



Planning for Permanence: the Speeches of J.C. Nichols
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Planning for Permanence

National Association of Real Estate Boards
New York City November 18, 1948

“Planning for permanence” is not a Utopian dream – not a doctrinaire proposal of theoretical reformers. It is a basic, serious challenge to the realtors of America.

How can we rest on our oars – largely accept conditions as they are – be proud of our past achievements – when billions of dollars of loss occur annually in unnecessary building up and tearing down of large sections of our American towns and cities? This tragedy is often regarded as inevitable, and blindly accepted as evidence of normal growth. Such gigantic loss must be attacked in a bold, courageous manner, and we are the men to lead the attack.

We must not make nomads of our city dwellers. We must not permit distrust of permanency in investment of savings and capital in homes, commercial buildings, industrial plants, and in municipal and public utility investments.

Americans from the time the Pilgrims landed have recorded a long history of constant migration. A vast continent has been heroically spanned by hardworking pioneers. Villages were hastily built – thatched roofs – hand-hewn timber – brush-covered sod houses or dugouts in hillsides – meager, hasty places to live, huddled together in protection from Indians and unknown dangers, but always on an advancing frontier.

Sites were chosen near a spring or under protection of a high cliff; in a sheltered bay; at a favorable canoe crossing. People built where people traveled.

Naturally, little thought was given to permanent planning. No son or daughter expected to grow up and work in those temporary, fleeting villages. Even operators of trading posts frequently pulled up stakes and moved on west or south.

For nearly three centuries civilization fought its way down the Ohio and up and down the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers; in ox-drawn covered wagons over the perilous Santa Fe and Oregon trails; and up from Mexico in Spanish efforts of conquest.

They braved hostile Indians, conquered endless plains; crossed barren deserts; blazed their way through forests; over unknown mountain passes; forded dangerous streams. They scattered little, hurriedly built, mushroom settlements across America, many soon to decay and be abandoned; a few to become great cities. Little thought then, or reason, to plan permanently – just an easy river crossing or favorable location for a water wheel grist mill may have been solely responsible for the site of a future big town or city, long before the words “city planning” or “realtors” were known.

We all know the mining and lumbering boom-and-bust towns which littered these tragic paths across our continent. History tells of frantic town site promotion schemes by new railroads. We know the zealous struggles of slavery and anti-slavery groups – and religious groups – to pioneer new settlements – frequently tending to unsound village locations and future losses.

Please understand I am not criticizing our forefathers for their hastily built, fly-by-night towns. In no other way could they have conquered a wilderness of forests, mountains, deserts, and plains.

The point I am driving home – is the fact that the whole early colonization history of America created a practice and acceptance of “no planning for permanence.”

This long, early practice of temporary villages and shifting towns may be responsible for our too casual acceptance today of the rise and fall of property values in our cities and the too frequent shifting of the uses of urban properties.

But what of now, realtors of America? We are the ones to lead the fight to check these gigantic losses. Is not our pattern today in locations of towns and cities and the basic framework of such cities fairly dependent on at least many known factors?

Of course, we should study and forecast the influence of the airplane; trans-country bus and freight lines; power from future river dams or possible atomic power; river navigation; greater production from our agricultural areas as a result of irrigation and soil conservation; and today’s amazing results from scientific research leading to greater industrial uses of all our natural resources.

Perhaps we should not ignore the recent report of the National Security Resources Board recommending greater distribution of defense industrial activities into cities of 50,000 or less. But I say it is a direct, commanding challenge to our great profession as realtors to weigh all these factors, study past mistakes in city building, and make a united, intelligent effort to “plan for permanence.” By so doing we create permanent human and financial values, increase tax income for our towns and cities, and build permanent power and strength in our nation.

Let us make a united drive to end fleeting and shifting uses of property – let us build enduring homes and neighborhoods; permanent business, commercial and industrial areas with lasting values, all planned for a century or more.

Herbert Nelson – in Europe this past summer – found many residential and commercial areas hundreds of years old still good, sound, and desirable.

