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Citizens Coordinate and The Battle for City Planning in San Diego

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DEDICATION

This history of Citizens Coordinate is dedicated to the memory of Lloyd Ruocco, Esther Scott, Ellen Revelle, Hamilton Marston and Dorothea Edmiston—early leaders of the group whose belief in a more beautiful San Diego continues to inspire all of us.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CITIZENS COORDINATE: BEGINNINGS/BACKGROUND	5
SAN DIEGO: BACKGROUND, RECESSION AND ANTI-COMMUNISM	10
THE ANTI-COMMUNIST CRUSADE	11
CALIFORNIA: THE CONTEXT.	13
MAJOR CITIZENS COORDINATE BATTLES	15
GREAT BILLBOARD BATTLE	15
BATTLE AGAINST DESTRUCTION OF MISSION VALLEY	18
MISSION VALLEY FLOOD CONTROL CHANNEL	21
PRESIDIO GATEWAY AND AIRPORT LANDSCAPING	22
CENTRE CITY: DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT/ CENTRE CITY PROJECT	24
"JOBS AND GROWTH" AND ATTEMPTS TO RESTRUCTURE PLANNING COMMISSION.	30
"MARXIST SOCIALISM" AND THE ROOM TAX	30
DEFEAT (AND REVIVAL) OF THE GENERAL PLAN	31
SAVING BALBOA PARK FROM THE FREEWAY	34
CONTROL OF PLANNING DEPARTMENT	39
BATTLING HEIGHT IN LA JOLLA.	40
SAVING SAN CLEMENTE CANYON & FIGHTING FREEWAY PROLIFERATION	43
COMMUNITY PLANNING GROUPS	47
ALL-AMERICAN CITY AWARD	49
CITIZENS COORDINATE BECOMES "C-3."	51
CONCLUSION	53

INTRODUCTION

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

– Margaret Mead

The story of Citizens Coordinate—or CC its first decade and C-3 as it is better known after that—is a case study of how a small group can become organized and exert influence on public policy. When C-3 first began in 1961, there were few community planning groups, and there was very little public opinion sought by governmental agencies when making land use and environmental decisions. But these are important matters that affect the public, deserving of public scrutiny and opinion. The 20th century history of the United States is, in part, the history of the expansion of civil rights, e.g., women’s suffrage, voting rights for African-Americans, affirmative action, etc. Community planning groups and advisory committees to governmental bodies are part of this broader movement towards expansion of democratic principles; and organizations like C-3 are an important part of that process. This is the bedrock of the great democratic tradition: when public matters are being decided, “we the people” have a right to be heard; and you, the elected officials, have a duty to listen.

The past 50 years of C-3's existence saw the growth of C-3 from a handful of committed individuals into a well organized group that had established its credentials by studying issues, preparing well thought-out positions, and participating in advisory groups to various governmental agencies. As a result, C-3 no longer has to organize protests or metaphorically “lie down in front of the bulldozers.” Rather, C-3 has become a respected resource for study and opinions on land use planning and environmental issues.

When historian Richard Pourade wrote the final volume in his series of books about San Diego, he called it *City of the Dream*. Pourade believed that one of the major themes of the period (1940 to 1970) was the effort to make San Diego not just a big city but a beautiful planned city. At the beginning of *City of the Dream*, Pourade wrote:

The World Columbian Exposition on the lake front in Chicago, just before the turn of the century, with its canals and lagoons and buildings that shone in the sun like marble, had inspired the belief that man could shape the character and destiny of the cities in which he lived, and that disorder, congestion and decay were not inevitable. (1)

Although he described many other events that took place in San Diego during those tumultuous years between 1940 and 1970, Pourade returned several times to the theme of city planning, in particular the unsuccessful efforts to create a handsome grouping of civic buildings along Cedar Street between the County Administration Center and Balboa Park. In his Notes at the end of the book, Pourade concludes:

In the years from World War II to 1970, city planning became a crucial issue, not as to a particular plan but as to whether city planning was to exist at all. (2)

My aim in the following pages is to tell the story of Citizens Coordinate, a small group of dedicated people, organized in 1961, who championed city and regional planning during all the ideological, economic and political battles throughout the ensuing decades. The present article covers the period from 1961 to 1970, which were the critical years, not just for Citizens Coordinate but for city planning itself. (Citizens Coordinate, founded in 1961, became "Citizens Coordinate for Century Three" in 1969, in recognition of San Diego's entry into its third century. In the following pages, I use "CC," as Citizens Coordinate was known to members in its first decade. Since 1969, the organization has become known as C-3.)

When I began to write the history of Citizens Coordinate, I soon realized it could not be written in a vacuum. The struggles over the freeways, Balboa Park, Mission Valley, Centre City redevelopment, and the City's General Plan that CC was involved in, are inextricably interwoven with the general political and economic history of San Diego.

In the following pages, I have sketched some of the background of the 1950s and 1960s in which CC developed and the controversies of city planning that took place. Following that, I've traced several specific "battles" in which CC played a significant role: billboard regulation; attempts to save Mission Valley; development of Centre City and the Community Concourse; defeating attempts to restructure the Planning Commission; the defeat and eventual adoption of the General Plan; saving Balboa Park from freeway widening, etc.

The process of following several issues from origin to conclusion, while simultaneously focusing on tracing the history of Citizens Coordinate, has resulted in some unavoidable repetition and overlapping that cause CC to sometimes appear more important than perhaps it was. There is no question that organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and San Diegans Inc., which had larger and more impressive membership, budgets and staff than CC, carried far more weight in their presentations before the City Council. Fortunately, on the major issues—support for downtown redevelopment, support for the concept of urban planning and the General Plan for San Diego—we were all on the same side.

The unique role of Citizens Coordinate, it seems to me, is that it has taken a broad view, tried to represent the general public interest, and has brought diverse groups together in different coalitions. Other organizations, such as San Diegans Inc., the Chamber of Commerce, Sierra Club, AIA, etc. tend to have more specifically-focused interests. Citizens Coordinate tries to look at the “big picture” for San Diego as a whole.

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CITIZENS COORDINATE:

THE BEGINNINGS

The history of Citizens Coordinate is the story of a handful of citizen activists who banded together and made a difference. They started out in 1961 to be "a Voice for Beauty" and a "Link to a Handsome Community," but they soon found themselves doing battle with the outdoor advertising industry, the California Division of Highways, the City Council, and the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade.

Citizens Coordinate began with a group of architects, artists, scientists, horticulturists and concerned citizens who cared about preserving San Diego's very special environment and discovered that the only way to do so was through concerted citizen action, community planning, and land use and zoning ordinances. Journalist Harold Keen described the group as "the aesthetic conscience of the community." (3)

In 1969, Citizens Coordinate became "Citizens Coordinate for Century Three" (C-3), in recognition of the City of San Diego's entry into its third century. At approximately the same time, C-3 moved into Suite #4 of the House of Hospitality in Balboa Park, where its offices were located until 1994, when the building was vacated for reconstruction. Present offices are located at 5252 Balboa Ave., San Diego, CA 92117.

The founders of the original Citizens Coordinate in 1961 were Lloyd Ruocco—arguably the most influential architect in San Diego in the 1950s and 60s—and Esther Scott, a Smith College graduate and horticulturist who provided the organizational skills to bring Ruocco's vision of a coalition of concerned citizens into being. If, as Emerson says, an institution is but the "lengthened shadow of one man," then for Citizens Coordinate, that man is architect Lloyd Ruocco. It was Ruocco's vision of creating "a handsome community" in San Diego that energized the group.

As its name implies, Citizens Coordinate, is not just the lengthened shadow of one man. It is comprised of the shadows of many men and women working together over the years to bring reality to Ruocco's vision of a handsome community. Chief among those early shadows in the CC's formative years are Esther Scott, closely followed by Minos Generales, Martin Stern, Ellen Revelle, Richard B. Wilson, Tom Crist, George LaPointe, Jean Morley, Hamilton Marston and Dorothea Edmiston.

Lloyd Ruocco (1907-1981)—the most significant of those lengthened shadows—provided not only the vision, the inspiration, the intimate knowledge of architecture and urban planning for the fledgling organization, but also the office space. Lloyd Ruocco was a visionary, a dreamer, and an idealist whose motto was: "City, I am your child. Fill me with Life." (4)

Born in Maine and reared in Canada, Ruocco came with his family to San Diego in 1922 and graduated from San Diego High School. He received his Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of California, Berkeley, where he became known for his "eloquent arguments for minimal architecture that allows nature to show through." (5) Ruocco settled in San Diego and was soon recognized as one of the leading practitioners of modern architecture, designing buildings characterized by simplicity and straight-forward use of traditional materials: wood, glass, red brick and concrete. He was honored by election as a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects in 1974.

In 1942, Ruocco married Ilse Hamann (1902-1982), a native of Spandau, Germany, who had settled in San Diego as a child. Ilse graduated from UCLA, completed her Master's in Art at Columbia University, and joined the faculty at San Diego State College in 1934, where she taught art and interior design until her retirement in 1967. (6)

Ruocco built one of his most influential buildings in 1950: an office building in the 3600 block of Fifth Avenue, which housed his architectural office, Ilse's interior decorator shop "Design Center," and the offices of landscape architects, Harriet Wimmer and Joe Yamada. The wood and glass structure fit gracefully into its canyon setting, surrounded by eucalyptus and Jacaranda trees. The building and its occupants rapidly became a magnet for the creative spirits in San Diego's arts community. "I can't believe that any young architect who was around Lloyd in 1950 or 1960 was not influenced by him," remarked architect Homer Delawie. (7)

Ilse Ruocco was also a powerful force in the design community. The poet and art critic Ettillie Wallace called Ilse "one of the most inspiring and influential teachers I have ever known...she influenced the taste of two generations of students at the university." (8) Upon opening her Design Center in 1950 in her husband's uniquely designed structure, it became "...a Mecca for those seeking the best in contemporary furniture and home interior accessories of all kinds, and also served as a gallery for her best students and other artists." (9)

Architect Leonard Veitzer, who had an office in Ruocco's building, remembered him as:

...a visionary with an abiding concern for the future of San Diego's urban development...He was a talented, graceful, sensitive man, slight of build, soft-spoken, very articulate...His influence was not so much as a designer...but rather his ideas and sensitivities of the city as a place to live and work and play...interlaced with green belts and environments for people. (10)

Lloyd Ruocco kept an "open house" at his office after work, welcoming a free-wheeling discussion group composed of artists, architects, and critics like Jim Britton. In a 1975 interview with *San Diego Union* architecture critic Kay Kaiser, Ruocco recalled these conversations as a prelude to Citizens Coordinate:

Everybody came at whatever time they could and there were no rules or order... [people would] start to go—have their coats on—and then come back and talk some more... There was new energy for everybody... We didn't get into anything precise until halfway down the first year. We realized we had to have some kind of standard. My idea was "HOW COULD YOU MAKE CITIES THAT WERE FIT TO LIVE IN?" (11)

James Britton, who campaigned for urban planning, green belts and architectural excellence in the pages of *San Diego Magazine* from 1950 to the 1970s, and later in the *San Diego Union*, noted that Ruocco, at his most compelling, "would sound like Walt Whitman and James Joyce both talking at the same time." (12) Many remembered him as spellbinding: "Like a master jazz improviser, Ruocco would state his theme, then lift off in a wild verbal riff—a torrent of ideas—breathtaking in their extravagance and imagination."(13)

To illustrate the Whitman-Joyce flavor of Ruocco's most impassioned prose, Kay Kaiser quoted from her 1975 taped conversation with him as he described his fantasy of a future city, with the excitement of Disneyland:

The center, the magic mountain, will be mammoth, complex and amazing. Inside will be total flexibility for change...with functional simplicity. ...The outside will be

all for surprise, with variety of architectural shapes, spaces, levels, masses, textures, conglomerations, inter-penetrations, interlinkages, *trompe l'oeil*, transparencies, *svelte* simplicities, fountains and other crescendos...masses and teeming cascades and streams of people, a multi-directional expositional amazement circuit like a million butterflies and birds in the heat of spring... (14)

But when he came down out of the wild blue yonder, Ruocco continued to raise the most piercing question of all: How can you make cities that are fit to live in? For that he knew he needed help. In January 1961, he gave a rousing speech at a luncheon meeting of the League of Women Voters. In "The Arts: Public Weapon for Progress," Ruocco lauded San Diego's unique geographic situation and natural beauty, but attacked its lack of coordinated planning to protect the environment and beautify its urban center. "We resemble just a good construction camp," he said, "enough preparation to do a big job, enough careless mess to incite us to action." Then he added: " But where are the people organized to demand and welcome this new urbanity?...who will be there with a constant demand for beauty, with instant aggressiveness against ugliness?...We need...a quick, dynamic form of organization so that those most against ugliness are all brought into contact for optimistic action."(15)

Ruocco proposed formation of a group made up of representatives of organizations like the American Institute of Architects, American Society of Landscape Architects, San Diego Art Guild, other arts and crafts groups, and civic minded groups like the League of Women Voters. The next step was to implement this idea, and this is where Esther Scott came in.

