A PLAN FOR COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY ACTION

IN

LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

by

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Dear Professor Adams:

I herewith respectfully submit this thesis entitled, "A Plan for Comprehensive Community Action in Lincoln, Nebraska", in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in City Planning.

Respectfully yours,

[Signature]

Donald D. White
A Plan for Comprehensive Community Action
in Lincoln, Nebraska

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AN INTRODUCTION TO LINCOLN

The promise of salt brought early settlers to Lincoln. A town grew up on the eastern edge of the shallow basin cut in two by Salt Creek. The surrounding ring of low hills protected the original site from tornadoes. In 1861 two companies were extracting salt, and people came from as far away as Des Moines to buy this scarce staple of domestic life. Wells as deep as a thousand feet were drilled to increase the flow of brine, but it is no longer commercially profitable.

Nebraska became a state in 1867. On August 26 three of the founders filed a plat of the village. At the time lots brought fifteen to one hundred fifty dollars each and during the first year $53,000 worth of land was sold. The next year a wooden building served as capitol when the state records had been stealthily removed from Omaha and brought to Lincoln during the night. This was the first of eight major state institutions to be located in Lincoln. The cornerstone of the earliest building of the University of Nebraska was laid in 1869. The first classes were held in 1871. Two hospitals, two penal institutions, the state fair grounds, and a home for children have become a part of the life of the city. The federal government has recently erected a veterans hospital near Lincoln.
The most rapid growth in population took place from 1880 to 1890, when the number rose from 14,000 to 40,000. During the next decade, because of the drought, grasshoppers, and hard times, the number decreased by twenty-seven per cent. Some outlying districts ceased to develop. After this setback Lincoln grew steadily. Not until 1920 did the population again exceed the boomtime figure. At the present time the number is between ninety and one hundred thousand.

Lincoln is the trading center for a rich agricultural region. Many hundreds of professional workers are employed in education institutions, governmental offices, and the home offices of insurance companies. Recent increase in industrial activities tend to round out the economic structure.

The several education institutions have developed Lincoln as a city of culture. A considerable number of college graduates reside in the city. At one time the title of "the holy city" arose from the fact that Lincoln had one hundred churches, one for each seven hundred inhabitants. There has always been a low major crime rate and also a minimum of misdemeanors. Most of the schools conform to modern standards since they have been built in the past thirty years. Large and small parks are well distributed about the city. Most of the homes are well set back from tree-lined streets and are of pleasing architec-
ture. Until recent years there have been few large apartment houses. For these reasons Lincoln has gained the reputation of being a favorable residential city.

Almost without exception the office buildings are of fireproof construction, and several are completely air conditioned. A half-dozen range from ten to eighteen stories in height. As a retail center the city has more shopping facilities than other cities of its size. Large factories are well distributed and separated from residential areas. Taken together, these conditions make Lincoln a desirable city in which to work and do business.

A federal highway north and south and two east and west make Lincoln easily accessible. Two main lines of the Burlington interchange freight in a large gravity classification yard west of the city. The Denver to Chicago line of the Rock Island Railroad passes through the eastern residential section. The Union Pacific, Northwestern, and Missouri Pacific Railroads also serve the city. Good freight connections built up a large wholesaling business in Lincoln.

Briefly, this is Lincoln.
GOVERNMENT OF THE CITY OF LINCOLN

Home Rule Charter

Electorate

Mayor

Six Councilmen Elected at Large

Attorney

Personnel Director

Department of Public Welfare and Safety

- Fire
- Police
- Health
- City Property
- Municipal Coal and Gasoline

Department of Accounts and Finances

- Clerk
- Auditor
- Treasurer
- Purchasing
- Assessing
- Registrations and elections
- Information Bureau

Department of Parks, Public Property and Improvements

- Engineer
- Parks
- Water
- Light
- Sewers
- Streets and Paving Repair
- Plumbing and Building Inspection
- Aviation
- Recreation
CHAPTER I

PROBLEMS FACING THE CITY

The realization comes to all that we are still far from what we visualized as the post-war world. How soon will it come? That is hard to forecast, but one thing is certain, that no automatic process will bring it about. It requires more than time. For Lincoln it means a program of comprehensive community action. The civic enthusiasm devoted to wartime activities needs to be directed toward achieving post-war goals. What are these goals and how can they be reached? Such questions form the basis of this discussion.

Need for Vision

To determine the course for the future, there is a great need to exercise foresight. Lincoln stands as a monument to the vision of its original founders. To them fell the initial task of determining the physical form that the city would take. On the raw prairie they staked out the lots and streets that today form the heart of Lincoln. In early days the 100 foot major streets may have seemed to some like an extraordinary waste of land that more profitably could have been put into house lots. Yet the founders were not thinking of the small village of the next few years, but saw a city of the future. Today these wide streets and ample sidewalks are a distinct asset to the
business district. Early activities did not end at the mere determination of the physical shape of the city. The forefathers actively campaigned for future growth and through their efforts the state capitol and state university were established in Lincoln. From this auspicious start the city grew to its present position as a political and educational center. This may seem to have come about through the normal process of city growth. Actually it came only as a result of persistent efforts on the part of civic minded individuals to see to the furthering of the welfare of the whole community. Unless the present generation exerts the same kind of influence, Lincoln in the future will fall into the pattern now evident in many larger cities resulting in costly slums and other civic liabilities.

Today, the problem is not one of staking out the virgin prairie. Lincoln as it exists will have to be reckoned with, for the city cannot be considered as if in a frozen state. Building, rebuilding, expansion, and change are going on at all times. Even during the period from 1940 to 1946, when a major part of home construction was stopped by the war effort, the number of private dwelling units in the city increased by eight per cent. 2 These changes from year to year will determine the future structure of Lincoln. At the outset of establishing

1. Hubbard and Hubbard. Our cities today and tomorrow. p. 206
2. U. S. Bureau of the census. Housing characteristics for 108 selected areas. p. 19
Lincoln, it was easy for a small group of men to determine the best pattern then known for the city. Today there are so many diverse interests and ownerships that any major change results only after diligent and well directed action over a long period of time. Although the task may seem impossible, actually a great common interest demands that the city structure be improved. What is needed is a clear picture of the way in which improvements can be brought about. This must start from a realization of what problems face the city.

In looking ahead to the future, there is a need to take stock of the present situation and to see whatever potentialities and problems it offers. During the period of the war years rapid changes occurred. To go forward on a basis of pre-war conditions or even those existing immediately at the close of the war would be unwise. After a reasonable period of adjustment, a more accurate picture can be obtained of the future course of Lincoln.

Population Growth

A basic essential in the determination of needs is an accurate estimate of the future population of the city. The intervention of the war has destroyed the accuracy of forecasts made before 1941. Not only that, numerous changes have resulted in the factors contributing to population growth. In addition to a rapid rise in birth rate, Lincoln experienced a great influx of veterans to the universities and college, and a large scale expan-
sion of industry. An increase in population is evident. What this will mean in the future school requirements can be predicted as well as the need for other community facilities. How can the location of these facilities be determined? First step would be a study not only of total population but also the areas of increase and shifts. At the present time each city agency makes its own estimates. The Board of Education estimates school population, the city engineer must estimate population for sewer design, and so it goes throughout all phases of civic improvement. All agencies might consolidate their data in one city research section. This would produce a more complete source of information both for the city and for the general public. From time to time as additional data became available the estimate could be revised and ready then for immediate use.

**Industrial Expansion**

Another major change that appeared in Lincoln immediately following the war was the tremendous increase in industrial employment. Most of this increase occurred in 1946 when the number of persons employed in industry is estimated to have soared from 5,768 to 13,405. Immediately the position of industry in the community took on new emphasis. What are the effects of this expansion and

4. Ibid. p. 768
what is the prospect for future development? Only a detailed study can adequately answer these questions. The interrelation of industrial activity and population is significant. With more jobs available, the community will be able to support more people, but just an increase in this one activity cannot be considered separately. The total employment picture in the community must be considered. As for the possibility of future expansion, any predictions must be based upon a study of trends not only within the community but in the nation as well. Within the community the land available for industry, the housing available for workers, and the transportation facilities can all be analyzed in order that the most favorable use can be made of the existing resources and modifications can be adopted for the general welfare of the community. It is vitally important that plans for the industrial future shall closely relate private activities to those of the city government.

Decentralization of the City

During the past decade Lincoln underwent a radical change in the basic principle of its physical organization. As originally laid out, it was a typical midwestern town with all activities, business, educational, cultural, and political, centering in the downtown area.

5. Segoe. Local planning administration. p. 93-99
Expansion from the central area went to the southeast and the northeast toward suburban communities. In the late twenties and early thirties four suburbs were taken into the city to form one government spreading over the whole urban area. It soon became obvious that existing small high schools in the former suburbs were inadequate and would have to be replaced. Lincoln High School already exceeded the desirable maximum size for a single high school. Another school was required to serve the newly added areas. In 1941 Northeast High School was built so that the northeastern area of the city could be served efficiently. Eventually, as this process is applied to other facilities, a change will take place in that activities formerly provided for the city as a whole will then be available in each neighborhood. At present every neighborhood is served by an elementary school, many have parks and playgrounds, and a few have shopping centers. A report says, "It is rather striking that practically no joint planning in the layout of school sites and parks is evident in the location of these facilities." In the future with neighborhood planning children will be able to go to school without crossing heavily traveled streets. Parks and playgrounds will be near at hand so that more frequent use can be made of them. Neighborhood centers will be convenient to save time for the housewives in

daily shopping. The proper location and utilization of these facilities can be obtained by planning.

State Institutions

Eight major state institutions in and around Lincoln have contributed to the growth of the city. At the same time special problems of jurisdiction and activity arise among the state and local government units. In the area surrounding the Nebraska State Capitol both the city and state want to create the proper setting for this beautiful building. There is a great demand for frontages surrounding the capitol for erection of apartment and business buildings. As is the case with all state owned property, jurisdiction of the state is exercised only over the land that it actually possesses. Zoning provisions for set-back lines and height regulations must be enforced by the city. In the 1947 session of the Legislature a bill was introduced to create a Capitol Environments Commission. One of the reasons given for the defeat of this bill was that no city planning agency existed in Lincoln to cooperate with the state. A joint approach is needed to the problem. With both the city and the state participating in future plans, each can furnish the legislative and financial cooperation that will establish harmonious areas surrounding the Capitol.

In the area about the city campus of the University of Nebraska are the housing accommodations for the

student body and the areas of future campus expansion. Although legally a part of the residence area of the city, they are actually an adjunct of the University. In these areas of joint interest a common plan needs to be developed so that complementary services can be provided. As the business area expands toward the campus, student housing areas must be protected. Coordination is needed to obtain the maximum use of land not taken by the University to assure that they are not cut off from the rest of the city. At the present time areas north of the campus are isolated from direct contact with other residence sections of the city. A common plan can guide the development of university facilities and the growth of the city in that area so that they will be mutually complementary.

