ST. LOUIS—WHAT OF THE NEXT 200 YEARS?
St. Louis - What of the Next 200 Years?

Eldridge Lovelace, Partner
Harland Bartholomew and Associates

St. Louis is celebrating its 200th birthday, and birthdays are the occasion for congratulations when one is either very young or very old. A look backwards over the 200 years of varied history indicates some, but perhaps not many, reasons (in addition to survival) to justify the congratulations. The small village on the riverfront is now a great city in commerce and industry, if not in beauty and amenity. Strictly speaking, we celebrate the birthday of the City of St. Louis and those of us who live outside the 62 square mile corporate area are technically bystanders and observers and supposedly should not participate wholeheartedly. The City of London, which is more than 1900 years old, includes one square mile and a population of only 4,600 persons, in comparison with the metropolitan population of 10,830,000 persons, all of whom call themselves "Londoners". In the same manner, do those of us outside St. Louis, yet in the metropolitan area call ourselves "St. Louisans", and this older precedent suggests that we may be forgiven for doing so and joining in the bicentennial celebration.

The founders of the city no doubt were aware that they were locating a great metropolis, otherwise they would not have chosen the site with such care. Yet succeeding decades were more notable for the unbounded optimism with which the residents tended to the work of today, leaving the care for tomorrow in the hands
of the obviously beneficent providence, than for their vision or foresight. A solidly substantial economy was provided by an unimaginative but equally substantial populace. A city relatively undistinguished, except for a few places here and there, was built.

Changes in point-of-view appeared after the shock of the war between the States. In 1870, "St. Louis the Future Great City" was published. In 1875, a movement for civic reform resulted in the break-away between city and county, and the formation of an extraordinarily fine park system. In 1903, the Fair occasioned a real awakening. By 1910, one of the first Plan Commissions was established. By 1916 it had its staff and its young engineer, Harland Bartholomew, was to remain until 1953, becoming one of the most noted of American City Planners. From the work of this Plan Commission, we now have the network of wide major streets – Olive, 12th, Natural Bridge, Kingshighway, the Riverfront Memorial (first proposed in 1928), the Civic Center, the Mill Creek project, and possibly even the national program of urban renewal, really first proposed in the "Urban Land Policy" published by the St. Louis City Plan Commission in 1936. St. Louis is also the first city to have established city planning as an integral part of the municipal government and as a continuous process. The currently accepted municipal capital budgeting process was initiated in the St. Louis 1923 bond issue.

The new City of St. Louis rising around us is a dramatic and inspiring example of the efficacy of the continuous planning
process and of the ability of our democratic process to deal
with problems of the urban environment. We did not expect Stan
Musial to do more than hit once out of each three tries, and our
planning of course has not done nearly so well. For every major
achievement, there were a half dozen times when we swung and
missed and just stood there and watched the ball go by. Our poor
average results from our unwillingness to anticipate or accept
the automobile and its effect on the city; from our desire to
sweep under the rug severe social and economic problems occa-
sioned by both geographic and individual uneveness in distribu-
tion of regional wealth; and by our stubborn hold on an almost un-
believably archaic local governmental system.

The complexity of life is increasing in geometric propor-
tions. Social, technological, and economic changes, which seem
so extraordinary when the St. Louis of 1964 is compared with
that of 1764, will be much more far reaching between 1964 and
2164. Neither the present physical city which seems so solid
and substantial, or the present local political system which
seems so immutable will be able to withstand the forces of the
future. The prospects of the next two hundred years suggests
that the only valid assumption that we can make is that there
is nothing that we have now that won't be discarded and replaced.
(This excepts a few quaint relics preserved for their historic
value.)

In this connotation there is no value in talking of the 62
square miles that comprise the "legal" City of St. Louis. The
larger metropolitan area, at least the "Bi-state District" of 3,600 square miles - this is the true "city" that Laclede and Chouteau founded, and is the "city" to be concerned with when we try to look ahead 200 years.

