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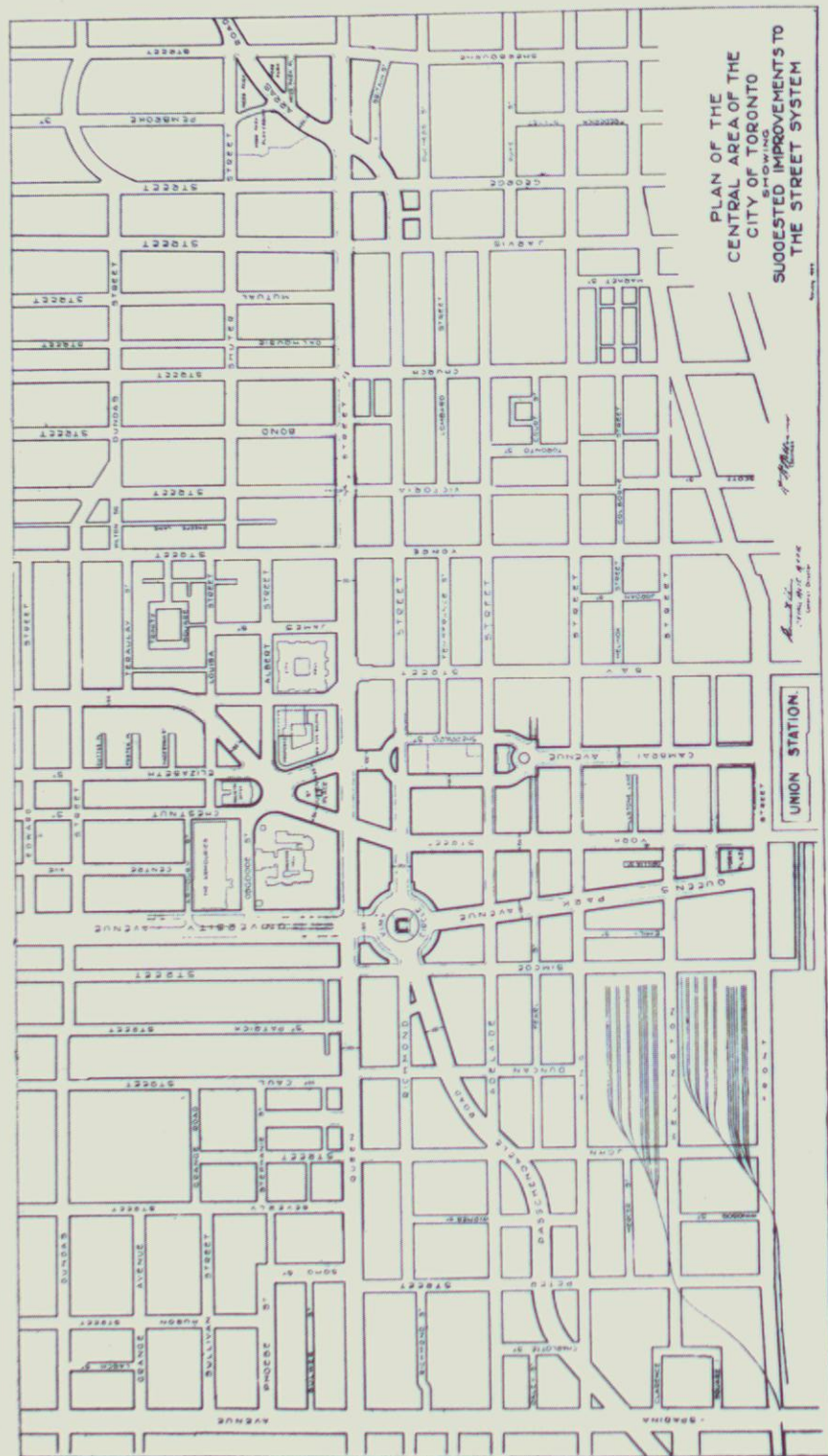
THE CITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

On January 1st, 1930, the ratepayers of Toronto, qualified to vote on money by-laws, will be asked to decide whether they are *for* or *against* the following by-law:—

By-law to provide for the issue of debentures to the amount of \$19,000,000 for improvements recommended by Report of Civic Department Heads re the Advisory City Planning Commission Report and the Report thereon by the Board of Trade.

Submitted by the Council of the City of Toronto.

For the information of the citizens, the Bureau presents herewith some of the relevant facts in regard to queries which naturally arise in the consideration of this important subject.



PROPOSED STREET IMPROVEMENTS (Central area only)

What Public Improvement Works are Covered by the Plan?

