

Master Plan Devised To Guide Lebanon Area's Future Growth

What will the Lebanon area be like in 10, 25 or 50 years from now?

This question may have prompted lively discussions around pot-bellied stoves and turner grocery cracker barrels a few score years ago. Still living participants in these discussions will not necessarily agree that there is a lack of change.

Present day speculators concerning the growth of the Lebanon area have one advantage not enjoyed by the hot-stove league members: The Regional Planning Commission of Lebanon County has completed its blue print to chart an orderly and productive growth of the Lebanon metropolitan area. Political subdivisions enrolled in the metropolitan area Planning Commission set-up are: Lebanon city, Cornwall Borough, and these townships: West Lebanon, Cornwall, South Cornwall, North Lebanon, South Lebanon and South Anville. Lebanon County, as represented by the County Commissioners, is also a Commission member.

The Commission's blue print, officially denominated "A Comprehensive Plan for the Metropolitan Area," represents the culmination of three years study and surveys. It was developed at a cost of \$8,000, of which sum \$21,000 was contributed as an urban planning grant from the Housing and Urban Affairs Agency of the federal government.

Designed to guide the development of residential, commercial, industrial, public and recreational projects in the metropolitan area, the plan also seeks to avoid pitfalls that stem from haphazard growth.

DREAMHOOD

KANKAKEE, Ill. — Cabinebmaster Edward (Ted) James is completing his lifelong dream of his own river houseboat. James' boat is 8 feet wide and 22½ feet long. He has named it the "Waw-be-wawa" meaning "now goes down Longfellow's Hiawatha." He started the hull during his vacation a year ago and prefabricated the cabin interior in seven foot sections in his work-

hazard community growth. The survey projects an estimated population growth of 10,000 persons by 1970 from the presently estimated 35,500 population in the metropolitan area.

The blue print points out this increase in population will require not only additional land for residential use, but also land for public recreational use. As homes, stores and factories appear, they will be accompanied by demands for governmental services which will include schools, water, sewerage, and police and fire protection," the report states.

The blue print, or master plan, as some term the chart for the metropolitan area's future growth, is classified under 10 general headings. They are: Highways, sanitation, public buildings, public schools, parks and recreation, urban renewal, industrial development, central business district, government, and health programs.

Some Projects Underway

Some of the programs recommended since the start of the survey, like the city-county municipal building, are already out of the talking stage. Plans for this building call for the start of construction within the next few months. Some are scheduled for financing on a local basis, some, like portions of the proposed area highway program, must await support by state and federal agencies.

Some of the projects advocated will require the setting up of boards and authorities. Suggested are a metropolitan sanitary authority to plan for and establish a water coverage system; a county redevelopment authority to redevelop and rehabilitate run-down and blighted areas of the community; a county board of acquisition and development land for park purposes; a county housing authority to provide housing for low income families, and a county industrial development agency to encourage new industries to locate in Lebanon County.

The master plan also notes

the realistic fact that additional increases must be made to Lebanon's economy if projected growth is to be sustained. It points out that primary employment must be expanded in manufacturing at an accelerated rate of about 450 jobs per year until 1960 to meet the goal of providing full employment in Lebanon County.

From 1960 to 1970, the plan calls for an annual increase of about 330 jobs in the goods producing industries.

For those who fear the projected growth of the metropolitan area may exhaust the available land, the plan statistics should allay their fears. The master plan for future land use contains approximately 6,500 acres for residential purposes. This is sufficient to support a population of approximately 91,000, thus allowing for expansion far beyond the expected 1970 population of 45,500.

Along with the projected residential expansion, the plan also contains provisions for expanded commercial and industrial areas. The acreage designated for future industrial expansion totals 3,533.

Continued Farm Need

The plan also points out every effort should be made to keep agriculture on the high plane it occupies in the county's economy. The county's farm crops had a combined value of \$12,503,000 in 1953, the plan report points out.

One of the studies included in the plan is the metropolitan neighborhood analysis for Lebanon city. The community was divided into 12 areas and each charted in respect to character of housing, density of population, dwelling conditions, population, property valuations, public services, mixed races, school facilities, recreational facilities and traffic. Recommendations are in three categories: Conservation, rehabilitation and redevelopment.

Conservation is called for in one area; that bounded on the north by Washington Street, east by the Pennsylvania Railroad and Queen's Road, and south by the city line and west

by the city line. The other sections are generally designated in need of conservation and rehabilitation or rehabilitation and redevelopment.

Conservation measures, according to the plan, call for the enforcement of appropriate codes and regulations for the subdivision of land, zoning of districts for suitable land use, establishment of adequate standards for the location of buildings and utilities and the maintenance and improvement of living amenities and the quality of housing.

