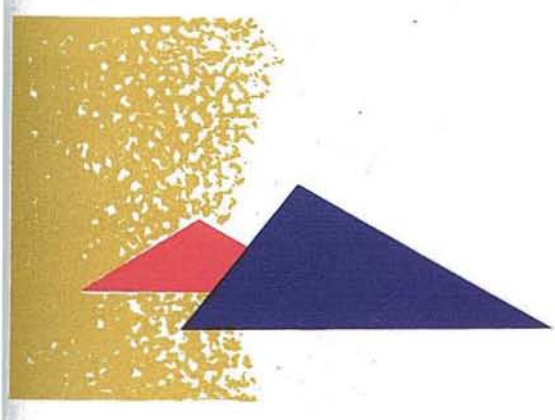
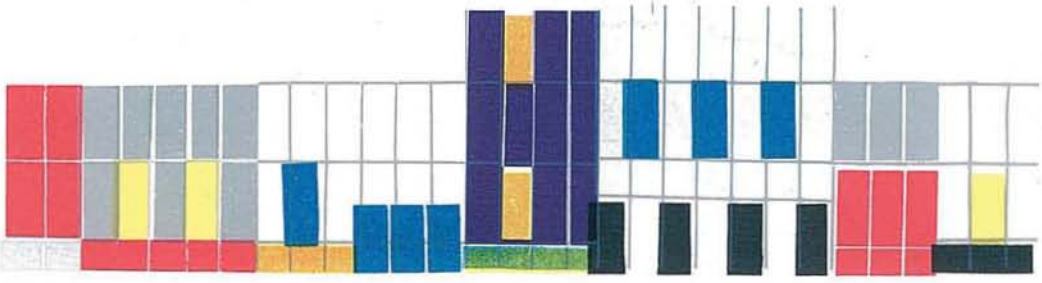
PLAN REPORT 62-1

THE 1925 CITY PLAN

A REVIEW OF THE KESSLER PLAN FOR EL PASO



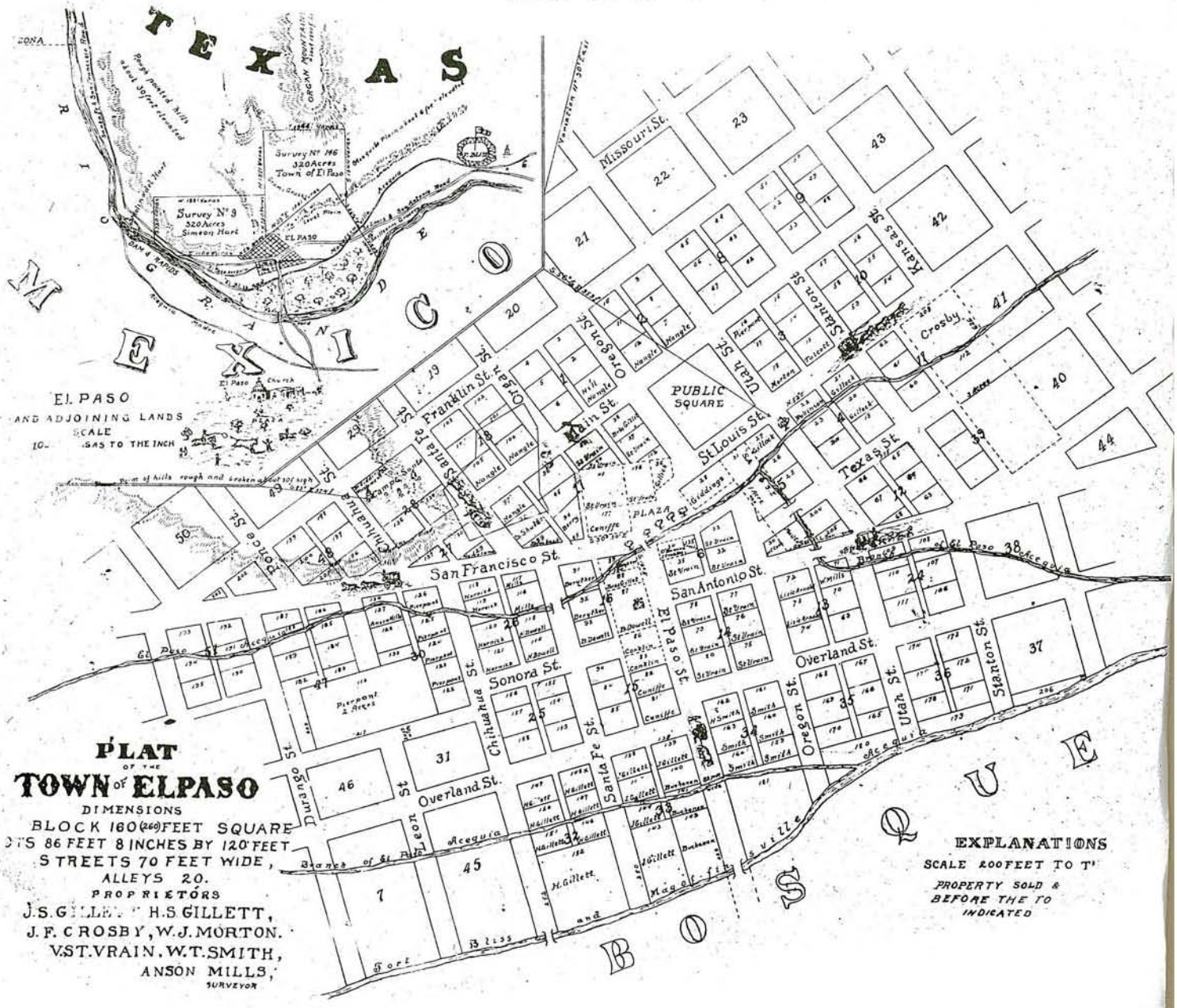


30.6
1

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING CITY OF EL PASO

HT
168
.E4N46
1962

EL PASO
1859



NOTE: Quotations appear in this type style.

RALPH E. SEITSINGER
MAYOR
J. M. HERRERA
CITY CLERK

ALDERMEN
TED BENDER
MAYOR PRO TEM
BERT WILLIAMS
RAY S. WATT
R. R. "BUCK" ROGERS

This review of the 1925 City Plan of El Paso is published as Volume I of the 1962 El Paso City Plan. The 1925 plan is frequently referred to as the Kessler Plan because of contributions made by George E. Kessler (1862-1923), who was employed to prepare the plan. Mr. Kessler provided inspiration, wisdom, and foresight for which we are grateful. Less frequently mentioned is Walter E. Stockwell, who assisted Mr. Kessler and completed the project after Mr. Kessler's death. We also owe a great debt of gratitude to Mr. Stockwell. He kept the plan alive and made the plan work. He remained with the City as Plan Engineer and Secretary of the Plan Commission until his retirement in 1952.

