



Capitol Planning Commission History

By Brian Brown, 2005

Organization and Functions

The Capitol Planning Commission consisted of nine members as established by ORS 2796.030. Three are public members appointed by the Governor for terms of 4 years. The other members consists of the Mayor of the City of Salem, the Chairman of the Planning Commission of the City of Salem, the Director of the Executive Department, and the Director of the Department of Administrative Services, or their designees. The President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, or their designees serve as advisory members without vote. The Commission employs an executive director and such clerical assistance and professional consultants as are required.

The purpose and policy of the Commission is to establish a long-range plan for development of the Capitol Area and areas in and around the City of Salem in Marion and Polk Counties, and to coordinate the acquisition of real property, construction of buildings, layout of streets and landscaping the grounds in these areas. Duties of the Commission include studies of building needs for state agencies in and around Salem, adaptation of standards for development, and implementation of the proposed plans.

The Capitol Planning Commission is funded by a continuous appropriation from the Department of Administrative Services Operating Account to the Capitol Planning Commission Account. In 1949, when the Commission was formed, the total appropriation was \$1,000. In 1985 the fund's equity was over \$50,000. For the 1995-1997 biennium, the commission was authorized to spend \$211,426 for operating procedures.

Administrative History

Planning and development of the Oregon State Capitol Mall was begun when fire destroyed the previous Capitol Building on April 24, 1935. Responsibility for planning and reconstruction of the Capitol was assigned to the State Capitol Reconstruction Commission which sited and approved plans for the present Capitol Building completed in 1938. The Board of Control assumed the duties of the Reconstruction Commission when it was dissolved in 1939.

Growth of state governmental functions in the decade following the rebuilding of the Capitol Building indicated the need for planning and development of an expanded Capitol area. To accomplish this purpose, the Capitol Planning Commission was established as an advisory body in 1949. The original bill designated that the Commission:

Shall consist of seven members, appointed by the Governor, one such member shall be from the membership of the Oregon Chapter of the American Institute of Architecture; one shall be from the faculty of the Oregon State College Engineering School; one shall be from the membership of the Salem Long-Range Planning Commission; and two members shall be appointed from the state at large.

The terms of the original seven members were determined by lot and the members were to serve without compensation.

The Act (Chapter 375, Oregon Laws 1949) declared it to be:

The purpose and policy of the State of Oregon to establish and effectuate a long-range plans of development of the Capitol Area in the City of Salem, ...and to coordinate the acquisition of real property and the construction of buildings by the State of Oregon, the laying out of streets and the landscaping of grounds in such area. The purpose of such plan - to enhance and preserve the beauty and dignity of the Capitol Area and permanently secure such area from commercial industrial encroachment.

The first problem before the new Commission was to establish the extent of the Capitol Area. While the original legislation was specific in intent as to accomplishments within the Area, no definition was provided as to size or shape. It was an early duty of a subcommittee to formulate Area boundaries, which recommended boundaries in an east-west direction extended from 13th Street to Cottage Street between Court and State Street and in a north-south directions from Court to D Street between Capitol and Winter Street. The recommendations were unanimously adopted by the Commission in November 1949. As soon as the delineation of the area became public knowledge, difficulties with property acquisition appropriations in 1951 limited such acquisitions to Union Street on the north. Finally in the 1957 legislative session the Capitol Mall Area was extended to D Street on the North (O.L. 1957, ch.377).

At its inception the Capitol Planning Commission was advisory only and sought cooperation with those agencies having authority for action. The City of Salem was cooperative and as a result of studies 1949 and recommendation in 1950 the Salem Planning and Zoning Commission gave consideration to zoning protection for the Capitol Area and the fringe around the area. In 1953 Salem Planning Ordinance Number 4578 was adopted which provided zoning protection within the delineated area and listed variances in existence at the time of adoption. Agreement was reached between the Salem Planning and Zoning Commission, the State board of Control, and the Commission for referral procedures in case of variance requests. In 1959, legal action was initiated by property owners within the Capitol Area challenging the legality of the zoning ordinance.

From 1949 until 1951, problems of policy, land areas, zoning and organization occupied the attention of the Commission. In mid-1951, first considerations were given to long-range development in the form of a master plan. Between 1951 and 1955, details of procedure for the formulation of the plan were discussed with various consultants and legislators. A "scope and nature" report was prepared as a guide for arrangements for professional architectural service in

developing a study. In 1956 arrangements were concluded with the architectural firm of Wilmsen and Endicott of Eugene to conduct the study.