Scott had come to San Diego in 1953 with her husband Leslie, a Pacific Telephone Company executive. She had become increasingly upset with the harm being done to San Diego's landscape by thoughtless freeway construction; but what really galvanized her was the assassination of the trees in Balboa Park. A Smith College graduate and horticulturist, Scott recalled that "what clicked me into action" was learning in 1960 that 200 mature trees were to be destroyed at the south end of the extraordinarily beautiful wooded drive through Balboa Park. Thirty-seven acres of parkland were ultimately sacrificed, and a massive barrier between Balboa Park and Downtown created, for the Crosstown Freeway (I-5) interchange.

Scott was outraged, and began to think about how to organize others to prevent future desecrations. Then she read about Ruocco's speech to the League, called him, and offered her help. (16) "Citizens Coordinate—the link to a handsome community"—was born from the conjunction of Lloyd Ruocco's dreams and Esther Scott's organizational skills. She provided the energy, the administrative structure and the *voice* of Citizens Coordinate.

One of the early board members, Martin Stern, praised her "powerful intellect." A tireless and compelling writer of letters, program outlines, press releases and position statements, Scott's enthusiasm and good humor cajoled busy professionals into serving on committees. Her tenacity and leadership skills marshaled large numbers of citizens in letter writing campaigns to officials, gathering signatures on petitions, and—the ultimate test in a democracy—getting out the vote.

Citizens Coordinate held its first meeting in the House of Hospitality in Balboa Park and subsequent board meetings in Ruocco's office. "Lloyd was the inspiration and I was the mechanic," Scott recalled. "We were quite an aesthetically-minded group at first—artists, landscape architects, garden club types." (17) Early in 1961, Ruocco, Scott and a steering committee that included artist Etilie Wallace and city planner Max Schmidt issued an invitation to groups and individuals to join a new organization called Citizens Coordinate for a Handsome Community. The letter of invitation stated that the group was:

...dedicated to the idea that the outward appearance of a community reveals and influences the character of its people, and that civic beauty is therefore an integral part of the community's cultural life. [Our purpose is] to initiate and encourage citizen action for: (1) Enlightened planning; (2) Preservation of desirable open space...; (3) Architectural excellence. (18)

The first public meeting of CC was held at Alice Birney School in Hillcrest, and was attended by representatives from the Allied Artists Council, American Institute of Architects, American Society of Landscape Architects, League of Women Voters, Metropolitan Planners Association, Opera Guild, Symphony Association, American Association of University Women, and the Junior League.

Major topics for discussion at meetings during the first year foreshadowed long-term interests of CC, including: location and landscaping of highways; master-planning Balboa Park; preservation of canyons and open space; land use and zoning in Mission Valley; billboard regulation; downtown redevelopment.

Many of these issues are still with us. Urban planning is a continuing process, reminiscent of Jefferson's statement that "the price of liberty is Eternal Vigilance." The price of planning is Eternal Revision.



SAN DIEGO: BACKGROUND

RECESSION AND ANTI-COMMUNISM

To understand the development of Citizens Coordinate, we must see it in the context of events in San Diego during the 1950s and 1960s. First, a brief look at the economy:

Since the end of World War II, the economy (nationally as well as locally) had been on a roller coaster. Employment in San Diego, heavily dependent on military payrolls and wartime construction of ships and aircraft, fell off drastically, reaching a high of 30,000 in May, 1946.(19) Although the economy improved in the next few years, by 1949 a nationwide recession was underway, and by 1950 unemployment had reached 23,000 in San Diego.(20) The advent of the Korean War then led to expansion of aircraft and missile production, helping to revive San Diego's economy; and in 1953, General Dynamics bought Convair and expanded its operations. By 1955, one of every eight wage earners in San Diego was employed by General Dynamics. (21)

Meanwhile, the Port of San Diego had built the 10th Avenue Terminal and was shipping out more cotton than the Port of Los Angeles, was building Shelter and Harbor Islands replete with tourist facilities, and was planning for the industrialization of much of the waterfront. Government programs, such as Federal and State-funded projects for freeway development and VA and FHA-backed mortgage programs for single-family houses, resulted in suburban developments that promoted urban sprawl and led inadvertently but inexorably to the decline of 'Downtown' in San Diego and across the nation. By the late 1950s, three suburban shopping centers were under construction (College Grove, Mission Valley, Grossmont), and downtown San Diego was beginning to look like a ghost town.(22) The great hopes for the Port were fading away as Ensenada captured most of the cotton shipments and the fishing and canning industries were being undercut by the Japanese. General Dynamics, having lost out in the competition to build passenger planes, was cutting back its operations and by 1960, 26,000 San Diegans were again unemployed. (23)

Economic Difficulties.

San Diego Magazine's Wally Homitz declared in March, 1961, "Postwar Housing Boom, She Dead," and summarized the doleful news:

In San Diego, aircraft employment skidded, housing starts sagged, and personal and business bankruptcies mounted...Anti-Communism ignited an ideological ruction at State College...the postwar boom is over, and an era in the City's history has ended. (24)

Homitz, however, believed that a new era was beginning and that new investment and greater diversification in employment would pull San Diego out of the doldrums. In fact, plans were well underway to pour millions of dollars into new construction downtown. Four high-rise buildings were slated for construction or completion in 1962 (C. Arnholt Smith's U.S. National Bank at 2nd and Broadway; Charles Fletcher's Home Federal Savings at 7th and Broadway; and two buildings in which Irving Kahn was a partner—the First and C Building and the United California Bank at 3rd and B Street). In addition, the State of California and the County of San Diego had just completed new buildings downtown. Two regional shopping centers had opened, the UCSD campus was constructing several buildings, and the City of San Diego was planning to construct a new Civic Concourse with administrative offices, Convention Center, Civic Theatre and a parking garage. (25)

Despite all the investment, the recession which had begun in 1960 continued to drag on into 1962, and San Diego's plight had attracted the attention of *Time* magazine, which asked whether San Diego was "Bust Town?" and reported that unemployment stood at 8.8%. "The aircraft workers are packing up in droves," *Time* noted, "and leaving the housing developments that sprawled around the City during the past few years." (26)

The Anti-Communist Crusade.

The political context of San Diego in the 1950s and 60s needs to be sketched in also, for urban planning issues (such as the rezoning of Mission Valley and the redevelopment of downtown) were conditioned by the underlying economic and political problems. On the whole, the economy of San Diego, while exhibiting some local variations, reflected national trends.

This was true in political issues as well. Chief among the important political factors of that era were the existence of the Cold War, and the influence of McCarthyism. The world-wide competition between the U.S. and the USSR was responsible for a widespread, almost pathological, fear of Communism, and a corresponding fear (for the most part groundless) of Communist subversion and infiltration of government and higher education. Having witnessed the 1989-90 collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe and the disintegration of the USSR's "Evil Empire," it may be difficult to understand how powerful these fears were. But they were real fears for many and it is not possible to understand the attacks on urban renewal, city planning, and the city manager form of government in the 1960s without recognizing this.

Lionel Van Deerlin described "The Anti-Communist Boom" in *San Diego Magazine* in February, 1961, noting the activities of several groups in San Diego, including the Christian Anticommunist Crusade, the John Birch Society, and Conservative Americans. At the January meeting of Conservative Americans, "an estimated 500 persons cheered the memory of Joe McCarthy and demanded impeachment of the entire U.S. Supreme Court." (27) Meanwhile, several of these groups were busy attacking UCSD's Dr. Harold Urey as a Communist sympathizer, and San Diego State College professors Dr. Ned Joy and Dr. Melvin Crane were also attacked by Students for Freedom. (28)

California Assemblyman E. Richard Barnes, a handsome, retired Navy chaplain, had been San Diego area director of the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade in 1961, before his election to the 78th District, which in 1962 covered most of the City of San Diego. Barnes attacked pornography, Darwinism and urban renewal, all of which he considered to be aspects of communism. His campaign co-chairman, Thomas Sayer, was one of the leaders of the John Birch Society, another strong anti-communist group. Barnes had become identified throughout the state, wrote Harold Keen, "as either a crackpot ultra rightist or a champion of constitutional freedom, depending on one's point of view." (29)

Allen Hitch was elected to the City Council in 1961, in large part because of his campaign promise to get rid of City Manager George Bean. Hitch's supporters in the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade flooded City Hall with pamphlets "charging that the International Association of City Managers is part of a Communist plot to form a world super-state." Hitch quoted so frequently from these pamphlets, another Council member said "that we finally called in the FBI to assure him that city managers were not part of a Communist plot." (30)

Since the anticommunist movement made little or no distinction between socialism and communism, the very concept of government planning of any kind was suspect. Martin Montroy, an insurance broker closely associated with Mission Valley real estate developer Charles Brown, initiated an abortive recall movement against Mayor Charles Dail in 1961, and followed it with an unsuccessful lawsuit (financed by the developer-funded Better Government Association, or BGA) to halt the Centre City project backed by Dail and City Manager Bean. Montroy was also a vocal opponent of President Kennedy's Urban Affairs Department, which he called "a further step in the complete socialization of the U.S." (31) Montroy's (and BGA's) greatest success came in 1965, when Montroy led the referendum movement which overturned the City Council's adoption of the General Plan for San Diego, described by Montroy as "a socialistic Trojan horse."

1961 was not a good year for San Diego, economically or politically. "When recession hit San Diego," remarked Mary Harrington Hall in *San Diego Magazine*, "the people traditionally become dissatisfied with local leaders," and City Manager George Bean became "the most unpopular man in City Hall." (32) Bean, who was noted for his blunt-spoken manner, considered that the City Council operated "almost totally on the basis of expediency, with few members who understood basic principles. Responsible citizens," said Bean, "must hold fast to long-range planning. (33)

Neil Morgan, in his provocative 1961 book, *Westward Tilt*, underscored the need for planning when he summarized the two major problems of western cities (especially applicable to San Diego):

...more diversification of industry is one of the most urgent needs. The other...is for state and metropolitan area planning to control rural and urban growth. The cities of the West must soon agree on plans for rapid transit systems, or the automobile will choke them. (34)

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CALIFORNIA: THE CONTEXT

When Michael Davie, associate editor of the *London Observer*, visited California in the late 1960s, he described California as a trend-setter, the leading edge in many activities and cultural manifestations. Davie quoted Richard Armour's pithy poetic summary:

"So leap with joy, be blithe and gay
Or weep my friends with sorrow;
What California is today
The rest will be tomorrow." (35)

Davie was more inclined to weep than to jump for joy: "I have seen the future," he noted sadly, "and it doesn't work." (36) California is full of people, Davie remarked, who came from elsewhere in search of a better future—"excellent climate, great wealth, new industries, new jobs, endless supplies of surf, sun and sex." But increasingly, California seemed to represent the problems of the future: "pollution, technological unemployment, social inequality," drug addiction, degraded environment, alienated students, race riots—the 60s, of course, were the scene of the Vietnam War protests and the 1965 Watts (Los Angeles area) race riot and conflagration. (37) Most of Davie's criticisms are still true today: "the weakness of the California economy is its over-reliance on defense industries and federally supported projects" the trend toward low paying service industries; the increasing gap between the rich and the poor, with the poor tending to be largely non-white; the decline in the sense of community; the increase in pollution. (38)

One of Davie's particularly incisive comments described the destructive effect of freeways, which break down communities, tend to isolate people from each other, "spread problems out, eat up the land and reduce the tax base of the cities."(39) "The concrete began to flow," wrote Davie in 1956 about the federal highway program which had been created partly for national defense purposes, to shift troops and equipment. To implement the interstate system, the federal government made grants to the states of up to 90% of the cost, with the result that:

The California Division of Highways is an absolutely sacrosanct part of the bureaucracy. The highway people don't have to go through the state legislature, yet they

have enormous amounts of money to spend...The Highway Division is in politics all over the state, because each county decides about roads for itself [and of course]...no one wants to build rapid transit systems when you can get freeways for virtually nothing...More roads generate more traffic which generates more roads which smash cities to pieces.(40)

The ugliness of student free-speech and anti-war protests, and the violence of the Black Power movement of the 1960s, paved the way for the growth of what Davie called "the new Right Wing," which was fanatically anti-Communist and also heavily dependent on the mythology of the Wild West. Their heroes were rugged individualists who took matters into their own hands; they believed in unrestricted property rights and in gun ownership.

