

Minneapolis City Planning Commission

COLLECTION SUMMARY

Collection number: B500, Accession # 2019.012.0001-.0001

Collection repository: Hennepin History Museum
2303 Third Ave
Minneapolis, MN 55404

Collection title: Minneapolis City Planning Commission

Dates: 1934-1979 (bulk 1945-1964)

Extent: 1 box with 1 oversized folder

Creator: Hennepin History Museum

Language of material: English

Processed by: Sophie Hunt, July 2019

ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY

The Minneapolis City Planning Commission advises the City Council on issues related to development, zoning, and capital improvements. It is a citizen's committee established in 1920 by the Charter of the City of Minneapolis, following the City Planning Act for Minnesota of 1919. The Commission is composed of ten members: the Mayor; four legal voters appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council; a representative and appointee from the Hennepin County Commissioner; and representatives from the City Council, School Board, and Park Board. The Planning Commission is staffed by the City Planning Department, an agency of engineers, architects, and surveyors within the Mayor's Office. In 2003, the City Planning Department became part of a larger office called the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development.

During the mid-twentieth century, the City Planning Committee faced issues related to population growth and increasing automobile use in Minneapolis. These issues included overcrowding, traffic congestion, and ageing buildings. Through the Planning Department, they conducted research and issued proposals for the construction of the Minneapolis-St. Paul airport, new parking structures, and a trunk highway system. They also made recommendations for redeveloping blighted neighborhoods, including making changes to city zoning and replacing deteriorating buildings with new housing projects. In 1954, The Planning Commission published an Official City Plan, which they revised in conversation with the public over the following decade.

Even as the Planning Commission was engaged in this work, Minneapolis, like many American cities, had begun to decline. Between 1953 and 1978, the city lost over one quarter of its

population. As the year 1980 approached, the Planning Commission and the Planning Department made plans for addressing the short-term needs created by population loss while working toward a long-term resurgence. Under the leadership of Planning Commission President Dan Cohen and Planning Director Oliver E. Byrum, they held a series of community meetings across the city. Based on citizen feedback, they created a 20-chapter document *Plan for the 1980s*, which used strategies of housing choice, jobs, downtown development, and property tax reduction to attempt to keep the city's population at 370,000.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Minneapolis City Planning Commission collection houses reports, plans, and proposals created or approved by the City Planning Commission between 1934 and 1979. Taken together, these materials document the growth, decline, and nascent resurgence of Minneapolis in that era. It is an important resource for understanding the roots of contemporary neighborhood and transportation patterns in Minneapolis. It is also useful in demonstrating changes in urban planning in one American city across 45 years and through alternating political parties.

The collection is arranged into three series with no subseries. The series include:

- Series 1: Works Progress Administration projects
- Series 2: Postwar projects
- Series 3: *Plan for the 1980s*

The “Works Progress Administration projects” series, which dates from 1934-1937, includes reports and surveys related to Minnesota WPA projects 3417, 1968, and 5435. These projects deal with population growth; the railway and state highway systems; property, housing, and taxes; and the construction of a Public Safety Building. The reports were conducted by Planning Engineer Herman E. Olson during the term of Mayor George E. Leach (R).

The “Postwar projects” series is the largest series in the collection. It dates from 1945 to 1964. This series includes annual reports as well as reports and surveys prepared for the Postwar Progress Committee, the Airport Commission, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Minneapolis Housing and Redevelopment Agency. It also contains an incomplete version of the Official City Plan of 1954, along with related publications about neighborhoods, housing, land use, and zoning. These were prepared by Planning Engineer Herman E. Olson, Planning Director Lawrence M. Irvin, and Planning Commission presidents Patrick H. Carr, Robert T. Jones, Arnett W. Leslie, and Elwood B. Swanson, during the term of mayors Hubert Humphrey (DFL), Eric G. Hoyer (DFL), and P. Kenneth Peterson (R). The series offers information about specific neighborhoods, including the Franklin School, Sumner Field, and Glenwood areas of North Minneapolis; Seward; Loring Park; the Central Business District; and the Lower Loop. It also offers plans for major transportation networks, including the Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport, the interstate highway system, and Minnesota State Highway 62.

The “*Plan for the 1980s*” series contains the background document “Planning for the 1980s: Issues for Community Discussion” as well as an incomplete Hearing Draft of *Plan for the 1980s*.

These documents were created in 1978 and 1979. The *Plan for the 1980s* was overseen by Mayor Albert J. Hofstede (DFL) and City Planning Commission President Dan Cohen, with research conducted under City Planning Department Director Oliver E. Byrum.

Where oversized maps or tables appeared in reports, they were moved to an oversized folder and replaced with a separation form, which indicates their title, accession number and any other location information. They are arranged in the oversized folder in order of accession number.

ACCESS

The collection is open for researchers and has no restrictions.

COPYRIGHT

The researcher assumes the responsibility for ensuring copyright is followed. When and where possible the archive will provide information related to the copyright owners, but it will be the responsibility of the researcher to ensure copyright laws are followed. Requests for permission to publish material in this collection should be directed to the Archivist.

RELATED MATERIAL

Hennepin History Museum:

- Collections dealing with city planning: B135 Minneapolis Planning Documents; B273 Twin Cities Metropolitan Council; and B274 MPLS City Council. Center for Citizen Participation and Communication records, 1982-1985
- Collections dealing with projects and politicians mentioned in this collection: B227 WPA Minnesota, B501 Eric Hoyer, B508 Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT), and B577 Minneapolis Housing & Redevelopment Agency (MHRA)

Hennepin County Library Special Collections:

- City Planning Commission publications available on shelf for library-use only
- City Planning Department Collection M/A 2016.01.01-04

ACQUISITION

These items were found in the Hennepin History Museum collection without information about provenance. Many appear to have been mailed directly to Joseph Zalusky, former Executive Director of Hennepin County Historical Society.

COLLECTION INVENTORY

Series 1: Works Progress Administration projects

Folder

- 1 WPA reports – highways, housing, public safety, circa 1934-1936
- 2 WPA reports – Blighted Areas Survey, circa 1936-1937

Series 2: Postwar projects

Folder

- 3 A Statement on the Parking Problems in the Central Business District, 1945
- 4 Grade separations on Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railway, 1946, 1950
- 5 Report on the Development of a Major Air Terminal, 1947
- 6 Proposed Zoning Ordinance for the City of Minneapolis, 1948
- 7 Report on the South Crosstown Highway, 1949
- 8 A Plan for the Redevelopment and Rehabilitation of Three Areas in North Minneapolis, 1950
- 9 A Plan for the Redevelopment of the Lower Loop Area, 1952
- 10 Official City Plan – Resolution of the City Planning Commission, 1954
- 11 Official City Plan – Sections 1, 4-6, 1954
- 12 Official City Plan – Sections 7-8, 10-12, 1954
- 13 Publications 107, 111, 115 – Neighborhood Series, 1959
- 14 Publication 110 – Land Use Series, 1959
- 15 Publication 112 – Zoning Series, 1959
- 16 Publication 114 – Housing Series, 1959
- 17 Publication 116 – Industrial Study Series, 1960
- 18 Publication 152 – Neighborhood Series, 1964
- 19 Annual report, 1949
- 20 Annual reports, 1950-1951
- 21 Annual reports, 1952, 1960

Series 3: *Plan for the 1980s*

Folder

- 22 Planning for the 1980s Issues for Community Discussion, 1978
- 23 Plan for the 1980s Hearing Draft – Chapters 1-4, 1979
- 24 Plan for the 1980s Hearing Draft – Chapters 5-8, 19-20, 1979



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