Briefly, these improvements are as follows: (See also Plan, page 2).

- (1) The straight extension of University Avenue to Richmond Street, where, in the centre of a circular plaza, a site will be reserved for a Great War Memorial.
- (2) The opening of a 100-ft. highway from this circle southerly and somewhat easterly to Front Street near Front and York.
- (3) The opening of a street between Bay and York Streets, centering in the new Union Station at Front Street, north to Adelaide Street where it forks, coming together again at Richmond and continuing to Queen where it would meet a diverted and widened section of Elizabeth Street.
- (4) The widening of York Street by 20 feet on the west side from Front Street to Richmond Street and its diversion thence north-westerly to Bay Street at or near Louisa Street and the widening to 86 feet of Bay Street, thence northerly to Dundas Street.
- (5) The widening of Queen Street to 100 feet from Soho to Sherbourne Street in stages under the Deferred Widening principles of the Municipal Act.
- (6) The widening to 100 feet of Richmond Street from the circular plaza easterly to connect with the new street between Bay and York.
- (7) The establishment of a municipal centre on the north side of Queen Street fronting the Registry Office between York Street extended and the diverted and southern section of Elizabeth Street.
- (8) The opening of a 100 foot wide highway from the circular plaza mentioned in Section (1), southwesterly to near the intersection of Wellington Street and Spadina Avenue and the opening of Wellington Street southwesterly to Bathurst.
- (9) The opening of a diagonal street 86 feet wide from Richmond and Jarvis Streets to Dundas and Parliament Streets.
- (10) The opening of Eastern Avenue into Front Street at or near Trinity.
- (11) The elimination of the jog at Carlton and College Streets.
- (12) The widening to 80 feet of Carlton from Yonge easterly to Jarvis Street.
- (13) The extension of Victoria Street from Gerrard northerly to Carlton.
- (14) The widening of Gerrard Street from Yonge westerly to Elizabeth Street.
- (15) The diversion of Elm Street west of University Avenue to connect with Baldwin Street at a width of 66 feet.
- (16) The modification of the jog between Beverley and St. George Streets at College Street.

Is it Proposed to Begin All These Improvements at Once?

The completion of the whole plan is expected to cover a period of fifteen years. Those units of the plan considered the most important will be commenced first. It is proposed that a yearly detailed programme of relative capital requirements for each unit be submitted for approval to the Board of Control and City Council to be included in the Capital Estimates of the City's Annual Budget. In this way each succeeding Council would maintain constant control of operations.

Should all the Proposals on This Long Term Programme be Decided Upon Now?

It is only during the past two or three years that active building operations have been in evidence in the downtown area affected by the proposed plan, as for several years previously the building programme in this region was comparatively negligible.

It would only require the erection of one or two large buildings in the paths of the proposed streets in order to make the plan impossible of fulfilment. The actual time of widening pavements, etc., is unimportant if rights-of-way for essential arteries are preserved. It has also been urged that in order to gain the maximum benefits from the re-sale of properties purchased or expropriated, that the plan should be adopted as a whole rather than in units in separated sectors, as values in one sector are closely inter-dependent upon values in a contiguous sector. Decision on the project will enable action to be taken on buildings now under contemplation.

Must the Plan, if Carried, be Adhered to Absolutely?

While it is likely that the plan would be adhered to in its essential features, it could be modified from time to time in the discretion of the City Council. Changed conditions over a fifteen year period might require modifications. The Harbour Development, The Viaduct and other large projects, with which Toronto citizens have had experience in recent times, are instances of how authorized plans may be altered when the necessity arises.

What is the Estimated Cost of These Improvements?

The estimated net cost to the taxpayer, including interest charges, amounts to \$18,632,021. The estimated gross cost is \$40,615,324 against which it is estimated credits for resales of property taken but not required for actual street widenings will amount to \$20,961,892, plus credits for rents derived from such properties of \$1,021,411, leaving the net amount as stated. The bond issue covering the work is limited to \$19,000,000. Naturally in a large project of this character, actual results may vary from estimates, but by the very nature of things, all future projects must be based on estimates. If the estimates are conservative, the project is sound, and the estimates have been closely checked and revised by recognized authorities.

How is This Cost to be Distributed?

The net annual cost is to be charged to the taxpayers as a whole in the general rate and, as for the first five years of each debenture issue interest is to be charged to the work, there would accordingly be no levy upon the taxpayers for five years. The cost of pavements, sidewalks, sewers and other Local Improvement Works will, however, be assessed against the contiguous properties liable therefor.

