

CITIZENS LEAGUE REPORT

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**League Research & Action Program
1960-1961**

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APPROVED
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S T A T E M E N T O F M A J O R O B J E C T I V E S

THE RESEARCH AND ACTION PROGRAM FOR 1960-1961

for the

CITIZENS LEAGUE OF MINNEAPOLIS AND HENNEPIN COUNTY

(Including committee assignments for and staff
commentary on each project)

PART I. GENERAL

A. Comment

The Citizens League 1960-1961 Research and Action Program, consisting of 35 projects, has been divided into 18 primary projects and 17 supplemental projects. The main differentiation between a primary and a supplemental project is the determination of whether and to what extent staff time is to be given to the project. No staff time is to be allocated to supplemental projects if it will materially lessen the likelihood of properly carrying out primary projects.

Many factors have been taken into consideration in determining whether and where a project should be included in the program. These factors, among others, include: (1) The amount of staff and volunteer time that might be required. (2) The availability of interested and qualified League members willing to volunteer time on the project. (3) The urgency of undertaking the project immediately. (4) The efforts of other community organizations -- attempting to avoid duplication. (5) The prospects that League efforts and recommendations will make a substantial contribution toward achieving the desired objective.

The formal Research and Action Program in no way precludes committees from taking on additional projects during the year, provided they do not interfere with progress on assigned projects, and provided they do not require staff assistance.

Obviously, events beyond our control will necessitate our making additions and modifications in this program during the year. For example, should a charter amendment or a referendum proposal be presented to the voters, we naturally would give the issue immediate consideration.

B. Recommendations

1. That a continuing Research and Action Coordinating Committee be established and that its membership be appointed by the League President and/or the Chairman of the Executive Committee. This committee would serve three principal functions: (a) Meet regularly with League officers and staff to review progress on the League's Research and Action Program. (b) Recommend to the Board, probably through the Executive Committee, additions to or modifications in the Research and Action Program during the year. (c) Serve as the hearing agency before which committees or League members could appear to request additions to or modifications in the Research and Action Program during the year.

This Research and Action Coordinating Committee would have no authority to set policy for the League. Its recommendations would be presented to the Board of Directors for its consideration and action.

2. That the following 35 projects be adopted as the League's 1960-1961 Research and Action Program.

PART II. RESEARCH AND ACTION PROGRAM FOR 1960-1961

- A. PRIMARY PROJECTS. The following 18 projects are to be given top priority during the year in the allocation of staff time.

No effort has been made to rank the projects in any order of importance, and therefore no significance is to be attached to the fact that one might be listed as No. 1 and another as No. 11.

Conduct research, make recommendations and promote action to:

1. Improve public transportation service in our metropolitan area, including evaluation of need for a metropolitan transit authority.

Comment: (Transportation Committee) The mass transit system in the Twin Cities metropolitan area has deteriorated steadily during recent years, with continual rate increases and corresponding decreases in the level of service. This project involves the assessment of the proper role of mass transit in the total transportation picture. First priority, partly because the next session of the State Legislature doubtless will have the issue before it, will be an evaluation of the need for or desirability of creation of a Twin Cities Metropolitan Transit Authority. The second specific assignment will be the assessment of the soundness of proposed changes in service expected to be recommended by the Twin City Rapid Transit Company some time this fall. In the interests of avoiding duplication of effort, the Transportation Committee should also dovetail its work so as to take maximum advantage of the forthcoming report by the Metropolitan Planning Commission concerning transportation in the Twin Cities area.

2. Redistrict County Commissioner districts, giving suburban area representation consistent with its increased population.

Comment: (Forms and Structure Committee) The 1960 census figures clearly established that suburban Hennepin County is grossly under-represented on the Board of Hennepin County Commissioners. Legislation redistricting the Board of County Commissioners is certain to be before the next session of the State Legislature. The Forms and Structure Committee, which began its work on this project more than a year ago, will be expected to make specific recommendations for redistricting to give fair and equal representation on the County Board. In addition, the Committee should review the law under which redistricting is accomplished to assure its adequacy for the future. These recommendations should be ready not later than during the early weeks of the 1961 legislative session.