I say again, let’s stop the loss of billions of dollars in the building up and tearing down of our towns and cities. Here is your job and mine.

Here are the assurances we must give future generations:

That children can be born, reared, and still live in the neighborhood of their forefathers.

That the home, the most precious possession in life – the real heritage of a free people – will have permanent value, and desirable, healthful and inspiring surroundings

for many generations; low depreciation charges; loan companies well-secured with long-time loans; where homes will grow old graciously.

That neighborhoods will have ample playgrounds (but not 10% of the whole subdivision as some impractical federal planners advocate) – adequate park areas – quiet, carefully planned, curving minor residential streets designed to discourage through traffic – major highways – boulevards – parkways – and circumferential drives – all worked out to fit into a good municipal and regional pattern. This long life home area, carefully restricted, must have elementary and high schools, libraries, shopping centers, churches with community activities, fire stations, utility and municipal facilities, etc., all carefully located – well spaced – planned for essential expansion as the area grows.

Residential areas must provide sites for smaller homes as well as larger ones, carefully allocated in respective areas. Transition from smaller homes to large estates must be carefully planned.

Buffers to protect home areas should be provided if possible. Golf courses, parks, parkways, institutional lands, well-planned neighborhood shopping centers, rivers, streams, lakes, and ocean beaches may all create good transition and seams of protection for residential areas.

It is certainly just as important to safeguard and enfranchise good living in neighborhoods of modest homes as in areas of large homes.

Developers of shopping centers and their tenants should be able to depend on permanent buying power in their respective neighborhoods.

Municipalities, counties, and public utilities should be able to plan and invest with assurance of long-time stability. Yes, particularly our downtown business areas, so important to all our cities should have permanent residential trade areas and civic patterns upon which to plan and depend. I am not one of those that predict a great exodus from our large cities.

Just stop to think how much the permanent character of residential sections can mean in the long time layout of the transit system, water, gas and power lines, the telephone system, and the whole traffic plan of a city – all planned for permanence, and safe, long-time investments.

I venture a lot of you are thinking this is a fine, haywire dream of a fanatic – that I am ignoring the constant shifting of property uses in a rapidly growing city – the changing conditions and new ways of living. Can it be done and not straightjacket and stifle a city's growth residentially, commercially and industrially? Do we have to have a national planned economy? Do we have to have federal or state subsidy? I say NO with all my soul – and considering human and financial values – I say again that our National Association of Real Estate Boards is the proper organization to take the lead in “planning for permanence” through private enterprise.

Let us consider a few fundamental plans to achieve our goal – “planning for permanence.” I am bold enough to suggest the following:

I believe in a vigorous, honest, non-partisan city government with progressive objectives and conscious of the importance of planning and building for permanence, and this can best be provided under the so-called Council-Manager plan.

I am a firm believer in zoning and city planning. I made the first speech on this subject before our Association some 30 years ago at our convention in Louisville, Kentucky, just after the first adoption of zoning in the United States in 1917 in New York City.

A carefully chosen Planning and Zoning Board with good, practical, experienced representation of local realtors can and should be able to make a reasonable forecast of future property uses – always giving ample consideration to future industrial and commercial needs, and provide that sufficient land be so zoned.

Realtors should serve willingly – and demand the right to serve – on Plan Commissions, Zoning Boards, Regional Planning groups, Traffic Committees, Chambers of Commerce, and all other groups controlling the future destinies of your cities. Hobart Brady has been preaching this gospel well and unceasingly throughout this year all over the country. Let us work with, not against, our public authorities.

The administration of zoning laws must be on a practical basis. Residential, retail and industrial property all need the protection of proper zoning, but if these laws are administered on an idealistic rather than a practical basis, the essential development of much land may be prevented.

In some of our cities, there are many vacant lots and tracts lying unused and unproductive because of defective titles brought about by delinquent taxes or mortgages long in default. Proper legislation should be enacted to bring these properties into use to bear their proper share of the cost of government.

