

Fantastic Future City Growth Foreseen By U-M Architect

ANN ARBOR—There is good reason for thinking that a universal city—a merging of the metropolis and the village—will be the earth's surface—is not too far off in the future, according to C. Theodore Larson, University of Michigan professor of architecture.

"World population, now approximately three billion, is expected to reach 5,280 millions by the year 2000. If present growth rates continue, it will take less than 35 years for the population to double once again," Larson notes in an article published in the October issue of Traffic Quarterly.

"On this basis we can expect the earth to have some 18 to 20 billion inhabitants, possibly even more, 100 years hence. If traffic conditions in the urban centers are considered bad today, just think what they would be like when there are six or seven times more people in the world—to say nothing of the probability that the vast majority will have their own personalized vehicles to run around in."

Says Larson, "The important point is that a century is a very short span in the life of a city or an urban unit. Today is not a bit too early to start planning for what will be needed a hundred years from now. A clue to the future of the expanding city is contained in the fact that, with the industrialization of agriculture and the emergence of big metropolitan areas, the old distinction between town and country has become lost. It is no longer possible to tell where one settled community ends and another begins.

As towns merge into one another, a process known as conurbation, farm lands shrink and surplus areas are turned into golf courses or industrial research parks or open spaces for regional recreation. The notion that a city must have any kind of boundary, physical or otherwise, is an outmoded vestige of medievalism," says Larson. "Imaginative town planners are asking should conurbation stop with megalopolis? Isn't there a still larger unit of urban growth just ahead, one which takes in the whole of each continent? And if this comes to pass, won't the entire earth eventually then become a single integrated urban entity?"

"The goal of a single integrated urban community eventually embracing the entire earth's surface implies a wide range of coordination in urban planning," Larson notes.

"Working contacts must be established with counterparts in other countries, and even other continents, if the urban developments in any single locality are to be planned within a sufficiently broad frame of socio-economic understanding."

"Motor road networks cannot be developed on an international scale without also considering all the other means of transportation—ships, trains, helicopters, jets, hovercraft, and the like," Larson states. "Boat traffic too cannot be ignored, for the streams and oceans continue to be important channels of commercial activity."

"It is also clear that as the various systems of transportation are coordinated and the motor roads are extended over ever wider areas, agreement will have to be reached between various countries as to how their resources and productive capacities may be used to best mutual advantage," says Larson.

"In an integrated world society, there will no longer be any need for each nation to try to be completely self-sufficient. Some areas are better suited to the production of certain commodities than others, and should specialize accordingly."

makeup from what exists today as the isolated medieval towns were from what preceded them. With new sources of energy and power at our command we differ in its architectural are on the verge of being able to modify the weather, and to control local climates."

Larson states, "A new architecture based on modern industrial production techniques rather than handicraft

methods that are centuries old, is in the making. With the further development of mechanized controls, we should soon be able to create environments that will be automatically responsive to a great variety of human needs."

"But we must accept the fact that buildings have predetermined life spans of their own. When the become obsolete, they

should be as easy to dispose as a piece of Kleenex."

"In a truly organic architecture, one which conforms to the evolution of human life, the issue is planning for change, recent years."

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Dr. E. George Lawrence, president-emeritus of Lawrence Institute of Technology, and Mrs. Lawrence will be guests of honor Sunday (Oct. 11) from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at an open house in the library promenade of the college.

The affair, sponsored by the L.I.T. Board of Trustees, the president and faculty, alumni and students, is a salute to the man who in 30 years brought a struggling L.I.T. from rented quarters in Highland Park to present beautiful campus from about 350 students to 3,830, the enrollment this Fall.

He became president-emeritus August 1 of this year when Dr. Wayne E. Buell succeeded him as president.

The committee in charge has been attempting to reach many old friends and former associates of the Lawrences as well as graduates of L.I.T. who are now scattered throughout the country in leading industrial positions.

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