

SYSTEM OF RECREATION
FACILITIES IN EVANSVILLE

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Plans for the Development
of
A System of Recreation Facilities
Evansville, Indiana

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HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW AND ASSOCIATES
City Plan Engineers
E. O. MILLS **L. D. TILTON**
Associates

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"The enormous losses in human happiness and in money which have resulted from lack of city plans which take into account the conditions of modern life, need little proof. The lack of adequate open spaces, of playgrounds and parks, the congestion of streets, the misery of tenement life and its repercussions upon each new generation are an untold charge against our American life. Our cities do not produce their full contribution to the sinews of American life and national character. The moral and social issues can only be solved by a new conception of city building."

HERBERT HOOVER

City Plan Commission Is 1828

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CITY OF EVANSVILLE

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RAYMOND W. BLANCHARD, Executive Secretary

Contents

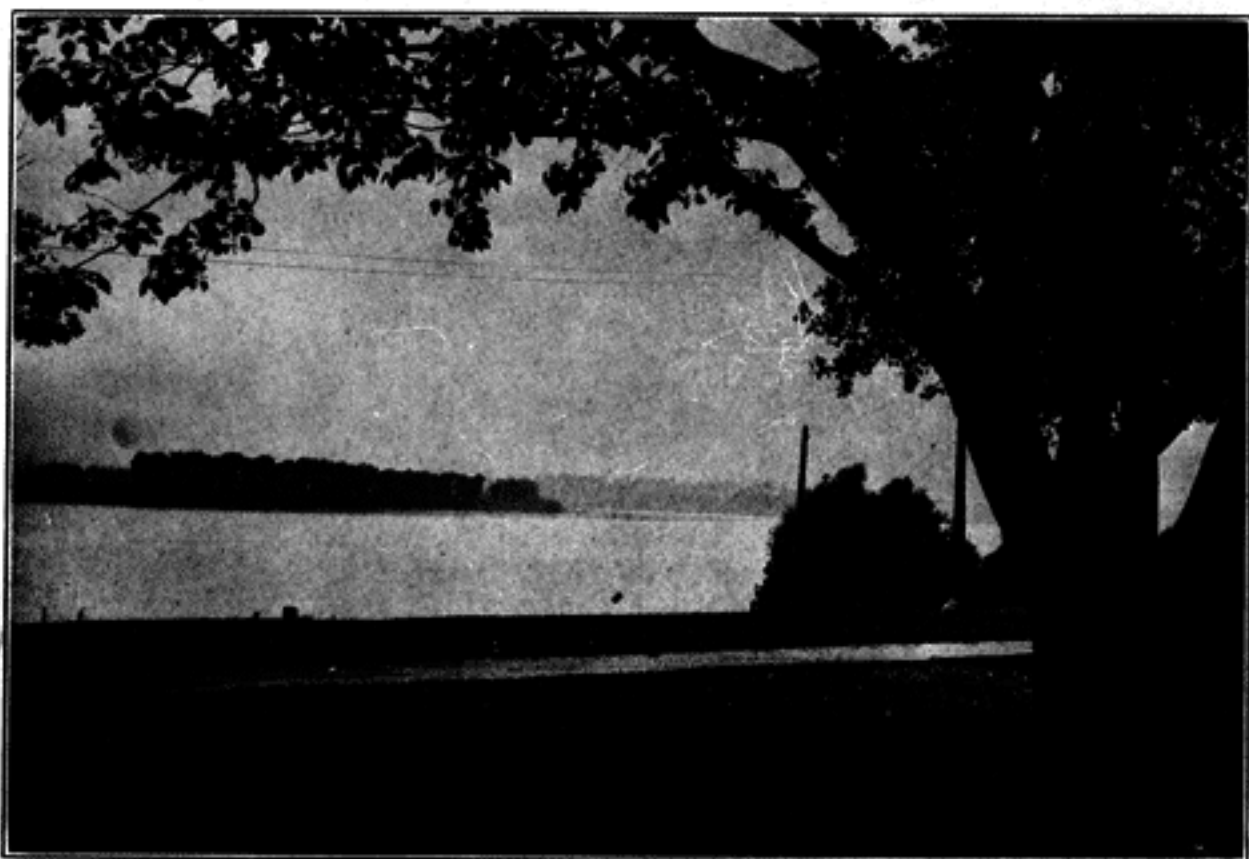
	Page
Personnel.....	6
Introduction.....	9
Letters from Park Board and School Board.....	10
PART I—FACILITIES OF A COMPLETE RECREATION SYSTEM	
Classification of Population and Recreation Facilities.....	12
Types of Recreation Facilities.....	14
PART II—EXISTING CONDITIONS IN EVANSVILLE	
Twenty-five Years' Expansion of City and Recreational Areas.....	22
Public Areas Available for Recreation.....	24
Existing Parks and Neighborhood Park Service.....	28
Summary of Existing Conditions.....	30
PART III—A RECREATION PROGRAM FOR EVANSVILLE	
Playground and Playfield Location.....	32
Proposed Park and Pleasure Drive System.....	38
PART IV—DESIGN OF RECREATION AREAS	
School Playground Design.....	44
Small Parks.....	46
Neighborhood Park Design.....	48
Cross Sections of Pleasure Drives.....	50
Summary of Indiana Park Law.....	54

Plates

	Page
PART I—FACILITIES OF A COMPLETE RECREATION SYSTEM	
Plate 1—Classification of Population and Recreation Facilities.....	13
Plate 2—Types of Recreation Facilities.....	15
PART II—EXISTING CONDITIONS IN EVANSVILLE	
Plate 3—Twenty-five Years' Expansion of City and Recreation Areas, 1900-1925.....	23
Plate 4—Public Areas Available for Recreational Use.....	25
Plate 5—Existing Parks and Neighborhood Park Service.....	29
PART III—A RECREATION PROGRAM FOR EVANSVILLE	
Plate 6—A Study of Playground and Playfield Location.....	33
Plate 7—Proposed Park and Pleasure Drive System.....	39
PART IV—DESIGN OF RECREATION AREAS	
Plate 8—Suggested Treatment for Evansville School Playgrounds.....	45
Plate 9—Suggested Development of Small Park at Indiana Street and Eleventh Avenue.....	47
Plate 10—Garvin Park.....	49
Plate 11—Suggested Cross Sections of Pleasure Drives.....	51

Illustrations

	Page
Frontispiece—Ohio River panorama from Sunset Park.....	8
Driveway and lake, Garvin Park.....	14
The stadium, Reitz High School, illustrating an effective use of natural grades. More planting is needed.....	16
The stadium, Bosse Field, which has a wide field of usefulness on the recreation program.....	17
Lake in Garvin Park.....	18
The golf shelter, Helfrich Field.....	19
Garvin Park fountain at main entrance to Park.....	20
Evansville should look forward to having a large outlying park which will take advantage of a commanding site on the Ohio River. These views give some indication of the beauties of such a site.....	22
Picnic grounds, Mesker Park.....	24
The golf course, Helfrich Field, one of the city's greatest assets.....	26
Small children's playground at Garvin Park. Every playground should have a special area set aside for the smaller children.....	27
Flag vista—Main Street entrance to Garvin Park.....	30
Houses on the site of a proposed park. Dwellings of this sort are a disgrace to Evansville. The alley is on the line of Garvin Street. These conditions would give way in the creation of a park for this neighborhood.....	32
Wooded portion of a proposed neighborhood park near the edge of the city.....	35
The corner of Helfrich Field nearest the city—an area proposed for an athletic field.....	36
View showing the possibilities for a wonderful natural park where the Evansville Industrial Addition was once laid out.....	37
Alvord Place, which is wide and has a center park strip. It is designated as part of the boulevard system. It needs improvement and maintenance.....	40
Ravenswood Drive, a boulevard type street lacking the advantage of continuity. The sidewalks at the curb limit the possibilities of the street.....	41
When the ill repute of Pigeon Creek has been overcome by measures for the removal of stagnation, its full advantages as a beautiful element in a circulating parkway and boulevard system can be utilized.....	42
The Garvin Park playground has shade trees in abundance, making it pleasant to play in on hot days. More shade is needed in other playgrounds.....	44
Rustic footbridge in Garvin Park.....	48
Lincoln Avenue, a useful and interesting street. It needs, however, among other things, greater width, systematic tree planting, and the removal of poles and wires to make it a true boulevard.....	50
Riverside Avenue, illustrating the dignity and impressiveness of a wide boulevard. Note absence of poles and wires and the charm of tree masses.....	52
Here where Riverside Avenue becomes narrow, it loses its dignity.....	53



Frontispiece—Ohio River panorama from Sunset Park.

Introduction

Close observers of present day conditions in cities, almost without exception, note the lack of adequate open spaces. Streets are narrow, home grounds are becoming smaller, public reservations are being absorbed by buildings. Here and there one finds an unusual interest in parks or playgrounds, but rarely is the city developing these facilities systematically or with a thorough understanding of recreational needs. No phase of modern city building is more in need of a new conception than that which concerns the reservation of areas for play and other open spaces that contribute to the general improvement of living conditions. The fact that the amenities of city life are becoming more and more difficult to maintain is due largely to the abuse and overloading of land within the urban boundaries.

The conditions which make recreation and recreation grounds vital necessities in the city are the direct result of growth. Growth means the utilization of space, a more intensive development, a concentration of interests, congestion. Vacant areas are one by one absorbed until eventually the interior of the city becomes solidly built up. In close-packed blocks live scores of families, the children eager to play, adults hungry for the shade of trees and quiet rest spaces. These normal human desires are thwarted or repressed in the city that has not left here and there an open space to be used for recreation.

The reluctance of the city to devote a proper proportion of its space to public use would scarcely require notice were it not for the constantly changing conditions of city life. Home ownership is decreasing. The praiseworthy single family dwelling with its pleasant surroundings, largely for economic reasons, is becoming unpopular. Apartment-living is the rule rather than the exception in many of the more populous centers. Those who live in multiple dwellings are forced to seek public grounds if they are to find the pleasures now enjoyed in the private home yard. A new obligation has come upon the municipality. In return for the repressive and confining conditions of home life, for the monotony of industry, for the emphasis which the modern city places upon material development, it will have to offer greater opportunities for recreation under municipal auspices.

It will be of untold advantage to the city to be able to anticipate these expanding needs. Parks and playgrounds are going to become more vital to the well-being of the city the larger it grows. Those who are in charge of the city's affairs today should understand this problem and generously reserve the open spaces which are so essential to a proper development of the city. The municipality is given a bonding or debt-incurring power so that it can look ahead and enjoy the economies and benefits of foresight. There is no better use for the city's borrowing capacity than in the purchase of adequate areas for public recreation.

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
CITY OF EVANSVILLE

HERBERT MALES
Mayor

March 10, 1927

City Plan Commission
Evansville, Indiana

Gentlemen:

Attention: Mr. W. A. Carson, Pres.

The Board of Park Commissioners has made a careful study of the City Plan Commission's Recreation Report and I am pleased to state that the Board has gone on record unanimously as indorsing the proposals contained in that report for a complete system of public recreation for Evansville. I wish to state further that your report is in complete accord with the ideas of Mr. G. G. Eppley, our new Director of Recreation, and of the National Playground and Recreation Association.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) E. D. LUHRING
President

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

OFFICE OF THE BUSINESS MANAGER
Evansville, Indiana

November 30, 1926

Mr. R. W. Blanchard,
Executive Secretary,
City Planning Commission,
Evansville, Indiana.

Dear Mr. Blanchard:

This is to advise you that at a meeting of the Board of Education held yesterday, your plan for the development of a system of public recreation for Evansville was carefully considered by the Board.

I am authorized to advise you that the School Board heartily approves of that part of your plan which deals with school sites and playground activities, and pledges its hearty cooperation in making possible such an important and beneficial program for the health and happiness of the children of Evansville.

Very truly yours,

By (Signed) C. B. ENLOW,
President, Board of Education
(Signed) IRENE ERLBACHER
Secretary

PART ONE
Facilities of a Complete
Recreation System

Classification of Population and Recreation Facilities

The population of a city has varied recreation interests—the difference in interests depending largely upon age. A city's population may in general be divided into four broad age groups within each of which the recreational needs are more or less similar. The diagram opposite shows this classification of population together with the facilities which should be provided by the city in order effectively to serve the entire population.

SMALL CHILDREN below school age are usually ignored in whatever provision the city does make for recreational areas. It is ordinarily thought that their opportunity for protected play will be furnished in their own home grounds. It is very obvious, however, that with the increasing congestion in residential districts, home grounds are constantly becoming less suitable as play spaces. Private homes are being crowded on smaller lots, apartment dwelling is increasing, and streets are becoming more dangerous every day. The city must offset and prevent development of these conditions. Among the specific things which a city may do are:

1. Discourage the platting of too small building lots.
2. Preserve rear yards by building regulations.
3. Encourage real estate promoters in the development of interior block playgrounds.
4. Acquire a sufficient number of well located and protected sites for junior playgrounds.
5. Develop convenient and attractive parks and pleasure drives which can be used by parents and small children.

CHILDREN OF SCHOOL AGE have always had some provision made for their play by educational authorities. Modern educators have begun to realize the value in the educational process of giving the child an opportunity to exercise his instinctive desire for play. Consequently adequate play space is provided in connection with all modern, well-planned schools. It is logical therefore that full responsibility for the provision of playgrounds for children of this age be placed in the public school department of the city. The so-called "playground" which is provided for the younger school children, generally those below the age of adolescence, is equipped with sand piles, wading pools, swings and other apparatus and kindergarten shelters. For the older school children, especially those of high school age, playfields are provided. Here sufficient area is found for football fields, baseball diamonds, tennis courts, and possibly swimming pools. Separate areas are provided for boys and girls.

These two types of recreation areas, when adequate in size and located at properly distributed schools, very effectively serve a large portion of a city's most active population. However these facilities may well be supplemented by a number of features which also serve other groups:

Home grounds	Coasting hills
Interior block playgrounds	Skating ponds
Park playgrounds	Outdoor camps
Swimming pools	Community centers
Naturalistic parks and forest preserves.	