Even further to the Right, noted Davie, was "the Lunatic Right," including the Minutemen, who believed that Red Chinese troops were massed in Mexico ready to invade the United States. The largest such group was the John Birch Society, which saw the communist threat not only from abroad but from within the U.S. government, including the President and the Supreme Court."(41) It is against the background of these attitudes that we must view the battles over the City Planning Department and the defeat of the General Plan for San Diego—all of which took place in the mid-1960s. Critics of planning invoked the fear of Communism and the fear of loss of property rights and individual liberty.

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MAJOR "CC" BATTLES:

GREAT BILLBOARD BATTLE

After a cross-country driving trip in the early 1960s, Stewart Alsop announced in the *Saturday Evening Post* that America's vast natural beauty was being overwhelmed by its man-made ugliness: "Americans are turning our lovely country into a garish, brassy, neon-lit, billboard-ridden...littered...and, above all, messy place."(42)

To his rhetorical question, "Why are Americans so messy?", Alsop suggested that the influence of the frontier, with its emphasis on rugged individualism, taming the wilderness, and fighting off trespassers to protect one's own property, had bred a careless attitude toward public property and open space along highways. "There has always been so much of everything," he continued:

Out of our closeness to the frontier there has grown...an American cult of ugliness. When survival came first, a man who cared about beauty would be laughed or hounded out of town...But the days of the frontier are gone...With the population exploding, we are simply going to have to accept the kind of regional planning England and almost all other European countries have, even if this means some infringement of individual property rights. Property rights do not include the right to turn America into a junk heap. (43)

It was this kind of attitude that lay behind the earliest activities of Citizens Coordinate. Even before that, in the 1950s, Lloyd Ruocco initiated the tree-planting project along Fifth Avenue in Hillcrest that "transformed a district of uninteresting store fronts into a one-of-a-kind San Diego neighborhood with a special village ambiance."(44) CC promoted tree-planting along Grand Avenue in Pacific Beach, on the sides of Mount Soledad in La Jolla and in the airport parking lots.

At one of the general membership meetings in July, 1961, Ruocco put on a slide show contrasting ugly, littered, billboard-ridden roadsides in San Diego with examples of well-designed and handsomely-landscaped areas, and Citizens Coordinate decided to concentrate all efforts, for the time being, on persuading the City Council to pass an effective outdoor advertising ordinance.

The great Billboard Battle began when Esther Scott pointed out that San Diego's freeways could qualify for government-financed landscaping if there was local sign control. Jacob Dekema, District Engineer of the California Department of Highways, wrote in response to Scott's questions: "the California Highway Commission...has stated that as a policy they will not allocate funds for landscaping freeways unless local ordinances are provided to protect the investment."(45)

The pressure to take action was increased by the federal government's guarantee of a bonus on construction costs to all states passing adequate billboard legislation before June, 1963. For California, this meant a savings of \$17,770,000. (46)

The struggle to get the billboard control ordinance enacted provided the first testing ground for Citizens Coordinate's signature activity: research, education and organizing public support for legislation. Sample ordinances were obtained from the California Roadside Council, public meetings were held to discuss the issue, and CC issued a statement that "...public thoroughfares...are rightfully the property of the people [whose taxes pay for them]...Regulation of signs will promote the safety, convenience and enjoyment of public travel...[and] the economy of our community will be strengthened by measures taken to ensure its attractive appearance."(47)

In September 1961, under the chairmanship of Esther Scott, CC organized a public presentation entitled "The Citizen, Freeway Planning and Planting" (48) at which two representatives from the California Division of Highways carried on a panel discussion, with CC members John Sage, landscape architect; Max Schmidt, City Planning Department; Sim Bruce Richards, AIA; and Bill Noonan, graphic designer. Subsequently, a CC committee chaired by Dr. Minos Generales met regularly with staff of the City Planning Department, representatives of the Outdoor Advertising agencies, and other interested groups to work out the language of a proposed ordinance.

Meantime, other avenues were pursued. In July 1961, the CC Board invited members of the City Council, Planning Commission and some other officials to a gathering at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Roger Revelle, loyal CC members who graciously offered their hospitality. Lloyd Ruocco showed slides of attractive urban developments in European cities. As Esther Scott noted in a letter to the membership: "It was an opportunity for all of us to become better acquainted and for us to tell them about our organization and its goals." Everyone enjoyed the evening...but please note carefully this comment by one city official [City Manger George Bean]: 'We would like to do these things, but we cannot without adequate support'."(49)

Scott urged CC members to write letters to their Council representatives and to newspaper editors, and CC solicited endorsements of billboard regulations from thirty organizations (including AIA, Sierra Club, and La Jolla Town Council).(50) Such activity did not go unnoticed by the Outdoor Advertising agencies. Foster and Kleiser responded sharply to a letter sent by Laura Vining (Secretary of CC) to the *San Diego Evening Tribune* supporting tough restrictions. Foster and Kleiser contended that "minimum requirements" would be sufficient to qualify the City for landscaping funds and added:

It would appear that the small, but vocal, group is ...advocating that unreasonable restrictions be placed on the sign industry. CC has only 75 people on its mailing list and the few organizations that are backing its resolution against billboards are, for the most part, small in membership, and certainly limited in their scope of interests and endeavors.(51)

Writing in *San Diego Magazine* about the billboard issue, reporter Gordon Edwards noted that "the industry has labeled its adversaries 'the scenic sisters'; the implication being that the opposition is composed of garden club ladies..."(52) Partly in order to avoid that kind of condescending criticism, Esther Scott had insisted on being only "acting chairman" until CC had a large enough membership to provide leadership with recognized community standing.

In September 1961, when elections were held, Dr. Minos Generales, professor of political science at San Diego State College, became CC's first President. (Lloyd Ruocco, who did not wish to hold office, was named Research Director.) *San Diego Magazine* reporter Gordon Edwards praised CC, because its members:

...do not have an economic interest at stake. They give freely of their time to promote a more beautiful San Diego...[The] outdoor advertising industry's game is to erect more billboards and sell more space. The Citizens Coordinate game is to make a more handsome city... (53)

In December 1961, CC's actions began to pay off; the City Planning Commission turned down the 'minimum' ordinance and unanimously instructed the Planning Department to draft a stronger one. Dr. Generales, appearing before the commission's public hearing, praised their action; and one of the senior planners noted that "the billboard control proposal has been one of the hottest issues at the Civic Center...The department received 300 letters or petitions from persons wanting strict regulation."(54)

In February 1962, the Planning Commission sent a recommendation to the City Council favoring a "restrictive" ordinance, and the *San Diego Evening Tribune* noted that although "the billboard industry favored a minimum ordinance, CC and other civic groups have supported the restrictive ordinance."(55)

Although the City Council did not pass a strict sign ordinance at the time, thus permitting billboards along freeways except those designated as 'scenic', Esther Scott regarded the struggle as an important experience. "CC had organized as idealistic advocates for Beauty," she said, "but the billboard battle suddenly plunged us into the world of realistic politics and provided invaluable training."(56) Scott believed that the billboard issue "...set the pattern for what I hoped would be the group's direction. I wanted us to act as a catalyst, a coordinator for getting other citizens' groups together..."(57)

The billboard battle has waxed and waned over the years. In 1965, for example, the Council restricted billboards on a portion of US 80 (now I-8), and required that those already in existence be "removed within three years."(58) But these were piecemeal efforts. The real success came in 1972, after Pete Wilson's election as Mayor of San Diego. Wilson had included environmentalist planks in his platform, including preservation of open space and a ban on billboards.(59) The 1972 ordinance, spearheaded by Wilson, banned all billboards, with a few exceptions such as public service and on-site advertising.

Reminiscing about the long struggle, Esther Scott said she had always felt that CC had played a part in getting Wilson to back billboard regulation, and when she later asked Peter Kaye (Wilson's 1971 campaign manager) about this, he had answered: "You're right!" Kaye said he had been made aware of the popularity of the billboard issue by CC's constant pressure in the form of press releases, letters to the editor, etc.; and that one day as he and Wilson were driving downtown and discussing possible campaign issues, they had seen a billboard touting Frank Curran, the incumbent Mayor and Wilson's chief rival for the post. "That's it!" said Kaye; "Billboards!" Banning all billboards, said Scott, "was far beyond what we had hoped for."(60)

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BATTLE AGAINST DESTRUCTION OF MISSION VALLEY.

Another of the earliest concerns of CC was the development of Mission Valley, referred to by historian and *San Diego Union* real estate writer Roger Showley as "the only urbanized area of San Diego developed without a master plan."(61) Early in 1961, CC established a committee to study Mission Valley, chaired by Dr. Martin Stern, a physicist with General Atomic. Stern, a widely-traveled, sensitive observer of cities both in the United States and in Europe, was appalled by the thoughtless, uncoordinated development of Mission Valley.

The background of this development lies in events which took place in the 1940s. Mission Bay Park, dedicated in 1949, was the brainchild of San Diego City Planning Director Glenn Rick. The concept of dredging and developing the former mud-flat area into a recreational paradise was proposed during World War II when it was feared that the end of the war would bring massive unemployment unless plans were made to diversify the economy by building up recreational and tourist facilities to "take up the slack occasioned by the shutdown of shipbuilding and aircraft plants."(62) The planners then turned their attention to Mission Valley, through which U.S.80 had just been completed.

In 1949, Mission Valley was green and pastoral, occupied by vegetable growers, dairy farmers, some sand and gravel mining operations, and a few scattered homes complete with barns and horses. The planners envisioned an extension of Mission Bay's recreational and tourist uses in the valley, such as golf courses, resort hotels, riding trails and open space. Hotelman Charles Brown spotted the junction of highways 80 and 163 and built his first project, Town and Country Hotel, there in 1953. (63)

The plan for Mission Valley, envisioning mainly recreational and tourism uses, remained incomplete and had not been adopted by the City Council, when the St. Louis-based May Company announced in 1957 that it wanted to build a large shopping mall in the middle of the valley, near the freeway exchange. David May requested a rezoning of 90 acres (from agricultural to commercial), presented an attractive plan, and emphasized the great employment and tax increase benefits that would accrue to San Diego if he received approval. The Planning Department (headed by Harry Haelsig) objected, and was soon joined by a chorus of architects, urban planners and downtown merchants who emphasized the potential for flood problems; the loss of green belt open space; the undesirable effect on downtown retailers; and the fact that a zone change given to the May Company would open the door to overdevelopment and commercialization of the entire valley. (64)

James Britton, architectural critic for *San Diego Magazine*, proposed that the City sell or lease its 100 acres of former World War II public housing near Midway and Rosecrans to the May Company, instead of "kissing the Valley goodbye." He urged the Council to postpone the request until the Mission Valley plan had been evaluated: "Just because Mission Valley is so gloriously visible," wrote Britton, "it should be kept open, green and valley-like in so far as practicable, thus telling the passerby that he is not a mere digit in profit calculations but a creature of nature, entitled to a fair contract with the uncluttered good earth." (65)

But the Council, concerned about the recession and intimidated by the May Company's threat to take their business elsewhere, ignored the critics. Arthur Jessop, one of San Diego's leading businessmen, remarked ruefully, "We might as well tattoo on the Council wall: HERE DIED PLANNING IN SAN DIEGO." (66) By the summer of 1958, "The Mission Valley Gold Rush," as Britton called it, was off and running despite the Planning Department's warning:

The lessons we can learn from our large Eastern cities should be obvious; they now wish they had not been so short-sighted when they traded the almighty dollar for

their available open space...Once Mission Valley is paved with commercial enterprises, it will be lost forever to the community as an open space area within the City.(67)

Forty-one Mission Valley property owners, controlling 500 acres of land, joined the "gold rush," supporting the May Company's request as the first step in getting their own land rezoned. The opposition, led mainly by downtown businessmen Hamilton Marston, Guilford Whitney and Arthur Jessop, argued forcefully that Mission Valley should be developed in accordance with the projected plan, which called for recreational and tourist facilities and open space; but their opposition was decried as "sour grapes" because they were owners of downtown businesses with which the May Company shopping center would compete (68), and in August 1958, the Council unanimously granted the rezoning.

