

# Parking, Parks Discussed at League Meeting

## Cities Should Get Sites Now for Park Program Purposes

By ERIC WENTWORTH  
Mail Tribune Staff Writer

Cities with programs for parks and recreation should acquire land now even if they lack funds to develop it right away, officials at the League of Oregon Cities convention in Eugene last week were told.

A second point stressed by speakers in the park and recreation section at the convention was the necessity for co-operation between cities and school districts for joint development of school-park sites.

Two discussion leaders described what can be accomplished by voluntary efforts in creating recreational facilities.

"As your city grows," Frank Shearer, Eugene city councilman said, "you will need every acre of park you can get."

Urges Acquisition  
He urged the acquisition of potential park sites before their surroundings are developed and land values rise. "It can mean the difference between paying \$500 and \$5000 an acre," he said.

Eugene does not require subdividers to allocate a portion of their land or cash equivalent to the city for park purposes, Shearer said. But, he continued, subdividers in several cases have been sold on the idea of giving land.

He said planning consultants prepared sketches to show how facilities could be developed. Subdividers were told how such facilities could increase the value of nearby property.

Medford Proposal  
A subdivision ordinance proposal currently before the Medford planning commission would require the allocation of land or cash.

Shearer said Eugene's yearly parks and recreation budget totals \$200,000, devoted largely to personnel. He said \$50,000 is raised annually by a 1-mill levy for capital improvements.

Lee Murphy, chairman of the 11-member Lane County Park and Recreation commission, discussed how a county group can assist and complement city programs.

He agreed with Shearer on the need to acquire park sites in advance. "We are already acting 30 years too late," he said.

County Could Acquire  
Murphy said a county could acquire and "hold" land just outside the city limits until the city annexes the land in the course of expansion and can then develop it. He said cities hope the county will develop such land itself before the annexation but this cannot be done.

Asked about the "suburban fringe" problem, Murphy said, "The metropolitan park districts are a solution." Describing them as "one of the coming things," he said they could "cut expenses immeasurably" and prove an advantage to all concerned.

A metropolitan district can include the major city plus surrounding suburbs where voters agree to joint it.

Lane county's current parks and recreation budget, according to Murphy, is an annual \$60,000. He said the county has 1,400 acres in parks, devoted to such non-urban uses as camp sites, boat landings, and water sports areas.

"All it takes is a little time and effort and work," he said.

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obtaining rocks from the supply brought in by the "rock hounds." These he placed along the right of way to create a natural atmosphere.

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## Authorities Review Off-Street Parking Measures, Aspects

By ERIC WENTWORTH  
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Voices of experience discussed municipal off-street parking measures at the League of Oregon Cities convention in Eugene last week.

D. Jackson Faustmann outlined general methods for cities seeking to solve parking problems. Faustmann, a consulting traffic engineer from Sacramento, Calif., has recently completed a parking study for Klamath Falls.

Floyd L. Wynne, city councilman from Klamath Falls, described the "tremendous amount of difficulty" that city is encountering in its efforts to establish off-street parking facilities.

Successful Measures  
Eugene Marsh, McMinnville city attorney, told of successful measures in his community. "It's probably a little easier in a town like McMinnville," he said. McMinnville's population is about 7,000, just over a third that of Klamath Falls.

Mayor George Christopher of San Francisco said in a press conference that the voters of his city approved a municipal off-street parking measure in 1947 because "they were just fed up with congestion."

Faustmann emphasized the need for a specific plan of action before seeking to arouse

public support.

Parking Survey  
This plan, he said, should be preceded by a parking survey designed to develop it. It should also be preceded by decisions on basic policy matters, he continued.

The survey, he explained, should include a study of the community's economy and future growth, a review of current parking facilities and practices, determination of land available for off-street facilities and probable costs of acquisition.

It should also include, he said, the selection of specific sites, the functional design of parking facilities and an estimate of earnings and expenses from operation of these facilities.

Five Small Lots  
Faustmann's study for Klamath Falls recommends establishment of five small lots at specific locations, providing 212 spaces at an estimated total cost of \$297,650.

Basic policy matters to be decided include, according to Faustmann, the type of location, the type of facilities, responsibility for the program, method of financing, who is to operate the facilities, how to determine parking rates and what are the possibilities of developing a cooperative public-private program.

With reference to financing, Faustmann said several California cities have issued revenue bonds and redeemed them with revenue from parking meters and the off-street facilities plus a pro-rated assessment on benefiting properties.

Revenue Bonds  
Revenue bonds cannot be paid off by money from a general tax levy. General obligation bonds, on the other hand, can be paid off by such a levy if revenue from other sources proves insufficient.

Faustmann said general obligation bonds are not used in California since in that state a two-thirds vote of city residents is required to authorize them. Revenue bonds, he explained, can be authorized there by the city charter or by a simple majority vote.

In Oregon, general obligation bonds require but a simple majority as well.

Faustmann referred to the Oregon statute passed last year that authorizes cities in this state to finance off-street parking programs with revenue bonds and the establishment of special assessment districts.

