

ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR ENDED • SEPTEMBER 30, 1962





City Plan Commission

EDWARD WINSOR, *Chairman*
JERRY LORENZO RALPH MATERA

WALTER H. REYNOLDS, *Mayor*
LUCIO E. CARLONE, *Secretary*

JAMES B. LEACH, *Vice Chairman*
RAYMOND J. NOTTAGE HARRY PINKERSON

FRANK H. MALLEY, *Director*
DIETER HAMMERSCHLAG, *Deputy Director*

*Suite 103, City Hall,
Providence 3, Rhode Island*

August 6, 1963

The Honorable Walter H. Reynolds
The Honorable City Council of the
City of Providence
City Hall
Providence, Rhode Island

Gentlemen:

It is with pleasure that I hereby submit, in accordance with Section 2, Chapter 22, Title 45 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, 1956 and Section 179½ of Chapter 2 of the Revised Ordinances of the City of Providence, the Annual Report of the City Plan Commission for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1962.

Respectfully yours,

EDWARD WINSOR
CHAIRMAN
CITY PLAN COMMISSION

EW:jag

IN CITY COUNCIL
SEP 5 1963

READ:
WHEREUPON IT IS ORDERED THAT
THE SAME BE RECEIVED.

Vincent Vespa
ACTING CLERK

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THE CITY PLAN COMMISSION

Mr. Edward Winsor, Chairman
Mr. James B. Leach, Vice Chairman
Mr. Lucio E. Carlone, Secretary
Councilman Jerry Lorenzo
Councilman Ralph Matera
Mr. Raymond J. Nottage
Mr. Harry Pinkerson

Honorable Walter H. Reynolds (Ex Officio)

THE COMMISSION STAFF

Director: Frank H. Malley
Deputy Director: Dieter K. Hammerschlag
Public Relations: Jeremiah H. Cannon
Clerical Section: Mrs. Mary M. Hannan
Mrs. Ann A. Clanton*
Miss Joyce A. Giannini

Principal Planner: Jerome R. Saroff
Principal Planner: Charles H. Graves
Principal Planner: Carl G. Lindbloom
Senior Planner: Anthony N. Meleo
Senior Planner: Christos G. Jemorakos
Senior Planner: Jerome W. Lindsey*
Senior Planner: Arne B. Englehart
Associate Planner: Harold T. Stearns
Associate Planner: Miss Alberta Z. Potter
Associate Planner: Jagdish C. Sachdev
Associate Planner: Ove F. Van Jepmond
Assistant Planner: G. John Terenzi
Assistant Planner: James T. Beattie
Assistant Planner: William F. Lombardo
Planning Aide: Richard H. Piscione
Planning Aide: Roy I. Kimmel, Jr.*
Planning Aide: Timothy E. Quinn*
Planning Aide: James F. Kruger
Planning Aide: Christian G. Cannell
Planning Aide: Marc C. Lowenstein

* Resigned during fiscal year

ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONS

By authority of an Act of the Rhode Island General Assembly and an Ordinance of the Providence City Council in 1944, the City Plan Commission, consisting of the Mayor (ex officio), two councilmen elected by the City Council, and five qualified citizens appointed by the Mayor, came into being.

It is interesting to note here that the City Council first created a City Plan Commission on December 2, 1913, one of the first in the country. Under the original ordinance, the Commission included the Mayor, the Presidents of the Board of Aldermen and Common Council, the Commissioner of Public Works and four citizens appointed by the Mayor. Theodore Francis Green was one of the four citizens appointed by Mayor Gainer in 1913 and is the only living member of that first Commission which initiated city planning in Providence 50 years ago next December.

The Commission's purpose is to initiate planning studies relative to the resources and future needs of the City and to give technical planning advice and assistance to the Mayor, the City Council, various boards and departments of the city government and the public. To carry out

its work a technical staff under the direction of Frank H. Malley is employed by the Commission. Of a total authorized staff of 22 there were as of September 30, 1962, no vacancies. During the past fiscal year the department operated with a budget of \$148,023. A summary of the department's budget appears in Appendix C.

In Appendix A are listed amendments to the various Master Plans adopted by the City Plan Commission; Appendix B contains the summary of Action of Petitions referred to the Commission from the City Council, Zoning Board of Review, and the Council Committee to Assist in Implementing the Downtown Master Plan.

A - REVISION OF THE GENERAL PLAN

The General Plan represents an attempt to apply forethought to the changing life of the community, and in so doing gives direction and purpose to this change. Much the same as a business concern must look ahead and plan for its future, so must an urban community. A city must evaluate its present and potential needs in light of available resources and formulate realistic objectives to guide future development. The process of guiding the physical growth of a community is a continuous one, yet the General Plan is the primary basis from which this process operates. The ultimate purpose of this Plan is to insure the welfare of those who live and will live in the community insofar as control of the physical environment will contribute to this end. Its immediate purpose is to provide a basis for the City Plan Commission and the City Council to consider specific projects upon which they must act, in light of a clear overall picture of the end product desired.

