provisions.

Vote No. 55 Yes □ No □

To the Board of Governors,
The City Club of Portland:

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENT

Your committee was asked to make a study "of the appropriateness of a City Manager plan for Portland, including any ballot measures that may be presented for public approval." In view of the initiation of the "Council-Manager" charter amendment to appear on the May 16 ballot, the committee's attention was directed primarily to a study and evaluation of the proposed measure.

NATURE AND SPONSORSHIP OF THE MEASURE

The measure on the May, 1958, ballot would amend the City Charter by abolishing the present commission form of government, consisting of five full-time members, and by substituting for it an elected part-time council of eight members and a full-time mayor. The council and mayor would in turn select the administrative officer of the city, to be known as the City Manager. They must do this within 90 days after their election and organization January 1, 1959.

The mayor would be a full-time official elected by the people at large for a four-year term. The present mayor would continue to hold office under this measure until his present term expires. The two commissioners who were elected to serve until January, 1961, would continue in office at their present salaries, but would serve as members of the new part-time council. The two positions for which commissioners will be nominated in May, 1958 would be eliminated from the election in November if this measure carries.

This measure was proposed by a non-partisan group of citizens who are known as THE COMMITTEE FOR EFFECTIVE CITY GOVERNMENT. Their brochure lists seven Republicans, seven Democrats, one independent, and one whose political affiliation is not stated.
The ballot measure is sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Portland; Young Democratic Club of Greater Portland; Multnomah County Young Republicans; and Portland Junior Chamber of Commerce.

The measure was placed on the May ballot by initiative petition after the City Commissioners voted that they would not place it on the ballot.

**SOURCES OF DATA FOR THIS REPORT**

Your Committee has made a detailed study of the proposed charter amendment. It has carefully studied the previous report of the City Club Committee of October 23, 1933 on CITY MANAGER PLAN AND PORTLAND. It has read a considerable bibliography on the subject in general. Mr. John C. Beatty, Jr., attorney, and Judge Virgil Langtry, who were in large measure responsible for the drafting of the Charter Amendment, appeared before the Committee. They also turned over to your Committee for study their voluminous reports from other cities and pertinent data accumulated while members of Mayor Lee's advisory committee on municipal re-organization in 1950.

Appearing against the proposed amendment were Mr. Rodney Davis of the Portland Firefighters, and, at a later meeting, Mr. John Churchill, editor of THE OREGON DEMOCRAT. Commissioner Bean appeared and provided the Committee with considerable statistical data which he had accumulated. Mr. George M. Baldwin, former executive secretary of the Multnomah Tax Supervising and Conservation Commission, was called by your Committee as an expert consultant.

**HISTORY OF THE MOVEMENT**

City government in America has followed a well-defined pattern. The small town meetings were replaced in growing communities by a representative form of government which became the aldermanic type. The abuses which grew out of this unwieldy form caused a wave of reforms.

The first commission form of government was set up in Galveston, Texas, after that city's disastrous flood. Under this plan, commissioners were elected to administer different departments of the municipal government. They also acted together as a council to formulate laws to govern the city and to plan a total financial program. This plan was adopted in Portland in 1913.

After 1915 few cities adopted the commission form of government.

Two other forms of government have developed since 1915. One is known as the "strong mayor-council plan." Denver, Houston, Nashville, Seattle and Los Angeles, among other cities, have adopted this form. Under this plan, the mayor is the full-time administrative head of the city. The council members serve only on a part-time basis. The mayor and council act as a legislative body, and in most cities the mayor has the power of veto. All are elected by popular vote. In most instances, the mayor appoints an administrative assistant, sometimes with the confirmation of the council, and such an assistant sometimes is given duties similar to those of a city manager.

The councilmen are usually elected at large on non-partisan ballots, but some cities elect by ward or position.

The other plan is called the "council-manager" form of city government. This plan varies in detail from city to city. The principal difference between this plan and the strong mayor plan is that under this plan the council appoints a city manager as the administrative head of the city, and the mayor has no administrative duties.