Children of this age will from time to time take advantage of such provision as the city makes for these special forms of recreation, but they will depend primarily upon the Department of Education to provide for their recreational needs with established playgrounds and playfields under competent direction.

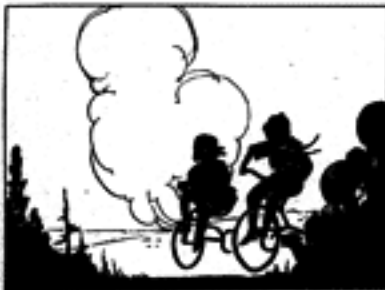
YOUTH may have its recreational needs partially served by the educational authorities. However, there is an important element which no longer enjoys school contacts and must depend, in most cases, upon the municipality for recreation facilities. School playfields and also school buildings for community centers may sometimes be available for this class in out-of-school hours, but ordinarily for active games and sports they must be served by playfields, tennis courts, and other recreation equipment furnished by the Park Department.

ADULTS generally are satisfied with the more passive forms of recreation provided by the parks, both large and small, and by the pleasure drives and community centers, for example: picnicking, watching the children at play, resting, attending a community center talk or contest. Notwithstanding this tendency, there is a real need for encouraging more extensive adult use of the tennis courts, playfields, and other recreation facilities furnished by the Park Department for active play. Less motoring and more participation in active games such as tennis, baseball, and swimming will result in improved health and greater enjoyment of life.

In a classification of this sort no hard and fast lines can be drawn. The aim is merely to study the dominant recreation interests of the entire city population and to plan, if possible, a balanced system of correlated facilities which will serve all recreational needs.

CLASSIFICATION of POPULATION

FACILITIES WHICH SHOULD BE AVAILABLE



SMALL CHILDREN

HOME GROUNDS
 INTERIOR BLOCK PLAYGROUNDS
 NEARBY CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUNDS
 & KINDERGARTENS
 DRIVES
 PROMENADES } IN PARKS



SCHOOL CHILDREN

HOME GROUNDS
 INTERIOR BLOCK PLAYGROUNDS
 PLAY AREAS IN PARKS
 SWIMMING POOLS
 SKATING PONDS
 COASTING HILLS
 BOY & GIRL SCOUT CAMPS
 SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS
 PLAYFIELDS FOR ATHLETICS
 COMMUNITY CENTERS
 OUTLYING NATURALISTIC PARKS



YOUTH

PLAYFIELDS
 SWIMMING POOLS
 SKATING PONDS
 COASTING HILLS
 NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS
 LARGE PARKS
 COMMUNITY CENTERS
 PLEASURE DRIVES



ADULTS

HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW
 CITY PLAN ENGINEER
 SAINT LOUIS MISSOURI

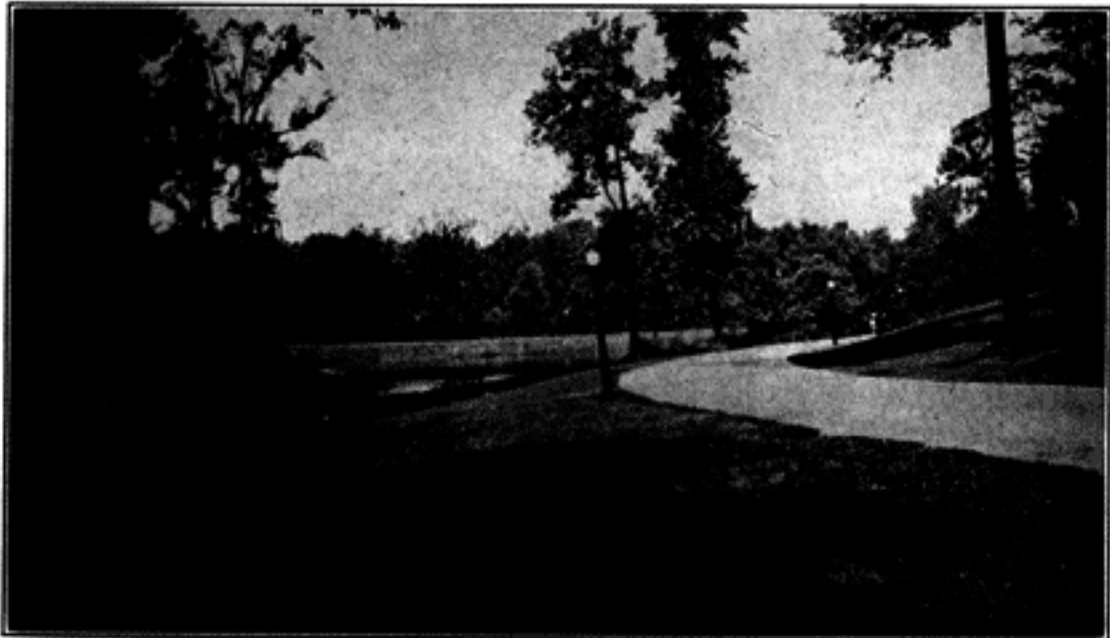
CHART SHOWING A
CLASSIFICATION of POPULATION
 & RECREATION FACILITIES

Types of Recreation Facilities

To be fully effective, the areas of the city which are devoted to recreation should be distributed and developed systematically. Recreational needs are dependent upon the size and general character of the city and can be expressed in specific terms. In the first place, it may be said that one-fifth of the city's area, aside from streets, should serve public needs. There should be approximately one acre of parks for every 100 persons. By following the two formulas above, the city would acquire some 128 acres of park and playground lands for each square mile added to the city's area. Approximately another fifth of the square mile would be used for streets and possibly a tenth for commerce, churches, etc., leaving half or less for purely residential development. If each net acre of residential area when fully developed carried an average of eight families, a typical square mile would be populated by some 12,800 persons, a density of twenty per gross acre. This 12,800 population is practically the minimum which may be expected when any given square mile is fully built up, since only single family dwellings are considered in allowing eight families per net acre. With a larger number more likely to be found upon a typical square mile it is not at all unreasonable to propose the reservation of 128 acres of recreation grounds.

It must be noted, however, that mere acreage is not enough. A city might have well over twenty per cent of its gross area lying in one tract in the outskirts, but its interior might be wholly without the recreation facilities needed in such sections. To be fully effective the proportion of the city's area dedicated to public use as parks or playgrounds must be in units of varying size, disposed according to a studied plan and developed with strict regard for recreational needs. All public recreation facilities should form a harmonious, coordinated system properly related to the extent and character of the city's development.

It is impossible to over-emphasize the importance of the proper distribution and location of various recreational areas. In the case of each unit of the recreation system, the value of the investment is dependent upon the effectiveness of its service. This in turn is dependent upon the adequacy of the area in size and the ease with which it may be reached by the population which it is intended to serve. For example, a small park or playground, to be easily reached by the greatest number of people, should be as nearly as possible centered in its particular district. When situated alongside such barriers as rivers, railroads, or industrial districts, the radius of effective service is greatly limited.



Driveway and lake, Garvin Park.

INTERIOR BLOCK PLAY AREAS OFFER PROTECTION TO CHILDREN WHO WOULD OTHERWISE BE UPON THE STREETS

PLAYGROUNDS WITH SLIDES NOT BEING SHOULD PROVIDE INTERIOR BLOCK PLAYGROUNDS

PREDICTED PLAY AREAS ARE POSSIBLE IN BLOCKS WITH NOY DEVELOPERS

PROTECTED PLAY AREAS

COMMUNITY CENTERS AND NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING PLACES - SCHOOLS - GYMNASIUMS - HOUSES IN PARKS & OTHER BUILDINGS WHICH MAY BE USED FOR EXERCISE RECREATION MAY LEAVE

DISTRICTS OF 1-1/2 MILE RADIUS MAY BE MARKED

COMMUNITY CENTERS

PLAYGROUNDS FOR WHICH CHILDREN WITH SUPERVISION SHOULD CONSTITUTE THE PLAYGROUND SYSTEM

SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS SHOULD BE AT LEAST 5 ACRES PLAYGROUNDS SHOULD BE MARKED FOR CHILDREN

PLAYGROUNDS WITH SUPERVISION OFFER AN EDUCATIONAL AS WELL AS RECREATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE. DISTRICTS OF 1/2 MILE RADIUS SHOULD BE MARKED

SUPERVISED SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS

CERTAIN SECTIONS OF THE PLEASURE DRIVE SYSTEM SHOULD BE OF THE NORMAL BOLLINGER TYPE

THE PLEASURE DRIVE SYSTEM SHOULD HAVE ITS COURSE IN THE RESULT OF THE CITY

OTHER SECTIONS OF THE PLEASURE DRIVE SYSTEM SHOULD BE OF THE NORMAL BOLLINGER TYPE

PLEASURE DRIVES

PLAYFIELD GENERALLY SHOULD BE DIVIDED INTO FROM 6-12 ACRES PLAYS IF SHOULD BE FROM 10-20 ACRES

ONE SET OF PLAYFIELD SHOULD BE LOCATED AT THE JUNIOR & SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS ANOTHER SET SHOULD BE IN PARKS OR SPECIAL SITES

SWIMMING POOLS WITH COURTS - FOOTBALL & BASEBALL FIELDS SHOULD BE DEVELOPED IN CONNECTION WITH PLAYFIELDS

PLAYFIELDS

ONE LARGE PARK, BEING A RECREATION PARK, HAVING ALL THE NECESSARY FEATURES SUCH AS GOLF COURSE - BALLFIELD - HILLS & ROAD SYSTEM

THERE SHOULD BE 1 PARK FEATURING WATER SPORTS

OTHER TYPES OF PARKS IN THE LARGE PARK SYSTEM SHOULD INCLUDE AMBIGUOUS TYPES - BOWLING - NATURALISTIC TYPES - BOATING - GARDEN TYPES

LARGE PARKS

ONE NEIGHBORHOOD PARK TO BE BUILT TO BEING, BEST CLASS SERVICE SHOULD BE OFFERED TO ACRES - PLAYFIELD 10-12 ACRES

ONE NEIGHBORHOOD PARK TO BE BUILT TO BEING, BEST CLASS SERVICE SHOULD BE OFFERED TO ACRES - PLAYFIELD 10-12 ACRES

ONE NEIGHBORHOOD PARK TO BE BUILT TO BEING, BEST CLASS SERVICE SHOULD BE OFFERED TO ACRES - PLAYFIELD 10-12 ACRES

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

SWIMMING POOLS SKATING PONDS OUTDOOR THEATRES TENNIS COURTS COASTING HILLS

SPECIAL FACILITIES

BARTHOLOMEW & ASSOCIATES
CITY PLAN & LANDSCAPE ENGINEERS
SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI

TYPES OF RECREATION FACILITIES

EVANSVILLE
INDIANA
CITY PLAN
COMMISSION

A SYSTEM OF RECREATION FACILITIES (Continued)

The accompanying plate shows diagrammatically the general principles which should govern the location of the various units of the recreation system. It is not to be taken as offering specific recommendations for Evansville, but merely to illustrate the theory underlying the detailed proposals of Part III.

PLAYGROUNDS

The term "playground" is loosely used. In the eyes of some, every vacant lot with a ball game on it is a playground. There are playgrounds in parks and around schools. They may follow no standards in location, size, arrangement, or use. But no other feature of the modern recreation system more seriously needs standards and a clarifying definition.

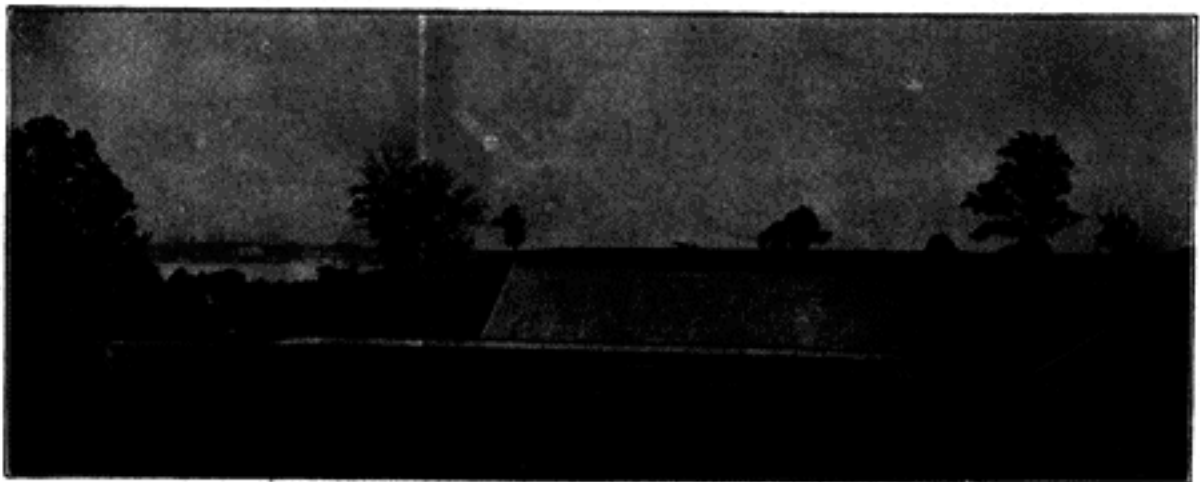
Strictly speaking, a playground ought to be a neighborhood area of a definite size, devoted wholly to the recreation of children under competent direction.

A playground, first of all, ought to be easily reached. It has been found by competent authorities that the same principles which apply to the proper location of public elementary schools also apply in general to playground location. Each elementary school should serve a homogeneous residential district approximately a mile square and should be as nearly as possible in the center of the district. Consequently, the ideal location for playgrounds is in connection with public schools where these are properly distributed. The effectiveness of any playground is greatly reduced if located on major streets, on car lines, alongside railroads, in industrial districts or any district which is losing residential character.

Secondly, the playground ought to be adequate in size. Where children who will use the playground may be counted, the rule should be to provide *not less* than 100 square feet of unobstructed play space per child. In no case should the gross area be less than five acres.

