

# *The* REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

COUNTY OF  
LOS ANGELES



PROPERTY OF  
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION  
**HISTORICAL FILE**

JANUARY 1929

THE material herein is for the purpose of answering by example certain questions pertaining to Regional Planning. The essentials are: An effective Commission; proper direction of the work; sound engineering principles; adequate research and statistics; a comprehensive highway plan; a wholesome regulation of land subdivision; regulation of use of property based on comprehensive zoning; recognition of the problems of landscape design; informational material properly prepared—brief, concise, and with emphasis on visual persuasion; above all, the moulding of public opinion for a comprehensive plan, well prepared and possible of accomplishment.

*Charles H. Diggs*

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PROPERTY OF  
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION  
HISTORICAL FILE

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

R. F. McCLELLAN

HENRY W. WRIGHT

FRED. T. BEATY

SIDNEY T. GRAVES

FRANK L. SHAW

COUNTY COUNSEL EVERETT W. MATTOON

THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

MRS. CHARLES F. GRAY

B. R. HOLLOWAY

R. O. BALDWIN

CARL BUSH

J. M. PAIGE

EX-OFFICIO

GEORGE W. JONES

J. E. ROCKHOLD

COUNTY ROAD COMMISSIONER

COUNTY SURVEYOR

IN CHARGE OF STAFF

CHARLES M. DIGGS - DIRECTOR

HALL OF RECORDS  
LOS ANGELES - CALIFORNIA  
JANUARY 1, 1929.

# THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

## ORGANIZATION, POWERS, AND DUTIES

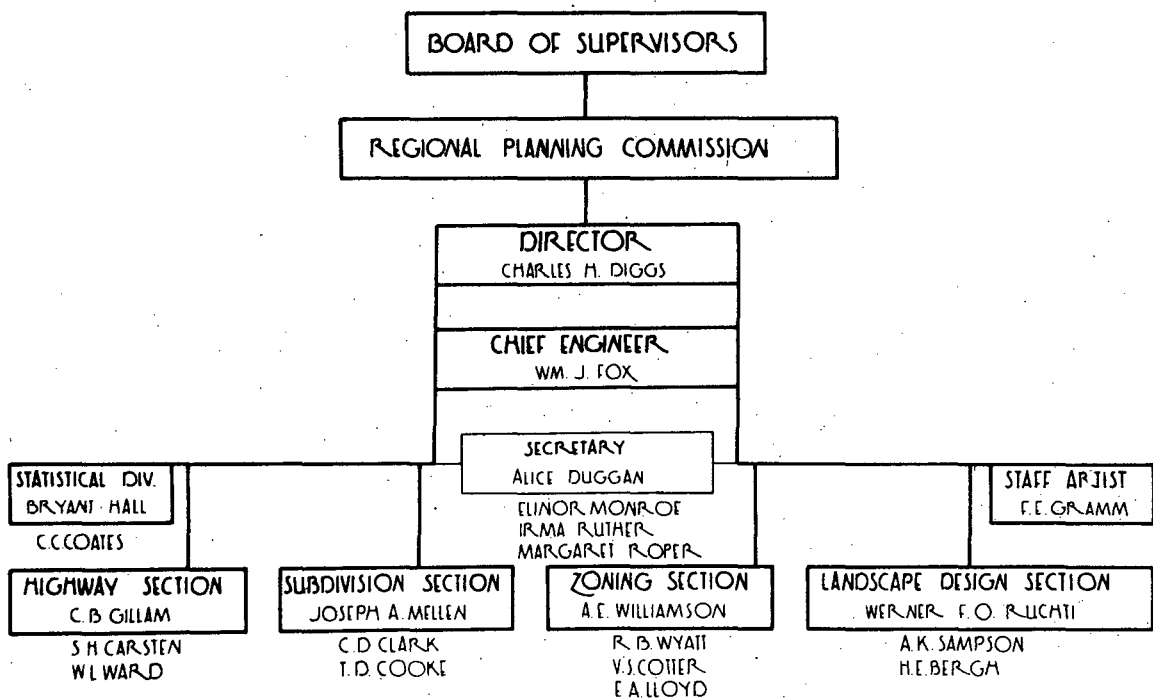
THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES IN JANUARY, 1923 ESTABLISHED THE FIRST OFFICIAL REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION IN THE UNITED STATES. THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THIS COMMISSION, AS SET FORTH IN THE ORDINANCE CREATING IT, ARE:

- "A TO MAKE A STUDY OF THE PROBLEMS OF THE COUNTY WITH RESPECT TO RESIDENTIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS, TRAFFIC CONDITIONS, PUBLIC PARKS AND BOULEVARDS, FLOOD CONTROL, SUBDIVISIONS, AND IN GENERAL WITH RESPECT TO THOSE MATTERS AFFECTING THE ORDERLY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTY AS ONE LARGE COMMONWEALTH AND TO MAKE TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE SOLUTION OF THE SAME.
- "B TO ADVISE WITH THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND OTHER COUNTY OFFICIALS WITH RESPECT TO THEIR DUTIES AFFECTING ANY OF THE ABOVE MATTERS.
- "C TO SEEK TO INTEREST THE VARIOUS MUNICIPALITIES AND OTHER POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS OF THE COUNTY IN A JOINT EFFORT TO UNDERSTAND AND SOLVE THE COMMON PROBLEMS OF DEVELOPMENT CONFRONTING THEM AND THE COUNTY."

THE COMMISSION CONSISTS OF FIVE APPOINTED MEMBERS, WHO SERVE WITHOUT COMPENSATION, AND THREE MEMBERS EX-OFFICIO; NAMELY, THE DIRECTOR (WHO IS IN CHARGE OF THE STAFF), THE COUNTY SURVEYOR, AND THE COUNTY ROAD COMMISSIONER.

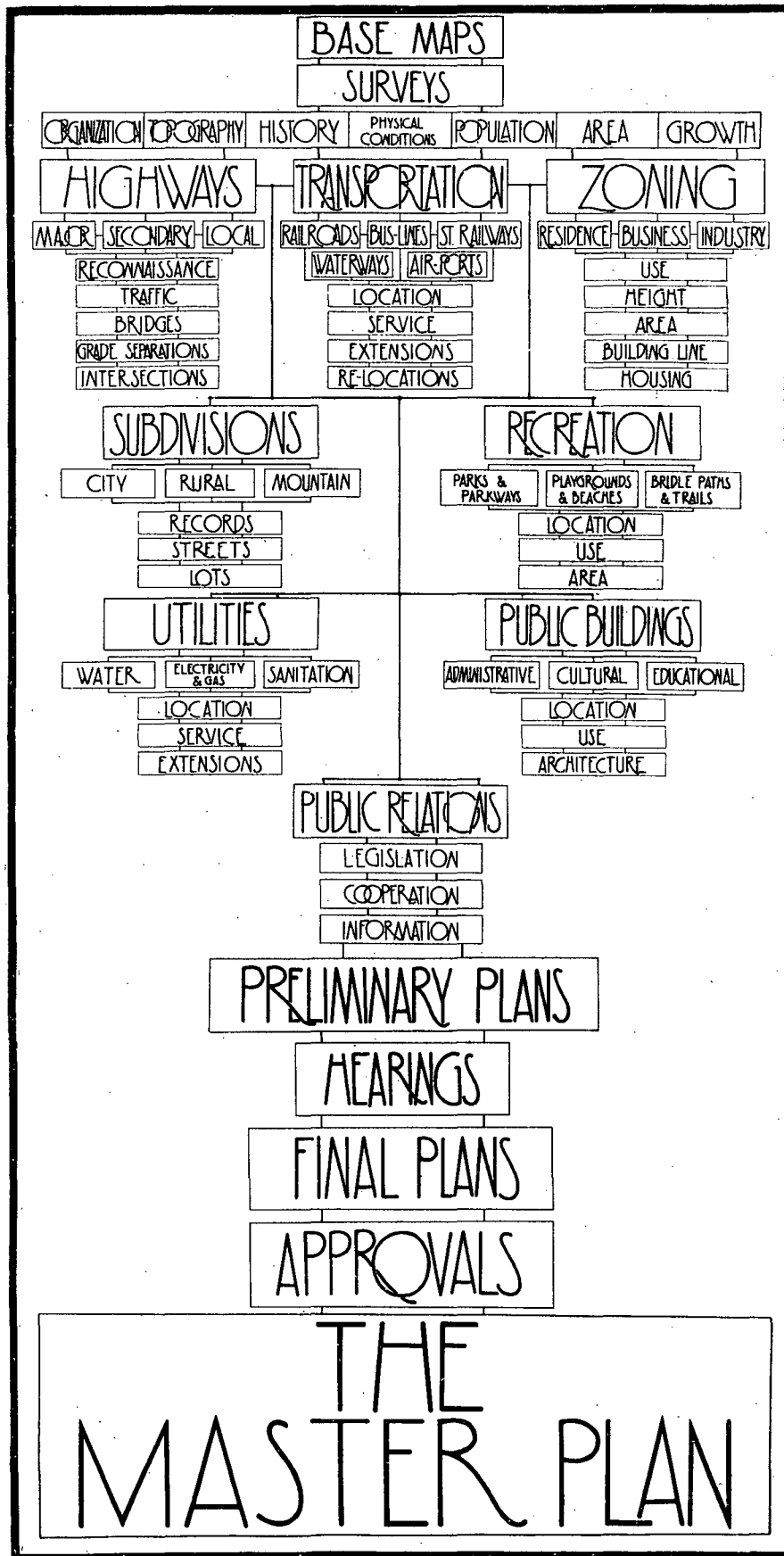
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## COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES



OFFICE ORGANIZATION EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 22, 1927.

*Charles H. Diggs* DIRECTOR



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# T H E M A S T E R P L A N

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by Wm. J. Fox  
Chief Engineer

**R**EGIONAL Planning in the County of Los Angeles can be defined as the scientific study of the problems of physical growth of separate communities which have common interests, the reduction of these to a coordinated, sound, economic plan, with methods of procedure for its execution.

When the Regional Planning Commission was created by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles, it became a part of the county government, the first of its kind in America. By reason of its official character it is having some rather unique experiences in combining the theory of planning with actual administrative practice. Its status demands that it have plans ready for immediate application and at the same time continue the basic studies leading to the development of a really complete plan for the future.

## SOUND ENGINEERING

It is good business to plan. It is as sound and expedient to plan the development of cities as it is to design and plan the construction of a bridge, a portion of a highway or a water system. Planning is an amplification of those fundamental principles which have always been practiced in engineering, namely, the accumulation of data, the reduction to formulæ, the application to design, and the accomplishment of predetermined objectives.