* Some of which are listed on Page 461.
HOW THE PROPOSED COUNCIL-MANAGER PLAN
WOULD WORK IN PORTLAND

The following description of how the proposed council-manager form of government would work is based upon the proposed amendment itself, and the claims and arguments of the proponents:

The Council, consisting of the mayor and eight councilmen elected at large, would be the legislative branch of the city government. Its members would have no administrative duties. The council members would serve staggered four-year terms, four of them being elected at each general election. They would continue to be employed in their own regular occupations, although they would devote considerable time to city government, just as do school board members, or the board members of a large corporation. Their primary duties would be to adopt needed legislation, and to examine and pass upon the city budget, which would be prepared by the city manager. They would see that the city manager properly executed their policies. They would be responsible for the selection and for continued supervision of the activities of the city manager whom they could replace as necessary. They would set salaries for themselves as well as for all other officials and employees of the city.

The Mayor would be the political leader and official representative of the city. He would appoint all non-administrative boards and commissions, and would be an ex-officio member of them. He would not be burdened by detailed administration as at present. Instead, the mayor would be free to devote his attention to building better public relations for the city, and to over-all planning and progressive objectives. He would be free to hold press conferences; to make information available, and to seek support for the council's policies at public meetings and through TV appearances; and generally to direct campaigns for the advancement of the city. He would have time to greet celebrities, to welcome conventions, and to attend civic receptions, banquets, and trade and industrial meetings. He would be able to give leadership to urban renewal, industrial development, and the host of other city projects. In his annual report, as well as from time to time, he could recommend such measures as he considered desirable, and comment on the general affairs of the city, including the city manager's proposed budget.

The City Manager would be responsible for all departments and all matters of city business. He would be appointed by the council, and would be directly responsible to it. He could be removed at any time by a vote of five council members if they were not satisfied with his work. The only limitation upon the council would be that it could not interfere with the appointments the city manager made or with the administration of the departments and bureaus under his control. He would be governed in his appointments by civil service rules where applicable.

The Departments. There would be nine operating departments, each with a director appointed by the manager and responsible to and removable by him. These departments are: Police, Fire, Health, Water Works, Finance, Public Works, Public Utilities, City Services, and Personnel. With the concurrence of the council he could combine two or more departments if this seemed desirable. The manager would be directly responsible for the successful operation of each department. Each department would be divided into sections headed by a chief who would be subject to civil service.

The Commission of Public Docks, the Exposition-Recreation Commission, and the Civil Service Commission, as well as the Board of Trustees of the Fire and Police Disability and Retirement Fund, would be outside of the jurisdiction of the manager.

THE CASE FOR THE COUNCIL-MANAGER FORM OF GOVERNMENT

The proponents of the proposed Charter Amendment contend that:

1. Forty-five years of the present COMMISSION form of government, under numerous administrations, have failed adequately to solve the many problems of a growing Portland. This experience is typical. There are only four large cities—Birmingham, Jersey City, Memphis and St. Paul—in addition to Portland, which still retain the commission form of city government.
2. Most other cities have adopted some other form of administrative authority to provide needed leadership. There are numerous reasons for this. Under the commission form there is no real administrative head to give required leadership. Thus the only general administrative authority held by Portland’s present mayor is the assignment of duties and departments to each commissioner. The individual commissioners often work against the mayor; in a recent election year, three commissioners ran against the incumbent mayor.

3. If a commissioner does not have the qualifications needed for particular departments, the mayor nevertheless has to make an assignment to him. If the commissioner proves ineffective, political reasons make it difficult to shift his responsibilities to another commissioner. An incompetent commissioner cannot be removed by the council, but can only be removed by a recall election.

4. Law enforcement in the past decade has been weak under several city administrations, but the commissioners have appeared to be powerless to change conditions under present charter provisions.

5. In some cities with council-manager government, the mayor is selected by the council from its own membership. This has led to charges that political leadership is lacking. The Portland charter amendment would provide political leadership by the popular election of a full-time mayor.