Third, to secure for the community the greatest usefulness of playgrounds, they should be placed under responsible management. Provision of space is a prime essential but supervision and direction are equally vital to the success of any system of playgrounds.

On account of the desirability of locating playgrounds at schools it has usually been found most satisfactory to center the entire responsibility of their supervision in the educational department of the city.



The stadium, Reitz High School, illustrating an effective use of natural grades. More planting is needed.



The stadium, Bosse Field, which has a wide field of usefulness in the recreation program.

School playgrounds, however, cannot as a rule serve the very small children below school age. Where home grounds cannot afford them the necessary play area, interior-block playgrounds have been found most satisfactory. These provide a safe place in which the younger children may play more or less under the watchful eyes of mothers. Such playgrounds are especially valuable in apartment-house districts. The chief requirement is to make lots 130 or more feet deep, dedicating an easement for play purposes over the rear 25-40 feet of each tier of lots. This easement may be for the benefit of either the general public or for owners of property in the block only.

PLAYFIELDS

Playfields are essentially a form of playground, but because of specialization should be considered separately. Playgrounds properly attract and serve only children between six and fifteen. Above the latter age, perhaps even above twelve, the interests of boys particularly are centered in more active, competitive games and sports. They wish detachment from the "kids" who frequent playgrounds. They seek advancement from the playground ball leagues to the leagues playing regulation baseball. They greatly need playfields with running track, football and baseball areas, and similar attractions. These recreation areas are not easily coordinated with playgrounds. Their uses are different; they have a distinct place in the recreation system.

Playfields generally draw from districts approximately a mile and a half in diameter. One should be found at every high school and at certain neighborhood parks and large parks. A site of from 15 to 25 acres is required to provide adequately for the various activities. Unlike playgrounds, the accessibility of playfields is not so much limited by railroad yards, industrial districts, major thoroughfares and car lines.

A SYSTEM OF RECREATION FACILITIES (*Continued*)

COMMUNITY CENTERS

The Community Center in the modern city corresponds in a measure to the old New England town hall. It serves as the public gathering place for the neighborhood. In such a building the various social and indoor recreational activities of the community may find accommodation. Club rooms for meetings, gymnasium and swimming pool for evening classes, branch library and art gallery, billiard rooms and bowling alleys, showers, handball courts, reading and lounging rooms are usually found in complete community centers. With local improvement societies growing in importance, parent-teacher organizations becoming more active, young people's societies seeking an outlet for their interests, this institution has come to hold an important place in the well-rounded recreation system.

Few cities, however, have true community center buildings. The newer public schools, particularly those of the intermediate or junior high type, are usually made to serve.

The public school is the logical neighborhood center. The buildings should, therefore, be designed for such out-of-school use. A first class community center will attract attendance from an area a mile or more in radius.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Neighborhood parks are indispensable in the modern city. They are intimate community recreation areas. Their great value depends chiefly upon their accessibility. A neighborhood park should be within walking distance of practically every person in the city—one-half mile is generally considered a fair radius of the service area. The far-sighted city will aim to reserve space for one such park for each square mile of new territory that is absorbed.

Neighborhood parks should not be large; neither should they be small enough to fall into the "small park" class. Twenty acres is a fair minimum size though from 30 to 75 acres is recommended where possible. The fact that parks of this type are planned to fit into the thickly built up interior of the city suggests limitations as to size. They must be com-



Lake in Garvin Park.



The golf shelter, Helfrich Field.

pact, thoroughly serviceable areas designed to offer the maximum recreational advantages to those who live around them. They must not be of clumsy shape or loosely developed or they will interfere with the functioning of the city without offering compensating advantages.

Theoretically, a neighborhood park of twenty or thirty acres should occupy the center of each square mile of residential territory in the city. The placement of such a park should be determined primarily by the boundaries of the district which it is to serve. Considerations of topography, groves of trees and the like should not be permitted to weigh too heavily against a central location. With a normal population density around it, each park of this type may be expected to serve approximately 2500 families. The number of people who will use the park, however, will be dependent upon the character of the district. A determination of residential areas is a prerequisite to effective neighborhood park location as well as school and playground location. The availability of automobiles may lessen the interest of some in a recreation area so close at hand; but there will always be a large number who will be unable to seek relief from oppressive city conditions in long drives or visits to more outlying recreation areas. Many of these will enjoy walking to an attractive park.

LARGE PARKS

The modern city should be encircled by a series of large outlying, natural parks. These areas, all connected by a system of pleasure drives, should offer wholesome retreat from the noisy, oppressive city. Topography should be the predominant factor in their location, and their general treatment should be highly naturalistic. They should embrace and preserve for the city-dweller all types of the native landscape around his city. Woods and hills and lakes and the valleys of streams naturally suggest themselves as public reservations. More and more are contacts with wild nature necessary in this age of confinement and artificiality; the city must set aside choice bits of such country for later use.

Each large park area may be developed with some distinctive feature—one may be preserved as a wholly wild, natural park, another used as a golf course, another as an arboretum and botanic garden with special floral displays, while still another may serve as a zoological garden.

A SYSTEM OF RECREATION FACILITIES (Continued)

PLEASURE DRIVES

The widening use of the automobile is focusing the attention of cities more and more upon the need of a system of parkways and formal boulevards. The automobile has extended the interest of the average citizen in the appearance of the city. It is possible today to construct streets of a highly finished type and reserve them for the exclusive use of the lighter, faster moving vehicles. In certain cities thoroughfares of this class are called "boulevards" in order to differentiate them from conventional streets and avenues upon which no traffic restrictions exist.

In the development of a system of boulevards and parkways related to the recreation system, however, the distinction between these pleasure traffic ways and the ordinary streets should be more than that of mere restriction of use. The features which characterize the pleasure drive system may be noted as follows:

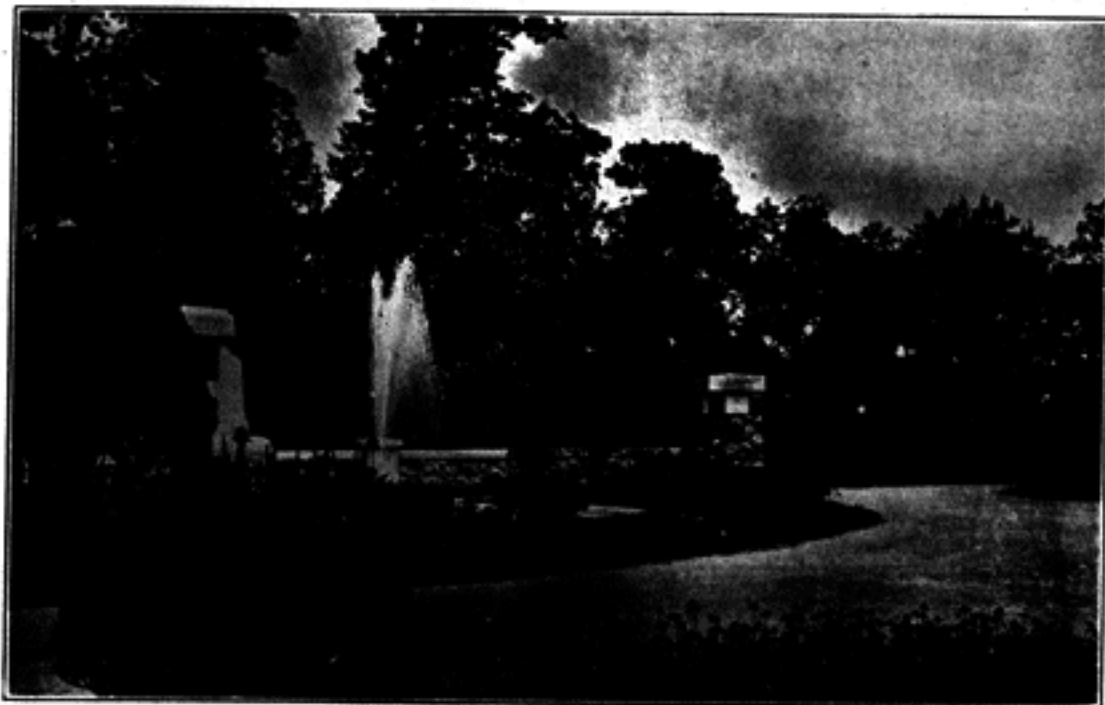
1. Width.
2. Proportion of width allotted to paving.
3. Character of paving.
4. Restriction of traffic.
5. Planting—uniformity in treatment of lawns, flowers, shrubs and trees.
6. Care or maintenance.
7. Uniform building setback.
8. Control of the types of buildings erected on abutting property.

Of these characteristics, the acquisition of a wide right-of-way, the initial cost of planting and general treatment, and the maintenance charge are the only items which increase appreciably the cost of establishing thoroughfares of this character in the city.

It is almost the universal experience, however, that because of their distinctive character these streets enhance the value of the property in the city more than enough to provide tax returns sufficient to cover their construction and upkeep. It can be shown by reference to many cities that the construction of a system of distinctive pleasure driveways has proved an extremely sound municipal investment. These features of a modern city are not extravagances but value-creating devices. They make the best use of certain property, they accommodate pleasure-seeking vehicular traffic and also other traffic of similar character, they contribute much more than ordinary streets to the enhancement of property values and the creation of a more widespread, more forceful civic spirit.

SPECIALIZED FACILITIES

Such seasonal recreational facilities as coasting hills, swimming pools and skating ponds, may or may not be placed in parks, their location depending upon considerations of service and advantageous natural situations.



Garvin Park fountain at main entrance to Park.

PART II
Existing Conditions in Evansville

Twenty-Five Years' Expansion of City and Recreational Areas

More than one-third of the present area of Evansville has been added in the past twenty-five years. During the same period about 600 acres of park land and almost 20 acres of school grounds have been acquired. In view of the previous recommendations for setting aside for recreational purposes approximately 128 acres of each square mile of residential area added to the city, this would seem an unusually large percentage. According to that formula it would appear that for the three and one-half square miles of area added, about 450 acres would have been sufficient for recreational purposes. Unfortunately, however, the city possessed practically no recreation areas until after 1900. In fact until after that date the only publicly owned properties which could be used for such purposes were ten acres of the present Sunset Park, a few other very small parks in the central part of the city, and several small school grounds.

At the present time there are 9.43 square miles within the city limits and the city possesses 630 acres of park properties and approximately 40 acres in school grounds. Since not all of the area of the city is used for residential purposes, it is estimated that the present recreation areas of Evansville are almost two-thirds of the amount recommended by present day standards. Evansville is not so far below the standards in this respect as many other cities. However, all progressive cities are taking steps in these days to bring their recreation systems up to the best standards.

One fact may be noted by a glance at a previously published study of Evansville conditions, Plate Number Four of the Major Street Report. There is very little unused property within the city limits at the present time. Most of this will not long remain. The disappearance of vacant lots has a very definite effect upon recreation opportunities and that is why it is so important that sufficient public open spaces be provided. Additions will be made to the city. At such times it is important to see that adequate areas are set aside for future recreation purposes. By acquiring the necessary land before development takes place, these recreation spaces may be located where they will best serve their purpose and at far less expense than if their purchase were delayed until values were greatly increased by the development of the district.

Another indication that Evansville is below the standard in its present provision of parks and playgrounds is the recommendation that one acre of recreation space should be provided for each 100 people. In order adequately to serve its population at the time of the 1920 census, Evansville should have possessed approximately 850 acres of land for such uses.

It is estimated that in another twenty-five years Evansville will have a population of approximately 167,000. (See Plate 2, Major Street Report). Thus before 1950 the city should acquire enough additional land for parks and playgrounds to bring the total up to almost 1700 acres.



Evansville should look forward to having a large outlying park which will take advantage of a commanding site on the Ohio River. These views give some indication of the beauties of such a site.

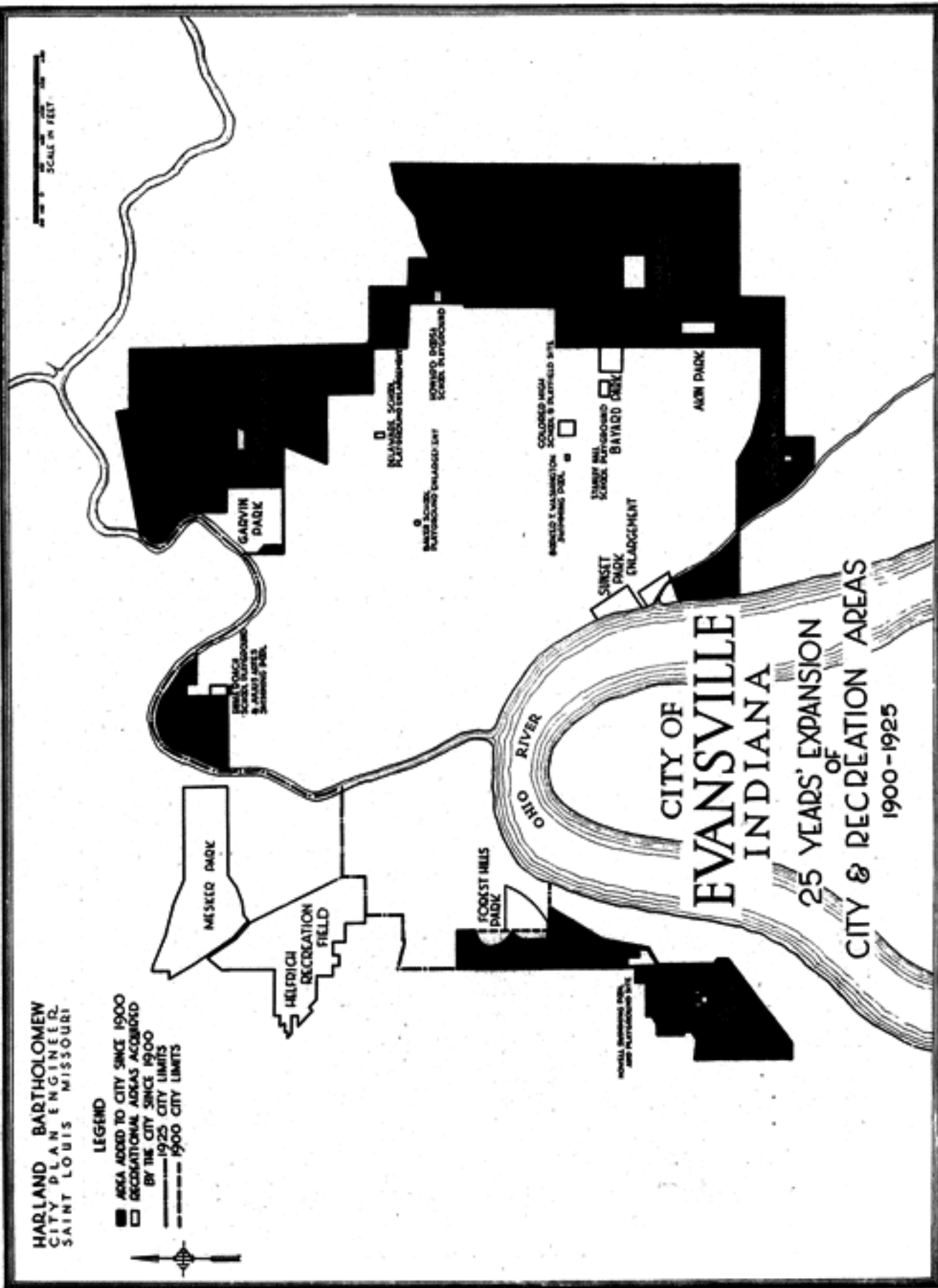
HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW
CITY PLANNING ENGINEER
SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI

