In March 1912, members of Seattle’s city council presented to the voters a city plan prepared by the engineer Virgil Bogue. Like Daniel Burnham in his planning for San Francisco, Bogue thought big in his efforts to remake Seattle. The Bogue Plan envisioned a metropolis of one million, a city with four times the population Seattle then possessed. The plan encompassed harbor improvements, major changes in the city’s street and transportation systems, the building of a civic center in a new part of town, and the construction of an extensive park and boulevard system. Altogether the Bogue Plan embraced an area of 150 square miles. One of the more detailed city plans drawn up in the Progressive Era, the Bogue Plan was highly engineered, offering technical solutions to many of the problems of growth.

The experiences of Seattleites with the Bogue Plan reveal a great deal both about the origins, development, and demise of city planning movements in the Progressive Era. Seattle’s planning drive, like those in San Francisco, Oakland, and Los Angeles, had varied origins. More than in the planning campaigns in California,
however, professional architects and engineers led the initial phases of the planning movement in Seattle. Nonetheless, business groups were important from the first and grew greatly in importance as Seattle’s planning campaign progressed. Although Seattle’s business organizations could agree on a general need for city planning, they were deeply divided on its specifics. Those divisions, together with cleavages separating business bodies from other groups in Seattle, prevented the adoption of the Bogue Plan. While significant portions of the plan were put in place piece-meal, the plan as a whole failed to secure approval. The defeat of the Bogue Plan, like that of the Burnham Plan in San Francisco, illustrates well the limits of Progressive-Era planning in a pluralistic society.¹

Parks and Expositions

As was the case in Oakland, the initial impetus for planning in Seattle revolved around creating a unified system of parks and boulevards.² Seattle acquired its first public parks during the 1880s, and in 1888 a three-man park board was set up by the city government to administer them. In 1892 E. O. Schwagerl—a professional engineer, architect, and landscape gardener—became Seattle’s first superintendent of parks. Schwagerl had helped landscape the Paris Universal Exposition in 1867 and the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876, had drafted the plans for park and boulevard systems in Cleveland and St. Louis, and had worked on cemetery designs in a number of cities.³

Shortly after assuming his duties in Seattle, Schwagerl put forward a plan for the construction of a system of parks and boulevards throughout the city. Central to his plan was a “continuous boulevard, from 150 to 300 feet wide” encircling Seattle from north to south. From the “grand drive” smaller boulevards and parks would branch off at various points. Schwagerl argued for the quick adoption of his plan on economic grounds. He claimed that with the construction of the boulevard surrounding Seattle “a large area of now useless land would immediately become the property of capitalists, whose sagacity would at once lead them to

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make improvements in conformity with the plan decided on by the municipal authorities, and a fresh and promising field would thus be opened for enterprise and the profitable employment of labor.”

Schwagerl revealed his ideas at a meeting sponsored by the Seattle Chamber of Commerce in September 1892. Attended by “representative business men and leading citizens of Seattle,” the gathering heard Schwagerl outline “his comprehensive plan for a system of parks and boulevards” and listened to Seattle’s mayor speak “very forcibly in favor of it.” Over the next few years the city’s park commissioners pressed for the adoption of Schwagerl’s scheme. In doing so, they broadened their arguments to include a mixture of aesthetic, moral, and economic claims—foreshadowing many of the arguments used by Seattle’s city planning proponents in the early twentieth century.

Matters of civic pride and economic development headed the commissioners’ list of the reasons why Schwagerl’s plan should be implemented. Parks were needed for Seattle to take its place as a major American city and as the leading city of the Pacific Northwest. The commissioners often spoke of “the necessity for the City of Seattle to avail itself of the prerogative found indispensable in other cities, of having its system of parks and boulevards.” They frequently commented upon “the enormous importance of a proper system of parks” to Seattle whose “destiny” was to be “the metropolis of the North Pacific coast.” Moreover, like Schwagerl, the commissioners believed that parks would spur Seattle’s economic growth. Parks would boost real estate values by attracting “a swarm of people of all trades, professions and vocations” to Seattle. Even more importantly, parks would attract capital necessary for Seattle’s economic growth, for, the commissioners bluntly stated, “park cities become centers towards which money tends.”

More was at stake than economic growth, for Seattle’s aesthetic and social development was, the park commissioners believed, also involved. After noting that “the natural verdure around Lake Washington is still in its maiden beauty,” they warned that unless actions were soon taken, areas suitable for parks and boulevards would be irretrievably lost to the woodsman’s axe and urban expansion. Such an eventuality would be most unfortunate, the commissioners continued, for parks were much more than simply beautiful ornaments for a city. Like park proponents in Oakland,
they saw parks as an uplifting moral force. They claimed, “There is probably no factor among civilized nations that ranks so high in the real education and refinement of the masses generally as public parks and grounds.” Parks, they continued, “cleansed the mind, [and] so purified the life and rescued the family from the slums and the degradation to which they were formerly tending.” Parks, in short, would be of “incalculable importance . . . in humanizing and refining the community.”

Despite the prevalence of such sentiments, little immediately came of Schwagerl’s ideas. New parklands continued to be acquired, but no comprehensive park and boulevard system resulted. Seattleites were too preoccupied with more pressing concerns involved in building their city—regrading hills, laying water and sewer lines, and extending streets—to construct Schwagerl’s unified scheme of parks. Schwagerl’s plan simply appeared too far-reaching for Seattle’s resources. As Schwagerl himself admitted in 1894, at a time when Seattle was wallowing in the trough of a nationwide business depression, “the general plans proposed during the past two years have proved to be so comprehensive and vast in extent as to render commencement along these lines too difficult for the present.” Despite repeated pleas from Schwagerl and the park commissioners that “some system should be adopted at once,” little of significance was accomplished until the twentieth century.