In addition, the public and private agencies and individuals of Providence can relate their development schemes to the objectives, principles and proposals as expressed by the City's General Plan.

Following completion of the General Plan it will be possible to prepare detailed neighborhood and other project plans within the framework established by the General Plan. The preparation of such detailed plans and a complete updating of the present Zoning Ordinance will be undertaken by the City Plan Commission following revision of the General Plan.

Of the many studies which are a prerequisite to revision of a General Plan, five were undertaken this year. These include a circulation study, a land use study, a school study, a population projection and an attitude survey. A progress report on these five studies is presented here.

1 - Circulation Study

Providence and its environs are on the verge of facing radical changes in travel patterns and traffic conditions as a result of the development of a comprehensive system of limited access highways. These new high-speed, high-capacity facilities are likely to reroute existing auto travel so as to completely change the present volumes on the city's arterial street system. In addition, these roads will, in the long run, reorient travel demands as new land developments take advantage of the accessibility provided by these facilities.

Obviously then a basic step in general plan revision is a study of existing traffic conditions, a prediction of future traffic patterns and the preparation of a circulation plan which will accommodate future traffic patterns in accordance with future land use requirements with a minimum of friction.

Therefore, a traffic study was undertaken in February of 1962, with the express purpose of anticipating changes in travel demands and developing a sound arterial street improvement program that would accommodate these demands. The study has been divided into three phases including:

- a) collection and analysis of basic data
- b) forecasting, and
- c) preparation and evaluation of alternate arterial programs

The first phase of the study has been completed and is discussed briefly here.

Phase 1 - Collection of Basic Data

The existing highway and street facilities of Providence and the immediately adjacent area have been classified as to their existing use, (local, collector, arterial, freeway) and the information obtained for all sections of the existing

arterial and freeway system:

- a - existing traffic flow
- b - practical capacity
- c - driving speeds (off-peak and peak hour)

Existing generalized land use data was developed on a zonal basis for the entire study area. (U. S. Census Standard Metropolitan Area) In addition the following 1960 statistical information was obtained for each of the 310 zones:

- a - population
- b - labor force
- c - employment
- d - car ownership

To assist in preparing a forecast of future land use, information on the quantity and quality of vacant land was obtained for each zone, and all available data on changes in population and employment distribution was compiled.

Data on travel characteristics was obtained from the State Highway Department's Origination and Destination Study of 1960. This information included:

- a - number of trips destined to each zone by trip purpose and mode of travel
- b - number of trips made by the residents of each zone by trip purpose and mode of travel, and
- c - number of cars owned by residents of each zone

Phase 2 - Forecasting

This phase of the study is now underway. Traffic in the study area will be projected to 1970 by means of a four-part gravity model. The gravity model will be used to distribute trips generated out of each traffic zone to each of the other zones in the study area. Both the size and distance to other zones will influence the number of trips distributed. Trip distribution to a zone will increase as the size or attraction of the zone increases and as the driving time to the zone decreases.

1970 traffic to and from zones will be assigned to the highway and street network by high-speed computer. The assignment program will be "all-or-nothing" over the minimum time path. The computer will consider each trip between zones and select the route which minimizes driving time without regard to the capacity of parts of the network.

2 - Land Use Study

One of the first steps in the process of revising the City's General Plan is the land use study. This study is simply an inventory of the land in the city to determine the present use of each parcel of property. The data collected is mapped and tabulated so that present use patterns

may be examined and compared with prior land use studies to determine trends.

The land use map itself enables identification of the older sections of development and the new groupings and patterns; it shows a relationship of physical conditions to population distribution; it indicates local spatial relationships and the basic elements of the City's character. This information also facilitates the determination of need for facilities in specific areas. The land use study also serves as a necessary and useful tool in determining zoning needs and location of zone districts.

A complete inventory of land use in the City was made in 1961, plotted on maps and then transferred onto punch cards and the information was tabulated into separate reports. These reports record the use, size, assessed valuation and zoning of every lot in the City. They also provide useful summaries of land uses by blocks, census tracts and City as a whole, and correlations of land use and zoning information, lot sizes and housing densities. Many other useful statistical summaries and analyses can be easily made by machine as the need arises.

The following table is a summary in acres of the 1961 land use tabulations compared with the 1946 and 1953 tabula-

tions. The amount of land in water and streets is not tabulated and accounts for the fluctuation in total acres indicated.