Other state institutions do not present as pressing problems as do the capitol environs and the city campus of the University. The fact remains that in every case the need arises at some time for the city to protect the interests of the state. Zoning jurisdiction of Lincoln extends for three miles outside of the city limits to reach even the state penitentiary and state hospital. At any time problems may arise that will require action by city and state agencies, and so a continuing method of cooperation needs to be established. The Planning Commission is the most logical body to perform this function.

8. Nebraska statutes, 1943. 15-901, 15-902, 15-903
MAJOR STREET SYSTEM GUIDES TRAFFIC "LINE OF DESIRE"

Map 1
"Line of desire" represents shortest distance to destination.
Traffic must actually follow major traffic streets.
Result: longer distance to destination.

DONALD D. WHITE  M.C.P. THESIS M.I.T.  MAY 1948
Physical Structure

Development of Lincoln must take place from the present city structure. Existing facilities will be modified and extended to serve future needs. As the city grows, the ability of the system of streets, transportation, and the public utilities to serve the community should increase. Modification of the present systems can bring greater efficiency.

Major Streets

Origin and destination studies of traffic in Lincoln made by the State Highway Department show the "line of desire" of passenger car movements. This indicates where people would drive if they took the shortest distance to their destination. An ideal street system would allow everyone to go directly to his destination. The major "line of desire" in Lincoln comes from the vicinity of College View in the southeast and terminates when it reaches the central business district. Next major "line of desire" comes from the vicinity of Havelock in the northeast and likewise runs to the central business district. Looking on a street map one quickly sees that at the present time no diagonal streets exist. The checkerboard pattern of the center of the city establishes the major street system east and west and north and south. To go from Havelock to the central business district.

9. Nebr. dept. of roads and irrigation. Lincoln traffic survey. Chart 1
LINCOLN
NEBRASKA

AREA SEWERED INTO SALT CREEK

DONALD D. WHITE
M.C.P. THESIS M.I.T.
MAY 1948

SENSES CREATE HEALTH HAZARD

Untreated sewage flows from sanitary sewers into Salt Creek to form a continuously potential health hazard.
district, a driver travels three miles south and three and a half miles west, making a total trip of six and a half miles. A diagonal street would be four and six-tenths miles long, saving one and nine-tenths miles or 29 per cent of the distance.

Major traffic streets are a hazard to school children. Five schools are located on major traffic streets and six are within one block of a major street. The school survey completed in 1946 states, "In the future development of the city, the co-operation of school and city authorities may improve the situation by re-routing major streets and guarding against the opening of any new arterials in the vicinity of schools."\(^\text{10}\)

Location of major streets is a problem involving many city agencies. The Board of Education, the City Engineer, and the Traffic Commission are most interested. A major street plan prepared by the Planning Commission would coordinate the interests of all these agencies.

Transportation

The presence of railroad grade crossings and heavy train movements are a potential traffic hazard. With five railroads entering the wholesale district, Lincoln multiplies the grade crossing problem in that the Rock Island and Missouri Pacific Railroads go through well developed residential areas. The O Street crossing

\(^{10}\text{Hill and Brownell. Op. cit. p. 218}\)
SCHOOL COSTS HIGH IN SCATTERED RESIDENTIAL AREAS Map 3

Schools with highest average annual operating costs are located in scattered residential areas.

$6.00

$4.00

$2.00

$0

DONALD D. WHITE

M.C.P. THESIS M.I.T.

MAY 1948
of the Rock Island probably carries more vehicular traffic than any other crossing in Nebraska.\textsuperscript{11} The transportation net serves an industrial area concentrated on the west, north, and east of the central business district. A coordinated transportation network would reduce the number of grade crossings and enable the railroads to operate more efficiently in Lincoln.

**Scattering of Residential Areas**

Lincoln has a low density of population of only 3,374 persons per square mile.\textsuperscript{12} The incorporation of outlying suburbs into the city and scattered development in blighted subdivisions account for the spreading of utility services over a wide area. A vestige of the time when Havelock was a separate suburb remains in the two sanitary sewers that dump raw sewage into Salt Creek. This practice violates modern concepts of good sanitation. The high cost of providing facilities to widely scattered areas is reflected in all forms of city service. The average annual operating cost of Lakeview School on a comparative basis is over seven times that of the average of seven largest schools.\textsuperscript{13} Lakeview is a suburban area that has never developed yet still is provided with full city services. Financially the city cannot afford to support this type of sparsely developed area. Stricter

\textsuperscript{11} Nebraska department of roads and irrigation. Traffic survey of Lincoln. p. xii
\textsuperscript{12} U. S. bureau of the census. Cities supplement, statistical abstract.
\textsuperscript{13} Hill and Brownell. Op. Cit. p. 227
control of subdivision practice would prevent reoccurrence of a situation which devalues the homes in the area and burdens the city financially. A utilities plan can be developed and new subdivisions placed where they will fit into the utility pattern. Again this is a problem involving the interests of several city agencies.

**Housing**

The housing shortage in Lincoln was eased at the end of the war by the establishment of Huskerville at what was formerly the Lincoln Army Air Base. Army buildings were converted into housing units and a community served by Lincoln developed. Several industries moved into larger buildings. Lincoln now operates a four-mile railroad spur from Woodlawn to Huskerville. The future of the area has not yet been determined. With the presence of industries, the community promises to become independent of Lincoln. A definite program for the area must consider how it fits into the housing needs of Lincoln. Will there be a demand for housing in this area when the shortage is over? Will there be increased demand for housing in Lincoln? A general study of housing needs in Lincoln would be a part of the answer to what the future is for Huskerville.

**Lack of Future Plans**

Lincoln was caught completely unprepared by the gift of the fifty-acre Rogers Tract. No surveys existed
to show the needs of the community or the proper manner for development of the area. Considerable time will go by before some plan of utilization for the area can be prepared. In the meantime any benefit will be completely lost.

Present status of the city auditorium location is indefinite. Funds are accumulating for construction and the site has been cleared. Questions which have been raised as to the size and suitability of the site remain unanswered since no complete study has been made of the location. The successful operation of the auditorium depends to a large degree upon convenience of access to bus lines, parking areas, and the central business district. The public interest requires adequate study be given to the placing of such an important building.

At all times there should be available to the city the information needed to go forward rapidly with public projects. Federal public works funds are available only for those projects that can offer statistics to justify construction. A backlog of future projects should be maintained by the city. Through planning, these projects can give a greater benefit to the whole city.

14. Detroit city plan commission. Civic center plan. p. 3
For thirty-seven years civic minded groups have been presenting plans for Lincoln. Despite the obvious need for some kind of comprehensive planning, all the enthusiasm of the proponents, and all the abilities of the technicians making the plans, not one of the proposals has been accepted by the city.

City Beautiful Approach

During the early part of this century there was a strong current of civic action sweeping the country, which has come to be called the City Beautiful movement. Even at that time our relatively new cities were exhibiting a shabby appearance. Civic centers, parks, and other public improvements were introduced to give a face lifting to the city. Beautification was the sole purpose stemming from the thought that a beautiful city to behold was one enjoyable to live in. Lincoln did not lack this desire. The Municipal Plan Commission of prominent citizens established by an ordinance of the City Council in 1911 set about the task and decided to hire a consultant to advise them. Myron H. West, president of the American Park Builders Association, had designed municipal park systems in Decatur and Jacksonville, Illinois. The Com-
mission hired his organization to do a plan of parks and playgrounds along with related improvements.¹

When presented, the plan offered a solution in the grand manner, but it was never carried out. Impossibilities proposed resulted in the plan never being officially accepted. Soon afterward the Plan Commission became inactive and was never revived. From this initial failure at least two points of advice are obtained for future reference. Most obvious is the fact that a too ambitious plan offered without proper conditioning of public opinion will result in complete rejection of the whole scheme. Second, recognition should be taken of the fact that, although a plan of beautification offers an esthetic value to the citizen, it must at the same time consider that there are many other values in daily city life. A comprehensive plan offers a balance of values, economic, social, and physical. A more complete plan has a better chance for success since it can more easily be shown to affect a larger segment of the population.

**Zoning Approach**

After a lapse of ten years, the planning movement again came forward in 1921 with the establishment of the Zoning Advisory Board. J. E. Miller, who had been chairman of the Municipal Plan Commission, was again named chairman. Serving with him were G. J. Culbertson, a realtor, M. I. Evinger, an engineer, O. J. Fee, a busi-

¹ American institute of architects. City planning progress, 1913.
nessman, and J. L. Teeters, a wholesale jeweler. A recently formed New York organization known as the Technical Advisory Corporation was hired to prepare a zoning ordinance. George B. Ford and Ernest P. Goodrich, prominent technicians in the new field of zoning, wrote the ordinance.

Having seen the American Park Builders Plan fail because of lack of public understanding, the Board determined to gain public support even before the ordinance was prepared. Mayor Frank Zehrung invited Ernest P. Goodrich to spend a week in Lincoln. During that period a dozen meetings were arranged at which the objectives sought in the zoning ordinance were discussed. At that time it became apparent that the zoning ordinance represented only a part of the planning process. Mayor Zehrung requested the Technical Advisory Corporation to prepare an outline for a complete planning study of the city. As a result Goodrich and Ford made a study of the essentials in city planning for Lincoln (see appendix), which was nationally published as being a standard for planning surveys. At the close of 1922, Lincoln had a proposed zoning ordinance prepared by competent technicians and also an outline for the future study of the city.

To understand the writing of the zoning ordinance, the background of that time should be mentioned. Zoning

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2. Technical advisory corp. Building zone ordinance and map as proposed for Lincoln, Nebraska
was a relatively recent addition to the functions of city
government. New York had the first comprehensive zoning
ordinance adopted in 1916. By 1921 there had been many
zoning ordinances written, but the procedure was still
relatively new and unfamiliar to the public. Realizing
this, the authors presented their work in an explanatory
manner. After each section of the ordinance was a para-
graph to explain the need for the provisions and how they
would apply to normal situations. The work of the Tech-
nical Advisory Corporation reflected experience with the
urban concentration of large cities. Nine types of zoning
districts were set up, but residence areas were passed
over rapidly with two classifications. A majority of the
provisions concerned the construction of apartment build-
ings and the courts, yards, and set-backs necessary in
locating high buildings. At this time there were almost
no apartment houses in Lincoln, and the possibility of
there ever being a closely built-up area as existed in
larger cities was very remote. Public reaction to the
ordinance was that it was unduly complicated and impossible
of administration.  