Fifteen years later, the distinguished urban planners Kevin Lynch and Donald Appleyard stated: "San Diego should erect an historic monument to that tragic event. It struck a double blow - one directed both at the landscape and at the economy of the center city."(69)

Looking back in 1981, former Mayor Frank Curran remarked that no one had envisioned the sprawling, uncoordinated development of Mission Valley: "One thing just led to another," he said. "Somehow or other we just never called a halt."(70)

Mission Valley Flood Control Channel

Citizen Coordinate's role in the 1960s in regard to Mission Valley consisted of piece-meal attempts to prevent environmental damage; CC provided advice and assistance to some property owners who prevented the rezoning of the hillsides below Mission Hills.(71) The biggest battle involved the flood-control channel. The Army Corps of Engineers proposed a massive concrete ditch running through the valley, six miles long, 200-300 feet wide and 26 feet deep. CC rallied other groups like the Sierra Club, proposed further study, pushed for alternative solutions, and fought a series of delaying actions until the Corps decided that the project was too expensive to build. (72)

This did not set well with Mayor Frank Curran, who, though he sided with CC on a number of other issues, considered CC's opposition to the concrete channel "stupid" and "emotionally oriented." (73) Eventually, the project for the ugly cement-lined ditch was shelved and the Council approved the concept of a 400-foot wide grass-lined channel, with 'floodway' zoning, which can be developed as a river park complete with jogging and bike paths, picnic areas and viewpoints—a proposal which CC supported (74), and which is coming to fruition nearly 50 years later.



PRESIDIO GATEWAY AND AIRPORT LANDSCAPING

In the mid-60s, CC was able to accomplish two more important projects in its pursuit of making San Diego "a more handsome community": acquiring parkland to create an attractive entry to Presidio Park, and providing shade trees for the airport parking lot. The principal entrance to Presidio Park "has been an eyesore for as long as I can remember," said Tom Crist, CC's Park Committee Chairman. So he and Citizens Coordinate members Polly and Armistead Carter approached the City with a proposal to buy land at the corner of Chestnut and Taylor Streets, where the park road began. This corner was dominated by a tavern, a used furniture shop, and some dilapidated wooden buildings.

While details of the agreement with the City were being worked out in 1964, the Carters put up the \$64,000 to purchase the property. Citizens Coordinate took on the responsibility of raising half the sum as a gift to the City, and the City agreed to match that amount, so the land could be purchased from the Carters. (75) Tom Crist, Homer Delawie and Hamilton Marston led the fund drive, successfully raising \$32,250 within a year; and Crist announced in July, 1965, that the City had budgeted an additional \$10,000 to raze the old buildings and landscape the area. (76) The CC newsletter announced that the Thursday Club would hold a rummage sale to raise money to purchase a stone marker and plaques at the new Gateway to the Presidio. In 1967, when the project was completed, the City Council passed a Resolution and sent a Certificate of Appreciation to Citizens Coordinate, commending the organization, Tom Crist and the Carters for their "civic-minded efforts and services to the community." (77)

During the same period of time, Citizens Coordinate also conceived and implemented a project to provide trees for the newly-remodeled airport parking lot. In a cost-cutting measure, none had been specified in the plans approved by the Unified Port District. Landscape architects Harriet Wimmer and Joseph Yamada, CC members, offered to provide a plan and cost estimates for putting in shade trees and an irrigation system; and CC members volunteered to collect funds to pay for the materials.(78) By March, 1966, CC had raised \$2,500 and turned it over to the Port Commissioners. Donald Innis, architect (with Paderewski Dean and Associates), for the airport project, thanked Citizens Coordinate in a letter that concluded, "If you knew the amount of effort that we expended to keep the parking lot from becoming just another sea of asphalt, you would have some appreciation for the depth of my gratitude."(79)



CENTRE CITY: DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT AND THE CENTRE CITY PROJECT

As Mission Valley was growing, downtown San Diego was dying. Mayor Charles Dail, City Manager George Bean and most of the City Council were committed to rebuilding the central core of San Diego before it was too late. Bean was charged with the responsibility for implementing the Centre City plan.

Since the adoption of the City Charter in 1931, the City Manager's position had been a very powerful one. The Mayor and Council members (of whom there were six until 1965) served part-time and had practically no staff of their own, so they were dependent on the manager for most of the information they received. Further, under provisions of the Charter, the manager not only had the authority to appoint most department heads, but appointed two members (of five) of the Park and Recreation Commission, and four (of seven) members of the Planning Commission. (The Mayor, with Council approval, appointed the others.)

Yet in 1961, newly-elected councilman Allen Hitch, backed by Mission Valley interests, was calling for the resignation of City Manager Bean. Hitch had, in fact, run on a platform consisting largely of attacks on Bean, whom he accused of responsibility for higher taxes and parking meter rates; high cost of the sewage treatment plant; and his 'secret' work on property acquisition for the Centre City complex. Bean responded that the council had authorized his activities, and that his acquiring options on the property "before public knowledge...[averted] a rise in prices and saved a million dollars...[and that] rehabilitation of downtown is vital to San Diego's future."(80)

This last point—the Centre City plan to build a civic complex including a city administration building, convention center, civic theatre, and parking garage in a downtown location—was the focus of a long-running political and economic struggle between Mission Valley property owners led by Charles Brown of Town and Country Hotel (later, Atlas Hotels Corporation) and the downtown Establishment. The Centre City proponents were commercial and financial leaders, most of whom belonged to San Diegos, Inc., which was founded in 1959. The aim of the group was to revitalize downtown San Diego and halt the decline of the area precipitated by the freeway-induced population shift to new suburban developments and shopping centers.

The desire to have a civic complex—a handsome group of public buildings including a theatre and convention center—had been frustrated time and time again in the 1940s and '50s by the failure of ballot measures promoting the project. At that time, the concept was usually referred to as "the Cedar Street Mall," since most proposals envisioned construction of the buildings along Cedar Street, forming a visual link between Balboa Park and the City-County Administration Building on the waterfront, in keeping with suggestions made by the 1926 Nolen Plan for San Diego.

The last year that the Cedar Street Mall was on the ballot was 1956. In June, a majority of the voters approved it—but not the two-thirds required to pass a bond issue. When a similar proposal appeared on the November ballot, it failed even to get majority approval. (81) It was clear that the voters were unwilling to see taxes raised to pay for public improvements. A bond issue to finance construction of a longer sewer outfall had failed in 1954. Now the Cedar Street Mall proposal (in various forms) had failed five times, and was regarded as dead.

In 1960, the concept of a civic complex was reborn in the proposals for a downtown Community Concourse, recommended by San Diegans, Inc., as a result of the economic analysis and overall land use plan for downtown rejuvenation. From the beginning, Citizens Coordinate worked closely with San Diegans, Inc., whose Executive Director, retired Rear Admiral Charles Hartman, was an enthusiastic early member of CC, a Board member by 1966, and Chairman of the Board of CC in 1970.

"We are concerned with the dangers of 'urban sprawl'," San Diegans Inc. President Ewart Goodwin told the City Council. "Central San Diego is the heart and nerve center of our metropolitan community." (82) Goodwin championed the redevelopment of downtown and construction of a civic complex, saying, "The downtown must be rebuilt if San Diego is to compete with other cities for business, for tourists and conventions... City services in decentralized areas cost more than the area pays in taxes."(83)

Lloyd Ruocco also believed that one of the most important elements of any city is its heart, its center—the symbolic representation of its significance. The center is the focus of the City's administrative, economic and cultural life. Ruocco and his "lengthened shadow" Citizens Coordinate enthusiastically supported the revitalization of Centre City San Diego, raising not only economic arguments but aesthetic questions as well. Ruocco asked:

...whether a city exists at all without its most important treasures being at its center. And to be treasures they must do a lot more than merely be practical. They must be surprisingly good and easily lovable. One should feel thankful for being a citizen of such a city. (84)

Smarting over the memory of the failures of bond issues to finance the Cedar Street Mall, and sure that voters would not pass any bond issues in the recession-plagued period 1960-61, the Council, in the Spring of 1961, authorized City Manager Bean and realtor Ewart Goodwin to quietly purchase (with capital outlay funds) land bounded by First and Third Avenues and A and C Streets. (85)

The Centre City project was attacked by Councilman Allen Hitch and the Mission Valley property owners led by Charles Brown, who of course saw the potential convention and hotel facilities downtown as unwanted competition. They organized under the name "Better Government Association," and proceeded (in conjunction with the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade) to flood city hall with pamphlets charging that the International Association of City Managers was part of "a Communist plot to form a world super state." (86) (Hitch's fears along that line extended even to the local United Nations Association; he voted against renewing the Association's lease in Balboa Park—an action so unrealistic that Hitch's campaign aide, Robert Ward, resigned in disgust.) (87)

City Manager George Bean's activities in connection with property acquisition for the Centre City project were attacked as illegal by the Better Government Association, and in April 1961, insurance man Martin Montroy and BGA circulated a recall petition against Mayor Dail, but failed to get enough signatures. *San Diego Magazine's* reporter Mary Harrington Hall warned, in her article "City in Danger": "If the city manager system goes, the city government will be less efficient—it will cost more; and patronage and graft will find its way into City Hall." (88)

The *San Diego Union* found itself in agreement with *San Diego Magazine* on this issue. In an alliterative editorial, the *Union* lamented:

Leaderless and listless, San Diego's city government is drifting in the doldrums of civic indifference...The City Manager's effectiveness has been damaged by lack of direction from the City Council...The mayor has missed almost half the City Council meetings since a recall movement against him fizzled last spring... Only the momentum of [previous] sound decisions and professional administration has kept such important projects as Centre City and the metropolitan sewer from foundering. (89)

But the attacks on City Manager George Bean continued; Councilman Hitch persuaded the Council (the final vote was unanimous) to sack the incorruptible but unpopular George Bean on September 22, 1961. Peter Burnham, one of the leaders of the BGA, announced that Bean's dismissal was "a step in the right direction," though inadequate, since BGA advocated the abolition of the city manager system itself. "I have no animosity toward the man personally," Burnham said, "but the system of government he was trying to install was a highly socialized and centralized form of government." (90)

Assistant City Manager Tom Fletcher was immediately appointed to replace Bean. Fletcher, who had been with the city six years, was regarded as more affable and cooperative than the frequently abrasive, outspoken Bean. In fact, he made no objection when subsequent City Charter revisions stripped the City Manager of power to appoint Planning Commission members.

Fletcher, City Controller Frederick Lawrence, the Mayor and the Council, and San Diegans, Inc. proceeded to devise a financing scheme for the civic complex that included selling the City's half of the City-County Administration building to the County, and borrowing \$8,400,000 from the City Employees Retirement Fund. But the required total to finance the structures was still short about \$1,500,000.

San Diegans, Inc. members Morley Golden and Guilford Whitney took the leadership in a public subscription campaign in which more than \$1,600,000 was raised in only six weeks (91), including large gifts such as \$200,000 from James Copley, publisher of the *San Diego Union* and *Evening Tribune*, and small gifts from many individuals and organizations, such as Citizens Coordinate's contribution of \$1,000.

The Mission Valley property owners, and their front, the Better Government Association, sued the city, alleging misuse of the Employees Retirement Fund; but the Employees Association had agreed to the loan, which was to be repaid with interest, and BGA lost its suit.(92) Mayor Frank Curran later defended the methods used to finance the Centre City complex, saying, "The project led to a complete rejuvenation of our downtown core and won for us the All-American City Award...Most of the people wanted it—we had to find another way [than a bond issue] to finance it."(93)

When Mary Harrington Hall, the astute and articulate urban critic for *San Diego Magazine*, wrote her incisive "City in Danger" article, she began with a statement reflecting her major concerns:

A negative wave of suspicion of all government has boiled up in a real threat to the long-established City Manager-Council system which brought clean, efficient administration to a city where bookmaking and prostitution once were among the major industries ...This wave also can undermine dynamic plans for rebuilding a seamy downtown into an exciting metropolitan center. It can jeopardize opportunities to attract new commerce and industry and so damage our economy. (94)

To support her contentions, Hall interviewed over 100 leaders in business, government and economics; she salted her article with pithy quotations from diverse sources. The most memorable remarks came from former San Diego City Manager O.W. Campbell, who said, "Corruption doesn't mean gambling tables in Horton Plaza. It goes dressed in business clothes, carrying a briefcase filled with patronage...and zoning changes."(95)

Zoning changes were exactly what was wanted by some people. Foiled in their attempt to overturn the city manager system of government, the Mission Valley-Better Government Association forces decided to shift their focus to a criticism of San Diego's lagging economy, the solution to which was supposed to come through reorganization of the Planning Department. Their newly-formed organization, in an effort to appeal to a broad constituency, called itself the "Jobs and Growth Association," or JGA.