3. Lessen the overdependence on the property tax for local government revenue by improving property tax administration and developing alternative nonproperty tax sources of revenue.

Comment: (Taxation and Finance Committee) The dangerous attitude of "It's futile to think we can do anything about the continued overdependence on the property tax for local revenues" appears to be gaining momentum. The Citizens League must resist this attitude with

every ounce of strength it can command, because of the importance of the issue to the future wellbeing of our community. The attack, during the coming year, should be centered on three aspects of the problem: (1) The League must provide leadership in bringing together other organizations reaching agreement on specific alternative sources of revenue. (2) The Taxation and Finance Committee should review and firm up previous recommendations urging a local income or earnings tax. (3) The Taxation and Finance Committee should report its recommendations with a view toward enactment at the next legislative session for improvement in property tax administration.

4. Better utilize area water resources and sanitation facilities.

Comment: (Metropolitan Government Committee) A tremendous amount of attention has been given during the past year to the issue of better utilization of our water resources. The Citizens League, through its Metropolitan Government Committee, should assimilate the mass of information which has been made available and report its recommendations. Specifically, the League should anticipate the introduction of legislation at the next session of the State Legislature urging establishment of some form of metropolitan sanitary district, and should be prepared to express specific views on the need for structural changes in government to cope with the situation.

5. Assure maximum economy and efficiency in local governmental expenditures by continuing intensive analysis of Minneapolis and Hennepin County budgets.

Comment : (County Budget Committee) (City Budget Committee)
This project includes staff attendance at all budget hearings on the various local governmental budgets on both the city and county level. It also involves intensive analysis of these budgets by the appropriate League budget committee. The committees should give particular attention to comparative costs and procedures in other similar cities throughout the nation. Another important function of the budget committees will be to ferret out seeming suspicious or soft points which should be given intensive analysis, either by these committees themselves or by some other League committee.

6. Reorganize the structure of city government in Minneapolis.

Comment: (Committee on Minneapolis Governmental Reorganization)
The defeat of the CIVIC Charter last June in no way lessened the urgent need for major reorganization of Minneapolis city government. The Citizens League must provide community leadership in bringing closer the day when this reorganization can be accomplished. At least during the next few months, the League must be prepared to react to proposals suggested by the Council's Bipartisan Charter Committee. Additionally, the League must maintain a current specific proposal for city governmental reorganization in anticipation of the proper time to again bring before the voters of Minneapolis a proposed charter amendment. As the best means of accomplishing

these objectives, a special League committee should be established, comprised of Minneapolis residents possessing a thorough understanding of the subject.

7. Reverse the upward trend in the rate of commission of certain crimes in Hennepin County.

Comment: (Public Safety Committee) Recent figures published by the Federal Bureau of Investigation report an alarming increase in the rate of commission of certain crimes in major cities throughout the country. The figures for Minneapolis, particularly in the case of burglaries and auto thefts, show substantially greater increases than for other cities. The Public Safety Committee should evaluate the possible causes for this worsening trend and make recommendations which would appear to be helpful in reversing the trend.

8. Modernize antiquated zoning regulations and restrictions in Minneapolis.

Comment: (Planning and Zoning Committee) The Planning and Zoning Committee, during the past year, has given intensive study to the proposed new zoning ordinance for Minneapolis. The League and the Committee should continue efforts on this project from two standpoints: (1) Evaluate the soundness of the proposed zoning ordinance and report the League's conclusions to the public. (2) Take positive steps to bring about the earliest possible enactment of a new zoning ordinance, the need for which appears to be nearly unanimously agreed upon.

9. Bring about increased understanding, cooperation and coordination among the metropolitan area school districts in determining the rate of compensation for teachers.

