

METROPOLITAN MASTER PLAN

1948

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

**THE CINCINNATI
METROPOLITAN MASTER PLAN**

and

THE OFFICIAL CITY PLAN

THE CINCINNATI
METROPOLITAN MASTER PLAN

and

THE OFFICIAL CITY PLAN

of the

CITY OF CINCINNATI

Adopted November 22, 1948



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By unanimous action of the Commission, the Master Plan of Metropolitan Cincinnati is dedicated to the memory of

ALFRED BETTMAN
(1873 - 1945)

As long as Cincinnatians love their city and strive for its future greatness; as long as they remain eager to make it the best place in all the world in which to live, the spirit and work of Alfred Bettman, member of the City Planning Commission from 1926 and its Chairman from 1930 will live on. Death came to him (January 21, 1945) just as his beloved Cincinnati, for which he had labored because it was his native city, was awakening through the beginning of the Master Plan project to the full practical import of the doctrines he had so long advocated.

INTRODUCTION

This volume, with the graphic material and the Master Plan Map which are integral parts of it, was adopted by the City Planning Commission on November 22, 1948, under the provisions of Sec. 4366 of the General Code of Ohio and Article VII of the City Charter, as the Official City Plan of Cincinnati.

This book, the final one in a series, presents a condensation of the findings and conclusions of the individual reports, each of which was devoted essentially to a single functional element, and a co-ordination and integration thereof into a unified Plan. The book has been prepared according to a plan as simple as the complexity and interdependence of the numerous subdivisions of the subject matter permit.

The titles of the earlier publications, copies of which are available at the City Planning Commission offices in City Hall, are listed on the last page. These are the reports referred to herein from time to time.

The FOREWORD is a brief glance backward to the beginnings of planning in Cincinnati, a short review of the history of the 1925 City Plan and a discussion of the conditions, legislation and action which have led up to the Master Plan project of 1944-1948.

Chapter 1, titled OBJECTIVES, sets forth the underlying concepts upon which the Plan is based, the policies which guided its formulation and the ends toward which the Plan is directed.

The extensive research work done in connection with the Plan is summarized in Chapter 2—BACKGROUND.

Presentation and explanation of the MASTER PLAN MAP for the whole Area is the purpose of Chapter 3. At this point the reader is given a bird's-eye view of the future Area as envisioned in broad strokes by the master planners. In Chapter 4 the Area Plan is broken down so that it can be examined as it applies to each of the individual communities comprising the Metropolitan Area.

Chapters 5 to 10, inclusive, discuss and interpret plans in those major functional categories which are area-wide in character and application: RESIDENTIAL AREAS, INDUSTRIAL AREAS, MOTORWAYS, PUBLIC TRANSIT, PUBLIC SERVICES, AND RECREATION.

In Chapters 11 to 16, inclusive, plans for special and localized areas and facilities are shown: RAILROADS, AIRPORTS, RIVERFRONT, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, PARKING, and the PRODUCE MARKET.

Ways and means for putting the Plan into effect over the years, a review of the tools at hand and a statement of those still needed for complete implementation are the subjects of the concluding chapter.

FOREWORD

Cincinnati is our city and we like it because we know it is a good city. We also know that we can make it better, more convenient and more prosperous. Realistic and thorough, yet imaginative, planning of its future, and the future of the Area of which it is the metropolis, is essential to attain that result.

A city and the surrounding area which it influences are primarily a home for people. Better life for people is the major objective of planning. Not only must plans be made but the indicated improvements must be carried into effect if we are to make the Cincinnati Metropolitan Area an increasingly better place in which to live.

The City Planning Commission endeavors in this volume to point the way by offering a comprehensive, modern Master Plan to guide us along the road of continued progress.

Our Area's record is one of much solid achievement although in accord with our tradition of conservatism its accomplishments have been unheralded by fanfare. Like every city Cincinnati has always had municipal problems. Today these problems are many and pressing.