These objectives are set forth in definite plans, which are given official recognition, substantiated by statistical information, stabilized by public opinion and supported by methods of procedure consistent with the most modern knowledge of economics.

Planning is primarily a function of the engineer, but in city and regional planning the engineer must work with the architect, the landscape architect, the attorney and those of other allied professions. Results are then satisfactory and have a recognized legal status.

There is a definite relationship between purchasing power and business, raw material and market, social conditions and production, sanitation and health, water supply and ultimate progress. Transportation facilities bind all these together in a complete network. Thus the work of planning is seen to deal with the controlling factors which govern the social and commercial progress of the region. The whole financial structure of the area is involved.

## FINANCES AND STAFF

To plan efficiently and effectively, a Regional Planning Commission must have adequate finances and be equipped with the best technical staff

Ave. 12 words per line [5  
Ave. 32 lines per page  
Ave. 384 words per full page.

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# T H E M A S T E R P L A N

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available. The achievements of a Commission, fortified with a well equipped technical staff, justify the expense involved.

The Los Angeles County Regional Planning Commission has built up its organization so as to provide for each of the important phases of planning activity. The Organization Chart on page 3 indicates how this is done.

## DIVISIONS OF THE WORK

The elements which constitute the foundation of Regional Planning, can be enumerated as the scientific study of *Highways, Transportation, Subdivision of Land, Use of Property, Recreational Facilities, Utilities and Architecture*. The ramifications of these basic studies are only limited by the ambitions and requirements of the citizenship. The diagram on page 4 illustrates this. Beginning with Base Maps, through Surveys, and all the respective branches, this outline shows the correlations observed in the specific study of any part of the Master Plan so as to produce an orderly and scientific whole.

## MAPS

One of the first requirements in all planning work is a proper set of base maps. In Los Angeles County the United States Geological Survey Sheets, 2000 feet to the inch, with 5-foot contours, are indispensable for general study work. Maps 1000 feet to the inch are used for the basic official highway plans. County sectional maps, 600 feet to the inch, constitute the compiled record of the official planning accomplishments of the Commission. Drawings 100 feet or 50 feet to the inch are used for special study work.

## HIGHWAY SYSTEM

Since highways form the basic framework for comprehensive planning, the first step is a thorough study of existing highway conditions. The various satellite centers of activity, either actual or proposed, are identified, and a tentative framework of connecting arteries is laid out, using existing dedications where advisable, and adjusted to property lines and improvements in such a way that the best alignments, the best grades and the safest intersections are procured.

The formula is to have a major boulevard one hundred feet wide every mile on the section line and a secondary highway, eighty feet wide, every half mile, where topography permits. The areas embraced between the major and secondary highways are purposely designed for residential or industrial use, the minor streets being so designed as to best serve local needs. Where heavy through traffic is expected, as for instance, between Los Angeles Harbor and the City of Los Angeles, the frequency of major highways is increased.

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## T H E M A S T E R P L A N

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With this major highway plan as a basis, all new subdivisions are required to dedicate their portion of the major and secondary highway systems, and the general character of the subdivision is adjusted to conform to the plan, to existing streets, and local physical conditions. Likewise, spur tracks, relocations of rail lines, pole lines, high tension electric rights of way, airports and other permanent features are oriented to conform to the major highway plan.

### PROJECT INITIATION

In Los Angeles County the work of carrying out any part of the Master Plan—by policy—is initiated by an official petition signed by a majority of the property owners. Such a petition is issued by the County upon proper application and has upon it a financial plan and statement embracing the following:

1. The Legislative act under which the work is to be done.
2. The term of the bonds.
3. The total assessed valuation of the district.
4. Approximate bonded indebtedness.
5. Approximate amount of bonds expected to be issued for pending work.
6. Approximate annual maintenance and operating charges of districts including those past the preliminary stages of formation.
7. The approximate average annual payment for the items 2, 3 and 4 on basis of current year, per \$100 of assessed valuation.
8. The estimated amount of bonds to be issued to pay the cost of the improvement.
9. Estimated maintenance and operating charges per year for proposed improvement.
10. The total approximate average payment for first year to be expected for improvements and maintenance per \$100 assessed valuation, if petition is granted.
11. Percent of total bonded indebtedness, present and proposed, to total assessed valuation.

When the estimate is compiled, the petition and an authorized map showing the proposed assessment district and specifications of the work to be done are approved by an official County committee, composed of the Chief Engineers of the Construction Department, the Surveyor's Department, and the Regional Planning Commission. With the approvals secured, the petition is submitted to the Board of Supervisors, and upon its approval, is permitted to be circulated.

### PUBLIC OPINION

Public endorsement and active support are extremely important factors, which should be kept in direct cadence with the work of planning. This is always forthcoming whenever and wherever there is available complete information as to the objects sought and the methods employed by the Commission. The office contributes regularly to the newspapers and technical magazines, material relative to the essentials of modern, scientific planning. A bulletin is sent bi-weekly to public officials and active civic workers throughout the



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## T H E M A S T E R P L A N

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county. The Staff Artist has graphically illustrated many vital points in a forceful, attractive fashion. His drawings have been of great value in the visual presentation of some of the more complex projects, making them clear to those not accustomed to technical drawings. (See page 30.)

The work of the Highway Section comes, perhaps, the most directly to the attention of the public, because roads are the first need in opening up new territory. The Subdivision Section's work is closely coordinated with that of the Highway Section, one setting the framework, the other the pattern.

The holding of numerous public hearings as the plan is being evolved is essential. These hearings give the public an opportunity to express their views and to inform themselves as to the intent of the Plan. They are so conducted as to cause the people to realize that the Plan belongs to them and that responsibility for its adoption and execution is likewise theirs.

The Commission, at its regular bi-weekly meetings, in determining general policies receives delegations of citizens and considers various matters on appeal.

### COORDINATION

*City Engineers' Association:* Coordinating the work of planning with official, semi-official and other agencies is vital in executing the Plan. The Commission was instrumental in forming a body of engineers called the "City and County Engineer's Association of California." This Association meets once a month. It was founded July 13, 1923, "for the purpose of acting as a body of advisory engineers for The Regional Planning Commission."

*City Planners' Association:* Formed also under the direction of The Commission in December, 1924, is an organization known as the "Association of City Planners of Los Angeles County," with a membership of 900 persons, composed of members of city planning commissions, city councilmen, city engineers, city attorneys and others interested in planning work. This organization meets once a month, each time in a different community. It unites more closely all the varied groups engaged in planning and serves as a reservoir of information constantly drawn upon by the various cities.

A member of the Commission's staff serves as Executive Secretary in each of these organizations.

*Committees and Other Agencies:* In Southern California nearly all the detail work of coordination in progress and development enterprises is accomplished through committees. Because of the nature of its work the Commission's staff is very frequently called upon by the various agencies to act on these Committees. Thus, in arriving at their deductions and conclusions, they have first-hand information as to the latest developments of the Commission's

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## T H E   M A S T E R   P L A N

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work. The Commission is represented in the League of California Municipalities; the Los Angeles County Grade Crossings Committee; the Los Angeles City Planning Association; the Industrial Trackage Committee of Los Angeles County; and the Chamber of Commerce Committee on Airports and Aviation. 42 = 10 1/2

The Commission is also in constant contact with the County Surveyor, the County Road Department, the Los Angeles Major Traffic Commission, the State Railroad Commission, the Greater Harbor Committee of 200, the Citizens' Committee on Parks, Playgrounds and Beaches, the Automobile Club of Southern California, the Los Angeles Realty Board, the Los Angeles County Flood Control Districts, the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts, and the Associated Chambers of Commerce. It finds that its cooperation with these organizations, together with its representation upon other committees, greatly fortifies the work of planning. This is demonstrated by the whole-hearted support given by these various bodies, who find in the planning done by the County a reliable basis for their own developments. 11 1/2 = 10.8

In the County administration itself, matters pertaining to planning and engineering are discussed by a committee composed of the engineering heads of the departments, in order to coordinate the work of planning with that of surveying, finance and construction. 39 1/2 = 10

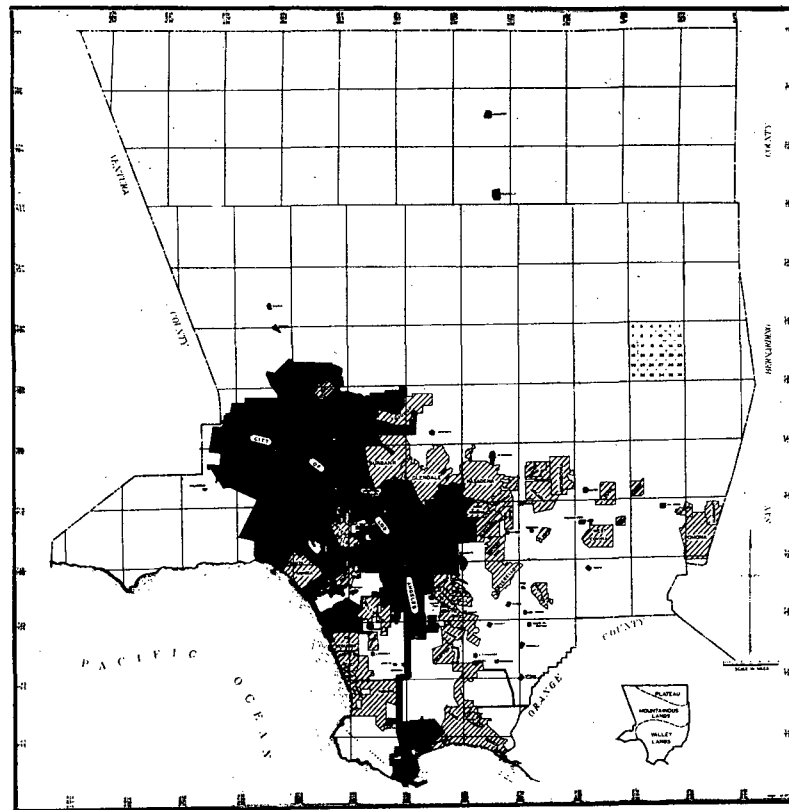
### ENGINEERING APPLICATION

All phases of planning work must have an engineering application. Therefore, extreme care is exercised to carry each part of the plan to a degree of completeness that will permit it to be applied by the legal, surveying and construction divisions. The plan, or any part of it, is complete only when it satisfies all the conditions prescribed in the Master Plan outline as shown on page 4. It must include sufficient information to enable each division or department to put it into execution with ease and precision, at the same time without transgressing upon the policies or duplicating the work of another department. 10 1/2 = 13

