

CITIZENS LEAGUE REPORT

No. 199

**CL Executive Committee  
Recommendations on City-County Space  
Needs**

**October 1966**

Citizens League  
545 Mobil Oil Building  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402

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REPORT TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Executive Committee, James Pratt, Chairman

**APPROVED**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**DATE OCT 5 1966**

The Executive Committee has devoted a substantial proportion of two meetings to reviewing the work of the City-County Building Space Committee. The question which has been posed to the Executive Committee is whether a report of this research committee should be placed in final form, submitted to the Board of Directors, and made public in advance of the Hennepin County Board's consultant's report on the same subject. The report of Space Utilization Associates, the County's consultant, is expected to be made public in November. The Citizens League's City-County Building Space Needs Committee could, if the Board of Directors considered it necessary or desirable and of sufficiently high priority, complete its report prior to that time. The Executive Committee has reviewed intensively the work of this research committee and also its proposed findings and recommendations, in order to submit to the Board of Directors a proposed course of action. This review discloses that:

1. The Board of Directors, late in 1963, directed the formation of a research committee to review the long-range building space needs of Minneapolis city and Hennepin County government. This project was precipitated by the action of the Hennepin County Board, in the fall of 1963, to acquire the Farnham property in the block immediately south of the Courthouse, together with the announced intention of acquiring the entire block and constructing on it a large administrative office building for county functions. There was considerable controversy at the time concerning whether the County needed additional space, whether the acquired site was the proper location for such a building, if needed, and whether there was adequate coordination between Minneapolis city and Hennepin County government officials in developing their long-range plans for building space.
2. The City-County Building Space Needs Committee held its first meeting in March, 1964, and met 14 times during March, April, May and June of that year. The committee formed a Steering Committee to analyze the massive amount of factual data which had been presented, to obtain such additional data as would be necessary to develop conclusions and recommendations, and to report back to the full committee. The Steering Committee began meeting in July, 1964, and between then and March, 1966, the Steering Committee met 40 times. The full committee was called together during the interim on a progress report basis.
3. The Steering Committee set itself to the formidable task of reviewing the future space requirements of each functional agency in city and county government. In accomplishing this objective, the Steering Committee met with numerous administrative officials in city and county government, several being called back more than once, and amassed a vast amount of detailed information.
4. In the process of this constant and intensive contact with county administrative officials, it became clear to all, including county officials, that the available data were totally inadequate to justify moving ahead with any new construction program. It became equally clear that the existing

county administrative staff was not equipped to perform the kind of long-range space planning function which must be accomplished, certainly not within any short period of time. The County Board then retained a California firm, Space Utilization Associates, to undertake a comprehensive study, at a cost to the County of \$60,000.

5. The committee, during the course of its work, became quite concerned about the alarming lack of coordination among county offices, about the relative lack of progress in adapting such modern techniques as computers, micro-filming, record storage systems, etc., about extensive plans to modernize the county jail without any long-range planning to determine the relationship between the city and county jail, extensive remodeling work of the County Courthouse with no coordinated long-range plan, and a number of other deficiencies. These concerns likewise communicated themselves during the course of intensive interrogation of administrative officials. Considerable progress has been made during the past year within county government in a number of these areas. Moreover, because of certain of this information which was developed by this research committee, the Citizens League Board of Directors subsequently programmed several research projects. Two specific examples of research projects which received a higher priority because of the work of the City-County Building Space Needs Committee were the projects assigned to the County Government Structure Committee and the City-County Jails Committee.
6. The Steering Committee continued to evaluate data and to develop its proposed findings and recommendations. During the course of approximately one year, these proposed findings and recommendations were refined and revised and refined. Numerous changes became necessary because of progress being made by the County. An example of this type of change was to revise a proposed recommendation that consultants be retained to develop a long-range building space plan to a commendation of the County Board for retaining consultants for this purpose. Even with these changes, many of the findings became recitations of past deficiencies on the part of county officials. It became increasingly difficult to report to the full committee, to the Board of Directors and to the public.
7. The Steering Committee's proposed findings and conclusions, which were reviewed in detail by the Executive Committee, cover 15 pages and are exceedingly detailed. These recommendations in general:
  - a. Conclude that present county permanent office space is inadequate to meet current requirements. By the year 2000, just 34 years from now, the County's office space requirements will be more than double the space presently available on a permanent basis.
  - b. The present Courthouse, based on the assumption that it would continue to house functions of city and county government, should house primarily courts and court-related functions.
  - c. A substantial amount of land, probably a full city block, will have to be acquired. The land to be acquired should be in close proximity to the present Courthouse.
  - d. Present Minneapolis city government space will be adequate to meet the long range requirements of city functions. However, considerable rearranging and better utilization of existing space must be achieved.