Upon presentation of the zoning ordinance to
the City Council, a political issue developed over its
passage with the result that action was delayed for six

5. Governmental research institute, op. cit. p. 3
months. Finally the ordinance failed to be adopted. Loss of the key battle over the zoning ordinance so weakened the movement that nothing further in the way of planning was accomplished. Educational work done to convince the public of the value of zoning did bear fruit. Interest kept the question alive, until in 1926 a zoning ordinance prepared by the city legal and engineering departments went into effect.\(^6\)

As a reaction from the complicated ordinance of the Technical Advisory Corporation, the 1926 Ordinance was relatively simple and provided only four use districts. In the first period of twenty-seven months, there were thirteen amending ordinances passed. In 1929, the ordinance was rewritten, but still retained its simple form.\(^7\) Frequency of changing the ordinance increased as time went on. The present zoning ordinance was passed in 1945 to replace a 1943 Ordinance that had been amended twenty times in the previous eighteen months.\(^8\) With the addition of numerous amendments, the zoning ordinance has increased in length, requirements have been made more complicated, and the number of districts increased to eleven. Despite the many changes in the ordinance, the property regulation map still to a large degree maintains the basic land use pattern established in 1926. Areas zoned for business in

\(^6\) City of Lincoln, Nebraska. Ordinance \#2646, March 22, 1926

\(^7\) City of Lincoln, Nebraska. Ordinance \#3039, April 23, 1929

\(^8\) City of Lincoln, Nebraska. Ordinance \#4003, March 26, 1945
the original ordinance, and now built up with residences, are still zoned for business today. Changes in land requirements caused by the addition of suburban areas during the twenty year period are unrecognized.

The present zoning ordinance is only an indirect result of the work of the Zoning Advisory Board, but it was successful in making the community aware of one of the major phases of planning. Their experience shows that planning is a peculiarly local function and must be carried on with a full awareness of local feeling and conditions. Consultants coming from the outside are handicapped in that a rapid visit to the community fails to give an insight into the vagaries of public opinion. This case also shows that proponents of planning should have put the emphasis upon city planning in general rather than upon a zoning ordinance specifically. Public refusal of that one element would not have destroyed public support for a continued planning program.

**Chamber of Commerce Approach**

Finding the city unwilling to foster a planning agency, the local businessmen utilized the Chamber of Commerce to keep alive interest in city physical development. Frank D. Tomson as chairman of the city planning division announced the gift of a tract of 560 acres in January, 1930. 9 This formed the first and major portion of Pioneer's

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Park which was later increased in size through additional gifts of the original donor, Mr. John F. Harris of Chicago.

High point of planning under Chamber of Commerce sponsorship came in 1945 when Lawrence E. Hovick served as director of planning. During that year an informational paper on aviation prospects presented Lincoln's case for potential air travel to the Civil Aeronautics Commission. A study entitled "Industrial Planning" proposed a program for systematic development of industrial sites. Major work of the year, however, centered around the report entitled "Planning for Lincoln". Since this is the most recent of the studies of the city, a detailed analysis will be presented.

"Planning for Lincoln" comprises two parts. In the first, background factors influencing future growth are summarized. Domination of the basic economic factor, agriculture, is characterized as somewhat stabilized by the political, educational, industrial, and financial activities. Compilation of various census figures leads to the conclusion that the incoming trend of population should be encouraged and the outgoing trend discouraged. Assuming this to happen, a population of 90,000 in 1950 growing to 100,000 in 1960 is predicted.

Brief recommendations contained in the second part cover a wide variety of topics from the possibility

11. Ibid. p. 19
of water navigation into Lincoln to the establishment of a center for delinquent girls. Most specific are the proposals for the downtown area which include underpasses on main traffic streets and conversion of the main business street into a landscaped pedestrian way. Extensive modification of the area around the University of Nebraska campus, and the development of a civic center around a "Capitol Mall", intended to bring those areas into their proper relationship with the rest of the city. Detailed steps proposed to remove the Rock Island Railroad tracks from Antelope Valley. Exhortation for better agricultural practices rounded out the report.

Plainly evident throughout "Planning for Lincoln" was the hope that the utopian view of the future city offered to the public would inspire acceptance and concerted action for more active planning. Just the opposite reaction was produced. Far distant proposals were considered to be immediately forthcoming. Impact upon the local reader terrified rather than inspired, leading to the feeling that after all it only represented a bad dream. The position of director of planning was abolished.

From this latest attempt at planning it is seen that, before any drastic change of the present city structure will be accepted, a careful and complete education of public opinion must be effected. Inspiration comes only when the goal seems readily obtainable. Although not a particular criticism of this plan, there remains the fact
that any organization, Chamber of Commerce or otherwise, can accomplish a program only by working through the municipal government. Detailed plans will necessarily be made by city agencies both for financing and construction.

Present Situation

At the present time Lincoln is again appointing a planning commission and preparing to undertake the organization of another planning program. A letter written by the zoning board to the city council in the summer of 1947 requested that some sort of a planning agency be created. In October a citizen's group known as the Government Research Institute published a bulletin setting forth in summary form the basic principles of planning procedure through a planning commission.\footnote{12 Governmental research institute. Op. cit.} This combined effort resulted in an ordinance being presented to the City Council to establish a planning commission. The question that must now be faced is what kind of a program should the planning commission develop.

To organize an effective planning program in Lincoln, the points of weakness of the previous attempts should be avoided. In none of these plans did local agencies play a part in formulating the plan. The cooperation of those persons who every day are faced with the problems of making the city operate plays a vital part in the planning process. The program must be comprehensive in both
the plans prepared and in the education of the public to understand the goals sought. Lincoln can then move ahead to future action.
CHAPTER III
PLANNING RESOURCES

As the first move in a plan of action for the community, Lincoln should take an inventory of planning resources. Those groups which in the past have fostered the planning movement provide the most potent source of continuing interest. Even though past efforts may seem to have gained little, important lessons are to be learned even in seeming failure. Also within the community lie many un-tapped sources of both information and support for the program. Only a few of the most obvious are considered.

The Chamber of Commerce

The Lincoln Chamber of Commerce actively participated in the national program to foster post-war plans. In the previous chapter a detailed history of the program has been given. The fact remains that the Chamber of Commerce still is probably the strongest of the groups supporting planning in Lincoln. Interest has not been limited to industrial and commercial problems alone. Last year the Capitol Environs Committee succeeded in preventing further encroachment of apartment houses into the area facing the capitol. From first-hand experience they know the danger in the failure of ineffective zoning in Lincoln
to protect public buildings. Why not offer them the opportunity of effectuating a program to see that in the future all public areas will receive the protection of adequate zoning? Composed of leaders in the business field, the Chamber of Commerce may take a prominent part in civic endeavor.

The Junior Chamber of Commerce

Younger businessmen in the community have expressed the desire to see specific projects accomplished through the improvements program of the Junior Chamber of Commerce. To date only a few of these projects have come to fruition. All these men have an active interest in the future of Lincoln, for it is closely allied with their own futures. Strong support could be expected for a forward looking program. At this time they are particularly interested in school and recreation problems since most are raising children. Many have lived in Lincoln all their lives, more have gone to the University of Nebraska, and all are keenly aware that Lincoln can have a brighter future.

Governmental Research Institute

The program resulting in the establishment of the Planning Commission received considerable help through both the radio programs sponsored by the Governmental Research Institute and a summary published by them recom-
mending that a planning commission be appointed.\textsuperscript{1} In the future this organization will have a two-fold value to the planning commission. It forms an independent citizen organization to foster planning. In Detroit, Cleveland, Philadelphia, and Cincinnati strong city planning programs are supplemented by active citizen planning groups. Again through recommendations based on the latest thinking in municipal management, it can give helpful criticism of local planning technique. In Cincinnati, the Bureau of Government Research cooperated in the preparation of a procedure for the advance planning of a bond program for Cincinnati, the school board, and the county commissioners.\textsuperscript{2}

University of Nebraska, Nebraska Wesleyan University, and Union College

As an education center Lincoln is fortunate in having authorities in many fields available locally. When even the state has seen fit to take advantage of professors from the University of Nebraska for legislative advice, it is unfortunate that the city has as yet no means of availing itself of similar services. Through its Institute of State and Local Government, the University of Pennsylvania conducted an administrative analysis of the Philadelphia Planning Commission.\textsuperscript{3}

\textsuperscript{1} Governmental research institute. Op. cit.
\textsuperscript{2} Downs. Letter to Alfred Bettman.
\textsuperscript{3} Institute of local and state government, univ. of Penn. An administrative analysis of the Philadelphia city planning commission
The University of Buffalo and the Buffalo City Planning Association joined in establishing a research station in city planning. Such an organization would be of double value. It would enable students in government, sociology, architecture, finance, and allied fields to study city problems at first hand. Lincoln would enjoy the advantage of concentrated study and advice that would be difficult and expensive to obtain under other conditions. The Planning Commission can well afford to initiate cooperative programs in the various educational institutions.

State Agencies

Many surveys conducted by state agencies for their own purposes contain data of value. A survey of Lincoln made by the Department of Roads and Irrigation, in cooperation with the Public Roads Administration, furnishes information on traffic movements within the city that would be very expensive to obtain otherwise. Since Lincoln is the capital city, all records of the state government are easily accessible. The planning commission in availing itself of these data will be able to offer much better and more complete information on the city as it exists. In this way Lincoln has a unique planning resource enjoyed by no other city in the state.

Professional Associations

Although the Nebraska State Capitol is located

4. Planning research station founded jointly by univ. of Buffalo and Buffalo city planning assoc. New York state planning news, 1:8-2, Oct. 1937
in Lincoln, all the people of the state should be interested in seeing that its beauty is enhanced by a proper setting. The Nebraska Architects Association has contributed studies of the capitol approaches and maintains a continuing interest in seeing that steps be taken to protect this outstanding piece of architecture. Other professional groups have vital interests in city programs. Social workers are interested in the recreation program, doctors are interested in public health programs, and teachers are interested in school programs. These citizens have a keen interest in some part of the city structure. At the present time there are few ways in which they can cooperate in the formation of definite future programs. Many of these persons would welcome a chance to lend expert assistance when necessary to the planning commission.

Other Groups

Although not mentioned in detail, there are on every hand groups with particular interests. Veterans organizations are interested in housing plans, cultural groups are interested in the auditorium plans, labor organizations are interested in industrial plans, and the list grows to include virtually the entire population. All they lack is a program that will transmit their enthusiasm into action.

Existing Surveys

Another consideration in the preparation of a
plan is the utilization of materials already gathered by city agencies. In 1945 and 1946 the Board of Education conducted the Cooperative Study of the Lincoln Schools. Although concerned primarily with the total city educational system, sections were devoted to forecasts of future population, assessing the financial ability of the city, and employment characteristics of local industries. The information is of value not only to the Board of Education but to the city government as a whole. At the present time the National Recreation Association is making a survey of the recreational program, facilities, and needs for Lincoln. When completed, this study will contain much material valuable to the Board of Education, to the Department of Parks, Public Property, and Improvements, and to the City Council. These surveys and others conducted in the future, even while concerned with problems and policies of a specific agency, offer much basic data for the city as a whole. With the assembly of data at one source, surveys will be facilitated and much duplication of effort avoided. Since these various plans are the basis for the operational policies of the agencies concerned, they form the truest pictures of what goals are being sought.