LEGEND

- AREA ADDED TO CITY SINCE 1900
- RECREATIONAL AREAS ACQUIRED BY THE CITY SINCE 1900
- 1925 CITY LIMITS
- - - 1900 CITY LIMITS



SCALE IN FEET
0 50 100 150 200



CITY OF
EVANSVILLE
INDIANA
25 YEARS' EXPANSION
OF
CITY & RECREATION AREAS
1900-1925

Public Areas Available for Recreation

The areas shown in black on the map opposite are all publicly owned, and available for recreation purposes. With the exception of certain school grounds, noted below, all these areas have been devoted more or less effectively to recreation uses. In consideration of the particular services which they perform these areas may be classified as follows:

LARGE PARKS

Total area—390 acres	
Mesker Park.....	212 acres
Helfrich Field.....	178 acres
	390 acres

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Total area—225 acres	
Garvin Park.....	95 acres
Sunset Park.....	65 acres
Forest Hills Park.....	45 acres
Bayard Park.....	12 acres
Akin Park.....	8 acres
	225 acres

SMALL PARKS

Total area—approximately 15 acres

225 acres

More detailed information as to the services performed by these parks may be found in Plate 5.

SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS—(Grade Schools only).

Total area—approximately 25 acres

Commencing this year, all but three of the seventeen school playgrounds are being used for the conduct of supervised play under the direction of the Department of Municipal Recreation. Twenty-one out of the total twenty-five acres, or 85 per cent., are thus now in use, as com-



Picnic grounds, Mesker Park.

PUBLIC AREAS AVAILABLE FOR RECREATION (Continued)

pared with thirteen acres, or 54 per cent., the acreage of school playgrounds which was served with supervised play during the preceding year.

The largest attendance is found, of course, at those playgrounds serving the most congested districts. The play areas available at some of these popular playgrounds have recently been considerably enlarged by the School Board, while others are pitifully inadequate. The Board is endeavoring to bring every school playground up at least to the minimum standard of 100 square feet per child. This effort deserves every encouragement.

The playground instruction and conduct of play activities has been, from the beginning, the best obtainable for the amount of money spent, which has been far too little for a city of Evansville's size.

MUNICIPAL PLAYGROUNDS

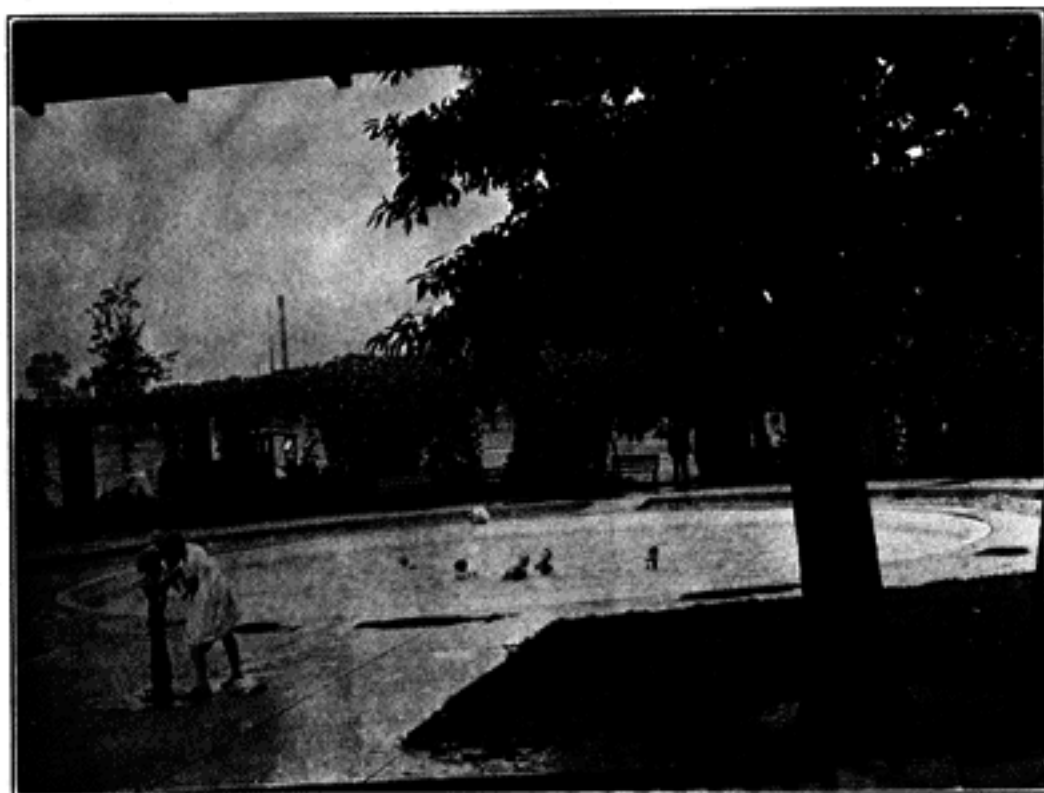
Total area, in addition to playgrounds in Garvin and Mesker parks—2.3 acres.

The City owns two playground areas at Howell, one of which, a small piece of land less than one-half acre in size, is close to the Daniel Wertz School, and is used considerably by children of that district. The other is adjacent to the Howell Municipal Swimming Pool. It is five times as large as the former, but is very low, and will not be available for playground use until a great deal of filling has been done.

There are supervised playgrounds in both Mesker and Garvin Parks. In Garvin Park the play area is of splendid design and equipment. Children's apparatus, tennis courts, swimming pool and all the features of a fully equipped recreation center are grouped under the trees in one section of the park. In no other park and on no school ground is there a similar play center. The features of the Garvin Park play unit could well be applied to those playgrounds which render more constant and wider service.



The golf course, Helfrich Field, one of the city's greatest assets.



Small children's playground at Garvin Park. Every playground should have a special area set aside for the smaller children.

PLAYFIELDS

Total area, outside of parks—15 acres.

Reitz Field (Included in Forest Hills Park)

Bosse Field (Included in Garvin Park)

Enlow Field (At Bosse High School; total play space at the school, 9.5 acres.)

Tract at McCormick and Lincoln Aves.—purchased for colored high school and colored playfield and playground—5.8 acres.

The three playfields, Reitz, Bosse, and Enlow, are of unusual completeness. These playfields, with the exception of Bosse Field, are generally for the use of high school pupils, rather than for general public recreation. In the interest of the public it would be a decided advantage if these high school playfields could be made available for general use at all times when this would not conflict with school play activities. Bosse Field is leased for league games; its special character renders it unsuitable for general use unless some special arrangement can be worked out.

PUBLIC SWIMMING POOLS

Total area of sites—1.3 acres.

Garvin Park

Howell

Julius Artes

Central High School

Booker T. Washington (colored)

These five pools furnish an extremely popular form of recreation in Evansville.

The present and future recreational needs of Evansville may be determined by a study of these existing facilities as compared with the recommended standards for a complete recreation system.

Existing Parks and Neighborhood Park Service

Evansville already has one first-class neighborhood park, splendidly developed. Garvin Park is a recreation area in which the city may take justifiable pride. It is a trifle larger than the ordinary type of neighborhood park, but the entire area is not available for full park use. The sections of the older portion of the park that have been given landscape treatment represent very well the ideal to be sought in all neighborhood park development.

But Garvin Park, praiseworthy as it is as a recreation area, lacks an opportunity to render full service to its neighborhood. The map opposite shows the population within one-half mile actual walking distance. A population of 6630 is now tributary to this park. It is hemmed in on the west by industries, and along its southern border lies an industrial belt railway which practically all visitors must cross. To the north and west of the park are the lowlands of Pigeon Creek, sparsely populated and never likely to develop unless the channel of the stream is improved. Briefly, Garvin Park is a recreation area of great possibilities, occupying territory strongly industrial in character, lying in an unfavorable position for the sort of service which it is extremely well equipped to render.

The lesson to be derived from a study of Garvin Park is in no way a reflection upon those who made the park possible or who gave it such meritorious character. The general disorderliness and haphazardness of the city is at fault. If a belt line for purposes of stimulating industrial growth is laid out, parks should not absorb space along this line. The two interests are incompatible; one or the other is improperly located and the city unquestionably suffers as a consequence.

As will be outlined further the aim henceforth should be to introduce more organization and design into the building of the city. Neighborhood park locations particularly should be selected so that these parks may be wholly surrounded by residences.

The accompanying map illustrates additional neighborhood park areas and the extent of their influence. Forest Hills Park, 45 acres, has a population of 3570 now living within one-half mile. Sunset Park, 65 acres, serves 8320. Bayard Park, 12 acres, serves 7350. Of these only the Sunset Park service area is at all fully built up. And here a considerable increase in population may be expected as the demand for centrally located apartment houses increases. Because of the river, however, this park can serve but half its normal area and population. Its popularity, however, despite limited neighborhood population, is an indication of the usefulness of such areas. The park deserves a more studied arrangement and more permanent improvements. In its treatment Sunset Park is not to be compared with Garvin. The natural attractiveness of the site has possibilities which the present design of the park scarcely recognizes.

Forest Hills Park is another neighborhood recreation area of great possibilities. It has a comparatively small nearby population and will never, because of topography, be surrounded with solidly built-up blocks. It is being properly improved for neighborhood park service, however, and should eventually exert a very favorable influence upon its district.

Bayard Park and Akin Park serve another section of the city. The former is larger and because of its tree growth more attractive, but little has been done to improve it as a neighborhood recreation area. The attractions of this park are not comparable with those mentioned above. Akin Park has been well laid out and in the course of time will supplement Bayard in affording neighborhood recreation facilities to this growing section of Evansville.

The closeness of these two parks, however, means a duplication of service not particularly advantageous to the community. It is never cheaper to keep up two areas than one, and there is always likely to be neglect of one or the other. By adherence to a systematic park development plan such duplication may be avoided. If twenty-five acres of land in one district were to be made into public parks it were better to have this acreage in one tract and place this park where it would be most effective.

Evansville has already made a wonderful start in acquiring recreation areas of the large park type. Mesker Park and the new Helfrich Field, lying comparatively close in, are naturalistic parks of great possibilities. The topography included within their boundaries makes it unlikely that they will ever lose their dominant natural character. Too great praise cannot be accorded the late Mayor Bosse for his insistence upon the reservation of these rugged hills as public recreation grounds. They are better suited to this use than any other; the city will derive greater benefits from them year after year.