When an area has been zoned for specific uses and investments have been made depending on such uses, any Board should be cautious in later changing such zoning to higher uses. Our Urban Land Institute with Richard Seltzer of Philadelphia as President and under the direct leadership of our capable Seward Mott and Max Wehrly, has made an exhaustive study of zoning, and we should all avail ourselves of these studies.

And let me right here pay our respects to Walter Schmidt, Newton Farr, Herbert Nelson and others for the establishment of that great research body, the Urban Land Institute.

Where a certain area has been zoned for single residences – two-family homes or apartments – Zoning Board enforcement officials and the neighborhood itself must always be on the alert to prevent encroachment of other uses detrimental to such areas; otherwise, basic home values can be quickly undermined.

Careful study should be made of ultimate needs of shopping and off-street parking areas in residential sections and ample lands zoned for such purposes. Let us encourage our Planning Boards not to yield to selfish demands and permit unnecessary destruction of sacred home neighborhoods by spot zoning and unnecessary intrusion of commercialism.

Another factor extremely important to zoning is not to have different zoning authorities and varying zoning regulations affecting adjoining, incorporated or unincorporated sections. Such a situation leads to chaos, and defeats the assurance of permanency. Here, certainly, lies the opportunity for a broad plan of cooperation in regional zoning.

Most cities have areas which are logical for industrial expansion and every Planning Board should study future needs and, where warranted, even protect such areas from unnecessary residential encroachment.

In our “planning for permanence” we must not overlook the slum areas in our cities. We should attempt to apply rehabilitation and redevelopment measures wherever possible along the plans so well followed in Indianapolis under Paul MacCord.

Baltimore, by strict enforcement of health, sanitary, fire prevention and building code ordinances, has made tremendous strides in clearing up unsightly slums, an example in rehabilitation which many other cities could well follow.

Perhaps condemnation authority for acquirement of such areas may at times be needed, but the development must be placed in private industry. If we fail in this job, then we can expect the government to take over under political control of such programs. Occasionally all or a part of such slum areas may be used more advantageously, from the standpoint of the city as a whole, for expansion of commercial and industrial areas rather than housing developments.

Provision for future expansion of central business areas, wholesale sections, etc. should always be considered. Joe Stewart, Chairman of the hardworking Central Business District Council of the Urban Land Institute, is conducting excellent surveys of such future needs and proper zoning regulations.

Preservation of Central Business Areas – We must check any ruinous decentralization. Every realtor is vitally interested in the preservation of these life-blood sections of his city. From here comes much tax support of a city. Here again the Urban Land Institute Central Business Council is doing a splendid, constructive job, even holding “survey sessions” in many of our cities, studying such areas on the spot.

Such sections of our cities must always be the location of our large department stores, banks, leading theaters, hotels, office buildings, wholesale centers, public markets, bus terminals, municipal centers, investment houses, and governmental buildings.

We should recognize that in our large cities we will have the development of important commercial sub-centers. There should be no jealousy or antagonism between the downtown sections and these sub-centers in a city’s development. There is room for both, and each should benefit by the total growth of a city.

We must recognize some inevitable decentralizing factors of the automobile age and any city is asleep at the switch that is not meeting its increasing downtown parking needs, including convenient truck deliveries, and other traffic problems.

The downtown street system, in most of our towns and cities, was designed for the horse and buggy age, creating staggering problems today. I am a great advocate of off-street parking, and I believe it can largely be achieved through private enterprise. It

may be necessary to have municipal acquirement powers of condemnation/acquirement of such areas paid by local benefit districts but for later private operation.

I feel many downtown areas are today making the mistake of trying to route too much traffic through central district streets. Every effort should be made to loop traffic well around such areas with easy access into the heart of the downtown sections.

I even believe we should encourage through traffic on federal highways to bypass our central districts – even perhaps our whole city – but be sure of easy, accessible routes leading into all parts of our cities.

Let us study the best functional use of all our streets. In studying control of traffic and parking in all business areas, certainly reasonable consideration should be given to the retail stores and other enterprises, and their customers, as well as to the rapidity of moving traffic through the area.