**Transforming Resources into Results**

Having assessed only partially the resources for planning, one is amazed to find that only a feeble attempt

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is being made toward the realization of any of these goals. Every group has selected its own particular project; and, although everyone is working diligently, little progress can be made. Only when several groups unite on one project, such as the campaign for a city auditorium, can the goal be realized. What is needed is a cooperative approach to achieve numerous goals in succession.

To establish community goals some kind of a common schedule is needed as to what will come first and what will come second. In deciding this a compilation should be made of all the individual goals, and from them the one most important goal must be selected for accomplishment first. This is just an extension of what organizations in the city have already done. Each organization selected those things which the greatest number of its members supported, and that became the program of the organization. Consider the city now as one organization that must select a single project or at most only a few projects which will be accepted by the greatest number of people. Having done this, the whole city can throw its support behind the project. The goal will be reached through the democratic process.

As simple as this process may seem, there are still complexities not obvious on the surface that prevent its action. Basically, it is a process of finding out what the city wants and determining a means whereby the greatest want can be first satisfied. This can be termed comprehensive city planning.
CHAPTER IV
ENABLING LEGISLATION FOR PLANNING AND ZONING

Development of a comprehensive city plan is a duty assigned to a municipal planning commission. Lincoln has taken the first step by establishing such a planning commission. Now the question arises as to just what will be its legal powers. City government as a creature of the state must look to the enactments of the state legislature for special powers. The Nebraska Statutes concerning planning determine the legal basis for any action in Lincoln. In considering the various powers granted to the planning commission, one can compare them with the powers enjoyed by similar bodies in other cities of the state. Experience of many cities and states has been reflected in model laws which give standards by which local laws can be judged.

Nebraska cities and towns enjoy certain privileges according to the classification by size in which they fall. As a primary class city, Lincoln is in the peculiar position of enjoying fewer planning powers than Omaha and smaller cities and towns. Three general types of legislation apply, the enabling act for all municipalities to engage in municipal planning, a special act giving Lincoln subdivision control, and two additional paragraphs of the latter act that enable Lincoln to establish
building zones. Each law is followed by a comment upon the content. All citations are from the Revised Statutes of Nebraska, 1943, with the Supplement of 1947.

Municipal Planning Act

18-1301. Terms defined. For the purpose of sections 18-1301 to 18-1307, certain terms are defined as provided in this section. Wherever appropriate the singular includes the plural, and the plural includes the singular. "Municipality" or "municipal" includes or relates to cities, villages, and other incorporated political subdivisions of all classes. "Mayor" means the chief executive of the municipality, whether the official designation of his office may be mayor, chairman, city manager or otherwise. "Council" means the chief legislative body of the municipality.


18-1302. Municipal planning commission; creation. Any municipality is hereby authorized and empowered to make, adopt, amend, extend, and carry out a municipal plan as provided in sections 18-1301 to 18-1307, and to create by ordinance a planning commission with the powers and duties herein set forth. The planning commission of a city shall be designated city planning or city plan commission, and the planning commission of a village shall be designated the village planning or village plan commission.


18-1303. Planning commission; members; term; removal; vacancies. The commission shall consist of nine members who shall represent insofar as is possible different professions or occupations in the municipality and who shall be appointed by the mayor, by and with the approval of a three-fourths vote of the council. All members of the commission shall serve as such without compensation and shall hold no other municipal office. The term of each member shall be three years, except that three members of the first commission
18-1303 (cont'd)
to be so appointed shall serve for the term of one year, three for the term of two years, and three for a term of three years. All members shall hold office until their successors are appointed. All members may, after a public hearing before the council, be removed by the mayor, by and with the consent of a three-fourths vote of the council for inefficiency, neglect of duty or malfeasance in office or other good and sufficient cause. Vacancies occurring otherwise than through the expiration of term shall be filled for the unexpired term by the mayor.


18-1304. Planning commission; organization; meetings; rules; records. The commission shall elect its chairman from its members and create and fill such other of its offices as it may determine. The term of chairman shall be one year, and he shall be eligible for reelection. The commission shall hold at least one regular meeting in each month. It shall adopt rules for transaction of business and shall keep a record of its resolutions, transactions, findings and determinations, which record shall be a public record.

Source: Laws 1937, c.39, par. 4, p. 177; C.S. Supp. 1941, 18-2104.

18-1305. Planning commission; funds; limit upon expenditures. The council may provide the funds, equipment and accommodations necessary for the work of the commission, but the expenditures of the commission, exclusive of gifts, shall be within the amounts appropriated for that purpose by the council; and no expenditures nor agreements for expenditures shall be valid in excess of such amounts.

18-1306. Planning commission; purpose. It shall be the function and duty of the commission to make and adopt plans for the physical development of the municipality, including any areas outside its boundaries which, in the commission's judgment, bear relation to the planning of such municipality.

Source: Laws 1937, c. 39, par. 6, p. 177; C.S. Supp. 1941. 18-2106

18-1307. Planning commission; duties. The commission shall, from time to time, recommend to the appropriate public officials programs for public structures and improvements and for the financing thereof. It shall be part of its duties to consult and advise with public officials and agencies, public utility companies, civic, educational, professional and other organizations, and with citizens with relation to the protecting or carrying out of the plan.

Source: Laws 1937, c. 39, par. 7, p. 177; C.S. Supp. 1941. 18-2107

Revised Statutes of Nebraska, 1943. Chapters 1-23

In general this act follows the Standard City Planning Enabling Act of the United States Department of Commerce. Most important deviations relate to the official status of the plan prepared and to the continuity of membership of the commission. In the Standard Act the planning commission prepares and adopts a master plan. All future construction must conform to the master plan, which can be amended or added to only by a two-thirds vote of the planning commission. Recommendations of a planning commission can be overruled only by a two-thirds vote of the legislative body. The Nebraska statute provides that

a planning commission shall advise and consult with various groups to protect and carry out a plan, but it gives such a plan no legal status. This places a greater burden on the planning commission in that each individual detail must be effectuated rather than a whole plan. Actually, no clear-cut decision has been reached as to which procedure is better. After twenty years of active work by the planning commission, Milwaukee still relied upon an unofficial plan.² Master plans once established are subject to continual modification. The fact that the Nebraska statute does not provide for a master plan need not be regarded as a weakness.

Of more importance is the establishment of continuity within the planning commission necessary to the carrying out of long-range plans. In the Standard Act three ex-officio and six appointed members form a commission of nine. The six appointed members serve six-year staggered terms. In other model laws³, commissions made up of five or six men with a new replacement member each year are provided. A five or six-year term gives a member of the commission an opportunity to become thoroughly familiar with the problems of the city, and a continuity of policy can thus be established. In the Nebraska

² Bennett. Experience with city planning programs. Planning, 1940. p. 40
statute, all nine members are appointed for three-year periods in groups of three. Thus, every two years a majority in the commission could change. No member could have a term longer than three years. The principle that the planning commission should have a continuity of position is thereby ignored. A lengthening of the term of appointment, with a corresponding decrease in frequency, would eliminate this weakness in the law.

Subdivision Control

15-901. Real Estate; subdivisions; platting; approval of council required. No owner of any real estate located within three miles of the corporate limits of any city of the primary class when such real estate is located in the same county as such city of the primary class and outside of any organized city or village, shall be permitted to subdivide, plat or lay out said real estate in building lots and streets, or other portions of the same intended to be dedicated for public use or for the use of the purchasers or owners of lots fronting thereon or adjacent thereto, without first having obtained the approval thereof by the city council of such city, and no plat of such real estate shall be recorded or have any force or effect unless the same be approved by the city council of such city. The city council of such city shall have power, by ordinance, to provide the manner, plan or method by which the real estate in any such area may be subdivided, platted or laid out, including a plan or system for the avenues, streets or alleys to be laid out within or across the same; and the city council shall have power to compel the owner of any real estate in such area in subdividing, platting or laying out the same to conform to the requirements of said ordinance and to lay out and dedicate the avenues, streets and alleys in accordance therewith.

Source: Laws 1929, c. 49 par 1, p 204; C.S. 1929, par 15-1001

As written, the law covers the laying out of streets and lots. More complete subdivision enabling acts
specifically provide the powers to assure adequate open space and a satisfactory distribution of population and traffic. Authority is lacking to compel the subdivider to improve the streets in any manner or to share in the cost of utilities. In a survey of 608 cities exercising subdivision control, it was found that 323 cities require the subdivider to provide some improvements. In 105 cities a subdivider must provide street grading and surfacing, watermains, sanitary sewers, sidewalks, curbs, and gutters. Lincoln might not now have large areas of scattered development lacking paved streets and utilities, if such requirements had been enforced in the past.

Zoning Enabling Act

15-902. Building regulations; height; location. Every city of the primary class shall have power to regulate and limit the height and bulk of buildings and to regulate and determine the area of yards, courts and other open spaces, establish building lines, and to divide into such districts as it may deem best suited to carry out the purposes of this section, all of the area lying between the corporate limits of any such city and three miles distant therefrom and outside of any organized city or village. The regulations as to the height and bulk of buildings, the area of yards, courts or other open spaces, and building lines shall be uniform for each class of buildings throughout such district. The regulations in one or more districts may differ from those of other districts. Such regulations shall be designed to secure safety from fire and other dangers, and to promote the public health and welfare, including, so far as conditions may permit, provisions for adequate light and air, and convenience of access.

Source: Laws of 1929, c.49 par 2, p 204; C.S. 1929, par 15-1002

Building zones; establishment; power of city. Every city of the primary class shall have power to regulate, restrict or prohibit the location of trades and industries, and the location of buildings designed for specific uses, and to divide into such districts as it may deem best suited to carry out the purposes of this section all of the area lying between the corporate limits of any such city and three miles distant therefrom and outside of any organized city or village. For every such district regulations may be imposed designating trades and industries that may be excluded or subject to specific regulations, and designating the use for which such buildings may be erected or altered. Such regulations and restrictions may be different in different districts, and shall be designed to promote the public health, safety and general welfare.

Source: Laws 1929, c.49, par 3, p. 205; C.S. 1929, par 15-1003

Revised Statutes of Nebraska, 1943. Chapters 1-23

Under these two sections of the Statutes, provisions for zoning are very inadequate. Outstanding is the fact that, although larger and smaller cities have rather complete enabling acts for zoning, Lincoln is excluded from the provisions of any acts like these. All other zoning acts, even the state airport zoning enabling act, provide for a board of appeals or adjustment.5 This failure to mention zoning, other than that applied to buildings and locations of trades and industries, raises the question of the legality of land-use zoning. Constitutionality of the present zoning ordinance has been upheld by the courts.6 Nevertheless, there is a serious need for a new enabling act for zoning in Lincoln.

