

Citizen Control of the Citizen's Business

TORONTO'S CITIZENS CAN CONTROL TORONTO'S AFFAIRS ONLY
THROUGH FREQUENT, PROMPT, ACCURATE AND PERTINENT INFORMATION
WITH REGARD TO TORONTO'S BUSINESS.

ISSUED BY THE

21 KING STREET EAST



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White Paper No. 128

May 11th, 1928

CITY PLANNING

STORY No. 3

"The City is already definitely pledged to a capital programme involving over \$40,000,000. This includes several major undertakings, such as grade separations, duplicate water works system, North Toronto sewage scheme and harbour improvements, in addition to a number of lesser capital works. The financing for the past few years has been, for the most part, on account of public utilities, the debt charges on which in no way effect the tax rate. On the other hand, the debt charges on the above listed commitments will be a direct burden on the general taxpayer, while the continuous heavy financing involved will place a considerable strain on the city's credit."

Toronto Commissioner of Finance,
p. 17, Civic Estimates 1928.

THE SIZE OF THE PROBLEM.

The gross debt of Toronto has gone up from \$61,118,100 in 1913 to \$176,861,754 in 1927, an increase of \$115,743,654, or 189%. Part of this huge increase is undoubtedly due to the decreased purchasing power of the dollar after 1913. Even allowing for this, the increase has been huge. In a growing, virile city, determined to have the best of everything, huge increases in capital expenditures are unavoidable. The question is not "shall we stop all capital expenditures?" but "shall we stop incurring capital expenditures without adequate planning?" In any other department of human activity "the most service for the least money" is the result of co-ordinated planning. Why not in the field of municipal improvement?

As pointed out in previous numbers, city planning is going on now, sometimes effectively, sometimes not. But it is, has been and, unless effective steps are taken to prevent it, will be partial, insufficiently co-ordinated, discontinuous and spasmodic.

With \$40,000,000 in the offing, but already beyond recall so far as the larger control is concerned, and with even greater amounts facing us in the next two decades, if the city remains vigorous and expanding, is the problem sufficiently vital to demand our active attention? If not, what is?

THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM.

The basic element in the problem is how to induce people to think. Making plans, like most other forms of thought, is a confounded nuisance to many people, but its necessity is recognized. Planning a house will not prevent an undesirable neighbor from moving in next door, but proper placing of the house, arrangement of the windows, etc., will reduce possible unpleasant effects to a minimum. Planning a house may not only reduce the cost of construction or increase the value received, but it may reduce the cost of heating and other operating costs. Planning a house will not reduce the physician's fee per call, but it may reduce the number of calls required.

The city is just one's larger home. What planning will do for the amenities, comfort and economic operation of a home, planning will do for the amenities, comfort and economical operation of a city. It is simply a bigger and harder job, because requiring the co-operation of more people, involving the expenditure of more money and requiring the solution of greater and more numerous physical difficulties.

House planning is not a process of evolving the most expensive house possible, but one of evolving a house which will give the greatest service and satisfaction in proportion to the physical resources available. City planning is not a process of developing an expensive city, it is a process by which it is made possible for people of ordinary resources to live in a delightful city, under worthy conditions.

All civic services are paid for by the citizens. Some are paid for through taxes. Some are paid for through fares and rates. All charges for civic services are deductions from the citizen's income. It is to his interest, therefore, that city planning shall be all inclusive and shall omit no capital expenditure incurred to meet community needs.

WHAT CITY PLANNING WILL DO.

City planning will not remedy all the mistakes that have already been made. It will enable us to profit by, rather than repeat our mistakes.

City planning will not prevent all mistakes in the future. It will reduce them to a minimum.

City planning will reduce the total cost of construction or increase the values received, or both.

City planning will reduce the unit cost of operation or increase the resulting services, or both.

City planning will tend to preserve the values of property for those who have established the values, and to stabilize the character of districts in the face of destructive tendencies.

These are not merely statements of pious wishes. Planning will do these things in the future because it is doing them now and under similar conditions it has done such things in the past.

As an example of how city planning as a whole operates, the following statement of one phase of city planning, namely, zoning, from the Boston City Planning Board is an illustration:

TEN POINTS ON WHAT ZONING DOES.

1. Zoning divides the city into districts, according to the most suitable and valuable uses for each district; based on existing conditions and future needs and regulates the location and use of new buildings.
2. Zoning makes provision for ample **general business districts** in suitable locations in which industrial plants may not impair the business environment.
3. Zoning places suitable land in industrial districts where the best of transportation facilities by rail, water and highway may be secured and factories may easily expand without tearing down expensive buildings.
4. Zoning provides **unrestricted districts**, suitable places for those heavy industries such as stockyards, boiler works, coke manufacture and other industries that would be objectionable elsewhere.
5. Zoning regulates the **heights of buildings** appropriate to their use, so as to provide an equitable distribution of light and air for all; minimizes overcrowding of people and relieves traffic congestion.
6. Zoning provides **local business districts**, conveniently located near residential neighborhoods, where stores will be concentrated instead of being scattered everywhere.
7. Zoning protects the comfort, convenience and quietness of **residential districts** by excluding stores, public garages, laundries, factories and other business and industrial uses.
8. Zoning establishes **uniform building lines** in residential districts to assure an equal amount of light and air and access for all residences.
9. Zoning provides adequate light and air by **side and rear yards** around every building in the suburban residential districts and establishing the **percentage of area of a lot** that may be occupied by buildings.
10. Zoning preserves the home character of **single and two-family residence districts** by segregating types of residences into districts where they are appropriate.

*On January 31st, 1922 the
Toronto Bureau of Municipal Research
stated in its White Paper No. 51:*

"If the Bureau of Municipal Research were to assert that on a certain date \$10,000 disappeared from the funds of the City of Toronto, considerable interest would be stirred up and many would want to know who was responsible and what steps were being taken to prevent a recurrence."

Recent events have shown that this was not an over-statement.

Is it possible that there is anyone in Toronto who believes that tens of thousands of dollars of public and private funds are not **wasted** each year through inadequate city planning?

Actual theft of the taxpayers' funds may be morally worse than the tacit condoning of avoidable waste of the taxpayers' funds, but the difference does not appear on a financial balance sheet. In fact it has been stated frequently that waste, public and private, is a greater economic drain on a community than larceny, grand and petty.