The central location of St. Louis, bridging the industrial east and the agricultural midwest, halfway between north and south is a strategic one. At the confluence of the two great rivers, joined by a third, the Illinois, that seems small only when compared with the first two, and a fourth, the Meramec, the site is an extraordinarily fine one on which to build a great metropolis. The wooded hillsides and the great rivers are always pleasant, many times spectacular, in natural beauty. No city has ever been treated with greater injustice insofar as its climate is concerned. The few unpleasantly warm summer days are now mitigated by air conditioning. From the middle of September sometimes until Christmas we have a fall whose succession of pleasant days is accompanied by the spectacular beauty of the foliage on the hillsides. Winter days may be occasionally brutal, yet the winters are short. We can usually pick roses for the table on Thanksgiving and crocus is always in bloom for Washington's birthday.

Topography, location, and climate are all favorable to construction of an extraordinarily fine metropolis. All that is needed is sufficient human ingenuity to capitalize on these advantages.
The economy of the St. Louis Metropolitan Area is notable for its diversity. It is not based upon just "shoes and booze", but includes representatives of more code numbers in the Standard Industrial Classification system than any other major metropolitan area. Yet such diversity also represents maturity and with matur-
ity has come relative declines in vigor and in growth. In 1900, the metropolitan area was the fourth largest in the United States, By 1930 the rank was sixth and by 1960 tenth. Between 1930 and 1960 all metropolitan areas grew at an average rate of 31 percent per decade. For the St. Louis Metropolitan Area, the rate was a disappointing 10 percent.

St. Louis is the home location of industries of national and international economic significance - Monsanto and Anheuser Busch, for example. Yet others, such as Gaylord Container and Midwest Piping, have been merged into corporations directed from elsewhere and the cold hand of economic colonialism has been felt locally.

As newer cities pursue economic growth more aggressively, St. Louis falls behind. Smaller cities with tax inducements lure fragments of the economic base away and electric parts, for example, once produced here, are now produced in Arkansas. Part of this is due to a measure of artificial competition, it is true, but much is caused by the better economic climate, the better and cheaper living and working conditions in the smaller cities. The next 200 years are not likely to be so easy, econ-

omically speaking.
Within the metropolitan area itself the growth pattern of recent years has become an extraordinarily dispersed one. The automobile and the slowly emerging freeway system conspire to promote a vast scattering of the urban area. The Bi-state District (the City of St. Louis and St. Louis, St. Charles, and Jefferson Counties, Missouri, and Madison, St. Clair and Monroe Counties in Illinois) contain 3,800 square miles — sixty times the area of the City of St. Louis. Between 1950 and 1960, the City of St. Louis actually lost 103,000 persons, decreasing from 853,000 to 750,000 in the 10-year period. St. Louis County grew by 74 percent, St. Charles County by 76 percent, Jefferson by 81 percent, Madison by 21 percent, and St. Clair by 28 percent.

Cheaper land "out" or "far out" is more attractive. By highway or freeway it may be close in time to an already decentralized industry such as McDonnell Aircraft, R. C. Can, or the Chrysler Plant at Fenton. Shopping centers follow along. Social problems, higher taxes, obsolescence and blight of the central cities are avoided at the same time. The urban pattern explodes, scatters itself over a radius of forty to fifty miles. The greater part of the new growth goes into rural counties and townships poorly prepared and politically disinclined to deal with it. The more sophisticated political organizations in the central cities equipped to guide and direct urban development stand by helplessly while mistakes in land use and subdivision design and development are made daily, mistakes which we have known how to avoid for more than 30 years.
The dozens of new subdivisions on the outskirts are built-up with thousands of new homes, almost all of which are occupied by young families with many children of school age. Incorporated suburbs, fire districts, water districts are organized to provide the minimum of public services and facilities. School districts are organized, consolidated, arranged, and rearranged to accommodate thousands of children where there were but tens and hundreds before, and this in a society that has suddenly realized that education is the first essential to its survival and which, if it can help it, does not wish a second rate education for any of its children.