And let me say right here, I sometimes wonder if we are frequently becoming speed crazy in America, spending billions of dollars across our continent and in our large cities in building too extravagant freeways, subways, underpasses, clover leaves, minimum grades, condemning and cutting through built up areas at great cost, all to save a few minutes in travel time. With the constant reduction of working hours and the lengthening of leisure weekends, is this slight saving of travel time always worth its cost?

We must not forget when “planning for permanence” in our central districts that whereas formerly almost all of our out-of-town trade came to our city by railroad, to a station generally close in, a very large amount of today’s out-of-town trade comes by automobile over Federal, State and County highways – and certainly we should plan to make it reasonably easy for such customers to reach our downtown areas. Certainly our airports should enjoy easy access to the downtown district, particularly to our central hotels.

Full consideration should be given to the immense importance of mass transportation in our cities – facilitating movement of buses and streetcars in every reasonable manner – cooperating in staggering hours of work when necessary – and encouraging the greatest possible use of essential mass transportation.

At this point I wish to emphatically urge that downtown merchants and owners of business properties should be on their toes and willing to invest money to keep pace with the times, remodeling, rebuilding and expanding – making their stores architecturally pleasing – merchandise appealing and up-to-date.

Rapid shifting of a central downtown shopping district to a new area does not necessarily spell healthy progress if the abandoned areas become sections of decay and dilapidation. It is generally far sounder city growth if the central business section can expand normally from its present location.

Where essential movement does result in a blighted group of buildings paying little tax income into the city, an immense opportunity is offered to the dynamic, far-seeing realtors of that community to study the rehabilitation and readaptation of such buildings to other uses – uses that normally should be close to the heart of the retail section of the city; frequently, perhaps, replacing old buildings with larger, modern structures to meet such needs. No sadder spectacle can be found than that existing in

many of our cities where buildings formerly housing the heart of the retail section have been allowed to fall into decline, run-down in appearance, and presenting a sad, ugly picture of the prosperity of the community.

Certainly here is a challenge to the realtors of our land, who specialize in the handling and development of central business sections of our cities. They must inspire and encourage owners of such properties to develop their best and appropriate uses.

Obsolescence is not unbeatable. Progress does not come through decay. Let orderliness confront all our visitors. Let us work for the highest and best use of every type of property.

Excessive smoke and soot, unnecessary noises, and offensive odors make living unpleasant. They can largely be overcome.

Should we not also encourage even industrial plants to landscape and beautify their grounds wherever possible to present a more attractive appearance? Also, small park areas in downtown sections are always immensely used and give character and civic appeal to their city.

In all these new problems of today and at this very hour – I appeal to the realtors of our nation to give their time and efforts to preserve the integrity and basic value of our central business sections.

But now let us go back to the outlying residential sections to which John C. Taylor and I and our organization have devoted our lives in the development of the Country Club District now housing a population of approximately 50,000 people; four 18-hole golf courses; 15 schools; 17 churches; and some 125 miles of streets, boulevards and trafficways.

Perhaps the greatest loss in building up and tearing down in our American towns and cities is found in the residential areas.

How can we stabilize and make permanent values and pleasant, inspiring surroundings in such sections? Everyone in a city must have a place to live. This is his most vital interest. Here is the very basis of private enterprise and equality in a freedom-loving country. Here is the incentive to work hard – and I mean hard – for an earned old-age security. Here is where we can lick Socialism and Communism.

Our Community Builders' Council, originated by Hugh C. Potter, under the Urban Land Institute, with 25 carefully chosen, experienced men from throughout the United States and Canada, have held 8 sessions of 2 to 4 days each studying how to “plan for permanence” in all our residential areas.

We are alarmed over the rapidly growing fringe belts of our towns and cities where unsightly, unplanned highway gateway developments are often creating a blot on the landscape, destroying home values over a wide area. Hot dog stands, billboards, filling stations, roadhouses and conglomerate and unsightly structures are rapidly springing up under little control of design, color, or location. Little regard is given to the effect on the present or future nearby home neighborhoods. Here zoning is extremely important, and if not within a zoned city then counties should have zoning powers. Only

about half of our states today have power to authorize county zoning. We should all strive to establish zoning regulations in all township areas adjoining our cities.

