

A City Plans

WILSON W. WYATT

When cities "just grow" they are like the garden we don't have time to weed—the crab grass gets bigger than the English peas. In the fall of 1943 Louisville, Ky.—beset with numerous wartime difficulties—began to detect "crab grass." Her citizens began to do a weeding job. The results have attracted nationwide attention and have given Louisville new strength with which to meet problems of the present and the postwar period. This story of how a city plans is told by Wilson W. Wyatt, Louisville's mayor.

WHAT WILL OUR CITY be like in the days and years to come? Will it continue along the path most cities have followed in the past—growing and spreading out, constantly forced to spend money to remedy conditions that could have been avoided by intelligent planning in the past? Or will its citizens, in some measure, control the future of their city by planning *now* for the years to come?

One city after another has come to the realization that many of the problems which now face us could have been avoided. More than 1200 local planning agencies have been set up all over the country. All groups—government, business, labor, and others—are planning for the postwar period. There are many questions which must be decided in each community, in each field of enterprise.

Some of these questions are the direct result of the war. What will become of the men and women now employed in war industries when contracts are cancelled? When demobilization comes, will there be jobs for returning service men and women? What effect will our shifting population have on the postwar community? How can reconversion be speeded up, and how can the gap between a war economy and a peacetime economy be bridged? How can the city take care of its increased population in peacetime and

how can it become a more pleasant place in which to work and live?

Louisville, with its tremendous influx of war-workers and military personnel, has a large stake in the answers to these questions. But there are others of long standing which must also be decided. What kind of a city do the people want? What will our future population be? What are the needs in the health and housing fields? What can be done to improve our recreation program? How can sewer construction be financed? Should we have a sewage disposal plant? Is a flood wall desirable? What is the best arterial street and highway plan for the area? How can we provide essential off-street parking facilities? How can we prevent the trend toward decentralization, leaving in its wake a rotten core of depreciated values in the heart of the city?

Louisville Rolls Up Its Sleeves

It was with these and other questions in mind that a group of forward-looking citizens of Louisville formed the Louisville Area Development Association in the fall of 1943. The Association is a civic non-profit corporation financed jointly by business, government, and labor. The cooperation of all groups upon whom rests the responsibility for the postwar city is assured by this joint enterprise. Organized

to determine upon and undertake to have carried into execution all of the various local plans conducive to making the Louisville area—both within and without the corporate limits—a more prosperous and progressive community, the originators of the plan believe that in the concerted action of citizens of the area lies the answer to practical and useful planning for the future of Louisville.

A fund of \$100,000 was provided for administrative purposes for the first two years. Contributors include a local bank, a radio station, the newspapers, the Water Company, the Gas and Electric Company, and the Louisville Central Labor Union as well as the city of Louisville and Jefferson County. Money appropriated by the city and county goes directly to the public planning agency, the Louisville and Jefferson County Planning and Zoning Commission, thereby maintaining a separation of public and private monies and making funds available to the Commission for additional staff and work related to the broad planning program.

It was emphasized from the start that the Association would conflict in no way with established agencies. It acts as a clearing house, encouraging the activities and programs of existing organizations, attempting to avoid duplication and overlapping. Piecemeal planning is insufficient, and the Association hopes to provide the broad over-all planning which can meet the immediate needs of the community, keeping the long-range picture in mind.

Louisville had a headstart in setting up an area-wide planning agency, since over two years ago the Planning and Zoning Commission was organized as one of the first city-county planning and zoning commissions in the country. Obviously, planning in any field cannot stop at the city limits. Interdependent, economically

and socially, the entire area must be considered as a whole. The effectiveness of an arterial street and highway plan, of preventive health programs, of sewer construction, and similar measures depends upon the ability to plan for the whole area.

Committees Go to Work

Centrally located offices for the Association were set up with an Executive Director and staff. Chairmen and members of the citizen committees were chosen with care from a long list of suggestions obtained from every conceivable source, subject to the final approval of the Board of Directors. It is significant of the widespread community interest that fewer than five of those asked to serve out of a total of more than three hundred did not accept the appointment.

To date eleven committees have been organized to consider the following subjects: Streets and Highways, Survey and Research, Finance and Taxation, Welfare, Sewers and Drainage, Public Buildings, Parks and Recreation, Transportation, Housing, and Health. The Committee for Economic Development is the eleventh. Committees soon to be formed will deal with Education, Smoke Abatement, and Arts and Civic Attractions.

These general committees are broken down into subcommittees, each dealing with a specific aspect of the general problem. For example, under Streets and Highways we have Subcommittees on a Major Street and Highway Plan, Rebuilding and Repairing, Bridges and Viaducts, Roadside Development, and Parking.

