THE PLAN OF NEW YORK
WITH REFERENCES TO THE CHICAGO PLAN

A Letter from
CHARLES D. NORTON
to
FREDERIC A. DELANO
This is Copy No. 347
of an edition of 500
FOREWORD

The letter which follows was dictated to me by Charles Norton in November, 1921. He retained a copy of it and from time to time made amendments and corrections in it in order to bring it down to date. It is personal in its nature, and for that reason it would hardly do to publish it widely, but believing that the friends of Charles Norton and the friends of city planning are entitled to know what Norton had in his mind at the inception of this project, and the inspiration he gave to his co-workers in this undertaking, I have suggested to my associates in the Plan of New York and its Environns that it might properly be printed for private circulation.

To this is added the remarkably clear and comprehensive statement made by Norton at the great public meeting of May 10, 1922.

Frederic A. Delano

May, 1923
Dear Fred:

Engaged again together as we are in a city plan venture—this time in New York—I have decided to record in this letter to you precisely how we started.

A recent experience in Buffalo suggested the possible future value of such a record. Chauncey Hamlin came to my apartment a year ago and told me he was trying to develop a plan of Buffalo and was finding difficulties about getting the venture started on sound lines. He asked me to visit him in Buffalo, dine with about thirty of his friends—city officials and other prominent citizens—whose aid and interest he wished to secure, and tell them the story of the beginnings of the Chicago Plan. I did this last February, told Hamlin’s guests how we enlisted Burnham, financed him, and finally got into our stride only when we decided to quit nibbling at Court House site problems and do something big enough to include all of Chicago and its environs.

It was easy to emphasize Buffalo’s position at the head of navigation, with the Niagara River flowing by their doors, and to point out how little of their water front, river or lake, had been preserved for the people, how little they had developed their greatest asset, and how possible it was to reclaim it by gradually filling the shallow waters of Lake Erie, just as Chicago was doing along the shores of Lake Michigan. I had struggled that morning to reach their water
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front, and finally, by climbing a fence and crossing the back-yard of private property, had reached the old site of the first fort, a superb site for a park, with a western view of limitless water, with the Canadian shore under one's eyes, with the Niagara River, vast as the Mississippi, swift as a trout brook, flowing to the nearby Falls and the distant sea. And practically every foot of that lake and river front gone! Hardly one foot which a railroad or a factory had not claimed; nothing left for the public of the one asset which the people enjoy most; nothing left to enable Buffalo to display to the admiring traveler the sources of her power and wealth, nothing to indicate that she took a just pride in her own beauty. There were the cheap, wild lands on the mountainous Pennsylvania border, near at hand and available for forest reserves, all, like the lake and river fronts, really a part of the Buffalo of a hundred years hence. An able planner coming there from the outside with a fresh mind would see things as Burnham did. They finally invited Edward Bennett to make a design and he is now at work.

Ever since 1911 you and I have agreed that New York should have a plan and should take a vital interest in it. The New York streets and squares and towers are fascinating. The situation is very grand. The Hudson, the environs of mountain and of shore, the variety of contours, make a situation with which only San Francisco can compare. Walk north from the foot of Wall Street, follow the East River to Corlear's Hook and swing over into the Ghetto through Tompkins Square, past St. Mark's or Stuyvesant Square, Gramercy Park, and so through Madison Square up Fifth Avenue. The views are entrancing. You go under great bridges, the tide rips by, sweeping the shipping up or down. The Navy Yard opposite is picturesque. The old slips like Coenties Slip, Burling Slip, Beekman Slip, where the colonial ships used to lie, are now sleepy squares surrounded by ancient rookeries of revolutionary days. There are reminiscent smells of fish
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and coffee and spices. There are ships at docks being unloaded, occasionally a full-rigged ship at that.

There is offered a remarkable opportunity for an elevated parkway similar to the one on the Algiers water front. The trucking traffic could go on beneath, as it does now, and on the upper level there would be ample space for motors and buses to speed to the Battery unhampered by cross traffic. Occasionally this Water Front Parkway, with frequent ramps from upper to lower levels, could be widened into small parks and playgrounds, with salt water swimming pools for the children, thus providing generous recreation facilities for the densest population in the world which parallels the river all the way but is now practically shut off from it, just as formerly people in Chicago were shut off from Lake Michigan. Eventually this Water Front Parkway could be extended all the way around Manhattan Island. Burnham’s dream of getting folks to water all over again!