What to do? Attract a shopping center or better yet a big new industry to our school district and get them to take up part of our burden or, lacking that, attract some apartment units to be occupied by wealthy old taxpayers with few children or no children at all. With the urban area spilling far out into the rural countryside, and with the division of the area into fragments with few if any of the division lines following any kind of a natural or logical location, the result would appear to be a political system devised by a mad man. Each school district or suburb fights for the few "goodies" - the industries, the office buildings, or the apartments (all occupied by wealthy childless couples, of course.) in an attempt to strengthen its own particular tax base. Not only does the devil take the hindmost, but in due observance of John Donne's principal, takes the foremost as well.
Despite these efforts, a great disparity exists among the different parts of the metropolitan area. The commercial and industrial uses locate in response to over-riding factors of access and convenience. Income groups distribute themselves in accordance with home building and mortgage insurance practices, land values, and local zoning practices. Except for a relatively massive public housing program (6,893 dwelling units in St. Louis and 800 in Madison and St. Clair Counties in Illinois) housing for the lower income families is of a "hand-me-down" nature and is found in the older residential areas in the cities of St. Louis and East St. Louis.

In the Bi-state district in 1960 there were 551,000 families. Of these, 174,000 had incomes of less than $5,000 per year. There were 66,000 non-white families. Of these 46,000 or 70 percent, had incomes of less than $5,000. There were 90,000 families with incomes of more than $10,000 per year, 87,000 white and 3,000 non-white. There were 287,000 families with an income of between $5,000 and $10,000 per year - 270,000 white and 17,000 non-white.

Of the 66,000 non-white families in 1960, 48,000 were in the City of St. Louis and 12,000 in the City of East St. Louis; of the total of 174,000 families with an income of less than $5,000, 98,000 were in the Cities of St. Louis and East St. Louis; and of the 90,000 families with an income of more than $10,000 per year, more than one-half (49,000) were in St. Louis County and the number in St. Louis County were more than twice that in the City of St. Louis (21,000).
The disparity in income is indicated also by the welfare cases. In 1960, there was an average of about 37,000 children in the Bi-state area receiving Aid to Dependent Children. Of these, 25,000 were in the City of St. Louis. In the City of St. Louis, there was one ADC case for each 30 persons. This ratio was one to 38 for St. Clair County, one to 117 for Madison County, only one to 300 in St. Louis County, and only one to 243 in St. Charles County.

In the Kinlock School District in St. Louis County, the assessed value per child enrolled is $2,000; in Webster Groves it is three times that, but in Clayton the assessed value per child enrolled is more than four times that of Webster Groves - $38,000 per child; and Brentwood and Ladue average more than $20,000 per child.

There is a great disparity in economic level and ethnic character of the population in the various parts of the metropolitan area. The central cities seem to be developing into "welfare ghettos". Under current conditions, with the automobile and the freeway enabling so vast a dispersal of population, the unspoiled areas on the outskirts call those who can afford to go out there, and the grey areas of the central cities with their economic and social problems are left for those less able to contend with them. All of this has been said many times before. The point here, is that we will not be able to build a great metropolis over the next 200 years if we continue to follow this practice.
The problem that confound us are serious. They may be listed as follows:

(1) The balkanization of the area with 225 municipalities and 750 local taxing districts, each pretty much looking after its own interests.

(2) The inequitable distribution of resources among these many municipalities and districts with no effective way to use the resources of the entire community in the most intelligent possible way to solve the community's problems.

(3) Inadequacies and inequalities in physical facilities such as streets or schools, excellent in one place and substandard in another resulting from items one and two.

(4) The inability of the metropolis to direct and influence its own future. This includes both the establishment and adherence to a land use pattern of maximum benefit to everyone concerned and the carrying out of an overall economic action program to bring additional employment opportunities to the entire region. No land use plan can be effective unless it controls urban growth itself, and is able to say: "No - development stops here." No effective planning may be done until we have some concept of the total form, arrangement and character of the entire metropolis. Are we to have a central urban area, a greenbelt, and satellite cities like London, a radial pattern such as has been proposed for Washington, or what? Are we to drift along economically, or are we going to formulate an economic expansion based on recreation (downtown arch and stadium), on institutions (colleges and
universities), on industry, on trade, or is each little part to continue to try to get whatever it can get its hands on?