Within the next two years the architects and Commissioners came up with more than a dozen basic schemes which were rejected in whole or part. A final plan was reported to the Commission, adopted and published in 1958 as the Master Plan Oregon State Capitol Group. After a period of re-evaluation, there resulted in a Revised Master Plan which was adopted by the Commission in 1963. In the years after its publication of the original master plan the Commission concluded that a revision was desirable to meet certain criticisms, particularly of its feature calling for underground parking in the Mall area and closing of Chemeketa to traffic.

In the following years, the Commission considered and approved matters relating to the construction of the Labor and Industries Building (1963) and the Agriculture Building (1966). The Commission was active in the restoration of the Capitol area and Wavery Park after the Columbus Day storm in 1962. After Willsdon Park was transferred to the State of Oregon from the City of Salem, Waite Memorial fountain was reconstructed and the park re-landscaped. The Commission approved plans for the construction of the Employment Building in 1972 as well as reviewing numerous plans for remodeling projects, including the State office Building and the Supreme Court Building, the Capitol Building, PUC (Public Utility Commission) space in the Public Service Building, and the Workmen's Compensation offices in the Labor and Industries Building.

In addition to the Capitol Mall as defined above, the Capitol Planning Commission has responsibility for planning of other buildings and facilities adjacent to the Capitol mall which are known as the "Capitol Group of Buildings." These include the State Accident Insurance Fund Building located in the Pringle area of the Urban renewal Development completed in 1974. In 1971 the duties of the Commission had expanded to include all state buildings in Salem (O.L.1971, ch.639).

In 1973 the Commission received legislative authority as a permanent state agency, whose power was no longer advisory but charged with statutory authority. The membership of the Commission changed to nine members, qualifications for membership were received, and a full-time executive directory was authorized (O.L.1973, ch.129).

The Commission has been involved in review and approval of the following buildings or projects: Capitol Wings Addition (1976); Salem Motor Pool Building (1978); Executive Department Building (1979); State Printing Plant (1980); Revenue Building (1981); and the Veterans' Building (1984). In keeping with the intent of the preliminary statement of the Commission in 1949, virtually all property within the Mall Area has been acquired by the state for future development.

During the 1980s, a main task of the Commission was to the update and revision of area plans for state-owned land. In the 1983-1985 budget period the Oregon State Hospital and Penitentiary Plan, the Oregon State School for the Deaf Area Plan, the Maclaren School Area Plan, the School for the Blind Area Plan and the Fairview/Hillcrest Area Plan were revised. The

Capitol Mall master Plan is currently undergoing a major update process and the State Fair Master Plan is scheduled for review.

The Commission conducted an annual evaluation of the state buildings needs in the Salem area. The study assists the Commission in continuing to perform, its responsibility for review of capitol construction and improvement projects and to provide recommendations to the Executive Department.

The Commission has been involved in many diverse issues during the present budget period including the renovation of the "J" Building at the Oregon State Hospital, and a proposal to include the Oregon State School for the Blind within a national Historic Precinct.