The value of making planning procedure conform to the engineer's methods and thought is strongly accentuated in the contacts with the various official and semi-official bodies. It has brought full and prompt recognition of the work of the Los Angeles County Regional Planning Commission because the engineering practices are thus more readily understood. 54 1/2 = 12

The process of planning is the only method thus far discovered that assures the development of the region so that its parts will relate properly to one another, and be connected by adequate provision for circulation, communication and orderly growth, so that the whole will reflect the intelligence and culture of those who live in it. 56 = 14

## RESEARCH AND STATISTICS

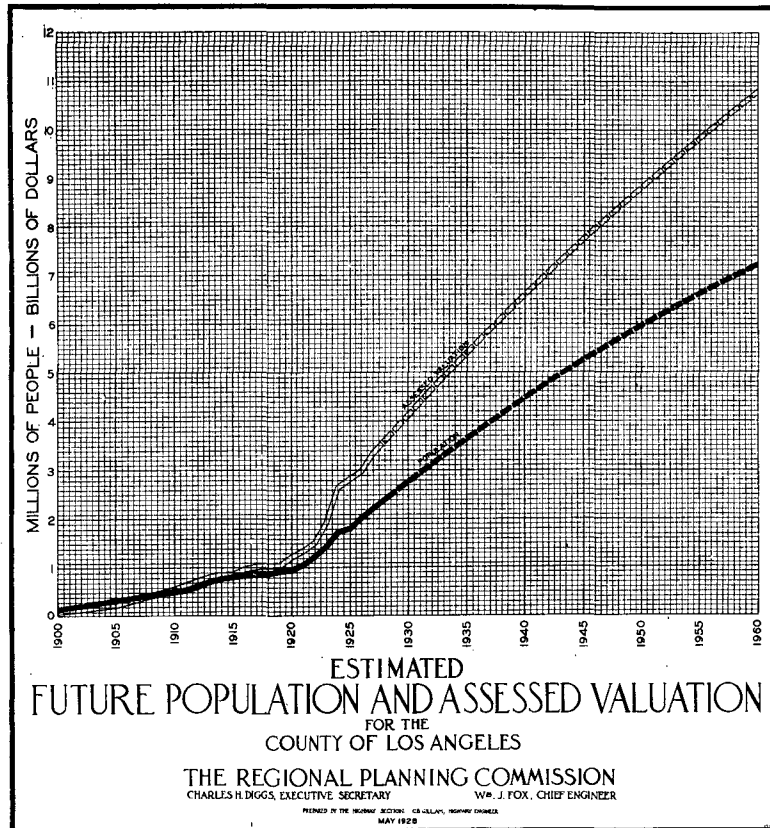


by BRYANT HALL  
*Research Engineer*

THE County of Los Angeles is 4,115 square miles in area, being almost as large as the State of Connecticut. Of this vast area, only about one-third is now intensively used. The Santa Monica Mountains on the north-west, and the San Gabriel Mountains in the north center with the plateau beyond them, make up a total of nearly 3,000 square miles now sparsely populated but holding interesting possibilities for the future. The remaining valley lands which constitute the metropolitan region within the County\* have an area of about 1,200 square miles. Here are to be found 44 incorporated cities, varying in size from one to 441 square miles, and having a combined area of over seven hundred. With each, the Commission is in constant contact. Around, between and even entirely enclosed by these cities are more than 50 well-populated communities, not incorporated, with a total area of some 300 square miles, and a total population of nearly a million. The stream of traffic, business and population is overflowing these boundary lines, and the

\*NOTE: The U. S. Census Bureau adds to this certain portions of three adjacent counties south and east, totaling 840 square miles. Co-ordination in planning with these counties is being rapidly attained.

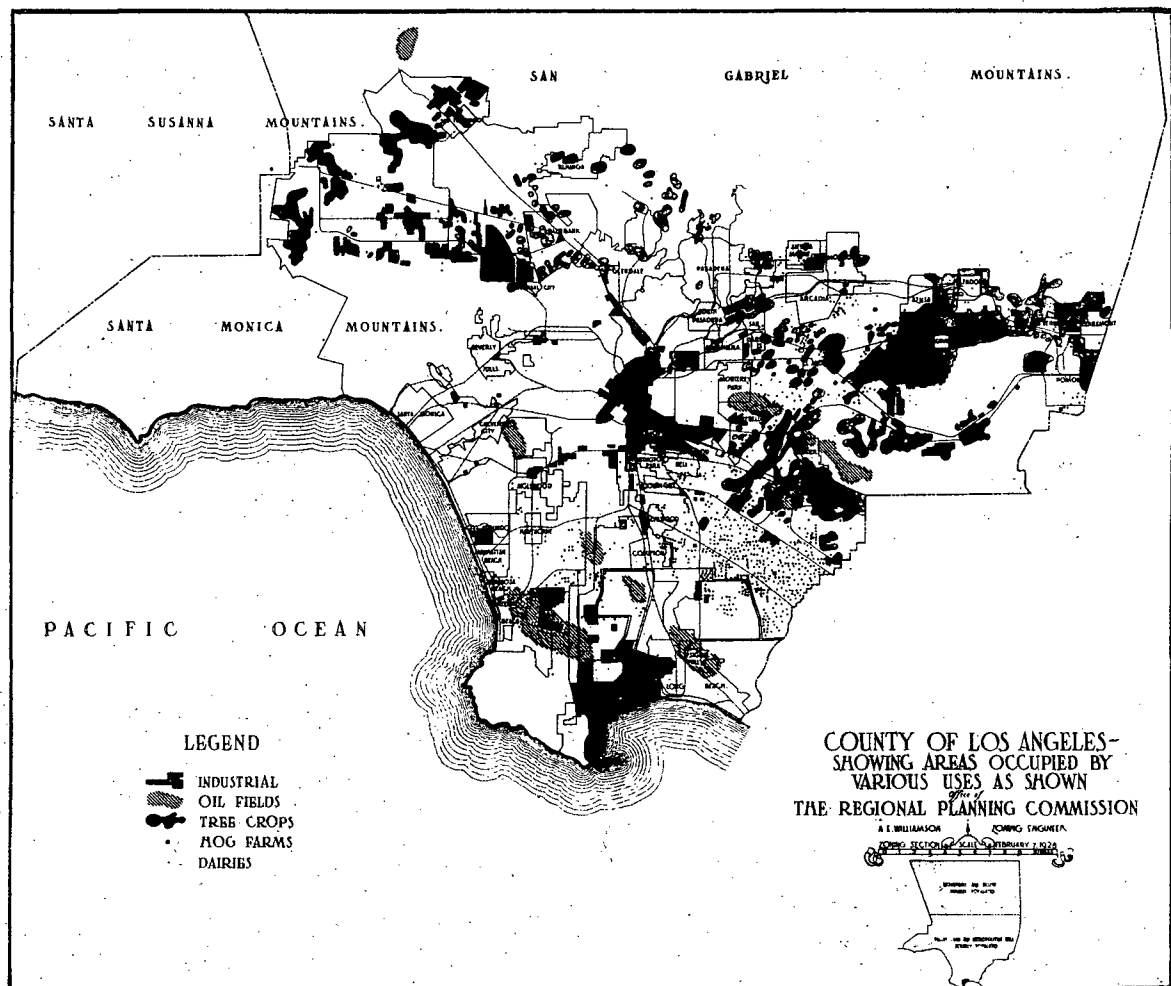
## RESEARCH AND STATISTICS



spreading communities daily are outgrowing artificial limitations. Social and economic cohesion increases, and the County government, through the Regional Planning Commission, provides a means for concerted action and for orderly development.

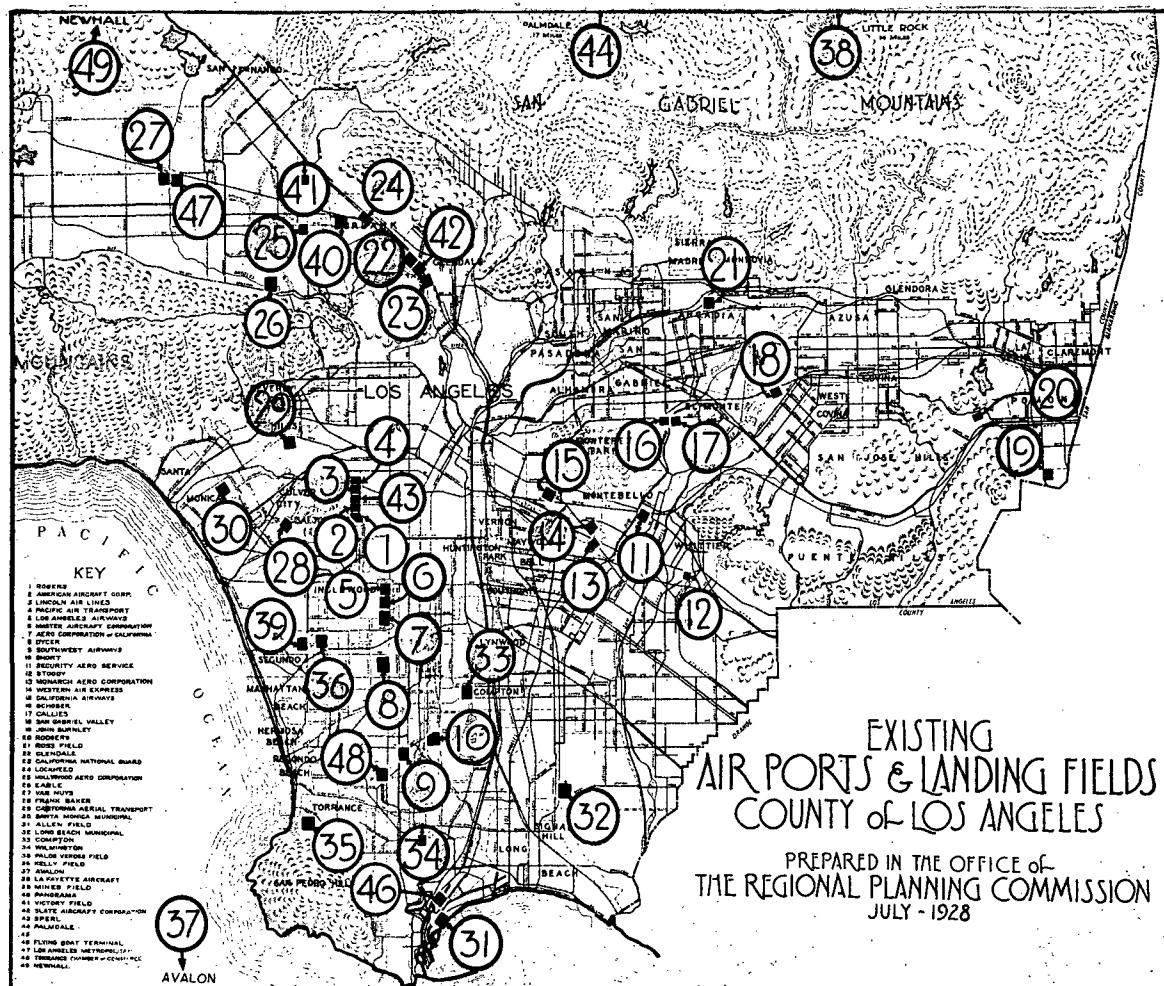
Estimates of future population are necessary as the basis of plans for water supply, sewer systems, highways, and other municipal works. They are, of course, subject to definite limitations, and depend on the assumption that present trends will not be seriously modified by any new factors. This chart was prepared, after careful study of the figures for the last quarter century, in accordance with the best accepted theories as to the manner of extending the curve into the future. An adequate water supply is assumed. While the whole County has shown a phenomenal increase in population, averaging 14 per cent annually since 1920, the smaller cities within commuting distance of the business districts of the City of Los Angeles have shown the most rapid growth. Many of these have increased their population during that period by more than 20 per cent each year, so that by 1930, they will be roughly five times as large as they were in 1920. Such unprecedented growth requires active and careful guidance.