The slight wedging in of an incongruous, injurious use may be so small in the beginning that it may be unnoticed, and yet through the years its expansion may destroy the values of a large residential area.

Legally binding private restrictive covenants should control residential areas. If large tracts of subdivision land are not controlled by one company, then a cooperative plan among many owners should be established along the lines W. P. Atkinson has so successfully followed in Midwest City, Oklahoma.

I recommend 40-year restrictions – self-perpetuating for like additional periods – unless the owners of a majority of the area execute an abandonment of the restrictions with proper notice at least five years before the expiration date.

Power of enforcement should rest in the homeowners as well as in the developer. Such restrictions should control the use of the property, setbacks, free space, architectural design, minimum costs, or minimum number of square feet in each home, and many other matters. These restrictions become the sturdy, protective pillars of home areas.

The Community Builders' Handbook covers a wide field of subdivision recommendations as to block and lot sizes, varying widths of streets and paving, adaptation of street plans to topography, and to the street and trafficway plans of the city and county – widths and locations of sidewalks, easements for public utilities, sewage disposal, etc.

Our Council also feels that careful consideration should be given in the location of airports or airparks as to their possible adverse effect on nearby present or future residential neighborhoods.

We recommend a close relation of playgrounds to your school sites. Certainly one should constantly confer with all public authorities, thinking always not only of his own selfish interests but the future needs of the city as a whole, planning for permanence and permanent needs.

We strongly recommend the organization of chartered neighborhood homes associations with power to levy an assessment (a lien on the land only) to supply services not provided by the city or township.

I deny the charge that the home building industry is not progressive – since the day of cave dwellers, continuous progress has been made. Our advance in the past few years has surpassed all previous records. I have no sympathy with public housers, theorists and government dreamers who have never built a house yet condemn our whole building industry. We are not archaic.

Comfort, convenience, better planning for real living are being added every day. I challenge any other industry to show more improvement in their product from year to year. It is true we work under many unreasonable building codes and costly union regulations. The F.H.A. has done a fine job in helping us. Frank Cortright and more than 13,000 members of the National Association of Home Builders are doing most constructive work – all together we are building for permanence. Homes built 50 to 100

years ago – long before today’s modern conveniences – can and are being adapted to include the use of many new comforts. We will continue to design our homes to reduce costs, to add new ease, efficiency and economy of living through scientific research and forward planning and build for permanence.

The old-fashioned, crowded, narrow 25-foot lot is a thing of the past. 60 feet or more is now an average width of most smaller home sites. Today you may ride along pleasing, curving streets with stately trees, enjoy the lawns, shrubbery, and flowers, and be proud of your town. It is a thrill to see homeowners – father, mother, and children – happily working to make their grounds attractive. This is building fine, beautiful residential areas. Light, air, sunshine, pleasing, harmonious architecture, open spaces, all more and more are marking our cities today. Here are the real heartbeats and sunbeams of urban life. Don’t tell me we cannot plan and control these home-loving neighborhoods so that they will grow in value, charm, and desirability for generations to come. Home ownership is on the march this very hour. Let us work to make our country a land of happy, contented homeowners.

Then, too, thank God, we are not giving up individuality in the design of the little “home castle.” We will not monotonize our street scenes – we are not stultifying our expression of family life by only mass cubical units.

This same worthy end is inspiring garden-type apartments in our cities, and I hope it is beginning to influence the layout and design of neighborhood shopping centers.

Neighborhood Shopping Centers and Sub-Centers – This is one of the most difficult needs to foresee. We all favor massed centers with wide streets rather than the string type of shopping layouts. We recommend at least two feet of off street parking space for each foot of floor space and ample land for future expansion should be zoned for such centers. There is no assured type of parking station locations – front parking, side parking, central parking and rear parking – yes, and even underground, roof and multiple-deck parking – should all be considered – always visible, accessible, and never overloading any one street entrance.