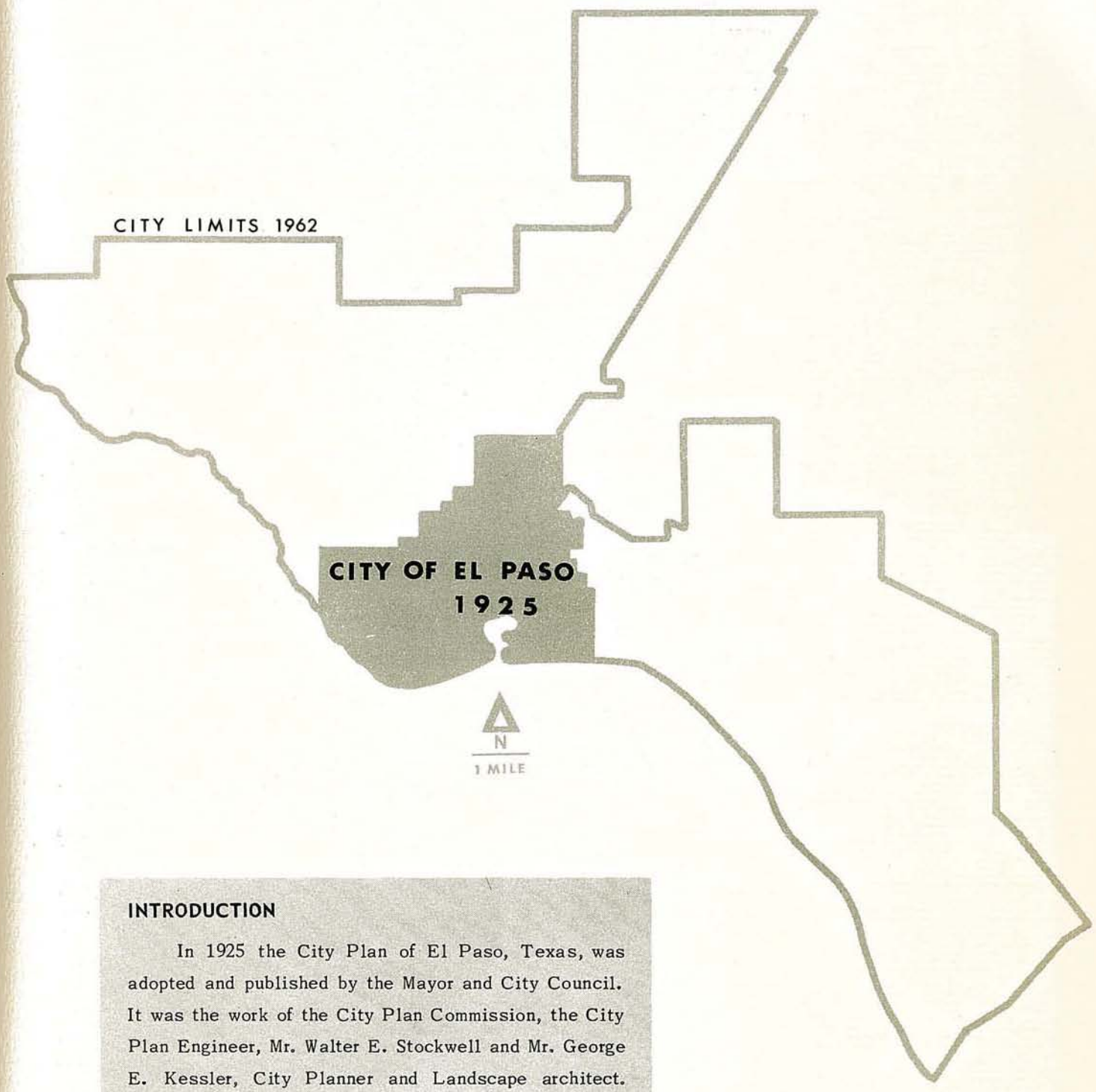
Now it is time for the El Paso Community to again express through printed words and maps its objectives for the immediate and long range future. The need for a new plan is well known. What is not as generally known is that the City has had a plan since 1925 and that a significant number of the objectives of that plan have been achieved. The plan has been consulted from time to time during the past thirty-seven years. It has served as a reference and guide in the planning and execution of public improvements. In fact, most public improvements have been made, sometimes consciously and sometimes unknowingly, in accordance with the 1925 plan.

Since the early nineteen-twenties the City Plan Commission, composed of citizens who serve the community without compensation, has been an important institution. The Department of Planning which functions as a research and advisory agency is an integral part of the City government. Planning has been a continuing process over the years. The 1962 plan is intended to be an extension of the 1925 plan. This first volume is a review of the 1925 plan upon which the 1962 plan is built.

Ed Hicks

Ed Hicks, Chairman
City Plan Commission

SEP 4 1986



INTRODUCTION

In 1925 the City Plan of El Paso, Texas, was adopted and published by the Mayor and City Council. It was the work of the City Plan Commission, the City Plan Engineer, Mr. Walter E. Stockwell and Mr. George E. Kessler, City Planner and Landscape architect. Seventeen maps accompanied the sixty-nine page report.

The philosophy of this forty-year-old city plan is not dated. It represents the best thinking, the ideals, and standards of El Paso today. The City has outgrown the land area described in the 1925 plan. However, the City has not outgrown the necessities and standards for city living outlined in that early report.

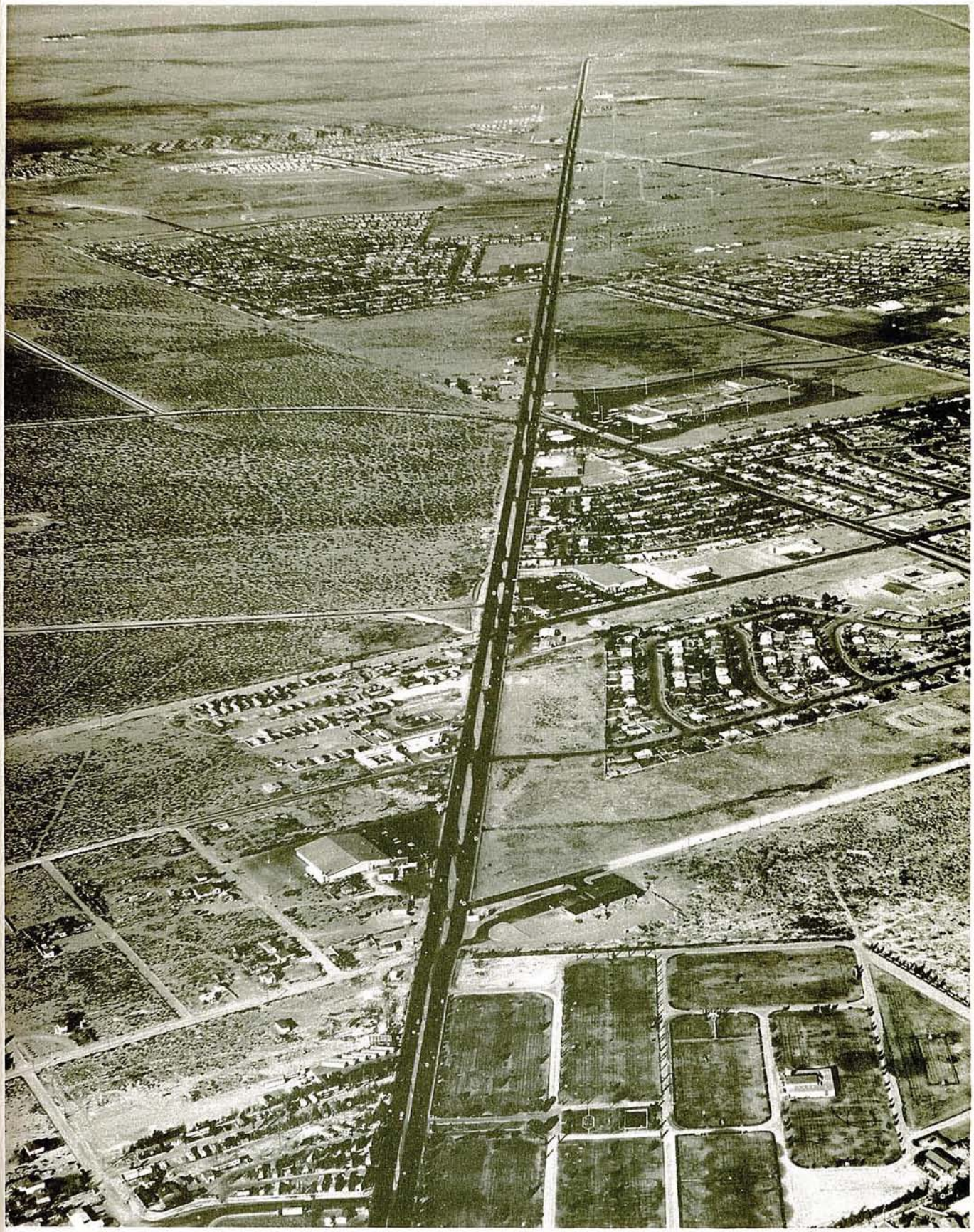
In looking toward the future, the 1925 Plan predicts:

The City will be densely built up in the future to the Baptist Sanatorium (Logan Heights Cantonment) and eastward to the Fort Bliss Spur (Robert E. Lee Road). West of the mountains the usable territory in Kern Place and Piedmont will be well occupied and there will be settlement all along the Mesa Road to the Country Club. Down the Valley, suburban residences will extend in solid lines along all roads as far as Ysleta.