Land-Use by Acreage

<u>Land-Use</u>	<u>1946</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1961</u>
Vacant Land	2,040	1,380	1,192
Residential	3,613	3,834	3,739
1-family	1,433	1,463	1,554
2-3-family	1,704	1,760	1,643
multi-family	351	448	414
aux. to res.	125	163	128
Commercial	378	469	572
parking	71	124	170
Industrial	1,422	1,584	1,507
utility & rr	441	399	383
Inst., Park, School, & Public	2,121	2,274	2,351
Total	9,574	9,541	9,361

The above summary indicates a continual decrease in the remaining vacant land in the city; a decrease in 1961 in residential and industrial land use, (largely as a result of freeway condemnation); a sharp increase in commercial land use, (46 acre increase in off-street parking, 68 acre increase in general and heavy commercial uses, minor decreases in other miscellaneous commercial uses); and a continual increase in institutional park, school and public uses.

3 - School Study

The City Plan Commission has begun a revision of the Master Plan for Public Schools. During the period this report covers, data gathering and evaluation of existing public schools was undertaken. The Plan Commission analyzed and evaluated the physical (structural) conditions of the schools, enrollment changes, and adequacy of district boundaries.

Particular attention has so far been given to the Elementary Schools. Junior High Schools will be studied in detail after the completion of the Elementary School Plan.

Preliminary studies indicate that the Elementary School system as a whole operates at 85% of optimum capacity. We found, however, that this percentage varied widely according to individual schools. Some elementary schools were operating at much over optimum, and some were greatly under. The Plan Commission is attempting to reduce these wide variations. One way under consideration is by eliminating small, old schools and consolidating them into large schools.

Projections of Public Schools Enrollment indicated that it would remain relatively stable, with at most a decline of 1,000 from its present figure of roughly 30,000.

4 - Population Projection

During the past year the Plan Commission made population projections in order to get an approximation of the type (loss or gain) and magnitude (how great a loss or gain) of population change we may expect by 1975. Our projections indicate that Providence will continue to lose population as it has in the past decade. However, there are indications that this loss will begin to taper off after 1970. By 1965 we project a population of 186,000; 1970, 171,000; 1975, 162,000. Thus, a loss of around 20% from the 1960 population is anticipated by 1975.

5 - Attitude Survey

The study was begun in February in 1962 as one of the preparatory elements leading to a revision of the Land Use Master Plan. In view of the large population loss Providence experienced between 1950-60, it was considered vital to determine the sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction of those still living in Providence. An understanding of these may give the City and the Plan Commission clues to the physical improvements and changes most desired by the people. Practically, the elimination of sources of dissatisfaction may enable the City to hold its already reduced population, and possibly even lure people back from the suburbs.

B - COMMUNITY RENEWAL PROGRAM

One of the major criticisms leveled at the urban renewal programs of many cities has been their tendency to develop projects unrelated to the city's comprehensive development. To correct this problem the Community Renewal Program was developed to bridge the gap between overall city planning, both land use and fiscal, and the urban renewal project.

The Providence Community Renewal Program was undertaken in June of 1961 and will require eighteen months to complete. The program, under the direction of the Urban Renewal Coordinator, is being developed by Blair Associates, planning consultants. The overall cost of the program is \$277,073.00, two-thirds of which is being paid by the Federal Government.

The CRP is designed to yield an overall estimate of the urban renewal needs of the city related to its revised general plan, ability to pay, the marketability of land, and the provision of relocation resources. Based on this data, priorities and treatment of projects can be established and the urban renewal program put on a continuous, long-range basis.

The most important result of the CRP will be to provide the City for the first time with a clear understanding of the magnitude of the task that lies ahead, coupled with an inven-

tory of tools for accomplishing the job. The CRP will also permit the City to maximize non-cash local grant-in-aid credits by tying the urban renewal program into the long-range Capital Improvement Program. This will permit renewal projects to be undertaken simultaneously with the major capital improvements in a neighborhood that will be eligible for non-cash credit.

The problem of relocation can also be minimized through the CRP as major problems can be anticipated years in advance and the necessary corrective measures taken in ample time to avoid hardship or project delays.

C - DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

Planning for the Weybosset Hill Project carried out by I. M. Pei for the Redevelopment Agency was reviewed at regular intervals by the Deputy Director under an agreement between the PRA and the CPC. Written comments were submitted to the Agency and its Consultant in regard to land use, parking, Empire Park, and design controls.

Railroad Relocation, proposed as the key to downtown renewal in "Downtown Providence 1970", was approved by the URA as a federally aided project in November, 1961. Because of the

extremely complex nature of the undertaking, progress was slow. In August, 1962, a representative of the Trustees of the New Haven Railroad and the real estate, traffic, legal, engineering, planning and design consultants of the PRA were given a word and color slide review of the history of railroad relocation, the many factors which were considered and went into the design of the entire project area in "Downtown Providence 1970".

