

# Medford Civic Center Could Get Boost by City Council Action

## Original Idea of 1931 Has Existed In Planners Minds

By GREG NOKES  
Mail Tribune Staff Writer  
The idea of a Medford civic center, although it was first broached in 1931, has never really gotten off the ground. It has existed largely in the minds only of city planners from 30 years ago to the present.

The reason for this is that no real study has ever been given to the proposal. However, if the city council is willing, the planning commission will soon give the civic center idea what it feels is a long overdue look-see.

This would be done under a joint city-federal public buildings study which is planned for the next fiscal year. It has been suggested that the civic center approach be made an integral part of this study.

What is presently known about the civic center proposal can be summed up in a few paragraphs.

**Original Idea**  
The idea was originally that of the 1931 planning commission working with Jacob L. Crane Jr., a Chicago planning consultant. It was prompted by the knowledge that a new courthouse would be built in the city as 1931 was the year in which the county seat was transferred from Jacksonville to Medford.

Crane and the planning commission selected an area around Central park (now Westside park) as the site for the civic center. It was then anticipated that the city library, which was constructed in 1911, would be moved to a new location leaving a park that was two square blocks in size.

The commission suggested that such buildings as hotels, churches, a municipal auditorium, a city hall, the courthouse and the new library be constructed around and facing the park.

**There Plan Rested**  
The courthouse was built in the center following a vote by the citizens of Medford, but there the plan rested until the present.

It is ironic that it is again a major public building, this time the proposed \$2 1/2 million Medford federal building that is largely responsible for reviving the plan. The planning commission had earlier decided to try and go ahead with the plan, but it admits that its deliberations on the matter were speeded up by the federal building.

The commission took the 1931 plan, and taking into account the demand for larger buildings and more parking areas, expanded it to tentatively include an 11-block area bounded by Main, Mistletoe, 10th and Holly sts.

The plan would make use of the courthouse, library and existing park area. And it is hoped that in the future the federal building, a state office building, a new city hall, school district offices, and possibly even a public auditorium could be built in the area.

**Not Developed Overnight**  
A civic center is not developed overnight, and the planning commission has no false hopes that such can be done here. But there is an opportunity to have several new public buildings erected in Medford within a relatively short period of time and those would give the civic center the boost it needs.

These public buildings, both present and future, would be integrated both in appearance and in their relationship to one another. Off-street parking would be provided, and the civic center area itself would be landscaped to some degree.

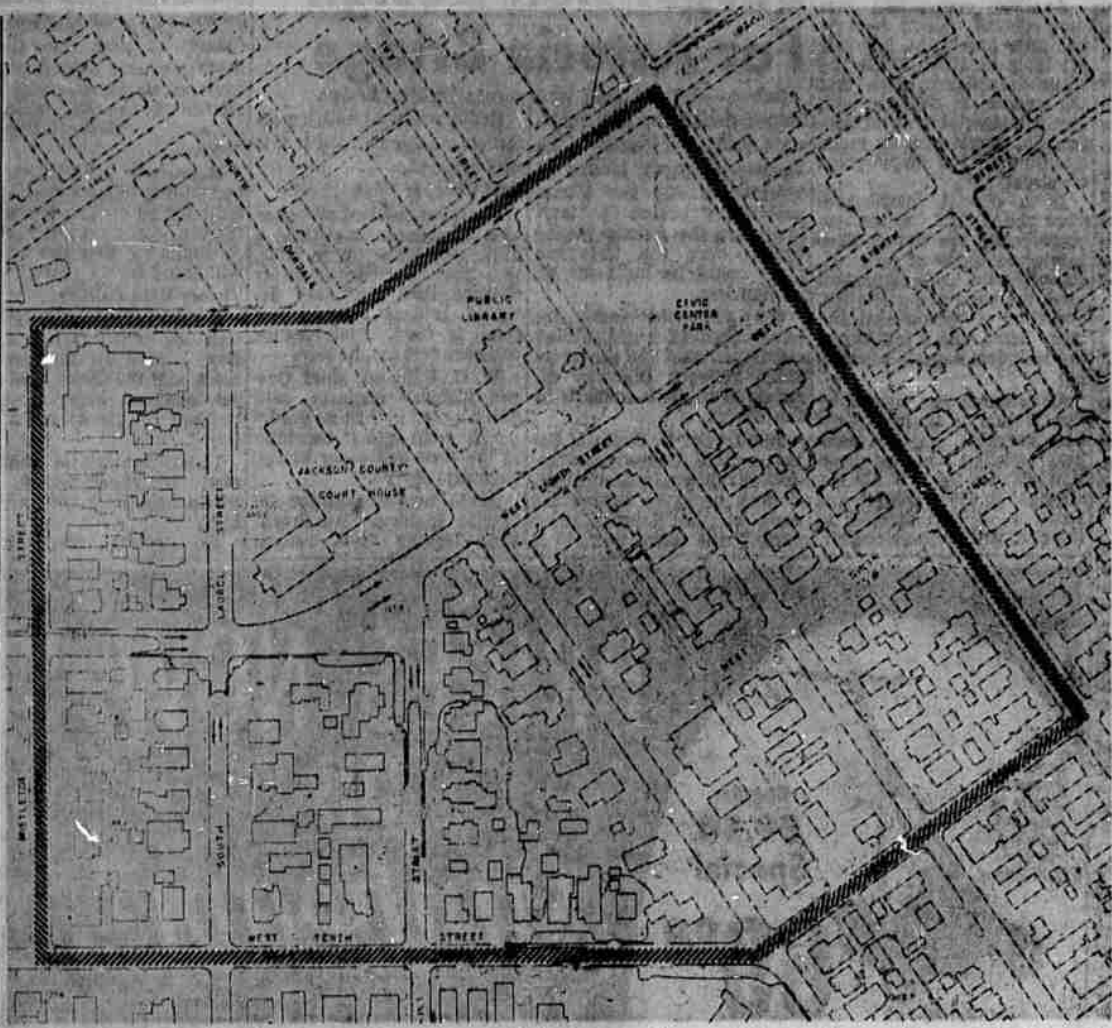
This is where the idea rests today.