In the city, the business district will have expanded northward and eastward and new trading centers will have sprung up. Manufacturing will be important and factories and warehouses will occupy much of the territory between the railroads and the river.

Such a city will need more and wider thoroughfares leading into the business center, and more trolleys. The blocking of important crossings by railroads will not be tolerable. There will be great public buildings and there will be parks and parkways. With such a prospect, to plan for the future is efficient and economical, for otherwise much that is done will be inadequate and inappropriate.

WEST OF THE MOUNTAIN TODAY - KERN PLACE AND PIEDMONT



LAND WON FROM THE DESERT ALONG DYER STREET

OBJECTIVE OF THE 1925 PLAN

This report is presented to the citizenship of El Paso not as an ephemeral thing, to be glanced at and thrown aside, but rather with the hope that it will prove to be of permanent worth as a compendium of fertile suggestions, and as an aid to the gradual systematic working out of a plan good in all essentials for 50 years to come. Above all, the effort has been to make the whole project reasonable, practicable, timely, and economical with public and private funds. It is for coming generations as much as for the present.

This was the purpose and function of The City Plan of El Paso, adopted and published by the City Council in 1925. The objectives of the El Paso Community were stated as follows:

Now the City of El Paso through its Chamber of Commerce and other civic bodies and through the municipal government, has emphatically expressed its desire and intention, still further to promote the convenience of the population; to improve health conditions; to provide more liberally for public recreation; to add to the comforts of urban life; to beautify the City and its surroundings; to develop earnestly all cultural elements in community life; and to give the City of El Paso such distinction among cities that it will acquire new and wider fame.

This plan was published by the City Plan Commission, by authority of the Mayor and Council. Members of the City Council in 1925 were:

H. P. Jackson, Mayor
W. K. Ramsey
M. C. Tracy
J. B. Brady
A. B. Poe

The City Plan Commission included:

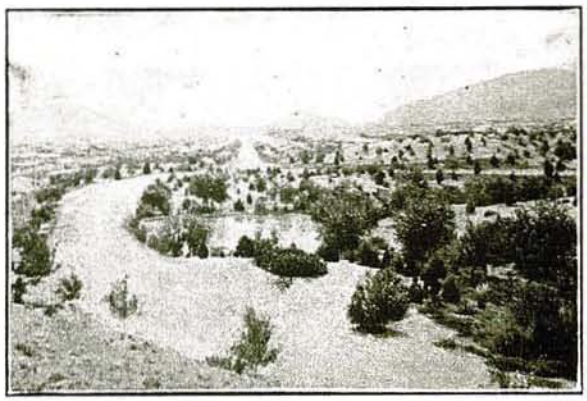
H. D. Slater, Chairman
H. L. Birney
R. F. Burges
W. E. Robertson
R. E. Sherman
W. E. Stockwell (ex-officio)

The work of city planning in El Paso, while under discussion for many years, began to take definite shape in 1919 with the establishing of the City Planning Committee of the Chamber of Commerce, of which James L. Marr was Chairman.

Civic accomplishments which developed from the initial planning program and which were completed before publication of the Plan in 1925 were listed as:

1. The Plan for Memorial Park was developed, and planting begun. The swimming pool and tennis courts were built. Additional land was acquired.
2. Construction of the Copia Street grade separation.
3. Hidalgo Park (Armijo) was acquired, and plans completed for its improvement.
4. Acquisition of land for Rim Road was begun.
5. A highway connection (Robinson St.) was established from Kern Place to Scenic Drive, and Schutz Street was connected with Texas Western College.
6. Dudley Field was established and its first grandstand built as part of extensive plans and development work at Washington Park.

Memorial Park with grading work just started



Same view two years later

Same view three years after planting

(PHOTOS FROM THE 1925 PLAN)

7. The railroad problem was studied intensively.

8. A plan for the highway system of the Valley between El Paso and Ysleta was made as a guide for new developments.

9. Kansas Street was opened on the west side of the County Courthouse (the present City-County Building), and Alameda was widened.

Future plans and projects were listed under three categories. Those listed under the category *Big Plans for the More Distant Future* were:

1. A $500,000 museum and art gallery.

2. A mountain playground (the development of Mt. Franklin).

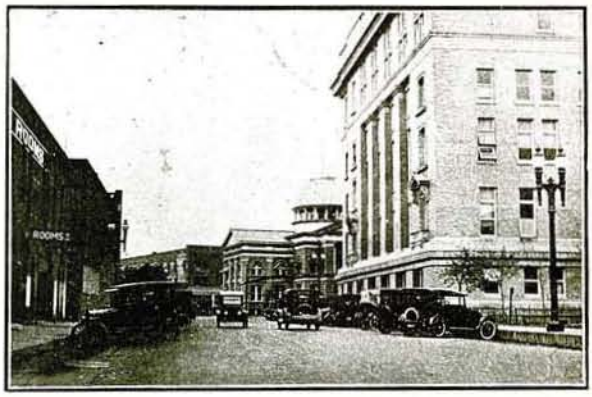
3. The construction of more scenic drives and development of recreational areas, both close in and as far away as Hueco Tanks and Cloudcroft.

4. Cooperation with Ciudad Juarez and the Mexican Government in the development of a regional plan to create an international metropolitan area of credit to both Mexico and the United States.

Completion of the El Paso Museum of Art, at a cost of $750,000 and acquisition of the Kress Art Collection, insured for $1,500,000, has made proposal number one a reality. Progress has been made with reference to numbers two, three, and four but complete fulfillment of these early objectives has not been realized.

Kansas St. at the Court House before widening

(PHOTOS FROM THE 1925 PLAN)



Same view of Kansas St. after widening

THE EL PASO MUSEUM OF ART - KRESS COLLECTION, LOAN EXHIBITS, LOCAL SHOWS

Other projects were listed in the 1925 Plan under the titles *For Immediate Action* and *The Larger Present and Pressing Problems.* Many additional suggestions and recommendations were included in the text of the report. For the purposes of this review, these proposals are regrouped under the following headings:

Economic Development

Over-all Design of the City

Downtown and Other Commercial Areas

Civic Center

Parks and Recreation

Schools

Streets, Thoroughfares, Alleys, Lighting

Railroads

Drainage and Flood Control

Water Supply

Sanitation

Housing

Legislation
- Zoning Ordinance
- Building Code
- Housing Code
- Subdivision Standards

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Growth and expansion are anticipated. El Paso is a city of 100,000 population including suburbs (1925 estimate). The City is connected by bridges over the Rio Grande with Ciudad Juarez, State of Chihuahua, Mexico, a city of 25,000 population.

Within 690 miles of El Paso in any direction there is no other city so populous or so important commercially and industrially as El Paso.

El Paso is the most important city south of Denver, between San Antonio, Texas and Los Angeles, California.