But this town is enormous; it daunts a stranger by its very size. Then so large a percentage of the population is transient, so many influential residents have one or two country places, and make journeys to Europe or to the South once or twice every year, that even New Yorkers do not feel domesticated. They do not have the same sense of responsibility for their town that is felt in Chicago or any western city. And city planning requires substantial financial support.

George McAneny, when President of the Board of Aldermen, was deeply interested in city planning, and in 1914 he organized a Committee on the City Plan, consisting of the presidents of the five boroughs, with himself as chairman, Robert Whitten as secretary, and George B. Ford as consultant. All the borough engineers, with Nelson P. Lewis as chairman, were a board of consultants. It was an excellent scheme of organization on paper, but the five borough
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presidents did not work harmoniously as a committee. They became involved in dispute over details and in compromise at the very outset.


Our Advisory Committee met in a beautiful room in the City Hall once or twice and wisely resolved to give our advice only when it was asked for, which was never. We did, however, sponsor a report on "The Present Status of City Planning in New York City" and we seriously discussed organizing a citizens' group to finance and develop a city plan independently of city officials. I prepared the following memorandum which was the basis of considerable and protracted discussions.

PROPOSED PUBLIC STATEMENT TO BE ISSUED BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE ADVISORY PLAN COMMISSION

November 27, 1915

New York has an official "Committee on the City Plan" consisting of the five borough presidents, with Mr. George McAneny, himself a high authority on city planning, as chairman. This Commission occupies large offices in the Municipal Building; employs an able secretary and competent expert advisers; and does effective work in connection with public improvements undertaken in the boroughs.
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There is also an official "Advisory Plan Commission" of eighteen citizens representing the various boroughs, appointed by the borough presidents with a view to securing advice and co-operation as occasion arises. This Advisory Plan Commission has assembled and published in one volume a series of reports by the city's engineers and experts indicating clearly that invaluable studies have been made of harbor facilities, of problems affecting heights of buildings and congestion, and that in Brooklyn particularly great progress has been made in the direction of city planning.

The daily and weekly press, and many magazines, are attentive to city planning news and developments—in short, are distinctly friendly and helpful to the cause of city planning.

The Municipal Art Society, the City Club, and organizations of engineers, of architects, and citizens, have active committees which might fairly be called City Plan Committees.

There could be found in and near New York a hundred citizens—teachers, architects, artists, engineers, bankers, merchants, social workers, lawyers, editors—men and women whose names would be recognized from Maine to California as being specially expert in the subject of city planning.

No American city is so rich in competent personnel. None has so superb a situation, or presents so great an opportunity for a noble city plan. Comprehending and applauding the successful efforts of Washington, of Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, of scores of American cities which have caught from France, England and from Germany the spirit of city planning, New York has no plan. The city enters now upon a new and greater prosperity, a more rapid growth than ever before, with no definite plan embodying the hopes and aspirations of its citizens.

The reason is not hard to find.

No plan has ever been projected here on a scale vast enough to capture the interest and the imagination of this group of cities, towns and villages which is New York.

The new Court House project and its proposed civic center interests taxpayers and lawyers, but it does not arouse the interest of the "man in the street" of the Bronx or of Richmond, of Newark or of Bridgeport. A civic center which he never visits makes no appeal to him. The New Jersey or Long Island commuter does not often see the confusion and muddle at Forty-second Street. The atrocious lack of decent facilities at the end of the Brooklyn Bridge
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is not known by personal experience to those who use the Grand Central Terminal.

No plan of New York will command recognition unless it includes all the area in which all New Yorkers earn their livelihood and make their homes.

From the City Hall a circle must be swung which will include the Atlantic Highlands and Princeton; the lovely Jersey hills back of Morristown and Tuxedo; the incomparable Hudson as far as Newburgh; the Westchester lakes and ridges, to Bridgeport and beyond, and all of Long Island.

Within that circle dwells the densest population in America. With a variety of climates and of topography it includes some of the finest scenery in our country. There are vast areas of protected tidal waters available for recreation or commerce. No great capital of Europe possesses such facilities. Of American cities San Francisco and Boston are fairly comparable in situation. The commercial capital of the whole country, New York, is unrivaled in its fortune.

