

1968 ANNUAL REPORT  
CITY PLAN COMMISSION  
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

REVIEW OF PLANNING AND PROGRESS

October 1, 1967

through

September 30, 1968

IN CITY COUNCIL

MAY 1 - 1969

READ:

WHEREUPON IT IS ORDERED THAT  
THE SAME BE RECEIVED.

*Vincent Vespa*

CLERK

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# City Plan Commission

Providence, Rhode Island 02903

April 8, 1969

Honorable Joseph A. Doorley, Jr., Mayor  
The Honorable City Council of the  
City of Providence  
City Hall  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Gentlemen:

I am pleased to transmit herewith the Annual Report of the City Plan Commission for the fiscal year ended September 30, 1968.

In its second year of operation as part of the single coordinated Department of Planning and Urban Development it is evident that the new effort can operate efficiently and successfully. Of particular interest to the Commission is the combination of the several phases of general planning with planning for renewal projects under the direction of a Chief of Planning.

The Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the excellent cooperation extended by the various city departments which contributed to the program and planning described in this report.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Edward Winsor".

EDWARD WINSOR  
CHAIRMAN  
CITY PLAN COMMISSION

WE:aem

## I. INTRODUCTION

The past year was the first full year of operation of the Commission as a part of the Department of Planning and Urban Development, which was newly effective as of March 6, 1967. Technically, the Commission retains its function and identity. The employees of the Commission became the staff of a Planning Division of the new department concurrently with the new organization.

The Planning Division consists of six sections, including: Long Range Planning, Current Planning, Project Planning, Traffic Planning, Graphics and Clerical. The new organization provides that all planning for the City of Providence is carried out in the Planning Division, which has streamlined and made more effective the previously fragmented activities.

The bird's eye view of Providence would show a city that is the result of the plans of many and the haphazard growth of generations. Every building, every street, every sign is the outcome of someone's action which, if investigated, would usually uncover some kind of "plan" of what should be built. Since it was natural for most individuals and organized groups to have different values and goals, the overall appearance of their projects combined seems to show little forethought at all. Local governments also have reflected a variety of activities and interests. Good plans for one public agency sometimes limit the activities of another. Therefore the need for coordinated planning in our cities has been a major challenge of present urban life.

Needs of the entire city are the concern of Providence's City Plan Commission. While every department of the municipal government must try to serve all the citizens, the Commission and its staff of professional city planners must balance the needs of various public and private interests to produce a compatible LONG-RANGE plan which will assist all. This planning, characterized by its broad scope and time period, is called "comprehensive or

"master" planning.

The physical environment is the prime subject matter of the Plan Commission. However, a basic requirement of all plans and their preparation is that they must be related to people and to their needs and desires. Each planning study must therefore analyze social and economic influences and how they will be affected by future programs.

## II. MASTER PLANNING

### School Master Plan

In response to new ideas set forth by the COPE Report and by the Rhode Island Special Commission to Study the Entire Field of Education, preparation was begun of an interim report on amendments to the Master Plan of 1965. This study will determine what changes are necessary to bring Providence School plant planning into line with proposed grade reorganization and metropolitan districting.

The Commission received periodic progress reports as work proceeded. The interim study deals with three broad alternatives for school plant systems: neighborhood schools, a citywide consolidation of schools into three to five educational miniparks, and a metropolitan consolidation into about four major educational parks each serving children from several municipalities.

Education park complexes, as they range in size, geographical coverage, and grade organization from elementary to and through college, were studied and suitability to the city and the metropolitan area assessed. Updated population projections, housing development trends by census tract and enumeration districts, age specification population data and recreational and community service center development were considered in the identification of possible sites. Tentative design studies were begun to test the effectiveness of alternative education park concepts either including or excluding a location in Central Providence.

### Circulation Master Plan

As State highway planning is modified, the Circulation Master Plan requires scrutiny and possible updating. While there were no changes made to the plan during the year, attention was directed to traffic patterns along the Woonasquatucket River, the possibility of bridge replacement and general

upgrading of the river bank. The civic center interchange was studied in connection with these developments.

