TALK

ON

JONES PARK DEVELOPMENT

APPLETON, WISCONSIN

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BY

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Appleton has within 300 feet of its downtown a site of nearly five acres, ideally situated, and with such potential as to make it of unusual significance and importance to the city's future. Appropriate public use of this site would help to stabilize and improve downtown property values, and make Appleton the governmental, civic, and cultural center of the Fox River area.

I am speaking of Jones Park, now being used for general recreational purposes, but ideally located for housing a variety of facilities which would make it a showplace of beauty and utility for the entire community.

Let's take a closer look at this valuable piece of property, and for the next few minutes envisage Jones Park as a publicly owned site, uniquely located, with great promise for the role it can play in Appleton's long-range plans.

MAY WE HAVE THE LIGHTS OUT PLEASE

Slide 1
(Map of Downtown
Appleton)

Jones Park is located on Lawrence Street, one block south of the main east-west thoroughfare, College Avenue, and midway between the two major routes, Oneida and Memorial, crossing the Fox River north and south.

The ground slopes sharply from Lawrence on the north, dropping almost forty feet below the street and adjoining properties to the east, south, and west. This topography makes the site potentially valuable for many uses because access can be had from varying levels around its perimeter.

Examining the location of Jones Park carefully, we find that it has still another interesting characteristic. The property fronts on what will probably become a major southerly leg of any peripheral traffic system around the downtown area. Notice also that the site has an excellent relationship to the present major downtown commercial district.

After a summary look at various possibilities, I am firmly convinced that Jones Park has great promise for use as a civic center for the City of Appleton. Its proximity to the County Building would allow a well integrated governmental area which might include a new city hall, possibly a new federal building and post office, accompanied by an arena or auditorium to accommodate civic functions, conventions, and other gatherings.

Notice also that a large, low-use density block of land lies to the northeast. This allows serious consideration to be given future expansion of a civic center development at the Jones Park site into this northeast block.

Looking at present civic facilities, we find that the existing City Hall is old and will soon need replacement; the Post Office and Federal Building is no longer totally

adequate to provide the most efficient type of postal operation for this modern, streamlined age; and the need certainly exists for a civic auditorium or arena. Planning of facilities such as these in Jones Park further suggests another collateral use - one that would utilize the lower levels of a structure built on the site; one that would take advantage of the topography; and one that would use to the fullest extent traffic circulation on a peripheral route encompassing Lawrence as the southerly leg - namely, the use of the lower levels of a Jones Park Civic Center as a parking garage.

Development of a civic center at present grade level over a parking structure would generate considerable demand for parking spaces by employees and visitors to the new City Hall, the Post Office, the County Building, and, certainly, the auditorium. In addition, the parking deck would serve the Appleton central business district, which is certain to expand as the community grows.

With these thoughts in mind, let us consider the suitability of the Jones Park site as a combined civic center-parking garage facility.

Slide 2 (Parking Lot in Chicago)

During the past decade, automobile registration in our country has increased phenomenally. The accommodation of autos in such large quantities as seen in this Chicago parking lot has become extremely important. After all, the future health of the core of our cities depends upon the ease, comfort, convenience, and pleasure with which its citizens can reach and use the facilities located there.

One method of handling large quantities of traffic safely and efficiently is to utilize peripheral circulation routes. In the concept of peripheral planning, we try to make it as convenient as possible for the occupants of a city to reach its core. The elements of this type planning

are not new, and are recognized by most responsible public and private agencies - city planning departments, professional planners, state highway departments, even the U. S. Bureau of Public Roads.

As a specific example of what we mean by peripheral planning, let us look at a small midwestern community in which this concept has been put into action.

Slide 3 (Kalamazoo Schematic)

Here we see a schematic land use plan for the downtown of Kalamazoo, Michigan. At present this plan is being implemented gradually, step-by-step. The ultimate goal will be the establishment of a low speed, peripheral road around the core of the downtown area. Penetrating this core will be several parking lots and parking decks. Autos can enter the peripheral highway from several feeder roads, circulate around the core until they come to an

appropriate parking lot, move into the lot, park, discharge their occupants, and remain conveniently stored until needed. Meanwhile, the pedestrian can move safely and easily to his destination in the heart of the city.

Slide 4
(Map of Downtown
Appleton)

Actually, in Appleton, the peripheral traffic concept has already been recommended in modified form several times. Various schemes dealing with traffic flow have utilized different thoroughfares, including Washington and Franklin Streets on the north and Lawrence Street on the south, as suggested locations for major by-pass traffic arteries around the central business district.