Rehabilitation areas are designated as those in need of planning, removal of congestion, reorganization of streets, provisions for parks and playgrounds and the prevention of the spread of blight and decay. To carry out these objectives often requires the removal of seriously dilapidated structures and other adverse conditions to conform with modern design and structural standards, the plan points out.

Redevelopment areas are formed those not savable because of unsuitable or inadequate or overcrowded conditions of the dwellings, inadequate planning of the area, existing lack of coverage of the buildings, open space, defective design and arrangement of the buildings, faulty street or layout and economically or socially undesirable land uses.

Low Rent Homes

The master plan points out that both federal and state funds are provided for redevelopment projects. One of the suggested goals is the construction of at least 300 housing units for low-income families.

To many area residents the Planning Commission's master plan will mean many things. But if a safe bet is to say the fact of its interest to the greatest number will be the proposals for the area's future highway system. Most of them have been outlined in the past at sessions of the Commission in brief they call for the construction of a

County Parkway that will form a complete loop around the city of Lebanon and connect with east-west Route 42 and north-south Route 72. Route 72 itself is scheduled for relocation under the master plan. A relocation that will by-pass the Lebanon city and Ebenezzer. A by-pass is also proposed for Route 42 from a point west of West Myerstown to the County Parkway.

Also included in the highway program plan is the proposed Cornwall by-pass, the extension of Walnut Street to Eighth Avenue, the extension of Eighth Street southwest to Pa. Ave. Street, extension of Pa. Ave. Street from Schaefferstown Road eastward to connect with the County Parkway, extension of Main Street west of Route 854 in Anville, and extension of Maple Street eastward to connect with Route 42.

Other projects listed in the master plan is headed by the authority for water, sewer and sanitary purposes. Anville and Cleona are also listed in the municipalities to be included in the study of these projects. Listed call for engineering studies of the metropolitan water and sewer system, a new sewerage treatment plant improvements in the High Bridge Reservoir, improvement to the distribution system, reservation of water shed areas and a sewerage collection system.

Public Buildings Program

The public buildings program, headed by the proposed city-county municipal structure, proposes construction of municipal buildings in Lebanon, West Cornwall, North Cornwall and South Anville townships, a new Lebanon post office and plan the Lebanon County Home - Hospital.

Other public improvements listed on the master plan priority schedule are in the fields of urban renewal, playgrounds, schools and parks, as follows:

Urban Renewal — Create County Redevelopment Authority: apply to the federal government for a demonstration grant to study methods of rehabilitation and create a housing authority.

Playgrounds — Develop playgrounds and recreation areas adjacent to elementary schools.

Schools — Consolidate all school districts in administrative area 3 (Cornwall Borough, Mt. Gretna, North Cornwall, North Lebanon,

South Lebanon, West Cornwall and West Lebanon) into one school district; consider an area of consolidation with West Cornwall (technical high school) and other sites for needed schools in advance.

Parks — Create a County Park: acquire suitable sites for parks in open spaces along stream valleys, through subdivision control, acquisition and gift.

Commission History

Organized July 1, 1955, the Regional Planning Commission is an outgrowth of the Chamber of Commerce Community Development Committee. Supported by member political subdivisions, it is exclusively an advisory body.

On Oct. 1st its contract with the federal government based on the \$31,000 Urban Planning Assistance Funds grant expired. This date also marked the expiration of the contract between the Planning Commission and Clifton B. Rodgers and Associates. The Rodgers firm served as planning consultant to the Commission from the time of its formation.

Since the Oct. 1st date the Rodgers firm has been retained by the Commission as part time consultant.

The Commission has a full-time staff of two employees at present. Richard M. Gehring, director, and Mrs. Sandra R. Kroyer, secretary, are located at 710 Chestnut Street. Officers of the Commission are: Samuel K. Clark, chairman; George T. Tucker, vice chairman; Harry H. Hartman, treasurer; Charles W. Metzger, secretary; Atty. Samuel G. Welis, solicitor.

The budget for the Commission year ending July 1, 1958 was \$94,254.73. Contributions from the participating subdivisions are: Lebanon County Commission, \$8,776; Lebanon city, \$8,042.54; Mt. Gretna, \$1,000; South Lebanon, \$558; West Lebanon, \$273; North Lebanon, \$993.40; South Anville, \$267.04; Cornwall Borough, \$457.50; West Cornwall, \$246.48.

One tangible evidence of the work of the Planning Commission to date was the adoption by the county of certain zoning and subdivisions of land subdivision regulations. They govern the size of lots that can be sold from sections of land being divided into lots. If that was not all, they also provide that health and safety factors must be taken into consideration in sub-dividing the land.