Westminster Pedestrian Mall

A special act permitting the City to establish pedestrian malls as proposed in "Downtown Providence 1970" was passed by the General Assembly in the Spring of 1962. Intensive survey and design work was begun by the staff in early summer and a contract was made with Fenton Keyes Associates for engineering services in connection with existing and proposed utilities.

In summary, it seems that the public effort to carry out the Downtown Master Plan is proceeding well. The private effort, with the exception of the bus terminal which is under construction, has been cautious and reluctant to show initiative.

APPENDIX A

AMENDMENTS TO MASTER PLANS

June 28, 1950 - MASTER PLAN FOR THOROFARES

- A. Realignment of North-South Freeway - from George M. Cohan Boulevard, across Providence River Bridge to Hayward Park and from Public Street to Smith Street.
- B. Olneyville Square Expressway amended to agree with State construction plan.

September 25, 1957 - MASTER PLAN FOR THOROFARES

Alignment of North-South Freeway from Public Street through Hayward Park to Smith Street to agree with State construction plan.

February 25, 1958 - MASTER PLAN FOR REDEVELOPMENT OF RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Amendment to allow for redevelopment of Lippitt Hill Section.

August 9, 1960 - MASTER PLAN FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL SITES

Amendment to agree with redevelopment plan for Mashapaug Pond Area.

August 9, 1960 - MASTER PLAN FOR THOROFARES

Amendment to Huntington-Niantic Freeway to provide for redevelopment of Mashapaug Pond Area.

August 9, 1960 - MASTER PLAN FOR REDEVELOPMENT OF RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Amendment to provide for industrial redevelopment of Mashapaug Pond Area. (Huntington Expressway Industrial Park)

APPENDIX B

PART I

Summary of Action on Petitions
Referred from City Council
1961-1962

<u>Subject</u>	<u>City Plan Commission Action</u>				<u>City Council Action</u>			
	<u>Total No. of Referrals</u>	<u>No Objection</u>	<u>Recommended Denial</u>	<u>No Action</u>	<u>In Accord with CPC Recommendations</u>	<u>Opposite to CPC Recommendations</u>	<u>Died in Committee</u>	<u>Action</u>
Zoning Amendments	17	2	15		7	1	(1)*	9
Abandonment of Streets	14	11	3		9	1	(1)*	4
Sale or Lease of City-owned Property	10	6	3	1	3			7
Redemptions of Tax Title Property	11	8	3		8		3	
Miscellaneous	<u>2**</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	54	28	24	2	27	2	(2)*	21

* The figures in parentheses indicate the number of petitions granted by the City Council following City Plan Commission recommendations for denial.

** This was tabled pending further information and it never went back to City Council.

APPENDIX B

PART II

Summary of Action on Referrals from
the Zoning Board of Review
through September 30, 1962

<u>Total No. of Referrals</u>	<u>No Objection</u>	<u>Recom- mended Denial</u>	<u>No Action</u>	<u>In Accord with CPC Recommen- dation</u>	<u>Opposite to CPC Recommen- dation</u>	<u>No Action</u>
113	38	74	1	61	39 (39)*	13**

* The figure in parentheses indicates the number of changes granted by the Board of Review following City Plan Commission staff recommendations for denial.

** Five petitioners withdrew application.

APPENDIX B

PART III

Summary of Action on Referrals from
the Committee to Assist in Implementing the Downtown Master Plan
through September 30, 1962

City Plan Action

Action of Building Department

<u>Total No. of Referrals</u>	<u>No Objection</u>	<u>Recom- mended Denial</u>	<u>No Objection</u>	<u>Recom- mended Denial</u>	<u>No Action</u>
18	17	1	14	1	3

APPENDIX C

Expenditures and Appropriations
of the
City Plan Department

	<u>Expenditures</u>	
	<u>1960-1961</u>	<u>1961-1962</u>
<u>ITEM 0</u> PERSONAL SERVICES (Salaries)	\$100,645.70	\$120,894.57*
<u>ITEM 1</u> SERVICES OTHER THAN PERSONAL (Printing, Transportation, Miscellaneous, Fees, etc.)	6,851.49	25,321.74**
<u>ITEM 2</u> MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES (Stationery, Office Sup- plies, etc.)	835.96	1,494.42*
<u>ITEM 3</u> SPECIAL SERVICES (Insurance for models)		113.40*
<u>ITEM 5</u> EQUIPMENT (Office furniture, books, maps and charts)	1,139.01	199.01*
Total Expenditures	\$109,472.16	\$148,023.14
Appropriations	<u>114,245.20</u>	<u>153,512.56</u>
Balance (returned to General Fund)	\$ 5,073.04	\$ 5,489.42

* \$22,369.65 transferred to Item I from Item 0
* \$400.00 transferred to Item II from Item 0
* \$113.40 transferred to Item III from Item 0
* \$150.00 transferred to Item V from Item 0

** \$65.00 transferred to Item II from Item I