

John D. Spaeth Planning Files, 1950-1969

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Seattle (Wash.). Dept. of Community Development
Title	John D. Spaeth Planning Files
Dates	1950-1969 (inclusive) 1950 1969
Quantity	1 cubic foot, (1 box)
Collection Number	1650-02
Summary	Files of Seattle's Director of Planning, John Spaeth, mainly covering the Central Business District study and Comprehensive Plan.
Repository	Seattle Municipal Archives Seattle Municipal Archives Office of the City Clerk City of Seattle PO Box 94728 98124-4728 Seattle, WA Telephone: 206-233-7807 Fax: 206-386-9025 archives@seattle.gov
Access Restrictions	Records are open to the public.
Languages	English

Historical Note

The City Planning Commission was created in 1924 to prepare plans and gather data for urban planning and the physical development of the City, to advise City Council on current problems and long range planning, and to participate in administration and revision of the City's Zoning Ordinance. A Zoning Commission was created in 1920 to develop the City's first Zoning Code which was adopted in 1923.

The Planning Commission initially was comprised of 25 members, but in 1930, membership nine. Prior to 1946, funding for the Commission came from the Engineering Department. A City Charter amendment in 1946 created an independent nine-member commission with fiscal autonomy. The Commission was given authority to hire employees as needed to carry out its planning and advisory functions. A Director of Planning was appointed in 1948 and, subsequently, work began on creation of the City's first Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1957. The Planning Commission also administered the Board of Adjustment which was created with adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Planning Commission, along with the Urban Renewal Program, was absorbed by the Department of Community Development when the latter was established in 1969. In 1992, DCD was abolished and the Planning Commission became a self-contained entity. As an independent body, it advises Mayor, City Council, and City departments on planning policies and physical development plans and projects. It has 15 members who are Seattle residents and includes an engineer or architect, urban planner, ethnic minority members, and citizens active in neighborhood affairs.

John Spaeth was appointed as the full time director of planning in 1948. Spaeth hired a planning staff and worked with business leaders, neighborhood organizations, and civic groups to garner support for the idea of a Comprehensive Plan. In developing the Plan, Spaeth and his staff created the City's first neighborhood plans for those post-World War II areas that were expanding at a rapid rate. He also focused on planning for the Central Business District. Following development of the Comprehensive Plan, the City adopted a new Zoning Code based on the Plan. Spaeth retired from City service in 1971.

Content Description

The records reflect an incomplete set of Planning Director Files of John Spaeth. The bulk of the records relate to the Central Business District study and the Comprehensive Plan. Population, traffic, transportation are all included in the background information. A report and background information is also included on Alki and the recreational needs of the community, including a study of the natatorium and whether or not it should be replaced. Other files reflect work on zoning issues, including over-water construction. Of note is an inventory of civic arts structures.

Use of the Collection

Preferred Citation

[Item and date], John D. Spaeth Planning Files, Record Series 1650-02. Box [number], Folder [number]. Seattle Municipal Archives.

Administrative Information

Related Materials

Researchers should also consult the Documents Index, the records of Assistant Planning Director Robert Hintz, and the records of Donald Monson on the Central Business District Study.

Detailed Description of the Collection

The following section contains a detailed listing of the materials in the collection.

1650-02: John D. Spaeth Planning Files, 1950-1969

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1/1	Alki - Neighborhood Recreational Study	1950-
1/2	Alki - Neighborhood Recreational Study - Background	1950-1951

Container(s)	Description	Dates
1/3	Alki - Neighborhood Recreational Study - Natatorium	1949-1950
1/4	City Light Office Space Needs (includes map)	1950
1/5	Civic Arts Inventory	1950
1/6	Civic Arts Center (includes attendance numbers and maps)	1950
1/7	Comprehensive Plan - Background (traffic, population)	1950-1953
1/8	Comprehensive Plan - Research	1950-1954
1/9	Comprehensive Plan - Central Area - Transportation (includes maps)	1960
1/10	Comprehensive Plan - Central Area - General Land Use Plan	1961
1/11	Central Business District Working Committee - Planning	1960
1/12	Central Business District Working Committee - Parking and Transit	1960
1/13	Central Business District Working Committee - Zoning Report - Draft	1963-
1/14	Central Business District - Symposium	1956-
1/15	Comprehensive Plan - Planning for Fire Station Locations - Report	1967-
1/16	Comprehensive Plan - Greenbelt Report	1959-
1/17	Central Business District Working Committee - Minutes	1959-1961
1/18	Central Business District Comprehensive Plan	1962-
1/19	Lake Union construction Limit Line - Peterson and Adams (includes map)	1964-1966
1/20	Over water construction	1963-1969
1/21	Over water construction	1969-1970

Container(s)	Description	Dates
1/22	Triplexes in Duplex Zone - Pederson / Board of Adjustment	1968
1/23	Waterfront Setback Study - Background	1961-1963
1/24	Zoning	1952-1959
1/25	Zoning - Fire Hose Towers	1969-1970
1/26	Zoning - Contract	1967-1968
1/27	Planning Commission Accomplishments : 1947-1957	1957
1/28	Mapping Legislation	1952-1957
1/29	State Legislation (includes parking commission)	1969
1/30	Bibliography / Publications	1965

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

City planning--Washington (State)--Seattle

Community development--Washington (State)--Seattle

Zoning--Washington (State)--Seattle

Personal Names :

Spaeth, John D.

Corporate Names :

Seattle (Wash.). Dept. of Community Development

Geographical Names :

Seattle (Wash.)

Finding aid prepared by Anne Frantilla

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