In general the over-all committee meets only to consider the reports of its subcommittees. The smaller unit is the working group. These committees act as study and discussion groups, gathering information on a specific problem and deciding

what action should be taken. Its members survey the needs in their particular field, determine correctives, decide upon definite steps which they believe will improve the area. The results are their own, determined after a study of the existing situation. Immediate projects which fit into the long-range program are under consideration as well as those which will be needed in the future. The officers and staff of the Association have no predetermined idea or plans; they assist but do not direct the activities of the committees.

The basis for these citizen committees is that the Association feels that the community has the talent and ability to determine for itself what kind of an area it wants and what changes should be made. Committee members are chosen principally for their ability to "get things done"; some, however, are selected because they are experts in a certain field. A representative of the governmental agency which parallels the work of each committee serves on it as an ex officio member. He furnishes information to the committee and provides a liaison between the citizen group and the public agency which will be entrusted with the carrying out of plans. The Director of Works serves on the Committees on Sewers and on Streets, the Director of Health on the Health Committee, etc. Members of the Board of Aldermen and of the Jefferson County Fiscal Court also serve on committees.

Thus local government takes its part, providing committees with a knowledge of the working arrangements and plans of the governmental agencies, and at the same time government is furnished with an expression of the judgment of a citizen group. Cooperation with the Planning and Zoning Commission is assured since the Planning Engineer is an ex officio member of committees and two of the members of

the Commission serve on the Association's Board of Directors.

It may be asked why a private planning agency is valuable in addition to the official public agency. A large part of the Commission's time is necessarily spent on zoning problems, leaving little time for planning, and there are many fields of community endeavor which cannot properly come under the jurisdiction of the official planning agency. The Planning Engineer and his staff furnish valuable information to the committees and assist in surveys. Making land-use maps to be used in connection with the streets and highway program and assessment maps showing comparative costs of rights-of-way are among their many services.

The Director and staff of the Association provide the coordination necessary for over-all planning. They collect information and make surveys for the various committees and take minutes and send out notices of all meetings. The Executive Director keeps each group apprised of plans in other fields which may have some bearing on their problems, and final review of all recommendations by the Board of Directors prevents conflicting action on the part of various committees. When projects are decided upon by the committees it is the responsibility of the Association to see that these plans are carried into effect.

Citizens Welcome Chance to Help

Nearing the end of the fact-finding period, many committees have already made recommendations and others will be ready soon. The Association has done little to date in the way of issuing reports, feeling that limited manpower and funds could better be used at this time in gathering information. The interest shown by committee members in the problems discussed is evidenced by the extraordinarily

high attendance at meetings and indicates that citizens appreciate a chance to help in planning for the future of their city. Many problems are unfamiliar to a large majority of the people. When well-considered solutions can be presented for some of these problems, proposals will be put before the public in as forceful a way as possible.

On many subjects a widespread public education program must be put into effect before necessary public support can be obtained. The chances of the success of such a program are excellent. Hardly a day goes by without an invitation from some civic group to discuss the work of the Association. The citizens of Louisville by their interest and cooperation have proven that they are alert to the present

and impending problems of the community.

The Association's program is not intended as a make-work program—its purpose first and foremost is to determine the essential needs of the community and to provide an instrument for democratic community planning. By encouraging the business and industry which will make the Louisville area more prosperous and by furthering needed projects and programs the Association hopes to make Louisville a better place in which to work and live. When men and materials are available, many plans and blueprints will be ready, and the citizens of the area will have determined their own comprehensive plan for the future in which all individuals, organizations, and groups can participate.

TOP-HEAVY LEADERSHIP

Is yours a "Do it my way or else" School? _____

C. A. WEBER

A community's voice in education is expressed through the local board of education. Yet, in many cases, boards do not follow the progress of a school beyond the point of electing a staff. They delegate dictatorial powers to the administrative heads with little thought to the need for cooperative action among all members of the faculty. C. A. Weber points out why cooperative planning has been so strenuously opposed. Mr. Weber is associate professor of education at the University of Connecticut.

BOARDS OF EDUCATION are usually elected by the people, in conformity with our democratic ideals, for the purpose of expressing the people's judgment in the operation of the schools and for the purpose of guaranteeing to the people that the program of public education in the community will meet the needs of democratic living and democratic control. The most important responsibility of the board

of education is the selection of a competent, healthy, creative, well-educated, growing staff of teachers to provide the type of teaching-learning situation which will result in the maximum of growth for all those engaged in the teaching-learning experience.

In most cases, the board of education is primarily a legislative and not an administrative body. Whether elected or ap-

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