5. State of Nebraska. Laws of 1945, chapter 33, par. 1-15
6. State of Nebraska. Revised statutes of Nebraska, 1943. 15-903
Use of Present Enabling Acts

Until the present time only two articles of the planning legislation have been used, those providing for subdivision control and for zoning. In both cases the final responsibility falls directly upon the City Council. Obviously the Council has neither the time nor the technical training necessary to give complete study to each subdivision. Plats for proposed subdivisions are referred to the city engineer for technical study. The engineering details of the subdivision are controlled, but there is no opportunity for various city departments to present their views. Certainly the school board, indeed every agency that furnishes public services, has an interest. A planning commission would more fully represent all city agencies concerned and consider the general public welfare. Comprehensive study of probable future growth of the city is necessary to decide the requirements for even a single subdivision.

The Lincoln zoning ordinances have attempted to provide a board of appeals within the sanction of the state enabling act. All actions of the board of appeals are subject to review by the City Council. For all practical purposes, the board of appeals is powerless. Experience has proved that unfavorable decisions of the board of appeals are invariably taken to the Council. Numerous amendments have been made to the zoning ordinance which destroy the comprehensive zoning plan by spot zoning.
Until a board of appeals with quasi-judicial power subject to review only by regular courts is established, the full value of zoning cannot be obtained to protect the public welfare and stabilize property values. 7

City-County Planning

In the enabling act for municipal planning reference is made to plans for "--any areas outside its boundaries which,----, bear relation to the planning of such municipality." The determination of the exact area is left to the Planning Commission. Lincoln has legal right to maintain subdivision control and zoning for three miles beyond the city limits. Lancaster County is granted no planning powers by the Legislature. Counties within state zoning districts are given the power to zone in those areas designated by the State Zoning Agency. While the Lincoln Army Air Base was operating, Lancaster County was part of a state zoning district, but with the closing of the Air Base, the zoning legally ceased. 8

Since Lancaster County has no official planning powers, the establishment of joint city-county planning is out of the question. If legislation were passed to grant the county powers, it would be desirable to establish one planning commission for the whole county. Until that time the Lincoln Planning Commission should consider the problems of the whole county in relation to Lincoln and cooperate with the Board of County Supervisors.

8. State of Nebraska. Revised statutes of Nebraska, 1943. 81-830 to 81-837
CHAPTER V
RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

Three distinct lines of responsibility exist in the creating of a comprehensive plan. To the city government falls the task of providing the legislative, administrative, and financial assistance. To the citizens at large falls the duty of expressing their desires in the formulation of plans and providing the political and financial support to carry them out. Between the city government and the people is the City Planning Commission, acting, on one hand, to interpret the wants of the people to the government and, on the other hand, to bring the program of the city government to the people. Past experiences in communities with successfully operating programs indicate that each group must fulfill its share of responsibility.

City Government

With the creation of the Planning Commission, the City Council fulfilled a legislative requirement. At the proper time it will be necessary to continue this process with the transfer of the administrative control of subdivision platting and zoning to the Planning Commission. Before this can be accomplished the Planning Commission will need a technical staff and an adequate budget. Failure to provide technical assistance reduces the planning
commission to a mere policy board acting within the limits of their own experience. A technical and administrative staff is absolutely needed to perform the planning function satisfactorily.

Immediately the question arises as to whether or not the technical staff for the planning commission may be provided by augmentation of an existing department of the city government. This method has most frequently been attempted in the office of the city engineer. At one time many city engineers in Pennsylvania were given planning assistants to work with them, but eventually separate staffs were organized. Reasons given for the separation spring from the entirely different direction of the two types of work. The city engineer is an expert in construction and responsible for the maintenance of the physical structure of the city. The planner is primarily interested in the location of facilities and in the expediency of the construction. In the paving of streets the city engineer is interested in their thickness, materials of construction, cost, and durability. The planner is interested in the relation of the street to surrounding areas. Does it run near a school? Will an increase of population in the area result in its being congested with traffic and so necessitate eventual widening? Is there a better route which might be improved first? Rightly, the city engineer ex-

1. Cowden. The city engineer and the city plan commission. Pennsylvania planning and zoning 1:5, 3-5, Nov. 1934
pects the planner to be able to answer these questions. The administrative division present in the Lincoln city government does not permit the staff of the city engineer to enter the fields of the other two directors. It remains for members of the Planning Commission and their technical staff to coordinate plans, and for that reason they cannot be administratively a part of any department. 2

Citizen Organization

Planning is not alone the collecting of research data. Statistics are used to compare a city with other cities. The standards that have been determined are an indication of what things are likely to be annoying in our daily life, but in the end they are just a compilation of the experience of many people. A good plan must be molded to the specific requirements of Lincoln. The easy way to achieve this end is to have the people concerned with the plan actually to assist in preparing it. 3 For the Planning Commission to undertake to consult with everyone in the city would be an impossible task. Obviously, a general election is the only manner in which all citizens have an opportunity to express themselves. The cost of conducting elections precludes the arriving at any other than the most important decisions by means of general voting. It should be reserved for those matters which legally require the voters' approval. What is needed in the planning process

3. Williams. Internal technique of a planning agency. Municipal training institute of New York state
is a frequent opportunity for the citizens to express their desires. They can do this only if they have some understanding of the principles of planning. A civic organization fostering the planning movement enables the public to learn what planning is, and having done this, to offer constructive criticism of the plans proposed. In cities with effective programs, planning commissions depend upon a citizen organization to educate the public in planning ideals so that residents can offer intelligent criticism of the plans proposed. In this way the public becomes a part of the planning process.

Four criteria have been proposed for a citizens planning organization. First, it must be representative of all individuals and groups in the community. Here is no place for nominal representation. Every member should strive to speak with a view to the welfare of the whole community. Second, it must be broad, comprehensive, and impartial in its purposes and policies. Third, it must be voluntary, non-official, and non-partisan. Fourth, it must be permanent, self-sustaining, and self-supporting. Some communities have felt that such an organization is a vital public service and have supported it with Community Chest funds. Since both service and policy-making functions are performed, other communities have felt that it should be independently supported.

4. Morrow. Planning your community. p. 8
In Lincoln such a program might well be adopted by an existing group. Since the Governmental Research Institute encouraged the formation of a planning commission\(^6\), it is logical to look to that group first. As successors to the Local Committee of 1000, they have been interested in civic action as well as research. The directors of the Institute can decide if it conforms to the characteristic pattern for any citizens planning organization, and if they are interested in sponsoring planning.

No matter how it comes about, an organization is needed to educate the public and offer the planning commission both support and criticism. General apathy on the part of the public will thwart the enthusiasm of both the City Council and the Planning Commission. Civic-minded citizens must see that public opinion favors planning, for otherwise it will never succeed.

**Planning Commission**

Administrative functions of the Lincoln city government are divided among three directors. With the exception of the city attorney and the personnel director, who are responsible directly to the City Council, all other functions of the city government are placed in the department of public welfare and safety, the department of accounts and finances, and the department of parks, public property, and improvements. The Planning Commission

\(^6\). Governmental research institute. Op. cit. p. 4
should be related to these agencies so that it may best perform the functions of coordination, research, and promotion of a comprehensive planning of city development. The data collected and research facilities must be regularly available for application to legislative decisions of the city government. To accomplish this, the Plan Commission needs to occupy a position as the advisory and research facility for the City Council. Coordination of the projects of the various departments can be obtained from this position. Each department has its own interests and enthusiasms. A great part of the energies are devoted toward routine matters of administration. Farsighted planning is not reducible to the mere approval or disapproval of specific projects. Behind the recommendations made by the Planning Commission must be the compiled results of investigations of the many related matters that lead to a complete as possible picture of the interrelationship. Members of the City Council are occupied with the immediate decisions of city administration. They do not have the time to study all the ramifications of each matter that comes before them. In determination of city policy, they need a short summary of the effects of proposals upon the future of the city. The Planning Commission can coordinate the interests of the various departments and reach a decision based upon the most complete data available. The City Council can now make its decision with a full knowledge of the factors involved.

CHAPTER VI

PLANNING METHODS

The Citizen Prepared Plan

What is the best way for Lincoln to go about obtaining a comprehensive city plan? Experience of other cities can help answer that question. In 1945 Mayor Charles W. Leeman appointed the Mayor's City Wide Planning Committee to prepare an improvement and development program for Omaha. With the assistance of a city planning commission and their technical staff, the Committee set to work finding out what Omaha needed. Fifteen sub-committees were appointed, each one of which was given a particular phase of the program to study. Each committee prepared its own recommendation of projects and priorities which were published together with a report of a correlating committee. Another committee conducted a campaign for an election at which twelve out of fourteen million dollars worth of projects were approved. These represented the urgent expenditures recommended by the committees. Study of this general method will show some features that can readily be adopted for use in Lincoln.

Citizen participation in this program gave it tremendous strength at the polls. Most basic criticism lies in the method of selecting the projects which was

1. Mayor's city wide development committee, Omaha, Nebraska. Improvement and development program
neither creative nor comprehensive. Consolidation of various programs into one master plan in no way improves the individual parts. An all-over appraisal of the relative importance of these parts involves a comprehensive study of the most urgent needs. Each individual sub-committee in Omaha determined by itself what were the most urgent problems. Although one hundred and sixty-eight citizens worked on the Omaha program, each committee kept within a narrow field.

During a short period of time and with tremendous civic effort, a program was developed to be financed over a six to ten-year period. Thus, for a period of ten years, the Omaha citizens have committed themselves to a single program. Even since 1945 conditions have changed considerably. Compare the inflexibility of the plan with one which is prepared currently. A more desirable scheme would be capable of being molded to current requirements.

Objective of the whole Omaha survey was only the determination of broad outlines. The technical work still remains to be done by the staff of the Omaha Planning Commission. At the time of citizen action on the program, technical assistance could only be given to a few committees. During the carrying out of the program, the special training and experience of the professional planner is only slightly utilized.

Strength of a citizen prepared program, of which Omaha is an example, is that it creates a maximum of citizen

2. Ibid. p. 3
participation during preparation. Undesirable features are the inflexibility of the plan produced, the lack of coordination, and the lack of technically trained personnel during the planning phase.

The Consultant Prepared Plan

Previous plans for Lincoln were made by city planning consultants. If properly utilized, would this method obtain a comprehensive plan and a program to carry it out? To answer this question the method of preparing and presenting such a plan will have to be analyzed. By specializing in the preparation of city plans, consultants have developed an organization of technicians and a standardized approach to city planning problems. The consultant would send several of his staff to Lincoln, and, in a short period of time, varying as to the detail of the study, they would gather all available information concerning the city. The concentrated effort of such a staff would produce in a short time a physically visible plan which could be presented in popular form to the general public. Undoubtedly this procedure gives the city a plan prepared by specially trained technicians. The plan is not, however, either the best that can be prepared for the city or the one most likely to be accepted by the public. Three previous failures in Lincoln bear the latter point home.