In presenting herewith the Cincinnati Metropolitan Master Plan, adopted November 22, 1948, by the City Planning Commission, we carry on a tradition of planning begun as far back as 1907 when the Kessler Plan of Public Parks was prepared and became the official guide in maintaining and extending our park system. As set forth in the Official City Plan of 1925, that city plan was the first to be officially adopted by any city of Cincinnati's size or larger in the United States. Since that time Cincinnati has held and nurtured an enviable position as a city which plans its future.

The movement which culminated in the 1925 Plan began in 1915 when the United City Planning Committee, a federated association, was formed by representatives of some of the major civic organizations. The Committee, enlarged so that it contained representatives of substantially all the civic organizations then existing, undertook as its first piece of work the placing upon the statute books of Ohio a general city planning law which up to that time had been lacking. This law later furnished the basis of the city planning provisions of the

Cincinnati Charter adopted in 1926. Since the passage of that law the city has had a continuously functioning City Planning Commission with full planning powers.

The Commission employed the Technical Advisory Corporation of New York, a firm of engineers whose city planning department was in charge of two of the most experienced and expert American city planners of that day—George B. Ford and Ernest P. Goodrich. They made a preliminary survey and a program for the making of a plan and were then authorized to carry out that program. The Official City Plan of 1925 was the result.

However, the main pattern of the city and its metropolitan area had been set long before that Plan was adopted. While some of the deficiencies existing in 1925 have been corrected others have increased in seriousness and new ones have come to light.

The 1925 Plan was prepared more than twenty years ago. Meanwhile a new generation has grown up in Cincinnati and in the nation. Twenty years ago the full impact of the automobile, the bus and the motor truck on city living and on manufacturing and merchandising was just beginning to be felt. Air transportation was in its infancy.

Twenty years ago, too, planning for cities in the United States was still in swaddling clothes. In the intervening period great advances have been made in planning methods and techniques, as in other fields. Better tools for effectuating plans have been developed.

The Official City Plan of 1925 was not intended to be, and it could not be, static. It was amended and expanded frequently to meet new conditions. But by 1944 it had become evident to the Planning Commission and to City Council that because of the accelerating swiftness of change the Plan required a thoroughgoing revision. It was agreed that the time had come to bring it up to date, to recast it entirely if need be, in terms of what we now need and want.

Appropriation to the City Planning Commission to revise the 1925 Plan and to formulate what is now called the Cincinnati Metropolitan Master Plan and presented herewith, was provided by an ordinance passed by City Council on February 16, 1944.

The Commission began immediately an investigation of the problems involved in the undertaking. Their inquiries included a review of advances made in recent years in planning, methods of procedure adopted by other cities, and the essential features of other cities' plans of particular importance to, and possible application to, the local Area. These activities, the decisions to which they gave rise, and the search in a time of war for competent personnel, occupied the attention of the Commission for several months.

On May 29, 1944, the Commission adopted a resolution in part as follows:

"That the Cincinnati Planning Commission do and does hereby establish as part of its organization a Division of City and Metropolitan Master Planning which, subject to the general direction and control of the Commission, will be under the immediate charge of a Director of Master Planning and advised by consultants and with such staff as may from time to time come to be established, and with the work of said Division financed through the appropriation to this Commission made by the City Council by its Ordinance of February 16, 1944."

It is recognized that sound planning for a city must embrace the whole of the area that constitutes the social and economic community. The Plan presented in this book gives as full effect as possible to this concept.

The City Planning Commission, as the planning agency for the metropolis of the Area, assumed the initiative and spearheaded the formulation of the Plan. All of the financial costs and responsibilities were voluntarily assumed by the City of Cincinnati.