Routing of southerly traffic along Lawrence places Jones Park in an especially convenient position to act as a terminal for auto traffic.

A parking facility located here is no more than seven minutes walking time to practically any commercial facility in the entire downtown. Most important, integration of Jones Park as a civic center and parking garage fits a pattern of total central business district redevelopment for Appleton. In addition, the Park has sufficient area for the related uses which might be considered, as well as having a topographic and geographic relationship to its surroundings and the street pattern which allows a well diluted traffic diffusion at entrances and exits from any parking deck which might be located there.

Below grade parking facilities are no longer a pipe dream. Many years ago, when the garage under ~~Pershing~~ Union Square in San Francisco was proposed, the hue and cry was deafening -

it wasn't practical; it wasn't feasible; it couldn't be financed; a return would never be realized on the investment. We have come a long way since ~~Pershing~~ Square, and now can look to many cities in our own locality that have built successful facilities, partially or totally underground.

Slide 5 (Over-all Grant Park)

Here, we see the Grant Park Underground Garage in Chicago. This structure is a two-level deck, built in 1953 under the authority of the Chicago Park District. The garage has a capacity of 2400 automobiles, and is reached by ramps leading to it directly from one of the busiest streets in Chicago - Michigan Avenue.

Slide 6 (Ramp Down to Grant Park Garage)

The Michigan Avenue entrance leads to the first level below grade. Notice in the right background how the park above has been refilled and landscaped to provide a beautiful setting on top of the underground deck. Incidentally, this park is located on the periphery of downtown Chicago,

just as the Jones Park area is located on the boundary of a peripheral road around the core of Appleton's central business district.

Slide 7 (Elevation of RR Tracks Adjacent Grant Park)

Financing of the Grant Park Garage was by revenue bonds issued upon authority granted by the State in 1951. Costs on the original parking deck were approximately $3500 per car space. These costs were high because of the construction difficulties imposed by adjacent railroads, surrounding high buildings, and poor soil conditions.

Another city with a progressive underground parking program is Detroit, Michigan. During the past few years there have been constructed in Detroit three underground facilities.

Slide 8 (Grand Circus Garage Entrance)

The most interesting of these is the garage located under Grand Circus Park, a historic focal point of downtown Detroit. The garage is entered directly from entrances ~~directly~~

located on a major thoroughfare. It contains two and three levels underground, was built in 1957, and has a capacity of 1043 automobiles. The deck is operated by the Municipal Parking Authority of the City of Detroit, and was financed by revenue bonds issued by the Authority. Illustrative of the success the garage has had is the fact that it accommodated 768,000 automobiles during the year 1959.

Cost of the facility, approximately $3900 per car space, ran more than that of the normal underground deck because of the odd shape of the site and because of construction difficulties encountered in the foundation work.

Rates for parking are 35¢ for the first hour; 25¢ for each additional hour. A maximum day rate of $1.50 is charged, and a maximum evening rate of 75¢. Monthly rates vary from 20 to 30 dollars.

Slide 9
(Grand Circus Park
Landscaping)

Notice how beautifully the park has been relandscaped over the construction. In fact, the entire character of Grand Circus Park, which many feared would be destroyed forever, was reestablished with considerable improvement once the deck was completed.

Slide 10
(Ramps to Ford
Auditorium)

Another Detroit facility, which has enjoyed considerable success over the short time it has been in existence, is the two-level underground parking garage, also built in 1957 and located adjacent the Ford Auditorium in the Civic Center. The Ford Garage has a capacity of 697 automobiles, of which half are hourly parkers and half monthly. Monthly parkers store their cars on the lower level, while hourly parkers keep their automobiles on the upper level.

This deck is operated by the Detroit Municipal Parking Authority, and was financed, as was the Grand Circus Park,

by revenue bonds. Rates are slightly lower than at the Grand Circus facility, being 25¢ for the first hour; 15¢ for each additional hour; with a $1.15 maximum day rate, and 75¢ maximum evening rate. Monthly storage rates, with in and out privileges, are $20. Incidentally, there is a waiting list of approximately 60 persons for monthly parking stalls.

In the first year of operation, this garage parked 321,000 automobiles, or an average of 973 per day. The turnover figures are low because of the high percentage of monthly parkers. Cost of the deck was lower than the other two described previously, and ran about $2,260 per car space.

Slide 11 (Jefferson Over Garage)

Notice how well the garage located under this street has been integrated with the Civic Center. Again, its location has been deliberately selected on the periphery of the

Slide 12
(Ford Auditorium)

downtown core, and it is situated at the terminal point of a major expressway to the central business district and the Civic Center's Ford Auditorium. (EXTEMPORIZE ON DECK LOCATION IN SLIDE)

Thus, with solid proof that an underground garage can be built and successfully operated, let us return to the Jones Park site and see specifically what this beautiful area might be used for.