#### Recreation and Conservation Master Plan

The Recreation and Conservation Master Plan will require amendments as changes to the School Plan are formulated. As new schools are built and old ones relocated, recreational development will keep pace. The demolition of old schools will open up land which may be considered for recreation use or conservation.

Planning for the Green Acres Program was carried out in accord with the proposals of the Recreation Master Plan.

#### Green Acres Program

Several applications under this program involving City, State and Federal funds were prepared and submitted in the summer of 1968. Included were applications for funds for acquisition and development of six vest pocket parks in the Model Cities area and seven totlots located in various sections of the City. Funds were also requested for acquisition and development of a playground at Kenyon St. in the Federal Hill area. This project will have a total cost of approximately \$625,000.

### III. PROJECT PLANNING AND COORDINATION

#### West Broadway Project

On December 5, 1967 the Commission received a progress report on preliminary project planning to that date. The project area is bounded by Route 6 Connector, Atwells Avenue, Knight, Bridgham, Cranston, Messer and Wood Streets. The residential use and character of the neighborhood is to be preserved through rehabilitation. Some spot clearance is planned to increase parking space, reducing overcrowding, eliminate substandard buildings and mixed or incompatible uses. New residential construction, recreational and community facilities, site improvements and improved circulation are planned for the area.

#### Federal Hill East Project

It was reported to the Commission on December 5, 1967 that the Survey and Planning Application for Federal Hill East (R. I., R-22) was complete, approved by the Redevelopment Authority, and before the City Council. The project area, bounded by Route 95 on the east, Route 6 Connector on the north, Knight Street on the west, and Westminster Street on the south, contains 170 acres and is characterized by overcrowding of land, small lots, and lack of open space and recreational facilities.

The application requesting \$801,000 for staff and consultant services in the preparation of a plan, was submitted to HUD on December 15, 1967. Since that date HUD has requested and received justifications and clarifications of the application and approval is pending. Tentative work has been started in anticipation of eventual approval. The staff has completed a population analysis by race, age and sex, prepared base maps, revised the block numbering system and conducted an AFHA housing inspection.

### Mount Hope Project

In October, 1967 after consultation with the Mount Hope Businessmen's Council and the Mount Hope Citizen's Planning Committee, comments on the previously submitted Part I were completed and sent to HUD. Planning and preparation of Part II proceeded in close consultation with the residents of the area. The Commission reviewed the plan on January 9, 1968. The project contains 89 acres of which 55 acres are residential, 9.5 acres nonresidential, and 25 acres in streets. Located north of the Lippitt Hill area, the project is bounded by North Main Street, Rochambeau Avenue, Camp Street and Doyle Avenue. Strip commercial and residential uses are scheduled for voluntary rehabilitation with spot clearance to eliminate substandard buildings and provide parking space. Recreational facilities to serve various age groups are planned.

The Commission approved this plan as desirable and conforming to the Master Plan. Part II was submitted to HUD in March, 1968 and approved on May 13, 1968. The Loan and Grant Contract was executed in July, 1968; a federal contribution of 3.2 million dollars is matched by local contribution of 1.78 million dollars and a noncash credit of \$806,000 for the Lippitt School.

### Model Cities Program

The commission's continuing interest in the Model Cities Program occasioned in April, 1968 a report from the Director of that program. In discussing the program, the Director emphasized that unlike the departmentalized, piecemeal attempts in the past to solve the City's problems, the Model Cities Program is a comprehensive approach to the analysis of problems and the planning for action and allocation of resources to solve the problems in the broad areas of employment, housing, health and welfare, education and environment.

As the program is formulated, the Commission will be involved in the City's attempt to apply all of its functions and resources to the coordinated solution of problems in the Model Cities area.

#### IV. PLANNING TOOLS AND ACTION PROGRAMS

Three elements of the current 701 program, R. I. P-23, were completed during the year.

##### Photogrammetric and Mapping Survey

The mapping contract produced a highly accurate base map of the city consisting of 102 topographic sheets and 102 planimetric sheets at 80 foot scale, 30 reduction maps at 160 foot scale and 98 photographic enlargements at approximately 80 foot scale. Systematic random checks for compliance with requirements of the photogrammetric contract revealed that errors and omissions comprise such a small percentage of total information shown that no general challenge is warranted. These maps are filed for reference and use in planning projects.