El Paso's location at the most important gateway to Mexico helps to make the city the natural metropolis of the northern states of Mexico as well as of New Mexico, Arizona and Western Texas. . .

It is safe to estimate that the population will reach 120,000 by 1930; 200,000 by 1940; 250,000 within 25 years from the date of this report.

The report did not outline any program of economic development, but special assets of the community were named for exploitation:

1. In the City's life the Spanish-American contribution is colorful, vivacious, and agreeable. El Paso has a unique opportunity to capitalize in numerous ways its exceptionally interesting cosmopolitanism...

2. El Paso is the natural concentrating and distributing point for all passenger travel in the Southwest, as well as for all trade and industrial traffic.

3. Next in importance is climate...these climatic conditions make El Paso an all-year resort for health-seekers and for those desiring relief from extremes of heat and cold and excessive precipitation and humidity in other sections of the country...The climate is also favorable for industry, permitting cheaper construction of buildings and less expense for heating. Outdoor work is seldom interrupted at anytime during the year...

4. Already El Paso has extensive and varied industries; any plan looking into the far future must assume the probability that manufacturing plants and wholesale houses will increase steadily...

5. The aim is first, to care for the present population with maximum efficiency according to modern city ideals; and second, to induce more tourists and home seekers to visit El Paso, and to make the city so attractive that worthy newcomers, once familiar with El Paso's advantages, will remain permanently, add their energy and their capital to the City's upbuilding and urge their friends to join them.

OVERALL CITY DESIGN

The Plan urged symetrical development of the City, and to this end it was suggested that the City encourage development along the west side of Mount Franklin *to correspond with development that has already taken place to the east and northeast.* Also it was urged that a distinctive El Paso Southwest architecture be developed and exploited to give a unique character to the City.

DOWNTOWN AND OTHER COMMERCIAL AREAS

These recommendations have been accomplished:

1. *Install modern street lighting.* For the second time since 1925 modern street lighting is currently being installed in the downtown area.

2. *More car parking space is an imperative need which will grow steadily greater...other things being equal, the shopper will seek the stores where parking facilities are best.* At least six major parking facilities have been built by private investors. Public money is expected to build more. Money is being accumulated now to build more parking facilities through a public improvement district.

3. *Street Intersections.* The Stanton, Myrtle, San Antonio intersection has been improved but not completely realigned as proposed in the 1925 Plan.

The Kansas, Myrtle, San Antonio intersection has been accomplished as proposed, after demolition of the old City Hall Building.

Other proposals of the 1925 Plan include:

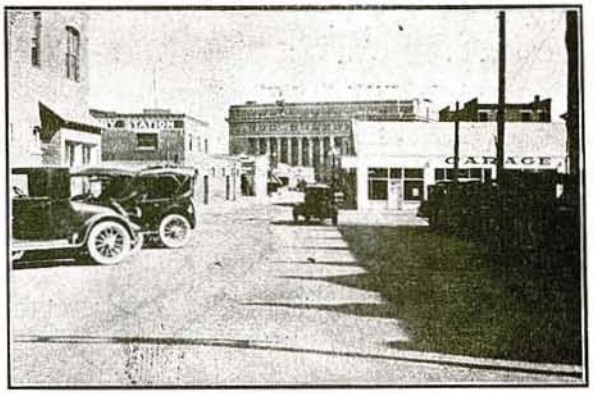
1. *Clear all business streets of projecting signs, metal or wood awnings.*

2. Remove obstacles to traffic such as crooked intersections and projecting corners.
3. Improve the Campbell-San Antonio and the Mesa-San Antonio intersections.
4. Realignment of major intersections and acquisition of park property in Five Points to protect the use and investment in this commercial area. Off-street parking was also considered essential to the survival of Five Points as a prime commercial area.

CIVIC CENTER

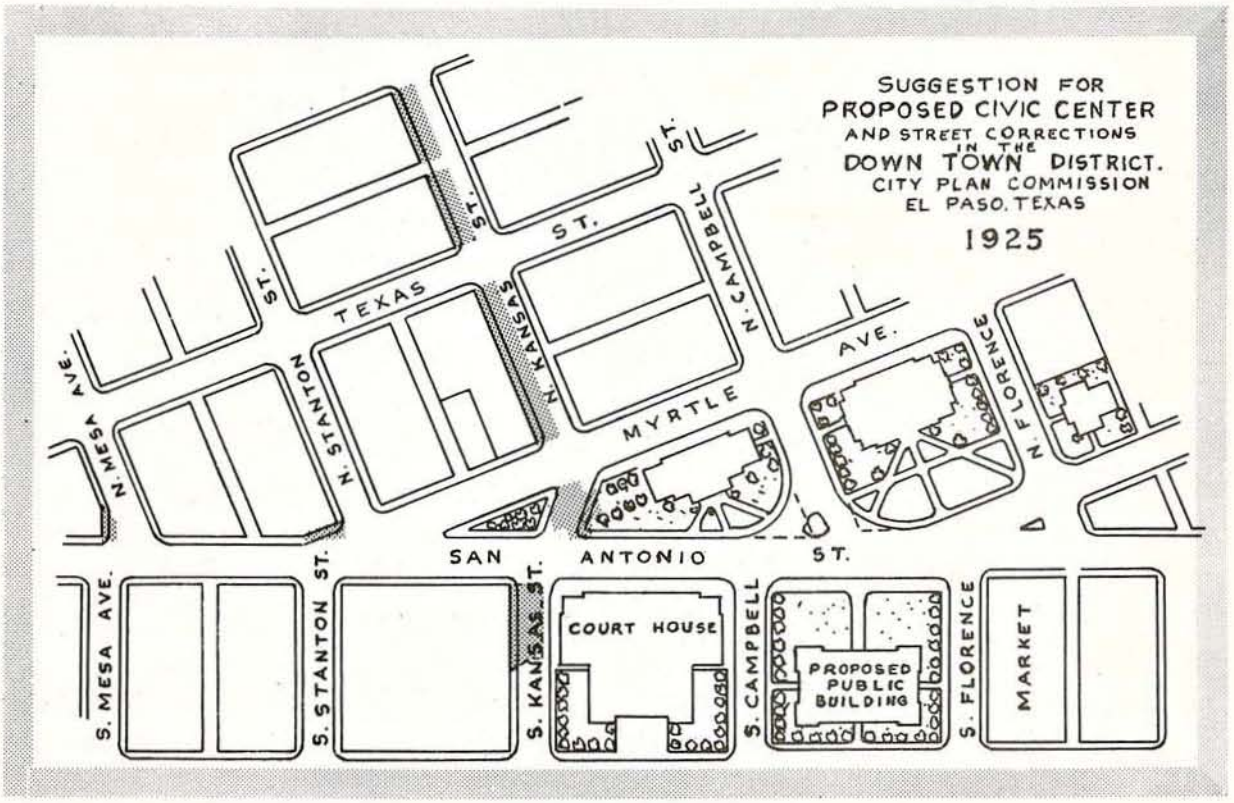
The present City Hall is entirely inadequate for present needs and should be replaced when the City is ready to build a new one...a new federal building is needed...a municipal museum and art gallery may well be among the achievements of the future.... Demolishing the present City Hall and opening North Kansas Street to its full width...and acquiring for a new City Hall an entire block...would make the beginning of a dignified civic group.

This objective has been substantially accomplished. Variation occurred when the Federal Office Building was built in the site suggested for a new City Hall and the City Hall was incorporated in the re-modeled City-County Building. Plans have been accepted by the City and County governments for expansion of the governmental area to the east.