## RESEARCH AND STATISTICS



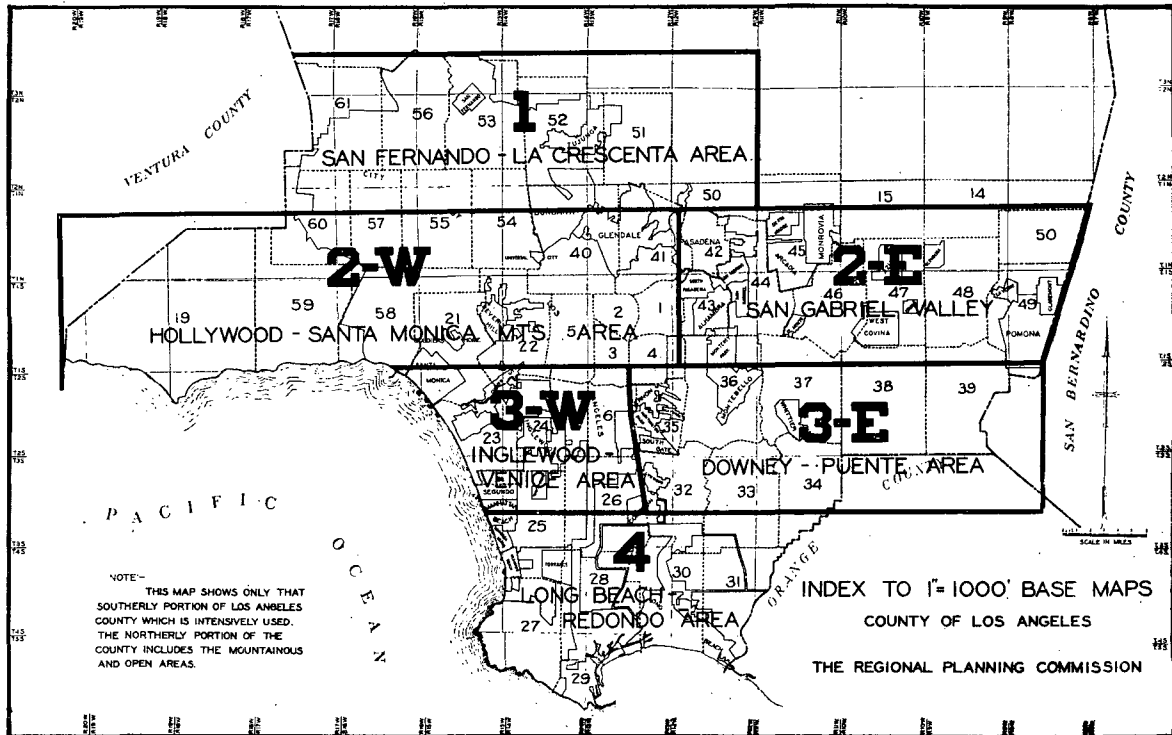
This is one of a series of studies made to show the broad general features of the distribution of certain existing property uses. It illustrates well the great amount of fact-finding work which must be done before the future needs of the region can be correctly gauged. More than 20 per cent of the nation's reserve supply of oil is located, according to expert estimates, in Los Angeles County. In 1927, the citrus crop was worth 120 millions of dollars, and the walnut crop brought six million dollars. Industries are stated by the Federal Census Bureau to have an annual output as of 1927 amounting to over a billion dollars (not counting plants whose annual output is less than \$5,000). Surveys have also been made or are being undertaken to determine, for example, existing parks and parkways, population distribution, rail transportation, political boundaries, extent of local planning and zoning, traffic density, location of grade crossings and many others.

## RESEARCH AND STATISTICS



The rapid development of aviation is indicated by the fact that there are now 1,387 airports in the United States, 386 of them municipally owned, and nearly 900 more proposed. The Commission aims at the development of a definite plan for the accommodation of this new form of transport. The fullest information is being gathered as to the forty-nine existing landing fields in the County. Maps and index cards in the files give accurate detailed information concerning each, especially as to conditions of ownership, highway plans involved, accessibility, and the ultimate uses of adjacent lands. Studies are now under way covering all other sites suitable for such purposes, in co-operation with the Committee on Aeronautics of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce. The object is to establish a fixed plan and policy as to the proper location of sufficient fields to serve the varied needs, considering their relation to each other and to the other features of the Master Plan.

# H I G H W A Y S



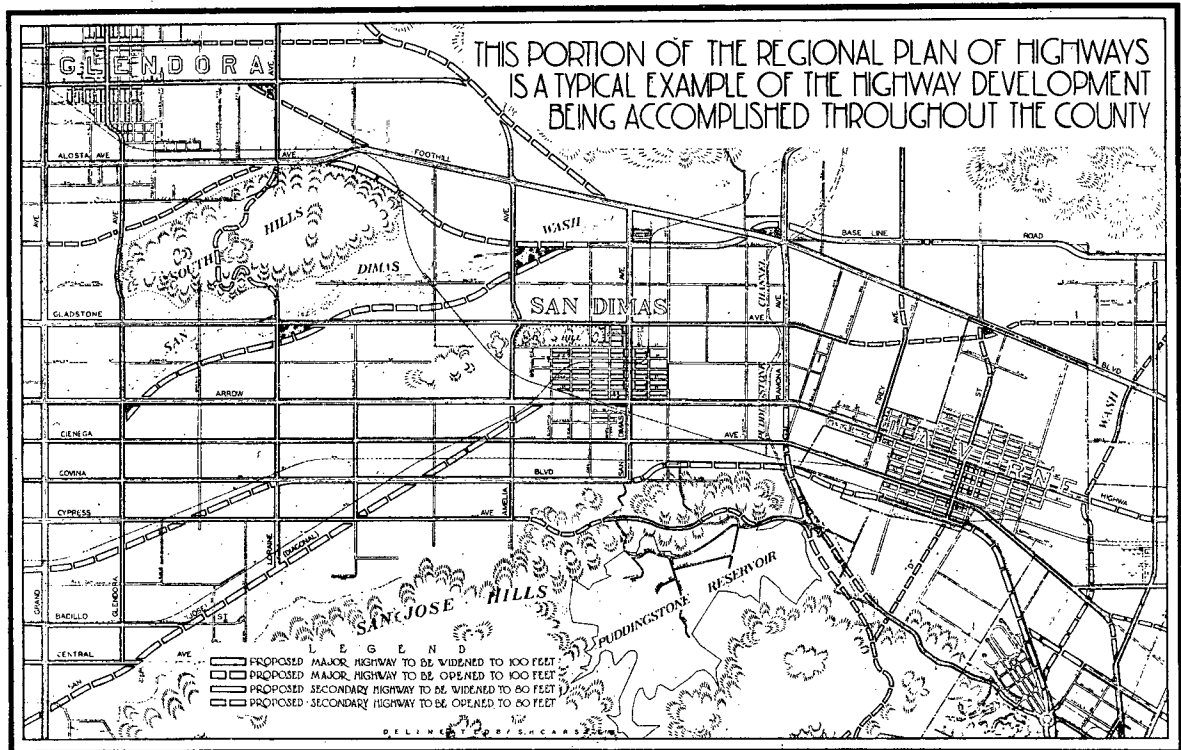
by C. B. GILLAM  
Highway Engineer

AN IMPORTANT step in the preparation of the Major Highway Plan, involving three thousand miles of highways one hundred or more feet in width, is the superimposition of a tentative plan on the County Surveyor's Index Maps. These maps, about seventy in number for the entire County, range in scale from  $1'' = 400'$  to  $1'' = 3300'$ . Some are adequate for local problems, but where a project extends over long distances they are unsatisfactory.

Therefore, base maps were essential which would include large areas of the County, of such scales that studies could be made and plans superimposed on them. A scale of  $1'' = 1000'$  was chosen and the intensively used portion of the County proposed for immediate mapping.

In August, 1925, the area designated as 2-E on the cut shown on this page, including the agricultural San Gabriel Valley, approximately two hundred forty-eight square miles, was started. This area is mountainous in the north. Southerly of the mountains the outstanding topographical obstacles to an even distribution of highways are the San Jose Hills in the southeast. Immediately westerly of these are the Whittier Narrows, which accommodate most of the drainage channels of the area. All or portions of seventeen populous

# H I G H W A Y S



cities are included. In November, 1925, a tracing showing existing streets, railways and city boundaries was completed. Immediately a preliminary highway plan was superimposed on a copy of this map. This plan has been in a state of evolution ever since and is now practically complete.

