

CITIZENS LEAGUE REPORT

No. 90

**Twin Cities Metropolitan Planning
Commission: Progress Report**

July 1958

Citizens League
601 Syndicate Building
Minneapolis 2, Minnesota

June 30, 1958

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Subcommittee on Metropolitan and Suburban Planning, Planning & Zoning
Committee

SUBJECT: Progress Report

The subcommittee on metropolitan-suburban planning was first set up by the Planning and Zoning Committee to suggest possible studies to be undertaken by the new Twin Cities Metropolitan Planning Commission. Since the Metropolitan Planning Committee is just getting started, and also because it has limited powers to do planning in local subdivisions, some committee members felt the committee should consider what the League could do further in the important area of suburban planning and zoning. As a consequence, the original subcommittee broadened its scope to include the fields of liaison with the Metropolitan Planning Commission and promotion of planning and zoning in the suburban Twin Cities area.

This is a progress report on the committee's plans for coordination of suburban planning.

1. Areas in which suburban coordination can work:

- A. Storm drainage
- B. Utilities, including water, sewer and gas
- C. Zoning
 - 1. Commercial
 - 2. Residential
 - 3. Industrial
- D. Roads, freeways, major access roads, collector streets, etc.
- E. Parks
- F. Fire protection
- G. Police

2. Agencies through which coordination can be achieved:

- A. Metropolitan Planning Commission. While the effectiveness of this Commission probably will not be felt completely for two or three years until its initial studies have been completed, it is possible to get advice and assistance from it if requested.
- B. Voluntary Associations. Examples of this are the group formed by the Edina Planning Commission of the villages surrounding Edina, and the group of communities near White Bear Lake that associated to finance, with federal aid, a planning study of their communities.
- C. Engineers. Occasionally a consulting engineer is employed by neighboring villages and can achieve some degree of cooperation between the villages that are employing him.

3. Action that can be taken by the Citizens League to encourage more coordination

- A. Until the Metropolitan Planning Commission is in a better position to give aid and assistance to the communities, the League should do

whatever it can to encourage and publicize the voluntary associations between suburban villages, particularly as these problems relate to physical facilities such as drainage, utilities, police and fire protection, etc.

Cooperation on zoning is probably going to be somewhat less effective due to the fact that the individual communities are attempting to establish favorable tax basis, as noted below.

- B. The League can help local communities to work with the Metropolitan Planning Commission. This can be done through publicity and through personal contact between individual members of the League and members of their local suburban council and planning commission. The League should also stand ready to assist the Metropolitan Planning Commission in instances where the Commission notices an opportunity for local suburban coordination but hesitates for protocol reasons to step into the situation. In instances such as this, League members might be able to prevail upon the local officials to invite the Metropolitan Planning Commission to take a look at the situation. Facilities of the Metropolitan Planning Commission at this time include advice on how to plan, the availability of federal funds from the Housing Act of 1954 for planning for communities under 20,000 population with matching funds to be provided by the local community, etc. The Metropolitan Planning Commission is doing all that it can to encourage contiguous communities to get together and is planning to publish a news letter on this subject.
- C. The League can maintain close contact with the Metropolitan Planning Commission and be available as a sounding board to the Commission and its staff to assist in decisions as to direction of its studies and recommendations, to assist in legislative changes if required and to assist in other areas that may turn up from time to time.

The subcommittee noted a danger area that should be the subject of some study, namely the tendency of many suburban communities to attempt to develop a favorable tax base through rather arbitrary zoning of commercial and industrial land.

The subcommittee felt that illogical zoning for the purpose of creating a tax base might prove to result in the development of potential blight areas.

An early priority for demand studies by the Planning Commission for both commercial and industrial land should be encouraged as much as possible.

Subcommittee on Metropolitan and
Suburban Planning

Robert J. Crabb, chairman
William Fine
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