Comparatively speaking, the St. Louis area recognized these problems earlier and has done more to solve them perhaps than most large metropolitan areas. The record is of interest.

It might be said to have started in 1870 with the publication of the book "St. Louis The Future First City of The World" by L. U. Reavis. At this time the City was the fourth largest in the United States. The population of somewhat more than 300,000 occupied an area extending some five miles up and down the Mississippi and two miles to the west - some fifteen to twenty square miles. Political difficulties were being encountered with the county government. There was great interest and civic pride in the city. Establishment of the new "city-county" separated from the old with an area of 62 square miles resulted. This area was sufficient for about a four-fold expansion of the city. At about this time, the three large city parks were established, one of them (Forest Park) being so far out as to be ridiculed as being useless.

Urbanization of the metropolitan area actually started on the Illinois side of the Mississippi River. Urban growth on the Missouri side has been accompanied by corresponding growth on the Illinois or "east" side, although for many years, the growth in Illinois was hampered by the occasional flooding of the very wide Mississippi River flood plain. In 1870, for every person on the Illinois side, there were three and one-half on the Missouri side. Because of the barrier formed by the river, there was little
of common interest prior to opening of the Eads Bridge in 1874.
This bridge, additional bridges, and successful flood protection
works on the east side made both sides of the river parts of a
common urbanization pattern.

By the second decade of the twentieth century, the St. Louis
population approached 700,000 persons. With the help of the
street car, growth on the Missouri side approached the city-
county line, now too firmly established. Commuter services on
the railroads fostered a modest pattern of suburbs - Webster
Groves, Kirkwood and Ferguson. There was a resurgence of civic
pride and spirit spilling over from the World's Fair of 1903.
There were ambitious projects proposed, most of which were turned
down by the conservative electorate; but these did result in a
Plan Commission in 1915 with a permanent professional staff, a
comprehensive plan and, in 1923, a capital budget financed by an
$84,000,000 bond issue as well as a comprehensive zoning ordi-
nance finally upheld by the Missouri Supreme Court in 1924.

Urban growth on the Missouri side began to spill over the
city-county line. A highway plan prepared for St. Louis County
in 1930 (not all carried out yet) looked forward to an urban
population of two million persons on the Missouri side by 1970.
The population of St. Louis City-St. Louis County was actually
1,573,400 in 1960.

By the late 1920's the interdependence of the several lo-
cal political units in the urban region was gaining recognition.
A regional Planning Federation representing the City of St. Louis
and three counties in Missouri (St. Charles, St. Louis, and Jefferson) and three counties in Illinois (Madison, Monroe, and St. Clair) was formed. This consisted of voluntary representation and participation on the part of the various political units and was modeled upon successful associations of the same type in New York and Chicago.

Although the metropolitan area has a highly diversified economy, the depression of the 1930's was severely felt in St. Louis. Those in the design professions, architecture and engineering, were almost all unemployed. By working through the Federal National Resources Committee, the six counties and the City of St. Louis reorganized the planning federation as a "commission". The regional planning commission set up a Works Progress Administration project and put unemployed architects and engineers to work on the preparation of a plan for the regional area. This was published by the National Resources Committee in 1936 as "Regional Planning Part II - St. Louis Region".

This report concluded that the St. Louis region included all of the City of St. Louis, all of St. Louis County, and parts of St. Charles, Jefferson, and Franklin counties in Missouri and all of Madison, Monroe and St. Clair counties in Illinois. The 1960 population was estimated at 2,000,000. Actually in 1960, it was 2,076,000, extraordinary accuracy for a depression-born population estimate. A land use plan for the region was proposed as well as plans for the "principal physical improvements" - highways, bridges, grade separations, transit, transportation, sewers,
water supply, parks, and recreation. Publication of the park plan brought gifts of more than 4,000 acres of park land. A final section of the report analyzed "federal and interstate problems" in the region.

