

**Appropriate \$2,000 For Signal Account**

To offset an over-expenditure caused by increased costs, Birmingham city commissioners appropriated \$2,000 for the traffic signal account Monday night. Total deficiency to date was reported at \$1,769, with more to come through signal installations still under order. Birmingham pays the Oakland County Road Commission to install signals in the city.

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**Most Residents Believe Educational Funds Are A Local Responsibility**

EDITOR'S NOTE: Following is the second in a series of articles by Community Research Associates reporting on its recent survey of people living in the Birmingham School District. It describes public thinking on taxation and building. Other articles will deal with curriculum and personnel.

Birmingham's growing family of children has created two basic educational problems: More classroom space must be provided, and the number of qualified teachers increased.

How to procure the funds to educate the expanding child population is a dilemma faced by this as well as most American communities.

Some people feel that since local taxpayers are already overburdened with property taxes, added funds for education must come from state or federal sources.

When local residents were queried concerning the level of property taxes in this area, 2/3 replied that local property taxes are "below average," and 2 per cent rated them "below average."

In spite of these feelings, most residents believe that providing necessary funds for educational needs is a dilemma faced by this as well as most American communities.

"If you were to choose between meeting the needs of the local school system or local levels, which would you choose?"

**THE BUILDING PROGRAM**—Since the use of tax dollars for school buildings is a more "visible" factor than the hiring of qualified teachers, we first asked our respondents how satisfied they were with the past building program.

In the last 10 years, Birmingham has built 10 schools. Birmingham has an opinion of the cost of these buildings in terms of value received.

Costs were too high 38%  
Dubs were about right 42%  
Costs were low 2%  
Don't know 18%

From the above table it may be seen that a relatively high proportion of the people in the Birmingham area feel that school building costs have run too high in the past.

The extent to which these feelings are valid is, of course, another matter. In any event, it is clear that a tendency exists for people in this community to identify the "frills and fads of education" with the building program, rather than with school curricula or special services.

**SHOULD THE SCHOOLS BE Run on a Year-Round Basis?**—Some people are of the opinion that the high cost of school buildings can be partially offset by running the public schools on a year-round basis. This issue finds local residents split. Thirty-one per cent favor the idea, 34 per cent are undecided or have no opinion, and 35 per cent are against the plan.

However, when we compare the opinions of parents of school age children with those who have no school age children, the result is clear cut. People with children in school are strongly against the

plan, while people with no children of school age favor it.

Disregarding those who have no opinion, the following table indicates that 2/3 of the people with children of school age are against the 12-month plan, while 3/5 of those who have no school age children favor it.

**BUILDINGS OR SCHOOL Programs, Which Has Priority?**—As stated earlier, our growing family of children has posed the need for added school buildings and more teachers. However, the task of providing a staff of competent teachers and implementing a superior educational program is a "less visible" factor than erecting school buildings.

Most Americans tend to "see" school buildings much more readily than the educational program for which the buildings are erected.

For instance, the American Institute of Public Opinion reported a study last spring which indicated that public demand for new school construction outweighs support for pay raises for teachers. Six out of 10 people would spend more money for school buildings, whereas 4 out of 10 would spend more money for teachers.

The two tables below clearly indicate that the people in the Birmingham area are capable of seeing beyond the physical plant to the educational program of their schools.

Suppose you were asked to vote to approve or disapprove the raising of rates locally in order to meet the demand for new school buildings. Would you probably vote:

No 40%  
Yes 50%  
Don't know 10%

Total 100%

And suppose you were asked to approve or disapprove the raising of rates locally in order to meet the demand for new school buildings. Would you probably vote:

No 62%  
Yes 38%  
Don't know 18%

Total 100%

In brief, where 6 out of 10 people across the nation give priority to school buildings over teaching, 6 out of 10 people in the Birmingham area see the importance of the school program.

**TAXATION AND PUBLIC SUPPORT**—Why are the people of this community capable of "seeing" not only the need for school program space but also a sound school program as well?

As was indicated in the first report, the support which a given community affords its educational program is related to the characteristics of the people who reside in that community.