Why are all the Works not to be Carried out Under the Local Improvement Plan?

In street widenings or openings of importance such as these are, even when carried out under the local improvement plan in Toronto, it is usual to charge up to as high as 75 per cent. of the cost to the taxpayers at large, the percentage varying according to the importance of the project as a general rather than a local benefit. In the Yonge Street widening the percentage of cost borne by the general ratepayers was 50 per cent., in

the Bloor Street widening 60 per cent, in the Terauley Street extension (Bay Street) 75 per cent. Projects which, it was felt, were of city wide benefit and importance, such as the Bloor-Danforth Viaduct, were charged 100 per cent to the general taxpayers. This plan, dealing as it does with downtown Toronto, which serves all taxpayers, was deemed to be a city wide rather than a local project and thus chargeable 100 per cent to the taxpayers at large. Then under the proposed plan, with the "excess condemnation principle" as used in such projects in London, England, and other large cities, much more property will be secured than will be actually used in the street widenings and openings, although it will be impossible in all cases to take over the frontages benefitted. The land taken but not actually needed for the widening, etc., will be held for resale and in this way the city will reap the benefit of a considerable proportion of the increased values or so-called "unearned increment" which, under the local improvement plan, would go to contiguous property owners. That such improvements do result in large increases in land values is borne out by the following figures presented by Harland Bartholomew, City Plan Engineer of St. Louis, in a paper given at the National Conference on City Planning at Buffalo, July, 1929.

City	Project	Total Cost	Increased Valuation
Chicago,	Michigan Ave.	\$16,000,000	\$100,000,000
Philadelphia,	Fairmount Parkway .	19,000,000	346,000,000
Detroit,	Cass Avenue	2,070,119	\$800 - \$3,250 per ft.
St. Louis,	Olive Street	2,349,547	\$300 - \$ 400 per ft.
Boston,	Stuart Street	3,100,000	23,758,440
Pittsburg,	Second Avenue	1,981,956	4,796,233

It has been stated that, if the project were to be undertaken under the ordinary local improvement plan, the total net cost would be \$30,000,000 instead of the \$19,000,000. If such were the case and 75 per cent were borne by the taxpayers at large, as in Terauley (Bay) Street extension, the net cost to them would be \$22,500,000. If 60 per cent were borne by the taxpayers at large, the net cost would be \$18,000,000. It has been stated also that the increased assessment in the area would more than take care of the increased taxes caused by the improvement. In this calculation, however, some allowance must be made for any increased civic services required. The Commissioner of Works stated that the area bounded by Queen Street, Parliament Street and Spadina Avenue, while only 7 per cent of the city's area, represents 32 per cent of the assessed value of the City of Toronto. It will thus pay 32 per cent of the total net cost of this project as it has been paying 32 per cent of the City's share of other projects such as the Bloor Street widening, the Yonge Street widening and so forth.

How is the Project to be Financed?

It is proposed to finance the entire project by the issuance from time to time during the fifteen-year period of 5 per cent, 45-year serial debentures, capital repayments upon the debentures to be deferred for 5 years. It is expected that \$4,500,000 of such debentures will be issued in 1931, \$6,500,000 in 1932, \$3,500,000 in 1933, and so forth. All except \$2,000,000 of the \$19,000,000 will be issued by 1936 and by that time it is expected that resales will have brought and will bring in sufficient funds to carry on a large portion of the balance of the finances required.

Can More Than \$19,000,000 be Borrowed Under the By-law?

No more than the amount authorized (\$19,000,000) can be borrowed for the purpose. The original amount will be invested, realized and re-

invested until the project is finished. There is no doubt that, if the estimates proved faulty and if lack of funds made the completion of any units of the plan already under way impossible, extra funds would be voted by the City Council, or the work temporarily halted. As Council will have control of the work from year to year, this eventuality should be greatly safeguarded.

Can the \$19,000,000 be Used for Works Not in the Plan?

No part of this money can be spent on any work not embodied in the report. It is possible, of course, that sanction could be secured to make any changes in detail deemed advisable.

What Will the Plan Cost the General Taxpayer?

As pointed out, no levy will be made for five years. On the basis of the estimates contained in the report of the Heads of Civic Departments, in 1936 the work contemplated in that year is estimated to affect the tax rate .23 mills; in 1937 by .54 mills and so forth, the greatest increase in any year being .76 mills. This would mean at the most an extra \$2.28 annually on an assessment of \$3,000, \$5.32 on \$7,000 or \$7.60 on a \$10,000 assessment.

Will the City's Borrowing Power Permit the Financing of This Project?