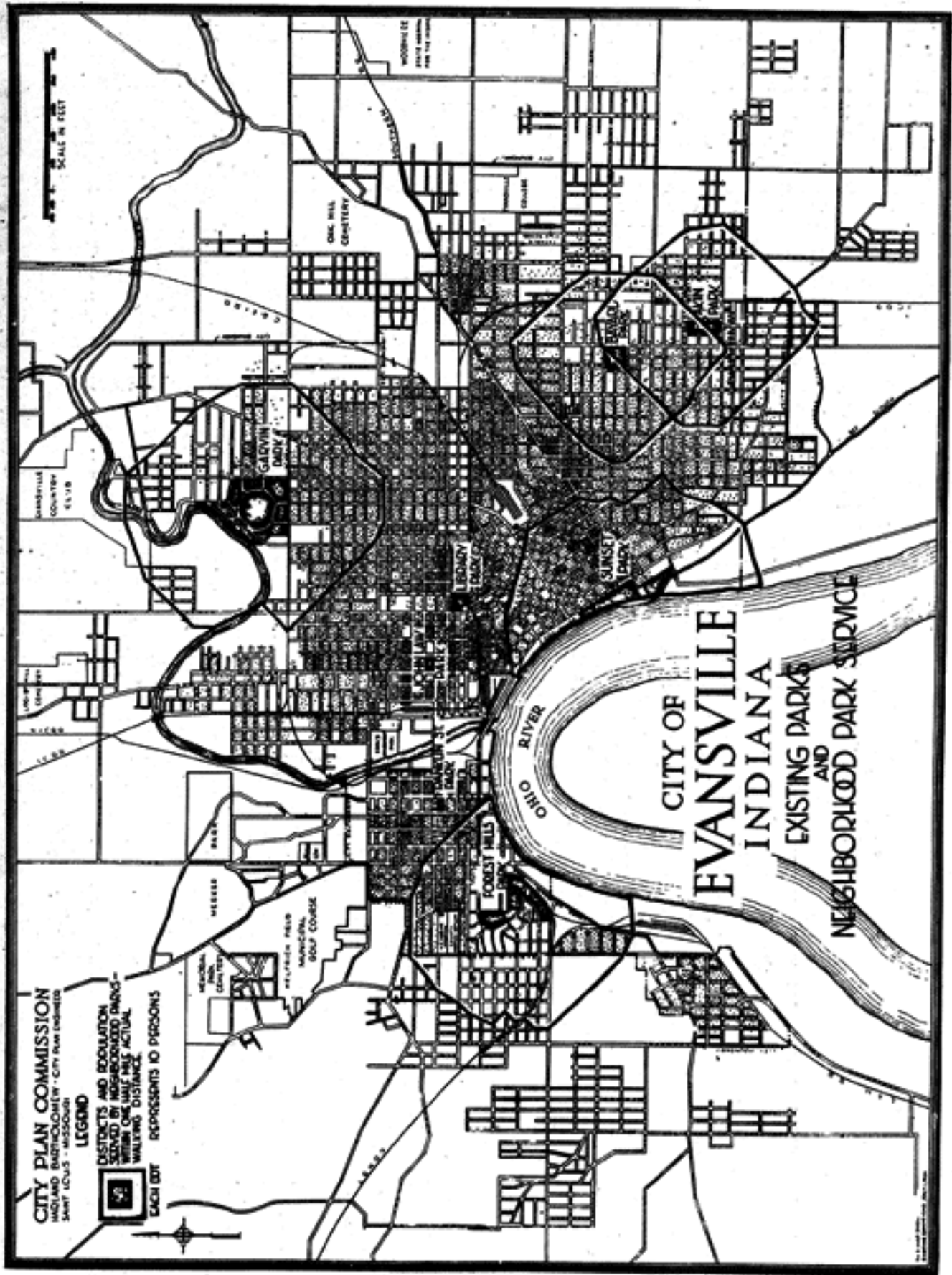


PLATE 5

SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

In brief, a survey of the recreation facilities existing in Evansville today reveals the following:

1. The need of systematizing recreation facilities is urgent.
2. Until recently there has been no orderly plan to follow in reserving space for these facilities.
3. There has been an unfortunate lack of harmony between interests charged with the advancement and support of public recreation.
4. The Playground Division of the Park Department has been attempting for several years to conduct playgrounds and swimming pools and to provide tennis courts and other recreation facilities on a budget hopelessly inadequate. The new Recreation Division of the Park Department has an excellent opportunity to correct this condition.
5. Playgrounds that were the most inadequate have recently been enlarged by the School Board. This is an important step. It needs to be followed up by adequate development of each school site.
6. For many years the Park Department was unprogressive and has only within the last few years discovered its obligations and opportunities.
7. There are many splendid park development possibilities in view, but a large portion of the densely settled interior of the city has been allowed to grow up without adequate open spaces.
8. The parks that have been built in the last few years are of high type, but Sunset Park, the city's most extraordinary recreation ground, is below standard and falls far short of its opportunities.
9. The river front is awaiting first-class treatment throughout and upon this action depends to a certain degree the fate of the lower portion of the business district.
10. A system of pleasure drives has never before been seriously proposed—the city is ready for a continuous encircling chain of these modern traffic ways.
11. Evansville seriously needs the cooperation and foresight of all real estate operators for advancing the recreation interests of the city.



Flag vista. Main Street entrance to Garvin Park.

PART III
A Recreation Program
for Evansville

Playground and Playfield Location

PLAYGROUNDS

The playground problems of Evansville may be analyzed briefly. The conduct of playground activities has been placed in the hands of a Director of Municipal Recreation under the Department of Parks. The provision of playground space adjacent to the school buildings has been assumed, and properly so, by the Board of Education. Henceforth it is recommended that the following principles be followed in providing for playground activities:

(1) The Board of Education should plan to acquire sufficient space for each new school building and so far as possible continue their good work of adding to the area of existing school grounds so that each child who is ultimately to be accommodated in the schools of that district shall have not less than 100 square feet of unobstructed play area. Two acres should be regarded as the minimum for such free play area at any school. This open space for play should be exclusive of such areas close to the building as are needed to serve as setting or foreground for the building.

The site of no school building should be less than five full acres. Many progressive cities are purchasing ten-, fifteen- and twenty-acre tracts as school sites. Their foresight in this respect will be more fully appreciated as the population mounts and the residential blocks in the school district one by one become solidly built-up. By assuming this obligation of providing ample play space about the public schools, the Board of Education makes a distinct contribution to the building of a more serviceable and efficient city. Within reach of the children of every section of the city there will be at least one well-known space upon which they may freely release natural play impulses. They can run and jump and play games without fear of street traffic or the abuse of unsympathetic neighbors.

(2) The responsibility of directing playground activities of Evansville should continue to be centered in the Park Department, because of the Indiana state law authorizing all first and second class cities to make the necessary appropriations for public recreation.

The whole matter of providing adequate recreational opportunities for all ages and groups of the public is of such vital importance and is so much linked up with the work of both the Park Board and the School Board that a definite arrangement for joint action by these two Boards constitutes a vital need. It is recommended that a practical solution of this problem be worked out by these Boards as soon as possible, and that regular meetings be arranged for at which all matters of recreation policy can be jointly agreed upon.

(3) In the establishment and maintenance of playgrounds the policy should be to provide for the more densely populated areas before establishing playgrounds in districts having more existing open spaces.

During the year 1927 several congested centers are being provided, for the first time, with organized play, and through the action of the Park Board in creating a Department of Municipal Recreation with a full-time director, many kinds of supervised recreation are being made available to both children and adults throughout the year in place of the short summer program for children only which previously existed.



Houses on the site of a proposed park. Dwellings of this sort are a disgrace to Evansville. These conditions would give way in the creation of a park for this neighborhood. The alley is on the line of Garvin Street.

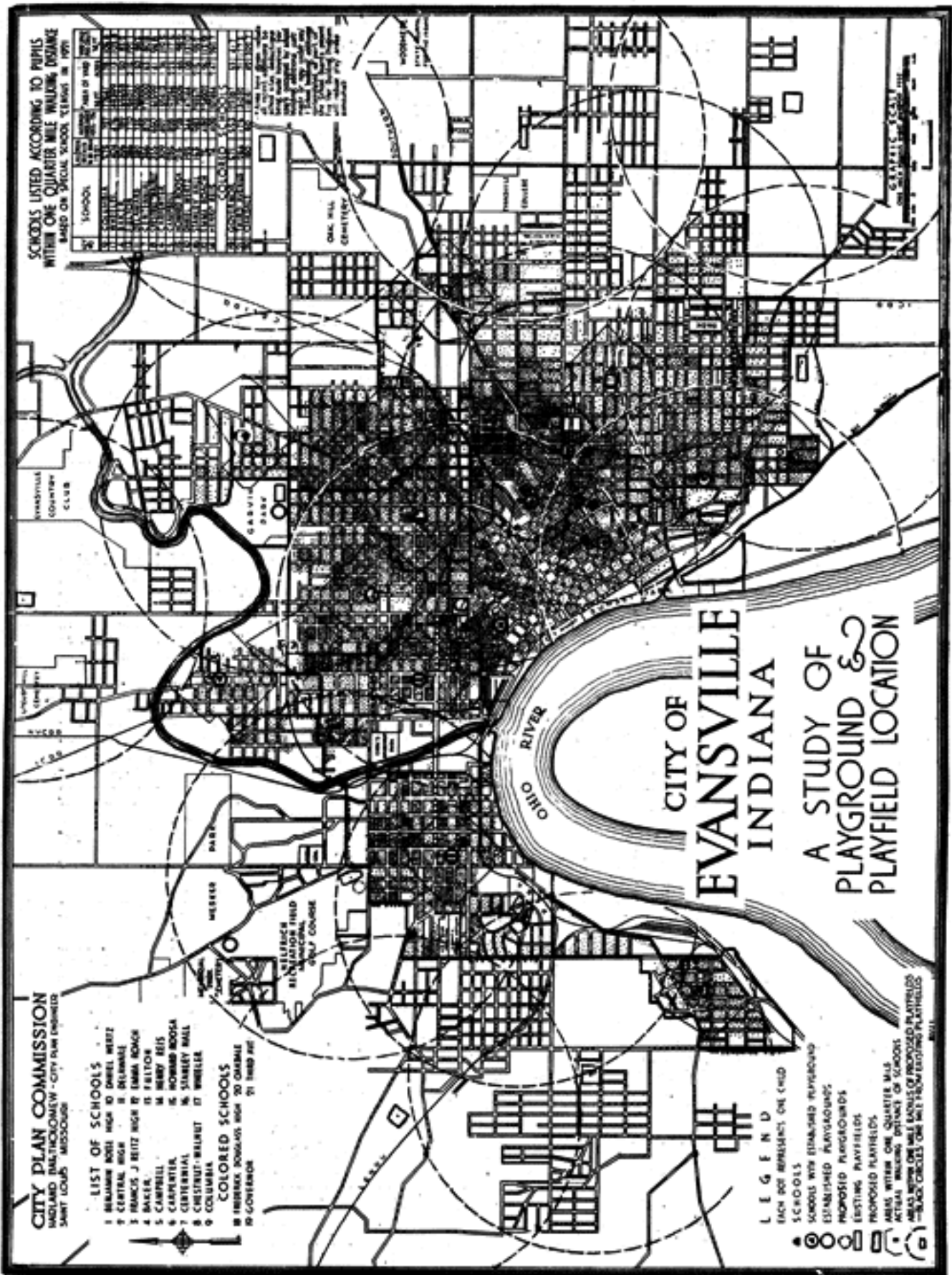


PLATE 6

PLAYGROUND AND PLAYFIELD LOCATION—PLAYGROUNDS (Continued)

In order to initiate this very necessary recreational program the Park Board has appropriated this year, to cover this whole program, twice the amount of money used during the previous season for summer play only. The Board deserves high commendation for taking this notable step ahead in the matter of available recreation facilities for the public. The marked progress made in the providing of opportunity for supervised play since 1921, the first year of such service in Evansville, is apparent from the following table, showing school playgrounds so used in 1921, 1926, and 1927, and the number of children of school age within one-fourth-mile walking distance of each of these schools, based on a special census in 1921:

1921		1927	
5 SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS		14 SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS	
Fulton.....	386	Columbia.....	575
Centennial.....	366	Wheeler.....	404
Howard Roosa.....	215	Baker.....	396
Stanley Hall.....	163	Fulton.....	386
Governor.....	571	Delaware.....	382
	1701	Centennial.....	366
		Chestnut-Walnut.....	355
		Carpenter.....	309
		Campbell.....	285
1926		Howard Roosa.....	215
8 SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS		Daniel Wertz.....	193
Baker.....	396	Stanley Hall.....	163
Fulton.....	386	Emma Roach.....	75
Centennial.....	366	Governor.....	571
Chestnut-Walnut.....	355		
Campbell.....	285		
Howard Roosa.....	215		
Stanley Hall.....	163		
Governor.....	571		
			*4675
	*2737		

From the above table it may be seen that about three times as many children are being reached by playground activities as six years ago—in fact all children within walking distance of every school in the city except three—**Henry Reis, Third Avenue, and Oakdale. In addition, Mesker and Garvin Parks have each had supervised playgrounds for the last two years, and this year, in order to alleviate conditions in the most congested districts, supervised play is also being conducted at two other locations convenient to large numbers of children and adults—Willard Library grounds and the small park at Eleventh Avenue and Virginia Street.

Notwithstanding the good showing already made in the development of organized play by the Recreation Department, and the enlargement of a number of existing playgrounds through purchase by the School Board, too much stress can not be placed upon the importance of keeping up the good work and extending it still farther. Two colored schools, Third Avenue and Oakdale, are entirely without organized play; these and the Governor Street colored school are almost entirely lacking in space for play. A number of playgrounds, already provided with organized play, are under two acres in size. This should be regarded as a minimum area for free play space at any school. If playgrounds smaller than this are not crowded now, they will be as the population of the district grows. Space for the conduct of these playgrounds should be secured at the earliest possible opportunity. The areas thus acquired, even though destruction or removal of existing buildings is involved, cannot ever lose value either as salable property or play space for growing children.

The school population map indicates the need for both new school and new playground facilities in a very congested and totally unserved area comprising a large part of the territory between Lincoln Avenue and Division Street and extending east as far as Bray Avenue. The greatest concentration of children in the city occurs in this section. It is here that the largest number of juvenile delinquency cases arise among both white and colored. The children in this district have practically no recreation facilities. Houses are old and close together and there is no playground whatever for whites. The Governor Street School has a playground for colored children which is pitifully inadequate. They are forced to use the streets for many of the regular playground sports. Altogether, considering the conditions which exist in this district, the recreation interests of children would best be served by a general revision and improvement of facilities.

It is recommended, therefore, that regardless of whatever additional schools are provided to serve this area more adequately, playgrounds be established for this section at an early date. Garvin Street will soon be extended from Bellemeade Avenue to Canal Street as recommended in the Major Street Plan. This will make it a continuous thoroughfare of great usefulness. In connection with this improvement the creation of a new park is proposed in which may be accommodated all the recreational activities of the district. In this park should be planned a modern, commodious playground to serve adequately the many

*These figures do not allow for increase in population of the districts since 1921. If they were corrected for 1926 and 1927 populations, they would be considerably larger.