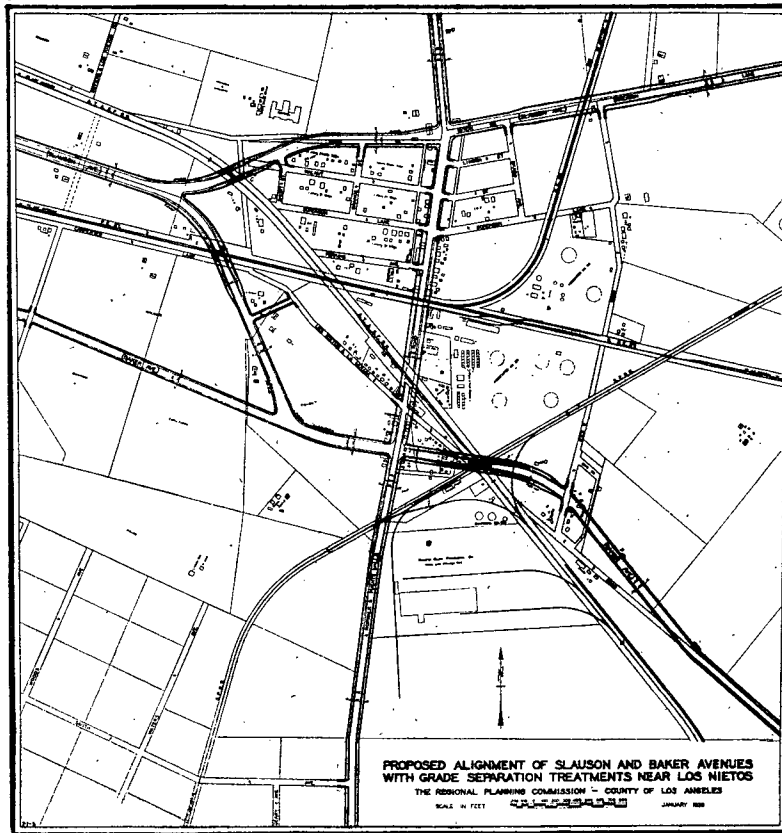
Similarly each of the areas, 3-E, 4, 3-W, 2-W, and 1, with its individual features, is being planned. Base Maps are completed for all except the last two mentioned areas. Carefully worked out tentative plans are prepared for all of them.

The method of procedure on a highway project usually is: A need for a highway improvement of major significance becomes apparent. This may mean the widening and improvement of an existing route or it may involve an entire new location through open territory. If the project is a large one, an improvement association is formed which represents the interests of the property owners along the route. At this point the Regional Planning Commission is consulted to determine if the project conforms to the Regional Plan of Highways. Then start field investigations and the preparation of preliminary plans based on a thorough study of the area to be served.

The attitude of the property owners is ascertained through the circulation of a petition to the Board of Supervisors. If this is favorable, and this govern-



# H I G H W A Y S

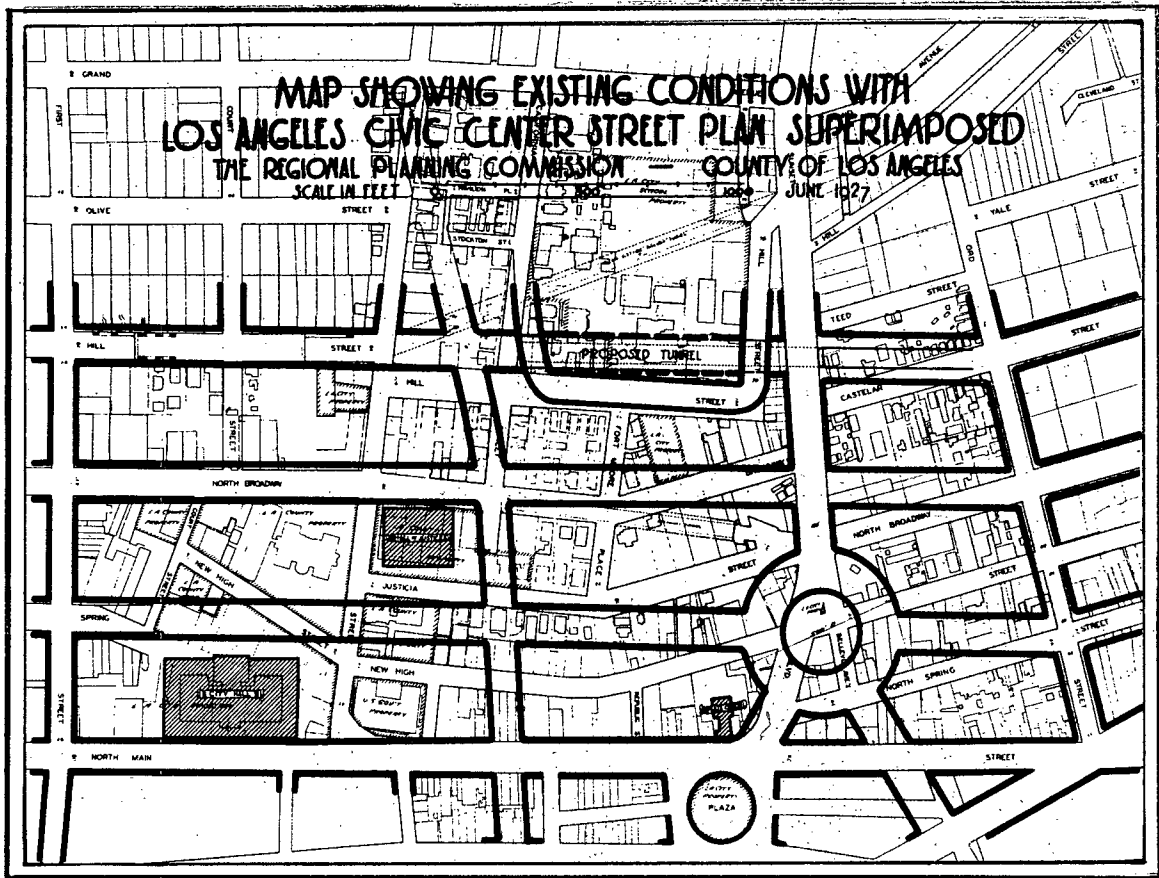


ing body deems it advisable, preliminary proceedings are ordered, and the improvement becomes assured.

Each area and each project has its problems of design and detail at intersections and special centers. These are thoroughly studied as plans are evolved. Two such problems, vastly different, are shown: One, the Los Nietos plan on this page, a complicated intersection and grade separation problem in open territory; the other on page 17, the Los Angeles Civic Center Street Plan.

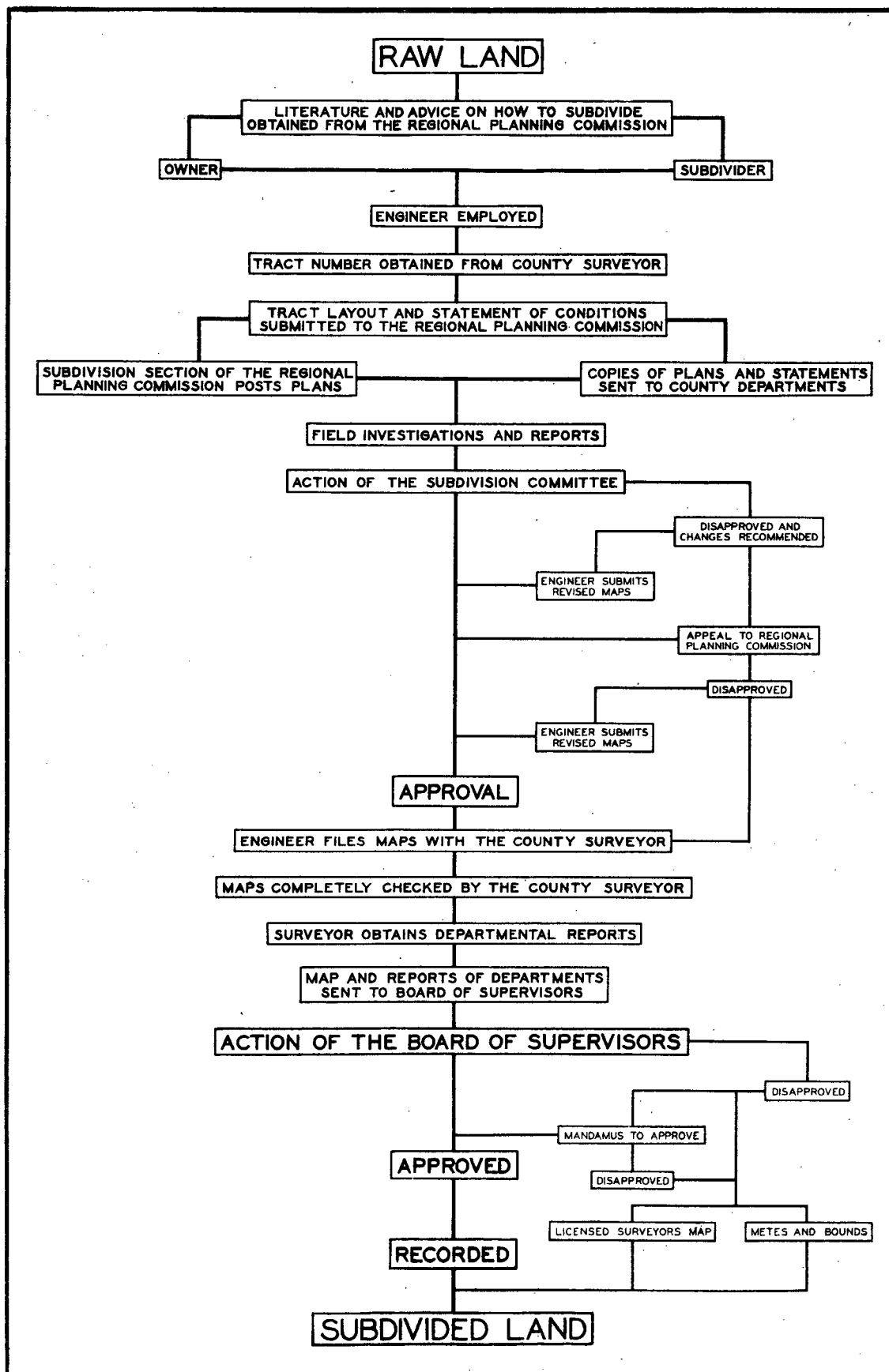
There are streets in Los Angeles County which are obviously in need of widening and improvement. They are usually narrow, heavily traveled, with sharp corners and abrupt turns, and are dangerous both to the traveler and to those who live along them. The Highway Section has recently been preparing building line ordinances for those streets, regulating the erection of buildings to conform to definite lines suited to modern living conditions and methods of travel. These ordinances are based solely on police power in that they are for the promotion of the public health and safety. Many such ordinances have been passed by the Board of Supervisors and more are being prepared for submission to that governing body.

