

Report of the  
Activities of the City Planning Commission  
for the Year 1930

The City Planning Commission has functioned during the year 1930 with the same personnel as during the year 1929, as follows:-

J. D. McInerny, President  
A. R. Keller  
J. M. Young  
R. H. Trent  
L. P. Thurston  
Marmion Magoon  
Hugh Howell  
M. B. Carson

Ex-Officio-- Mayor John H. Wilson  
Engineer L. M. Whitehouse, Chief Engineer  
Department of Public Works.

Executive officers without vote--

Charles R. Welsh, City Planning Engineer  
Mrs. Grace M. Bartlett, Secretary

During the year 1930 the City Planning Commission has met in the City Planning Rooms, 318-319, of the new Municipal Building, Honolulu Hale. Twenty (20) regular meetings have been held.

VISITORS:

It has been the privilege of the Commission to receive three distinguished city planning visitors during the past year as follows:-

Mr. Morris Knowles, Consulting Engineer, and member of the United States Advisory Committee on City Planning and Zoning, spent one morning early in the year checking on the activities of the Honolulu Commission. Mr. Knowles was unable to attend any of the meetings of the Commission due to the fact that he was

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was in Honolulu on an enforced vacation because of ill health.

On March 27, Mr. Henry E. Coonley, a member of the City Planning Commission of Chicago, sat in with the Honolulu Commission at their regular meeting, and reviewed the work and organization of the Chicago Commission.

Mr. Coonley emphasized the fact that City Planning is largely a matter of education, not only of the public, but of the members themselves. In Chicago, while the executive council, which is the working body, is small, there is a regular membership of some 125 who act as a Publicity Body, and to whom is given the task of educating the public on projects worked out in the Executive Group. This larger body meets only occasionally whenever there is some definite task for them to do or some educational program to be initiated, the executive group meeting in regular session as does the Honolulu Commission.

Mr. Coonley stated that while the original plan of Chicago had been laid out by Mr. Burnham, and a portion of it had been carried out, there is still a large part of the plan as yet unattempted because the people as a whole are not yet ready to support it. He cited the Lake Shore Drive from Grant Park to Jackson Park as one of the original plans of Mr. Burnham that had been carried out.

Zoning in Chicago, according to Mr. Coonley, is handled by a separate Zoning Commission.

On July 10 the Commission had as its guest and speaker, Mr. Edward M. Bassett of New York City. Mr. Bassett is an ex-Congressman, past president of the National Conference on City Planning, and special counsel for the City of New York in its comprehensive Regional plan.

Mr. Bassett is a specialist in city planning and zoning legislation, with emphasis on the basic laws and enabling acts under which city planning and zoning function. Therefore he stressed that particular phase of city planning with illustrations of successful and unsuccessful planning and zoning in the states. He urged the Honolulu Commission to make sure that its Territorial enabling act is legally correct and comprehensive in order to avoid future litigation by unscrupulous lawyers.

Mr. Bassett also spent one morning in the City Planning office checking on our laws and giving us some valuable suggestions.

In addition to the usual routine duties incident to City Planning, the major activities of the Commission for the past year have been grouped as follows:-

Ala Moana Park Development  
Business District Petitions  
Street Name Revision  
Street Signs Projecting over the Public Ways  
Street Numbering  
Subdivisions  
Street Plan mauka of Ala Wai  
Set Back lines  
Maps prepared for Chinese Government  
Threatened Invasion of the Residential District by  
Miniature Golf courses.  
Ten Year Improvement Program  
Traffic Code

#### ALA MOANA PARK

On January 16, the Planning Commission gave its final approval to plan for developing the Ala Moana Park area, now under reclamation. The Ala Moana park, when the Hawaiian Bredg-

ing Company will have finished its work, will comprise an area of some 65 acres of land waikiki of Kewalo basin, about one mile long and with an average width of one-eighth of a mile.

The plan endorsed by the Commission proposes to feature a park with two lagoons,- one at the waikiki end and the other at the ewa end of the area, with an island in the center of each. The one lagoon will probably be of shallow water and devoted to the use of the smaller children who cannot swim, while the second lagoon will be made deep enough to provide swimming and water sports for the older children. It is suggested that the island in the center of this deeper lagoon be connected with the shore by a foot bridge, and perhaps devoted to the development of an Hawaiian Village or some similar native attraction.

Between these two lagoons the plan provides for a large open space sufficient in size to take care of the various outdoor sports, such as tennis, baseball, volley ball, putting greens, etc. Winding thru the entire area will be a driveway bordered on one side by a bridle path which it is anticipated will eventually connect with a similar path thru the Waikiki Reclamation district. Plans <sup>provide</sup> / for a very definite landscaping of trees and shrubbery within the entire area, this to be accomplished in cooperation with the Outdoor Circle.