Comment: (Education Committee) Minneapolis Public School officials report that its salary schedule for teachers is inadequate to compete successfully with those of surrounding suburban communities. St. Paul school officials maintain, for the same reason, they cannot compete successfully with Minneapolis' schedules. At the same time, suburban school officials report great difficulty in attracting and retaining top-grade teachers. The Education Committee, during the coming year, should evaluate the accuracy of each of these contentions, report its findings and make recommendations which might prove of assistance to all school districts in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

10. Permit Minneapolis to become a part of the Hennepin County Park Reserve District and explore other ways to further strengthen the District.

Comment: (County Parks Committee) (Minneapolis Parks Committee) The legislation authorizing Minneapolis to become a part of the Reserve District, which was passed by the 1959 session of the State

Legislature, has been rejected by the Minneapolis City Council and it now appears certain that changes in this legislation must be made if Minneapolis is to be included. Minneapolis Parks Committee and the County Parks Committee, working jointly, should review the enabling legislation passed at the last session with a view toward recommending specific changes that might bring about more general agreement among Minneapolis public officials. The timing of these recommendations should be such as to permit effective League action at the next session of the Legislature. In addition, other ways to strengthen both the geographic and financial base of the Reserve District should be explored. This might include such issues as the encouragement of private financial contributions to the Reserve District, the relationship of the state and county in acquiring park land, etc.

11. Strengthen procedures and criteria used in granting liquor licenses in Minneapolis.

Comment: (Licensing Committee) As we near the end of the first year of experience under the charter amendment revising the liquor patrol limits of Minneapolis, it would seem appropriate for the Licensing Committee to evaluate the soundness of the change and the need, if any, for additional modifications. Equally important is the need for formal establishment of guiding principles and procedures in the issuance of liquor licenses. The Licensing Committee should continue its work in this area during the coming year.

12. Improve public library services throughout Hennepin County.

Comment: (Library Committee) Perhaps the most urgent aspect of this project is to evaluate the level of services provided by the Minneapolis Public Library to suburban residents and to assess the adequacy of suburban sharing in the cost of these services. Since changes in the level of these services and the financial contribution made by suburban residents is governed by state law, the Committee's report should be timed to permit effective League action during the next session of the Legislature.

13. Improve the organization and structure of county government in Hennepin County.

Comment: (Forms and Structure Committee) Adoption by the voters of Constitutional Amendment #1 in 1958 raised important questions as to the future course of county government. Should county government be "home rule" government with its own home rule charter, or should it continue to be an administrative arm of the state? Is county government the most appropriate level for the handling of any governmental functions which cannot be provided by each municipality? These are two of the more important questions raised and which have been under study by the Forms and Structure Committee during the past year. The Committee should continue its analysis and report its recommendations to the Board.

14. Assure the maintenance of a sound and aggressive urban renewal program in Minneapolis.

Comment: (Urban Renewal Committee) Heretofore the League has had little contact with issues involving the urban renewal programs for Minneapolis. These programs are assuming ever-increasing importance to the future of our community. Rather than assigning as a project some specific aspect of the urban renewal program, the League at this time is creating a new Urban Renewal Committee, with the express assignment of familiarizing itself with the general situation as it exists today.

15. Improve the effectiveness of the Voters' Guide for candidates for public office and, in particular, evaluate the experience with the Candidates' Code of Ethics.

Comment: (Election and Candidate Review Committee) The Citizens League, in conjunction and cooperation with the Minneapolis League of Women Voters and the Minneapolis Tribune, is continuing the work on the Voters' Guide in anticipation of this fall's election. The Candidates' Code of Ethics is again being used. The Election and Candidate Review Committee should evaluate the experience with the Candidates' Code of Ethics and report to the Board its findings.

16. Provide better understanding of the governmental units in our metropolitan area by accumulating a comprehensive inventory of these units and the functions each performs.

Comment: (Metropolitan Government Committee) This project has been the principal assignment of the Metropolitan Government Committee for the better part of three years. The project should be brought to its conclusion not later than the end of 1960. A careful analysis of the remaining work to be done should be made immediately. If this appears to be considerable, there should be a re-evaluation of the priority given to this project.