Let some Daniel H. Burnham do for this immense community what Burnham did for Chicago and its environs; spend the best years of his life studying all the varied possibilities which lie within an area so infinitely attractive physically with a population so dense, a commerce so great—let him show how the isolated Palisades Park with its thirty square miles of wilderness, and the East Side of New York only six miles away, with its million and a half of tenement dwellers, may be brought nearer together; how the commuters of small incomes in Jersey or the Bronx may more easily reach the beaches; how the merchants and the railroads and the public authorities may combine to reduce the cost of handling goods and maintain the supremacy of this port; where markets and parks may be created. Let him demonstrate with unfailing logic where the civic centers of this vast population really are, and how they should be developed and embellished. In short, let him make a big daring imaginative plan such as George Washington and his French engineer L'Enfant had the courage to make for the City of Washington 115 years ago—and New York will not fail to recognize and adopt her City Plan.

Let his report be published in fullest detail for the use of experts and public authorities.

Let it be condensed into attractive text-book form for use in our public schools, and the end of this policy of drifting, of piecemeal
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improvement, will be in sight. It is the young and not the old who can and must be captured. Let our young people adopt in their hearts a city plan, and the citizens of tomorrow will carry it out.

In what practical way can this huge community, comprising parts of three states with many independent civic jurisdictions, be organized so that effort may be coherent and effective, so that every citizen resident in the entire area will realize that the progress of the City Plan as a whole is a matter of vital personal interest to himself?

Without interfering with existing local commissions or committees which are all doing good work in the right direction, there should be assembled a group of one hundred men and women from Princeton, from Newark, from upper Jersey, from the Hudson River Valley, Westchester, Long Island, and from the Boroughs. This group should enlist for at least five years of study and work; and it should occasionally dine together as a group and receive reports. It should select a chairman and a small executive committee. It should raise $200,000 in voluntary cash contributions for expenses. It should have quarters high up in one of the city’s towers. It should find and employ a planner; and then at the cost of endless labor and patience, the Executive Committee should see to it that all the varied important interests of New York—commercial, social, industrial, artistic—are studied.

The Chamber of Commerce, the Merchants’ Association, every local body, should be invited to cooperate and criticize, and after sufficient years of such work and a thorough test of public sentiment, so that the Plan may be modified to meet just criticism, it should be published in permanent form for the use of experts and engineers. It should be abbreviated to attractive text-book form for use in the public schools. Stereopticon slides should be prepared so that by means of lectures in public schools the Plan would become familiar to the young.

But why should tax-ridden citizens expend $200,000 in making plans which call for vast public expenditures? The answer is this: the money which will carry out the Plan of New York is the money which New York will spend in any event, whether it has a plan or not. With a city plan public expenditures can proceed along permanent lines; without it, public expenditures are diverted into projects which are not enduring and are, therefore, wasteful. Each city administration adopts its own new policy and often undoes the work of its predecessors. In answering this same question in Chi-
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cago it was found upon investigation that upon public improvements, wrongly planned because no one had looked ahead and which were later destroyed and replaced, the city had spent between 1871 and 1908 no less than $225,000,000.

To end such waste; to bring order out of a disorder that may fitly be characterized as chaos; to make convenience and thrift take the place of discomfort and extravagance; to realize the potentials of commerce and industry as well as of beauty and comfort and pleasure; these are the objectives of a city plan. The private contribution required to create such a plan, in money or in service, should readily be obtained.

E.H. Outerbridge, Grant La Farge, Frederick B. Pratt, William Barclay Parsons, George McAneny, and one or two others dined together, and the entire Advisory Committee at the Knickerbocker Club once or twice, to discuss the project and the memorandum. George McAneny’s resignation of his post as Borough President to join the New York Times in February, 1916, was a body blow, and when Mayor Hylan succeeded Mayor Mitchel everything that George McAneny had built up in the City Hall, including our Advisory Committee on City Plan, was swept into limbo.

In 1918 Mr. Robert W. de Forest asked me to study Sage Foundation affairs and make suggestions of new projects. Learning that Mrs. Sage’s bequest required us to spend at least a quarter of our revenues for the benefit of New York, I suggested in January, 1919, that we could wisely organize and finance a New York City Plan. In February, 1919, at a Saturday luncheon at the Recess Club, Robert de Forest, Alfred White, and John Glenn discussed the project in detail and asked me to draw up the memorandum which follows:

Private and Confidential New York, February, 1919

R. W. de F.: The following is suggested for a minute to be adopted by the Trustees of the Sage Foundation if they are prepared to undertake the City Plan project.—C. D. N.
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MEMORANDUM

In the letter of gift to the Trustees of the Sage Foundation by Mrs. Sage in April, 1907, are found the following words:

"While the scope of the Foundation is intended to be national, it is my wish that special consideration should be given to the needs of my own city and its vicinity. I therefore request that at no time shall less than one-quarter of the income of the fund be applied exclusively to the benefit of the city of New York and its vicinity."