An amendment to this plan includes provision for a land-locked harbor, 500 X 500 feet in size, adjoining the ewa end of the park area, for the anchorage of yachts and pleasure boats. While it is probable that this part of the project may have to be handled separately, since this area lies outside the area defined in dredging contract, it is included in Commission layout in anticipation of its eventual development as a part of the waterfront project.

## BUSINESS DISTRICTS

There have been three additions only to the Business District area of the city during the year 1930.

The first was the extension of Business District No. 25 on the ewa side of John Ena Road between Hobron Lane and Kalakaua Avenue for a depth of 100 feet. Since this area has been business in character since before the passage of the Zoning Ordinance, and joins and is practically a part of the already authorized business area, the Commission believed that this property should be classified definitely as "Business" in order to permit and encourage the rebuilding of the old existing stores of permanent construction rather than of the present third class construction.

The second addition was a change in classification of a strip of land 100 feet in depth along the mauka side of Kalani Street from Puuhale Road to Winant Street, in the Kalihi-kai Section. This area has also been business in character for many years, although lying within the district classified as "Residential", and its change in classification was recommended by the Commission in order to allow and encourage a more uniform development of the ~~Business~~ District.

A third addition was made by extension of the Business District on Kalakaua Avenue so as to include Lot no. 60 of the Kalakaua Acres Tract, and providing for the extension of the boundary of the business district to coincide with the street boundary at Namahana and Kuhio streets instead of in the middle of the block as at present. While the Commission is convinced that the business area in the Waikiki area should for the present be confined to Kalakaua Avenue, the above extension, it is believed, has set a more definite and logical boundary line than the former arbitrary boundary within the middle of the block.

A fourth petition was submitted to the Commission by the Bishop Estate for the creation of a Business District at the corner of Kalihi and School streets. Although the petition carried the signature of 82.8% of the taxable area, the Planning Commission made an adverse recommendation to this petition on the grounds that the need for a business district in this section is not sufficiently urgent to justify the enlargement of our business area in the city.

In making a study of the Business District area of the City of Honolulu in comparison with the population, and basing findings on similar studies by mainland cities-, it was reported by our engineer that Honolulu has already set aside more area for business purposes than her population can absorb for many years to come. The Planning Commission is therefore discouraging wherever advisable the creation of new business districts until such time as the growth of the city justifies such increase.

#### STREET NAME REVISION

For many months there have come to the Planning Commission complaints from the various sources, including the Fire Department, Post Office, Chamber of Commerce, newspapers, delivery men, merchants association, as well as from individuals, in regard to the many duplications, or near duplications in street names within the City of Honolulu, causing confusion and delay in meeting fire calls and in making deliveries of mail, newspapers and merchandise, etc.

A beginning was made a year ago to improve this situation when an attempt was made to classify the various highways of the city in a manner somewhat commensurate with their importance to the travelling public by defining the following designations:-

1. "Place" = all highways dead-ended at one end.
2. "Way" = all highways not exceeding two (2) blocks in length.
3. "Drive" = all winding highways.
4. "Street" = all secondary highways over two (2) blocks

in length.

5. "Avenue" = all main thoroughfares.
6. "Boulevards" = all highways 100 feet or over in width.

Following up this classification, the Planning Commission prepared a list of changes in street names, which included new names, Hawaiian wherever possible, for duplicates now in use, and certain adjustments in classification of street designations to conform with rules adopted a year ago.

While this list was in no way complete, it was believed that it would cover most of the outstanding duplicates and some of the wrong classifications. Changes in well known and long established names which have met with considerable objection, were not included in this list. The Commission was particularly interested in correcting the names and designations of the newer streets in recent subdivisions before they have become well established.

This list was submitted to the Board in April of this past year, and referred by them to Committee. So far as we know no report of same has yet been made by this committee.

A second recommendation was also made in September, suggesting that the prefix "Queen" be added to Emma Square and Emma Street, and that the prefix "Admiral" be added to Thomas Square. This recommendation was made at the suggestion of some of the older residents of the city, who recognize with regret the fact that these two names, as well as many others, have long since lost their original significance in the minds of the average citizen, and that their historical setting is being obliterated by the passage of time. While the suggested changes would be official rather than actual, common usage having already established the shorter forms, the Commission believes that the official change would tend to per-

petuate the historical setting and therefore justify such action. This recommendation was also referred to Board Committee and failed to be reported out.