##### Neighborhood Analysis

This study is a compilation of data in nineteen neighborhoods or planning areas constituting the city. Data concerning Population and Socio-economic Conditions, Land Use and Housing, and Public Services and Facilities is assessed and interpreted to determine assets and needs of each neighborhood. A traffic and parking analysis evaluation was prepared for each neighborhood. Maps and graphs accompany the reports and present much of the information visually. The analysis consolidates information which suggests guidelines and substantiates the need for future improvements in each of the neighborhoods.

##### Automated Information System

Under the terms of a contract with Policy Management Systems, Inc., a Data Bank feasibility study was completed. As the Industrial National Bank is under contract to handle the City's computer operations, the Commission wished to discuss the feasibility study with the bank. Representatives of

the bank met with the Commission on June 18, 1968 at which meeting it was decided that further study by the bank was necessary to arrive at cost estimates for additional work items prior to implementation. This study was conducted and implementation now requires a policy decision by the City.

#### Street Address Survey - Data Bank

This survey was undertaken to resolve discrepancies among various sources of street addresses as they relate to Assessor's lot numbers. Information on 44,000 parcels was checked and cross checked. IBM printouts were corrected as were Assessor's Plat Maps. In addition to corrections, information concerning census tracts and block numbers according to the 1965 census was compiled with the corrected data.

#### Capital Improvement Program

The Commission in its joint responsibility with the Finance Director reviewed the preliminary Capital Improvement Program on October 26, 1967. At that time the Program was completed but for the unsubmitted school program. After discussions with the Mayor and review of the Departmental requests, the Commission approved the program on December 5, 1967. On January 9, 1968 the Capital Improvement Program was amended to include the School Department program based on figures that were available for existing bond authorities. The approved CIP contains text and tables of the first year capital budget and five year capital financing program, 1967 to 1973, with total requests of \$146,345,445 for Schools, Recreation and Parks, Planning and Urban Development, Water Supply Board, Public Works, Public Safety, Welfare and the Downtown Master Plan. This request represents an increase of \$21,959,111 over that of the approved 1966-1972 CIP. Most of this increase is to be financed from State and Federal sources.

### Land Use Inventory

Preparations were made for the start of the comprehensive land use inventory necessary to update obsolete 1961 information. IBM cards were purchased, and field kits with small area maps were assembled for use by surveyors in identifying and recording properties directly on punch cards.

It was impossible to proceed with this inventory during the summer of 1968 for various reasons. It is expected that the Land Use Inventory will be implemented through the use of summer interns during 1969.

### Trinity Square Repertory Theater Site

The effort to locate a site for the repertory company's theater involved the Commission in late 1968. A seven acre site was determined to be advisable to accommodate the building and parking, and the staff has analyzed the suitability of several sites. No decision has been made.

### Fox Point - India Point Project

The Commission was engaged throughout the year in discussions of the proposed recreational redevelopment of the Fox Point - India Point area. Review of the State's highway planning and the extent of land taking for the Interstate 195 interchange was necessary to determine the land available for consideration. Preliminary sketches and a written analysis of the possibilities and considerations of this proposal were prepared by the staff and discussed with State and the Fox Point Neighborhood Association. State site planning continues as of this time.

### Downtown Department Store Study

Preliminary sketches and perspective renderings of a proposed department store and parking garage in the downtown retail area were prepared as a part of the study of that proposal. This study took into account a Central

Business District parking space survey and circulation study prepared by the traffic planning staff. The Commission reviewed the proposal and approved its conformity with the Downtown Master Plan noting that a study of such a development's economic impact might be advisable.

#### Convention Center

Planning for this facility revealed a projected insufficiency of parking space and the Commission turned its attention to this matter in early 1968. As architectural designs for the center will not be undertaken until a construction bond issue is approved, on-site parking space cannot be calculated. Existing parking facilities were studied and several suggestions for augmenting these were considered. It was generally concluded that the facility would attract private investment in the construction of a nearby parking facility.