Since its organization, the Sage Foundation has been interested in problems of housing and congestion. In an effort to solve one of the many aspects of this problem which in New York grows ever more acute and pressing, the Foundation has invested no less than $3,874,238 in the development of Forest Hills, Long Island, but no one local improvement, however beneficent, offers relief from the deep-seated structural defects which congest our vital growth and leave masses of our people in an environment ill suited for human happiness and welfare.

Unlike Paris, Berlin, Chicago or Washington, New York grows by leaps and bounds without an adequate city plan. There is no plan of New York, and there is no public treasury which can be drawn upon to create one. For no one government has jurisdiction over all of the area in which our people live. New York is the center and the city of all who live or who work within its borders. The Atlantic Highlands, Princeton, West Point, Stamford, and all of Long Island, parts of three states, of hundreds of municipalities, irrevocably tied together by common economic and social interests—all of this area is New York.

A plan of New York bold enough to visualize the commercial, the industrial, the social and the artistic values and possibilities of our glorious harbor and all of its broad and varied environs and nothing less, would fix upon a common object the hopes and aspirations of our whole people. Precisely as a family rejoices in the development and the embellishment of its home, so our citizens and their children's children would find their highest satisfaction in the gradual development of their fair estate in accordance with some cherished plan of New York.

City planning requires imagination. It requires vision. It requires a long continuing effort and it costs a great sum of money. Recognizing the difficulties and the importance of such a project, and desiring to expend its funds in a way to serve the public interest, the Trustees of the Sage Foundation hereby appropriate the sum of $300,000 to be expended under the direction of a Committee on Plan of New York, consisting of five members to be appointed by the president.

This Committee is directed and authorized to organize, develop and publish a plan of New York which shall embody and record the thought of the vision of our engineers, our artists and architects, our public servants and social workers, and our far-seeing business men. Within the limit of its appropriation, the Committee will have full power to incur expense, reporting progress at least yearly to this Board. The Sage Foundation Library is directed to add to its collections
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every available book, map and document of value to the Committee on Plan of New York. It is hoped that ultimately the Committee can find the man to plan for New York as L’Enfant planned for Washington or Burnham for Chicago. In the meantime, the Committee will arrange for a series of preliminary studies by a staff of consultants best qualified to make an immediate reconnaissance of the field to be covered.

The Committee will not be limited by considerations of what is immediately practicable, but will seek to record what New York may reasonably aspire to become in the far future. It will propose no great increase of public expenditure. A plan of New York generally accepted by public opinion will tend to direct public expenditures into projects of permanent constructive value, each single improvement, as provision is made for it, taking its place in a coherent scheme without the inevitable waste that has always resulted from city growth along irregular and incoherent lines. It can be shown that without a plan hundreds of millions of dollars have been wasted in and near New York during the past century in desultory or ill-considered public improvements. As time passes, a plan of New York can become a reality by the expenditure of the very funds which will be expended in any event.

The work of the Committee will be deliberate, in the hope that ultimately there can be developed a plan of great beauty which shall represent in the broadest way all interests in the whole community and which shall realize to the maximum the economic and social values of this great world capital and port.

We four took luncheon together once more at the Recess Club and spent a long Saturday afternoon considering the above memorandum. Mrs. Sage’s death, November 4, 1918, had brought us in additional endowment. As time passed we had been spending large sums, more than $250,000 in the aggregate, on each of several projects. I pressed the comparison of what a similar sum had done for Chicago in the Burnham Plan, but the scheme was regarded at the moment as too large for us and was definitely dropped.

It came up again, however, a year later, in the course of a long talk with Alfred White, and this time he took the initiative and brought about a luncheon conference at the Down Town Association on December 10, 1920, inviting Mr. de Forest, John Glenn and myself, with his old friend, Nelson P. Lewis, former Engineer of the Board of Estimate and Apportionment. After full discussion Robert de Forest was now ready to agree to the employment of Nelson P. Lewis to
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make a preliminary survey, and the latter undertook to begin work on May 1, 1921, on his return from California.