17. Bring about the soundest long-range use of Glen Lake Sanatorium; implementation of prior Citizens League recommendation for use by the State, and review of the experimental project using a portion of the sanatorium for nursing care patients.

Comment: (Health, Hospitals and Welfare Committee) The Board last spring adopted a recommendation that Glen Lake be transferred to the State for use as a state institution. The League officers and staff, during the coming year, should initiate actions to implement this recommendation. Legislative action is necessary to accomplish this objective. In addition, the Health, Hospitals and Welfare Committee should review the experience with the pilot study now underway by which a part of Glen Lake Sanatorium is being used for nursing care patients. The Citizens League recommendation that this pilot study be terminated at the end of six months should be followed through.

18. Assure maintenance of a professional approach to the fixing of compensation for public employees with a level of compensation comparable to that paid for like work in private employment.

Comment: (Public Employment Committee) The previous League recommendation that fringe benefits for public employees must be considered in establishing wages has been recognized by several Minneapolis salary-setting bodies during the past two years. The Public Employment Committee should evaluate the degree of this progress and report its findings to the Board.

- B. SUPPLEMENTAL PROJECTS. These projects are included in the program with the hope that some progress can be made on many of them during the year. The degree of progress will depend heavily on the amount of volunteer time that can be marshalled. Staff time is not to be allocated if it will materially lessen the likelihood of accomplishment of primary projects. The order in which they appear is of no significance.

19. Assure a sound capital improvements program for Minneapolis public schools; preliminary review of the forthcoming proposed recommendations.

Comment: (Education Committee) The Minneapolis School Board and administration, in cooperation with the Citizens Committee, is presently reviewing the long-range capital improvement needs of the Minneapolis Public School System. Their recommendations doubtless will be presented to the voters of Minneapolis in the form of a referendum requesting authority to undertake the necessary improvements through the issuance of bonds. The Education Committee should familiarize itself with the progress of this review, so that the League can make appropriate recommendations if and when proposals are submitted to the voters.

20. Assure the adequacy of Minneapolis park and recreational facilities.

Comment: (Minneapolis Parks Committee) How does Minneapolis compare with other cities throughout the nation in provision of park and recreational facilities? What impact will the coming freeway program have on Minneapolis parks and playgrounds? What about the proposals of the Planning Commission and the Minneapolis Park Board for new facilities in the Seward and Whittier neighborhoods? The Minneapolis Parks Committee will attempt to find answers to questions such as these during the coming year.

21. Provide a feasible and equitable means of meeting any operating deficit which might be incurred by the proposed expanded Minneapolis municipal auditorium.

Comment: (Taxation and Finance Committee) Much work has been done by other organizations in determining the most suitable location and the most suitable way of expanding the municipal auditorium facilities in Minneapolis. The League has no intention of duplicating

these efforts. However, it appears that the greatest obstacle to progress on this project is resolving the method of financing the likely operating deficit from future use of an expanded auditorium. The Taxation and Finance Committee is being asked to report its recommendations for the most suitable method of financing any possible deficit.

22. Assure maintenance of the fiscal soundness of the various municipal employee pension funds.

Comment: (Public Employment Committee) The Public Employment Committee, during the past year, has probed into the fiscal condition of these various employee pension programs. A report on their actuarial soundness, together with indicated recommendations, should be presented to the Board during the coming year.

23. Assure equitable financing of the cost of local poor relief by evaluating the desirability of seeking state and federal financial aid.

Comment: (Health, Hospitals and Welfare Committee) The League has given attention to this subject for many years. However, no clear-cut recommendations have been forthcoming, and there is considerable confusion as to the position of the League on this issue. The Health, Hospitals and Welfare Committee is asked to consider the desirability of seeking state and federal assistance similar to present assistance for old age recipients, aid to dependent children, etc.