A major study would be required to determine such necessary things as the appearance and design of the civic center itself, the kind, size and location of the public buildings to be included in the center; the manner or degree to which these buildings should be architecturally integrated; the amount of off-street parking area that would be needed; and, of course, the cost of the city's share in such a project.

The civic center in theory is not new. Civic centers of one kind or another could be found in some of mankind's earliest cities.

In the United States many large cities, such as Los Angeles, have civic centers, and so do many smaller cities, such as Eugene. However, as City Planning Consultant Ned Langford points out, there is genuine disagreement on the desirability of having civic centers, particularly in smaller cities.

Many persons favor the



**CIVIC CENTER**—Pictured above is an 11-block area that is being tentatively proposed as the site of a Medford civic center. The current proposal is based on a similar proposal that was drawn up in 1931. The area is bounded by Main, Mistletoe, 10th and Holly sts. A civic center

would make use of the courthouse, library and park, and would include such future public buildings as a state office building, the federal building, a new city hall, and possibly even a municipal auditorium.

scattered development of public buildings, such as Medford has now, rather than having them all grouped together at one central location.

The chief arguments for a civic center can be found in the civic center plan for Eugene. That city's civic center is already partially completed, at an initial cost to the city of slightly more than \$1 million, which includes a city hall. The Eugene plan lists four main advantages:

—Convenience to the public. Transaction of business often requires contacts with two or more agencies of the same or different levels of government. Grouping of public offices simplifies the problems for these citizens.

—Increased administrative efficiency. When public buildings are grouped in a civic center, closer liaison between governmental agencies results, eliminating unnecessary duplication of work by the various agencies.

—Consolidate Departments  
Close liaison between government agencies tends to consolidate departments for city-county services such as public health, jail and city-county planning.

—Economy in land acquisition. It is simpler and less costly to expand a civic center to meet increased needs than it is to expand public building sites that are scattered throughout the central area of the city.

—Civic pride. Certainly the grouping of public buildings is more effective, it instills a greater sense of pride to the citizenry, and it is a landmark visited and remembered by many tourists.

—'Embodiment of Civic Pride'  
A publication of the American Society of Planning Officials goes even further on this last point and calls the civic center "the embodiment of civic pride." It adds that the civic center, because of its size, becomes the architectural focus of the city; it is also "a chance to give part of a city back to the pedestrians."

In selecting a location for a civic center, the Planning Advisory Service declares: "Nearly all experts on civic center planning agree that a civic center should be downtown."

A Dayton, Ohio, civic center study states: "A civic center should not be in the heart of the business district because it would break the continuity of business structures and a large amount of potential commercial land would be put to less profitable use; and unrelated vehicular traffic would be routed through the commercial area. A site on the fringe of the central retail district is generally a preferred location."