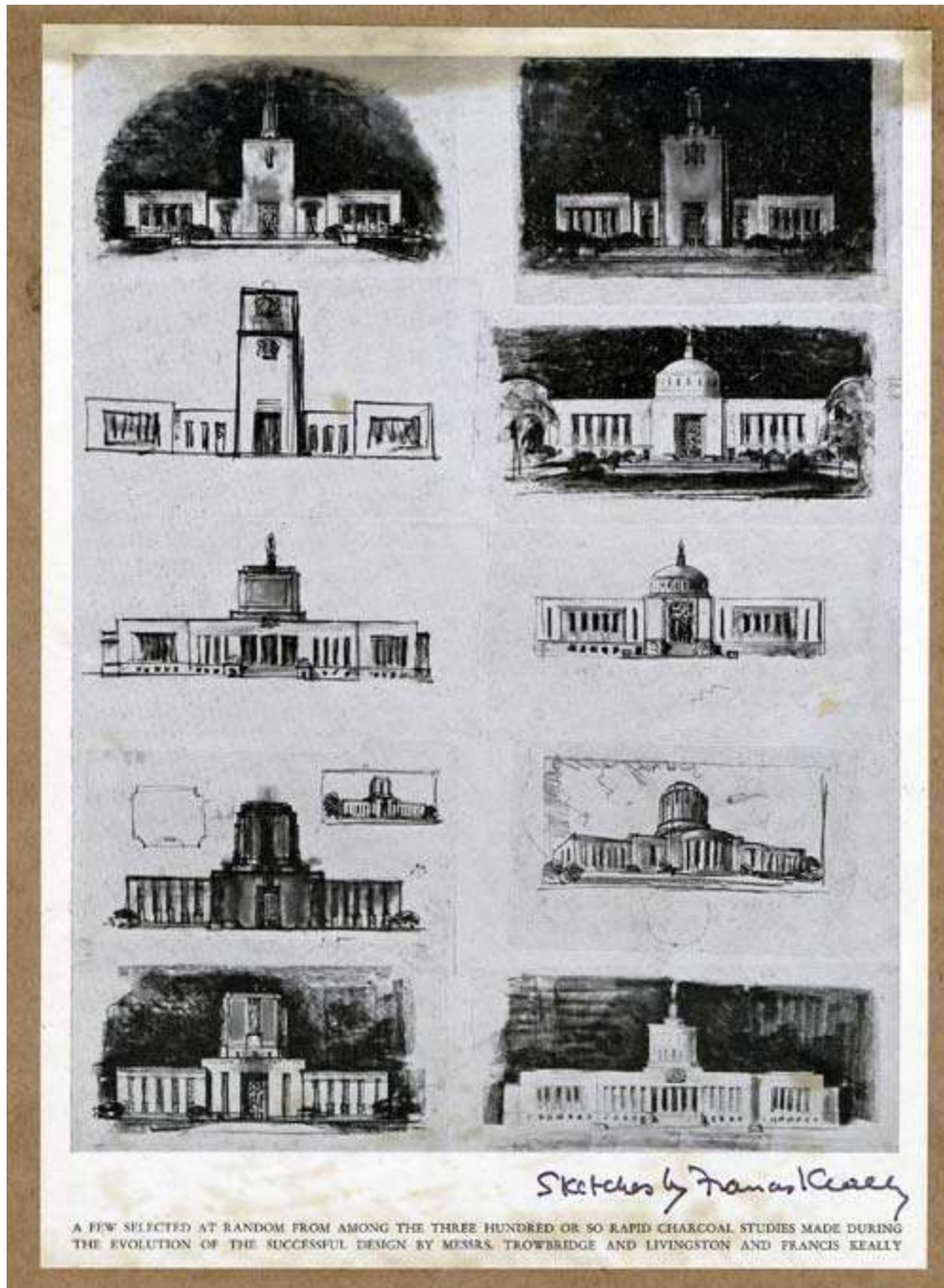
In the fall of 1986, the Commission recommended an allocation of funds to begin the initial planning of a new Archives building. In June of 1988 the Commission approved the Capitol Mall site for the Archives building location; by the fall the Commission approved the Department of General Services (now Department of Administrative Services) budget requests for the construction of the Archives building and agreed that the proposed building conformed to the Commissions Capitol Mall plans.

The Commission, in December of 1992, adopted a new version of the Capitol Mall Area Plan created with major revisions to the 1988 revision of the 1981 plan. The Commission in 1996 adopted "New Development Policies" of the North Mall. A Task Force in June 1998 presented to the Commission a report to advise on the revision of the adopted Master Plan for the State Hospital and Penitentiary Area.

A House Bill from 1999 (HB 2743) modified the purpose of the Commission to include: the coordination the disposition of state-owned real property in the metropolitan capitol area; the coordination the disposition of state property that is located in the area plan adopted by the Commission; the investigation of reductions in state buildings and grounds and approve proposals from state agencies that pertain to reductions in state buildings and grounds.

In 2002, the application process for new building projects is formalized between a state agency applicant, the Capitol Planning Commission, and the local jurisdiction within which the project is located.

In 2003 the legislature (HB3597) voted to suspend the activities of the CPC for two years until June 30, 2005). The budget note accompanying the budget report of the bill directs the Capital Project Advisory Board (CPAB) to adopt the Department of Administrative Services requirement for a public review and advisory process for all capital projects. During the suspension, Temporary Rule 125-125-0050 effective from April 21, 2004, provides guidelines for CPAB operations.



These sketches were created by Francis Keally as part of a competition for a replacement to the Oregon State Capitol that burned in 1935. (Capitol Planning Commission Records)