# H I G H W A Y S



A scientifically designed highway plan for an area the size of Los Angeles County requires much time and careful effort to bring it to the point where the word "master" may be substituted for "tentative." The few hundreds of dollars spent by this section annually may only be contrasted with the millions of dollars of the taxpayers' money saved through knowing exactly where we are going and why, in the matter of this type of public improvement. Maps of the past show how lacking communities were in this regard. Streets were full of dead ends and jogs. Few, if any, of the highways were continuous or direct. Rates of grade in some instances were excessive. Highways were dedicated along property or section lines without regard to topography or to the direct linking of heavily populated areas. This condition may be excused to some extent because in the days when those surveys were made the surveyor traveled on horseback, and Los Angeles County did not have a registration of three quarters of a million motor vehicles as it now has.

In the light of our present day knowledge, if we continue to make mistakes similar to those of the past, we shall be neglecting our opportunities.



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## LAND SUBDIVISION

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by JOSEPH A. MELLEN  
*Subdivision Engineer*

LAND subdivision has always been a major activity in the County of Los Angeles, usually as a commercial enterprise of the realty profession, but dabbled in generally by a large percentage of the population. The subdivisions vary in size from one lot to a township. The shapes, thanks to King Charles III of Spain, involve all the problems of geometry.

Patchwork street planning prevailed throughout the county until the Board of Supervisors created the Regional Planning Commission. A set of standards for the regulation of subdivisions were evolved. These regulations have been perfected by five years of application and contact with the professions involved in land subdivision. By bringing each subdivision up to these standards the uneconomical practices of the past have given way to the more sensible policies of the present.

Each proposed subdivision is considered by the Regional Planning Commission through its Subdivision Committee, which is composed of engineers representing the eight county departments vitally interested.

1751 tracts, all in unincorporated territory, have been submitted to the Commission's Subdivision Engineer for consideration during the past six years.

The number of lots placed on the market by subdivision activity in county territory was 9600 in 1928 alone; and during the four preceding years, an even greater number, as shown by the following tabulation:

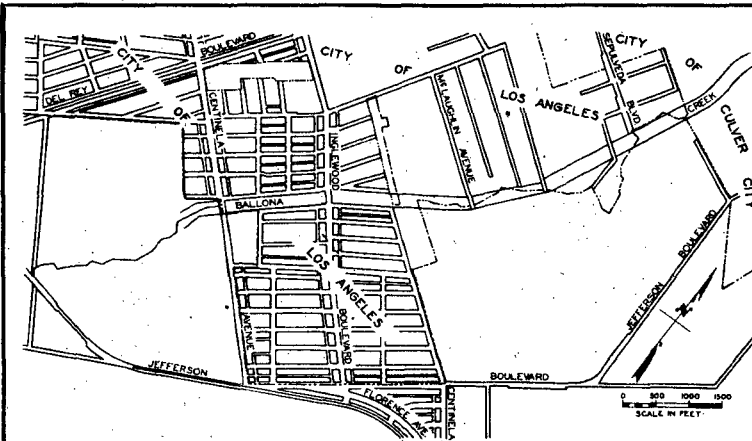
1924	. . . . .	19,328	1926	. . . . .	12,006
1925	. . . . .	17,065	1927	. . . . .	14,135

The effectiveness and value of this regulation is shown by the fact that one hundred miles of major and secondary highway has been dedicated to public use in these subdivisions. These dedications, obtained in conformity with the master plan, represent an enormous saving to the communities in which they exist. They obviate the necessity for the expenditure of large amounts of public funds which would otherwise have been necessary for elimination of street jogs, openings and widenings and other costly corrective proceedings.

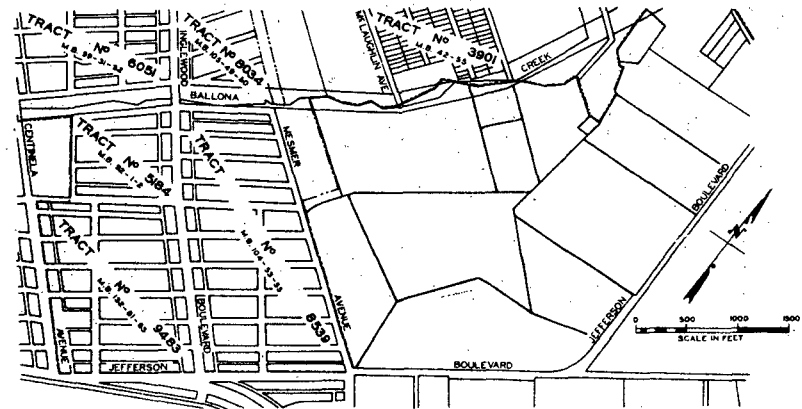
Studies are being made of neighborhood recreational needs, so that as acreage is converted into city lots, small parks and playgrounds can be procured where they will most efficiently serve each district. As a result, several such decorative parks, which add value to the adjoining districts because of their beauty, have been dedicated in subdivisions without cost to the public.

The Subdivision Section has made numerous studies of those portions of

# A STUDY IN LAND SUBDIVISION



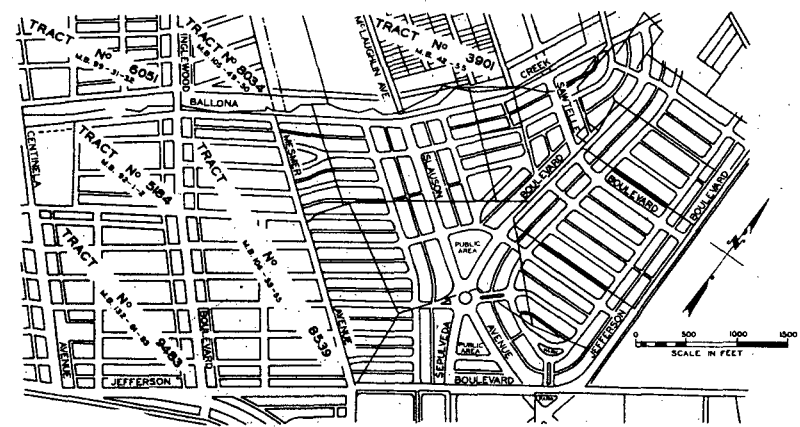
1. LOCATION WITH REFERENCE TO EXISTING DEVELOPMENT



2. DIVISION INTO SEPARATE OWNERSHIPS



3. THE HIGHWAY PLAN - EXISTING AND PROPOSED



4. THE STREET AND BLOCK PLAN - PUBLIC AREAS RESERVED

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## LAND SUBDIVISION

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the county which seem likely to be subdivided within the next few years. In these studies all phases of community life are considered and unity of design is obtained over larger areas. Experience shows that where land is being laid out as small farms, re-subdivision is apt to occur within a very few years. Guidance in laying these out in such shapes and dimensions as to permit economical re-subdivision has made possible the utilization of land which would otherwise have become inaccessible and valueless.

The accompanying plan is an example of the transition from acreage to subdivided land in a locality involving 15 separate ownerships. It represents a total area of 270 acres of undeveloped land which will ultimately provide homes for approximately 3200 persons. Some of the holdings are now without frontage on public ways and are so peculiar in shape that independent subdivision is impractical. Note also the proposed major highways and the existing local streets of the adjacent subdivisions, which must be recognized in the plan.

In making a design for the development of this area the major highways were considered as the framework about which the local streets were arranged, giving due consideration to property lines. Some of the advantages of the plan are: major highways protected for traffic use, local streets protected for residential use and against through traffic, convenient access to residential areas from highways, appropriate street widths, provision for parks and public building sites, a circle to permit free traffic flow through a complicated intersection, and visibility at all intersections. Other features not possible to show at this scale, such as size and shape of lots, building lines, and use of property, have been studied and will be part of the complete scheme for making this an orderly, efficient and a livable community.

The thoroughness of this design will avail nothing unless fully protected as part of a general plan. In order that the plan become a reality it is necessary for each owner to realize that the best plan for the community is really the most profitable one to the subdivider.

This typical problem of one small community must be solved simultaneously with hundreds of others in various portions of the county. The progress of the region as a whole cannot wait for the solution of one part. 10 13 14

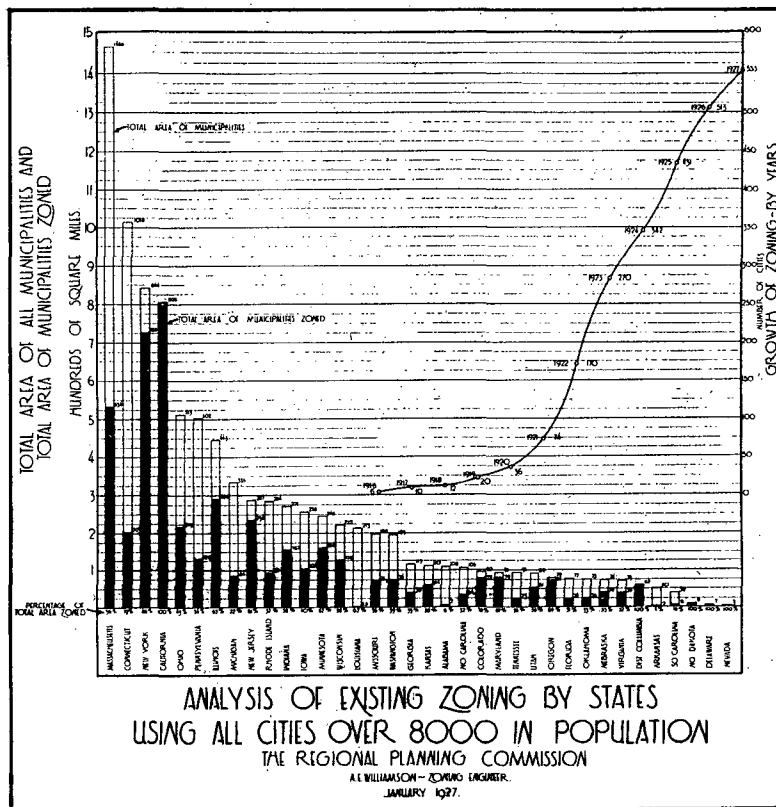
The Subdivision Section is thus seen to be the point of contact for all parties interested in land subdivision. The owner, subdivider, engineer and general public, as represented by the Commission, confer and agree upon a practical plan of subdivision meeting their respective requirements. To be prepared for the present and future subdivision growth of Los Angeles County is ever the problem. 60 12 12

# USE OF PROPERTY

by A. E. WILLIAMSON  
Zoning Engineer

**A** GLANCE at the accompanying chart shows clearly the progress made in zoning since 1916, the total area of all municipalities with a population of 8,000 and over, and the percentage of those areas actually zoned. More than half the urban population of the United States lives in zoned cities. This indicates that the regulation of the use of property is generally recognized as one of the most important parts of planning.