Finally, in 1903, acting upon the recommendations of the park commissioners, the city council invited John C. Olmsted to visit Seattle and design a system of parks and boulevards. A landscape architect from Brookline, Massachusetts, John C. Olmsted was a son of Frederick Law Olmsted and was by this time well known in his own right throughout the United States. After coming to Seattle several times, Olmsted prepared a plan quite similar to Schwagerl’s earlier one. Olmsted’s plan consisted of a boulevard system twenty-four miles long linking parks throughout Seattle. The boulevard would extend along Lake Washington from the city limits on the south to the grounds of the University of Washington on the north, joining the Bailey Peninsula (now Seward Park), Madrona Park, and Washington Park. From the university, the boulevard would turn inland to link Ravenna Park, Green Lake, Woodland Park, and the Fort Lawton Reservation with Smith’s Cove on Elliot Bay. Subsidiary boulevards would join yet other parks to the system, which would encircle much of Seattle.
Seattleites responded favorably to Olmsted's plan. In October 1903, the city council officially adopted it, and between 1906 and 1912 bond issues totaling $4 million to implement the plan won public approval. By 1913 much of Olmsted's scheme had been put in force. Twenty-five parks, twelve playgrounds, and twenty-five miles of boulevards lay within Seattle's boundaries.10

Several reasons accounted for the success of Olmsted's plan for Seattle. Many Seattleites simply desired to live in a beautiful city with improved recreational facilities. Economic factors also spurred the swift implementation of Olmsted's plan. By the early 1900s, Seattle had recovered from the hard times of the 1890s and was in a period of rapid economic growth. As a consequence, its citizens could better afford the costs of developing a park and boulevard system. Businessmen in particular came to view parks as an investment that would attract settlers and businesses to their city, thus ensuring Seattle's future growth. Social factors also help explain the favorable votes of some Seattleites. Olmsted called for the building of playgrounds in working-class areas as a way of bringing vaguely defined citizenship values to their residents. Middle-class professionals joined businessmen in praising his proposal for the playgrounds as "nurseries of good citizenship" and "cradles of democracy" in which children of all backgrounds could mix and grow into "beautiful manhood and womanhood."11

Two business-dominated groups were especially important in backing the park movement. Like many reformers in the Progressive Era across the nation, members of those groups believed that by changing their environments, the character of people could be altered for the better. The Seattle Recreation and Playgrounds League was one such group. Middle-class businessmen and professionals, many of whom were active in political reform movements in Seattle formed the organization in 1912. They argued that parks and playgrounds should be supported as a way "to encourage and foster all recreation and play which will add to the health, happiness and moral uplift of our people" while at the same time "discouraging and aiding in surpressing those amusements which tend to deprave."12 The Seattle Playgrounds Association, a similar organization established four years earlier, called for more parks and playgrounds because of "the known effects of play upon normal growth and health, as a preventive of crime, as cheaper in dollars and cents than their alternatives—jails, police,
and hospitals—and as a Citizen Maker through the ideals of fair play and social cooperation inculcated under the stress of action in organized games of the playground.\textsuperscript{13}

Given the varied motives for support, it is not surprising to find that all of the park and boulevard bond issues passed by two-to-one majorities. Of more interest is that while the issues did particularly well in middle-class suburbs, they faced rougher handling in blue-collar wards. The Ballard and Wallingford districts, for instance, often gave them only close favorable votes or actually defeated them. The workingmen living there could see little immediate advantage in the creation of an elaborate and expensive park and boulevard system and may have objected to the implications of social influence inherent in the scheme.\textsuperscript{14}

Even as his park and boulevard plans were meeting with success at the polls, John Olmsted was called to Seattle to plan a new campus for the University of Washington. In mid-1903 he was asked to take charge of “the improvement of the large university campus in harmony with the proposed system of parks.”\textsuperscript{15} Olmsted’s campus plan, drawn up over the next two years, stressed the need for comprehensive preparations. Olmsted decried the tendency of university officials to follow a “hand-to-mouth policy” of piecemeal building and called upon them to follow a “comprehensive, systematic and well-organized arrangement of numerous buildings . . . embodying certain general principles and ideas.” Specifically, he wanted the erection of “imposing and monumental” buildings on an “important and imposing site” and the replacement of native evergreen trees with deciduous ones, because he thought that wild evergreens would be “incongruous with the formal buildings.” Connecting the buildings of the campus to each other and to Seattle’s park and boulevard system would be a symmetrical pattern of walks. Linking the campus to Seattle via parkways would, Olmsted hoped, elevate the tone of student life by ensuring “direct communication with the greater part of the existing and future residential districts of the better class of the city.”\textsuperscript{16}

It was on the campus grounds that Seattle’s business and political leaders sponsored a world’s fair, the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition, in the summer of 1909. The inspiration for this exposition came initially from a group of Alaska’s gold-rush pioneers who desired to establish an Alaskan exhibit in Seattle, which they did in 1905. Support for something larger began in 1906, when fifty
Seattle businessmen, mostly merchants, formed an exhibition company. The company sponsored the fair three years later. Business leaders viewed the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition as a major advertisement for their city, a lure to attract capital, industry, and commerce from around the nation.  

As in the case of park development, more was involved in the exposition than economics, however. Like Olmsted’s plans for parks and boulevards and the new university campus, the fair served as a model for planning. The exposition company hired the Olmsted Brothers firm to design the fairgrounds. Showing more sensitivity to the natural environment than he had in his plans for the university campus, John Olmsted produced a plan that took advantage of its natural setting. He oriented the central portion of the grounds and buildings along a major axis that opened onto a vista of Mount Rainier. Secondary axes provided views of Lake Union and Lake Washington. Nearly four million people came to the exposition, and the fair left many with a sense that planning could improve their environment. At the conclusion of the exposition, the Seattle Chamber of Commerce called for the construction of a Museum of Arts and Sciences as “a natural outgrowth of the exposition” and urged the creation of a Fine Arts Association to work for civic improvements in Seattle. The chamber also persuaded the city council to allocate funds for the preservation of the beauty of the fairgrounds and for their integration into Seattle’s park system.

The Municipal Plans Commission

The park and exposition campaigns led some Seattleites to begin thinking of additional ways to improve their city. In the early 1900s, the Washington State Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (WSCAIA) took its first steps to promote civic improvements. Composed mainly of Seattle architects, the WSCAIA had been formed in 1894 and acted as a catalyst in the emerging campaign to improve Seattle. In the opening years of the twentieth century, the WSCAIA sponsored an exhibit demonstrating advances being made in city planning in Washington, D.C., pre-
pared revisions to the city’s building ordinances, and worked with business groups to promote their products throughout the Pacific Northwest. 20 Civic pride lay behind many of the activities. For instance, in early 1907 the WSCAIA joined with the Seattle Manufacturers’ Association to call for the construction of a new city hall because “the needs of the City of Seattle demand the construction of a City Hall worthy of the city.” 21

