

# IMPORTANCE OF CITY PLANNING MOVEMENT BEING RECOGNIZED

## Interest in Making Provisions for Nashville's Rapid Growth Spreading.

### Lewis T. Baxter Makes Report to Board of Trade on National Conference.

### Plans Should Be Made for a City of 500,000 Population—Advantages.

The movement looking toward making immediate plans for the development of Nashville along modern lines, with civic centers, more attractive parks and boulevards, symmetrical building arrangements and architectural perfection, is growing rapidly, and a number of the leading citizens have become very active in forwarding the movement in an aggressive manner. A typical evidence of this interest in planning for greater things for Nashville is shown by the report of Lewis T. Baxter to the Board of Trade Thursday night, in which he outlined the work of the last national conference on city planning held in Chicago and gave suggestions for applying the progressive principles to Nashville. His report was, in part, as follows:

#### MR. BAXTER'S REPORT.

"As a member of the committee appointed by your organization I attended the fifth annual conference on city planning held at Hotel La Salle in Chicago May 5 and 7. I regret that the other members of your committee could not attend and that no members of this large committee appointed by the mayor of Nashville were present at this conference, for it proved to be not only very instructive and interesting, but it represented one of the greatest factors relating to city development and beauty now in existence.

"Fully 100 of our most progressive and larger cities were represented by able lawyers and engineers in this country and men who are absolutely at the head of their professions. In addition, every phase of professional and business life was there—lawyers and physicians, retired business men and men in active control of some of the largest industrial concerns—men whose work in beautifying cities has received deserved recognition from other cities than those in which they live; men who have planned city improvements in Chicago, Kansas City, New York, Philadelphia, Buffalo, Seattle, St. Louis and scores of other cities, and have successfully worked out the hundreds of questions which necessarily arose in carrying out their plans.

#### SCOPE OF THE WORK.

"The work of these not only included the general plan of saying where civic centers should be, how many and of what kind the new buildings should be, the class of architecture to be adopted, what new streets, avenues and boulevards should be made, what streets should be widened or straightened, where and of what area the parks should be laid out, and how beautified, where the playgrounds, swimming pools, golf links and ball grounds should be; but also the more difficult problems as to how the money necessary should be raised, and plans for the fair and equitable distribution of the assessments on the adjacent properties; beautified, extending to the various streets parallel to and crossing the streets and boulevards to be created anew or widened and straightened. The ingenuity and labor displayed in arriving at some of these conclusions brought forth applause from one of the most intelligent audiences I ever saw.

"There were scores of maps hung on the walls of the immense audience chamber, showing the plans adopted by various cities in America and Europe and carried out. Other showed plans suggested or adopted which had been worked on

—plans which showed beautiful small parks, lakes, playgrounds and circles which formerly were the worst spots in these cities; which showed beautiful effects where formerly the unsightly river banks looked very much like those of our own Cumberland between our bridges. One instance might be mentioned of Schenectady, N. Y. There an ugly gulch about 125 feet in width and 80 feet deep and two blocks long, where formerly one feared to go, has been spanned by light bridges of great architectural beauty, while the bed of this gulch has running through it a boulevard, on both sides of which are flower beds, shrubbery and shade trees and through which the pedestrian is invited to stroll in perfect safety.

#### A POWERFUL FORCE.

"Few know how great a power for good this conference is, and how great a force it is in making our cities not only more beautiful but much more healthful because of the effect it will have in making such attractive spaces in our modern cities.

"The general idea of those in this movement in city planning is for each city to adopt a plan best suited to its needs and topography—one looking forward for fifty years as each city grows larger, and work toward the completion of that plan, and at the same time look also to the demands which commerce and business have a right to make.

#### WHY NOT HERE?

"Almost all of our progressive cities have either adopted plans for such future development or are considering this most important matter. Why should not Nashville take up this matter without delay and employ some competent landscape gardener and architectural engineer to study our location and its surroundings and formulate a plan for the beautiful city of 500,000 population which we must have here some time in the future? Let them now come and see the glorious possibilities of this beautiful spot in 'the dimple of the universe.' Let them show us what we should do to accommodate this much greater population and give plenty of space in our streets for rapid transit of every kind; tell us how our unsightly neighborhoods may be turned into places of beauty; lay out playgrounds for the children of this and coming generations; point out new locations for parks, and tell us where and how many boulevards are necessary to connect the new and the present beautiful-parks.

#### THE BOULEVARD BEAUTIFUL.

"And when the central portions of our city have been studied thoroughly let them go further into our suburbs and lay out for us that future Highland Rim road which will pass from the Hermitage over the Overton, Harpeth and White's Creek hills and return through the Maplewood section and that wonderfully beautiful natural park—Shelby Park—and along the banks of the Cumberland. I doubt if one could find a more delightful drive of thirty miles in any part of the United States than this would be. This certainly from this Highland Rim road could be seen one of the fairest and most fertile sections in America.

"I cannot close this report without urging the Nashville Board of Trade to take this matter of a plan for beautifying Nashville up without delay, and seriously urge its many advantages upon our city

authorities and all our citizens. If this is done now it can be done at much less expense than hereafter, when impediments may be in the way, and it will save us from many mistakes which otherwise may be made.

"The fact that the Board of Trade believes such a plan now necessary and that its members approve of taking active steps at present will make it a live question, attract the attention of our people, bring on discussion of it in our daily press, and by an educational campaign hurry the plan to a successful completion. Few things this board can do would arouse as much enthusiasm at home or advertise our city abroad so favorably. We have all the material for the work. Nature has wonderfully blessed us in this respect. She has painted a glorious panorama on our hills and valleys. We ought at least to furnish a suitable frame for this unrivaled picture."