Kansas St. looking south from the railroad tracks, showing the need for widening....
(PHOTO FROM THE 1925 PLAN)

THE FEDERAL OFFICE AND CITY-COUNTY BUILDINGS - NUCLEUS OF THE FUTURE GOVERNMENTAL CENTER



PARKS AND RECREATION

The progressiveness of a city may be measured largely by its park and recreational facilities, for these are the expression of the aspirations of the community...

El Paso has special need for a progressive park and recreational program because nature has denied her the natural attractions of grass and trees found in a humid climate.

Supervision of playground activities should be extended beyond school hours and throughout the year...some of the older schools are sadly deficient as to play space. Alamo, San Jacinto, Beall, Bailey and Morehead Schools are badly in need of more space.

Parks and playgrounds at frequent intervals will keep children from playing in the streets. A new park will soon be needed in Morningside Heights, which is rapidly filling up.

Acquisition of the Magoffin Homestead for a park was recommended. In addition, the 1925 Plan proposed a natural park in the Upper Valley.

Unnecessary streets and parts of streets should be abandoned and the space thus saved could be used for parks and playgrounds....

The existing major parks, Washington and Memorial, are to be developed as planned....

Mount Franklin and Charles Davis parks should be developed, as they have great possibilities for unique desert parks....

Today Washington and Memorial Parks have been developed, largely as suggested in the Plan, although the original Washington Park area has been divided by Paisano Drive. Hidalgo Park in south El Paso has been improved as planned by Mr. Kessler, and renamed Armijo Park. Dudley Field was established prior to the 1925 Plan as a project of the City Plan Commission. An important asset to the City today, Dudley Field was remodelled extensively in the Spring of 1962.

Since publication of the 1925 Plan a considerable number of neighborhood park sites has been acquired; many developed. At present, school authorities work with the City in planning, acquiring and developing joint-use recreational facilities for year-round activities. In some instances the City purchases land for park sites next to school sites.

Still to be accomplished are the following major projects:

Expansion of playgrounds in developed areas.

Development of Charles Davis Park and exploitation of mountain recreation areas.

Acquisition of a natural park in the Upper Valley.

Acquisition of the Magoffin Homestead as a historic landmark.

SCHOOLS

The 1925 Plan calls attention to a 1922 survey and report completed by the New York Institute of Public Service on El Paso schools. A need for larger playgrounds and for a careful study of new school locations was cited by this school survey. The planning of schools to serve areas as yet undeveloped was also urged.

The philosophy of this Survey has been followed rather closely in the location and creation of new school sites in recent years. Schools and playgrounds are being planned in advance and the land is acquired as the area is platted for development.

STREETS AND THOROUGHFARES

The highway system is the skeleton on which the City is built, and the Highway Map is the fundamental of the City Plan...El Paso has planning problems of peculiar difficulty because of topography, but it also has opportunities for features of special interest if the problems are attacked boldly and solved rightly.

The business center should be the principal focus for the main traffic arteries of the city.

A system of thoroughfares east of the present city limits is shown as a guide for the future development of this section. Without such a plan there is great danger that this region will be developed piece-meal....

The above recommendations of the Plan have been generally carried out, through careful examination, revision, and application of the City's Master Thoroughfare Plan. The 1925 Thoroughfare Plan and the 1962 Thoroughfare Plan appear following page 11.

Specific recommendations which have been accomplished include:

Extension of Cotton Street southward across the railroad tracks (although this is still unpaved).

Opening of East Missouri between Cotton and Piedras.

Construction of Copia Street underpass.

Extension of Montana to connect with Womble (now Trowbridge).

Construction of Dyer Street underpass.

Construction of a grade separation west of Union Station.

Construction of Rim Road.

Highway connections from Kern Place to Scenic Drive and to Texas Western College.

Preparation of a highway plan for connections with Ysleta.

Widening of Alameda.

Opening of a free bridge connection to Mexico.

Extension of Mesa Street to the Crossroads.

Opening of Kansas Street on the west side of the County Courthouse.

Projects completed in modified form are:

The extension of Piedras to a new bridge to Mexico was recommended. The Cordova Island crossing, off Hammett Street has been built in this general location. This crossing eventually will connect directly with a north-south freeway.

Construction of a road to Hueco Tanks and Carlsbad Caverns was urged in the 1925 Plan. The construction of Montana Street and U. S. Highway 62 has accomplished this objective. In 1923, travelers to Carlsbad went by way of Pecos, Texas, or Roswell, New Mexico, later via Van Horn, Texas.

Projects yet to be accomplished are:

Contruction of a monumental bridge to Mexico located somewhere between the two existing toll bridges at Stanton and Santa Fe Streets.

Elimination of grade crossings.

Extension of Copia Street northward.

Construction of McKelligon Canyon Drive over the mountain.

RAILROADS

The problems associated with railroad crossings and switching yards was of prime concern to the people of El Paso in the nineteen twenties. The 1925 Plan had this to say about the subject:

El Paso is to a large extent a railroad town, being the terminal or division point of three important systems and railroad payrolls contribute much to the prosperity of the city..

With the growth of the city, the railroad yards have become entirely surrounded by residences and business, making impossible any large expansion of either railroad activity or of the business district, and interfering with the circulation of traffic. These conditions call inevitably for relief in the near future.

It is not the purpose of this report to say what the solution shall be. There are, however, certain general conditions for a solution satisfactory to the city which should be expressed here.

First: Grade crossings should ultimately be eliminated from all intersections with streets designated as main thoroughfares.

Second: Classification yards and tracks not necessary for local service should be removed from the center of the city.

Should the present EP & SW line from the yards to Fort Bliss be abandoned for main-line operation, the opportunity should not be lost to make this a great boulevard.

The removal of the railroad tracks from the heart of the city will permit a natural expansion of the retail district and tend to counteract any tendency to excessive concentration.

Expansion of the business district is resisted by the railroad tracks and yards. The property in the western end of the yards will in time, become too valuable to be used for this purpose and it is for the interest of all parties concerned that plans be made for an ultimate solution of the problem and a beginning made toward their execution by eliminating the grade crossings between Campbell Street and the Union Station.

The Bataan Trainway, completed in 1950, has elimimated the grade crossings in the Central Business District. A contract is being let this year, 1962, to construct a grade separation at Hawkins Way as a part of the long-range program to eliminate dangerous crossings throughout the city.

DRAINAGE AND FLOOD CONTROL

In general, the drainage of the city presents an unusual problem because of the topography and irregular rainfall...A comprehensive flood water drainage plan should be prepared for the whole area of the future city, so that all street improvements and drainage plans may be made to conform with it.

In the spring of 1961, the City of El Paso formally adopted a ten-year flood control and drainage plan, augmenting the extensive program underway since 1958.

SANITATION

The 1925 Plan suggestions which have been accomplished include:

Have a thorough cleanup of the sections where human habitations are congested.

Prohibit dirt from unimproved areas from blocking sidewalks.

