

# Plan For Better Cities: The 1967 Urban Planning Stamp and its First Day Covers

## Exhibit Plan

### Design, Publicity and Distribution

- Unadopted Designs
- Accepted Design
- Press Releases & Photograph
- Postal Bulletin
- Lobby Poster
- Warning Label

### Stamp

- Plate and ZIP Blocks
- Production Anomalies

### First Day Ceremony

- Ceremony Program

### First Day Postmarks

### First Day Covers

- AIP Theme
- Model Cities Program Theme
- Generic Urban Planning Theme
- Promotional
- Collector Made
- General Purpose
- Foreign Destinations

### Postal Uses

- Domestic
- International

### Conclusion

**Key items  
in red borders**

FDC by Adam Bert on his distinctive 3-1/8" x 5-1/2" envelope. Bert (1905-2007) serviced his first FDC in 1923 and continued to do so into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

As Americans worried about the declining state of their cities in the 1960s, the American Institute of Planners (AIP) gathered in Washington, D.C., October 1-6, 1967, for their 50th anniversary convention. The group was concerned about cities as well, and what they could do as a profession over the next fifty years to make cities viable places in which to live and prosper. Their conference theme was "The Next Fifty Years, 1967-2017: The Future Environment of a Democracy."

To raise awareness of urban revitalization efforts, the U.S. Post Office Department agreed to the AIP's request for a stamp. The stamp was designed by Mr. Francis Ferguson of Columbia University's School of Architecture, Division of Urban Planning. The stamp was printed by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing using a combination of lithography and intaglio in a quantity of 141,757,800.

The stamp was issued in Washington on the second day of the AIP conference. AIP Executive Director Robert L. Williams presided and Postmaster General Lawrence O'Brien gave the main address. 389,009 first day covers were serviced.

The *purpose of the exhibit* is to tell the story of the stamp with an emphasis on first day covers. *Mellone's Specialized Cachet Catalog of First Day Covers* (1985) lists 29 different cachets for the issue, all of which are presented here. However, many more cacheted FDCs for the stamp are now known, and numerous examples of these uncatalogued covers are presented here as well.

Key items include original artwork for rejected designs, items autographed by the stamp designer and multiple original cachet artwork pieces. Not included in the exhibit, as they are not recorded: early release use on cover and unofficial city FDCs.



## EXHIBIT SYNOPSIS

June 2026

### **Plan For Better Cities: The 1967 Urban Planning Stamp and its First Day Covers**



#### ***Importance of the Issue***

American cities were in a state of decline in the 1960s. To combat that trend, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development was established in 1965, with HUD's "Model Cities Program" a key initiative beginning in 1966. To raise public awareness of federal and state revitalization efforts, the United States Post Office Department issued the Urban Planning stamp in October 1967. The stamp was issued at the behest of the American Institute of Planners (AIP), a professional organization representing the field of urban planning in the United States, which was celebrating its 50th anniversary in 1967. The theme of the AIP's anniversary celebration was "The Next Fifty Years: The Future Environment of a Democracy," what urban planners could do that would result in improved city life in the year 2017.

#### ***Purpose and Scope of the Exhibit***

This is a traditional first day cover exhibit; a study of the commemorative stamp and the first day covers created for it. The exhibit adheres closely to the criteria set forth in Appendix 2.1.7 of the current edition of the *Manual of Philatelic Judging and Exhibiting*.

#### ***Treatment***

The exhibit is grouped into chapters, as detailed on the Title Page. The exhibit begins with items pertaining to the stamp's design, distribution, publicity for its release and the first day of issue ceremony. For the stamp you'll find a plate block signed by the designer and a rare block of stamps printed on a paper splice. All positions and numbers of plate blocks are present, as are all positions of ZIP blocks.

The main focus of the exhibit is first day covers, organized by cachet theme. Among the separate subchapters are categories for cachets highlighting the AIP, the Model Cities Program, generic urban planning themes, and collector-made cachets (unique cachets made by a collector for his or her own collection). First day covers range from mass-produced, mostly single color cachets from the likes of Art Craft and Artmaster to handcrafted covers (Maul, Dyer, Ulrich) produced in low quantities. Promotional FDCs not aimed at collectors are well represented. *First cachets are not numerous enough to warrant their own subchapter (Mellone lists just one), but it is identified as such in the FDC section.* The more significant items are in red-bordered boxes.