6. Under the commission form a commissioner must give up his business or profession and devote all of his time to his city position. Often this requirement has resulted in less able candidates for the commissionerships than for Portland’s part-time city school board. Under the proposed charter amendment, the councilmen would devote time to legislative responsibilities only, and would be able to continue their normal occupations. This should aid in attracting competent persons to serve on the council, and it should make it unnecessary for them to cater to selfish pressure groups in order to retain their means of livelihood.

7. The salary expense under the proposed plan need not exceed the present outlay. In addition, substantial saving could be realized through centralized administration, purchasing and budgetary control.

8. Letters from civic organizations, politicians, labor leaders, etc., in cities which have populations of 200,000 or more, and which have the council-manager government, indicate that these cities are satisfied with this form of government, and bear out the contention that labor leaders are not opposed to it where it has been in operation for some time.

9. Fortune (Nov. 1957) magazine’s appraisal of Cincinnati as the most efficiently governed large city in America indicates that the council-manager plan is effective in a large city.

THE CASE AGAINST THE COUNCIL-MANAGER FORM OF GOVERNMENT

Those speaking against the proposed charter amendment contend that:

1. No city larger than 240,000 population has adopted the council-manager form of city government in recent years, with the exception of San Antonio, Texas.

2. There is nothing basically wrong with the commission form of government that a few charter amendments could not correct, and a complete change in structure is not necessary.

3. Most of the problems of the city are financial and these problems can be solved only by a new tax base which would have to be adopted under any form of government.

4. The council-manager form will add materially to the cost of government, because of substantial increase in administrative salary expense.
5. It is undemocratic in that it will remove the administrative head of the city from direct control of the voters.

6. City managers are difficult to employ and command large salaries.

7. Tenure of most managers in cities averages only about five years, and since it takes about six months or more for a new man to grasp the problems of a city, there is a consequent lag in effective operation.

8. Managers come from many different types of cities and may attempt changes that might not be desirable for Portland.

9. The reputation of many city managers for efficiency has been achieved primarily at the expense of the employees.

10. One of the weaknesses of the proposed charter amendment is the provision for the full-time mayor. A full-time mayor may engage in political bickering with the manager, since the mayor would be the political head of the city. Also, the mayor, being a full-time official, would tend to dominate the council.

11. The three present councilmen carrying over on a full-time basis for the first two years of the new plan may unduly influence the new council because of their familiarity with city government.

12. Since 85% of the present city budget goes for wages and only 15% for equipment, there is little that a new government could do to effect savings. Wages will be the same or greater under any plan.

13. There is little evidence that a better type of candidate would seek the position of part-time councilman than is now running for commissioner.

14. Labor fears that while many business and professional men would be able to afford to serve on the council, few from the ranks of labor would be able to do so. This would tend to weaken the position of labor before the council.

15. The statement made by the proponents to the effect that "the trend in city government has been toward a council-manager form" is misleading, since most of the larger cities that have changed from commission or other types of government during the past twenty years have changed to the strong mayor-council form.

COMMITTEE'S DISCUSSION AND COMMENTS

Most changes in the forms of city government, especially in larger cities, have stemmed from reform movements to "throw the rascals out." This has not been true in Portland. No charges of corruption or gross mismanagement have been brought against any member of the present city government. The problem in Portland has been a failure of the city government to accomplish what many citizens feel a progressive city should accomplish.

A principal reason for this failure, in the opinion of the Committee, has been a chronic lack of effective leadership at the City Hall. In the judgment of the Committee, this is largely attributable to the structure of the existing city government. Under the commission form, the city has five administrators of equal status, each concerned primarily with his own department, each with political motivations, each saddled with both legislative and administrative responsibilities. This has made real leadership at the City Hall difficult if not impossible. It has made businesslike budgeting and long-range planning a real problem, due to interdepartmental conflicts of interest. It has resulted in some notable failures in the
realms of capital improvements, replacement of obsolete equipment and improvement of city services. It has delayed forthright action on the mass transit problem, off-street parking, sewer improvements and such things as city salaries, industrial development, functional consolidation of city-county services, and fringe area problems. And because of these failures of omission, voters have shown their lack of confidence by turning down a realistic city tax base measure and some necessary city improvements.