24. Assure strict enforcement of the provisions of the Minneapolis housing code.

Comment: (Planning and Zoning Committee) Are the provisions of the Minneapolis housing code being strictly enforced? Does the city have sufficient personnel to assure proper enforcement? These are the two principal questions which must be answered in finding workable answers to the problems of urban decay and deterioration.

25. Assure adequate fire protection throughout Hennepin County through increased cooperation between Minneapolis and suburban fire departments.

Comment: (Public Safety Committee) There have been a number of developments designed to improve fire protection among the various municipalities throughout Hennepin County since the League completed its study several years ago. The Public Safety Committee should evaluate the extent of these improvements and report them to the Board, together with any recommendations for more rapid progress.

26. Provide better understanding of the anticipated future financial needs of Minneapolis government by compiling a comprehensive inventory with appropriate cost projections.

Comment: (City Budget Committee) This project began last year, and considerable progress has been made. This project should afford a better understanding of the extent of the demands on the taxpayers' money in the years ahead.

27. Improve the adequacy of the curriculum for the gifted child in public schools throughout Hennepin County.

Comment: (Education Committee) During the past year the Board of Directors approved a report by the Education Committee recommending specific steps to improve the adequacy of the curriculum for the gifted child. Steps should be taken during the coming year to assure the implementation of these recommendations. The Education Committee should assess the steps being taken by the appropriate public bodies to accomplish the objectives contained in the report.

28. Assure a sound relationship between the functions of the central library and the branch libraries.

Comment: (Library Committee) What is the proper function of the central library? What is the function of each of the branch libraries? These are important questions which must be answered in assessing the merits of the proposed increase in the mill limitations for library purposes, for the purpose of establishing additional branch library facilities in Minneapolis. The Library Committee devoted considerable attention to this project during this past year, and should formalize its conclusions into a report to the Board.

29. Assure maximum efficiency in administration of county government, by evaluating the sufficiency of the use of cost accounting information in the County Highway Department.

Comment: (County Budget Committee) The County Budget Committee is nearing the completion of its work on this project, and a report to the Board should be forthcoming at an early date.

30. Assure that the level of fees for on-sale and off-sale liquor licenses in Minneapolis is both adequate and equitable.

Comment: (Licensing Committee) The license fee for off-sale liquor establishments in Minneapolis, which is fixed by the State Legislature, has not been increased for about ten years. Is the amount of this fee still adequate? Is the fee for on-sale liquor establishments, as established by the Minneapolis City Council, adequate? The Licensing Committee should seek to find answers to these questions during the coming year and report its findings to the Board.

31. Assure the adequacy of garbage and rubbish disposal services and facilities in Minneapolis and suburban Hennepin County.

Comment: (Health, Hospitals and Welfare Committee) Various communities throughout Hennepin County have different methods of collecting and disposing of garbage and refuse. The Health, Hospitals and Welfare Committee, during the past year, has made a preliminary study of the present situation. During the coming year the Committee should continue its work on this project and report its findings to the Board.

32. Assure that any proposed charter amendment curtailing or prohibiting borrowing by the City of Minneapolis for current expenses be consistent with sound fiscal policies and procedures.

Comment: (Taxation and Finance Committee) The Council Bipartisan Charter Committee has recommended adoption of a charter amendment which would prohibit borrowing for current expenditures. The Taxation and Finance Committee should evaluate the soundness of this proposed change and report its findings to the Board.

33. Strengthen the procedures under which local bills applying to Minneapolis and Hennepin County are considered by the State Legislature.

Comment: (Forms and Structure Committee) Recommendations have been made urging the creation of a Legislative Research Committee for Hennepin County to weigh the merits of local bills between legislative sessions. Also, strong criticism has been raised to the so-called "unit rule" system under which local bills are considered by the Hennepin County legislative delegation. The Forms and Structure Committee should undertake to review the procedures by which local bills are considered by the State Legislature and report to the Board its findings and recommendations.

34. Assure that public libraries throughout Hennepin County are open during the most advantageous hours of each day and days of each week.