**The Henry Reis district is taken care of at the Garvin Park playground.

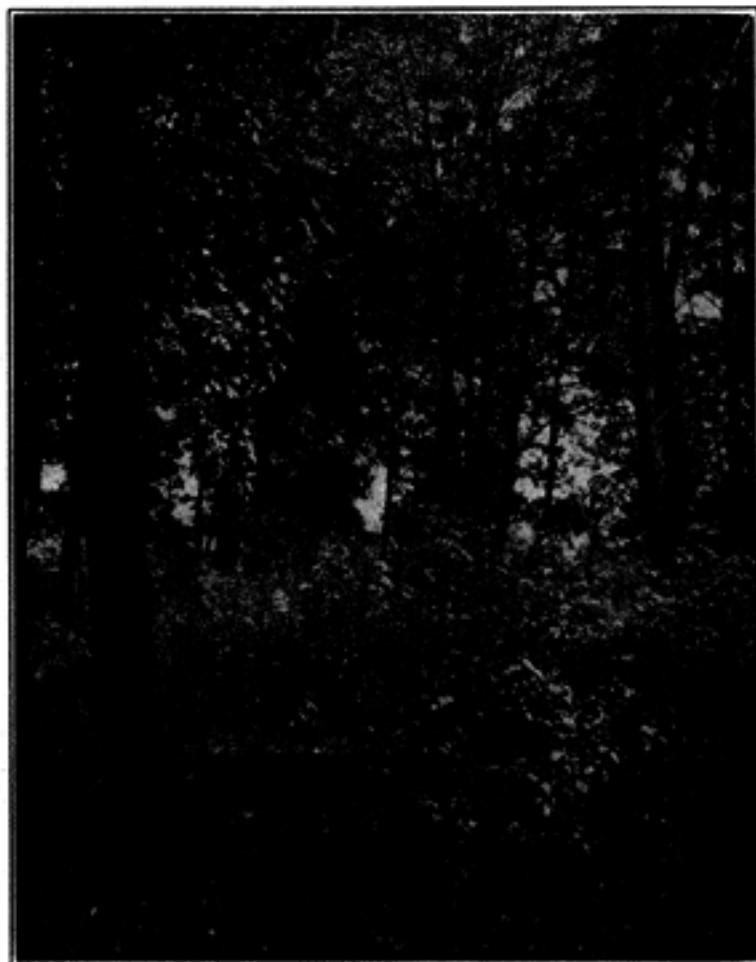
colored children of this district. The playground activities now conducted under such difficulties at the Governor School would find adequate accommodation in such a playground as here proposed.

In the creation of a park and playground in this section, the city would gain in many ways. It would be relieved of many unfit houses, the neighborhood would be brightened up, a class of people who would make splendid use of these recreation facilities would have them. No such move should be attempted, however, without providing suitable dwellings for the families displaced thereby.

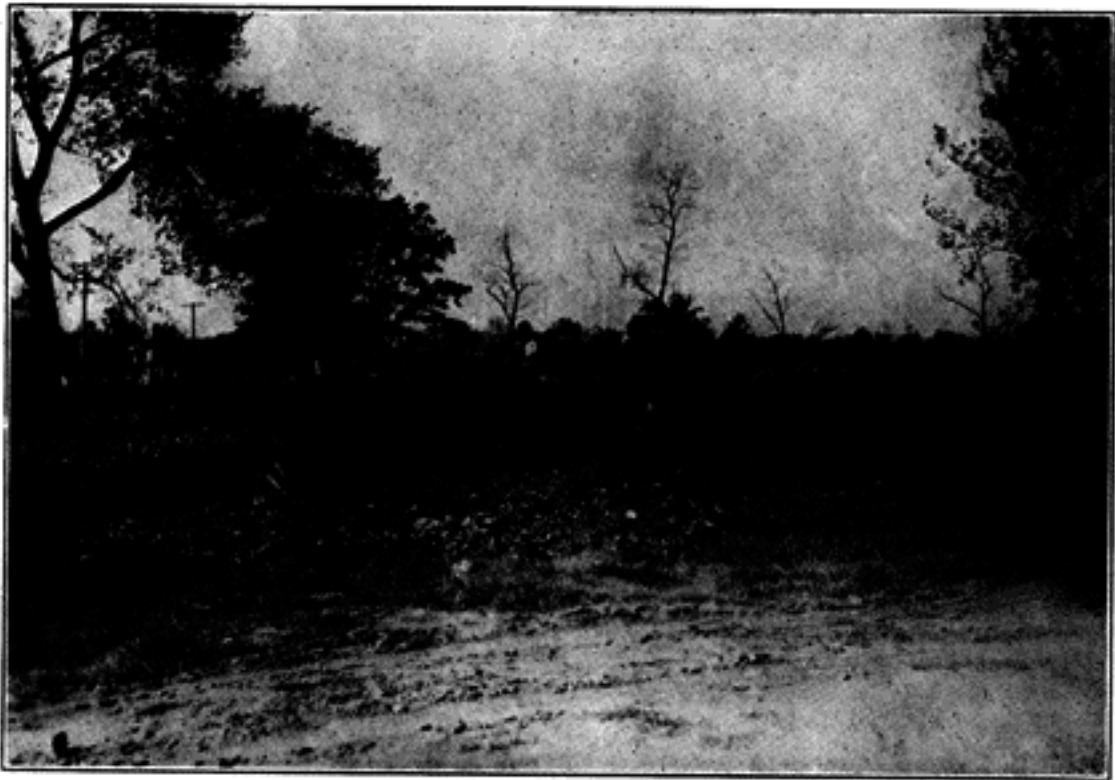
(4) A program for the building of new schools where they will adequately serve the growing population should be devised as early as possible. Since the logical location for children's playgrounds is adjacent to schools, any recommendations for the establishment of playgrounds cannot provide fully for the future needs of the city unless based on a similar program for the building of new schools.

In the case of the above-mentioned congested area north of Lincoln Avenue there is need for a new school as well as playground. Others will eventually be needed in the eastern part of the city and without doubt another south of Carvin Park. However, nothing but a complete school survey can settle this question of the future needs of the city for both schools and playgrounds.

(5) In caring for the playground activities of Evansville, the Park Department and School Board should cooperate in every way possible in the provision of necessary space and the erection and maintenance of apparatus.



Wooded portion of a proposed neighborhood park near the edge of the city.



The corner of Helfrich Field nearest the city—an area proposed for an athletic field.

PLAYGROUND AND PLAYFIELD LOCATION—PLAYGROUNDS (*Continued*)

PLAYFIELDS

The playfields which Evansville now possesses are not so located as to serve the more densely settled portions of the city. Sunset Park ought to be enlarged— to offer more space for games and sports. A new riverside playfield west of Wabash Avenue and south of the L. & N. Railroad and one at the southeast corner of Helfrich Recreation Field would serve the youth of the West Side. In the reclamation of the area north of the Governor Street school would come an opportunity for the establishment of another playfield. A portion of the present Willard Library Park would be well suited to such uses, and a beginning is being made this year at providing public recreation at this convenient center. If this library can eventually be more appropriately located, the entire space can then become a playfield, convenient to the Central High School and to a large population which needs out of door sports and games. If additional areas are obtainable, more playfields should be developed in the section north of Franklin Street.

COMMUNITY CENTERS

There is real need for community centers in Evansville and the city has reached a size capable of supporting such specialized institutions. Though there are now very few community center activities, it is probably true of Evansville, as it has been of many cities, that the social spirit in a neighborhood is latent and needs only the facilities by which it may express itself to become evident.

Progress in the development of community social activities, however, is usually slow. Public provision of facilities for the accommodation of social center activities cannot at once take the form of complete and fully developed social center buildings. Such structures, while quite ideal as the neighborhood meeting place, are generally not built until the social needs of a neighborhood are fully known and demand such a specialized structure. The use of the public school, consequently, is commonly the first step in the development of community social activities.

It is recommended in Evansville, therefore, that the Board of Education be asked to consider the social needs of the community in the construction of new school buildings. In cities where the intermediate or junior high school plan of education is in effect, the school buildings are usually designed to accommodate out-of-school activities. Auditorium, gymnasium, swimming pool, wood-working and domestic science rooms, facilities more often found in schools of the above type, have a usage that extends far beyond the school group. These buildings are coming to represent the highest type of school architecture. While not as numerous as the grade schools, they are placed so as to be accessible to large population groups. They may be opened at night for all forms of community activities. In buildings of this sort may center a great many of the interests of the people which it is advantageous for the city to cultivate.

The construction of schools suitable for community center activities is a sensible investment of public funds. It affords an opportunity to the population of the district for the clean and wholesome expression of normal social desires. The adoption of a forward-looking policy with respect to the development of community center interests in the intermediate schools of Evansville is strongly to be urged.

It is suggested, therefore, that the Board of Education recognize the need of community centers in the Evansville recreation system and assume responsibility for their development. This will involve—

1. An estimate of the serviceability of existing schools for social center purposes.
2. Adoption of a policy governing the use of those schools which are suitably equipped.
3. Planning future schools with this wider use in mind.
4. Arranging through the Director of Recreation for a personnel to supervise and direct community activities.

It should be noted that in the case of community centers, while provision of facilities is a first essential, proper leadership is but slightly less important. The groups which would make use of a community center are now disorganized and largely inactive for want of proper shelter. Opening up of a common meeting place in each community would call these groups forth and suggest the development of organized recreational activities under competent direction. This direction should be supplied through the recently organized Department of Municipal Recreation, which is now working toward that end.



View showing the possibilities for a wonderful natural park where the Evansville Industrial Addition was once laid out.

Proposed Park and Pleasure Drive System

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

More neighborhood parks should be found in the central portion of Evansville. The city here has been very thoroughly built up. Houses are close together and crowd out to the street lines. There is scarcely any vacant property left. The people who live in such sections miss the opportunities for rest and recreation which a generous neighborhood park would provide.

The only opportunity for the city to correct this deficiency, to provide parks for that large unserved population shown on Plate No. 5, is to reclaim certain desirably located blocks. There may be houses on these tracts now, but in the life of the future city, recreation grounds here will be worth more than houses. By a gradual process of acquisition the city could secure control over these improved properties. The parks needed could be created at the first favorable opportunity.

The correction of Evansville's imperfect distribution of neighborhood parks may or may not be considered worth while; there can be no question of the desirability of avoiding such conditions in the future. Let it be accepted as a fixed policy, therefore, to acquire twenty or thirty or more acres whenever a square mile of new city territory is added. The space should be secured because of its relationship to the growth of the city and its possibilities of service. Lack of trees or other characteristics of a park should not condemn the area or draw attention to tracts less likely to serve neighborhood recreational needs. The landscape art has reached such a state that parks can be created upon almost any terrain. In the case of parks of this type it is of the utmost importance to have them where they are needed. The map opposite shows a distribution of neighborhood parks adapted to the needs of the future Evansville.

In connection with the further development of Sunset Park the natural advantages of its location should be emphasized. The broad expanse of the Ohio River is a recreational asset of which any city might be proud. Today Sunset Park seems almost to extend across this entire expanse and include the tree-lined Kentucky shore opposite. It behooves the city to lose no time about saving that beautiful shore in its natural state as a permanent feature of the Sunset Park scenery. Extension of the Park to the southeast by filling is already going on. A retaining wall and wide promenade along the edge of the river would increase the usefulness of the park tremendously. Evansville's recreational waterfront deserves a treatment appropriate to the high standards of an ambitious city and capable of creating a lasting favorable impression upon all visitors.

LARGE PARKS

In Mesker and Helfrich Parks the city has the first unit of a system of large parks. These areas, which essentially constitute one park, possess practically all the characteristics which should distinguish such parks from others of the recreation system. They are large enough to give the visitor complete detachment from the artificial surroundings of the city. They offer the city dweller a bit of "uncivilized nature"—a retreat wherein he may enjoy those delightful sights and sounds which his growing city has banished. Every city needs to have a certain proportion of its park acreage in large, outlying naturalistic parks.

The large park shown in what is generally known as the Industrial Subdivision lying west of the city deserves special note. The area is extremely rugged and densely wooded. In a day of enthusiasm it was platted with straight streets and rectangular blocks, a form of platting wholly unsuited to the topography. A great many lots were sold, most of which were inaccessible. The tract today is held by numerous early lot purchasers, many of whom do not know where their holdings are or how to get to them. Taxes are becoming onerous, since the land in its present state cannot be put to use.

It is obvious to anyone who makes a casual survey of this portion of Evansville, particularly this old subdivision, that the land is better adapted to recreation purposes than any other. It is essentially a wild park and ought to remain in such a state. It should become a possession of all Evansville.

By a proper presentation of the facts to the owners of lots in this useless subdivision they undoubtedly could be persuaded to turn over their holdings to the city. It is suggested, therefore, that this unique area be sought at once as a large park. A canvass of a few of the lot owners would soon reveal the possibilities of securing the entire area. The city would ever be grateful to those who made a contribution toward the reservation of this wooded land for a public park. The contributors would see their holdings being put to the best possible use. This large park would fit well into the complete system of such large outlying areas.