Believes Some 'Bugs'  
This statute, he remarked, roughly parallels the authority on California's books. But, he said, the city attorney of Klamath Falls believes there are some "bugs" in the Oregon law that should be corrected at the next legislative session. He did not specify what these "bugs" were.

"To date no parking facilities in Oregon have been financed through any type of bond issue," Faustmann said. He mentioned an attempt in Eugene and Medford's ill-fated 1956 measure as programs involving general obligation bonds that have failed in the past.

Councilman Wynne of Klamath Falls said off-street parking is that city's most pressing problem. He said it must be solved if the central core area is to survive, and be revitalized.

He said the downtown merchants' association there is "poorly supported" and "not very active." He said the downtown area is in danger of losing out to a new shopping center just outside the city limits.

Main Problem  
The main problem at present, Wynne said, is developing a workable assessment district. He said the proposed district was recently reduced in size to eliminate residential properties since the owners of these properties oppose the plan even if they are not to be taxed.

He said Faustmann presented at public hearings the results of the survey he had been invited to make. But, he said, "We haven't gotten very far since."

There are questions, Wynne said, on the legality of the Oregon statute. Like Faustmann, he did not mention specific points. He said only that Oregon's law was "not exactly like the California law."

Wynne said another obstacle is the state bond commission's refusal to indicate in advance whether it will approve the bonding of the Klamath Falls program. He said the commission had been asked for some prior hint of its decision. But, he said, it replied it would decide only after the final project is presented with the bonds.

Wynne said he would like to ask the League for help in dealing with the state agency.

Other Problems  
Still other problems, Wynne related, have developed with respect to administration of the proposed assessment district and the effects of such assessments on the downtown economy.

He said it would cost the city \$5,000 a year to pro rate the assessments and collect them. He said it is yet to be decided who would keep the district's books. He pointed out that varying property values would make this book-keeping a complicated procedure.

He explained that while property owners would be assessed directly, the city in most cases would be dealing ultimately not with them but with the merchants leasing the property.

The property owners could be expected to offset their assessment losses by seeking higher lease rates. The question then, Wynne said, is whether the merchants would renegotiate these leases.

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## Two Years Required to Build Model Railroad at Camp White Domiciliary

By SID HOLLINGSWORTH  
Camp White—Walter Holman knows quite a lot about what pioneer railroad construction men of the west had to contend with in building the transcontinental lines.

He recently completed two years of labor in building a miniature railroad system in an upstairs room of the VA domiciliary.

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## Class Hears Talk on Public Relations

Ashland — Mrs. Dorothy Gustison, first vice president of the State Congress of Parents and Teachers, and Mrs. Jessie Fitch, past president of the Lincoln school PTA and member of the county board, addressed Dr. Alva W. Graham's graduate class in public and professional relations at Southern Oregon college Thursday.

Explaining the basic objectives of the PTA, the two leaders said the organization now has 11 million members with 43,000 units comprising the largest volunteer organization in the country. The organization is non-sectarian, non-partisan, and works with the schools without seeking to direct or control them.

Mayor Christopher described San Francisco's establishment of a municipal parking authority after the initial bond issue. This authority, set up as a non-profit corporation, has since floated bond issues on its own at a 5 per cent interest rate, he said.

"Banks eat these up," he stated. He explained that when all bonds have been paid off, the corporation will revert to the city.

San Francisco will see an increase in parking meter rates Jan. 1, Mayor Christopher said. The increased revenue, he said, is to be allocated to more off-street parking facilities. The half-hour rate is to be increased from 5 to 10 cents, he added.

He said the new revenue can mean extension of facilities to benefit merchants in outlying areas as well. He estimated the increase at \$1 million a year.

Revenue from Lot  
Revenue from the new lot would possibly be derived through an "honor system," Marsh explained. He stated there were no plans to install meters, but that perhaps coin boxes would be placed at certain locations about the lot.

He said establishment of the lot has already resulted in steps by adjacent businesses to remodel and improve their stores.

Mayor Christopher said San Francisco in 1947 had to overcome opposition from private garage owners in getting voters to approve a \$5 million general obligation bond issue for off-street parking.

"Since that time," he said, "we have built a half dozen facilities in excess of \$30 million."

Development of these facilities has encouraged private investment so that today the situation is competitive, he said.

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**MINIATURE RAILROAD** — Lelia Birch, VFW auxiliary and Polly Offutt, American Legion auxiliary representatives of VAVS, view the new attraction in arts and crafts at the VA Domiciliary. Scale model is the work of a veteran member. Many parts were built from materials contrived for effects created. The railroad measures 250 feet of track and is set up on a table lengthwise in a special room of the domiciliary. —(Sanford Byne Photo)



**COMPLETED WORK** — Walter Holman returns on the light for his completed work in building the model railroad for VA domiciliary members. Billy Andrews, Mail Tribune agent at Camp White, is at the controls (left) in this scene overlooking the yards. Assembly and construction of numerous details involved two years of effort. The American Red Cross recovered the parts three years ago and had them shipped in for the members to reconstruct. —(Sanford Byne Photo)

Many, many thanks for your generous support