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A GENERAL LAND USE PLAN FOR RALEIGH

A STUDY BY THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

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## A GENERAL LAND USE PLAN FOR RALEIGH

The General Land Use Plan presents an idea of how land should be developed around Raleigh in the future. It is a schematic plan of the future city. It is an estimate of what is expected of private development, more than it is a plan, because private development projects cannot be predetermined with any degree of precision either as to location or quantity. Its purpose is to provide a guide for correlating public and private development projects.

### Land Use Study

The General Land Use Plan For Raleigh was developed after a study was made of current land use practices and probable trends of development.

The Raleigh urban area was divided into districts called "Planning Areas". The number of houses in each area were counted and the land used for residential purposes was measured in typical areas. From this, the density of dwelling units for each planning area was determined. The vacant land in each planning area was then measured, and its probable use determined. The acreage that was expected to be used for residences, multiplied by the density of dwelling units expected per acre, gave the number of families expected in each area. From figures on the average number of persons per family, the total population for each planning area was computed. Added together, as shown in this plan, they comprise an urban area of from 125,000 persons to 150,000 persons, depending upon the completeness of development.

### Assumptions

A plan of this nature must be based upon several assumptions. The first assumption is that Raleigh will continue to be a governmental and educational center, but that industry will develop and become increasingly important. Second, is the belief that the city will continue to grow around the periphery with some increase in density near the center, and some movement of population out of blighted areas.

A third assumption is that the current practice of requiring sewers where city water lines are extended, will be continued. The area shown on the map is an area which will be accommodated by a single city sewerage system. The entire area drains naturally to the location of the proposed sewage disposal plants.

A fourth assumption is that State owned lands will remain as they are. Since so much land west and south of Raleigh is in State ownership, any substantial change in the status of that land will alter considerably the land use pattern of the city.

Fifth, is the assumption that effective planning practices will continue to be pursued. Zoning, subdivision standards, street and park planning, urban redevelopment, and other urban growth policies will all have to be studied, kept up to date, and pursued in a positive manner.



### Planning Principles

The planning principles which have been followed in arriving at this layout have been expressed before.

First is the recognition of this as a Capital City. Therefore it must be spacious and attractive. This calls for many parks and low density development. It also calls for State activity in planning future State buildings; policy which is being considered by the State at this time.

A second principle - striving for a balanced economy - requires the allocation of space for industrial and business uses as well as expansion of government uses. Industrial sites are shown on the plan.

Thirdly, the plan endeavors to preserve the natural assets of the territory. This is principally a matter of utilizing the topography to best advantage. The plan shows how the streams can be used to advantage as parks and "public corridors" for roads, sewers, and drainage. If they are not kept open and free of buildings, they will be perennial sources of trouble.

A fourth principle is that modern cities should not compound human congestion. This is fundamental to all city planning in the world today. In two words, it means "spread out"! A spacious city is safest in war and most satisfactory in peace. It requires a low density of development with open space around each building, and public open spaces planned throughout the area where physically possible and economically feasible.

Principles of community development were followed in the spacing of new residential areas. Each area can develop into a community of from 3000 to 5000 population, capable of supporting community schools, shopping centers, etc. Each community is bounded by a park strip wherever possible. This serves several purposes, not only as recreation space, but also as a buffer against industry, or as a place for sewer and water trunk lines and arterial streets,

### Arrangement of Land Uses

In this general plan, land uses have been simplified into three general categories: residential, commercial (including industry & business), and permanent open spaces (including institutional and public).

Most of the present residential growth is between state owned lands on the southwest and Crabtree Creek on the northeast. State lands and the creek have served as barriers to expansion, and partly for that reason the city has grown mostly to the northwest. Because of the difficulty of spanning these barriers with water and sewer, residential development will probably fill in the open spaces to the barriers first and then jump over them. The pattern of development within the barriers is pretty well fixed, but open lands beyond the barriers, should be developed as wholesome residential communities, with reservations made for schools, parks, shopping centers and other community needs. The plan shows such development, with park strips along the streams acting as boundaries for the communities. Raleigh is fortunate in having a natural topography which can be used in this way. Such opportunities should not be squandered.