The conferences with Alfred White continued. I saw him at his office on the afternoon of January 28, 1921; he called at the bank on Saturday morning, January 29th, and we agreed upon the wording of the formal presentation of the project to be made to the Sage Foundation Trustees at the January 31st meeting, and then he left to join his brother for the week-end at Central Valley in the hills of the Harriman Estate, where that very afternoon, while skating, he fell through the ice and was drowned.

The Trustees’ meeting set for January 31st was postponed by reason of the untimely death of Mr. White to February 4th, and then to February 7th, when it was held at the home of Mr. de Forest at 7 Washington Square. All the living Trustees, except Dr. Finley (absent in Europe), were present, and you and Dwight Morrow were elected to fill vacancies. The City Plan scheme was then presented in great detail. A motion was unanimously adopted authorizing the appointment of a committee and the expenditure on preliminary work of $25,000.

Meantime I called a meeting at dinner at my apartment for February 11, 1921, to discuss the project further, as Mr. de Forest was to leave for Jekyll Island the next day. The following were invited: Robert W. de Forest, John M. Glenn, Charles Moore, Frederic A. Delano, Frederick Law Olmsted, George McAneny, Lawrence Veiller, Frederick B. Pratt, Lawson Purdy, Edward M. Bassett, E. P. Goodrich, Shelby M. Harrison and Nelson P. Lewis.

Every one was present except yourself and Charles Moore, who were in Washington, and Nelson Lewis, who was in California. The memorandum was read aloud and each man present was called upon to speak in turn. Olmsted began with a notable analysis of the fundamental considerations which should be studied precedent to
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actual planning, and the views of McAneny, Bassett, and Harrison were particularly interesting and helpful. Every man agreed to send a written comment on the project, and in closing the meeting we read again Burnham's appeal:

"Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with growing intensity."

On the following day, before he left for Jekyll Island, Mr. de Forest wrote me as follows:

"February 12, 1921.

"Please understand that you have the initiative in the City Planning matter; that as between you and me you are in a position to go straight ahead and that I will back up anything you do while I am away."

Mr. Root examined the project in great detail, one afternoon in February, when we sought his aid and advice. His first thought was that we should make a careful study of the boroughs and enlist the interest of the key men and women of local political influence; but he assented heartily to the proposition that in its earlier stages we could wisely concentrate all of our energies on organizing the four inquiries as a solid basis for the largest and finest plans. Mr. Root's generalizations on city planning and the need for study of the future New York were inspiring.

Meantime I fell ill and on March 12th entered Johns Hopkins Hospital.

After my return to New York in May I wrote Robert de Forest as follows:

"According to the minutes of the Sage Foundation, you are Chairman of a Committee on City Planning, consisting of yourself, John Glenn and myself. You asked me, during your absence in Jekyll to
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take initiative, which I did. Am I correct in assuming, as I have, that you will resume the initiative?

"Lewis is here, rather expecting 'orders'. The decisions based on the conference at my house have not been formulated. Should Delano and Morrow be appointed on our Committee?"

to which on May 6th he replied:

"You are Chairman of that Committee on City Planning, whatever the minutes say, and I look to you entirely for initiative and for decision as to who should be added to our committee."

He brought up the matter of the chairmanship at the next meeting of the Trustees on May 17th, and as a result the record of the City Plan Resolution in the minutes of February 7th was corrected and adopted as follows:

"Trustee Norton read a memorandum prepared by him recommending that the trustees authorize the appointment of a committee to prepare a Plan of New York and its Environs and that the committee be authorized to spend not over $300,000 on the preparation of a plan.

"After full discussion of the subject, during which President de Forest told of a luncheon conference that had been recently called by our late colleague Mr. Alfred T. White, and which included Trustees de Forest, Norton and Glenn, and Mr. Nelson P. Lewis, formerly Chief Engineer of the Board of Estimate, on motion, it was resolved and carried:

"There is hereby appointed by the Trustees of the Sage Foundation, a Committee consisting of Charles D. Norton, Chairman, Robert W. de Forest, John M. Glenn, Dwight W. Morrow and Frederic A. Delano, with power to devise and formulate plans and methods by which a Plan of New York and its Environs, as recommended in Mr. Norton’s memorandum, may be created. The Committee is authorized in its discretion either to take responsibility for the development of a Plan of New York and its Environs, or to arrange to co-operate with others in such development."