The Commissioner of Finance states that the City's margin of borrowing power as at October 31st last was in excess of \$13,000,000, and that notwithstanding that the City is committed to a programme of Capital Expenditures approximating \$50,000,000 in connection with Duplicate Waterworks System, North Toronto Sewerage System, Disposal Plant, Grade Separations, Harbour Improvements and prospective street extensions, that there should be no apprehension that these works would be delayed or that the City's finances would be strained by the additional commitments of carrying out the proposed new improvements.

Will the Carrying out of This Project Interfere With Other Large Contemplated Works?

It has been stated that the financing of any large contemplated work, such as Sherbourne Street extension, Church Street extension, Beaches Development, etc., when authorized by Council, should not be delayed by the carrying out of this plan. It is estimated that the growth of assessment and the retirement of City debt during the fifteen-year period will create sufficient margin in borrowing power to finance this as well as other necessary works, during that time.

Under Whom Would the Plan be Carried Out?

This has yet to be definitely decided. A special improvement Commission might be appointed and, in this event, as pointed out previously, the Heads of Departments recommend that such Commission be required to submit an annual capital budget. Council may decide to have the work done by Civic Departments.

Does the Plan Deal With Relief of Street Car Congestion?

Not directly. There can be no doubt that the opening up of new motor arteries, east, west and north, free from street car tracks, will do much to relieve present street car difficulties. Such streets also offer possibilities of bus line transportation to downtown centres as an auxiliary to street cars. On the other hand, the increased construction which it is expected the plan will bring about will, in turn, cause increased traffic. It has also been pointed out that the circular plaza proposed at Richmond Street and University extended, and the crossing of York Street extension with Elizabeth might cause some traffic congestion. The Departmental

Heads, however, counter this objection by stating that the experience in other cities of similar "Circles" proves that if the traffic is properly supervised no traffic congestion ensues.

What in General are the Plan's Suggested Advantages?

(a) The downtown section of Toronto urgently needs the opening and extension of great arterial thoroughfares in order to provide a permanent means for the facilitation of traffic. The daily business losses from traffic jams are estimated to be \$1,000,000 in the metropolitan region of New York, \$400,000 daily in the metropolitan region of Philadelphia, \$200,000 in the loop district of Chicago, \$100,000 in Detroit, \$100,000 in Cincinnati and so forth. Robert Whitten, an eminent authority, states that the average cost of all motor traffic, passenger and freight is 2 cents per traffic minute. On the basis and taking the figures of the 1928 T.T.C. traffic count the speeding up of one minute of the traffic on University Avenue would mean an annual saving of over \$100,000, and if the plan succeeded in speeding up all the traffic in the downtown area affected by one minute per day, the yearly saving would be over \$600,000. Many estimate that Toronto will have a million population within ten years. More population means greater congestion downtown. *A city must pay either for planning or lack of planning.*

(b) It provides opportunity for aesthetic, as well as commercial, development along profitable lines where most needed. No one can seriously contend that the section of downtown affected by the plan presents a beautiful aspect at the present time. A beautiful well laid-out city is a paying proposition, not only on account of its effect on its citizens, but also as an attraction to tourists, conventions, etc. People go to cities famous for their attractiveness. They are not so anxious to go to the cities known as ugly. It has been estimated that the municipal attractiveness of Paris, France, is worth anywhere from \$50,000,000 to \$100,000,000 per year. Many of the more important cities on the North American Continent now have under way great plans of beautification. Can Toronto afford to lag behind?

(c) The carrying out of the plan will provide a profound stimulus to building trades, employment, general business and every department of city life generally, both during the fifteen year period and upon its completion. One town planning engineer has given it as his opinion that private interests will spend from \$5.00 to \$10.00 in new developments for every dollar spent by the city on this project.

(d) The new development encouraged by the plan means increased revenue for the City Treasury. High-value downtown property contributes largely in taxes without adding directly to say, school costs, as does a similar growth in residential districts.

(e) It is well to remember that the plan was evolved only after a prolonged study of the situation by the Advisory City Planning Commission, composed of outstanding public spirited Toronto citizens having at their command competent town planning engineers. These men emphasized the need for prompt action. The plan was in turn studied by the Heads of the Civic Departments and endorsed by them with only minor changes.

While realizing that payment for the plan may mean a slightly increased rate for the taxpayer and while realizing, as its originators readily conceded, that it does not solve all Toronto's planning problems and that it in some details may be subject to change, the Bureau believes that its advantages far outweigh these considerations and that its adoption would best serve the future interests of Toronto's citizens.