The 1936 regional plan report was also notable for its recommendations which included:

1. Establishment of a regional planning agency on an official, permanent basis by an interstate compact. The first duty of this agency would be to prepare, adopt, and keep up-to-date a comprehensive regional plan.

2. Partial or full control for the new regional agency over such matters of distinctly regional concern as public health and sanitation, interstate highways, river crossings, unification of transportation terminals, large-scale housing projects, and outer parks.

The report of the National Resources Committee led directly to the formation of the Bi-State Development Agency. Establishment of a regional agency by interstate compact is not an easy task as this requires passage of identical legislation by both states and approval by an Act of Congress. This required 13 years; the agency was established on September 20, 1949. Even so, this could probably not have been done without the successful example of the New York Port Authority which had been established in a similar manner some years before. The pact established the Bi-State Agency included the City of St. Louis and
the same six counties, three in Illinois and three in Missouri. The agency is an official part of both states and is dominated by neither, being administered by a board of ten commissioners, five appointed by the Governor of Illinois and five appointed by the Governor of Missouri. This is a particularly favorable arrangement for the people of the Illinois side, as they have only one-fourth of the population.

The Bi-State Agency has two types of activities to perform. It is empowered to act as the official planning agency for the region - to prepare, adopt, and keep up-to-date a metropolitan plan for the coordinated development of the area; and second, to build and operate certain types of public works, including bridges, tunnels, airports, wharves, docks, terminals, and the transit system. The agency has no taxing powers and is limited to revenue-producing projects that may finance themselves. The Bi-State Agency today is very much of a going concern with numerous regional studies and plans prepared under its sponsorship, with the transit facilities for the area under its ownership, with a river terminal, and with the transportation system inside the great Arch about to be built.

The Bi-State Agency is unique. No other metropolitan area that crosses state lines has established an official planning agency in this manner. However, it is now almost 30 years since it was first proposed and 15 since it was established, and the metropolitan area has yet to take full advantage of it. The Agency fulfilled its first obligation - preparation of a metropolitan plan.
The Regional Plan Report of 1936 did not lead only to the Bi-State Development Agency; the Regional Planning "Commission" was incorporated as the Regional Plan Association, and in 1940 a full-time staff and director were engaged. The purpose of the Association was to provide a focus for citizen interest in the metropolitan area, a platform for the discussion of metropolitan problems and a promotional and educational agency. Financial support for the Association came from public utilities, local foundations, and some local communities. In 1948, the Association published a "Guide Plan" for metropolitan area development. The Association held conferences, sponsored speeches, and in 1956 published a symposium on the physical development problems of the metropolitan area. For some reason, the Plan Commission did not gain in influence or prestige. It gradually faded away, passing out of existence for all practical purposes some five or six years ago.

This has left a void. A viable citizen's organization for regional planning and development would not have made it necessary for Mayor Tucker to recommend a "Regional Council" on April 23, 1964, or for Supervisor Roos of St. Louis County to recommend formation of a regional organization for economic expansion as he did a few days after that, although perhaps all three would be worthwhile and certainly one, two, or three organizations interested in regional development are better than none at all.
A reawakening of interest in regional development - the "City" of 2164 - apparently is at hand. This has been encouraged by increasing interest in optimum development of entire urban areas on the part of the Federal Government. The Federal Highway Act of 1962, for example, includes a mandatory requirement that all Federal highways aid in urban areas of more than 50,000 persons after 1965 will be predicated upon existence of a comprehensive transportation study and plan for the entire urban region with a continuing planning organization and process to keep such plans up-to-date. The Bi-State Development Agency is uniquely suited to the preparation of such a plan and acceptance of responsibility for such a continuous planning process. Other agencies of the Federal Government will not be far behind in instituting similar prerequisites for the granting of aid. A regional plan and a continuous regional planning process have become necessities. We will have to have them although we could, and should, be better motivated. We have known that we needed them since 1936.