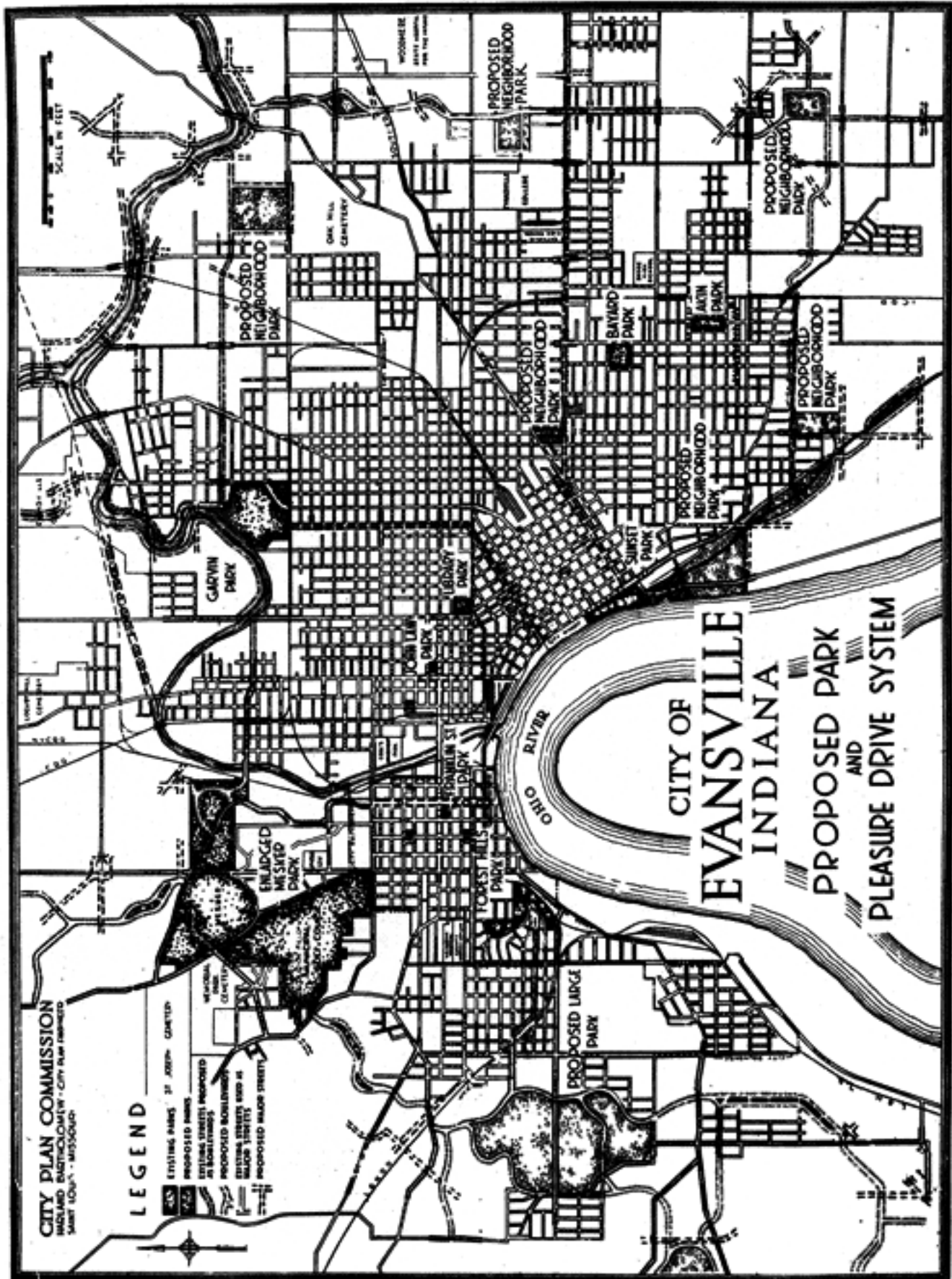
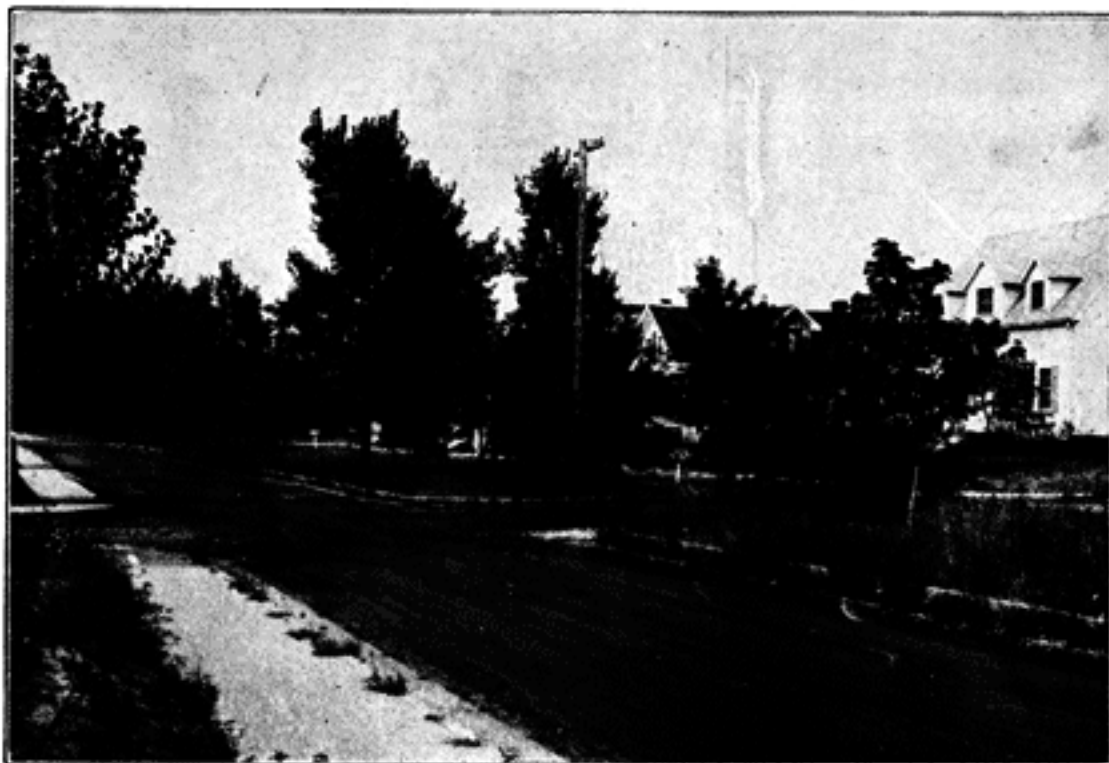


PLATE 7



Alvard Place, which is wide and has a center park strip. It is designated as part of the boulevard system. It needs improvement and maintenance.

PROPOSED PARK AND PLEASURE DRIVE SYSTEM—LARGE PARKS (*Continued*)

Plate No. 7 shows the location of additional parks of this type proposed for Evansville. Practically all the sites noted are either natural park lands or are suitable for development as large recreation grounds. They are distributed around and for the most part outside the present city. The purchase of the more desirable of these areas by small annual payments would in a few years give the city a splendid series of these outlying park lands. Their improvement could wait until the resources of the city were larger.

Ultimately each of these park areas should be known because of some dominant feature. In planning for their development one should be made the zoological park, another an arboretum and floral park, while those which have pronounced naturalistic character should be kept in this state. In the improvement of all these parks, however, it must be remembered that they are essentially natural parks and only so much of road and walk, building should be indulged in as is necessary to make the areas accessible. Whatever buildings and features they have should be located according to an orderly, purposeful landscape design. All the large outlying parks should moreover, be accessible by distinctive pleasure drives.

PLEASURE DRIVES

The various park areas of Evansville, existing and proposed, have long been thought of as individual elements, more or less unrelated. In the development of the recreation system of the future city, the aim should be to bring all features into a harmonious, connected system. There should be traffic ways, bearing something of the character of the parks themselves, by which the outlying recreation grounds may be approached. Pleasure drives are no longer to be considered expensive luxuries in the city. The comfortable, smooth-riding automobile has become a pleasure-giving device of great importance. Its use is constantly being extended. Definite routes over which such vehicles may move are urgent needs in the modern city. Evansville has not yet commenced to develop a real system of first-class pleasure drives.

To be essentially what the name implies, pleasure drives must afford the user distinct pleasurable sensations. The views ahead and alongside ought to be of a higher order than those found on ordinary streets. Pavements should facilitate smooth, comfortable driving. These thoroughfares, moreover, should have width and continuity, both for traffic-carrying purposes and for a dignified impressive appearance.

It is manifest that when pleasure drives are not planned beforehand and laid out as successive portions of the city are platted, the possibility of securing the distinctive characteristics noted above is considerably lessened. Evansville has already had experience in this line. Few existing streets would now lend themselves to boulevard treatment. They are narrow, sidewalks are often against the curb, houses sit forward on lots. Out in the district around Akin Park are three streets laid out with center park strips. They are none too generous in width but are nevertheless distinctive. Their chief disadvantage is their isolation. Evansville needs to follow a plan in the development of a system of modern pleasure drives.

If pleasure drives are anticipated in the platting of land they can be made practically to pay for themselves. Evansville should be able to encircle the present city with a chain of beautiful parkways and boulevards. It can do this if it makes the proper plans and adopts a forward-looking policy. The formula is as follows:

- (1) A continuous pleasure route should be laid out through territory at present unplatted or subject to replatting or modification.
- (2) This route should be located so as to prove advantageous to the property through which it passes; the city's interest in the scheme as a whole can be adjusted to this requirement. Specifically the above means—
 - (a) Utilization of land which might prove of little value for home sites, (b) variation of width and direction, if need be, to permit platting of lots and streets so as to take advantage of the drive system, (c) providing convenient access to larger parks, (d) wherever possible making pleasure drives serve more utilitarian purposes also, such as providing quick approach to city, etc.



Ravenswood Drive: a boulevard type street lacking the advantage of continuity. The sidewalks at the curb limit the possibilities of the street.

PROPOSED PARK AND PLEASURE DRIVE SYSTEM—PLEASURE DRIVES *(Continued)*

- (3) Out of civic interest, supported incidentally by proof of the influence of such a system upon their property, the realtors affected by the proposed pleasure drive route should be willing to incorporate their share of it in their platting.

Needless to say, the willingness of realtors to accept this scheme will depend upon (1) the ability of the city to assure continuity to the route, (2) the selection of a right-of-way line which houses can face and from which they can derive benefits, (3) the preparation of satisfactory detail plans for the improvement of the system. Isolated sections of a pleasure route are of little value; the city must act in good faith and see the scheme completed, once it promulgates plans. This route should take precedence over all other streets in determining the frontage of lots; no homes should turn sides or backs on pleasure drives. The drive should not be monotonous; there should be a variation in the treatment wherever topographic conditions permit.

In accordance with the principles outlined above there has been prepared a plan for giving Evansville a system of modern pleasure drives. The details of this plan are fully shown in Plate No. 7.

Three distinct types of pleasure drives are proposed, the inner reconstructed and specialized street, the new restricted boulevard in the outlying sections, and the informal parkway of varying width and direction. Four existing streets have been chosen to tie the proposed new pleasure drives more closely to the central portion of the city. Division Street and Baker Avenue are joined to afford a distinctive approach to Garvin Park. Lincoln Avenue and Oak Street are likewise joined to offer pleasure traffic from the eastern section a special route to Sunset Park. In the southeastern portion of the city Sweetser Avenue has been chosen to lead the system into the country, and on the west side Wabash Avenue suggests itself as a boulevard connecting Mesker Park with the combined boulevard and major street along the river. Altogether these streets make up a total of approximately seven miles within the city limits. With the existing Riverside Drive fully developed to the west, as shown on Plate No. 7, the total would amount to nearly eleven miles.

The new lengths of boulevard are found chiefly in land not yet platted. In the development of these sections lies the city's greatest opportunity. By enlisting the support of the real estate interests who will plat the land through which these lines run, the city should secure a boulevard system of great attractiveness.



When the ill repute of Pigeon Creek has been overcome by measures for the removal of stagnation, its full advantages as a beautiful element in a circulating parkway and boulevard system can be utilized.

PART IV
Design of Recreation Areas

School Playground Design

The sketches opposite show a possible rearrangement of playground space at two Evansville schools so that more adequate provision may be made for the play needs of the children of each district. Both of the suggested layouts are far from ideal because of the limitations of space. Even with the almost complete utilization of all area outside of the buildings for play purposes, the playground area in both cases falls considerably short of the recommended minimum.

The ideal school ground would probably be a rectangular plot, on one end of which the school building would be set, with sufficient area reserved to give it a pleasing landscape setting. The remainder of the area behind the building should be fenced in for a playground, with the exception of about a ten-foot strip inside of the property line. This strip should be used for tree and shrub planting, which would make the playground unobjectionable to neighboring homes. The planting would not only screen from view the rather bare expanse of playground but would also deaden the noises. Immediately inside of this strip a fence would serve to protect the planting as well as to make supervision of the grounds easier and add to the freedom of play.

The playground area should be divided into three parts, one for the very small children, and separate areas for the older boys and men and for the girls and women. As a rule boys' and girls' playgrounds should be of about equal size, while that for the younger children may occupy a smaller space. The equipment for the small children should include swings, teeter boards, a merry-go-round, sand boxes, and especially a wading pool. Practically the same equipment may be used for both the boys' and the girls' playgrounds. A baseball diamond should always be provided for the boys and if there is sufficient area there should also be one for the girls. Both boys and girls enjoy tennis and each group should have at least two courts if possible. Volley ball, basketball, and horseshoe courts should also be provided for both boys and girls. Hand ball courts are popular with the boys, and should be provided for them. Gymnasium apparatus, swings, slides merry-go-rounds, giant strides and teeter boards are all very nearly indispensable for both boys and girls. Boys also enjoy an opportunity for jumping.

In all of the playgrounds as much open area as possible should be reserved for those games which require no equipment and in which the greater number of children will probably join. Shade trees around the boundaries add much to the comfort as well as the attractiveness of playgrounds especially when they are to be used during the summer. Benches may be placed under the trees and next to the fence which encloses the playground. Outdoor drinking fountains are essential; if possible one should be provided for each of the three divisions of the playground.