The Committee believes that the proposed council-manager form of government offers not an assurance but a significant and substantial probability of improvement in this important respect. This is so for several reasons.

In the first place, it is the Committee's belief that a city manager who is responsible for all departments of the city government would find himself face to face with all of the city's pending problems, and also with those that can be seen to be approaching with an ominous certainty. Thus he would know that he alone would be held responsible if he failed to develop and propose far-sighted plans and programs for meeting these problems. It is hardly conceivable that an experienced city manager would allow the city's salary scales to remain for years at pre-inflation levels, or that he would fail to find and offer some program for dealing with the impending crisis in the city's sewer system, or that he would allow the transit problem to drift into Portland's present predicament.

Secondly, the Committee agrees that a city council freed of administrative responsibilities, and whose members can act courageously on legislative matters without jeopardizing departmental objectives of their own, and indeed without risking the loss of their own immediate livelihood if their action brings defeat at the polls, can reasonably be expected to make even hard decisions in a responsible manner. This will largely depend, it is true, on the calibre of the councilmen. It is sufficient to say that if qualified councilmen are obtained in Portland after adoption of this charter amendment, the structure of the city government will not hamper them, but instead will encourage and assist them to act courageously and effectively.

In this connection it may be added that the Committee believes that many able men and women who are successful in their own lines of endeavor in business, labor or the professions, and who therefore would not even consider becoming candidates for the present city commissionerships, might be able and willing to serve on the proposed new city council, because they would not have to abandon their present means of livelihood to do so. Thus it is reasonable to expect that a high level of competence would ultimately be achieved and maintained on such a city council.

And finally, it is the committee's view that a full-time mayor, although a novel and almost untired feature of a council-manager plan, may prove advantageous in securing an aggressive and progressive municipal government for Portland. Again, much will depend on the calibre of the mayor. A poorly qualified occupant of this position might intrude on the city manager's administration of the municipal departments, or bicker with him over appointments, or seek personal political advantages for himself. Some checks on such abuses would exist: but the Committee does not regard these risks as too great. Furthermore, the political leadership which should be the mayor's special province under this proposal is a function that would be distinct and different from the city manager's responsibilities, and, if wisely developed, it could be a real value of the city. The Committee feels that the possible gains and advantages from this feature of the plan outweigh the hazard of abuses.

The Committee believes that these considerations justify the conclusion that the proposed council-manager form of government would increase the likelihood that Portland will have enlightened and progressive leadership in its municipal government in the years to come; and the Committee regards this as of major importance in its evaluation of this measure.

The second factor which in the Committee's judgment weighs heavily in favor of this proposal is the probability that administrative efficiency would be increased under the council-manager form of government. The Committee can find no basis for charging that the routine operations of the present city government are inefficiently performed. However,
the Committee believes that these functions could be administered even more efficiently under centralized supervision and budgetary control, and that this would in fact occur if a competent city manager is chosen.

If all departments of the city government reported ultimately to the same central authority, if their fiscal needs were examined by an official whose supervisory responsibility extended equally over all of them, and if the budget were finally passed upon by councilmen who have no individual loyalties as between the several departments, the result would almost surely be that the whole process of budget making would be strengthened and improved. Rivalry between the city's chief administrative officials would no longer have a significant part in determining what expenditures are to be authorized, and long-range financial planning would be facilitated.

The Committee believes that centralized administrative supervision and financial management would prove beneficial in Portland's city hall, as it has in other cities across the country.

To summarize what has been said, the Committee has reached the conclusion that the arguments in favor of the council-manager form of government as here proposed may be reduced to two that have real substance and validity. These are, first, that this form of government would facilitate progressive and far-sighted leadership in meeting the many problems now confronting Portland; and second, that it would encourage increased efficiency in the administration of the municipal departments and in the city's budget-making process. The Committee does not assume that these advantages would be gained immediately, merely by adoption of the council-manager form of government, or that they would be realized in full at all future times, even after the new government is well established. An improved form of government should not be expected to guarantee good administration and planning, but only to facilitate it; and this the council-manager plan appears to do.