The provision of downtown parking space is the subject of continuing staff research, and this question will receive thorough attention as plans for the center progress.

## THE CITY PLAN COMMISSION

1967-1968

Edward Winsor, Chairman	to Jan. 1971
Harry Pinkerson, Vice Chairman*	to Jan. 1968
Johns H. Congdon, 2nd., Vice Chairman**	to Jan. 1973
Raymond J. Nottage, Secretary	to Jan. 1969
Edward J. Costello	to Jan. 1972
John J. Cummings	to Jan. 1970
Robert J. Haxton (Councilman)	to Jan. 1969
Louis A. Mascia (Councilman)	to Jan. 1969

The Honorable Joseph A. Doorley, Jr.

Mayor of Providence (ex officio)

\*Resigned September 1967

\*\*Appointed October 1967, reappointed and elected Vice Chairman January 1968

PLANNING DIVISION  
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Frank H. Malley, Chief of Planning

Long Range Planning

John R. Kellam, Supervisor  
Robert B. Haig, Senior Planner\*\*  
George Turlo, Senior Planner  
David Aldrich, Associate Planner

Current Planning

Charles R. Wood, Supervisor\*  
Richard Piscione, Senior Planner  
Fred DiQuattro, Senior Planner\*  
Jerome Nesson, Senior Planner\*  
Linda Brodsky, Associate Planner  
Frank Antonizio, Assistant Planner  
George Baligian, Assistant Planner\*

Project Planning

Richard Torchia, Supervisor\*  
Soo-Dip Chin, Supervisor  
Merrick A. Cook, Jr., Senior Planner  
William F. Lombardo, Senior Planner  
John R. D'Antuono, Senior Planner  
Richard Schneider, Senior Planner\*  
Malcolm Derderian, Senior Planner\*\*  
George Myrick, Associate Planner  
Harriette Auskern Weiss, Associate Planner\*  
Clinton Goins, Assistant Planner  
Earl Shirley, Assistant Planner  
Brien T. Kerr, Assistant Planner\*\*

Traffic Planning

James T. Beattie, Supervisor  
Bruno Mollo, Traffic Planner

Graphics

Christos Jemorakos, Supervisor  
Ronald Mercurio, Assistant Planner  
Arthur F. Toppi, Draftsman  
George R. Oldham, Draftsman  
Lillian Paradas, Draftsman  
Donald Turner, Draftsman\*  
Thomas McCarthy, Draftsman\*\*

Clerical

Mary M. Hannan, Clerk IV  
Ann E. Mitchell, Clerk Stenographer III  
Edith Eisenberg, Clerk Stenographer II  
Jean Roy, Clerk Stenographer I

\*Transferred

\*\*Resigned

SUMMARY OF ACTION ON REFERRALS FROM

THE CITY COUNCIL

SEPTEMBER 30, 1968

Subject	City Plan Commission Action			City Council Action			
	Total No. of Referrals	No Objection	Recommended Denial	No Action	In Accord with CPC Recommendation	Opposite to CPC Recommendation	No Action
Zoning Amendments	16	6	10		3	3 (3)*	10
Abandonment of Streets	11	9		2	3		8
Sale or Lease of City-owned Property	6	3	2	1	2		4
Redemptions of Tax Title Property	19	19			16		3
Miscellaneous	8	4	2	** 2 #	2		6
Total	60	41	14	5	26	3 (3)	31

\* City Council granted petition after the City Plan Commission recommended denial.

\*\* One petition referred to the Providence Redevelopment Agency.

# One petition referred back to Committee.

Summary of Action on Referrals from  
the Zoning Board of Review  
through September 30, 1968

Total No. of Referrals	<u>Plan Department Action</u>			<u>Subsequent Action by Board of Review</u>		
	<u>No Objection</u>	<u>Recommended Denial</u>	<u>No Action</u>	<u>In Accord with CPC Recommen- dation</u>	<u>Opposite To CPC Recommen- dation</u>	<u>Petition Withdrawn No Action</u>
123	82	39	2	91	28 (22)*	4

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