Comment: (Library Committee) The Library Committee, during the past year, initiated a study of present hours during which public libraries are open, with a view toward determining whether more advantageous hours could be found. This project should be continued and completed during the coming year.

35. Assure the soundness of the recommendations of the Minneapolis Planning Commission and the Twin Cities Metropolitan Planning Commission, as contained in numerous reports made public during the past year, and assist in their implementation.

Comment: (Planning and Zoning Committee) Among the more important reports published by the Metropolitan Planning Commission and the Minneapolis Planning Commission during the past year were the following: (1) Central Minneapolis Plan, (2) Minneapolis Communities

and (3) Seward Neighborhood Plan (all issued by the Minneapolis Planning Commission), and (4) The Challenge of Growth, and (5) Metropolitan Water Study (issued by the Metropolitan Planning Commission). It is important that each of these reports be analyzed to assure their soundness and in order to implement their recommendations. Reports on each of these should be made to the Board during the coming year.

PART III. CONTINUING ACTION PROJECTS

The Citizens League has previously made recommendations in a number of important areas of local government. Although these issues have not been included as research and action projects forming the program for 1960-1961, we fully expect that every effort will be made during the coming year to expedite favorable action on each by the appropriate official governmental agency. These previously declared recommendations include the following:

1. Transfer of Glen Lake Sanatorium for use by the State of Minnesota.
2. Consolidation of Minneapolis fire and police radio communications systems.
3. Legislation modifying veterans' preference in local public employment.
4. Replacement of the present coroner system in Hennepin County with that of a medical examiner.
5. Eventual abolishment of the office of County Superintendent of Schools.
6. Maximum use of business machines in Minneapolis city government.
7. Implementation of performance budgeting procedures by local governmental units in Hennepin County.
8. Establishment of public employee suggestion systems.
9. Enactment of legislation authorizing local government regulation of nursing homes in Minneapolis.

PART IV. PROJECTS CONSIDERED, BUT OMITTED FROM PROGRAM

Naturally in formulating any Research and Action Program which is realistically within the capacity of the League to undertake, many important projects have had to be postponed. Following is a listing of those projects which were among those considered but which, of practical necessity, had to be omitted. Each of these projects will be under continuing study by the Research and Action Coordinating Committee.

1. Recommendations on the adequacy of the size of the professional staff of the Minneapolis Public Library compared with national standards and with other similar library systems in other large cities throughout the country.
2. Assure that any Minneapolis city governmental participation in the expansion of Metropolitan Stadium be fiscally sound.
3. Recommendations on the equity and feasibility of charging fees to users of such public library services as the Museum and Planetarium.
4. Evaluation of the need for additional regulation of public utility services provided to communities in suburban Hennepin County.
5. Evaluation of the role of the Council-appointed Capital Long-Range Improvements Committee and its formula for rating projects.
6. Evaluation of the comparative adequacy of the Minneapolis area civil defense program.
7. Recommendations on the need or desirability of a formal civil service system for Hennepin County employees.
8. Recommendations on the future adequacy of the physical plant at General Hospital.
9. Recommendations on the sufficiency of the number and type of employees assigned to Minneapolis Municipal Court.
10. Evaluation of the proper degree of coordination between the City and the Minneapolis Board of Education with respect to purchasing.
11. Recommendations on the adequacy of the library program in Minneapolis Public Schools.
12. Evaluation of the Minneapolis Park Board's program for disposition of unused Park Board property.
13. Evaluation of the soundness of having separate jail facilities for the City of Minneapolis and for Hennepin County.
14. Review of the general adequacy of the level of license fees in Minneapolis.
15. Review of the desirability of differential treatment in the assessment of land and buildings.

16. Review of the progress being made by the recently instituted Court of Domestic Relations.
17. Evaluation of the degree of duplication between functions performed by the City Engineer and those by the Minneapolis Park Board.
18. Review of the progress being made by public schools throughout Hennepin County to improve the admittedly deficient foreign language program.
19. Recommendations on the proper degree in the use of "day labor" in carrying out Minneapolis public works projects.