These stations should be well lighted, attractive in appearance, clean and orderly. Boundary planting or attractive boundary walls add greatly to their appearance.

Every lease or sale of land in a shopping center should retain control of the parking of all employers’ and employees’ cars – one space occupied all day by an employee may rob the serving of 8 to 15 customers per day.

Alleys or off-street loading courts should be provided so not to use front streets for truck deliveries.

Signs - The Council believes signs on all stores and buildings should be controlled. We see no reason why a neighborhood shopping center or a large sub center should mar the whole quiet, sacred home area with a riot of garish, huge signs – every tenant trying to make his sign yell louder than any other sign. Once the race is on for the most conspicuous sign, every merchant may try to outdo all his competitors with more screaming signs and no one gains any advantage.

We are against roof or projecting signs in such neighborhood centers. We feel about the same size letters and color scheme and height above the sidewalk should be

required in any one group of shops – and if possible even achieve a harmony in the color of signs.

We all control signs in our home areas – why not do so in our neighborhood shopping centers?

I contend that the developer of a shopping center should just as carefully control the architectural design, heights, and colors in shop buildings as he does with the homes in his subdivision. I feel the architecture in any one center should be of some one harmonious general design and religiously observed. We owe this to surrounding homes, both as to their values and pleasant environment. We also owe it to the appearance of our city as a whole.

Then, too, I strongly advocate use of high-branching street trees, placed some fifty feet apart, on all streets in a neighborhood shopping center in order to add beauty and shade, and lessen the feeling of intrusion on the surrounding homes.

Perhaps purely neighborhood centers should be at least a mile apart and larger sub-centers two or three miles or more apart.

Churches, schools, libraries, utility buildings, public tennis courts and playgrounds and medical buildings may well be good buffers around such centers – and perhaps garden type apartment buildings or duplexes all leading gradually into your well-protected single home areas.

You should carefully study the order of the types of stores and shops first needed in such a group of shops, all carefully listed with 308 possible uses in our Community Builders' Handbook.

Then, too, plan for permanence for your shops by providing certain removable partitions and avoid putting electric light panels, plumbing, stairways, and other fixed items on partitions which you may later wish to remove in order to throw two or more rooms together. We try to get our columns at least 30 feet or even farther apart.

Then, too, where our street grade is not more than 14 per cent, we have successfully sloped our floors on the same grade as the street, so doors can later be provided at any point, and rooms can be thrown together or cut into smaller fronts without raising or lowering floors. We would have saved tens of thousands of dollars had we done this years ago.

Elasticity and flexibility – all subject to change and adaptability – are important, challenging words in permanent planning of shopping centers.

The more corner locations you can create, the greater your rent income may be. I favor shorter blocks in shopping centers, making it easy to “shop” clear around the block and creating more “quick turn over” curb parking.

Always remember the trade-pulling power of attractive show windows to pedestrian traffic. In a corner store, we moved an entrance door only 25 feet from a side street to a main street and the tenant's hardware business doubled in six months.

In the Country Club District with our 11 shopping centers having over 500 tenants, we have expended immense sums of money shifting our improperly located tenants – we did not “plan for permanence.”

For instance, do not put a candy store next to a shoe repair shop, or a flower shop next to a fix-it shop. Grouping of women’s apparel shops is always wise, for women love to shop around. Don’t put a bank, which is closed so many hours in the day, in your hot spot, and don’t put your theater, dancing school, etc. where their peak parking load usurps parking needs of your store shoppers.

Also, don’t let large office organizations with a lot of all-day employees’ parked cars be located in the heart of your center.

By all means, organize your tenants into a merchant organization. They can accomplish much working together and also be helpful to the developer in working with the city and public utilities. Keep them enthusiastic and on their toes, referring business even to competitors. Get them to know one another’s shop, pulling together for the common good of all. Have them organize to haul trash, keep sidewalks and parking stations clean, promote common seasonal advertising, carry on Christmas and Easter decorations, promote better window displays, provide demonstrations on better salesmanship, and other mutual activities.