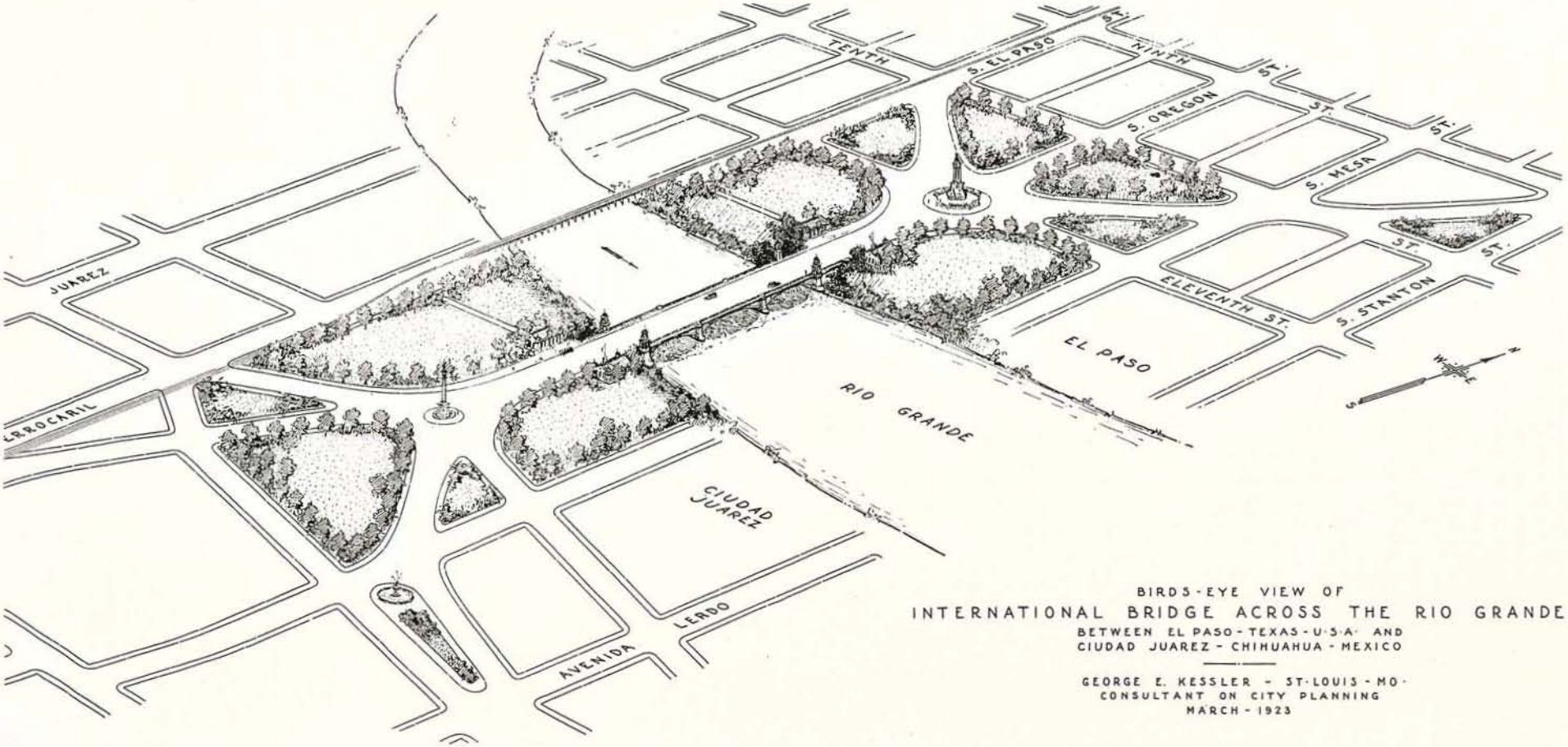
Grade and render usable alleys in the developed parts of the city and the streets in unpaved areas.

A broad program for developing the river front, including drainage and pest control.

The present sanitary sewerage system of the city has been a growth with the expansion of the city and no comprehensive plan has ever been made for future needs. Large expenditures may be anticipated in the future to care for the growing city and a careful study of future needs would effect economics in the ultimate cost.

Other suggestions not yet accomplished include:

South of Washington Park the city owns a large area which contains the sewerage disposal plant and is used for dumping. As the land south of the canal comes into use the odor from the disposal plant will become more of a nuisance, and some means to control it will be demanded. A thick growth of trees around the plant will help and should be started at once.



BIRDS-EYE VIEW OF

INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE ACROSS THE RIO GRANDE

BETWEEN EL PASO - TEXAS - U.S.A. AND
CIUDAD JUAREZ - CHIHUAHUA - MEXICO

GEORGE E. KESSLER - ST. LOUIS - MO.
CONSULTANT ON CITY PLANNING
MARCH - 1923

HOUSING

The need to improve housing conditions was recognized in the 1925 Plan. The Plan stated:

Between the business center of El Paso and the Rio Grande lies an area of three-fourths of a square mile constituting the most densely populated area in the city...For the most part it is covered with one-story and two-story tenement houses crowded with human beings.

This area constitutes a special problem, and is likely to remain the city's most congested district. Also, this district must be crossed by every visitor to El Paso desiring to cross the international boundary, and civic pride would urge due attention to the living needs of the area so that good impressions might be made on strangers.

Generally speaking, it would seem the part of wisdom to provide every modern facility for city life, and at the same time endeavor to conserve the foreign spirit, the exotic charm of unfamiliar customs and some distinction of aspect. This should be a show-place, it should furnish a model that might be followed by towns and cities in the interior of Mexico.

The city should provide adequate facilities for the carrying out of all the traditional Mexican formulas of life which are good; for example, there should be typical Mexican markets, industrial exhibits, places for music and dancing and games, public laundries and baths.

A large market place and permanent outdoor fair should be provided, possibly as part of the new bridge project.

Since 1925, the City has increased in area from 13 square miles to 115 square miles, and the population has increased from 100,000 to 290,000. As a result of this growth, a large number of well-planned subdivisions have been built. Desert land has been converted into efficient and attractive neighborhoods for the expanded population. Nonetheless, there remain substantial areas of population congestion with inadequate sanitary facilities. Few of the buildings referred to in the 1925 Plan have been modernized or replaced. It was noted that much had been accomplished to improve housing conditions in the years prior to 1925. Today, the following statement from the 1925 Plan is as true as when it appeared thirty-seven years ago.

In the past 15 years, conditions of living have been vastly improved, but there is much to be done.

LEGISLATION

The City Plan Commission was established by city ordinance in 1923 and Mr. Walter E. Stockwell was named Secretary-Plan Engineer. The report notes that a volunteer committee of *earnest* and *energetic* citizens is necessary to:

....plan far ahead and insure continuity of policy and to employ expert counsel for guidance in many different problems that continually arise.

Additional legislation was strongly recommended as essential to the fulfillment of the plan and the building of a modern city of which all its citizens may be proud. Proposed legislation included:

ZONING ORDINANCE

It is recommended that El Paso prepare a zoning ordinance as soon as there is thought to be reasonable prospect that it may be sustained by the courts.

El Paso's first comprehensive zoning ordinance was adopted in 1930. It has been studied and systematically updated since that time.

BUILDING CODE

Its need and legal status are unquestioned.

El Paso has had a building code since 1936.

Housing Code

In 1925 it was strongly urged that the City adopt a

HOUSING CODE

Housing conditions in the lower part of the City, the report stated, are bad and should be studied with a view to a gradual raising of the standards. The 1925 Plan went on to distinguish between a building code, a housing code, and a zoning ordinance.

Public control of building is exercised in three ways, each occupying a separate field but overlapping to some extent.

The Building Code has to do with the structural safety of buildings, and its need and legal status are unquestioned.

The Housing Code regulates the sanitary conditions of living as affected by the building and has to do with plumbing and drainage, water supply, privacy, light and ventilation and similar questions. The Housing Code applies equally in all parts of the city and while its legality is unquestioned it is usually applied only to the grosser evils as found in the tenement and 'slum' districts.

Zoning, on the other hand, is for the protection of all property owners against the unsuitable use of property in their neighborhoods.

A "tenement code" was adopted in 1951. A more comprehensive code bringing together in one ordinance all health and sanitary regulations concerning housing has been studied from time to time and is currently a subject of general discussion.

SUBDIVISION STANDARDS

The subdivision of land is of vital interest and is one of the fundamentals of the City Plan. Little attention has been paid to topography or to proper articulation with streets which have gone before or which are to come after in some parts of El Paso.

There should be legislation requiring submission of all plats within the metropolitan district to the City Plan Commission for review of their conformity with the general street plan. The Texas Legislature passed such a law in 1951.