In preparation, the plan is weak, for it can be based only upon such information that is readily available.
The consultant would come to Lincoln as a relative stranger. Many important influences in city growth are not immediately obvious. Standardized procedures tend to ignore local variations. Then, also, the community is assumed to be put into a frozen state as of the time it was surveyed. Having turned over the complete plan, the consultant has no opportunity to modify it in application. The inflexibility mitigates against its efficiency.

Transforming the plan into reality is the heart of the planning process. No plan can be immediately accomplished. Planning is a continuous activity.\(^3\) Services of the consultant are terminated when the plan is accepted. A strong organization backed by public support is needed to put the plan into action. At this point the process is weakest. Usually the original enthusiasm of the public quickly subsides after the presentation of a plan. Often no group actually feels a personal interest in the plan since it was entirely prepared by the consultant.\(^4\) Resistance to the plan is most intense at this time. Unless a vigorous campaign is conducted, the accepted plan is never put into effect. The whole burden of activating such a plan for Lincoln would rest upon the Planning Commission.

A modification of the consultant prepared plan has been adopted in Newark, New Jersey, and several other cities.\(^5\) During the preparation of the plan one member of

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3. Functions of a city plan commission. The municipality 42:2 May, 1947
5. Walker. The planning function is urban government. p. 207
the consultant's staff is designated to remain in the city and organize the local planning office. After the consultant has completed the plan, the local staff can make modifications of the plan without destroying the original intent. Several criticisms of the consultant prepared plan have been removed. The plan still has been prepared outside the local government and with only a minimum amount of citizen participation. The technical advice and skill of the consultant are no longer available after presentation of the plan. The success of the plan is limited by the ability of the local planning staff to meet any major problems that may arise. 6

Continuing Consultation Program

From the effective essentials of each of the previous methods, Lincoln must develop a workable program. The strength of the citizen prepared plan lay in the fact that it was prepared locally and gains strong public support. Consultant prepared plans combine the skill of trained personnel and standardized approaches to planning problems. Likewise a union of both of these into a continuing planning process offers the best method of obtaining effective and high calibre planning action.

By statute, the Planning Commission will be a citizen body. A permanent staff of technically trained personnel is needed to carry on the continuous research and plan-making activity. Subdivision control and zoning,

two of the most important tools in the shaping of the future of the community need an administrative staff to put them into effect. For special planning problems that may arise, the commission needs access to the best consultants that the city can afford. Even New York, Cincinnati, Detroit, and other large cities find it necessary to hire consultants on a regular basis. Lincoln, particularly during the initial stages of activation of the planning commission would need to retain a consultant of wide experience in organizing planning programs. The consultant would spend three or four days each month in the city. During this time he would meet with Plan Commission and discuss current progress and problems. Staff conferences would be held to outline the work for the future month. Any problems confronting the staff that were outside of their experience and training would be handled by the consultant. In this way the Commission could best use the consultant's wide range of experience. By continuously having the consultant available, the staff would be able to keep the plan current and to offer the best solution for any particular moment.

The plan would be presented to the public as a series of studies of individual problems. In this way the public could become thoroughly familiar with one phase of planning at a time. A campaign of education could be arranged by the citizen planning organization to arouse
civic enthusiasm and interest. A series of specific projects could be completed that would serve as concrete evidence of the effectiveness of planning action.

A technical trained planning staff assisted by the continuous services of a consultant would produce a plan that would be of high technical excellence, flexible, and easy to present to the general public.
CHAPTER VII

FORM OF THE PLAN

Although a great majority of city plans are presented under a common title of master plan, there are actually many differences in scope, detail, and purpose. Lincoln needs a specific type tailored to the peculiar characteristics of the city. Any plan must recognize the legislative and financial structure of the state and local governments. Nebraska is limited by the state constitution to a pay-as-you-go policy. Any expenditures must be made out of current appropriations, and the state has no authority to issue bonds. 1 At its biennial meetings the unicameral legislature makes appropriation of funds for the ensuing two year period. All new legislation comes before the body at these times. Unless a special session is called, there is no other time at which

1. State of Nebraska. Constitution of the state of Nebraska.

Article XIII - State, County and Municipal Indebtedness

Section 1. The state may, to meet casual deficits, or failures in the revenues, contract debts never to exceed in the aggregate one hundred thousand dollars, and no greater indebtedness shall be incurred except for the purpose of repelling invasion, suppressing insurrection, or defending the state in war, and provision shall be made for the payment of the interest annually, as it shall accrue, by a tax levied for the purpose, or from other sources of revenue, which law providing for the payment of such interest by such tax shall be irremovable until such debt be paid.
any legislative action may be taken. With this in mind the planning commission must prepare any programs of legislation or proposals involving financial cooperation for presentation to the unicameral at the first of odd calendar years.

Capital improvements of a major nature within Lincoln are usually approved at a special referendum. At these times the voters are asked to vote increases in the mill levy for a period of ten years. If approved, bonds are issued, the projects built, and the bonds retired during a ten year period from revenue of the levy. Many improvements within the city, however, are financed from current city funds derived either from general tax sources or through revenues from various municipal enterprises. When relating the program of the Planning Commission to the city and state financial structures, one sees that a ten-year program could be used for developing those projects requiring no state cooperation. Where the state must commit itself financially, a two-year program would have to be adopted.

Comprehensive Master Plan

Widest scope, greatest detail, and broadest purposes are contained in the comprehensive master plan. It represents the work of experts in many fields brought together by a city planning consultant. Basic studies of population, land use, and the economic base of the commun-
ity are conducted and the future of the community is forecast as far as twenty-five years into the future. Sections on schools, traffic, transportation, housing, recreation, public buildings, utilities, and zoning are written by authorities in each field. Extensive surveys result in detailed proposals and lists of projects complete with plans and estimates of cost. A long term capital improvement program is presented and a program of public action is outlined to accomplish the objectives of the plan. If the city adopts such a plan, all capital expenditure of the next twenty to twenty-five years will go to projects shown in the plan.

Several reasons can be given as to why Lincoln should not prepare a twenty-year master plan. The inflexibility of a detailed long range program keeps it from meeting changing conditions. Long range planning is based on the principle that changing conditions will be encountered in the future. A detailed plan made for twenty years in the future will be twenty years behind the time when completed. The long term factors must be considered in planning, but effort is wasted in detailing projects for accomplishment more than a decade in the future. It is essential in planning that the financial means of accomplishing the plan be considered. In Lincoln local financial programs are characteristically short term. Detailed plans must be prepared in accordance with the period of financing.

Capital Improvements Program

A form of municipal planning that has arisen is the long range capital improvements program. A schedule of public works is maintained and at specific periods city departments add projects to the list. Omaha used a variation of this technique when projects for a ten-year period were presented in one lump for public approval. The capital improvements program must grow out of a plan. The long-range value of public works is determined by the role that each is to play in community life. The appropriate location and the need for facilities are determined by the interrelationship of many factors influencing community life. Private development plays as important a part as public improvements. Subdivision control and zoning of private property were established to coordinate private activities for the public welfare. Lists of projects compiled without the existence of a comprehensive community plan become only inventories of proposed public works and are of no value. Once a plan has been developed, a capital improvement program serves as a means of realizing the plan, but the plan must always come first.

Continuing Master Plan Studies

Continuing master plan studies offer the best means of obtaining planned community development for Lincoln. A framework of basic data on the city would be de-

3. Mayor's city wide planning committee, Omaha, Nebraska. Improvement and development program.
4. Bettman. City and regional planning papers. p. 11
5. Segoe. Local Planning administration. p. 582
veloped by the Planning Commission. Continuing studies of population, employment, and the economic base of the community would be supplemented by studies of specific problems. The city department primarily concerned with the study would be furnished with the technical advice of the planning staff. Where unusual or highly specialized studies were involved, an outside consultant would be called in to assist in preparation of the report. In those subjects dealing directly with some department, such as parks, a plan made by the cooperation of that department and the Planning Commission would become a part of the plan for city development. Studies involving the interests of several departments would be made by the Planning Commission. The citizen organization would participate in the planning process by a presentation to the public of problems involved and the methods of solution proposed. Before any plan was finally adopted, hearings would be held at which time the public could offer comments and modifications. Where a plan involved capital improvements beyond the current city budget, the citizen group would supply the public with information of an unbiased character so that they could vote intelligently at the referendum.

The policy of placing the planning function within the local government would give Lincoln a flexible plan adapted to local conditions. Consultants called in for special studies would furnish the best technical advice available.
CHAPTER VIII
ORGANIZATION FOR PLANNING

The general outline of techniques for planning in Lincoln has been discussed. The specific steps in organizing the program remain to be considered. To be effective, the program must be official, regular, and continuous.¹ The Mayor and City Council of Lincoln have established the City Planning Commission as the official planning body of the city.

Planning Commission

Lincoln is restricted in only one way in selecting the Planning Commission members. They can hold no other public office. From this it is clear that they are intended to represent the public as a whole rather than the city government. To this end the members must be unselfishly interested in the public welfare and able to exercise vision and sound judgment in forming the future of the city. A specific technical knowledge of planning is not required, for that is furnished by the staff. The members must have a general appreciation of the problems of the city and understand the purposes of planning.²

Although any one member may not represent the views of

1. Functions of a city plan commission. The Municipality 42:2 May, 1947
2. Segoe. Local planning administration. p. 40
all groups in the community, the commission should main-
tain a proper balance of membership representing a cross
section of the community. Once plans are being made it is
quite important that all groups feel vitally concerned in
fulfillment of the plan.

Functioning of A Plan Commission

Two major responsibilities face a planning com-
mission, the preparation of a comprehensive plan, and the
necessary actions to accomplish the fulfillment of the plan.
This does not mean that, once having determined the needs
of the city, an immediate program can be initiated to solve
these needs. Planning is a continuous process that accom-
plishes its purpose concentrating all forces towards com-
mon ends. This is not accomplished through a major im-
provement program. The city financially would have diffi-
culty in maintaining such a program, and in the past the
voters have refused to sanction such action. From time to
time additions have to be made to the structure of the city.
A new subdivision is laid out here, and street is resurfaced
there, and the school board is building a new school. The
plan commission advises each agency concerned with city
government of the probable effect of their actions upon
the whole city structure. The school board would like to
know where new areas will be developed so schools can be
planned. Likewise the recreation department is interested
in what effect a new school will have upon their recreation
program. By coordinating these routine events in the growth of the city a maximum of benefit will accrue for everyone.

In even as small a body as the plan commission various members should have special fields of interest and knowledge so that they may lessen the work of the entire commission by applying concentrated effort to these fields. Three committees organized on the broad general lines of planning, each with three members, could consider in detail the problems of their field and report to the plan commission as a whole. Although numerous problems might overlap different fields, each could be assigned to a specific committee with the knowledge any common interest would be represented by the planning commission as a whole.