After presentation of cachets, the exhibit concludes with postal uses, both domestic and international. Postal uses are generally "in period" uses while the stamp remained on sale.

#### ***Difficulty of Acquisition***

Non-FDC material: The stamp was issued at the 5-cent first-class letter rate, and most postal use was for that purpose, albeit for only three months before the first-class rate increased. Other uses are scarce and difficult to acquire because (1) being a commemorative, the stamp did not see much use for other classes of mail or special services, and (2) postal use covers of a modern stamp are of little interest to dealers and thus generally unavailable in the marketplace. Despite these difficulties, domestic first-class usages and uses for the payment of special services are presented, as well as singles and multiples used to meet a variety of international airmail rates.

**First Day Covers:** Despite being a modern stamp issued when first day covers were quite popular, many cachets for this stamp are obscure and not often seen today. Chief among these are the promotional FDCs used for advertising purposes and not marketed to collectors, several of which are here, including the highly elusive “Bekins” Artmaster variety. Covers produced by cachetmakers whose production of cachets was short-lived and relatively unknown today (e.g., Screen Art, Marvin Frey) also appear. **Key items include the unique original artwork of Art Craft, Ralph Dyer, and Kolor Kover, and printing plates used by Art Craft and Artmaster.**

### *Research and Personal Study*

The Mellone catalog, published in the mid-1980s, is the standard general reference for cachets of this era, but its shortcomings are now quite apparent. Through diligent search I have discovered and identified many additional covers not listed in Mellone, which are so indicated in the exhibit. I am unaware of any other collector undertaking a comprehensive study of this issue and its FDCs, so the exhibit chronicles my discoveries for the philatelic community.

### *What You Won't Find in the Exhibit*

- Die proofs (if they exist at all) and similar BEP archival materials are not known in private hands.
- I am still searching for pre-first day uses and unofficial first day usages. None have been reported, but they may exist.
- Collateral material from the AIP 50th Anniversary Convention of 1967 would be a welcome addition to the exhibit, if it could be found. Search continuing.
- Dorothy Knapp did not do a cachet for this issue (in case you're wondering).

### *Exhibit History*

This was a new 4 frame exhibit in 2017, and was shown four times in 2017 and 2018. In 2019 the exhibit was expanded to 5 frames and shown once, then set aside while additional material was acquired. In 2026 the exhibit is now at six frames, and new items include:

- **Spectacular original artwork of unadopted designs by stamp designer Burt Pringle**
- A new foreign destination FDC (Hungary)
- Previously unknown “fill in the blank” sample press release prepared by USPOD
- Additional FDCs with general purpose cachets, and FDCs with collector made cachets
- Additional postal use covers, including domestic Registered and Insured covers, and an international Airmail Special Delivery usage

### *Sources\**

- The definitive work on the history of this issue: “Urban Planning 5-cent Commemorative Issued Oct. 2, 1937 at Washington, D.C.” Faries, Belmont, July 1969. *S.P.A. Journal*, pp. 683-686.\*
- *Mellone's Specialized Cachet Catalog of First Day Covers of the 1960s*, compiled and edited by Michael A. Mellone (1985, FDC Publishing Co.).\*
- *Mellone's First Day Cover Photo Encyclopedia of First Cachets Revealed—Volume 3, 1960 thru 1969* by Richard A. Monty, Mark W. Goodson, Wendy L. Doyle and Norman L. Elrod (2005, FDC Publishing Co.).\* **Note: only one first cachet is identified for this issue.**
- Information on individual cachetmakers gleaned from various issues of *First Days*. While it's not feasible to list every article sourced for this exhibit, the entire *First Days* archive is available for purchase at [www.afdcs.org](http://www.afdcs.org) or can be reviewed on-site at the APRL.

\* Download this material at: <http://tinyurl.com/1333Urban>

**The entire exhibit you will see in the frames will be available to view at**  
**<https://www.ronnei.com/UP1333.pdf>**