Zoning includes, among many other things, a thorough study of every-

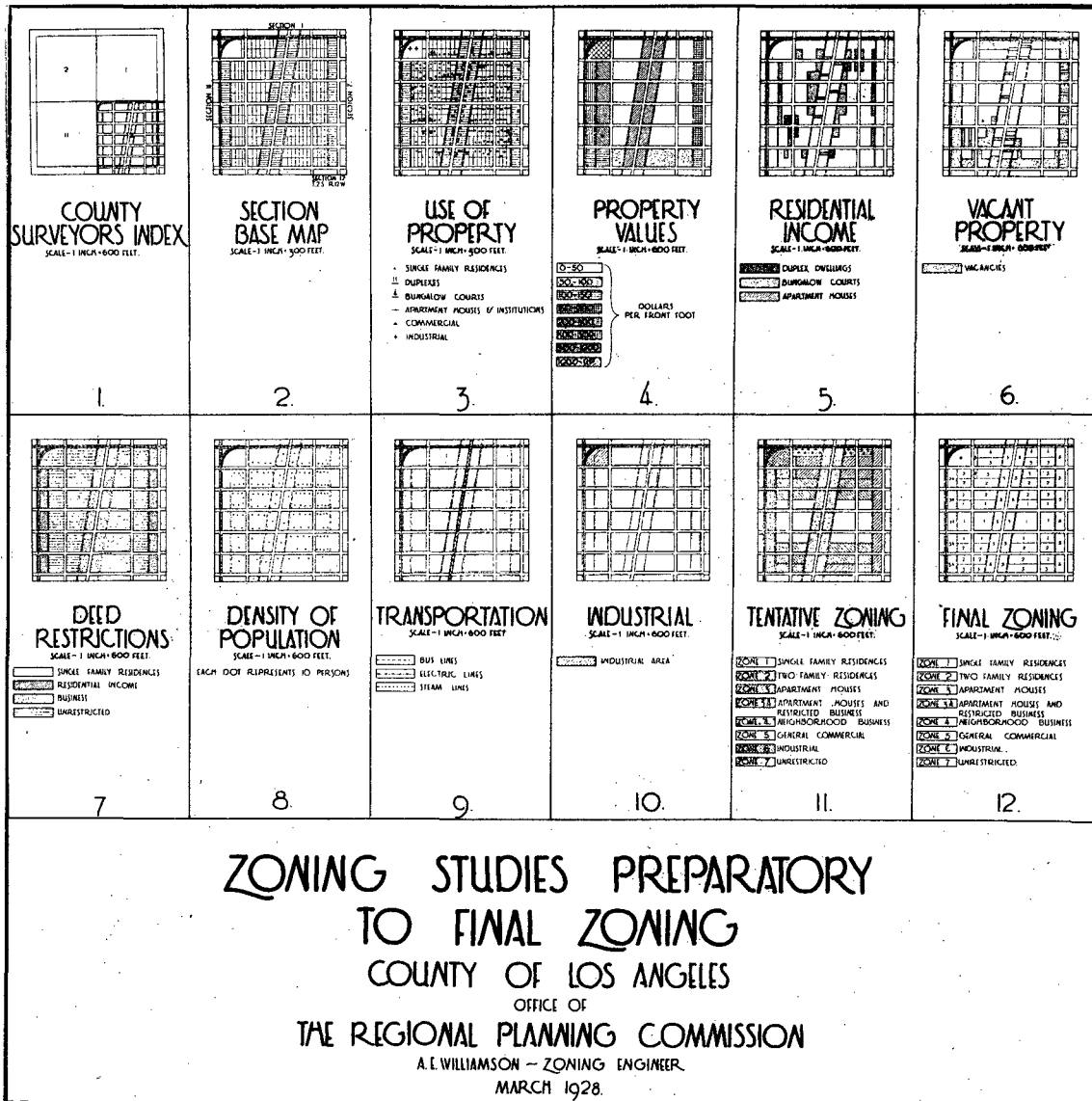


thing relating to housing; not only the dwelling itself, but also the social activities that affect and determine living conditions. Zoning in its final analysis means assured property values, and eliminates to a large degree *mistaken judgment in the purchase of land*. Wrong uses of land in any community spell economic loss. Therefore, it would seem perfectly logical to regulate the use of property so that a well-balanced com-

munity will be developed instead of a hodge-podge conglomeration of various uses. One can drive through many of our cities and outlying communities, and see clearly the misuse of property; for example an undertaking establishment, a public garage, or a laundry being interwoven into the home life environment of many fine residential areas.

Mr. Edward M. Bassett, Counsel of the Zoning Committee for the City of New York, who is considered the leading legal authority on zoning in the

# USE OF PROPERTY



United States, very aptly stated in one of his reports: "The truth is that no man can make the best use of his own property, unless his neighbors are required to make such use of their own as not to injure others."

The unguided growth of many of our cities has brought about in numerous instances chaotic conditions that have taxed to the limit the best talent of the country, both of city planners and the legal profession, in attempting to undo that which has been done in a haphazard manner.

The County of Los Angeles was the first County in the United States to establish a zoning ordinance, adopted September 12th, 1927.



# USE OF PROPERTY

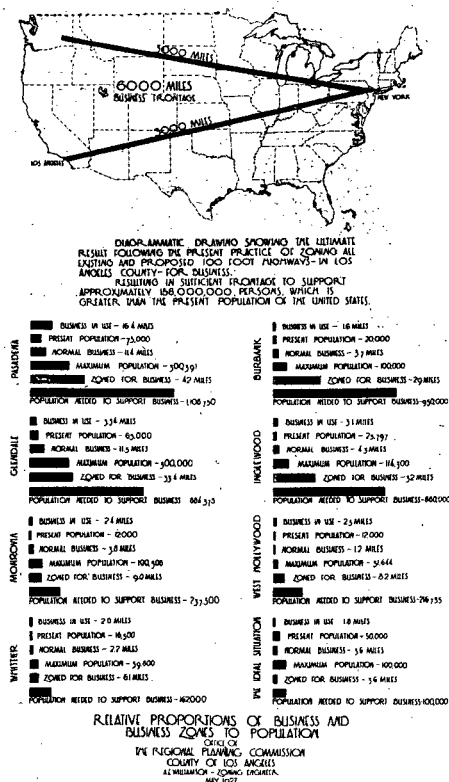
January 24, 1926, saw the first Use of Property Survey maps started. Since that date, twelve unincorporated communities have been studied, embracing all of the subjects shown on page 23. In addition, eight communities are being surveyed with the same objective. In all approximately 105 square miles of urban communities are under intensive study. Out of the twenty communities involved, six have already been definitely zoned.

Approximately 85 public meetings have been held throughout the County in the past two years. This, however, does not take into account the many necessary preliminary conferences with small groups, representing improvement associations, chambers of commerce, and other civic bodies.

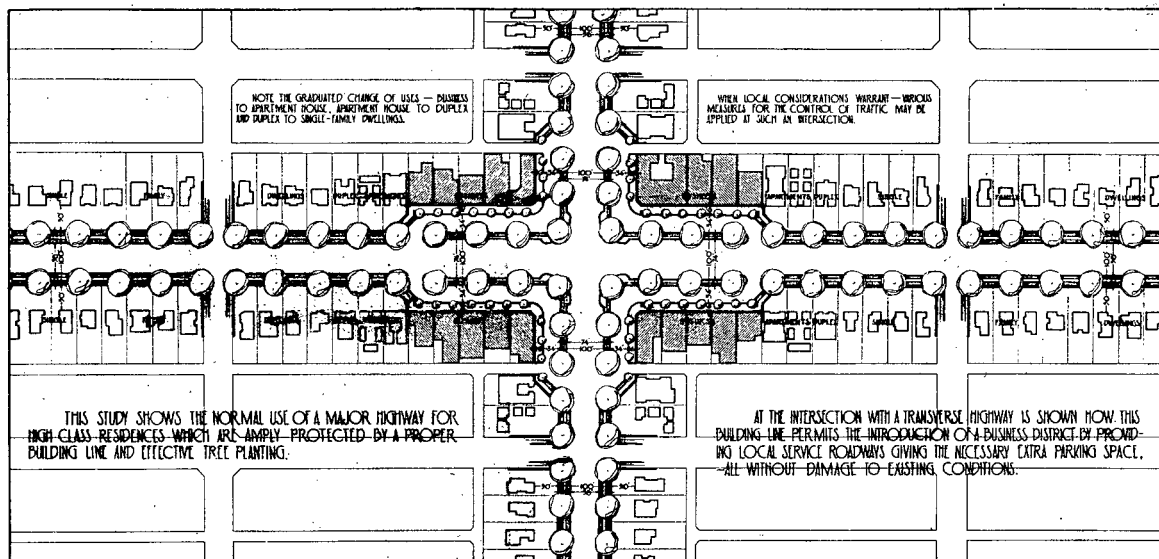
One of the most difficult problems in zoning is that of the excessive amount of business frontage that has been placed upon the market for sale. The chart below shows seven cities out of a total of fifteen that were surveyed, and shows conclusively that the amount of business frontage is far in excess of that which actually will be needed to supply the ultimate population.

Very extensive studies have been made, and are being made at the present time, to determine the correct ratio of business to population, bearing in mind that a set ratio cannot be laid down for the County as a whole, but can only serve as a guide. The customs and habits of the people, the class of people, the

geography, the topography, the proximity to a metropolitan business center, traffic conditions, the buying power of the community, the ultimate use of the property, all have to be taken into consideration in a study of this kind. Measurements were made in forty cities and villages in the region of Chicago to determine how much business property to plat in subdivisions and to zone for commercial uses in the future. They found the average ratio to be 50 feet of business to every 100 people. In the forty cities and villages measured, the lowest ratio they found was 22 feet of business to 100 people, and the highest was 90.7 feet to 100 people. A fixed ratio cannot be applied upon all communities alike. Each community will have to be studied by itself to determine the amount of business frontage that should be set aside for a given population.