Aid from highway planning funds and from the planning assistance program of the Housing and Home Finance Agency is available. The official regional planning agency is here and is willing to do its part. A comprehensive plan for the regional area, recommended in 1936, again in 1950 when the Bi-State Agency was established, may finally become a reality over the next three to five years.

We can confidently expect a workable, sound, practical plan for the region as a result of such a program. The plan can be prepared in such a manner as to be susceptible of being easily
brought up-to-date. Surveys of population, buildings, land use, assessed values, traffic movements and desires can be undertaken with the data compiled, analyzed and stored in computers to be immediately usable and easily kept current. The information thus provided would, by itself, more than justify the planning program. Yet there would be more.

Economic analyses and projections would be made. This would appraise our prospects, pinpoint our opportunities, forecast the amount of industrial, commercial and other economic activity, and plan its optimum arrangement. There would be projections of population and its characteristics. Plans would be prepared showing the arrangement of the residential, industrial, commercial and other areas that comprise the matrix of the urban complex. Traffic generating powers of these land uses would be appraised; metropolitan traffic movements would be estimated. A complex of transportation facilities — highways, streets, terminals, transit, (possibly rapid transit, too) and airports would be designed. As time permits, studies and plans for schools, parks, sewer, water, urban renewal programs, etc., could be incorporated in the regional plan. This would be a sensible scheme for the orderly evolution of the metropolis into a physical urban pattern providing the best living and working conditions consonant with the characteristics of the site and the existing urban pattern that we have to work with. For we cannot throw all that we have away and start anew. A step-by-step evolution is the only procedure that is practical.
Bureau of Public Roads standards call for land use plans, traffic estimates, and highway networks to be devised for each five-year interval into the future.

There should be little question but that the Bi-State Agency is the proper organization to prepare such a regional plan. A committee has been formed and work is going forward as this is written to initiate the continuous planning process at the regional level. The Bi-State Agency does not intend to build up a big staff. Local planning agencies in the cities and counties are expected to do most of the work on the Regional Plan.

St. Louis has always been a pioneer in planning and in engineering. Many of the present day planning practices and procedures originated here. The new regional plan can be the finest in the United States. It can be prepared in such a manner that few will quarrel with its objectives or with many of its recommendations. The firm hold on the purse strings by the State Highway Department and the Bureau of Public Roads can result in the highway network plan being carried out and this surely is to the good.

Yet let us not delude ourselves. No plan is going to coordinate the activities of six counties and 225 municipalities. The essence of any regional plan is the ability to carry out its land use recommendations. The Bi-State District contains 3,600 square miles and a population of 2,000,000 persons. At a generous ratio of 15 acres of land in urban use for each 100 persons, 5,000,000 persons would require development of only 1,200 square miles. At this point, which even the most sanguine observer would
agree to be some time off - perhaps 100 years, two-thirds of the land area of the Bi-State District would still be in agriculture, in forests, parks or open space. And the real measure of our foresight and planning will be the wisdom with which we locate the 2,400 square miles of undeveloped land.

Land use, population density, and the design of highways, sewer, water, public utility systems and other public facilities and services are closely interrelated. A good highway design may be made inadequate over-night by inappropriate land uses locating along it. No reliable future traffic estimates are possible without reliable land use plans.

To date, our method of carrying out a land use plan has been by zoning. This is a police power regulation. Almost all of the 225 municipalities have such ordinances. Furthermore, the unincorporated areas of St. Louis and St. Charles Counties in Missouri and Madison County in Illinois are "zoned" also.