#### STREET SIGNS

The question of regulation of the width of street signs projecting over the public ways has perhaps received more attention in the matter of time and meetings than has any other one subject during the year.

Early in December of 1929 there was referred to the Planning Commission by the Board of Supervisors a petition signed by seven electrical contractors of the city, protesting the provisions of Sect. 18.200 of the Building Code which limits the projection of any sign over the public ways to more than three feet, claiming that an effective electrical sign cannot be designed within these limits.

In January of this year, after studying the provisions of several mainland building codes, and finding that in most instances a larger sign was permitted than was the case in Honolulu, the Planning Commission recommended to the Board that the width of signs extending over the sidewalk area be increased from three to six feet, provided, however, that no such sign shall extend nearer to the curb than eighteen inches, in this way permitting the larger signs only where the sidewalk area was sufficiently wide to take care of same.

After this recommendation had been sent to the Board protest was received from the Outdoor Circle, asking for a reconsideration of the matter. At the following meeting of the Commission, representatives of the Outdoor Circle were present and outlined in brief the history of their movement, their struggle and final success in removing the unsightly billboards, and their present program looking toward the eventual elimination of all street signs.. An increase in width of permitted sign would, they de-

clared tend to counteract the work already done, and delay their progress materially.

With the cooperation of the Outdoor Circle the Commission was glad to have the subject re-opened and presented to the public in open meeting. A special committee was appointed with Mr. M. B. Carson as chairman, to investigate public opinion. Some weeks were spent in making this study and holding public hearings of interested parties.

While the committee submitted to the Commission a majority report recommending the elimination of signs over the sidewalk area, it also submitted a minority report which was finally concurred in by the majority of the Planning Commission. The sense of this report was that while the Commission is fairly unanimous in endorsing the idea of the eventual elimination of street signs over the public ways, it is not yet convinced of the feasibility of making so radical a change until the public has been prepared for same by a program of education. The opposition from the merchants of the city is too pronounced at this time to make such a move advisable. Therefore, the Commission has taken the middle ground in making its report to the Board of Supervisors, recommending that the present provisions of three feet be left unchanged, but with the added recommendation that the provisions of this section be rigidly enforced. The Commission believes that if the present ordinance is thus rigidly enforced at three feet, such enforcement will tend to automatically curtail the practice of constructing overhanging signs, and therefore accomplish without further legislation the desires of the Outdoor Circle.

#### STREET NUMBERING

Street numbering is progressing in a satisfactory way. During the year there has been exhibited sample pages taken from a detail map book of the city which is being prepared from maps

of the Territorial Tax Office, and which when completed will show not only the location of every house in the city, but also the official number. With this as a basis, it is anticipated that a fairly accurate record can be maintained when once established.

### SUBDIVISIONS

Only two subdivision plans have been submitted to the City Planning Commission during the past year, as against three in 1929, 14 in 1928, and 20 in 1927. These unusually low figures for the past years do not in any way represent the true condition of subdivision activity. While there has been a definite decrease in the subdivision of large areas, there has also been an increase in the re-subdivision of already approved subdivisions. These re-subdivisions have not come before the Planning Commission for approval and do not fit into the City Street Plan.

This practice was initiated on a large scale by a transient Realty Company, Janes and James, who successfully evaded the Subdivision law for many months, and have since left the Territory. These men consistently bought unimproved lots in already approved subdivisions all over the city, and crowded into one or more lots many houses, constructing so-called private streets, which are in reality nothing more than lanes, - sometimes as narrow as ten feet, - to serve these homes. While these lanes are technically owned jointly by all the abutting property owners, and not dedicated to the City and County, they lose the quality of a private road when once the houses have been sold and re-sold and public service is demanded from the city. The original owner is no longer interested after he has gotten out from under his obligation, in this case by leaving the territory, thus leaving innocent home buyers with property facing on unapproved streets, not recognized by the city as a part of its City Street Plan.

The success of Janes and James in this method of procedure has encouraged other realtors in the city to do likewise, with the result that there has developed the pernicious practice of law evasion that is difficult to handle,- a practice which tends to penalize the honest subdivider who is trying to abide by the provisions of the subdivision ordinance while putting a premium on the law evader.

If the Subdivision Ordinance is not constitutional, as is claimed by many of our lawyers, the Commission believes that it should be definitely proved so by the courts. To determine this the matter has been again referred to the attorney's department for the preparation of a test case. The issue, however, is being effectively delayed because of technical complications, and the outcome is problematical.

Looking at the problem from another point of view, one is forced to face the question which is being honestly asked-- does the present law meet the need of the average home builder, or is the violation of the law perhaps an evidence of its failure to do so?