**Physical development committee.** Subdivision control; plans for transportation; street and highways, and land utilization.

**Economic development committee.** Industrial location, population trends, economic future studies, financial program.

**Social development committee.** Education facilities, health and welfare programs, recreation program, park program, cultural facilities, housing.

By following the course of one matter through the Planning Commission, the method of operation can be illustrated. The City Council is petitioned to enlarge an existing park. Council members feel that the request is
reasonable and refer it to the Planning Commission for a report. The social development committee consults with the Department of Parks, Public Property and Improvement and finds that no plans have been made for the enlargement of the park. The committee consults its own park program and notes that several areas lack park facilities, but that the area mentioned is served adequately. Reporting to the Planning Commission, the committee recommends that a public hearing be held to determine the sentiment of the neighborhood relative to the park facilities. A public hearing is scheduled and notices are sent to residents in the vicinity of the park. At the hearing the park plan for the whole city is presented with an explanation of the standards sought and the needs of various areas. It is pointed out that the neighborhood under consideration is better served than other areas of the city. The residents express their views in favor of the park. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Planning Commission votes to recommend to the City Council that, if funds become available for purchase of park property, these shall be used in those areas which lack park facilities.

Upon the report of the Planning Commission, the City Council is given a clear picture of the situation. It would be fine if all park areas could be increased, but not enough city funds are available to accomplish this objective. The Council must decide whether it would be wise to spend money enlarging an existing park when some areas are not adequately served.
Since the members of the Planning Commission serve without pay, they are limited in the amount of time they may spend at meetings. For every meeting data need to be prepared, statistics collected, and graphic illustrations prepared. Other departments of the city government, as well as private individuals, daily require access to information collected by a planning commission. These functions are performed by the technical staff.

Planning Staff

Other cities of the same size and general characteristics as Lincoln have provided a technical staff for the Planning Commission. Austin, Texas, which is approximately the same size as Lincoln, and similar in that it is the state capital and seat of the state university, employs three full-time staff members and had a budget of $15,300 in 1945. Pasadena, California, which is the next smaller city to Lincoln in the 1940 census, has four full-time staff members and a budget in 1946 of $12,000. Closer to Lincoln is Davenport, Iowa, which, although only about three-fourths the size of Lincoln, employs two full-time and two part-time employees and had a 1946 budget of $12,000. These cities suggest a standard pattern occurring in the technical staffs and budgets of planning commissions. Based on this pattern Lincoln would find a three or four member staff with a budget of between $14,000 to $17,000 sufficient to provide the routine services for the Planning Commission.

Commission. In considering this expenditure, it should be remembered that in addition to handling zoning, subdivision control, and the preparation of planning proposals, the staff furnishes information for other city departments that enables them to supply services more efficiently and economically, particularly in reference to areas of future growth. Other cities have found that such expenditures are well justified as a part of government and are returned in future benefits to the city.

At the present time there is a fairly rapid turnover in planning personnel throughout the country. Salary scales depend to a large degree upon the training and range of abilities expected and the degree of responsibility of the position. A general survey of planning personnel throughout the country was made by the University of Michigan and the American Society of Planning Officials in 1938. The standards for planning in a medium-sized city with a staff of three or four are presented. Adjustments of salary have been made to agree with present day levels.

**Director of City Planning**  
Salary $4,000 to $5,000 yearly

Three years experience in a responsible city planning position equivalent to position of associate city planner in a large city. A degree in city planning, architecture, or civil engineering from a recognized school.

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Salary estimates were prepared from current positions available as listed in the newsletter of the American Society of Planning Officials.
**Junior City Planner**  Salary $3,200 - $3,600 yearly

Recent graduate in city planning, or graduate in architecture or civil engineering with city planning experience.

**City Planning Draftsman**  Salary $2,800 - $3,000 yearly

College graduate with specialized training in landscape or architectural design.

Non-technical member of the staff would be a secretary who would do the routine correspondence of the office, be responsible for the maintenance of the files, and answer routine requests for information.

In addition the staff would be served by a city planning consultant of wide experience. Usually the consultant would spend only three or four days a month with the staff but would be available for conferences when demanded by situations of an emergency nature.
The planning program for Lincoln can be broken down into three stages. The first is the organization stage, during which time the Planning Commission holds its first meetings and prepares a budget for submission to the City Council. The second stage is the first year program. The budget submitted to the Council will have to contain definite items which can be adopted as program to be accomplished in the first year. The third stage is the long range program. It covers the general course to be followed over a period of years. Every planning program comes into existence under different conditions. For Lincoln several steps can be given and will depend upon the time schedule of other governmental activities. Suggestions are made with the full realization that a delay in the accomplishing of one stage may alter details. A logical progression is established to accomplish a complete program in a relatively short period of time.

Organization Stage

Step 1 Information for Planning Officials

Members of the Planning Commission need to be well informed in the processes of planning. Both the American Society of Planning Officials and the American Planning and Civic Association furnish assistance to newly formed planning
commissions. Books and pamphlets are also available, which outline the fundamentals of planning. A picture of how other cities propose to solve their problems appears in reports by local planning organizations. Since these reports are written for the general public, they do not discuss technical procedures. The Planning Commission will need to develop its own library because books on planning are not available in Lincoln libraries. Despite the fact that many good books are available on planning, the Commission will find that none offer an exact solution for Lincoln. A local program will have to be developed.

**Step 2: Technical Advice**

As early as possible, the Planning Commission should seek technical advice from a planning consultant. An appropriation by the City Council would be required. Emphasis should be placed on the fact that the consultant is not being retained to prepare plans for Lincoln. He will be expected to advise the Planning Commission as to what its program should be for the first year. A reasonable budget can then be offered the City Council based upon his recommendations. Private consultants with considerable experience in the organization of planning programs can outline the advantages and disadvantages of various methods of procedure. In a few days the cost of the

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1. Segoe. Local planning administration. p. 47
program could be determined and the budget presented to the City Council.

Step 3  Citizen Support

Before the City Council approves a budget item for a planning staff, members must be convinced that the public desires a planning program. The best method of crystalizing public support is through an organization actively fostering planning. At the same time that the consultant is making estimates of the situation for a budget recommendation, he can be assisting in organizing citizen support. The wide range of experience of a consultant gives him many concrete examples of the success of planning. Speeches given to service and civic groups arouse public interest, which can be maintained and reinforced by a citizen organization. The Planning Commission will sooner or later have to depend upon a citizen organization. Since there is not yet a strong citizen group, it will be necessary to do everything possible to encourage some group to take over that function or to assist in the formation of a new group.

Step 4  Presentation of the Budget

On September first the fiscal year of the city begins. The budget receives final approval early in August. By that time the City Council must be made aware of the general methods of operation of the planning function and
the need for a technical staff to lighten the work of other departments and furnish services not otherwise available to the city government. The Planning Commission will need to explain that this is a new function being introduced into the city government. Stress can be placed upon the fact that a technical staff on the city payroll will be able to give the city continuous service. Without technical aid the Planning Commission can do very little to help the city develop suitably. With the presentation of the budget, a crucial point will be reached. It is therefore essential that the budget be carefully prepared and forcefully presented. The two-month period may seem short for such an important matter, but delays in entering upon an active planning program will multiply. Only four months pass between the start of the fiscal year of the city and the January, 1949, session of the Legislature. In that period a study will have to be made of legislation that the city wishes to be enacted. If the Planning Commission is unsuccessful in completing its program by that time, it will experience a two-year delay before it will again have a chance to introduce legislation.
First Year Program

Offices of the city government schedule activities on a yearly basis according to the budget period. The Planning Commission will find that one year program will have to be developed each summer. This program will outline the studies proposed for coming year and the general activities contemplated by the Commission. Conservative estimates should be made of the amount of work to be accomplished. Many special problems arise during the actual preparation of plans that require additional effort and time to resolve. During the first year it is important that the basic studies undertaken be done in a thorough manner which often prevents maintaining a definite time schedule.

Step 1 Planning Staff

As the first step in building a planning staff, the Commission will want to hire a consultant as an advisor on a regular fee. Several city planning consultants are available who offer cities such services. There should be a definite understanding from the very beginning that all data collected and plans made will be retained by the city. In an advisory capacity the consultant supervises the technical staff of the Commission. The actual staff work is all performed locally. During the initial stages the

2. Public administration service. Action for cities. p. 8
consultant will need to make at least monthly visits to Lincoln. As the staff becomes more experienced visits occur less frequently. But the consultant should be available at all times should an important situation arise beyond the capabilities of the staff.

The Planning Commission should receive assistance from its consultant in building up the staff. Since the consultant will work with the staff, he will have definite personnel standards that he will wish to maintain. City planning is a distinct profession. As far as possible all personnel of the technical staff should have training in city planning. At the present time there is a great shortage of trained personnel. Allied fields of civil engineering, landscape architecture, and architecture furnish many men for planning staffs. This arrangement works out satisfactorily, provided the head of the office has been trained as a city planner and provided that the staff is balanced by being drawn from several fields. Enough diversity of work exists that many different types of ability can be used. Nonetheless when at all feasible, staff members should be selected who have had city planning training.

Much time may be consumed in organizing a staff unless the work is energetically pushed forward. The American Society of Planning Officials maintains a clearing house for planning technicians. Architecture schools and
planning schools assist in the placing of graduates. National conventions of planning associations also bring together planners interest in new positions. Any and all possibilities must be explored. Delays in staff organization will delay the whole planning schedule.

Step 2 Legislative Program

Most pressing demand upon the Planning Commission will be for a program of legislation to present to the Nebraska Legislature in January, 1949. Before Lincoln can have effective zoning, a new enabling act for zoning must be passed. It becomes the duty of the Planning Commission to encourage the City Council to sponsor a revised zoning enabling act. Extension of the present subdivision control law should be considered. If abuses of the past are to be avoided, the city needs broader powers. The present laws will be twenty years old and it is advisable that they be revised to include more modern policies on subdivision control.

A major section of the legislative program will have to be devoted to the problem of city to state relationship. Lincoln will be in a position to cooperate in the planning of areas surrounding state institutions. Preliminary plan for a joint city-state agreement should be drawn up for presentation to the Legislature. Careful consideration will have to be given to the scope and
administrative detail involved.

Step 3 Preliminary Plan Studies

Local conditions determine the extensiveness and intensiveness of particular studies of the Planning Commission. Current decisions faced by Lincoln demand that some surveys be given priority. The Planning Commission will need to review previous plans and establish community objectives. Four major ways of speeding plans are suggested in *Action for Cities*.

1. By sharpshooting instead of scattering shots. Effort should be concentrated on the most important or key planning decisions. Details of application should be left to later study.

2. By simplifying the gathering of facts. Collect only the data known to have specific use and only in the detail necessary. Full use should be made of existing data and informed local judgment.