City Planning Consultant Langford has told the Medford city council in the past that the planning commission

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## Decision Expected on Recommendation of Site for Proposed \$2.5 Million Building

By GREG NOKES  
Mail Tribune Staff Writer  
The Medford city council is scheduled to render its long-awaited decision tomorrow night on a recommended site for a proposed \$2 1/2 million federal building, and on its decision could well hinge the success or failure of a 30-year-old plan for a Medford civic center.

The plan has never been closer to realization than it is today, but at the same time, never has it been more in jeopardy. And all because of the federal building.

A civic center is, essentially, an area that has been set aside within a city for the location of all related city, county, state and federal buildings. The buildings are usually constructed over a period of years, but all according to a plan which integrates them both geographically and architecturally.

**Courthouse in Plan**  
The city of Medford has a civic center plan which dates back to 1931 when it was proposed as part of a generalized

land-use plan for the city. The existing Jackson county courthouse was built in accordance with this plan when the county seat was moved from Jacksonville to Medford in 1931.

The plan largely inactive through the years, due in part to the fact that no large civic or public buildings have been erected in the city since then.

Last spring, when it was first known that a \$2 1/2 million federal building was proposed for Medford, the city planning commission in order to recommend a site for the building heartily endorsed the 1931 plan, made some minor modifications, and proposed to the city council that it be officially adopted.

**Action Delayed**  
That was in May, 1960. When the recommendation came before the council, that body elected to delay action on the matter for one month, ostensibly to determine the effect of the plan on property values in the proposed civic center area.

The council is apparently still determining these effects, since no action has been taken since then.

The one thing that can make or break the civic center right now is the federal building. The federal government is reportedly considering two sites for the building—one in the civic center area, and the other south of 10th st, between Central and Riverside avenues.

**Decision Factor**  
The council's choice between the two could well be the deciding factor in the federal government's decision. The council could conceivably recommend a third site, or no

site at all, but this would not appear likely.

The federal building is important to the civic center plan because it is the first of several public buildings that are proposed for Medford within a few years. The others would be a state office building and a new city hall.

Even without the federal building, the civic center could at first glance still be a partial success as the location for city, county and state buildings.

**Good Indication**  
However, if the council fails to recommend the civic center as the site for the federal building, it would be a good indication that it has no confidence in a civic center as such, and future planning for other buildings there would appear futile.

The civic center proposal received a blow several months ago when the general services administration announced that it was leaning toward the 10th st site for the federal building. However, recent developments have prompted the GSA to look twice at the site, and several persons, including Planning Commission President Jack Edson, have said that quick action on the part of the city could possibly induce the government to change its mind.

Accordingly, the planning commission shot off a resolution to the GSA and to Oregon's Congressional delegation, recommending that the building be located in the civic center. The commission was joined a week later by the Medford Chamber of Commerce, which also recommended the civic center site, and thereby indirectly en-

dorsed the civic center itself. The commission asked the city council at its April 22 meeting to send a similar recommendation because the council's action would carry more weight. But, the council balked at this and elected to postpone its decision for two weeks. Two weeks will be up tomorrow night.

The council has been at odds with the planning commission over certain aspects of the civic center proposal, and, on several occasions, one or two councilmen have publicly criticized the planning commission for its seemingly unilateral action in recommending a site in the civic center for the federal building.

On the other hand, the commission has said publicly that it believes it has a right to recommend that the federal building be located in the center because it is charged by the council itself, "with the primary responsibility for planning and orderly development of land use within the boundaries of the city . . ."

Privately, several members of the planning commission have said that if they don't bring the civic center proposal to a head, then no one will.

## Morse Opposes More Direct Military Action Against Cuba

By A. ROBERT SMITH  
Mail Tribune Washington Correspondent  
Washington—What should the United States do about Cuba?

Nobody seems to know, although there seems to be a general climate here which would support more direct American military action against Castro.

Last week Morse came close to an open break with the Kennedy administration on this question. The Senator was more than a little annoyed because he and the Senate Latin American Subcommittee, which he heads, had not been let in on American plans respecting Cuba, either before or after the invasion by Cuban rebels.

As the new president stood amid the wreckage of that abortive operation, Washington wondered what he would do to try to recoup his first major political setback. As Kennedy met with a host of Republican leaders, from Eisenhower and Hoover to MacArthur and Goldwater, the Oregon Senator suspected he had been deliberately left out in the cold because the Kennedy administration was planning another invasion and was seeking GOP sanction in advance.