At that particular juncture, Brown, Montroy et al had failed in their attacks on the city; and in March, 1963, San Diego was honored by the National Municipal League and *Look* magazine with an All-America City award, in recognition of its "thorough-going answer to a declining and inadequate central business district." San Diegans, Inc. was praised for its role in underwriting studies and working with the City Planning Department to develop the Centre City Plan; and the citizens of San Diego were lauded for their cooperation in raising the funds to complete the financing of the project. (96) In accepting the award, Mayor Dail singled out three citizens for laurels: Joe Jessop, founder of San Diegans, Inc.; Morley Golden and Guilford Whitney, organizers of the successful fund-raising drive. (97)

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“JOBS AND GROWTH” AND THE ATTEMPTS TO RESTRUCTURE THE PLANNING COMMISSION

By the spring of 1963, the Jobs and Growth Association—successor to the Better Government Association and composed mainly of Mission Valley property owners bankrolled by Charles Brown of Atlas Hotels—had prepared an amendment to the City Charter, the main features of which were: that the Planning Commission be restructured so that each Councilman (and the Mayor) would appoint one member. The new Planning commission would have complete control of all planning and zoning in San Diego, handling appeals with its own three-member appeal board, and eliminating existing state planning regulations. Zoning variances would be *automatically* granted, unless objected to by two-thirds of the property owners within 300 feet. The Planning Commission would be charged with the "responsibility for eliminating red tape," since, according to the JGA brochure, the interminable delays in processing plans tend to discourage the flow of capital funds.

Ed Self, editor of *San Diego Magazine*, and Mary Harrington Hall wrote a piece for the magazine warning of the dangers presented by the JGA proposal. The re-structuring of the Planning Commission, they contended, would lead to:

...old fashioned ward pressures...Good planning must be projected with a sense of the city as a whole. Instead of promoting jobs and growth, this proposed Charter Amendment would do just the opposite. It would create the kind of instability which inevitably discourages new industry...It is time for San Diegans, Inc., for Citizens Coordinate, and for every resident who cares about his city's future [to protest].(98)

Citizens Coordinate responded to the challenge by organizing an ad hoc group of businessmen and professionals (including architects, engineers and builders) to fight the JGA amendment. Esther Scott said she worked harder on the defeat of this measure than anything else. She called dozens of people from the Chamber of Commerce and San Diegans, Inc. and invited them to a luncheon at the Grant Hotel, where the dangers of the JGA proposal were described.

From this meeting, in May 1963, came Citizens for Good Government (which included businessmen Hamilton Marston, Clinton McKinnon, Sherwood Gordon, and Ewart Goodwin and architects Lloyd Ruocco, Roy Drew and Robert Mosher). They countered the JGA arguments with letters and speeches to community groups. (99)

But fighting the ultra-Right Wing, Brown-financed forces was an uphill battle that lasted for several years. Mayor Charles Dail complained angrily about the JGA influence on City government, saying:

There has been a lot of appeasement in this Council regarding Jobs and Growth. There has been a kowtowing to Mission Valley...The structure of our Planning Department has been under vicious attack...The political maneuvering is all the more reason for us to retain independent planning as it exists in San Diego today. (100)

The Jobs and Growth Association had two powerful allies on the City Council, Allen Hitch, and Harry Scheidle. They persuaded Tom Hom and Jack Walsh to join them and maneuvered Walsh into sponsoring a Charter amendment (placed on the June, 1964 ballot) that incorporated all of the major points of the JGA amendment. Harold Keen called the Walsh amendment (known as Proposition D on the ballot)"...a resounding triumph for Jobs and Growth. Brown and his [group]...staged a coup that for skill and daring has no equal in recent San Diego political history."(101)

Finally, the opposition began to rally itself at the public hearings on the Walsh amendment, asking pertinent questions such as:

Who actually is complaining about the City's planning and zoning procedures...Who wants the so-called red tape snipped, other than Jobs and Growth, which by its own claim consists of 200 members?... [The majority] of the builders, land developers, architects and engineers [are] among the most vocal opponents of the Walsh Amendment at the public hearings. (102)

City Attorney Ed Butler testified that the amendment was full of legal difficulties. It would make the Council subordinate to the Planning Commission, a non-elected body, and it would overturn established zoning policy by providing that "a zone variance must be granted as a matter of inherent right, instead of permissively for relief of hardship."(103)

The San Diego Chamber of Commerce weighed in against the Walsh amendment also, pointing out that the amendment was concerned "almost exclusively with devices to grant exemptions from zoning...and not with planning for future growth and development."(104) Citizens Coordinate mailed out hundreds of fliers warning that "D is Danger!" and stressing the possibility of ward politics, the danger of placing legislative authority in the hands of an appointed body, and the instability that would result from lack of zoning standards.(105)

What is perhaps the most remarkable about this whole episode is that before the JGA group was through, they had virtually co-opted a majority of the City Council in support of a ballot measure nearly identical to their own, sponsored by Councilman Walsh. The powerful Copley papers supported it. Yet, a determined coalition of business, professional and citizen groups was finally able to persuade the electorate to reject it!

When the votes were finally counted in June, 1964, the Walsh amendment went down to defeat, 96,000 to 62,000. Jack Walsh, a sportsmanlike loser, wrote to Esther Scott and Citizens Coordinate: "Congratulations on a sweeping victory!...The recent election has convinced me again of the influential and respected position of your organization in the community. I sincerely hope that on most future actions, we can both be on the same side."(106)

Happily, Councilman Walsh and Citizens Coordinate, as well as many other organizations, were all on the same side opposing Brown and his associates when they tried, yet again, to pass the JGA amendment to re-structure the Planning Commission. Proposition T, as it was called on the November 1964 ballot, was denounced by Mary Harrington Hall in *San Diego Magazine*:

[It is a replay] of the Jobs and Growth measure which would bring an end to sane city planning; turn zoning into a shell game; and give alarming and undemocratic legislative power to a Planning Commission over which the voter would have no control. The Commission would be appointed in the discredited, ward heeling way. (107)

The voters rejected Proposition T in November, 1964. But Brown's forces were by no means through with their attacks on city government. The next battle was over San Diego's General Plan.

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"MARXIST SOCIALISM" AND THE ROOM TAX

In November 1964, Brown's forces were successful in their referendum against the 4% hotel-motel room tax, recently enacted by the City Council for promotion of tourism and conventions. *San Diego Magazine's* investigative reporter Mary Harrington Hall asked: "Is he trying to block the rejuvenation of downtown as the city's cultural and commercial heart because his heart (and his holdings) is in Mission Valley?"(108)

With San Diego still trying to pull out of the economic doldrums, Mayor Curran advocated development of tourism and conventions because they constituted San Diego's third largest industry. Yet Brown, proprietor of Atlas Hotels in Mission Valley, refused to join the Convention and Tourist Bureau (forerunner of today's Convention and Visitor Bureau), and attacked the very concept of tourism promotion through the room tax.

Why? Harold Keen, in an insightful article titled "Brown's Holy War Against the Room Tax," proffered several possible explanations:

One explanation...is that Brown is determined, regardless of personal sacrifice, to wrest power over San Diego's government structure from the arch-foe downtown interests....A possibly more fundamental motivation is Brown's vision of himself as manning the ramparts in a holy war against Marxist socialism..."The visitor tax," says Brown, "is immoral legislation, on the assumption that the Marxist theory of socialism is immoral."(109)

Brown dragged the socialist "red herring" into the argument on the basis that the room tax money would be used, in part, to promote facilities on publicly-owned land, such as the new convention center and the hotels in Mission Bay Park. This argument was undercut, however, by the revelation that Brown had applied to the Unified Port District for a hotel lease on Harbor Island. Would Brown consider himself "a partner in a socialist enterprise," Keen wondered, "if he received a lease?"(110)

The City Council had ordered a special election for February 16, 1965, to re-instate the room tax that Brown's referendum had overturned. If the tax is approved, Keen asked: "...will Charlie Brown give up his seemingly endless broadsides against the city government? Probably not. But if he wins, he will have demonstrated his power...Some believe Charlie Brown's secret sentiment ...is: beat Proposition C [the room tax] today and take over City Hall tomorrow."(111)

The room tax (nowadays known as the Transient Occupancy Tax, or TOT) did pass in February, 1965; but as Keen predicted, Brown's "broadsides against city government" did not stop. The next attack was on the City's General Plan.

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THE DEFEAT (AND REVIVAL) OF THE GENERAL PLAN

The City Planning Department, under the capable direction of Director Harry Haelsig, had been working on a General Plan Study since 1960, and presented it to Mayor Dail and the Council in June, 1962. Though merely a study, it projected in general terms goals for housing, industry, commerce, and transportation and for public facilities such as schools, parks, libraries, police and fire protection. It suggested that pressures be brought to bear against urban sprawl and recommended that the City's deteriorating inner core should be redeveloped.

Mayor Dail appointed a 200-person Citizens Advisory Committee, chaired by San Diego State College professor Dr. Donald Leiffer, to review the Study and make further recommendations based on citizen input. Organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, League of Women Voters, San Diegans, Inc., and Citizens Coordinate were well represented on the various subcommittees that worked on different aspects of the Plan. Mission Valley property owners like Brown objected to the emphasis on building up the inner core of the city and maintaining low-density designations in Mission Valley. Brown-associate Paul Borgerding complained bitterly:

Every building in Mission Valley was put there over the dead body of the Planning Department...I think we will live to see the day when we will have...a second Miami beach in the valley...it would be the greatest thing San Diego ever had, because people like to come to a sensational city. What makes a sensational city? Bright lights and tall buildings.(112)

Another Dail-appointed committee also issued a report in 1962. The Citizens Charter Review Committee, chaired by Howard Chernoff, had been studying San Diego's 1931 City Charter. Their recommendations included strengthening the Mayor's stature and authority by giving him the right to appoint all Commission members. This meant, most importantly, that the City Manger would no longer appoint four of the seven Planning Commission members, and City Manager Tom Fletcher said that he had no objections.

Another important recommendation was to increase the size of the Council from six districts to eight, with elections for the newly-enlarged Council to take place in November 1965. These measures, placed on the September 1963 ballot, passed without difficulty. But the voters rejected a measure which would have placed the Planning Department under the City Manager. It remained under the authority of the Planning Commission and, ultimately, of the Council.

Neither the Planning Commission nor the Council, however, seemed to have a sense of the value of consistent, long-range planning. With a lagging economy, Mary Harrington Hall, *San Diego Magazine* reporter, pointed out:

...it became easy for speculators to convince...the Planning Commission that things should be loosened up a little "to help the economy" ...Spot re-zoning... is increasing, even though it messes up neighborhoods, damages the city's future and ultimately hits the taxpayer's pocketbook...Because there is so little understanding and real support for planning, the City Council and the Planning Commission...last month [August 1964] finally ruined Mission Valley, although it won't be noticeable for years.(113)

What Hall meant was that in August, 1964, Publisher Elliott Cushman won a rezoning of his property along Highway 80 (despite Planning Department and City Engineer's objections) for an automobile agency. The Planning Department, Hall noted, would then be faced with requests for re-zoning by others in the immediate area: "...former Councilman Ross Tharp and other landowners on the hillsides...are naturally asking for rezoning...[And then] El Cajon Boulevard will move down to Mission Valley."(114)

Harry Haelsig, after nearly ten years as Planning Director, tired of fighting losing battles, resigned. His assistant, Jim Fairman, was asked to take over. In an extraordinary meeting with the Planning commission, Fairman, smiling but serious, told the Commissioners (according to Hall): "You could be great, because you are first string citizens, but you...act like the Council's errand boys... [S]ome of you act as though you are representing developers...You should start thinking about what planning means to this city's future."(115)

In *City of the Dream*, Pourade notes the importance of right-wing ideology and fear of government intervention in San Diego during the 1960s, concluding: "Conservatism dominated San Diego's political thinking...There was a heavy concentration of military personnel, both active and retired, as well as many pensioners from the Midwest. Conservative ideology was brought to bear on the voters by the quiet yet persuasive James S. Copley through his *San Diego Union*."(116)

When the Citizens Advisory Committee presented its report on "The General Plan for San Diego," which contained a statement advocating urban renewal as the best way to deal with downtown blight, it was, Pourade said, "like touching a match to the dynamite of San Diego conservatism...*The Evening Tribune* condemned the General Plan in an editorial...'People who believe in freedom, who believe in property rights, who believe that government is the servant and not the master of citizens, will be instantly alert...if you do not want City Hall to rule every condition under which you live and work in San Diego, you must protest now'."(117)

For two days, "the Planning Department's switchboard was jammed" with complaints. M. H. Hall, in an article titled "Fun and Games at City Hall," noted:

This was obviously an organized campaign by the Do-Nothing, Know-Nothing crowd which has had the Council cowed...*The Union-Tribune's* urban renewal view is well known, as is the newspaper's fear of city planning ...Irving Reynolds, Copley Press chief economist, is board treasurer of (Charles) Brown's Atlas Hotel Corporation.(118)

Eventually, a number of changes were made to the wording of the General Plan, the most significant of which was to water down references to urban renewal; and the City Council adopted the General Plan in 1965. To think that this could be done without a major effort to win public support was probably naive. The Citizens Protective League, a Brown-financed group led by Martin Montroy, denounced the General Plan as 'socialism' and immediately began circulating petitions to force a public vote on the Council's action.