3. By participation of many local officials, citizens, and organizations. Do not depend on the staff to do all the thinking; farm it out.

4. By organizing the work. Coordinate the working groups, and see that no part of the work is delayed because another part has bogged down.

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By using this rapid technique a preliminary plan can be developed for use in determining the detailed studies to be undertaken. City planning is based upon controlling land use to determine the future land use pattern of the city. Data will need to be produced as early as possible on land use as a basis for revision of the present zoning ordinance.

Step 4 Rules of Procedure

Older planning commissions have developed standard methods of conducting business. Some have even gone so far as to have specific meeting days devoted to zoning and administrative matters and other days devoted to aspects of the master plan. Meetings of the planning commission are open to the public. They form an effective means of presenting the current projects of the commission to the public. Some of these meetings take the form of public hearings, and it is necessary that the Planning Commission develop a policy on the holding of hearings. Notice has to be given to all interested parties a fixed time in advance of the hearing. Skillful handling of hearings goes a long way toward answering criticism of plans and achieving public support.

The planning Commission will have to determine a procedure for internal functions and relations. Certain

types of decisions of a technical and routine nature are designated as staff actions. The Planning Commission should authorize the head of the planning staff to take staff actions. Relations with the City Council should be arranged so that all matters regarding the development of the community would be referred automatically to the Planning Commission for report. It is important that these reports be rendered as quickly as possible to prevent the process being regarded as a delay in legislative procedure.

Step 5 Land Use Survey

The initial land use survey of Lincoln will be directed toward a revision of the zoning ordinance. A complete real property inventory would be desirable, but it is out of the question because of the cost entailed. The survey should include those items relevant to zoning and more complete surveys undertaken at a later time.

Sheets from the Sanborn Map Company insurance atlas of Lincoln would be used as field sheets on which by observation would be recorded the use of each plot of land, the height, size, and occupancy of all buildings, and the front yards, side yards, and lot coverage. This information would be placed upon large scale plat maps of the city along with information from the assessor's

records of the valuation of the land and improvements.

A statistical analysis would be made of the data collected. Key punch cards of the Remington-Rand Powers Accounting System owned by the city could be used with a technique developed by the City Plan Commission of Providence, Rhode Island. Cards are punched to record the location by plat and lot number, valuation of land and total valuation, a land use code, existing zoning code, area of parcel, and the census tract and block number. When these cards are sorted mechanically, summary reports are prepared to show the quantity of land now devoted to various uses, how use compares with zoning, and the number of lots of various areas. From these studies a zoning ordinance can be developed based upon statistical facts. These cards can further be used in selecting sites for public buildings and use by making rapid tabulations of land costs. Additional data can be added at any time, such as recording the zoning of land under a new ordinance.

**Step 6 Selecting a Specific Project**

The most effective demonstration that the Planning Commission can give of the value of planning is actually to carry through a project. The people will then have some specific accomplishment that they can appraise. Whatever

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the project may be, it needs to be done very well. Several suggestions for improving Lincoln have been before the public for years without anything ever having been done in a concrete way toward accomplishing results. The removal of the Rock Island Railroad from Antelope Valley and the improvement of the environs of the Capital are mentioned the most often. The Planning Commission after due consideration should select a project that they feel can be readily completed and that will catch the interest of the general public. The citizen organization will be given the opportunity to perfect its technique in helping select the project and then developing support for its completion. Too difficult a problem or one requiring a long period for solution should not be attempted, for it would fail to fulfill its purpose. The prime objective is to do something efficiently and rapidly to show that the Planning Commission can bring results that will develop a better Lincoln.

Step 7 Evaluation

Having completed the first year of trial, the Planning Commission, upon submission of the second budget, should evaluate the work of the first year. Other agencies which worked with the Commission offer valuable comments. The City Council will then have a clearer picture of the planning function and the citizen organization, having had an opportunity to participate in a planning project, develop
a more critical attitude. The Commission has preliminary plan studies and the land use survey. The factual information gathered, combined with the experience of the various groups, formulates a long range program. Necessary additions or changes are made in the planning staff and improved techniques are outlined for the future.

Long Range Program

Preliminary plan studies and the land use survey offer a basis for outlining a long range program. Successive steps cannot be given. As range increases so does flexibility. Some future conditions may necessitate the early completion of one study and the delaying of another. The Commission is guided by a broad program to counteract the strong tendency to lose sight of the future when surrounded by a mass of current details. Actions of the Planning Commission have a long range effect; hence it is necessary that every decision include a realization of the distant as well as the immediate future. The elements of a plan are given with the suggestion that they be considered only as guides.

Maps

Accurate and complete maps of the city are prerequisites for studies of physical conditions. The City Engineer has current maps of city facilities at a scale of
600 feet to the inch. Recently an air photograph of the same scale was purchased. Accurate plat maps are available from a private company. An accurate and complete topographic map of the city is needed. Maps of the Sanitary District and the City Engineer do not give a complete coverage of all areas of the city. United States Geological Survey maps of the area are fifty years old. A topographic map prepared by ground survey would be too expensive to justify. The Planning Commission should determine if topographical data could be obtained from air photographs of Lincoln. If a topographic map could be created in this manner, a complete set of local maps would be available.

Economic and Population Studies

Population growth, composition, and characteristics, the economic base of the community, and the land use survey, analysis, and forecasts form the basic studies for planning. The Planning Commission will conduct a land use survey and keep its data current on land use. Economic and population studies call for special techniques. Cooperation of the educational institutions should be used in preparing these studies. Students of economics and political science would be interested in studies of the economic base of Lincoln. Sociology and geography students would be interested in studies of population growth, characteristics, and migration. A program could be developed that would offer a maximum amount of training for students and provide information
vitaly needed by the Planning Commission. For certain phases the Chamber of Commerce would be interested in furnishing statistics and analyzing results. Although these studies in themselves are not plans, they are the basis for all plans and the future of the community. As for any other information, they would have to be revised periodically to keep abreast of the current conditions.

Major Streets, Traffic, and Parking

Travel by automobile forms an important link in the transportation system of Lincoln. Parking, the pedestrian hazard of major arteries, and the traffic congestion on the streets themselves are important planning problems. The state department of roads, the Lincoln police force, and the Traffic Commission are all directly concerned with these problems. Through the cooperation of these agencies and the Planning Commission a plan for major streets and a parking plan can be worked out. Priorities of development and construction are established so that all parts of the program coordinate. The Planning Commission can use this plan in newly developed areas as a guide for subdivision control. Schools, parks, and other community buildings can be located in proper reference to the major street system.

Transportation

The railroads in Lincoln at present operate over many grade crossings and numerous tracks. The Planning
Commission should make a study of transportation with the cooperation of the railroads. The present structure which developed when Lincoln was a town could be adapted to serve the city adequately and efficiently. The location of rail facilities affects the surrounding areas, and must be considered in light of the whole city structure.

Housing

The Lincoln Housing Authority will be primarily concerned with housing problems. Their general studies and plans form a part of the city plan. The Planning Commission and the Housing Authority will have to work out broad policies together. Housing has to be studied on a city wide basis rather than in individual areas. After the Planning Commission has designated areas, the Housing Authority develops its program.

Recreation

A recreation program is already being developed for the Recreation Board by the National Recreation Association. This plan will need to be fitted into proper relation with the plans of other agencies and priorities of development scheduled for the City Council. Already a working agreement has been reached between the Board of Education and the Recreation Board. The Department of Parks and other interested groups need to be included in a similar agreement. The Planning Commission should
study the recreation and adopt the major features for the city plan.

Public Utilities

Using the predictions developed of the future of the city, the Planning Commission should prepare a plan for the future expansion of utilities. These plans would indicate the general areas of expansion and not technical details of construction. As with the major streets, these facilities play a substantial part in the control of future subdivisions.

Buildings Location

By arranging for the placing of related government buildings in one area, a civic center can be developed. The offices can more adequately serve the public and a beautiful surrounding can be created to give the proper dignity to the function of government. Well designed and well located private buildings also add to the beauty of the city. The Planning Commission is the only body concerned with the overall appearance of Lincoln. Locations selected for the state institutions, municipal buildings, and private structures will add to the beauty of the city.

Presentation and Participation

Effective presentation and citizen participation are as much a part of the long range program as the planning studies. Progress reports are made in the form of year
summaries of activities. Periodically as phases of the plan are completed they are made public. Each presentation warrants the use of all possible means of public information. Wide distribution of attractively printed and popularly written pamphlets gives everyone a chance to become familiar with the proposals. Lectures, newspaper articles, and radio programs are all phases of a well-rounded scheme. Complete understanding of individual sections of the plan replaces the past procedure of attempting to give the public a complicated and long range program in one lump. By introducing elements one at a time, continued interest can be maintained and more emphasis placed on specific problems.

Planning education in the schools assures long range support. The Denver Planning Primer is used as a text for civics classes in the eighth grade. A similar text for Lincoln furnishes an opportunity for relating the functions of city government to the responsibilities of good citizenship.

Summary

The continued success of a planning program for Lincoln depends upon the maintenance of public interest. The Planning Commission alone is only one-third of the team. The city government and the people must share in the planning process. If Lincoln develops a well-rounded program to include all groups, the better future for the city will be assured.

APPENDIX

ESSENTIALS IN CITY PLANNING
E. P. Goodrich and Geo. B. Ford

National Real Estate Journal
March 28, 1921, v. 22, pp. 24-25

General Facts About the City and Surrounding Natural Features

Municipal Control Over Private Development.

Building zones; setback building lines; fire limits; building, garage and sanitary ordinances; Bill-boards and Skysigns; Smoke abatement; Housing and congestion; New Plats and Additions; Cemeteries.

Circulation.

Traffic Analysis; jitneys, regulation; throughfares; parking; minor streets; alleys; street-crossing sections, grades, surfacing, encroachments; street planting, lighting, poles; comfort stations; transit lines; railway relocation, grade crossing elimination, stations and terminals, waterways; bridges and tunnels; aviation.

Public Service.

Substructures; water supply; fire protection; sewage disposal; stream pollution; dirt, waste, and snow removal; flood control; food supply.

Civic Art.

Federal and state buildings; setting; City buildings; civic center; schools; libraries, museums, colleges, churches, monuments, statues, fountains.

Recreation.

Playgrounds; playfields; community centers; gymnasiums, public baths; parks, parkways, and esplanades; commercial recreation.

Finance and Administration.

Paying for the improvements; local assessment; readjustment of tax values; administrative procedure and enforcement: revision of ordinances or Laws.
Co-ordinated Plan.

Need of complete base maps of city and surroundings: regional planning: comprehensive, coordinated plan.

Conclusion.

Summary and "Order of Urgency": Organization for education and accomplishment: getting results.

1. Existing conditions and problems; 2. proposed solutions; 3. procedure to determine the one best practical solution.
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