From those beginnings, the WSCAIA moved on to propose revisions to Seattle’s city charter creating an office of the superintendent of buildings separate from the city’s board of public works and the formation of a commission composed of professional architects and builders to advise the city council on “matters pertaining to municipal improvements which involve artistic consideration.” In making those proposals, the WSCAIA cooperated closely with business groups in Seattle—the Chamber of Commerce, the Manufacturers’ Association, and the Commercial Club—and with labor organizations, the Building Trades Assembly, and the Master Builders Association. 22 Backed by Seattle’s newspapers as a way “to meet the progressive needs of a growing city,” the proposals easily won approval by large margins at a city election in 1908. 23

Spurred on by their success, in January 1909 members of the WSCAIA conferred with representatives of improvement clubs and with members of the Pacific Northwest Society of Engineers, a well-established organization of building engineers and architects. In the words of Charles Bebb, the president of the WSCAIA, they discussed “ways and means for procuring a comprehensive plan for the future development along civic lines of the City of Seattle.” Noting that Washington, D.C., Cleveland, Boston, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and other cities across the nation had become deeply involved in planning, Bebb argued that Seattle had to follow suit or fall behind its more progressive counterparts. The time to begin, he thought, was now. Seattle was still young enough to accomplish a great deal. Seattle was not as built up, as fully developed, as most eastern cities and thus offered more scope to planners. Planning was needed, Bebb argued, “so that the future development of the city shall not be left to haphazard and chance growth and that the public may be assured that all the money that will normally be spent each year for improvements will be spent with farsighted wisdom.” The scheme would not be
“new or visionary,” he stressed, but “a practical reality” similar to what was being adopted in cities across the nation. From that meeting came the formation of a Municipal Plans League one month later.\textsuperscript{24}

The Municipal Plans League spearheaded the growing planning campaign in Seattle. The league called for the preparation of a city plan encompassing street and transportation improvements, new harbor facilities, the construction of a civic center, and further work on parks and boulevards for Seattle.\textsuperscript{25} In the fall of 1909, league members held several meetings with members of business groups. Finally, in late November the Municipal Plans League, the WSCAIA, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Commercial Club jointly endorsed a resolution drafted by architect Carl Gould, who belonged to the WSCAIA, served on the executive committee of the league, and had worked with Daniel Burnham on his plan for San Francisco. The resolution called on the city council to place before the voters a city charter amendment setting up a commission of three experts to draft a plan for Seattle. They were to be advised by twenty-one Seattleites representing the city’s business and labor organizations. The city council agreed to the request.\textsuperscript{26} Having achieved unity of purpose among themselves, Seattle’s architectural and business organizations next had to convince their city’s voters of the need for city planning.

Planning proponents emphasized economic arguments in seeking approval for a Municipal Plans Commission. In the words of George Walker, a lawyer deeply involved in the campaign, planning, far from being expensive, meant simply “taking things as we find them and planning wisely, conservatively, and economically.” Moreover, noted Walker, “there is competition among cities just as there is in other lines . . . the city that is up-to-date and modern leads . . . others fall behind.”\textsuperscript{27} As Walker’s arguments suggest, perceptions of urban rivalry played a significant role in motivating those favoring planning in Seattle. Members of the WSCAIA urged the establishment of a planning commission in part because “the City of Portland is moving to the same end and there is the possibility of our suffering the chagrin of seeing a smaller city occupy our natural position of the leading city of the Northwest.”\textsuperscript{28} W. Marbury Somervell, a leading Seattle architect, summarized many of the economic reasons put forward in support of planning:
It is not enough to tell the taxpayer that he should have a more beautiful city, but to show him conclusively that beauty and hygiene, and all that goes to make a city useful and attractive, mean simply unity of purpose... Visitors are impressed; and the municipality is advertised; trade is attracted by the increase in population and more amenable conditions of life; values quickly increase with better trade, and at the same time the [tax] rates are kept at a lower level.\textsuperscript{29}

Social and moral factors also influenced advocates of planning. Gould hoped that planning would promote "the cause of civic unity."\textsuperscript{30} The Reverend Mark Mathews, a well-known Protestant minister and a fiery advocate of moral reform in city politics, may have had the same thing in mind when he called for the establishment of the planning commission because "the improvements of the city ought to have in view the whole city, and the city ought to be developed as a whole."\textsuperscript{31} Similarly, the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, a leading newspaper, backed the creation of a planning commission so that "Seattle may grow along definite and harmonious lines."\textsuperscript{32}

Business and labor organizations jointly backed the proposal. Members of the Chamber of Commerce and the Commercial Club pushed for it, observing that "the plans are not necessarily for immediate fulfillment, but are to serve as a guide for years to come."\textsuperscript{33} Numerous neighborhood improvement clubs, now linked in the Federated Improvement Clubs, came out for it. The Workingmen's League, a body of unionized workers formed to support labor candidates for city offices, pressed for the measure "to create a better understanding in the minds of the public as to the future development of a great city." The president of the Seattle Central Labor Council urged workers to stand "shoulder to shoulder" with their city's business organizations in backing the measure.\textsuperscript{34} Important political support came from R. H. Thomson, Seattle's city engineer. Thomson had won local acclaim for reshaping Seattle by lowering its hills, which had stood as formidable barriers to the city's expansion. As Thomson later noted, "I put in a great deal of labor in securing this Municipal Plans Commission."\textsuperscript{35}

Favored by a broad spectrum of business, professional, and la-
bor organizations and facing no organized opposition, the city charter amendment setting up a Municipal Plans Commission won a resounding victory at the polls, passing by a margin of 13,852 to 7,371 votes. At that time, nearly all Seattleites could agree that city planning could be beneficial. Inspired by the development of their parks and boulevards and by what they had recently seen at the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition, they hoped to create an improved urban environment.

A strong progressive movement was developing in city politics, and city planning became loosely associated with progressivism. In Seattle progressivism came to revolve around two major clusters of issues: first, whether Seattle should have a “moral” government embodying values of hard work, temperance, and the abolition of vice and, second, whether the city’s public utilities, including street railroads, should be municipally owned. The twin issues of moral reform and municipal ownership merged in 1911 when the city’s mayor, Hiram Gill, was recalled from office. Gill had championed Seattle as a “wide-open” town, even to the extent of directly involving the city government and city funds in the building of a gigantic house of prostitution. At Gill’s direction, the city council rerouted streets and granted a franchise to a new street railroad line to serve the bordello. Like members of San Francisco’s Union Labor party, Gill and city councilmen associated with him were also suspected of taking numerous bribes from private street railroads and other utility companies in return for giving them franchises.

