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at the meeting of June 29, 1973:*

REPORT

ON

THE NEED FOR COMMUNITY GOALS

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*"To inform its members and the community in public matters and to
arouse in them a realization of the obligations of citizenship."*

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ADDRESS CHANGES WANTED

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REPORT
ON
THE NEED FOR COMMUNITY GOALS

To the Board of Governors,
The City Club of Portland:

I. INTRODUCTION

In March, 1971, the City Club Project Planning Board proposed and the Board of Governors approved a special study on "The Need for Community Goals." The charge to the Committee stated:

During recent years, communities and governments have begun to realize there was little consistency in their planning and actions, because of a lack of stated goals and objectives for the community. In recent years, several of our own research projects (such as *Planning for Transportation in the Portland Metropolitan Area* and *Sign Code Revision*) have noted that the lack of community consensus on what we're trying to do makes satisfactory solutions hard to find.

Communities and institutions are becoming increasingly aware of the need for this kind of definition to underlie planning and development efforts. In the past several years, Dallas, Texas and Los Angeles, California, have tried to define goals for their communities. The State of Oregon budget is woven into "Goals for Oregon." Federal laws increasingly recognize the need for this type of planning. The Federal Aid Highway Act of 1968 states: "A state must consider its plans and their consistency with the goals and objectives of such urban planning as has been promulgated by the community."

The task of the study was to investigate and report on the need for and possible use of community goals and objectives in the areas of environment and land use; health, human resources and housing; transportation, communications, and economic development; education; taxation and finance; governmental organization and procedures; and recreation and the arts. *It was stressed that the Committee should not attempt to formulate goals but should seek to define the responsibility or process of goal formulation.*

A. Work of the Committee

Your Committee was convened for the first time in October, 1971. It consisted of 15 City Club members representing a variety of backgrounds and experiences. During the ensuing months it has held more than seventy sessions during which it has interviewed public officials, planners, and other concerned individuals (see Appendix A), has evaluated pertinent publications, and has worked at the task of preparing this report. It has also maintained correspondence with agencies and individuals in other areas. In the course of its deliberations three members of the Committee resigned from the City Club and your Committee acknowledges their participation and contributions with gratitude. The Committee also was assisted by a research intern sponsored by the Portland City Club Foundation, Inc.¹

A substantial part of your Committee's efforts was initially spent in determining the nature of its mission and the problems that lay behind it. The self-educational task was a formidable one.

B. The Nature of Goals

Although the terms "goals" and "objectives" would seem to be relatively ordinary and easily understood, your Committee found this not to be the case. Much time was taken up in developing working definitions because each member saw the Committee's charge in the light of his own experiences and perceptions. Some initially viewed goals as more or less universal human values applicable to most

¹Wilbur Conder, graduate student, Portland State University.

places and times while others saw them as more specific directives which, might, say, define the alignment of a freeway. Ultimately the Committee adopted definitions presented to it by Vernon Rifer, a consultant to the State of Washington Department of Ecology and past chairman of the Oregon Environmental Council:

A goal represents an ideal expressed as a desired result. In this context goals remain essentially continuous over time, and may never be completely achieved.

Objectives are specific interim steps leading toward the defined goals. They are dynamic in nature in that they may change as a result of changes in the social, economic, political, and physical environment, and as progress is realized toward achievement of the goals.

In your Committee's views, goals are comprehensive, significant, and continuing purposes, while objectives are more specific, subsidiary, and limited targets leading to the attainment of such goals. Taken together, goals and objectives represent a set of guidelines for the future in ends to be achieved and in environmental and human values to be preserved. A statement of goals and objectives would not, however, be a "plan" in the sense of a blueprint for the future community. Planning is really a continuing process that takes into account the constantly changing elements of the present situation in devising methods for achieving goals and objectives. Such planning includes not only the responsibilities of formally designated "planning commissions" but also policy and decision formulation in nearly all other aspects of government.

An example of a possible goal in the field of land use for the Portland Metropolitan Area might be "that a maximum of productive agricultural land should be preserved in the lower Willamette Valley," while a related objective could state that "priority for expansion of residential developments should be given to foothill and mountain regions adjacent to the urbanized area of Metropolitan Portland." Such a goal and objective could be reflected in zoning maps of planning agencies and in routes chosen for future water and sewer lines by public works departments.

II. METROPOLITAN GROWTH AND ITS PROBLEMS

In the Foreword to *The Conscience of a City: Fifty Years of City Club Service in Portland* (1916-1966) the following statement appears:

. . . the Portland metropolitan area faces in some degree all of the crucial problems that face all of our metropolitan areas: those of land, water and other resource protection and use; of production, transport, distribution and service; of housing and shelter; of community economic, social and cultural institutions and services; of parks and recreation; of education, health and welfare; of economic opportunity; of social justice; of community relationships and organization; of metropolitan shifts and dislocations and of urban and suburban renewal; of comprehensive planning and development; of governmental organization and coordination; of financing of capital improvements, services and operations. Transcending throughout are the imponderable matters of maintaining and enhancing the whole environment in the interest of human well being and the ineffable quality of livability.

In the same connection, the views of Lewis Mumford, who has written extensively on the city, its culture, architecture and planning, are relevant in the approach to goals for urban well-being and security. He also sees the need of reexamination of the modern city, its integration, and the use of its immense energies for betterment:²

The final mission of the city is to further man's conscious participation in the cosmic and the historic process. Through its own complex and enduring structure, the city vastly augments man's ability to interpret these processes and take an active formative part in them. . . .