Mr. Louis Cain, who has made a study of subdivision practice in the city, and is particularly interested in laying out subdivision plans for the mauka side of the Ala Wai to meet the needs of the people who would be interested in building in this section of the city, has volunteered the following solution.

Mr. Cain explained that while the present subdivision ordinance is adequate to regulate subdivision of property owned by the man of middle class means, or the man earning between \$150. and \$350. a month, and who is in many cases in a position to choose where he shall live, there is still left the largest single economic group of people in the municipality who are earning in

the vicinity of \$100. per month and who can pay not more than the equivalent of a \$33. rental for their property. Mr. Cain maintains that in order to take care of this large majority there inevitably must be provided certain adjustments in the present subdivision requirement whereby provision is made for smaller lots in certain sections of the city without interfering with the street system. Otherwise there will continue to exist the practice of subdivision of existing lots with the construction of several cottages without street frontage and the persistent subdivision and sale of property contrary to the intent of the ordinance. This type of subdivision he would call boot-leg subdivision, because it is based on an attempt to evade the present law, patently because the present law is not meeting the needs of the community.

He would suggest that certain sections of the city be set aside for the development of the smaller lot. In this section he would provide a longer block with shallow depth, and a narrower right of way for the intermediate streets and the isolated interior lots, while conserving the wide right of way for the main traffic arteries. He submitted suggestive sketches of variations of this plan, including the garden type of subdivision with interior lots facing on a narrower street and small parked areas. No plans have as yet been approved under such a layout, but the problem is being considered by the Commission

#### TRAFFIC

On May 7 the Planning Commission submitted to the Board of Supervisors a draft of a comprehensive uniform Traffic Code, the result of a year's intensive study.

This draft was patterned after the Model Traffic Ordinance, prepared by the National Conference on Street and Highway Safety, of which the Honorable Herbert Hoover, then Secretary of the United States Chamber of Commerce, was Chairman. The reason for

following this model ordinance as closely as possible is to secure a Code that will, so far as feasible, be uniform with those in use in the important mainland cities. This the Commission believes will prove a distinct advantage both to the tourist visiting in Honolulu as well as to residents of Honolulu who spend their vacation periods motoring across the continent.

In this draft it is provided that many of the administrative details of the traffic ordinance be delegated to a Traffic-Commission, which shall serve in an advisory capacity to the Board of Supervisors. The Commission believes that the details concerning traffic which vitally affect the travelling public, are far too numerous and time consuming to be assumed by the Board of Supervisors, and far too important to be delegated to any other existing department of the City and County Government.

A few of the more generally interesting provisions of the proposed traffic code are as follows:

1. 25 streets are named "Through" streets (heretofore called "Boulevards") before entering which vehicles must come to a full stop.

2. 40 Individual "Traffic" stops (heretofore called "Safety" stops) are established at strategic points, where all vehicles must come to a full stop before passing.

3. All vehicles, including street cars, are to be governed by stop signs, wherever legally placed.

4. All persons are prohibited from placing stop signs or other traffic signs at places other than those enumerated in the ordinance.

5. A fine of \$5.00 is provided as a penalty for driving on a flexible street traffic sign.

6. Pedestrians are required to obey traffic signals; and when walking in a public road must walk on the left side, facing traffic.

7. Street cars are prohibited from stopping in intersections or on cross walks.

8. Provision is made for safety zones for the exclusive use of pedestrians- tabu to vehicular traffic.

9. An interval of 100 feet is required to be maintained between the individual units of trucks or other vehicles moving in trains.

10. Freight trucks are forbidden to be used for the carrying of passengers except under special permits to be secured from the traffic authorities.

11. Garages and parking stations are to be limited to a maximum of 30 feet of street space in any one block for entrance and exit driveways.

12. No parking is to be allowed on paved portions of country highways where it is possible to avoid such parking.

13. Use of spot lights is prohibited on public roads.

14. Emergency vehicles are required to be painted red; and all other vehicles are prohibited from appearing in red.

15. Speed limits are fixed as follows:-

- 15 miles- in business district.
- 20 miles- elsewhere in city limits where rate is not specifically fixed.
- 25 miles- (a) on all "Through" streets.  
(b) on Kamehameha Boulevard from Fort Shafter to Puuloa Junction.
- 35 miles- (a) on Ala Wai Boulevard.  
(b) on West Queen Street from Puhale Road to Puuloa Road.  
(c) on Ala Moana from South Street to the Ala Wai.  
(d) on all highways where a lesser speed is not specified.

This Traffic Code has not yet been reported out of Board Committee.