The Citizens Advisory Committee fought back, calling the Citizens Protective League "a small band of willful citizens...[who] intend to grind to a halt the development of the city."(119) But the referendum succeeded, and in September 1965, the Council's adoption of the General Plan was overturned, 66,000 to 40,000.

After the defeat of the General Plan, the Citizens Advisory Committee removed all references to specific blight areas and to 'urban renewal', and left it to the discretion of the City Council to make any such designations in the future. (120) Ultimately, the only such area ever to receive federal urban renewal funds was the San Diego City College redevelopment project, since a City ordinance prohibited use of such funds except for public facilities.(121)

After the required lapse of time, the General Plan was brought up again. This time, now that the wicked words 'urban renewal' had been excised, the Copley newspapers endorsed the Plan. The *San Diego Union*, in an astounding about-face, declared:

The Plan is not a product of a concealed band of social plotters but of your neighbors...[it] merely sets down new guidelines by which business and industry and residents can continue to live together in a well-ordered and beautifully developed community ...[A no vote means] we are willing to turn the community over to the promoters, the speculators and the exploiters...(122)

The untimely death of Charles Brown in October 1966 probably was the most important factor in defusing the opposition to the General Plan. Brown, founder of the Atlas Hotels Corporation and the land development firm Sample-Brown Enterprises, had been the leading force and the major contributor behind the various anti-planning groups (BGA, JGA, Citizens Protective League). Mayor Curran paid tribute to his impact on San Diego, saying: "Charles Brown was a controversial figure, and he had differences with City Hall on many occasions. But he made great contributions to the economy of San Diego by his dogged willingness to go ahead with projects which turned out to be highly successful."(123)

In the fall of 1967, Pourade wrote, "a saturation advertising and promotion campaign was waged on behalf of the Plan...and it won voter approval by a four-to-three margin, in November, 1967."(124) At the same time, Mayor Frank Curran (a friend to planning) was re-elected over challenger Allen Hitch (an anti-planner). Things were beginning to look up!



SAVING BALBOA PARK FROM THE FREEWAY

Citizens Coordinate had also been waging another big, long-term battle: to save Balboa Park from the State Division of Highways' plan to double the size of Cabrillo Freeway through the park. In February 1965, the proposal to widen US 395 (also known as 163) through the park first became public. Later that year, the Chamber of Commerce and the San Diego Highway Development Association, citing traffic congestion, requested the City Council to promptly seek initiation of the work by the State Division of Highways.

Citizens Coordinate rounded up several other groups, including the Sierra Club, the Park and Recreation Board, the American Institute of Architects and the American Society of Landscape Architects, and these organizations communicated to the Council their unalterable opposition to the widening of the freeway through Balboa Park in the light of alternative routes that were being developed and the future possibilities of mass transit. "Before reaching any conclusion," wrote Jean Morley, executive secretary of CC, "the Council may feel, as we do, the need for more information. We are attaching questions on which we would like answers."(125) The questions requested information on traffic counts at different times of day, consideration of alternative routes, and exploration of expanded bus service and car-pooling.

In September, 1966, *San Diego Magazine* published an article by Harold Keen called "Cabrillo Freeway Fight: Citizens Coordinate takes on the City and the Chamber." The article was illustrated by photographs of the freeway, including one titled: "Co-founder of Citizens Coordinate, Esther Scott, and present Chairman, Dorothea Edmiston, symbolically stand guard over the Cabrillo Freeway, San Diego's most beautiful scenic drive."

The small band of politically inexperienced urban conservationists who formed Citizens Coordinate in 1961 [wrote Keen] is engaged in the prime battle of its short, combative existence...Citizens Coordinate achieved its pinnacle of civic prestige last month on the day the City Council decided to take a fresh look at the recommendations...of the State of California's traffic experts. (126)

Criticism of CC as "that bunch always coming down here [to City Hall] asking for impossible things" was easily fended off by Dorothea Edmiston, business woman (and later, school board member), who became Chairman of CC in 1965. She responded: "Part of Citizen Coordinate's function, of course, is to ask for impossible things. Dreaming the big dream, favoring the hard alternative, speaking up for the unpopular cause are some ways this group can serve as the voice of the citizen who cares."(127)

The CC report "Highwayman Stop! This is City Park," written by Esther Scott, pointed out that the complete, ultimate plan, if US 395 were widened through the park, would include development of two big interchanges, destroying even more of Balboa Park; a connecting link with a proposed Maple Canyon freeway in the northwest section of the park; and a proposed Switzer Canyon freeway in the southeast section.

The CC recommendations called for steps to deal with commuter traffic problems: limit truck use during peak hours; encourage use of alternate travel routes with directional signs; encourage carpooling and staggered work hours; develop better bus service; and provide park-and-ride lots.(128) All of these suggestions were eventually adopted, though in some cases, not for several years.

Well-researched arguments, however, are seldom enough to persuade politicians, especially when opposing arguments are fielded by powerful and prestigious groups like the Chamber of Commerce and the State Division of Highways. However, Neil Morgan, in his book *Westward Tilt*, noted that "there is rising resentment...of the philosophy of freeway development...and its powerful hierarchy in the State Division of Highways."(129) (San Franciscans had recently been successful in stopping construction of the Embarcadero Freeway.) The freeway philosophy, Morgan noted, was expressed by state highway engineer Jacob Dekema, saying:

We find out where people are coming from and where they're going. Then we draw a straight line, and that's where we try to build the freeway...[But] ...something of volatile concern is likely to lie in the path of any straight line drawn in California... Wallace Stegner of Stanford refers to the California Highway Commission as 'having too much money, too much power, and an engineering mentality.'(130)

Citizens Coordinate focused attention on Balboa Park by organizing a large public "Explore Balboa Park Day" in the fall of 1967. Mayor Curran issued a proclamation mentioning various events that had been planned:

Whereas Citizens Coordinate, a link to a more handsome community, has arranged [for] music concerts at the Organ Pavilion and Balboa Park bowl; puppet shows...art displays, exhibits and demonstrations, open house at the Houses of Pacific Relations...nature walks...family picnics... and various bands, choirs and musicians...Now therefore I proclaim October 21, 1967, Explore Balboa Park Day, and urge our people to participate with Citizens Coordinate in becoming better acquainted with our great Balboa Park.(131)

While the public was enjoying various activities in the park, CC members took the opportunity to explain the park's varied and valuable resources, the threat posed by freeway expansion through the park, and the need to sign a petition which would be presented to the Highway Commission in Sacramento. These petitions stated:

As freeway users, we are proud of California's excellent roads, but we are no less proud of Balboa Park, a magnificent public facility enjoyed by San Diego residents and by visitors...Economics as well as an emotional attachment to the Park reinforce our belief that additional highway encroachment, by damaging one of this city's major assets, would be a disservice to the general well-being of San Diego. We ask you not to sacrifice any more of the space, the clean air, the greenery of Balboa Park to expediency. (132)

By the end of the year, CC reported that 17,000 signatures had been collected on the petition and taken by Dorothea Edmiston, CC's Executive Director, to Sacramento and presented to the Highway Commission. Now that a substantial block of public opinion had expressed itself in opposition to the widening of US 395 through Balboa Park, the San Diego City Council took note and, "as a direct result of citizen opposition," the widening proposal was reduced from eight lanes to six.(133)

Councilman Jack Walsh (in a move praised by Citizens Coordinate) urged the establishment of a citizen task force to review freeway planning procedures in their early planning stages, so that local groups could advise about protection of parkland or historic and scenic assets. Walsh especially noted the "antagonism, disillusionment and even distrust in local government" produced by current freeway planning methods, in which no local input had been sought until nearly the last stages of plans to widen US 395, and the recently announced proposal to construct "an elevated 16-lane swath" through Southeast San Diego.(134)

The latter proposal, another straight-line engineering concept of the Division of Highways, became a CC cause. Because of the experience CC gained in fighting the Cabrillo Freeway project, it was able to help the Southeast San Diego Community Planning Group organize the effective opposition that ultimately led to abandonment of the 16-lane 'San Miguel Freeway' project (discussed later on).

By the end of 1968, Gordon Luce, head of California's Business and Transportation Agency, announced that the decision-making responsibility for widening US 395 through Balboa Park would rest entirely with the San Diego City Council and that the State Division of Highways would abide by its decision. CC's Edmiston applauded that decision and reminded the Council that, although City Manager Walter Hahn had urged a six-lane compromise, CC had collected 17,000 signatures in opposition to *any* widening, and that several Council members supported that position.(135)

Resistance to widening the freeway through the park continued to grow, especially after the announcement the following year that the federal government's Department of Transportation, in a nationwide competition for aesthetically designed freeways, had awarded first place to Cabrillo Freeway.(136)

Eventually, the Council quietly shelved the proposal to widen the freeway and began to implement various suggestions proposed by Citizens Coordinate in its "Highwayman Stop!" report of 1966. By 1973, the Chamber of Commerce and Citizens Coordinate were on the same side in urging Mayor Wilson to prohibit heavy truck traffic on Cabrillo Freeway (137). In August of that year, the California Department of Transportation announced its approval of San Diego City Council Ordinance #11065 prohibiting vehicles of one ton or more from using the freeway through the park from 7 to 9 a.m. weekdays.(138)

In the view of Esther Scott, saving Balboa Park from the State Division of Highways was one of the best things Citizens Coordinate ever did. It not only saved parkland from destruction, but it helped to establish a new and powerful role for citizen input and local control over freeway construction. And it helped Citizens Coordinate to refine its methods of operation: research and preparation of well-reasoned arguments; working with other organizations to form coalitions in support of common goals; arousing public opinion through publications, meetings, events and signature gathering; advocating positions through letters, petitions and public testimony before boards, commissions and the City Council. (139)

Harold Keen's "Cabrillo Freeway Fight" article in *San Diego Magazine* (September, 1966) provided an impressive summary of CC's first five years of activity. As Keen summed it up:

The billboard battle was followed by the successful campaign against the attempts of Mission Valley hotel operator Charles Brown (Jobs and Growth Association) and City Councilman Jack Walsh...to upset the city's planning structure...; and the victorious marshaling of public opinion that led to the Council's adoption of a height limitation in the La Jolla high-rise controversy... Citizens Coordinate [also] raised \$32,250 as half the purchase price of Old Town lots to serve as a scenic gateway to Presidio Park; has contributed to the Community Concourse building fund; has raised \$3,000 for trees to beautify the...new Lindbergh Field terminal.(140)

The photo that accompanied Keen's article, showing Esther Scott and Dorothea Edmiston "symbolically standing guard" over the Cabrillo Freeway, also marked a symbolic "change of command" from the leadership of Scott to that of Dorothea Edmiston. Esther Scott had been Acting Chairman in 1961, when CC first began; Lloyd Ruocco served as advisor and provocative idea man at board meetings.

"Lloyd was not really a practical person," said Scott, "but he was a tremendous inspiration. He set people on fire, and that was his great gift and our good fortune...We provided the organization, the research, the work, and he provided the steam. He was always gracious, kindly, and a truly gentle person. Details, however, did not interest him. He was always delighted to have other people planning the meetings, finding the locations, doing the mailings." (141)

During the first five years, Scott continued to do most of the organizational work, under the title of vice-chairman. Dr. Minos Generales, a professor of political science at San Diego State College, served as Chairman from late in 1961 through 1962. Richard B. Wilson, an engineer at Convair, followed him as Chairman in 1963; followed by Dr. Edward Little, a physicist at the Naval Electronics Laboratory, in 1964.