Let me say again, in planning for permanence throughout our whole city or town, whether the approach to a city be by rail, air, waterfront or highway, let us not have ugliness greet your visitor. Remember that beauty and charm enlighten your guest; encourage him to want to live in your city, and inspire your own citizenry to greater efforts and greater deeds in town building.

We must always fight to make our towns and cities cleaner and more attractive. Let us not have vacant lots covered with rubbish, trash, and tall grown weeds. Let us have no littered, dirty roofs.

In laying out our streets, let us remember that many streets in the world today, like the Appian Way, are over 2,000 years old. When you impinge upon your city any part of its street plan, it certainly may tie down surrounding properties for centuries to come and should be planned for the ages. Let us remember the creation of one job in a traffic street may mean millions of dollars of costs in policing, time wasting, and accidents through the centuries.

Let us make values permanent in our cities. They must not vacillate with every decade. We should group our municipal and public buildings to get the best cumulative effects for the greater dignity of our town. The grouping of cultural, scientific, and certain educational buildings, with ample grounds, can give a greatly increased total effect and may inspire gifts and endowments from your loyal citizens.

Are we building our towns and cities monotonously alike, or are we accentuating their particular characteristic features and preserving their objects of natural beauty, scenic value, and historical interest? Let us as realtors create order and beauty that will grapple the hearts and love of our people and inspire them to build for permanence. Let us not forget that good residential morale is as important as army morale in time of war. Let us look beyond our downtown areas, our own sub-divisions, our own particular parts

of a city. Let us be citywide minded, suburban minded, and trade territory-minded in our study of future needs. Whether our cities are physically bad or physically good is largely our responsibility.

We should strive to make our cities efficiently serve not only an out-of-state area in commerce, but also in educational, cultural, recreational, and other vital and precious things in better living. Even this is “planning for permanence.”

Let us, as a profession, create and preserve values and not simply transfer values. Let us continue the sacred influence of home and property ownership in America.

The days are only beginning for building better, more permanent, more spacious cities, better commercial areas, better housing, and better neighborhoods.

Our National Association of Real Estate Boards must be a bulwark of democracy, encourage the right to own land, and create patriotism, loyalty and pride in our towns, cities, states and nation. This is the very cornerstone of our survival in the midst of the wild ideologists of our time.

By building for permanence we inspire ambition to be a property owner; we build a country desirable and fit for our children and our children’s children.

May the constant creed and goal of the realtors of America be today and forever be the realistic planning and building of better towns and better cities for permanence, through the centuries. Let us not be content to build up and tear down.

Let us – every single one of us – the realtors of America – dedicate ourselves to always do a better job – but still make it pay – always planning for permanence. No other ideal in city building can survive and be true to the high standards of our great and glorious National Association of Real Estate Boards.

The J.C. Nichols Company Records (KC106) – Speech JCN083

Arguably Jesse Clyde Nichols (1880-1950) was the single most influential individual to the development of metropolitan Kansas City. Moreover his work, ideas, and philosophy of city planning and development had far-reaching impact nationally – so much so that the Urban Land Institute has established the J.C. Nichols Prize for Visionary Urban Development to recognize a person or a person representing an institution whose career demonstrates a commitment to the highest standards of responsible development.

Nichols’ objective was to “develop whole residential neighborhoods that would attract an element of people who desired a better way of life, a nicer place to live and would be willing to work in order to keep it better.” The Company under Nichols and his son, Miller Nichols (1911-), undertook such ventures as rental housing, industrial parks, hotels, and shopping centers. Perhaps the most widely recognized Nichols Company developments are the Country Club District and the Country Club Plaza Shopping Center, reportedly the first shopping area in the United States planned to serve those arriving by automobile rather than trolley car.

The J.C. Nichols Company Records (KC106) contains both personal and business files concerning J.C. Nichols’ private and business life. Included are personal correspondence, family related material, and speeches and articles written by him. Business and financial files pertain to actions of the Company, including information about different developments and the securing of art objects; and printed materials produced by and about the Company.