- e. Long-range space planning by the County is totally inadequate. (This conclusion is being remedied by the retention of the consulting firm.) Long-range city space planning is even more inadequate than that of the County. A recommendation to retain outside consultants spells out precisely the steps to attain an adequate long-range plan.
  - f. There is an almost total lack of coordination and exchange of information between City and County officials in planning for future space requirements.
  - g. The Municipal Building Commission is neither properly structured nor is it the appropriate governmental agency to have the responsibility for city and county space planning. To the extent this Commission is retained, it should be limited to custodial responsibilities and should be restructured.
  - h. Responsibility for space planning for the County should be given to the County Board and for the City of Minneapolis to the City Council.
  - i. Expression of deep concern about the proposed expenditure of substantial amounts of money to improve and modernize the County Jail and the recommendation that a comprehensive review of the entire jail question be undertaken prior to the launching of extensive improvements and remodeling of the present facilities. (The remodeling has since been deferred and the Citizens League's City-County Jails Committee has reported urging a consolidated City-County Jail in a new building.)
  - j. The expression of concern about the extensive remodeling and modernization of space within the Courthouse without any overall guiding modernization plan and specific recommendations to fit this program into the long-range building space program.
  - k. The expression of concern about the vast expansion which will be required to meet future court needs. Before the end of this century, based on the standards generally accepted by the judiciary, we will be electing 90 municipal and district court judges.
  - l. The expression of concern about the seemingly high cost of custodial care in the Courthouse building, with the recommendation that studies be undertaken to determine whether the contract system of maintaining this building would be more economical.
8. The problem faced by the research committee in keeping its proposed findings and recommendations current with developments was further compounded by the inability of the Executive Director, who staffed this committee, to undertake the drafting of these proposed findings and conclusions in the detailed report form because of more pressing priorities in other areas of his responsibility. The fact that County officials actually were carrying out the proposed recommendations being urged by the Steering Committee and that most of the previous concerns no longer applied had much to do with giving completion of this report a lower priority than otherwise would have been the case.

9. The committee has met with the County's consultants, and the preliminary proposed findings and recommendations developed by the Steering Committee are familiar to the consultants.

It is our understanding that the report of the consultants will be completed and made public during the month of November. The question to which the Executive Committee has addressed itself is whether to place top priority on the completion and publication of the Citizens League report prior to the publication of the consultants' report. The alternative would be to defer preparation of the Citizens League report until after the consultants' report is made public and to incorporate in the final Citizens League report a review of the consultants' report. It seems clear that the Citizens League will have to review the consultants' report in either event.

Based on our review of the total situation, your Executive Committee makes the following recommendations:

1. We believe it inadvisable to make public the Citizens League report just ahead of the report of the County's consultants. We reach this conclusion for two principal reasons: First, we believe the timing of the report would be inappropriate. Second, the relative priorities on the time of the staff are such that it is not possible to complete the report of the City-County Building Space Needs Committee without adversely affecting other endeavors which we regard as having an even higher priority. We, therefore, recommend that further work on the report be deferred until after publication of the report of Space Utilization Associates.
2. Although the final decision on programming should be withheld until the consultants' report is published, we believe that that report should be reviewed promptly by the Citizens League research committee. The work done thus far by the members of the City-County Building Space Needs Committee will be of invaluable assistance in making such a review. Those findings and recommendations now included in the proposed draft developed by the Steering Committee must go beyond certain issues likely to be discussed by the County's consulting firm, and can then be consolidated within a single report. We therefore urge that time be reserved within the Citizens League research program for the inclusion of this project, with the final decision to be made by the Board of Directors after publication of the consultants' report.
3. We urge that an expression of deep gratitude on the part of the Board of Directors be conveyed to each member of the City-County Building Space Needs Committee for its splendid work under exceedingly difficult circumstances. We further urge that the Board of Directors convey to each member of this committee the conviction that the committee's endeavors have already had important and beneficial impacts, even though its report has not been completed. It is our view, for example, that:
  - a. It is extremely doubtful consultants would have been retained by the County Board and certainly not as promptly and with so comprehensive an assignment in the absence of the work done by the member of this research committee.
  - b. There is every reason to believe that the findings and conclusions developed by the Steering Committee have provided beneficial guidance to the consulting firm and that its proposals will in general be compatible with those of the Steering Committee.

- c. The endeavors of the members of the research committee have been most helpful to the Board of Directors in the programming of other research projects. Areas of particular concern to members of the City-County Building Space Needs Committee have been programmed as separate research projects. We cite specifically the projects assigned to the County Government Structure Committee and the City-County Jails Committee.
- d. Recent actions within county government to utilize modern techniques, such as microfilming and more effective use of computers, we are convinced have been given added momentum because of the committee's endeavors.

We urge also that in expressing these thoughts to members of the City-County Building Space Needs Committee the Board also convey its hope and expectation that these committee members will be willing to resume participation in carrying the project to its final report stage after publication of the report of the consulting firm.