With a City Plan...it is possible to design new subdivisions for the use intended, instead of adhering blindly to the established standards.

In some districts a replatting would be very much to the advantages of both the owners and the city, allowing development in backward sections by making less costly the grading of the streets and closing unnecessary streets. The City Plan Commission will assist in such cases where the property owners will cooperate.

For some years, the subdivision and re-subdivision of land in and near El Paso has proceeded under subdivision standards and procedures adopted by the City Plan Commission. These standards include most of the provisions urged in the earlier Plan.

THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

To implement the objectives of the 1925 Plan, Mayor Robert E. Thomason, (now Federal District Judge) asked, in 1927, ten citizens to formulate a program of public improvements to cover the next five or ten years *because it seems that El Paso is entering on a new era of growth for which constructive plans should be made.*

That Committee, whose Chairman was Mr. W. E. Robertson, reported in 1928, saying:

The advantages of budgeting capital expenditures over a considerable period in the future are well known. With a program developed well ahead, expenditures for needed improvements may be kept within the means of the city to pay.

Having examined the city's total assessed valuation, tax rate, and legal limitations on bonding, the Committee presents an analysis of proposed expenditures and their effect on the tax rate, as well as a schedule of proposed projects.

The ability of the city to finance such a program has been given careful study and the Committee believes it will work a hardship on no one; on the contrary, it is certain El Paso will become a more desirable place in which to live and do business, as wise investments are made in public improvements for the benefit of all.

For projects of primary importance, the ten-year program included:

Schools	*$1,876,000*
Public Works	*2,818,000*
Plan Projects	*820,000*
Total	*$5,815,000*

An additional $1.4 million was suggested for projects of secondary importance.

These recommendations accompanied the figures:

1. That the charter of the city be amended to increase the maximum tax rate to $2.25 for the first five years of the program, and to $2.35 thereafter.

2. That the program be adopted, and an election called to authorize issuance of the bonds proposed for the first three years, and bienially thereafter as needed.

3. That an advisory committee be appointed to revise and re-adjust the schedule annually, and to supervise the issuance of the bonds and the expenditure of funds.

(The first city bond issue was $45,000 in 1898, and the net bonded debt of the City in October, 1928, was $6,000,000.)

This comprehensive revenue and capital improvement program was published in November, 1928. The City Plan Commission assumed responsibility for reviewing and revising the capital improvement program annually, as had been recommended. The 1923 city ordinance which established the Commission also directed such review.

The depression delayed execution of the Robertson proposals. In the report of the City Plan Commission for 1931, Chairman Roland Harwell writes:

It will be noted that the activities of the Commission have been mainly confined to matters of minor consequence. No projects of any particular importance are set forth as accomplishments, or as recommended for the consideration of the public.

The reason for this situation is found in the depleted state of City finances, and in the policies of retrenchment, incident to the prevailing economic depression, which the City government has adopted. There are many projects of public benefit which might otherwise have been offered for consideration. These must await more favorable circumstances for the serious consideration which they merit. It would appear to be useless to proceed at present with studies and recommendations covering such projects.

Publication of capital improvement programs for El Paso was resumed by the City Plan Commission in 1953, with annual revisions being made each year thereafter.

THE 1962 PLAN

The recommendations of the 1925 Plan were practical suggestions. A substantial number of the proposals have become reality. A few are no longer valid because of unanticipated development. Others are even more urgently needed today than at the time they were originally proposed. Over the years, the 1925 Plan has served as a civic conscience and has caused city officials and community leaders to pause and evaluate proposals for public expenditures in terms of their total effect on the city. Mr. Walter E. Stockwell, who worked with Mr. George E. Kessler in the preparation of the plan, remain-in the City employ as Plan Engineer until 1952. Through his knowledge and understanding the objectives of the Plan were retained. Over the years the 1925 Plan has served as a frame of reference for departmental and Plan Commission recommendations. In the introductory chap-

ter to the 1925 Plan, Mr. Stockwell wrote:

A City Plan is a constantly developing and changing thing, meeting new conditions and keeping always well ahead of improvements in order that there may be avoided the haphazard and piecemeal development of the past. While the Plan can at any time be changed, experience indicates that a well thought-out plan tends to bring about its own consummation by holding up an ideal and a program toward which the community may work, and if any change is suggested it must be judged by its effect upon the whole plan, and the burden of proof of its superiority be upon the ones who propose the change.

The 1962 Plan is appropriately intended as an extension of the 1925 Plan and of the planning process which has evolved during the intervening years.

The 1962 Comprehensive Plan will consist of the following:

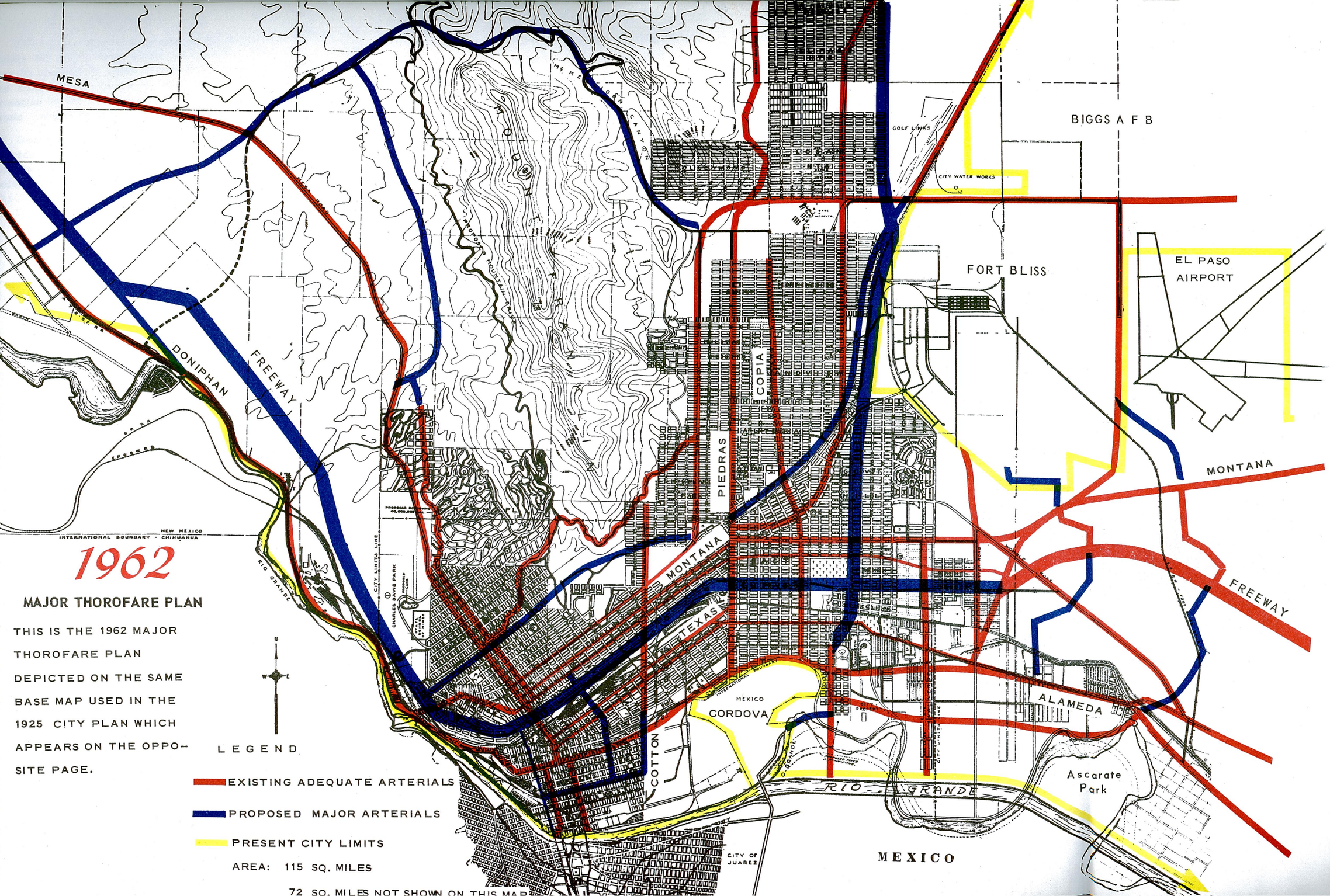
Economic and Population Report

Public Policy Report

Land Use Report

Community Facilities Report

Comprehensive Plan
- (a) Land Use
- (b) Community Facilities
- (c) Thoroughfares



1962

MAJOR THOROFARE PLAN

THIS IS THE 1962 MAJOR THOROFARE PLAN DEPICTED ON THE SAME BASE MAP USED IN THE 1925 CITY PLAN WHICH APPEARS ON THE OPPOSITE PAGE.