Perhaps the most important criticism of the council-manager form of government that is advanced by its opponents is that administration of the city government would be removed from democratic control by the city's voters. As thus stated, the Committee feels that this criticism is too broad. Even though a city manager would not be subject to recall by the voters, there would be many indirect controls that the voters would still exercise, the chief among these being the alertness of the press, the readiness of dissatisfied groups to speak up in opposition at council meetings and elsewhere, the probable sensitiveness of the councilmen to protests and criticisms, and the voters' prerogative of rejecting bond and tax proposals and of refusing to re-elect incumbent councilmen.

Nevertheless the Committee concedes that the city administration under the council-manager plan would be somewhat less responsive to public opinion and to the pressures of affected groups than has been the case under the present form of government. The Committee regards this as a valid objection to the council-manager plan. It is common experience that governmental agencies that are too far removed from political controls tend to become rigid and "bureaucratic" in their actions. On the other hand, there would be some administrative gain in insulating city officials from direct political pressures, and these gains would in some measure offset the losses in this respect. Furthermore, the Committee feels that a municipal government can never become wholly insulated from democratic controls, because it operates in a limited geographical area and has direct and constant contacts with its electorate. For these reasons the Committee feels that this objection to the council-manager form of government is not of controlling importance.

A second criticism of this proposal, frequently advanced by labor spokesmen, is that a city manager would be able to effect reforms in the administration of the city government only at the expense of the city's employees, since 85% of the city budget is used for wages and salaries. The Committee believes that this criticism is not well founded. Many avenues for improved administration should be open to a city manager other than direct or indirect reductions in wages and salaries. Indeed, the Committee anticipates that a city manager would be more inclined to urge increases in the city's wages and salaries than the contrary. This has been the experience of other municipalities, a recent instance being the current budget proposed by the city manager in Salem, Oregon.
Labor representatives have also expressed the fear that the city council as constituted under the proposed charter amendment would become over-balanced with business and professional men, because of the likelihood that few persons from the ranks of labor would be able to afford to serve on such a council. The committee recognizes that there is some basis for this concern and that this is a matter of importance. It would be essential to have a balanced and fair representation of the entire community on the proposed council. However, the Committee also believes that if labor itself, as well as other community leaders, remain alert to this problem, it can be adequately guarded against. In recent years, organized labor in Portland has produced many qualified and competent community leaders who have, in fact, participated generously in community activities and who have contributed much to their success. There is no valid reason for believing that labor could not similarly contribute to the effectiveness of the new city council under the proposed charter amendment.

This Committee believes that a more significant weakness in the provisions for the proposed city council arises from the fact that four of the councilmen would be elected at large every two years. In view of the record of Portland's own all-too-recent experience and that of Multnomah County in filling numerous elective positions at large on a single ballot, the Committee is unable to understand the failure of this charter amendment to provide for numbered positions on the proposed new city council, similar to those on the present council. This error, in the opinion of the Committee, will require early correction, if the present measure is adopted.

The opponents of the council-manager proposal have suggested that an experienced city manager would presumably come to Portland as a stranger to this city, and that he might attempt to impose novel and unsuitable administrative procedures on Portland's city government. This seems to the committee to be a relatively small risk. Such an eventuality would hardly occur if Portland is successful in obtaining a competent and qualified city manager, because such a manager would not be likely to make mistakes of this kind. While over the years this city would doubtless have its share of experiences with unsatisfactory city managers, it should be one of the cities offering a higher salary for this position, and so should ordinarily be able to attract an able administrator.

The Municipal Yearbook shows that the average tenure of present city managers in this country is eight years. This seems adequate for good municipal administration.

There remains for comment the contention that is frequently advanced by the opponents of this charter amendment, that no city with a population in excess of 240,000 has adopted the council-manager form of city government in recent years, with the exception of San Antonio, Texas. It is of interest to note that when a previous City Club committee made a study of this subject in 1933, the charge was made that no city with a population in excess of 100,000 had changed to the city manager form of government. In the intervening years, many cities having populations in excess of 100,000 have changed to this form of government, and those opposing such a change have therefore found it necessary to modify their objection, in effect conceding that the council-manager plan has been used successfully in somewhat larger cities.