# U S E O F P R O P E R T Y



## THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION - COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

CHARLES H. DIGGS, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
SCALE IN FEET

LANDSCAPE DESIGN SECTION  
VORNER T. O. RUCH, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

W. J. FOX, CHIEF ENGINEER  
APRIL 1926

The accompanying drawing is a suggested treatment for a business center at major intersections. It is interesting to note the treatment for parking facilities providing adequate space for automobiles off the major highway, thereby eliminating the usual interference with through traffic. The substantial building line proposed between such intersections is a very desirable feature, making the property particularly desirable for residential purposes, in view of the fact that the dwellings are removed from the usual noises and fumes of automobile traffic.

On close examination of the drawing, it will be noted that a method of gradual intensity of the use of the property has been suggested, i. e., the business zone first, then an apartment house lot, then a duplex, and finally the single-family residence zone. The graduation of the uses forms a very good buffer to the single residences. This "step-down" method is being employed here at present in all zoning schemes, and has proven in practice to be ideal and a very equitable way of handling the situation. It eliminates to a large degree the necessity of granting special permits for the erection of apartment houses next to business, which otherwise would have to be done in almost every case, greatly weakening the ordinance.

Where such fair and reasonable methods of treating special problems are employed, favorable decisions may be confidently expected from the courts.



# LANDSCAPE DESIGN

[by] WERNER F. O. RUCHTI  
*Landscape Architect*

IN APRIL, 1928, the Commission was asked to suggest the proper location for a large permanent agricultural building on the Los Angeles County Fair Grounds. The program for expansion, all future buildings, existing structures, the character and uses of adjacent property, highways, drainage and flood control—all these were made the subject of a careful survey. The study sketches resulting were considered by a committee representing the City of Pomona, the Fair Association, the County Architect and the Commission. The final design shown opposite was then prepared and officially adopted.

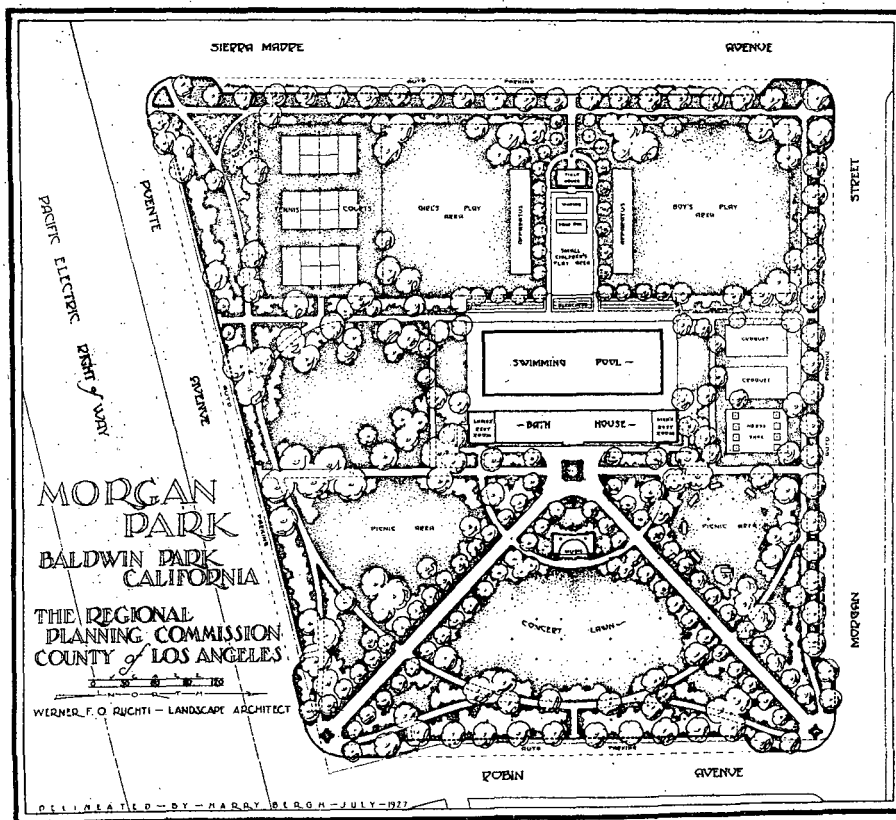
This seems like a long process to decide upon a location for one building, in itself apparently a simple matter. But such work can not be done hurriedly. There can be no positive assurance as to the most fitting location of a single unit until all the possibilities of the whole area involved have been studied and a complete plan worked out. The result then is a dependable design rather than a hasty answer to the immediate question. It shows not only the correct location of one building but that of all other future buildings, highways, drives, walks, approaches, drainage channels and parking spaces. Wasteful patchwork and the reconstruction of misplaced units are eliminated.

An important part of the Commission's program is the development of a comprehensive park and parkway system. At this time the County has no parkways, although their immeasurable value has long been recognized. In the eastern and midwestern states park and parkway programs come second to none in planning procedure.



A comprehensive development plan of a complex problem involving the relationship of park & river development, highway & railway concentrations.

# LANDSCAPE DESIGN



Calling a ribbon of pavement with a little planting on either side a "parkway drive," however, does not make it one. A parkway must have design and parklike character with a liberal amount of land reserved for planting. The width may vary from 200 feet upward to where in some instances it may be wide enough for recreational uses. Such a treatment is illustrated in the drawing on page 27. Because of the beautifully matured planting around the historical old Gage adobe, the location was ideal for a park to be designed as a feature of the proposed parkway along the Rio Hondo. This is merely one example of the many possibilities the Commission has in view for the treatment of property adjacent to stream beds as an integral part of the general plan for the park and recreational needs of the County.

Equally important are small community parks, such as Morgan Park shown above. In this case, public spirited citizens in an unincorporated community consulted the Commission for aid and advice. The area, as in most such cases, was small; the features desired were many. By proper design, it was possible to demonstrate that an area even so limited in size (less than eight acres) can be so developed as to serve for both rest and play without sacrificing charm and beauty.

## LANDSCAPE DESIGN

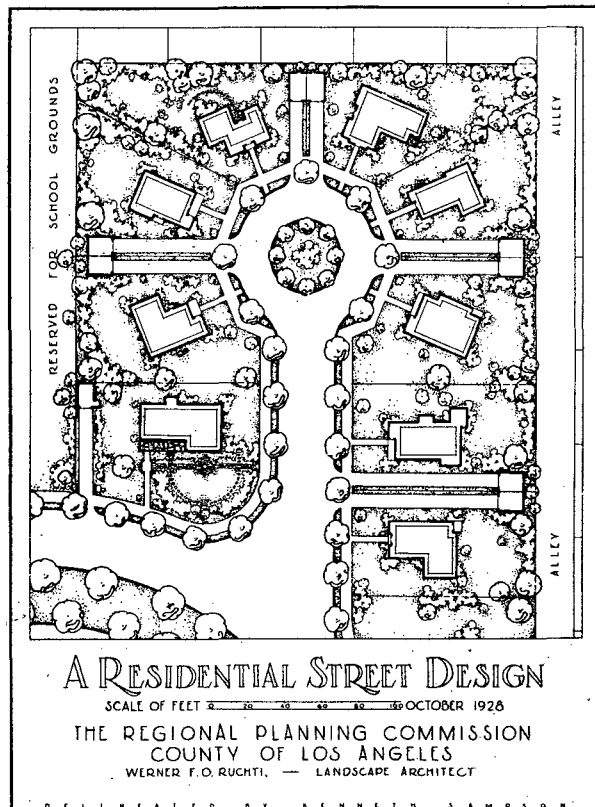
The value of care in design is also illustrated in the treatment of small odd-shaped areas occasionally left over in the process of land subdivision. One such case, where it was impossible to extend a local street into adjacent property, is illustrated opposite.

The circular treatment makes the lots more desirable to live on than if the street had been carried straight ahead to the property line, and lends itself to an effective and artistic planting scheme. The park-like effect produced provides a pleasant prospect for the surrounding homes and an attractive termination of the vista. The irregular shape of the lots makes possible greater individuality and charm in planting, walks and garden features, and in the architecture of the homes.

Similar thorough methods are used in attacking all problems of design. An example of an entirely different sort is the Los Angeles Civic Center Street Plan produced in this office. This plan, shown on page 17, was officially adopted by both city and county authorities on December 5, 1927.

These are but a few of the many problems which arise in Landscape Design. Landscape beauty is a treasure well worth its cost. As a region passes from its natural state and becomes intensively occupied there is a tendency to neglect or abuse certain parcels of land not readily adaptable to ordinary residence or business use. These spots by reason of the very quality which eliminates them from such uses are made available and often are ideal for certain special uses.

Thus a rough area impossible of subdivision becomes a charming natural park. A neglected stream provides inspiration for a winding parkway with its trees, walks or bridle paths. All these things serve a need in human life that nothing else can fill.

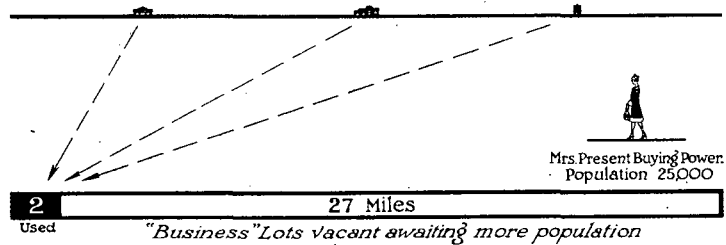


# V I S U A L   P R E S E N T A T I O N

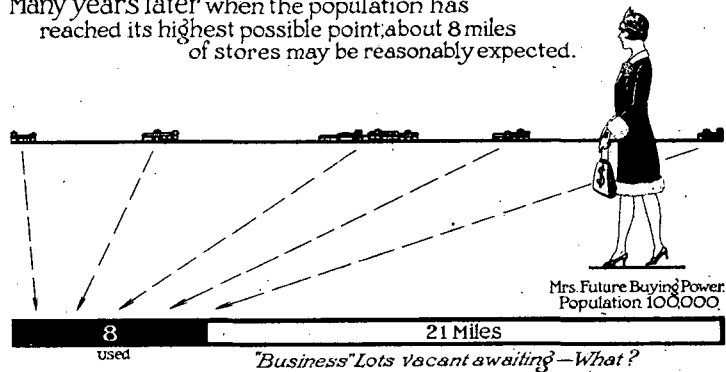
by FERD E. GRAMM  
Staff Artist

## IN A CITY OF 25000 POPULATION

If all the "Business" property on the market to-day were stretched out in a single street it would be 29 miles long -  
with only 2 miles in use!



Many years later when the population has reached its highest possible point, about 8 miles of stores may be reasonably expected.



But even then 21 miles of this "Business" property would still be idle.

## PURCHASING POWER ALONE CREATES BUSINESS VALUES

THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION  
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

## When it strikes Home ~ It's different