To combat “Gillism,” a group of middle-class businessmen formed the Public Welfare League at a meeting sponsored by the Commercial Club in 1910. The members thought Gill’s actions were creating an unsavory national image for Seattle and that that image was retarding economic growth by scaring away businessmen and capital that might otherwise move to Seattle. Gill was, one of the league’s petitions claimed, “a menace to the business enterprises and moral welfare” of Seattle. Gill badly misjudged the changing desires of most of Seattle’s businessmen. In an address to the Chamber of Commerce in April 1910, he discussed what he viewed as the proper relationship between government and business:

I recognize, first and foremost, that men are in business with one primary aim, to make money. They are not running their
businesses to display pretty show windows, keep their sidewalk clean, or improve the ethical tone of the community. Their primary object is to get the dollar into the cash register, and because it is the businessmen who make the prosperity of the city, I believe the city government should do all in its power to help the businessmen get the money. . . . A "City Beautiful" will be encouraged so long as it is a "City Practical" and a "City Economical."\textsuperscript{39}

Such appeals, which had been persuasive in earlier times, no longer sufficed. Seattle was no longer a frontier outpost, and its business leaders wanted national recognition and continued growth for their city. Gill was an anachronism who would have to go. In a hotly contested election in 1911 the league succeeded in removing Gill from office by convincing many of Seattle's prosperous workers, as well as the city's burgeoning groups of middle-class businessmen and professionals, to vote against him. Only less-prosperous, downtown workers and the business leaders who benefited directly from Gill's political favors supported him. This was the zenith of progressivism.

As in San Francisco, Oakland, and Los Angeles, city planning became partially linked to progressivism in Seattle. Many of the same people, especially middle-class businessmen, supported both movements. Many of those joining the Public Welfare League and an earlier reform group, the Municipal Ownership Party (established in 1905), were also active in the Municipal Plans League, which pressed so strongly for the creation of the Municipal Plans Commission. Moreover, many of those same Seattleites became members of the Municipal League, a body of middle-class businessmen and professionals organized in 1910 to work for a broad spectrum of progressive reforms in the city government.\textsuperscript{40} Businessmen supported reform politics and city planning for many of the same reasons. They wanted to improve Seattle's image nationally and on the Pacific Coast, thus allowing Seattle to attract new immigrants, business firms, and capital. Moral and social issues also ran through both movements. By closing down Seattle's "restricted area" of saloons and gambling houses, and by backing city planning measures, many Seattleites, again especially middle-class businessmen, hoped to
create a homogeneous society open to their values and way of life.

Shortly after Seattle's 1910 municipal elections, at about the same time that the campaign to recall Gill was beginning, the Municipal Plans Commission took form. As stipulated by the city charter amendment, the commission consisted of twenty-one members: three city councilmen, the city engineer Thomson, a representative of the King County commissioners, a member of the board of education, a member of the park board, and fourteen citizens chosen by business, labor, and architectural organizations. The fourteen citizens included representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, the Manufacturers' Association, the Commercial Club, the Seattle Real Estate Association, the Waterfront Owners, the Steam Railway Companies, the Seattle Clearing House Association, the Central Labor Council, the Carpenters Union, the WSCAIA, and the Pacific Society of Civil Engineers.41

Unlike the situation in San Francisco where the AAISF operated separately and independently from the city government, the Municipal Plans Commission was, by the city charter amendment, part of the city government in Seattle, if only for a limited time. Although differing in their official roles, the two organizations were similar in their functions. Both were only advisory; neither could mandate actions for their city governments to follow. Before being put into practice, their recommendations had to be approved in city elections. Businessmen, especially merchants, were active participants in both bodies, for through them they hoped to work out their planning desires.

The Municipal Plans Commission moved quickly to select the three experts who would undertake the actual planning. A committee composed of Thomson, C. J. Smith of the Chamber of Commerce, and Frank Mullen of the city council initially considered five planners, landscape architects, and engineers. Disregarding its original charge to choose three experts jointly to prepare a plan for Seattle, the committee picked Virgil Bogue to assume command of the preparation of the entire city plan by himself. Bogue had been contacted initially to undertake only the planning of new streets and harbor facilities. He accepted the position in September, 1910 in return for a salary of $1,500 per month.42
The Bogue Plan for Seattle

Bogue was particularly well qualified for the engineering tasks at hand. A graduate of the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Bogue had worked briefly for F. L. Olmsted, Sr. He had then gone on to design a route for the first railroad to cross the Andes and had located the Northern Pacific Railroad’s route through the Cascade Mountains just east of Seattle. Perhaps most significantly, Bogue had, as a consulting engineer to the King County Board of Tide-land Appraisers, drafted a plan for the development of Seattle’s harbor in 1895. Although sixty-four years old in 1910, Bogue was full of life and eager to accept new challenges.43

Bogue probably owed his choice to Thomson, Seattle’s city engineer. Both men had the same mentality. Thomson was an engineer with little feeling for Seattle’s topography. Rather than work with them, Thomson preferred to level Seattle’s hills by using hydraulic cannons to wash them into Puget Sound. As the historian William Wilson has observed, “Thomson’s sympathy with the natural environment was limited to allowing water to run downhill.” 44 Bogue thought in the same way; and it is no surprise that, while the report he ultimately drafted was in some respects an engineering marvel, it took little account of the topography of Seattle’s natural features. Although most Seattleites were pleased with the choice of Bogue, not all were. The members of the WSCAIA initially felt a sense of betrayal, for Bogue was too much of an engineer and not enough of a planner for their tastes.45 Perhaps because of such feelings John Olmsted was retained, after further negotiations, as a consultant to advise Bogue on parks and boulevards.46

Bogue came to Seattle to begin his work in September 1910. Upon his arrival, Bogue emphasized that planning would foster Seattle’s growth in the most economical way by eliminating waste in general and by aiding in meshing the city’s street system with its harbor facilities in particular. True to his engineering background, Bogue was especially happy to find that Thomson’s work in regrading hills and laying out new streets could be incorporated directly into his planning ideas.47

The actual work of preparing the city plan proceeded rapidly,
given the magnitude of the task. Assisted by a few close subordinates, Bogue was in overall charge of the planning effort. However, the twenty-one-member Municipal Plans Commission, now divided into committees dealing with specific topics, remained important. Both Bogue and the commission also frequently conferred with the WSCAIA, the Pacific Northwest Society of Engineers, the Chamber of Commerce, and other business and professional bodies. Private citizens—Joseph Blethen, the editor of the Seattle Times, Edmund Meany, a well-known professor of history at the University of Washington, and George and C. A. Kinney, prominent real estate men with interests in the southern end of the downtown district—also received hearings from committees of the commission. After the appropriate committee of the Municipal Plans Commission dealt with a particular topic, the matter was referred to the commission as a whole and to Bogue to ensure that specific decisions would fit into the plan Bogue was drafting for the city. Considerable local input from organized groups went into the preparation of the Bogue Plan, in marked contrast to the way the Burnham Plan was prepared for San Francisco.48