Slide 13
(Plate 2 - Land Use Study)

This is a plan of the top level of Jones Park used as a Civic Center for the City of Appleton. To briefly orient ourselves, up (on the map) is North; Lawrence Street runs along the top and the boundary of the Park extends south from Lawrence, with a tip fronting on Appleton, and a connection extending southwest toward the existing Courthouse.

Here is shown one suggested building arrangement, in which the City Hall is oriented with its long axis north and south, and surrounded by a beautifully landscaped pedestrian area which bridges Lawrence Street. Lawrence ramps down approximately twenty feet below present grade, and entry to the parking deck from Lawrence can be had with no vehicular interference or danger to visitors to the Center.

The grade level connection to downtown allows the pedestrian to walk in to or out of the Civic Center area without crossing any major thoroughfare, and bridging across Lawrence Avenue also allows full integration with future downtown redevelopment plans which might be proposed for the City of Appleton.

Building "B" suggests a possible location and arrangement of a new Federal Building and Post Office. "C" Building represents the Civic Auditorium or Arena.

Notice the landscaped walk that connects the City Hall and Federal Building to the Courthouse on Seventh Street.

Underneath this beautiful top layer of trees, buildings, fountains, and people, extends four levels of parking (POINT TO SECTION AA, AND EXTEMPORIZE).

Entrance to the parking deck is from three different points, with the most important of these being the Lawrence Street entrance. Another entrance is provided from the general area of the existing Courthouse by a ramp down to the top level of the deck. A third entry is provided at the garage bottom level by an access road sloping down gently to the bottom parking floor of the deck from Appleton Street.

These three entries will allow adequate, safe diffusion of traffic even during maximum peak hours when the deck must be completely filled or emptied in a short time.

Slide 14
(Grant Park
Garage Ramp)

Slide 15
(Kalamazoo
Pedestrian Area)

Slide 16
(Roadway Under
Convention Hall)

(EXTEMPORIZE HERE ON RAMPS, PEDESTRIAN AREAS, AND ROAD DROPPED UNDER BUILDING)

Slide 17
(Parking Level)

Moving down to the major entrance level off Lawrence Street, we find that access is directly from the road, carrying automobiles in past control points, beyond which they can move to the lower levels, up to the top level, or remain on the main entrance floor at the Lawrence Street level. Notice the easy one-way traffic pattern, the generous aisles, bounded

by angle parking spaces. The layout has been designed to accommodate self-parking, and dimensions have been made generous enough so that even the most cautious or timid of drivers should have little difficulty parking safely and conveniently.

Direct access to the arena or auditorium and all other buildings above is provided from each parking level. Thus, it is never necessary for the parker in the deck to go outside to reach either the City Hall, Post Office, or the Arena-Auditorium area.

Such a parking deck as the one we are speaking of might have a capacity of approximately 1100 automobiles. Construction costs, of course, would vary, depending upon the method of construction, the staging of the work, and many other factors which can only be determined after a detailed study is made. However, for preliminary budget

thinking, it is possible that this deck can be built for between ~~$2500~~ $2000 and ~~$3500~~ $3000 per car space. Financing of the deck itself is probably best accomplished by use of parking funds obtained from meters and other municipal parking facilities.

It should be emphasized here that most experts in this field feel that all revenue from all city operated parking facilities should be pooled and spent on the over-all program rather than making each of the facilities self-sustaining.

Slide 18 (Upper Level of Jones Park)

The buildings at the upper level, the Federal Building, City Hall, the Auditorium, could all be financed in different ways. City Hall construction, for example, might come out of municipal revenue and perhaps ~~general obligation~~ bonds ~~issued~~ by the City of Appleton. The Federal Building, in accordance with present practices, might be built on a Federal leaseback arrangement. The public auditorium or arena

could be built from funds raised by public subscription. Appleton, being a relatively wealthy area, should certainly have many citizens interested in lending their name to such a worthy cause.

Slide 19 (Northland Environment)

A civic development such as has been proposed here tonight could be of lasting beauty and a source of pride to the citizens of Appleton. It could reestablish the sense of human scale and pleasant environment such as we see here but so often forgotten in our ~~normal~~ usual day-to-day rush.

Above all, a well planned civic center would help knit together a downtown now threatened by congestion, inefficiency, and obsolescence, and would be a rallying point for the revitalization of the Appleton Central Business District.