. . . Our cities have been going steadily from bad to worse; and many of the achievements that officialdom is wont to boast about . . . have only hastened the pace of metropolitan disintegration, random suburban dispersal, regional spoilage. . . . Today everyone at last realizes that our cities are in trouble. . . .

All of these vital conditions for social continuity and personal integrity have been breaking down in both the central metropolis and its outlying areas; and they have most completely broken down among the lowest-income groups. This unfortunate minority lacks regular work and the self-respect that comes from performing such work; their immediate neighborhood and city have undergone and are still undergoing abrupt structural changes for bad and good, that erase their familiar social patterns and destroy their sense of belonging, so that their own selves become so much scattered debris in the larger demolition process. . . .

The nature of the modern city needs to be reexamined; a new pattern of urban integration more capable of utilizing the immense activities that modern man now commands must be invented.

As the extensive bibliography appended to this report (Appendix B) indicates, much has been written from many points of view and over a long period of time, on the urban condition and on the general and specific nature of the problems involved. Although recognition of the need to deal with these problems has now become general on both national and local levels, finding long-term solutions has been elusive. Traditional governmental organization procedures have either failed to meet the developing crises or have treated them one by one as they appeared, more often than not with short-term remedies that have created as many problems as they have solved. Carl H. Madden, chief economist of the United States Chamber of Commerce, includes the following general observation in his broad study of the clash of forces in national development and change, including those of the city:³

For too long a time, we as a nation have responded to problems in a reactive fashion, concentrating our time, money, and energy on treating them on an emergency basis, with consequences that could have been avoided if we had

²*The City in History*, 1961.

³Carl H. Madden, *Clash of Cultures: Management in an Age of Changing Values*, National Planning Association, 1972.

exercised more foresight. One of the central lessons of our present difficulties is that we must learn to anticipate both problems and opportunities—in a sustained and systematic way—in advance of their occurrence. To do so is in no way to turn our back on present concerns. We must simultaneously attend to what is urgent, and do our best to foresee and respond to what is imminent.

The Portland Metropolitan community in many different situations has failed “to foresee and respond to what is imminent” until the problem was at hand. *A substantial part of this failure marks the lack of unity of purpose in governmental decision-making.* A number of City Club studies have called attention to such a lack, including those dealing with problems of city government, port development, racial justice, ombudsman, urban redevelopment, the waterfront, and mass transit.⁴ The 1968 study of transportation planning in particular stated flatly that a wide consensus on what the future must be like was essential for effective comprehensive planning. Following its formal presentation to the City Club, the members of that committee in a joint letter to the Board of Governors urged the City Club to assume leadership in goal formulation. Following this the City Club Board of Governors and the Project Planning Board had discussions at length as to how the Club might be helpful in a community goal-setting effort. Several weekly Club meetings were devoted to questions of planning for the future and the community's need for goals, greater citizen involvement, and governmental outreach.

A. The Effect of Governmental Fragmentation

A basic problem in finding long-range approaches and solutions to the region's needs is fragmentation of governmental authority. No single body exists in the Portland metropolitan area with overall responsibility for the present needs and providing for the future. The structure of governmental decision-making in this area, as in nearly every other American metropolitan region, is dispersed among literally hundreds of legislative and executive bodies. They and their specialized bureaus, departments, and offices frequently operate in isolation from each other due to differences in topics handled, levels of government administered, and geographic areas served. Local government in the Portland metropolitan area alone includes five counties, three dozen incorporated municipalities, and more than 300 special districts. To these must be added the local field offices of two states and the federal government. It is illuminating to note that the Portland telephone directory in its opening pages lists more than 850 separate state and federal offices for the local area.

There are many benefits to be gained from such highly specialized organization of the governance of society. Competent personnel resolve specific problems easily and expertly; local concerns can be dealt with locally in most cases; scale economies can be achieved by the higher levels of organization. At the same time, however, there are critical problems in coordinating and harmonizing their disparate activities. Each agency, with few exceptions, sets about accomplishing its assigned tasks within its prescribed area of jurisdiction according to its own perceptions of problems and internal indicators of success. It usually lacks any precise guidelines from parent legislative bodies or constituencies and seldom has cross-contact with other agencies in allied fields and regions. Each agency thus has to establish its own parochial priorities and programs or, worse yet, it may meet its day-to-day problems and tasks without any future aims at all.

The result consists of sets of contradictory policies and programs that frequently

⁴The following reports in Portland City Club Bulletins:
Portland City Government, Vol. 41, No. 51, May 19, 1961
Port Management, Operation, and Development in the Metropolitan Portland and Columbia River Area, Vol. 45, No. 46, April 16, 1965
Problems of Racial Justice in Portland, Vol. 49, No. 2, June 14, 1968
The Ombudsman (or Public Protector) Concept, And Grievance Handling and Citizens' Services in Oregon, Vol. 50, No. 52, May 29, 1970
Urban Renewal in Portland, Vol. 52, No. 12, August 13, 1971
Journal Building Site Use and Riverfront Development (interim report), Vol. 50, No. 10, August 8, 1969
Planning for Transportation in the Portland Metropolitan Area, Vol. 49, No. 27, December 6, 1968.