On October 31, 1921, Frank L. Polk was added to our Committee. During the summer of 1921 repeated conferences with Glenn, Polk, Harrison, Veiller, and Olmsted deepened the conviction that
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we must approach our problem very much as Senator Aldrich approached the problem of monetary reform: that we must organize a series of well-defined fundamental inquiries, deliberately undertaken, staffed by the ablest men and women, the reports carefully edited for brevity and clarity, and published in attractive form, and that we should announce the project at a meeting of architects, artists, engineers, and other citizens to be addressed by Mr. Root and Mr. Hoover.

The work accomplished since last summer is well summarized in our proposed public statement to be made at that meeting—a statement that has from time to time been changed, as our organization has developed, until today it appears to be in final form ready for public announcement.

We shall sadly miss Alfred White, but with Robert de Forest, John Glenn, Dwight Morrow, Frank Polk, and yourself as the Committee, I am sanguine as to the ultimate outcome of this adventure if we live, and keep our powder dry.

Faithfully yours,

(Signed) CHARLES D. NORTON

To Hon. Frederic A. Delano
Washington, D.C.
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From the Record of the Meeting of May 10, 1922

Announcement of project, by Charles D. Norton:

The present street plan of Manhattan Island was designed by Commissioners Gouverneur Morris, Simeon DeWitt and John Rutherford in 1811, when New York had a population of less than 90,000.

In the report of the 1811 Commission we find the following:

“• • • It may be a subject of merriment that the commissioners have provided space for a greater population than is collected at any spot on this side of China. • • • It is not improbable that considerable numbers may be collected at Haarlem before the high hills to the southward of it shall be built upon as a city, and it is improbable that (for centuries to come) the grounds north of Haarlem flat will be covered with houses. • • •

“It may be matter of surprise that so few vacant spaces have been left and those so small; for the benefit of fresh air and consequent preservation of health. Certainly if the City of New York were destined to stand on the side of a small stream such as the Seine or the Thames, a great number of ample places might be needful; but those large arms of the sea which embrace Manhattan Island render its situation, in regard to health and pleasure, as well as to convenience of commerce, peculiarly felicitous; when therefore, from the same causes, the price of land is so uncommonly great, it seemed proper to admit the principles of economy to greater influence than might, under circumstances of a different kind, have consisted with the dictates of prudence and the sense of duty.”

These “principles of economy” applied to Manhattan Island in 1811 have yielded their logical and disastrous harvest of congestion and confusion in 1922. Embraced by “those large arms of the sea,” rigidly bound to a street scheme designed in 1811, Manhattan has leaped into the air; it has tunneled and bridged the rivers; it has thrust out its transportation arms until men and women travel fifty
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miles to their daily labor in the city; until the great area of which Manhattan is the center is in 1922 the home of no less than nine millions of people. Deep-seated structural defects leave masses of this population in an environment ill suited for human happiness and welfare. Traffic in existing streets is congested to the point where it places intolerable burdens upon commerce and endangers human life. Although the public, the liberal press, the engineering and artistic professions have repeatedly voiced the need, there exists no comprehensive regional plan of New York and its wide environs. Many admirable local plans have been developed, but no inspiring vision of the far future guides us in our present expenditures of money and of civic effort. Without a guiding plan, what of New York one hundred years hence? Momentous decisions are being constantly made, decisions that are local, piecemeal and unrelated to the larger trends. The time has come for unified planning in the interest of the whole people.

Unhampered by the fears of the Commissioners of 1811, lest their plans become "subject of merriment" if too large an area were included, all of the communities in which people make their homes who gain their daily livelihood in New York, from the New Jersey shore, through Princeton, to West Point, and Bridgeport, and including all of Long Island, will recognize their common interest in comprehensive planning; will share a common wish to make of New York and its environs a better place in which to work and to live. Precisely as a family rejoices in the development and embellishment of its home, so our citizens and their children's children will watch with deepest satisfaction the gradual development of their fair estate, of New York and its environs, in accordance with some cherished plan.

City planning requires imagination, it requires vision; it requires a long continuing study of facts, and it costs a substantial sum of
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money. There is no public treasury which can be drawn upon to create such a plan, for no one governmental agency has jurisdiction over all of that area which includes portions of three states and many municipalities.