Central to the Bogue Plan were transportation improvements. Most important was the creation of a system of arterial highways and radial streets, adjusted only slightly for Seattle’s hilly topography, to speed the flow of traffic around Seattle’s congested business district and to connect a proposed civic center with the rest of the city. A new Central Avenue would form a north-south axis for Seattle’s revised street system. It would extend from the established downtown district to the civic center just southwest of Lake Union, then continue along the west shore of Lake Union and run in a northerly direction past Green Lake to the county line. Numerous tunnels would slice through Seattle’s hills to facilitate traffic movement between previously separated parts of the city. The plan also made detailed recommendations for the location of steam railroad lines, including the construction of a new union passenger station several blocks north of the proposed civic center, the construction of a ninety-one-mile-long rapid transit system, and the extension of interurban and ferry service to link Seattle to its surrounding area. It included recommendations for electric street railroads to connect Seattle’s increasingly dispersed neighborhoods with its downtown district, proposed civic center, and waterfront.49
Harbor improvements also attracted great attention from Bogue and the Municipal Plans Commission. Seven one-thousand-foot piers would turn Harbor Island, at the time undeveloped mudflats at the south end of Seattle’s port on Elliot Bay, into a major commercial complex. Two fifteen-hundred-foot piers would add to the importance of Smith’s Cove at the northern end of Elliot Bay. In between those complexes two systems of docks—one for ferries and Alaska steamers, the other for Seattle’s fleet of small ships plying the waters of Puget Sound—would transform the central waterfront. Lake Union and the southern end of Lake Washington were slated to become industrial areas, while the northern end of Lake Washington was designated a residential and vacation region.\textsuperscript{50}

To serve as the focal point for Seattle, Bogue designed a civic center to be located several miles north of the established business district at the intersection of Fourth Avenue and Blanchard Street. The area was just being made accessible by Thomson’s leveling of Denny Hill. Bogue believed the site possessed a number of advantages over a downtown location: the availability of relatively cheap land, a location near what he thought would be the future center of Seattle’s population, and easy transportation access to the rest of
Virgil Bogue’s plan included a new civic center; this view looks south along the proposed Central Avenue. From the Bogue Plan for Seattle.

the city. Bogue called for a six-building center grouped together in an imposing manner and having impressive views of Mount Rainier to the south and the Olympic Mountains to the west.51

Finally, the Bogue Plan envisioned a system of parks, boulevards, and municipal ornaments for Seattle and the surrounding region. For the most part, Bogue followed Olmsted’s ideas within Seattle’s city limits. Outside of Seattle Bogue desired the creation or improvement of twenty-two parks ranging in size from 15 to 475 acres, partially linked by boulevards and parkways. Municipal decorations—concourses, esplanades, the beautification of traffic intersections, and a tall obelisk facing Puget Sound at Duwamish Head—would further enhance Seattle.52

Bogue and the members of the Municipal Plans Commission hoped their plan would both foster Seattle’s economic growth and unite the city spatially. Improvements in the city’s harbor and
transportation layouts and the meshing of those two systems would, they anticipated, put Seattle ahead of its urban rivals as the Pacific Coast’s commercial and manufacturing center. After noting that Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, and Portland were all planning major harbor and transportation improvements, Bogue warned that unless Seattle responded to those challenges the city would “surely fall behind other competitors for the accumulation of worldwide trade.” Speed was essential, Bogue contended, in light of the imminent completion of the Panama Canal. Transportation improvements were needed, not simply for their economic stimulus, but also because they would bring Seattle’s rapid spatial expansion under control. The arterial highways and the unified electric street railroad system would, planning advocates thought, tie together Seattle’s various neighborhoods.53

The civic center and the parks were also intended to be unifying forces. Bogue and the members of the Municipal Plans Commission believed that an impressive civic center would inspire Seattleites with a sense of common purpose very similar to the civic patriotism that James Phelan had hoped planning would bring to San Francisco. At the civic center “large gatherings of citizens” could congregate for “pageants and for the formal reception of delegates from other cities or foreign countries.” The civic center would mold personalities along useful paths. After observing that “environment in youth has enormous influence on the personal and civic education of future citizens,” Bogue applauded civic centers for their ability to uplift the minds and spirits of urbanites.54 The same concern for a united populace imbued with common values motivated Bogue’s desire for a park and boulevard system. Like John C. Olmsted and his supporters, Bogue declared that parks and playgrounds would instill citizenship values in Seattleites:

The taxpayer now knows by statistics of unquestioned accuracy that the maintenance of places of healthful exercise, amusement, and self-improvement for those who would otherwise pass their formative years in adverse, and possibly degrading circumstances, is more profitable than that of reformatory institutions for children and penitentiaries for adults. . . . At least a three-fold benefit accrues to the public
from the development of public playgrounds, viz.: the arrest
of disease and vice, a constantly decreasing prison-roll, the
preparation of useful, law-abiding citizens. . . . Those who
learn to play well will be more apt to work with a purpose.\textsuperscript{55}

The Bogue Plan dealt with many facets of Seattle's develop-
ment; it was much more than simply a scheme for the city's beau-
tification. More of an engineering document than the Burnham
Plan for San Francisco or the Robinson plans for Oakland and Los
Angeles, the Bogue Plan was particularly detailed in its analysis of
the harbor and transportation needs of Seattle. Yet the Bogue Plan
had shortcomings. Like most city plans drafted in the Progressive
Era, it said little about the housing needs of most people. Moreo-
ver, the proposals for transportation improvements rode rough-
shod over Seattle's hilly terrain and would soon be made partially
obsolete by the widespread adoption of the automobile.