This Committee believes that it is not important to determine what other cities of Portland's size, if any, have or have not adopted the council-manager form of government. In any given city the occurrence or non-occurrence of a movement for a change, and the character of any change proposed, are likely to be explainable only in terms of the detailed conditions existing in each city, and these cannot readily be evaluated by outsiders. In any event, the question here is not as to other cities, but as to how well or how badly the council-manager plan would work in Portland.

However, the same objection is sometimes expressed as a contention that the council-manager plan is suitable for smaller cities, but that it is neither necessary nor appropriate for cities as large as Portland. In support of this, it is pointed out that smaller cities usually cannot afford to employ capable administrators for each of their several departments, and so can get better administration by employing a single competent manager to administer all of their departments. In contrast to this, it is then pointed out that Portland is large.
enough to be able to afford, and it does afford, to employ competent department heads for each of its departments; and from this it is said to follow that in this city a city manager is not needed and would be unable to administer the city any more efficiently than at present.

The Committee finds this argument unpersuasive. It is probably true that the change to the council-manager form of government will frequently bring to smaller cities the administrative advantage mentioned above, and that a similar advantage would not result and is not needed in Portland. But this does not mean that the advantages and benefits from this change that are discussed earlier in this report would not be realized in Portland. The Committee remains convinced that these advantages and benefits would in fact be realized in Portland, even though this city may be larger than many of the cities that have adopted the council-manager form of government.

Some confirmation of this is to be found in the reports which the proponents of this charter amendment have received from ten other cities that were smaller when they first adopted the council-manager form of government, but which have grown and are now comparable to Portland in size. These ten cities, and the years in which they adopted the council-manager form of government, are the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Adoption of Council-Manager Plan</th>
<th>1950 Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dayton, Ohio</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>243,872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berkeley, California</td>
<td>1923</td>
<td>113,805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cincinnati, Ohio</td>
<td>1926</td>
<td>503,998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas City, Missouri</td>
<td>1926</td>
<td>456,622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma City, Oklahoma</td>
<td>1927</td>
<td>243,504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochester, New York</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>332,488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas, Texas</td>
<td>1931</td>
<td>434,462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakland, California</td>
<td>1931</td>
<td>384,575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Diego, California</td>
<td>1932</td>
<td>334,387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toledo, Ohio</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>303,616</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The proponents of the present Portland proposal sent inquiries to and received replies from political party officials, labor leaders, and business and professional people in the above cities. All of those who answered these inquiries indicated continuing satisfaction with the council-manager form of government, and said that their cities have no intention of seeking a change. It is significant to note the general endorsement of the council-manager plan by labor leaders. For example, in Oklahoma City, the Building Trades Council joined in a campaign to prevent the overthrow of this form of government.

In considering the experience of other cities under the council-manager plan, special attention may properly be accorded to Cincinnati, because of its size and because of its long record of excellent administration under a city manager. There is persuasive evidence that the principal reason for this success has been the continuing interest and activity of a strong citizen's group. Among other things, this group encourages qualified persons from all segments of the community to become candidates for the city council, and actively aids them in their election campaigns. The committee believes that a similar citizens' group in Portland, which should be non-partisan in character and effectively representative of business, labor, the professions, and other interested groups, would be the best possible assurance that the council-manager plan of government would be a success in this city. An alert citizenry is the key to success of any plan of government.
CONCLUSION

The Committee's conclusion is that the advantages likely to be gained for Portland from adoption of the council-manager form of government as proposed in this charter amendment, clearly and convincingly outweigh the weaknesses and shortcomings of this plan.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends that Portland citizens should vote "55 Yes" on this measure.

Respectfully submitted,

McDannell Brown
Leslie M. Finch
Allan Hart
Harry Holloway
Tom Humphrey
Howard Lane
John W. McHale, Chairman

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