In undertaking so complex a project as a metropolitan master plan it was recognized at the start that the support and assistance of the officials of every governmental unit involved was not only desirable but essential and that systematic contact and consultation with all the Area's planning executives must be provided for. Moreover, it was seen that carrying into effect a Plan metropolitan in scope requires continuing collaboration and co-ordinated action by the legislative, planning, and administrative officials of all the governmental units within the Area.

Accordingly, formation of the Metropolitan Planning Committee was one of the first steps in the Master Plan project. Through the activities of this group the formulation of the Plan became a truly metropolitan effort. Because of the size of the Committee a number of its members were designated "Planning Associates" to represent it at all meetings of the Planning Commission relative to the Plan. Throughout the project these

Associates, three representing the Ohio side and two the Kentucky side of the river, were entitled to participate in these activities as fully as were members of the Commission.

The Master Plan as now adopted by the Commission represents, in the best way possible, the combined wants, thoughts and knowledge of the citizens of the Area. Although its preparation was administered by the Commission in collaboration largely with the interested governmental agencies, there have been continued constructive criticism and suggestion from private sources assuring a product that reflects the public viewpoint.

It is a well-known fact that many cities have spent large sums of money in the preparation of plans only to permit those plans to be filed away in some dusty corner of the City Hall and forgotten.

One reason for such a fate for otherwise valuable plans is that those cities merely *bought a package of plans* instead of *adopting planning* as a continuous and regular approach to their civic problems. Planning, like every other phase of government, is never finished. There is nothing *final* about a Master Plan. It is a reviewing-stand in a continuous job of planning. It is a stopping-place from which the people can look backward a generation or more to sum up their accomplishments to date—and to look ahead and lay the foundation for desired improvements in the generation or so ahead. From the date of adoption of this Plan it should be subject to continued study and as needed, to change. It should be at all times constantly sensitive to the wishes and needs of the people and to the requirements of a changing world.

Another reason for the failure of good master plans to be fully effective is that they did not represent the wishes, needs and hard work of enough officials and citizens. Had these participated more fully they might well have become more appreciative of and concerned with a continuance of planning and an awareness of the master plans made. The City Planning Commission has taken every precaution along these lines to assure the success of our Plan.

The Commission has at all times solicited the tangible assistance of civic-minded citizens who had ideas of value to contribute to the development and improvement of their city and its surrounding Area. Many individuals have preferred, or found it more effective, to express themselves through organized groups. Notable among the latter is the Citizens Planning Association (now the Citizens Development Committee) which was organized expressly to represent the public, to inform it regarding the Commission's proposals and to co-operate with the Commission in the formulation of the Plan.

A Master Plan is an overall diagram or framework for desirable future developments rather than a detailed blueprint of specific improvements. Continuous study and alertness and detailed plans are necessary when the projects recommended in general terms come up for consideration and effectuation.

Keeping the Plan up to date, as well as putting it into effect during the years ahead, provides special opportunities for constructive co-operation by individuals and by civic organizations. The Commission recommends that every organization of citizens and property owners and business men designate a standing committee to study the problems of the Area, and instruct and authorize its committee to transmit to the Commission its conclusions and recommendations in writing.

Only thus can this Master Plan continuously reflect the desires and aspirations of our people, and operate as an effective instrument through which the Area can become a better place in which to live and work.

We want more good homes located in modern, de-

sirable neighborhoods. We want more health centers, more branch libraries, more recreation centers, safer streets, modern thoroughfares, better public transit. We want to reclaim our shabby riverfront and to eliminate our slums.

These and many other public improvements can be ours if we want them enough to work together for them. The time for wishing is past. The Master Plan is our opportunity. Its proposals are realistic, while not overlooking Burnham's precept to "make no little plans." We believe they are far-sighted enough to be inspiring and practicable enough to be attainable. Sound planning and engineering principles have been adhered to throughout the project.

In this Comprehensive Master Plan the Commission believes it is presenting a new point of departure toward a more efficient and inviting Cincinnati Metropolitan Area for today and for tomorrow.

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

November, 1948