The Fight for the Bogue Plan

Bogue presented his completed plan to the Municipal Plans
Commission for that body's final approval in August 1911. With
only three negative votes—cast by members representing the city
council and the county commissioners, who may have been wor-
bried about the cost of implementing Bogue's ideas—the commis-
ion accepted the Bogue Plan. The commission then submitted
the plan to the city council with the request that it be embodied in
a city charter amendment for public ratification in the March 1912
city election. Should the charter amendment pass, city officials
would be required to follow the Bogue Plan as a mandatory guide
in laying out the future development of Seattle. The city council
agreed to place the Bogue Plan on the ballot. With its work seem-
ingly complete, the Municipal Plans Commission disbanded in
late 1911.\textsuperscript{56}

Many business, professional, and labor bodies found immediate
praise for the Bogue Plan. The secretary of the Chamber of Com-
merce observed that "the great cities of the future will not be
creatures of chance. Early preparations will smooth the way and hasten their advancement." Bogue's ideas, he concluded, represented "excellent progress" particularly because "Bogue has always kept in mind the minimizing of expense... so as not to saddle the community with an unwieldy burden."57 Members of the WSCAIA, who had harbored doubts about Bogue, now applauded his "sincere appreciation of the needs for a comprehensive plan" and elected him as an honorary member of their organization.58 Thomson, Bogue's initial sponsor, called his work "most excellent."59 The Seattle Central Labor Council, the powerful clearinghouse for Seattle's strong craft unions, commended the plan and allocated a small sum to help publicize it.60 Nonetheless, opposition to the work of Bogue and the Municipal Plans Commission materialized even as the Bogue Plan was being prepared. Although planning advocates were able to defeat the early threats to their ideas, this opposition boded ill for the adoption of the Bogue Plan.

Most serious were challenges from businessmen desiring to have Seattle build a new city hall at the south end of the city's established business district rather than to the north as specified in the Bogue Plan. By 1910 the city government had outgrown its old headquarters. The city council placed on the ballot—the same one that presented the proposal for a Municipal Plans Commission to Seattleites—a bond issue to purchase land for a new city hall site at Third Avenue and Yesler Way at the southern end of Seattle's downtown district. Those favoring the adoption of the Bogue Plan quickly rallied to oppose the bond issue.61

The campaigns for and against the bonds to buy land for a new city hall sorely divided Seattle's business community. On one level, the issue developed into a struggle between businessmen with real estate interests in the southern section of Seattle's downtown district and businessmen in other parts of the city. Those with property downtown desired the immediate construction of the city hall near their properties as a way of increasing their real estate values. Businessmen elsewhere in the city favored waiting until the Bogue Plan incorporating a new city hall as part of a civic center was drafted before reaching any decision. At a second level, the bond issue began dividing Seattle business leaders into those favoring a dense downtown of skyscrapers like New York (the southern downtown area was already heavily constructed and
could only grow up) and those who favored a more dispersed downtown area, with the city hall in a new part of town.\textsuperscript{62}

Poorly defined, those issues were only just emerging in 1910. While the Chamber of Commerce backed the proposal for the Municipal Plans Commission, it also supported the proposal to buy land for a city hall in the established downtown area. The bonds passed by a vote of 11,975 to 7,108.\textsuperscript{63} (Seattle’s bonds required only a simple majority favorable vote to go into effect.) Following up on their initial success, the south-end businessmen worked to win public approval for additional bonds to build the city hall on the land just purchased. However, opposition from the Municipal Plans Commission, the Municipal League, and some fifty improvement clubs and church groups defeated the proposed bonds in late 1910.\textsuperscript{64} A renewed attempt to commit Seattleites to a southern location for the city hall met the same fate in 1911. As Charles Allen, an architect who headed the City Plan Committee of the Municipal League, explained, the bonds “would jeopardize the integrity of the Bogue Plan” and should be killed. Members of the Municipal League, working with Seattle’s Ministerial Federation, an organization of Protestant churches, mounted a massive campaign against the bonds. They advertised in Seattle’s newspapers, distributed pamphlets denouncing the bonds, and spoke against them at numerous public meetings.\textsuperscript{65} Such opposition, combined with a willingness on the part of most Seattleites to wait and see what the Bogue Plan entailed, defeated the bonds.\textsuperscript{66}

With the conclusion of the votes on the city hall bond issues, the battle lines over city planning were drawn. Those favoring the Bogue Plan had demonstrated an ability to organize and turn back efforts to subvert it. They had not, however, yet shown an ability to win public approval for their specific planning ideas. The contests over the locations of the city hall were simply preliminaries to the main fight over the acceptance of the Bogue Plan as a guide for Seattle’s growth.

Planning advocates initiated their campaign for public approval of the Bogue Plan during the late summer and fall of 1911, with the Municipal League leading the fight. The league’s members spoke at meetings of local improvement clubs and sponsored mass rallies to publicize the plan. The organization financed the printing and distribution of ten thousand copies of the plan and
took out advertisements in Seattle’s newspapers in support of the
Bogue Plan. The WSCIA worked closely with the Municipal
League in providing lecturers for groups that wanted to learn
about the plan and set up exhibits about it at libraries and other
public places. Additional professional and business organizations,
most notably the Commercial Club and the Pacific Northwest
Society of Civil Engineers, worked for the plan.67

Those favoring adoption of the Bogue Plan stressed its antici-
pated economic benefits. They repeatedly argued that planning
would decrease the cost of providing public utilities and services
for Seattle, thus helping keep taxes low. In a well-worn claim, they
asserted that a planned city, in addition to being a functionally
integrated city, would also be a beautiful city; and they saw beauty
as having a definite economic value in attracting visitors and new
residents to Seattle.68

The transportation and harbor improvements of the Bogue
Plan won special praise as bound to spur economic growth. With
the completion of the Panama Canal approaching, Seattle’s plan-
ing advocates, like those in San Francisco, claimed that it was
necessary to rearrange their city’s port facilities and internal
transportation network to handle the expected increase in trade.
Failure to do so would, they warned, entail the risk of having that
commerce travel through the harbors of Seattle’s rivals, San Fran-
cisco and Portland. “Other cities on the Pacific Coast are spend-
ing millions to attract the commerce incident to the opening of
the Panama Canal,” reported the City Plans Committee of the
Municipal League. “What chance has Seattle in competition if it
does not plan for the proper utilization of its natural advantages as
a seaport?”69

A flyer widely distributed by the Municipal League during the
closing days of the campaign summarized the perceived economic
advantages of planning:

What the plan means:
1. Economy in transportation. We probably lose today
$500,000 a year in hauling freight over heavy grades—that
is, we lose interest on an investment of over $8,000,000.

2. The saving of the wasteful practice of doing work over
again when once done. . . .
3. Prevention of high rents in a monopolized business area. High rents increase the cost of goods to the people.

4. Prevention of congestion of business and traffic with its great loss in time and money to the travelling public and carriers of freight.

5. Taking the direction of the city's growth out of the hands of real estate speculators and putting it in the hands of the people.