There has been a controversy in recent months over a proposed new zoning ordinance for St. Louis County which, among other things, sets aside flood plains, agricultural areas, and potential public areas and would prohibit urban development within them. The existing St. Louis County ordinance was passed 18 years ago and has been amended more than 700 times. The zoning regulations of the municipalities are not based on any overall land use plan, but either are designed to protect existing development or to bring about a real or fancied tax advantage.
The real difficulty is two-fold. First, development of the urban area, transforming open or agricultural land into urban land, is a business and a profitable one. Great profits have been made in speculating in vacant land adjacent to the rapidly growing metropolis. One popular practice has been to buy a tract of land, get it rezoned, and sell it at a profit. Realtors, home builders, land speculators have a significant financial interest in the process of urbanization. They prefer that there be no zoning or community control at all, but if there must be some control, let it be as loose, as "flexible" as possible. The assessed value of St. Louis County increased from $455,772,000 in 1950 to $1,800,000,000 in 1963. The vested interest in such a trend is considerable. The speculative interests may well afford to attend meetings, organize new suburbs, and influence public officials to act in their favor. They take a dim view of any lands being taken outside their purview - in the form of open space, flood plain protection, agricultural reserves or anything of that type. Yet all of the realtors, all the speculators, and all of the home builders, together, hardly constitute 1.5 percent of the urban population.

Second, the fragmentation of the urban region with each fragment trying to obtain the greatest possible financial or social advantage to itself, places an unsupportable burden on any regional plan. A suburb may be the local location for a badly needed regional industrial district or commercial center or low income housing. Yet the council of the tiny municipality can, and frequently does, thwart the carrying out of a logical overall land...
use plan; or the reverse may happen and with equal lack of logic—several suburbs will endeavor to obtain commercial or industrial uses in locations not suited to them to bring a real or fancied tax advantage. The balkanization of the urban area into 231 zoning jurisdictions makes it possible for the speculator to play one against the other; it is an ideal circumstance for him.

In such a milieu, our regional land use plan has little more hope of being accomplished than the proverbial snowball. When we look back 200 years we see that there was little if any community interest and certainly no community control over the land use pattern or the character of the physical arrangement of the urban area for the first 150 years. For the last 50 years, we have been exerting more and more public control over urban development and this has been gradually accepted despite the cries of outrage from the speculative minority; there have also been proposals, supported at least by a rather sizeable minority, to do something about the fragmentation or balkanization of the urban area by direct political consolidation; and we have created the Bi-State Agency as an instrument of regional coordination.

Insofar as our purpose is the development of a finer urban environment, these measures have been attacking the symptoms and not the causes of our difficulties. Yet by political action we could remove the causes as well as the symptoms. There are courses of action we can and should take over the next several decades. The quality, character, economy and progress of this great metropolis is likely to depend upon how quickly we take them.
1. We can eliminate, or at least greatly minimize, the
disparity of resources over the metropolitan area. A citizen
of Ferguson or of St. Louis should be just as interested in lo-
cating a new industry in Alton, or Edwardsville, or Waterloo, or
St. Charles as in his own municipality. We are not going to make
him that interested by the most eloquent of altruistic preaching,
but we might do so if we put most (say two-thirds or three-fourths)
of the taxes from the economically productive uses (mainly com-
merce and industry) into a common metropolitan fund and then re-
distributed them on a per capita basis. We could do this by
interstate compact - if we wanted to.

2. We can reorganize our entire system of real estate
taxes to place almost all (say 90 percent) of the tax burden
on the land, with very little on the improvements. The case
for so doing has been so fully documented by experience in
Canada and Australia that it need not be documented here. In
essence, this would mean that the owner of a vacant lot would
pay almost as much in taxes as his neighbor next door whose lot
has a house on it. The speculator holding idle land for the
quick profit cannot afford to do so because the taxes will
quickly eat up his profit. Conversely, the man who improves
his property, erects a new industry or office building, is not
immediately penalized by a raise in taxes. By such a method, we
encourage good urban development and discourage the bad. There
is nothing to stop us from putting such a system into effect,
place by place, or gradually, a little each year so that no real
hardship is suffered by anyone.
3. While the "land tax" described above would reduce the problems occasioned by land speculation to some degree, this alone would not be enough. Increases in land values in an urban area are not the result of the work of the speculator — they are the result of the growth of the community and of the provision by the community of the essential urban services, such as highways, schools, sewers, and the like. Thus, it is the community, not the land owners, that is responsible for the increase in land values.