Raleigh is also fortunate in being able to have industrial areas in three separate locations outside the present city limits. These locations are west on Route 1, south on Walnut Creek, and northeast along Crabtree Creek. All of these are served by railroads and highways. They will be satisfactory locations for businesses and industries which do not need to be near the center of the city. Those which do need to be near the center of the city can be located in the Pigeon House Branch valley and in presently blighted areas along the railroads. The distribution of industries in several locations makes them more accessible to employees and to commercial traffic both, thereby reducing the probability of traffic congestion in any one locality. This arrangement gives a distribution of commercial land which will serve the needs of the city, and will not damage any residential areas except those in Smoky Hollow and around Cannister Street which were poorly built to begin with and should be redeveloped for commercial use.

Permanent open spaces are a very important part of this plan. It is not too late to keep Raleigh a beautiful city. However, once the opportunity of using the streams as permanent open spaces is lost, Raleigh will be just like any other ordinary city, characterized by an unbroken urban sprawl from one end to the other.

The plan shows how a "green belt" can be created using House Creek on the west, Crabtree Creek on the northeast, Walnut Creek on the southeast, and State owned lands on the southwest. These, and other park strips shown, will serve more than one important function. They are not intended to be idle open spaces. They will become "public corridors" for the city - just as hallways are public corridors for a building. First, they are corridors for drainage, because they are the natural drainage courses. They will always be drainage courses, and as the city grows they will carry a greater volume of water. They must be kept open and free of buildings. A second function will be to serve as the natural locations for the huge sewer collectors which will have to be laid to serve the new sections of the city. Thirdly, they are excellent locations for the parts of a circumferential belt route which will not only help to carry highway traffic around the city, but will help carry the local traffic which will be generated by the new industries and residential communities. Finally, they will serve as a locus of parks to satisfy the recreational needs of a larger city: the level grounds can be used for playfields, winding routes can be constructed for bicycle paths and bridle trails, and the roads will become parkways as well as highways. At certain spots, dams can be constructed and ponds created, if the streams are cleared of pollution. There is a dearth of natural bodies of water in the vicinity of Raleigh, and lakes made accessible to the public are badly needed.

All of these are opportunities which must be seized before it is too late. As private development encroaches on these barriers and squeezes them from both sides, the opportunity will gradually slip away.

#### Work to be done

This is only the beginning of a land use plan, in a generalized and schematic form. It must be corrected and refined. It is being presented at this time for two purposes: one, to serve as a basis for criticism and study by city officials and citizens alike, and secondly, to serve as a guide for development of the city until a more specific plan is developed.



① HIGHWAY AND PARK SYSTEM ALONG THE CREEKS

② STATE OWNED LANDS

③ RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITIES

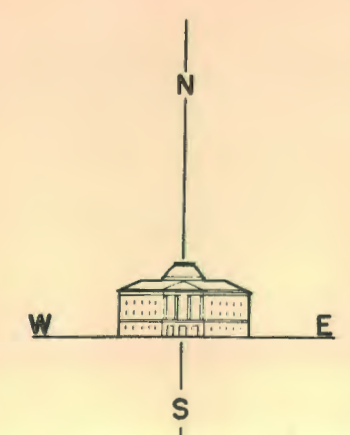
④ STATE FAIR GROUNDS

⑤ STATE CAPITOL

⑥ INDUSTRIES AND WAREHOUSES

⑦ SHOPPING CENTERS

⑧ DOWNTOWN BUSINESS CENTER





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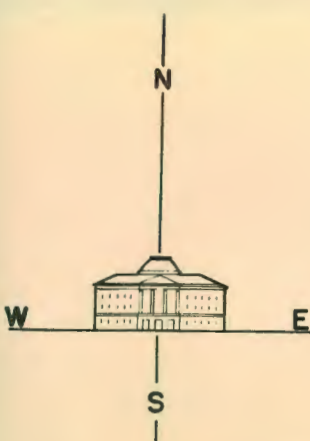
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RESIDENTIAL AREAS  
COMMERCIAL AREAS  
STATE AND INSTITUTIONAL  
AREAS  
PUBLIC PARK SYSTEM

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RALEIGH, N.C.  
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION  
AND  
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING



BASE MAP DATE JUNE 29, 1950 FILE NO. 7004  
LAND USE MAP JAN. 12, 1951 FILE NO. 7025



LEGEND

- RESIDENTIAL AREAS
- COMMERCIAL AREAS
- STATE AND INSTITUTIONAL AREAS
- PUBLIC PARK SYSTEM

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