People of higher occupational income and educational levels tend to be supportive of educational programs.

To illustrate this point, the next table shows that people who have attended college are more apt to vote mileage support for the schools than are people who have not attended college. The same tendency occurs by income and occupational levels.

**IN SUMMARY**, members of the community feel that tax support for the public schools is a local rather than a state or federal matter.

Although most residents feel that the school tax dollar is spent wisely, some feel that full value

for the building dollar has not been received in the past.

Further alleviation of classroom space through a 12-month school program finds the community split, with parents of school children in strong opposition to such a plan.

The selective nature of Birmingham's population is evident in an analysis of supportiveness toward school programs. The tendency to provide mileage support for educational programs as well as for building programs was found to be higher income, occupational and educational levels of the members of the community.

**Route**

(Continued from 1-A)

Commerce reaction to the plan. "We have looked into it," said Donald Cummings, chairman of the chamber's parking committee, "and we accept the development committee's plans on it. We feel they've come up with a very good plan."

The CBDD plan was formally presented to the commission by Mason on July 31. He urged commission members to move forward with haste.

Mason then presented it to the plan board on Sept. 19.

**IN ANNOUNCING** the plan board's endorsement, Robinson said it "is generally handicapped in its ability regarding reasoning and advanced planning because of lack of an appropriate master or comparison plan."

"The CBDD committee has provided the city commission, plan board and administrative staff, as well as the merchants and citizens of Birmingham, with a guide for future CBDD improvements."

"The board wishes to convey . . . its endorsement of the plan as a concept, and specifically recommends that the commission take action to initiate action on the peripheral route right-of-way as the first step toward effectuating the plan."

**THE PLAN** is designed to improve traffic and parking as well as to help meet the needs of future retail sales growth in Birmingham.

It continues the peripheral route to carry traffic around the central business district, parking facilities and malls for pedestrian access to the commercial establishments.

Proposed streets after acquisition of property for the peripheral route are:

Installation of additional parking areas.  
Construction of access routes.  
Construction of a concourse.  
Completion of the physical aspect of the plan has been estimated for about 1950.

**THE PLAN** would achieve a shopping area similar to the North and Shopping Center, with traffic and parking surrounding the retail stores.

No estimate of cost has been made for the overall plan, but rough estimates of \$1.6 million for the peripheral route system and \$4.5 million for parking spaces have been made.

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**B'ham Eccentric**

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**Relief**

(Continued from 1-A)

basement space at the Hill Building for utilization as administrative space and relieve Baldwin School of administrative encroachment.

This building program, according to Supr. Otis M. Dickey, is not an extravagant one. In fact, it represents only about 60 per cent of the facilities and improvements recommended as immediate needs by an Ohio State research study.

**IN DEVELOPING** an alternate building program to replace the one suggested by the research team, certain improvements, such as a new administrative building, and has proposed fewer but larger school units.

School officials estimate that construction of fewer new school plants and more additions to existing buildings will keep both capital outlay as well as operation costs at a manageable level.

The building program is an attempt to satisfy the immediate building needs and is designed to alleviate the problem over the next three to five years.

A solution to the building needs for a projected population surge when enrollments are expected to climb between 18,281 and 22,226 (in about 15 years) remains to be developed.

Next week: program improvements.

**Con-Con Budget Totals \$2 Million**

When Michigan's constitutional convention delegates approved a \$2 million budget last Thursday, more than half of the sum was for salaries for the 144 delegates, set at \$1,000 per month, totaled \$1,080,000.

The second biggest item in the budget was \$329,306 for salaries for convention staff workers. The smallest expenditure was \$400 for newspaper clippings of the convention's activities.

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**B'ham Commission Appropriates \$9,000**

Birmingham city commissioners Monday night appropriated a total of \$9,084.73 for a variety of projects. They authorized \$509.53 for the Elton Park parking lot and flood fighting at the Elton skating rink. The sum of \$8,575.20 was approved for the following:

- Forestry summer program, \$4,176.50
- Labor for elections, \$1,200.
- Operating supplies for elections, \$1,100.
- Election inspectors, \$2,100.

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