In 1965, Esther's husband, Leslie Scott, retired from his position with Pacific Telephone Company. Esther, who said she did not want to become a permanent fixture, retired from CC as vice-chairman, writing to the Board:

This role has provided unlimited opportunity and challenge, as well as a fair share of inevitable headaches! On the whole, it has been a rich and rewarding experience, and I should like to express my deep appreciation for the tremendous help so generously given by so many of you...in this exciting, unique adventure. (142)

Fortunately for Citizens Coordinate, Dorothea (Mrs. James R.) Edmiston came along at that time. She had, recalled Esther Scott, "great organizational skills, political ambition, energy, tenacity; a background of business experience" and a gift for public speaking that made her very effective at presentations to the Planning Commission and City Council.(143) Either as Chairman (1965-66) or as Executive Director under the Chairmanship of Dr. Edward Little (1967-68), Dorothea exercised the major leadership role in the battles to prevent the widening of Cabrillo Freeway through Balboa Park, and to help bring about the adoption of the General Plan for San Diego in 1967.

Control of the Planning Department

One of the long-term concerns of Citizens Coordinate has always been the very nature and process of planning itself and the conviction that the ultimate decision-making power must rest with the City Council, as the democratically elected representatives of the citizenry. In 1968, during one of the periodic attempts to shift control over the Planning Department to the City Manager's office, Councilman Harry Scheidle took the lead.

Scheidle's criticism centered on Planning Director Jim Fairman, whom he termed uncooperative. He called for Fairman's removal, and asked that the Planning Department be shifted to the Manager's office, which he said would expedite the implementation of community development plans. (144) Scheidle also requested an opinion from City Attorney Ed Butler as to whether the shift could be accomplished by ordinance instead of by amending the City Charter. Butler responded that an ordinance would be sufficient; however, he noted:

As a private citizen and taxpayer with a stake in the orderly development of San Diego, it is my opinion that the Planning Department should continue to be independent of the office of the city manager...I don't feel that it is within the usual administrative area and it ought not to be subjected to normal administrative expediency or day-to-day political pressures. (145)

Citizens Coordinate supported Butler's position, and Dorothea Edmiston testified eloquently about the importance of planning. The objective of the proposed ordinance was to speed up the permitting process by reducing appeals to the Council. Edmiston began by referring to the Council's complaining about spending so much of their time on zoning decisions:

I am not yet ready to go on record with my list of priorities for the Council's time, but high on my list would be land-use decisions. Many problems which have high priority are often solved, at least in part, by good land-use decisions...Must we have 34 dead and \$40 million in destruction to learn that Watts [a district in Los Angeles

that had recently suffered a devastating race riot] had no good hospital for 87,000 people, no modern school for 30,000 children, no movie theatre, but one swimming pool, and such poor transportation facilities to other areas that the labor force was 30% unemployed? Can we see these things happening and still talk about spending too much time on land use decisions? (146)

As to placement of the Planning Department under the City Manager, Edmiston raised the question of what situation would best promote long-range planning: "Can this best be hoped for with a semi-independent department concerned with the big dream—the long-range solution—the consideration of all factors? Or can we hope for it by confining planning activities to the limits of one man's awareness and the saddling on him of the all-too-big problem while he is necessarily concerned with the day-to-day business of keeping the City's expenditures within its budget?" (147)

Public pressure, stirred up by Citizens Coordinate, and its ad hoc committee, Citizens for Good Government, persuaded the Council to submit the proposal shifting the Planning Department to voters. Councilmen Floyd Morrow, Tom Hom and Mike Schaefer joined CC and Citizens for Good Government in opposing Proposition L, as it was called. It was rejected by the voters in November, 1968. (148)

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BATTLING HEIGHT IN LA JOLLA

In the early 1960s, a movement began in La Jolla to preserve ocean views and a village ambiance from high-rise construction. The La Jolla Town Council expressed its concern about the possibility of high-rise buildings in 1962. (The Town Council is a business and property owners group without legislative authority, since La Jolla—though it has stubbornly retained its own name, identity and post office designation—is legally part of the City of San Diego.) Therefore, the La Jolla Town Council asked San Diego Mayor Charles Dail for help.

Dail appointed a committee to study the effects of high-rise construction on La Jolla, and called for a thirty-day moratorium on high-rise construction permits while the committee studied the question. *San Diego Magazine* reporter Roberta Ridgely noted that the La Jolla Town Council, led by Bailey Gallison, was continuing "in the best tradition of the Council's predecessor, the Village Improvement Committee"—a committee founded in the 1890s and guided by the "remarkable foresight of Ellen Browning Scripps."(149)

Ridgely pointed out an ironic twist: "At a time when San Diego's city planning is in danger, La Jolla is in the unique position of often petitioning the City Council to have zoning and other restrictions applied, not removed."(150)

Following the pattern of San Diegans, Inc., a group named La Jollans, Inc. was formed in 1965 to study and plan for the orderly development of La Jolla. It hired the Real Estate Research Corporation to make an economic analysis of the area and prepare recommendations. This fitted in well with Mayor Frank Curran's ideas. Curran, City Council member since 1955 and Mayor since 1963, was a firm believer in democratic participation: "The greatest thing for a community is to get involved in its government," said Curran. (151) He supported the concept of community planning groups by making staff support available from the City Planning Department and lauded the energetic participation of these groups in developing individual neighborhood plans which would then fit into the General Plan for San Diego.

Meantime, the temporary moratorium against high-rises had expired, and by 1965 Orville Huntley's sixteen-story condominium at 939 Coast Boulevard had shocked La Jollans into action. This bulky building, which blocked part of the ocean view from the village, appeared to be the first act in an escalating drama of more and more tall buildings, which could lead to a massive wall along the coast of La Jolla.

Dr. Martin Stern, a physicist at General Atomic, member of the La Jolla Town Council, and Board member of Citizens Coordinate, recalled that initially La Jollans, Inc. was not interested in taking on the height limitation issues, perhaps fearful that it would alienate support for a comprehensive plan. Stern, who had long been interested in urban planning, wrote a thoughtful article for *San Diego Magazine* about the problems associated with high-rises. He suggested that, when appropriate, high-rise structures could be placed at the base, or on the flanks, of hills so as not to block views and reduce property values along the coast.(152)

Stern placed the issue in a broad context, and echoed some of Lloyd Ruocco's ideas:

The problem of cities is how to create, under crowded conditions, the right mix of privacy and human interaction, of private freedom and public responsibility, of good appearance and economic usefulness... Man should learn to master these factors so as to shape for himself an environment in which he can thrive. (153)

Stern noted that, under existing zoning in La Jolla, the half-dozen proposed high-rises (and more to come) could be built without zoning variances, and that elsewhere in La Jolla the existing M-1 zoning would permit auto-wrecking yards, body and fender repair shops...carpet cleaning works and storage warehouses. Further, many residential areas were zoned R-4, even though most lots were utilized for single-family residences (R-4 theoretically permitted over 100 units per acre). Stern pointed out that Roger and Ellen Revelle and their neighbors in La Jolla's Barber Tract had already provided a good example in the 1940s by having their land rezoned from R-4 to R-1 in order to voluntarily protect the residential character of the area. (154)

In concluding his forceful argument in favor of comprehensive planning and revised zoning, Stern pointed to the example of San Francisco, where a group of residents had halted the walling off of the waterfront by high-rises. Caspar Weinberger, a member of the San Francisco residents' association, had written to Stern: "We were aided...by the fact that a Master Plan was already in existence...We secured passage of an ordinance imposing a 40-foot height limitation on blocks along the waterfront..."(155)

Mayor Curran, with his belief in participatory democracy, suggested that La Jolla residents organize a petition drive asking for an interim ordinance. The voice of public opinion would, he felt, impress the City Council.(156) Citizens Coordinate helped by sponsoring and circulating (in July, 1965) the La Jolla Height Limitation petition, calling for a one-year 50-foot interim height limitation while La Jollans, Inc. and the City Planning Department developed a long-range plan for the area.(157)

A precedent for height limitation existed in Point Loma where, in the late 1950s, a group led by Mary Harrington Hall and then-Councilman William Hartley had, in the words of Harold Keen, "mobilized community sentiment and legal facts that convinced city government the area would suffer irretrievable damage from congestion affecting traffic, sewage and schools." The Council had responded by passing a thirty-foot height limitation for residential sections and a 60-foot limit for commercial areas of Point Loma. (158)

Some of the most powerful residents of La Jolla, however, opposed the height limitation, among them William Scripps Kellogg, owner of the La Jolla Beach and Tennis Club and other property in La Jolla Shores. Kellogg was represented by attorney (and former Councilman) Ross Tharp, who characterized the petition as typical of the "reprehensible mobocracy and governmental domination which is sweeping the land and encroaching upon our basic American concepts of private ownership."(159)

The height limitation proponents, on the other hand, argued that high-rises would increase the population density, which in turn would have unfavorable impacts on traffic circulation, parking, sewer and water requirements, schools, and police and fire protection services.

Noting the role of Citizens Coordinate in sponsoring the height limitation petition, Harold Keen concluded his article on "The Politics Behind La Jolla's High-Rise War" by remarking that: "La Jollans, for years considered the very embodiment of individualism in their philosophy toward government, have come to realize the value of urban planning within the framework of the free enterprise system."(160)

CC petition circulators Martin Stern, Elizabeth Sellon, Sally Spiess, and many others were crowned with success when the City Council, on March 8, 1966, passed the La Jolla Height Limitation Ordinance, placing a two-year moratorium on all construction over fifty feet. "Dogged determination, crackerjack organization, and hard work on the part of overwhelming numbers of La Jollans," trumpeted the CC newsletter, finally led the City Council to recognize "that height does not always make right."(161)

By September 1966, the La Jolla Community Plan—a combined effort of the City Planning Department, La Jollans, Inc., and the Real Estate Research Corporation—was ready for review by local residents, and Citizens Coordinate sponsored a meeting at which the plan was presented and discussed. Similar meetings were held by other community groups in La Jolla, and eventually the plan was approved by the vast majority of the citizens of the area. The San Diego Planning Commission unanimously approved the plan in March, 1967, and on April 13, 1967, the San Diego City Council adopted the Plan.

A final struggle remained before the Plan could become functional, since specific ordinances had to be adopted before the Plan could be implemented. This struggle was between La Jollans, Inc., which wanted the Plan implemented, and the City Council, which delayed and postponed hearings on the ordinance. In October, 1968, Karl ZoBell, one of the leading spirits of La Jollans, Inc., resigned in frustration "because the city will not take any positive action in implementing La Jolla's Community Plan."(162)

John Rose, Vice-president of Citizens Coordinate, pointed out the irony of the situation: San Diego had been nominated for an All-American City Award for community planning, yet was dragging its feet about implementation. In a letter to Harold Keen, Rose warned that "as La Jolla, so goes the rest of Greater San Diego planning." The fate of the other community plans, he believed, hung in the balance, as did the whole concept of citizen-participation in planning that had begun with San Diegans, Inc. (163)

At the November City Council hearing, Robert Jackson, president of La Jollans, Inc., appealed for approval of the zoning ordinance; and Martin Stern, representing Citizens Coordinate, wrote to the Council:

The La Jolla Plan is one of the earliest residential community plans to come before you...It is supported by the overwhelming majority of the citizens of the community...If you vote for it, you will have made an important contribution to the future well-being of our city, and will have set an example for other cities to follow.
(164)

Finally, the Council voted 8-1 (Allen Hitch dissenting) to rezone 126 acres of La Jolla from R-4 (permitting 108 dwelling units per acre) to R-3 (43 units per acre), thus implementing the Plan and upholding the will of the majority. (165) The down-zoning was a precedent-setting action, which was repeated in succeeding years in other community plans, though seldom without a struggle.

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SAVING SAN CLEMENTE CANYON AND FIGHTING FREEWAY PROLIFERATION

San Clemente Canyon, an attractive tree-shaded arroyo stretching from Clairemont to La Jolla, was part of the original pueblo lands of San Diego. As such, most of it belonged to the city, and the remainder was obtained in land-trades between the city and Burgener and Tavares, developers of Clairemont. As the city's population expanded into outlying subdivisions, the canyon appeared to be an ideal location for a connecting roadway from the coast to inland communities. Nature lovers, however, demonstrated an early interest in the area, recognizing its unique role as a riparian habitat, a native plant preserve, and an open space buffer within a rapidly developing metropolitan area. In 1959, residents of Clairemont voiced their opposition to a city proposal to use part of it as a trash disposal site. (166)

One of the first groups established after the formation of Citizens Coordinate in 1961 was the San Clemente Canyon Committee, under the leadership of Grace Sargent and Jean Morley. The committee hoped that the City Council would dedicate the canyon as a natural park, pointing out that its special value lay in its native vegetation of chaparral, gooseberry bushes, giant sycamore and oak trees (some of them hundreds of years old), and the existence of birds, bees, and small animals drawn to the area by the little stream coursing through the canyon bottom.