6. The most efficient development of the harbor and the provision of factory sites . . .

7. The opening of Seattle to access by new railroads.

8. Decreasing the ultimate cost of necessary work by proceeding in a systematic manner instead of haphazard.

9. The making of a city beautiful as well as a city useful. As an advertisement alone the adoption of the plan would pay for itself many times.\textsuperscript{70}

While economic arguments dominated the presentations of those working for the Bogue Plan, social considerations were also important. Thomson, the powerful city engineer, lent his support because he thought the plan was needed "to produce a sanitary city" and to "so arrange the streets and parks of the city that there shall be the best opportunities afforded for light and air and the best opportunities afforded for the laborer to come quickly from his home to the places of recreation." Thomson also found praise for the civic center for bringing "culture and refinement" to workingmen.\textsuperscript{71} The City Plans Committee of the Municipal League anticipated that the plan would promote the cause of civic unity because it would "harmonize the conflict of purposes" and secure for the people "conditions adapted to the maximum of productive efficiency, of health and enjoyment of life."\textsuperscript{72}

Undergirding many of the arguments in favor of the Bogue Plan was the issue of civic pride, a desire on the part of planning proponents to see Seattle recognized as the premier metropolis of the Pacific Coast and as a leading national center. In an advertisement placed in Seattle's leading newspapers, members of the Municipal League noted that planning advocates in Portland were "united
toward making that city the tourist headquarters and convention
city of the Northwest as well as making it as attractive as possible
for its permanent residents." They urged Seattleites to counter
those actions by working "along the lines of public spirit, common
sense, and progress." Similarly, they observed that San Fran-
cisco's Board of Supervisors was supporting the building of a new
city hall and argued that Seattle's officials should do no less. By
the same token, an editorial in the Town Crier noted that, should
the Bogue Plan be implemented, "we would become the talk of the
country as having the most beautiful and useful civic center in
the world" and concluded that "the value of this as an advertise-
ment will alone be worth more than the cost of the ground and the
buildings." The secretary of the Municipal League perhaps best
summarized that type of sentiment when he called for a favorable
vote for the Bogue Plan, because "no obstacles should be allowed
at this time to cast their shadow before a city with a future, the
brightest of all, on the Pacific Coast." 

Businessmen owning property in the south end of Seattle's
downtown district mounted the most vocal and best organized
opposition to the plan. Their opposition reached a climax with the
formation in February 1912 of a Civic Plans Investigation Com-
mittee. The committee issued a widely read pamphlet that attacked
the Bogue Plan as too expensive, impractical, and inflexible. In
particular, the committee opposed the plan for placing the civic
center north of the established business area. To do so would, its
members claimed, upset the flow of business transactions and
impede Seattle's economic growth. As in the past, they pressed for
the building of a new city hall on the land the city already owned
in the southern section of Seattle's established business district at
Third Avenue and Yesler Way.

While downtown businessmen rallied most strongly against the
Bogue Plan, other groups and individuals opposed it as well.
George Cotterill—a well-known engineer who had worked on the
Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition and who ran successfully as a
reform candidate for mayor in 1912—had long supported the idea
of city planning but now came out against the plan as too rigid and
costly. In fact, considerable opposition developed among Seat-
tleites along the lines that the Bogue Plan, as a mandatory guide
for civic improvements, would prove inflexible and expensive.
Representatives of organized labor opposed the plan in part for
Virgil Bogue’s proposed civic center would have been constructed in a new section of Seattle. From the Bogue Plan for Seattle.

those reasons. The leaders of the Central Labor Council urged its members to vote against the plan. They believed it might prove be too difficult to alter in the future and they thought that the park and boulevard system should be developed separately from the plan.79

Some business organizations that had earlier favored the Bogue Plan saw less need for it in 1912. Of great importance in that regard were efforts to develop Seattle’s harbor.80 Intercity rivalry was of utmost significance. Perceiving that “it is useless to hope for great results from the opening of the Panama Canal unless the harbor is large,” members of the Portland Chamber of Commerce secured passage for a city charter amendment creating a Portland Commission of Public Docks in 1910.81 Authorized to sell up to $2.5 million in bonds, the commission opened the city’s first publicly owned docks for business in 1914 and 1915. Seattle’s business leaders were awakened by the challenge. “San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego, and Portland are spending millions of dollars in harbor improvements,” argued Seattle merchants. “Seattle must meet this competition.”82 The Chamber of Commerce, Commercial Club, and numerous neighborhood improvement clubs responded by successfully pushing for the passage of a $2.275 million harbor bond issue in late 1910. During the next two years those organizations won approval for the establishment of a Seattle Port Commission to develop their city’s harbor, together with additional bonds recommended by the new commission to build
up the harbor. The establishment of the Port Commission and the passage of the bond issues seemed to negate the need for the harbor proposals in the Bogue Plan.

Bereft of much of its former support and opposed by powerful individuals and organizations, the Bogue Plan went down to a crushing defeat at the polls. The final tally at the March 1912 election was 24,966 votes against the plan, with only 14,506 in favor of it. In none of Seattle's fourteen wards did the plan receive a favorable vote. As the vote favoring the establishment of the Municipal Plans Commission in 1910 had shown, most Seattleites approved of the general idea of city planning; but many of those same people voted against the Bogue Plan when they came to view it as threatening their specific interests. Downtown businessmen disliked the proposal to place the civic center in a newly developing area to the north, and other businessmen came to see the plan's harbor proposals as irrelevant or redundant. Labor leaders objected to some of the specifics of the plan.

Equally important was the feeling on the part of many that the plan was simply too rigid. The mandatory nature of the Bogue Plan set it apart from most city plans of the period, which were only advisory. Some members of the Municipal League—for instance, Carl Gould, who had watched the piecemeal defeat of the Burnham Plan in San Francisco—liked the mandatory feature of the Bogue Plan. Most Seattleites did not. They thought that aspect of the plan would deprive the city government of the ability to change with the times in planning for the future.