**Spoke His Mind**  
Morse had previously spoken his mind against any military intervention. In a lengthy Senate speech April 24, Morse warned that direct American action against Cuba would easily topple Castro but also alienate much of the rest of Latin America, which is much more important than that melancholy little Caribbean island vicer Communist domination.

"Cuba is not a dagger pointed at the heart of the United States, but it is a dagger pointed at the heart of the United States," Morse declared.

The proper course of action would be to act in concert with all the other Latin nations. Communism in Cuba represents a greater threat to the other Latin nations than to the United States, Morse observed, and the United States should call for a meeting of the Organization of American States to get this point across and plan joint action to avert the spread of Communism.

The American states at Caracas in March, 1954, adopted a declaration respecting the threat of Communism in the hemisphere. It declared that "the domination or control of the political institutions of any American state by the International Communist movement, extending to this hemisphere the political systems of an extracolonial power, would constitute a threat to the sovereignty and political independence of the American states, endangering the peace of America, and would call for a meeting of consultation to consider the adoption of appropriate action in accordance with existing treaties."

The big question is to define "appropriate action." But Morse's point is that it must be defined by the nations of this hemisphere in concert and not by the United States alone.

This week Secretary of State Dean Rusk briefed Morse's subcommittee for three hours on the Cuban fiasco. Afterward, Morse said he was quite relieved to hear that no new invasion was contemplated by the United States.

**Bills Approved by Legislature**  
Salem — (UPI) — Measures approved Monday:  
By the Senate:  
SB1113—Contracts, purchases and sales made by state agencies.  
SB294—Educational television and radio.  
SB549—Beach easements.  
SB549—Four p.m. executive vacancies for the governor.  
SB553—Bonds.  
SB1563—Real estate brokers.  
SB1575—Port of Portland contracts.  
SB1578—Donating one's body for scientific and medical purposes.  
SB1584—Licensing of real estate brokers and salesmen.  
SB1584—Liquor petroleum sale.  
HB286—Allows Oregon to be represented at national legislative conference.  
HB1133—Sentencing.  
HB1205—Ad Valorem taxes.  
HB1223—Fees paid by litigants for court reporter service.  
HB1558—Management of property owned or administered by board of control.  
HB1405—Reimbursement of student driver training.  
HB1405—Tax exemptions for family shelters.  
HB1531—Defining submerged lands.  
HB1532—Permits tidelands leasing for private oil exploration.  
HB1548—Statutory liens.  
SB1558—Fire protection by domestic water supply corporations.  
HB1568—Oil and gas wells.  
HB1569—Local health boards.  
HB1720—Federal surplus food.  
By the House:  
HB1421—Education foundation grants.  
HB1483—Special road districts.  
HB1487—Rural fire districts.  
HB1705—Collection agencies.  
HB1732—Milk price controls.  
HB1757—Consent to drunken driving tests.  
HB1758—Small woodlot timber tax leveling.  
SB63—Legal instruments.  
SB102—Corporation excise taxes.  
SB117—Removal of material from riverbeds.  
SB177—Public roads.  
SB226—Licensure of mechanics.  
SB239—Fishing licenses.  
SB305—Bankruptcy.  
SB307—Motor vehicle registration.  
SB308—Domestic relations.  
Measures approved Tuesday:  
By the Senate:  
SB435—Death investigations.  
SB240—Teachers' retirement.  
SB25—Maximum vehicle speeds.  
SB448—Relating to highways.  
SB551—Rogue River coordination board.  
HCR8—Condolences on death of Earl E. Fisher.  
HCR9—Appreciation to Salem ministerial association.  
HB1158—Relating to criminal actions.

**Measures Signed By Gov. Hatfield**  
Salem — (UPI) — Signed by the governor Tuesday:  
HB1185—Increases salaries of governor, secretary of state, state treasurer, attorney general, superintendent of public instruction and labor commissioner.  
SB37—State investments.  
SB149—Barberry and other plants declared a public nuisance.  
SB259—County officers.  
SB285—Hospital districts.  
SB314—Local budget law.  
SB396—Savings and loan associations.  
SB399—Osteopathy.  
SB405—Medicine and surgery.  
SB484—Plumbing and cess-pool work.  
SB486—Appropriation of surface waters.  
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