The Trustees of the Russell Sage Foundation, organized for the improvement of social and living conditions—mindful of the explicit request in Mrs. Sage's deed of gift, that a portion of the income be applied exclusively for the benefit of New York City and vicinity, and desiring to serve the public interest—have made an appropriation which, together with a large number of contributions from interested citizens, will provide a sum sufficient to meet the necessary expense of developing a comprehensive regional Plan of New York and its Environs. They have appointed a Committee consisting of Charles D. Norton, Chairman, Robert W. de Forest, Frederic A. Delano, John M. Glenn, Dwight W. Morrow and Frank L. Polk, to organize the work and to that end to co-operate with groups of citizens and public officials in the boroughs, municipalities, and local communities throughout the whole area.

But for his untimely death, Alfred T. White, who was actively interested in the project, would have been a member of the Committee.

Avoiding duplication of effort, the Committee propose to approach their difficult problem by first organizing a series of preliminary inquiries with a view to developing and recording those basic facts and fundamental considerations which are requisite to inform public opinion and to guide the future city planners. There will be organized at least four such inquiries, as follows:

1. Economic and Industrial: An analysis of the fundamental reasons for the existence of this great center of industry and commerce, its potentialities and the sound limitations on its future development; an inquiry into economic and occupational activities,
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those that create populous districts and those that follow population; a study of the land within the area, its use and taxation.

2. Physical: The mapping of existing topographical and other physical conditions, including railway and water transportation, harbor, "free port" and terminal facilities, bridges, ferries, main highways, park and recreation spaces, public and quasi-public buildings, and density and distribution of day and night population; the compiling of existing local schemes for improvement.

3. Legal: A study of existing law as it controls or affects a plan for the area which includes portions of three states; an analysis of the law of zoning, excess condemnation, stabilization of official city maps, shore rights and land under water, and other subjects relating to city planning.

4. Social and Living Conditions: Studies designed to bring to the attention of the city planners those factors which have direct bearing upon human values and social welfare, and make for healthful and satisfactory housing and home surroundings, efficient work and wholesome leisure time.

After these inquiries have laid solid foundations upon which to base sound planning, the man, or the group of men, will be found to plan for New York and its environs as George Washington and Pierre L'Enfant planned for Washington, or Burnham and Bennett and their committees of business men planned for Chicago; to create a plan which, with wide public participation and approval, shall embody and record the best thought of our engineers, our artists and architects, our public servants, our social workers and economists, and far-seeing business men.

Plans, when sufficiently advanced, will be submitted to the public at large for study and criticism through groups of citizens representative of each community in the great area involved. They will be offered in no arbitrary spirit, but rather in the faith that the public
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will welcome comprehensive planning, and will endeavor through the proper public authorities and citizen organizations to realize to the utmost, as the decades pass, the social, the industrial, the commercial and the artistic values of this great world capital and port.

The Committee will propose no abnormal expansion of public expenditure. With a wisely conceived plan public funds which will be expended in any event can be directed into projects of permanent constructive value; without a plan millions are likely to be wasted in desultory or ill-considered public works.

This project is presented for the first time to this representative conference of public officials, engineers, architects, artists and other public-spirited citizens, for here it is that we must find the love of order and of beauty, the lofty vision, and the skilled hands which shall depict for a vast population the dramatic and stirring possibilities of the centuries to come.

Mr. Norton added:

The Committee is faced with this dilemma. Desiring the cooperation of many people in many communities, early and frank announcement of the project is necessary; but the method chosen to approach the problem, while sound and original in planning ventures, is necessarily slow and laborious. Enlisting as we do the ablest men and women, who are always the busiest people, these inquiries cannot be hastened.

There is danger lest the mere announcement of the project arouse too great expectations of immediate results, expectations which at best cannot be realized until after much study and the lapse of considerable time.

It is, however, perfectly fair to ask what the Committee has done and in detail how they propose to proceed.

For more than a year the Physical Survey has been under way. With a staff of engineers assisting him, Nelson P. Lewis, former
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Chief Engineer, Board of Estimate and Apportionment, City of New York, and former President of the National City Planning Conference, has been studying the density and trends of population, mapping the whole area and learning what public officials and engineers are doing, or can do, in the development of forest reserves, parks, playgrounds, as well as in the development of railroad, port, harbor and transit facilities. Mr. Lewis has the aid and advice among others of D. L. Turner, B. F. Cresson, Jr., Jay Downer, Morris R. Sherrerd, Frederick Law Olmsted and George C. Whipple.