The matter of expense also troubled Seattleites. Planning advocates argued in vain that building a planned city would in the long run be less expensive than constructing an unplanned one. Typical of the many who called for the defeat of the Bogue Plan was one opponent who decided to vote against it because "Seattle has more immediate needs that should have the support of her energy and of her tax and bond paying powers. Let us have payrolls and health [a reference to the need for better water and sewer systems] now—luxury and art as we can afford them." Writing in the same vein was a Minnie Frazier, who described herself and her husband as "Independent, Non-Partisan, Insurgent Radicals." As she explained to Joe Smith, a reformist newspaperman and politician, "We shall vote No on Bogue Plans. No on Park Bonds. Luxuries can wait while necessities are lacking."
Their position was understandable. As a result of the efforts being made to regrade Seattle’s hills, put in new water and sewer lines, and build parks, Seattleites were heavily taxed. By 1915 Seattle trailed only San Francisco of all the major cities in the United States in terms of per capita revenue receipts and outlays.\(^88\)

In a sense, the defeat of the Bogue Plan mirrored the collapse of Seattle’s progressive movement. Just as most Seattleites could agree that city planning in the abstract was a good idea, only to vote against it when presented with a concrete planning proposal, so, too, did many Seattleites defect from the progressive campaign when presented with specific proposals that threatened to injure their individual interests. New issues arose after 1911 to drive a wedge between the prosperous workers and the middle-class businessmen and professionals, and by the First World War the city’s reform coalition had shattered and progressivism had died. In fact, Hiram Gill, who had been recalled from office in 1911, championed the cause of organized labor to win a stunning reelection as Seattle’s mayor in 1914.\(^89\)

### Later Planning Efforts

City planning and improvement efforts continued in Seattle after the defeat of the Bogue Plan but in less comprehensive forms. While some public attempts at planning continued, private work increased in importance. Moreover, whether public or private, the efforts became more limited in scope. The idea of overall city planning quickly eroded.

No sooner had the Bogue Plan been defeated than the struggle over where to build a city hall was renewed. Opposing groups succeeded in having the city council place two very different measures on the ballot in the fall of 1912. Businessmen from the south end of the downtown district pushed a proposal for a $950,000 municipal building-county courthouse at Third and Yesler. Members of the WSCAIA and the Municipal League countered with a proposition for a similar structure costing $1.4 million at the more northerly location designated in the Bogue Plan. The south-end businessmen formed a Public Buildings Improvement Association
to press for their location as the most economical and convenient. "The city needs factories and payrolls," the head of the organization argued, "and factories do not come to cities which waste their money and overtax their people." He concluded, "It is not classical art that has made for the greatness of the United States, it is commerce and industry."90

Those backing the northern location formed a Civic Center Association and responded by drawing a more positive connection between art and trade. One member of the Municipal League and the Civic Center Association observed, "I believe a few beautiful buildings grouped together would do more than any other single factor in attracting to Seattle the population which is now on the eve of moving to the Pacific Coast."91 Urging the passage of bonds for a city hall at the northern site, a leading member of the Chamber of Commerce noted that Seattle had recently lost a proposed Ford Motors assembly plant to Portland and predicted that "if Seattle will not plan ahead . . . she will lose out in scores of similar cases."92 Nonetheless, those favoring the northern location were on the defensive after the defeat of the Bogue Plan and proved unconvincing to most Seattleites. The southern site was chosen, and construction of the municipal building-courthouse was finished at that location in 1916.93

The final act of Seattle's prewar public city planning drama was played out in 1914. In that year the Municipal League spearheaded a drive to have the city build a large civic auditorium similar to the one being constructed in Oakland. Proponents of the auditorium claimed that it would place Seattle ahead of other Pacific Coast cities in attracting visitors and settlers and that it would help unite Seattle socially by providing an arena in which massive civic celebrations could be staged. By 1914 Seattle was in the grips of a recession, however. Most Seattleites, even some members of the Municipal League, thought that the proposed auditorium was an unnecessary luxury and defeated the proposal for it at the polls.94

With their failure to secure adequate backing for their public proposals, planning advocates explored private spheres of endeavor. During the summer of 1912, the Seattle Garden Club, the Real Estate Association, and local improvement clubs mounted a drive to clean up Seattle's vacant lots and plant them with vegetables. At ceremonies inaugurating the campaign, Mayor George Dilling and Mayor-elect Cotterill spoke favorably of the movement, and the pres-
ident of the Garden Club drove his team of blooded horses at the
plow. The Municipal League soon became involved in the campaign
because, as one member explained, "it is not just for respectable
people to be obliged to live next to a human pig-sty." The movement
waxed and waned over the next few years until the Garden Club
ended its active sponsorship in 1916, noting with satisfaction that
"indications of the activity of the club are apparent throughout the
city."\(^95\) Suggesting new directions that planning would take in the
future—a growing concern with social conditions—the Municipal
League also cooperated with the WSCAI\(A\) and the Seattle Central
Council of Social Agencies in trying to improve the quality of life for
Seattleites through various private associations.\(^96\)

By far the most comprehensive building actions involved the
University of Washington. In 1861 the university had received ten
acres of what would become the heart of Seattle’s business district
as a gift; and for years the university was located on that tract.
However, as the surrounding area became settled and developed,
the university moved in 1894–95 to a new site. Its present location
is on Lake Washington several miles to the northeast, where the
Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition was held. The move left the uni-
versity with the question of what to do with its downtown lands.
The university chose to keep and develop the property as a source
of rental income. Throughout the Progressive Era, the university’s
board of trustees worked with a private company, the Metropolitan
Building Company, to develop the university lands as a single
unit. A number of skyscrapers, most notably the White-Henry-
Stuart Building, went up on the land.\(^97\)

The coming of World War I halted attempts at comprehensive
city planning in Seattle. When planning was revived with the
creation of a City Planning Commission by the city council in
1924, the methods and goals of planners differed from those of the
prewar years. Planners in Seattle, as was true of those across Amer-
ica, were more concerned in the 1920s with zoning, as pioneered
in Los Angeles, and with the details of altering transportation
networks to meet the needs of the automobile than with creating a
functionally unified city.\(^98\) Virgil Bogue’s conception of a com-pre-
hensive plan for Seattle eroded.

Nonetheless, the Bogue Plan left a lasting imprint upon Seattle.
While never implemented in its entirety, the Bogue Plan had an
impact upon the city’s development. Numerous individual improvements, especially in parks, transportation facilities, and harbor facilities were made over the years. In fact, most of the park plans were ultimately implemented. Perhaps even more importantly, the Bogue Plan kept alive the concept of planning. When Seattleites considered planning anew after World War II, some looked back on the Bogue Plan favorably “as an instance of scanning the palm of an entire city and attempting to forecast its future existence.” In 1972 the head of the Seattle Department of Human Resources wondered in an article written for one of the city’s leading newspapers, if “in an age of subdivisions and domed stadiums, can we look back on the Civic Idea and not yearn for that nobler vision?”