LEGEND

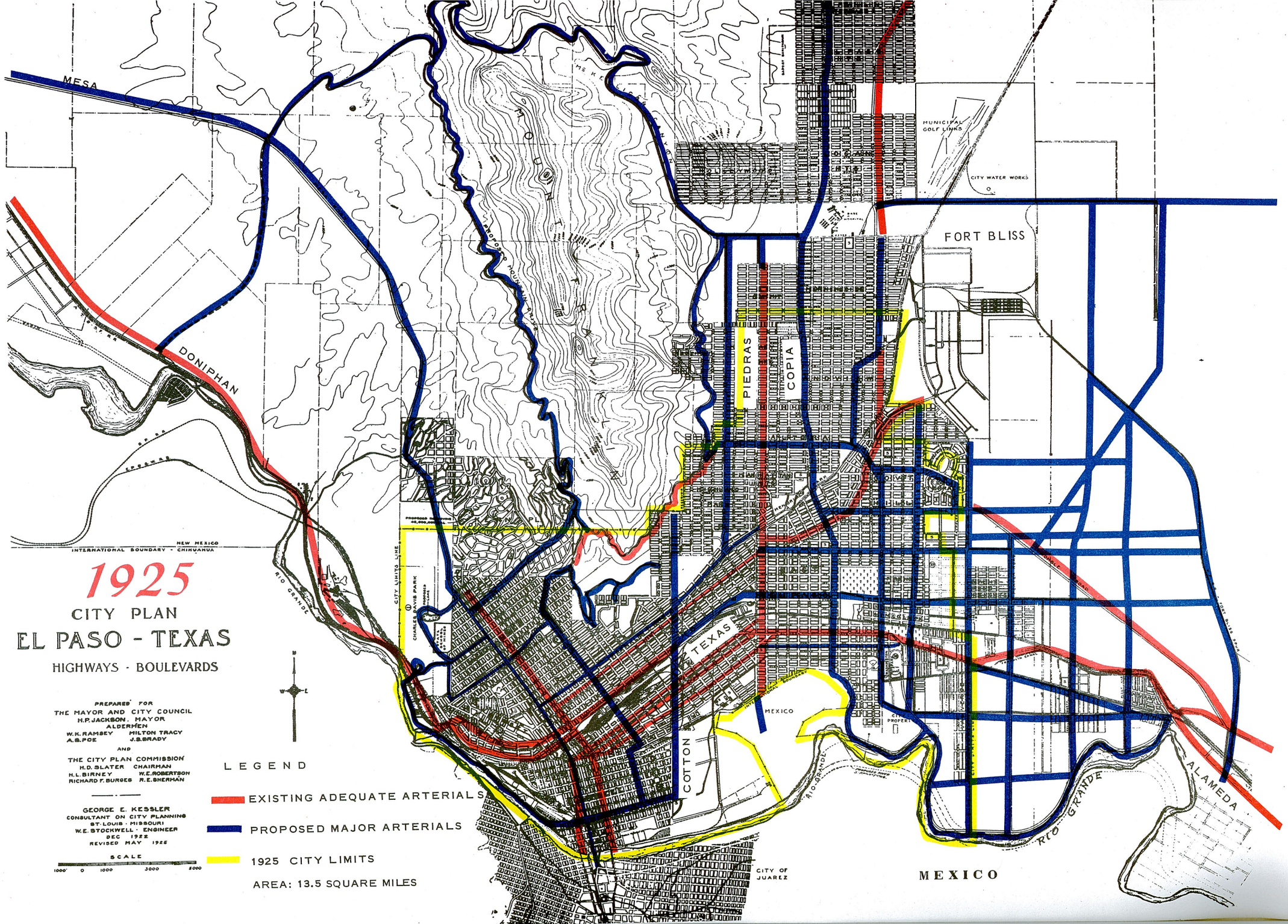
EXISTING ADEQUATE ARTERIALS

PROPOSED MAJOR ARTERIALS

PRESENT CITY LIMITS

AREA: 115 SQ. MILES

72 SQ. MILES NOT SHOWN ON THIS MAP


MESA
DONIPHAN
FRANKLIN MOUNTAINS
MUNICIPAL GOLF LINKS
CITY WATER WORKS
FORT BLISS
PIEDRAS
COPIA
NEW MEXICO
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY - CHIHUAHUA
CITY LIMITS LINE
CHARLES DAVIS PARK
RIO GRANDE
TEXAS
MEXICO
COTTON
ALAMEDA
CITY OF JUAREZ
MEXICO
1925
CITY PLAN
EL PASO - TEXAS
HIGHWAYS · BOULEVARDS
PREPARED FOR
THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
H.P. JACKSON, MAYOR
ALDERMEN
W.K. RAMSEY MILTON TRACY
A.B. POE J.B. BRADY
AND
THE CITY PLAN COMMISSION
H.D. SLATER CHAIRMAN
H.L. BIRNEY W.E. ROBERTSON
RICHARD F. BURGES R.E. SHERMAN
GEORGE E. KESSLER
CONSULTANT ON CITY PLANNING
ST. LOUIS · MISSOURI
W.E. STOCKWELL · ENGINEER
DEC 1922
REVISED MAY 1925
SCALE
1000' 0 1000 3000 5000
LEGEND
EXISTING ADEQUATE ARTERIALS
PROPOSED MAJOR ARTERIALS
1925 CITY LIMITS
AREA: 13.5 SQUARE MILES

THE CITY OF EL PASO

MAYOR	RALPH E. SEITSINGER
ALDERMEN	TED BENDER, MAYOR PRO TEM
	BERT WILLIAMS
	RAY WATTS
	R. R. " BUCK " ROGERS
CITY PLAN COMMISSION	ED HICKS, CHAIRMAN
	MRS. PATRICIA ADKINS
	F. DEEL GRIFFIN
	FELIPE HERNANDEZ
	CLIFFORD KEETH
	S. C. McELRATH
	HERBERT SCHWARTZ
	EUGENE M. THOMAS
	JOHN L. WINN
EX - OFFICIO MEMBERS	RALPH E. SEITSINGER, MAYOR
	PHILLIP G. DIETER, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS
	CHARLES W. DAVIS, CITY ENGINEER
	JONATHAN R. CUNNINGHAM, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING
	JOSEPH D. NADON, DIRECTOR OF TRAFFIC
PARTICIPATING STAFF	JONATHAN R. CUNNINGHAM, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING
	CLAUDIO ARENAS, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF PLANNING
	ROSALIO FIERRO JR.
	BETTY A. HASTINGS
	LUARA THOMAS
	NESTOR A. VALENCIA

JULY, 1962