Incidentally, with the aid of a special group including William Adams Delano, Jules Guerin, Isaiah Bowman, George D. Pratt and Sherman Fairchild, Mr. Lewis will endeavor to develop a new type of map for city planners, in which the painter, with his mastery of arrangement and of color, will be guided by the accurate contours of the engineer and the new viewpoint of the aerial photographer.

The Legal Inquiry has been under way for six months under the direction of Edward M. Bassett, former Chairman, Zoning Commission of New York and present counsel, Zoning Committee, aided by Frank B. Williams, legal investigator in city planning, who is giving his entire time. Interesting legal questions arise. What planning powers are lacking in the various communities? How can they effectively co-operate with each other? Is the public ownership of aqueduct, water supply and canal lands such that future populations can enjoy them as open places? How far can zoning be adopted by areas outside of cities? To what extent can ungranted foreshore and land under water, now owned by the states, be preserved for future recreational use? How can official highway and park layouts, especially in sparsely populated districts, be created and stabilized? Mr. Bassett's advisers in-
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clude James Byrne, President, Association of the Bar of the City of New York, Charles E. Hughes, Julius Henry Cohen, Isaac N. Mills, and Chancellor James F. Fielder of New Jersey.

The Social and Living Conditions Survey naturally divides into several heads: Among them I will mention public health; housing; leisure time and recreation facilities; the environment of hospitals and custodial institutions. Shelby M. Harrison, Director of Surveys, Sage Foundation, is giving his entire time to the organization of this work. One typical subdivision, that of public health, has been placed under the supervision of Dr. Hermann M. Biggs, aided by a group of authorities including among others Dr. George David Stewart, President, Academy of Medicine, Dr. Walter B. James, Dr. Josephine Baker, Dr. Thomas W. Salmon, Miss Clara D. Noyes, Dr. Winford Smith and Dr. William H. Welch of Johns Hopkins.

It is not necessary to say more in illustration of our method. Never before, I believe, has a city plan been approached in just this deliberate way: preceded by inquiries so comprehensive. The results of these inquiries will be published from time to time—not voluminous reports covering the whole range of human knowledge on each subject—but authoritative, carefully edited and, we hope, brief reports, strictly limited to those phases of each subject of vital concern to city planners.

As Executive Secretary, the Committee has enlisted Frederick P. Keppel, former Dean of Columbia College, and former Assistant Secretary of War. Mr. Keppel will leave his present post with the International Chamber of Commerce in Paris and move to New York in September, and will be assisted by Flavel Shurtleff, Secretary of the National Conference on City Planning, with offices in the Sage Foundation Building.
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The Committee will include among its general counselors and advisers such citizens as Elihu Root, Alfred E. Smith, Herbert Hoover, A. C. Bedford, Irving T. Bush, William Fellowes Morgan, Frederick B. Pratt, Nicholas Murray Butler, Mrs. Otto Wittpen, Hugh Frayne, Virginia Gildersleeve, Morgan J. O’Brien, Amey Aldrich, John J. Carty, Frances Perkins, Lawson Purdy, Mary E. Dreier, Felix M. Warburg, Darwin P. Kingsley and Lillian D. Wald. Instantly there come to mind the names of public officials whom we would wish to have on any list of advisers. Mr. de Forest has, however, well stated our desire not to embarrass or involve them, at this juncture, in what is essentially a private venture in co-operation, engaged in by private citizens who have become deeply interested in the high cost of not planning. But public officials too are citizens and neighbors and friends, and as such we shall endeavor to keep them fully informed of our activities and freely seek their comment and advice.

Planning for so wide an area and on so large a scale requires group judgment. The group certainly will include the architect, the engineer, the lawyer, the painter, the sculptor, the landscape architect, the social worker, the economist and the business man. And the work itself will develop and discover the man, the planner, to lead us. He is here, the spiritual descendant of Pierre L’Enfant, of Charles McKim, of Daniel Burnham. We shall find him, and he and his group will depict for us the New York of a hundred years hence, a city great not merely in numbers, but great in that its citizens, the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak, can take just pride in its power and its beauty, can share in those durable satisfactions of life which are the natural outgrowth of orderly thinking and wise planning.