The committee took city Park and Recreation Director Lester Earnest and some of his staff on a tour of the canyon. Earnest was so impressed that he asked Citizens Coordinate "to assist in a city-wide survey of suitable spots for parks in other ravines and canyons." (167)

But the dictates of population expansion and transportation arteries were, initially, more powerful than those of the ecologists. In 1966, "the heart of San Clemente Canyon [was] sacrificed" to the Genesee Avenue straight-line route crossing the canyon to join Mission Valley with University City. An 80-foot-wide flood-control channel edged with rip-rap was proposed for the canyon bottom, and the giant "Bee Tree," whose 150-foot spread indicated an age of two or three hundred years, was destroyed along with many other great oaks. (168)

Outraged complaints from CC about "wanton tree-cutting" resulted in the City Manager's request that City departments must cross-check with the Park and Recreation Department before undertaking construction work that would threaten parkland and trees(169), but it was too late for those already sacrificed.

In May, 1967, Citizens Coordinate's general meeting featured a film called "Automania 2000." Discussion focused on recent developments in the controversies surrounding Cabrillo Freeway (through Balboa Park), Soledad Freeway (proposed S-52 through San Clemente Canyon), and the San Miguel Freeway (proposed S-157 through Southeast San Diego). Clairemont residents, including CC members Sargent and Morley, formed the "Save Our Open Space Committee," which effectively opposed a canyon bottom route for State Highway 52.

Meantime, CC and Clairemont residents continued to urge the City Council to dedicate San Clemente Canyon Park, and on July 10, 1968, the park was formally dedicated—the first "natural" park in the City of San Diego.(170) Shortly afterward, in announcing the beginning of construction of the freeway, California highway engineer Jacob Dekema stated that S-52 "will be every bit as attractive as Cabrillo Freeway," and that because of opposition to the original route, the "plans were changed so the freeway would not disturb the trees in the canyon bottom. Instead, the highway will be [built]...near the top of the north slope."(171) Thus, a compromise had been reached and the most important part of the canyon had been saved by persistent citizen action. The highway engineers had begun to listen!

In 1971, following completion of access roads, parking lots and picnic benches, the park was officially opened to public use. Councilwoman Helen Cobb cut the ribbon, remarking that this symbolized "the culmination of a battle that began in 1956 to keep this 345-acre area in its natural state."(172) Assemblyman Pete Wilson, then running for Mayor of San Diego, spoke also, paying tribute to those who fought to save the heart of the canyon by insisting on the relocation of the roadbed further up the slope. In 1975, the City Council changed the name of the park from San Clemente Canyon Park to Marian Bear Park, in honor of the woman who had chaired the Clairemont Planning Group that fought to save the park. (173)

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COMMUNITY PLANNING GROUPS

The first of the citizen community planning groups in San Diego was San Diegans, Inc., founded in 1959. The previous year, the Chamber of Commerce, looking at San Diego's increasingly deteriorating downtown and the potentially damaging competition from Mission Valley commercial developments, and being generally "conscious of the increasing problems of urbanization," urged the City Council to direct the Planning Department to develop a General Plan for the San Diego metropolitan area in conjunction with existing groups of interested citizens.

The San Diego Downtown Association established a committee to advise specifically on plans for downtown. This group, the nucleus of which included merchant Joe Jessop, architect Sam Hamill and banker George Sears, became a separate organization in 1959—San Diegans, Inc. This group met regularly with the city planning department and financed the economic analysis of downtown that led to the successful construction of the Community Concourse and provided a great stimulus to office and hotel development in the downtown area by private developers in the early 1960s.

In 1965, the City Council devised a policy of drawing citizens into the community planning process by encouraging the establishment of local planning committees. These committees undertook studies and made recommendations for their neighborhoods. La Jollans, Inc., Peninsulans, Inc., and Southeast Development Committee were among the first. By providing some staff support from the Planning Department, Mayor Curran encouraged these committees.

After the unexpected defeat of the General Plan at the polls in September 1965, a wide-spread educational program about the economic and social benefits of urban planning was launched by various organizations, including the American Institute of Architects, Chamber of Commerce, San Diegans, Inc., Citizens Coordinate and the League of Women Voters. They held public meetings and sent speakers to other groups to explain the General Plan. This culminated in a well attended conference held June 17-18, 1966, sponsored by San Diego State College, Mayor Curran and the organizations previously listed.

The conference, called "San Diego Tomorrow: What do YOU want it to be?" was keynoted by the Mayor and by architects Harold Sadler and Robert Mosher. Workshops were held on subjects such as redevelopment, industry, parks and community planning. Twelve community planning groups were represented: San Diegans, Inc., La Jollans, Inc., Peninsulans, Inc., Old Town San Diego, Frontier-Midway, Mission Beach, Pacific Beach, Kearny Mesa, North Park, Harbor-101, East San Diego and Southeast San Diego Development Committee.

The Southeast San Diego Development Committee was formed in July 1965, when a group of concerned Southeast residents were invited to meet with city planners and representatives from the City Manager's office to organize a program which would document the area's problems and propose solutions. This occurred in the aftermath of the Watts-area riot in Los Angeles and, while other planning groups had focused on physical planning (land use, transportation, etc.), the Southeast Development Committee "introduced for the first time demands that the community be analyzed and policies developed that address the social as well as the physical environment." (174)

In May, 1967, Citizens Coordinate had called attention to the State Division of Highways' plans to construct the San Miguel Freeway (S-157) through Southeast San Diego. The following month, the major article in the CC newsletter was devoted to this subject, under the heading: "More Heedless, Needless Freeway Planning." Citizens Coordinate joined the Southeast Development Committee at the City Council meeting on June 8 to speak in opposition to the plans for S-157, noting that: (1) this freeway would not serve the Southeast community because it lacked on-off ramps into the area; (2) it would completely disrupt the neighborhood, cutting through residential areas and isolating the elementary school from two-thirds of its students.

Viewing the situation in a broader perspective, CC pointed out that controversies existed over several proposed freeways, and suggested that city officials carefully examine the desirability of all contested freeways in terms of their impact on communities, saying: "Transportation routes should not be allowed to destroy the unique qualities that make San Diego so wonderfully different from other cities...What's needed here is to begin giving greater weight in the decision making process to non-engineering considerations—human and community values, for instance."(175)

These recommendations led the City Council to take the unusual step of engaging a consultant to re-study the proposed freeway route and alternatives. The criteria for the re-study called for employment of a sociologist and planner, so that "human and community values and aesthetics" were taken into account as well as engineering considerations. (176) Thus, CC and the Southeast Development Committee were effective in persuading the City to establish a broader and more inclusive basis for laying out freeway Routes—one that took account of people as well as cars.

By 1969, the Southeast Development Committee's plan was adopted by the City Council—and S-157 had been scrapped. In her evaluation of the Southeast San Diego Development Committee, researcher Christine Williams noted among its achievements that the freeway defeat was considered by many as "a notable accomplishment... representative of what could be accomplished through a coalition of community leaders and professional planners." (177)

Community planning groups were not only successful in halting high-rises in La Jolla and preserving a natural park in San Clemente Canyon, but also in stopping a proposed freeway which would have cut a broad concrete swath through Southeast San Diego.

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ALL-AMERICA CITY AWARD

As part of San Diego's celebration of its Bicentennial in 1969, Charles Cordell, president of the 200th Anniversary Celebration, submitted an application to the National Municipal League which, along with the popular national *Look* magazine, presented annual awards to cities in which citizen participation had been effective in meeting community problems, and in March, 1969, San Diego received its second All-America City Award.(178) (The first had been given in 1963, in recognition of citizen action in working with the city government to organize support and financing for the Community Concourse.)

Cordell's application traced the history of the community planning groups and outlined obstacles overcome by them in drafting their plans. He singled out for special commendation Karl ZoBell of La Jollans, Inc., John F. Williams of the Southeast San Diego Development Committee, and Fred Schoelkopf of the Clairemont Mesa Development Committee.

The San Diego system, said Cordell, "...initiated by its citizens, stands as an important attempt to involve citizens in the planning process. They know they are not being manipulated to serve short-term political purposes, but are shaping their communities for the next 20 to 30 years."(179)

The National Municipal League praised San Diego's community planning groups, which engaged in effective action to improve their communities. "As a result," continued the award statement, "one area has a new park, another was able to detour a new freeway, a third was able to avoid...high-rise construction."

Citizens Coordinate was proud to have played a significant role in all of these activities.

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CITIZEN'S COORDINATE BECOMES C-3

As San Diego celebrated its two hundredth anniversary in 1969, the board of directors of Citizens Coordinate decided to restructure the organization, enlarge the board, change the name of the organization, acquire tax-exempt status, and move to larger headquarters. By March, 1970, all of these things had been accomplished, and Admiral Charles Hartman (former Executive Director of San Diegans, Inc. and Mr. San Diego of 1970), as chairman of the newly enlarged board of directors, announced the election of the 60-member board, reflecting a cross-section of citizens from "all four of the region's major universities, organized labor, business management, community planners, conservationists, ethnic groups, the professions, the Junior League, Jaycees and San Diego County's Indian Tribes."(180)

In recognition of San Diego's entry into its third century of existence, Hartman said the name had been changed to "Citizens Coordinate for Century Three," C-3 for short. Other officers included Dr. Lawrence Solomon (Director of USIU's Human Research Center), Anthony Corso (professor of Urban Planning at SD State College), engineer Greer Ferver, writer John Rose, attorney Julius Pearl, and Brian Reeves, former Student Council president at SDSC. Dorothea Edmiston was named C-3 Program Director and, later that year, when C-3 moved into Suite #4 of the House of Hospitality in Balboa Park, Diane Barlow was hired as Executive Director.

The board members pledged themselves "to help resolve the threatening and complex conflict between so-called progress and environmental destruction,"(181) and took note of C-3's achievements during the past decade.

For a small group, Citizens Coordinate had an impressive list of accomplishments. Working alone, or as the lead organization in a coalition, CC could claim the following successes during the decade of the 1960s:

- Billboard control along freeways
- Landscaping the gateway to Presidio Park
- Rescuing the San Diego River from a concrete flood control channel
- Defeating attempts to restructure the Planning Commission into a potential pork-barrel system

- Promoting the relocation of freeway 52 in order to create Marion Bear Park in San Clemente Canyon
- Saving Balboa Park's scenic freeway 163 from expansion

In addition, Citizens Coordinate, while not playing a leading role, had been a supporting player in the following important events of the 1960s:

- Redevelopment of Centre City, including the City Hall, Community Concourse, and Civic Theatre
- Adoption of the General Plan for developing the City San Diego
- Development of neighborhood community planning groups based on principles advocated by C-3: citizen participation in the planning process and concern for environmental and social values in land use decisions.
- The formation of citizens' advisory committees to the Mayor and City Council, including: the Parks and Recreation Board, the Balboa Park Committee, and the Mission Bay Park Committee

Citizens Coordinate has been involved in many more battles since 1970, continuing to champion urban and regional planning, citizen participation and environmental protection; but the first ten years were the hardest!



CONCLUSION

Since the 1970s, C-3's major emphasis has been focused on supporting the proposals set forth in *Temporary Paradise*, a landmark study of the San Diego area produced in 1974 for the San Diego City Planning Department by two highly respected urban planners, Kevin Lynch and Donald Appleyard. This study was made possible by a grant from civic benefactors Hamilton Marston and his aunt, Miss Mary Marston. The principles expressed in *Temporary Paradise* (e.g., save the canyons, reduce energy consumption by curbing urban sprawl and developing mass transit) continue to guide planning decisions in San Diego.

In 1991, C-3 members devoted several months to a review and update of *Temporary Paradise*, and then published a revised study, called *Toward Permanent Paradise*. This publication represents the expression of C-3's guiding philosophy and forms the basis for C-3's positions on various land use and environmental issues.

C-3 holds regular monthly breakfast meetings for study and discussion of current planning issues. Most recently these meetings have been concerned with downtown San Diego development (and redevelopment), and with waterfront planning issues such as the Embarcadero plans and the Navy Broadway Complex. Now, more than ever, C-3 is still trying to answer founder Lloyd Ruocco's question: **"HOW CAN WE MAKE CITIES THAT ARE FIT TO LIVE IN?"**

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