#### MINIATURE GOLF

While for a short time the Residential District of the city appeared to be threatened by the invasion of Miniature Golf fortunately this danger did not materialize, the interest in the

miniature courses waning before the issue had an opportunity to be tested.

#### MAPS FOR THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT

Early in the year 1930 maps were prepared by the City Planning Division for the use of the Chinese Government, at the request of the Chinese Consul,- the first map defining the various zoned area of the city of Honolulu as established by ordinance; and the second map showing proposed streets, parks, school grounds and other land used for municipal purposes.

#### STREET WIDENING BY SET BACK

The question of how far it is wise to anticipate street widening by the establishment of set back lines was brought before the Commission when recommendation that a set back line be established on Waimanu Street in the newly developing Kewalo district was disapproved by the Board of Supervisors on the ground that money required for the purchase of land for future widening of streets on authorized set-backs is now so great as to seriously interfere with other legitimate improvement requirements of the municipality.

While recognizing the validity of the Board action, and appreciating the financial problems involved, the Planning Commission is convinced that a very definite opportunity and challenge is now being presented to the city to demonstrate the elements of a properly laid out business and industrial section. Honolulu, in the light of its past experience with business fronting on narrow and congested streets, is justified in expecting and even demanding that our newer districts shall offer a relief from this condition and that they shall be made to more nearly conform to a standard adequate to serve the needs of the district involved.

We have a large stretch of virgin land in the Kewalo area where such a plan can be carried out, and the Planning Commission believes that the challenge should be met and that streets of ample width should be provided as one of the fundamentals of its plan.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE TO ENGINEER

The first of September there was granted to Engineer Welsh a leave of absence from the Bureau of Plans and Surveys to serve on the staff of the Chamber of Commerce in the capacity of Industrial Engineer, his services on the Planning Commission, however, being retained to complete certain projects now under way.

#### TEN YEAR IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

In compliance with provisions of Senate Resolution authorizing the Bureau of Governmental Research to compile a history of public loans of the Territory, the most desirable method of financing the future public improvements, the bonded indebtedness of other sections of the United States, and the probable public improvement requirements during the next ten years, there was submitted to the Planning Commission in August a request from the Research Bureau for the preparation of a ten year program of improvements projects listed in the order of their importance and urgency.

Working in cooperation with the committee from the Chamber of Commerce, the following list was prepared and submitted to the Bureau of Governmental Research in December.

1. Bethel Street- Merchant to Queen.
2. Kapiolani Boulevard- Ward to Kalakaua.
3. Koko Head- Hanamu Bay to Makapuu Pass.
4. Queen Street Bridge- Nuuanu Stream.
5. Alakea Street Widening.

6. School Street- Emma to McGrew Lane.
7. Kamehameha Highway at Wahiawa.
8. King Street- Desha to Hoapili Lane.
9. Kamehameha Highway- Hauula to Waiialae.
10. Nuuanu Street- Beretania to School.
11. Bishop Street Extension- Beretania to Kukui.
12. Widening of Pali Road Bridges.
13. Ala Moana- Keawe to Kalakaua.
14. Beretania Street- Nuuanu to Alakea.
15. University Avenue- King to Ala Wai Boulevard.
16. Kamehameha Highway- Waiialua.
17. School Street- McGrew Lane to Kalihil
18. Middle Street Extension- King to Queen.
19. Mauka Branch of Kapiolani Boulevard- Ala Wai to Waiialae.
20. Kapahulu Road- Waiialae to Kalakaua.
21. King Street- Hoapili to ewa Kalihi Stream.
22. Beretania Street- Alakea to Alapai.
23. South King Street or Waiialae Avenue widened from Junction  
with Beretania to Kapahulu Road.
24. Hotel Street Widening- Bishop to Alapai.
25. Young Street Widening- Alapai to Thomas Square.

#### DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS

1. Kapahama Canal.
2. (a) Manoa-Palolo Drainage.  
(b) Ala Wai Extension.  
(c) Bingham Park Extension outlet.
3. Makiki Ditch.
4. Sheridan and Piikoi Extension.
5. Pauoa Stream.
6. Kapahulu District.
7. Kalanianole Bridge near Isenberg.
8. Waiialae-Kahala Drainage.

9. Booth and Star Tract Drainage.
10. Kahala-wai Drainage, near Harrison property.

SEWER EXTENSIONS

1. Lower Kaimuki, Kapahulu and Moiliili.
2. Palolo Valley.
3. Palana District.
4. Manoa Valley.
5. Nuuanu Valley.

Respectfully submitted

Mrs. Grace M. Bartlett  
Secretary

January 20, 1931.

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