The Federal Government and at least one (sometimes two) of the national political parties have expressed deep interest in "doing something" about the plight of the urban areas in the United States. One action that the Federal Government could take that would also overcome the objections to "centralized control" would be to return to properly constituted metropolitan governments the capital gains tax on increases in real estate property values. A 50 percent capital gains tax on property value increases could provide a fund which, for example, could be used in part to buy up development rights of property that should not be urbanized — land in flood plains, in good agricultural areas, in scenic areas, etc. — all in accordance with the metropolitan land use plan. A "development right" is somewhat similar to a "scenic easement". It is a purchase of the right to use property for certain purposes. For example, a public agency could condemn and buy from a property owner the right to use land for any purpose but agriculture.
It is difficult to estimate how much the capital gains tax on property would amount to. Precautions would, of course, have to be taken against complete avoidance of the tax by the use of long-term leases, but this could be done. As one example, St. Louis County has 259,000 parcels of land. In 1963 there were 28,000 transfers 9.25 percent of the total. The average parcel has an assessed value of $5,730. A one percent increase in value per year, an average length of tenure of 10 years, and a 50 percent capital gain tax would result in an income of about $750,000 per year for St. Louis County alone and this would permit a great number of "development rights" to be purchased.

It should be emphasized, however, that this would need to be done on a metropolitan - not a localized basis.

4. We must have a completely new method or approach - not necessarily to replace - but to supplement zoning as the major instrument for the direction of the land use pattern. Reservation of land against any urban development, really the most important aspect of any planning activity, could best be accomplished by acquisition of the development rights financed by the capital gains tax as suggested above or by other tax sources. This would mean that no one, not even the speculators, would be really harmed. It would mean also that the control would be complete and reasonably permanent.

For the developed areas, however, we need diversity, not monotony, and sensitive and imaginative, not bureaucratic, design. We do not want to support the great local bureaucracy that would be required if the public was to design all of our urban areas,
Nor do we want the antiseptic, stereotyped living conditions that would result. Yet, we do need something far better than our present home building industry, although this industry does do a magnificent job when the impediments that are placed in the path of its doing any job at all are considered.

The suggestion here is to reorganize the building industry as licensed public utilities. The metropolitan plan would indicate the broad allocation of land use and the major transportation and community facilities. This would be a "broad brush" plan similar to the English city plans allowing a reasonable latitude in the development of large projects within a general framework. The building industry would be a utility (not one company but several or many) licensed by the metropolitan agency to operate within the framework of the regional plan.

As a utility, there would be control over rates and general practices. Power of condemnation would be granted to allow land to be assembled at a reasonable price. One of the difficulties in bringing about any type of orderly urban development under any condition is the fragmentation of land ownership and the impossibility of assembling land for a reasonably-sized project area. We are in an era of "bigness" whether we like it or not and the metropolitan St. Louis of 2164 will most likely be built by big projects and not little ones.

Organized as licensed public utilities, the home building industry would still be competitive. In fact, it is this element of competition that we could count on to bring the needed diversity, interest, and real character into the metropolitan area.
Zoning would be retained as the instrument to keep order and insure good maintenance after an area was built, or rebuilt.

No doubt the above four suggestions appear to be an unusual if not an odd "plan" for the St. Louis of the next 200 years. No picture has been painted of the broad avenues, the great plazas, the heliports, the fine living conditions in the metropolis-sans-slums of the future. There is a reason for this. The next 200 years will see advances in techniques and technologies that we cannot dream of, as Laclede and Chouteau could not dream of ours. We need not speculate as to what they will be; rather we should seek to establish the social, economic, and governmental milieu in which we may take advantage of them.

We are like the farmer who refused the advice of the county agent, telling him that he did not want further advice because he knew enough already to be twice as good a farmer as he was! Yet in our defense we remember that we have only applied community direction to the character and pattern of our urban growth for 50 of the past 200 years and, even so, our accomplishments are notable and undistinguished. If we just "keep at it", the type of community direction that we may develop over the next 50 years may bring forth a metropolis of 2164 far greater than anything we can imagine today.