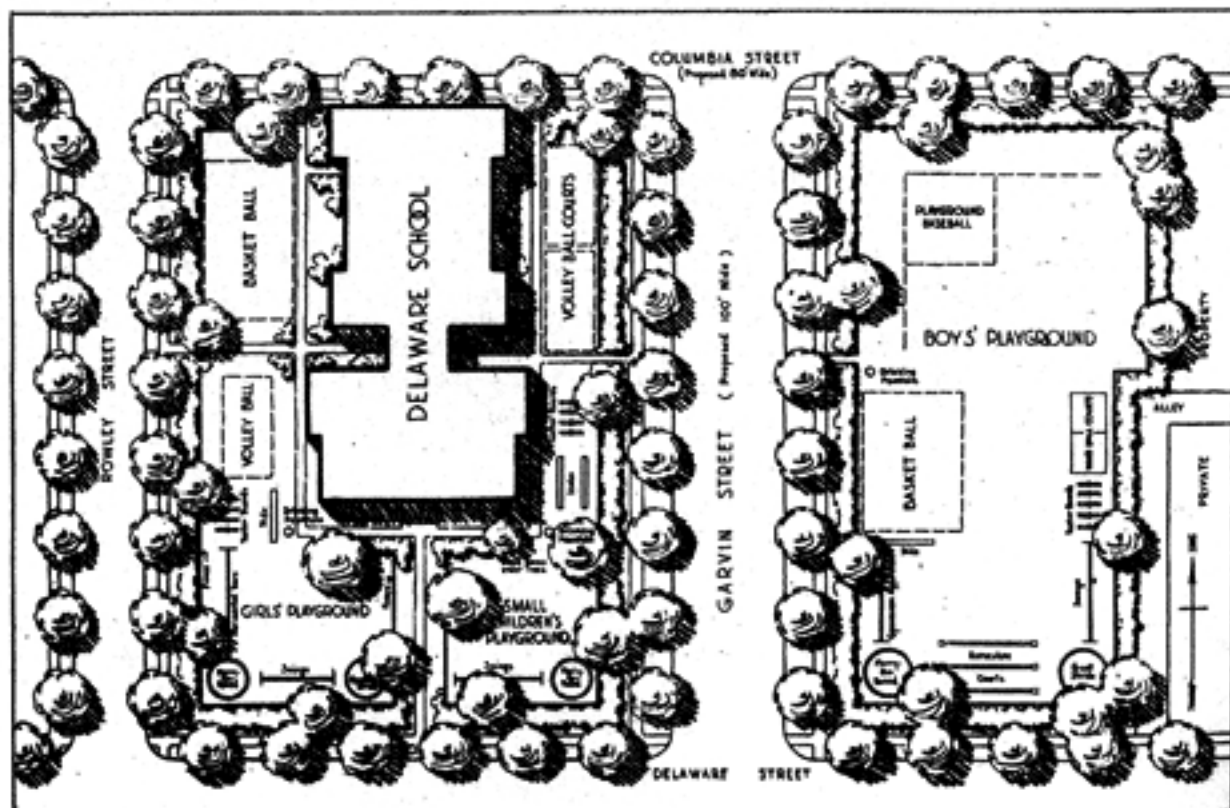
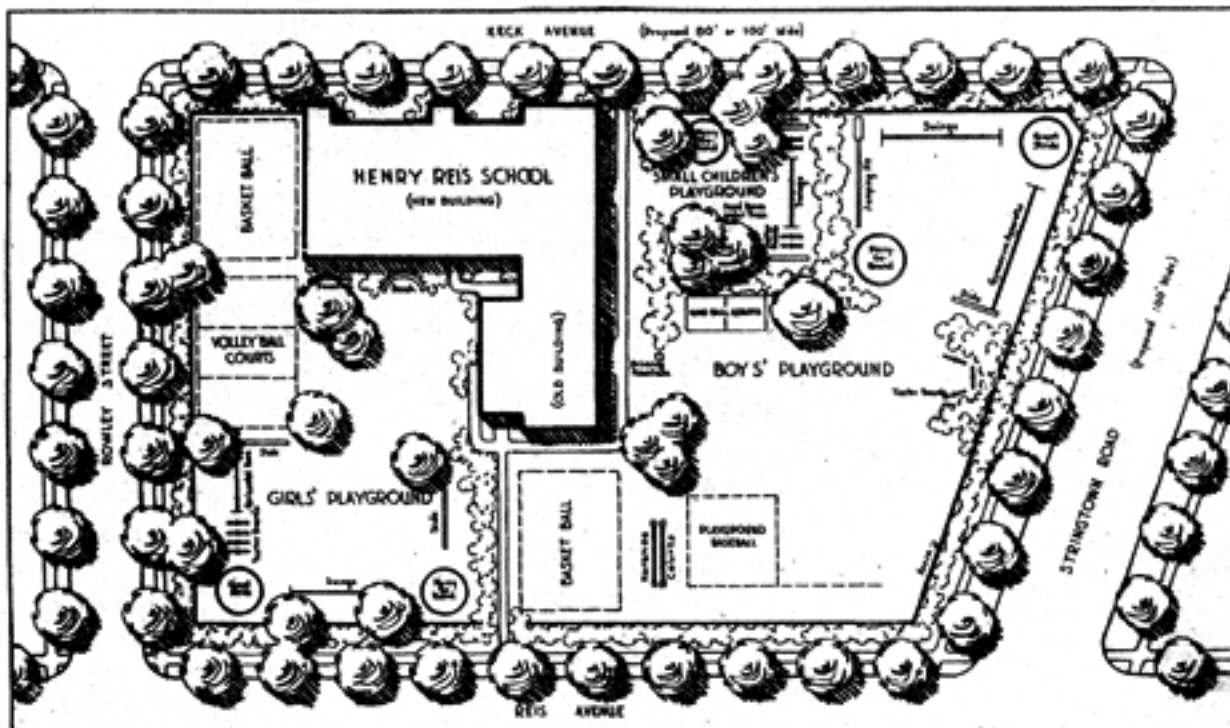


The Garvin Park playground has shade trees in abundance, making it pleasant to play in on hot days. More shade is needed in other playgrounds.

HAROLD BARTHOLOMEW
CITY PLANNING ENGINEER
SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI
1925

SKETCHES SHOWING SUGGESTED TREATMENT
FOR
EVANSVILLE SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS

CITY PLAN
COMMISSION
EVANSVILLE
INDIANA



Small Parks

Under the general heading "Small Parks" are classified all those public grounds which, because of their diminutive size, have limited recreational possibilities. These parks range in area from the single blocks frequently dedicated to public use in subdivisions to the fragments left at irregular street intersections. Practically every city has one or more such areas.

The degree of appreciation which is accorded small parks varies. Some cities ignore them because of their limitations and as a consequence they become waste spaces. Some transform them all into noisy, unregulated and unsatisfactory "playgrounds" and by applying this term to them avoid the purchase and development of really adequate and properly located playgrounds.

Other cities have a different conception of the service of these small parks and make them delightful breathing spots, always neat and clean, with lawns and trees and shrubs contributing dignity and character to the neighborhood. When so treated they make a definitely favorable impression upon visitors and inspire generally a higher regard for the city. Not every microscopic "park" offered by speculative real estate operators, however, is capable of rendering proper service to the city, but generally speaking, these areas can be given a function in the recreation system which should not be underestimated. The city however, should reserve the right to refuse to accept all such parks having an area less than one acre.

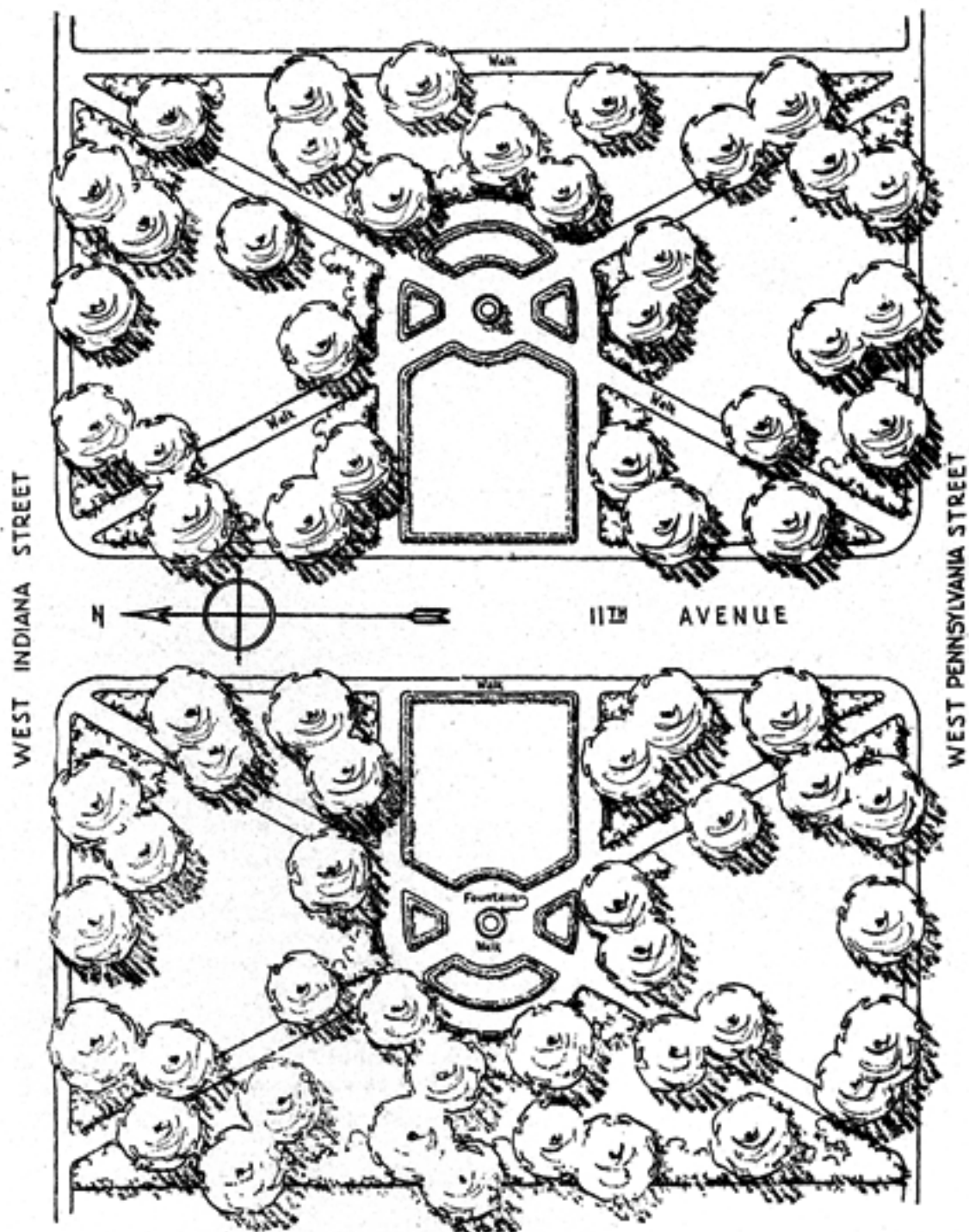
These small parks should be designed with the idea of affording a pleasant place through which people may pass or in which they may stop for a short rest. Practically any area which would be included in this classification should be developed in a more or less formal manner. Straight direct walks will be appreciated by those who wish to use the area as a "passing through" park, and will be much more in keeping with the limitations of space than the rambling walks which may be used in larger parks.

If possible every small park should contain some feature of particular interest, such as a fountain or a monument at an intersection of walks or a small pavilion at the termination of an axis. It is especially desirable to provide attractive and comfortable benches. If possible these should be arranged along wide walks laid out for leisurely promenading rather than along the main cross walks provided for hurrying pedestrians. Well selected trees should afford shade along the walks. Shrub planting should be confined mostly to boundaries or to backgrounds. Small clipped hedges may often be used to advantage in a small area of this kind. Color may sometimes be introduced by proper planting of flowers. Care should be taken, however, to avoid the breaking up of lawn areas by the introduction of flower beds having no relation to the area. If formal flower beds are desired they should be one element of a central feature of the park. The arrangement of beds as well as the selection of flowers calls for the advice of some one trained in design and having a knowledge of color. Flowers may often be more effectively used in an informal border with shrubs as a background.

In Evansville the old market space made up of the two small areas on either side of Eleventh Avenue just north of Pennsylvania Street, is one example of a neglected opportunity for creating a pleasant small park. This, as well as several other publicly owned small areas in the city, if properly developed, might be made to serve a real need in the recreation system. The sketch opposite shows a possible plan by which the old market space might be made into an attractive and useful spot. In this design the attempt has been to tie together the two parts of the park by repeating the same scheme on either side of the street and by opening up a central court extending through both divisions. The essential characteristics of a well designed small park are illustrated in this sketch, which is presented here more as a general guide than a definitely proposed scheme for the treatment of these areas.

SKETCH PLAN FOR DEVELOPMENT OF
SMALL PARK AT
INDIANA STREET AND ELEVENTH AVENUE
CITY PLAN COMMISSION — EVANSVILLE INDIANA
HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW — CITY PLAN ENGINEER — SAINT LOUIS MISSOURI

Scale
0 20 100



Neighborhood Park Design

The intensive usefulness of neighborhood parks makes their design a serious problem. They cannot be mere open spaces in the midst of thickly built-up neighborhoods. Their design must reflect in a measure the nature of their surroundings. A closely-knit layout is needed. There must be no waste portions of a neighborhood park. Every section of the area must perform some service, must offer some attraction to the diverse classes who will live around the park. In the average-sized neighborhood park automobile driveways are wholly out of place except perhaps for approach to a parking space near a concert court or some such feature. Walks should invite promenading and also provide displays of flowers for those who enjoy colors, water in fountains and pools, a shelter, benches under trees, suitable shrub plantings, trees and lawns, play areas for children, perhaps tennis courts and if possible a band pavilion and well-proportioned concert court. The whole layout of the park should be trim and neat and well adapted to interior city conditions. It should lack nothing which people who live under such conditions desire for recreation and pleasure.

The accompanying plan is that of Garvin Park, which was designed by the American Park Builders in 1915. Except for the omission of a few features the original plan has been largely carried out as intended. This park is, of course, larger than necessary in order to serve strictly neighborhood needs, but its generous size makes it possible to incorporate drives, naturalistic wooded areas, a lake and other features which cannot be provided in the average-sized neighborhood park.

Garvin Park provides for practically all the diverse recreational interests of the different age groups in the community. There are separate and well-equipped playgrounds for both boys and girls and also for the very small children. Provision is made for the various playfield activities such as football, baseball and tennis. There is a large swimming pool and the principal lake could afford opportunity for boating in summer and skating in winter. The drives and walks make possible the enjoyment of the many beautiful park scenes by those of all ages. Floral displays add interest to certain sections of the park, and for the many who enjoy music there is provision for outdoor concerts. The park is maintained in excellent condition and in many ways may serve as a model in the development of other neighborhood parks.



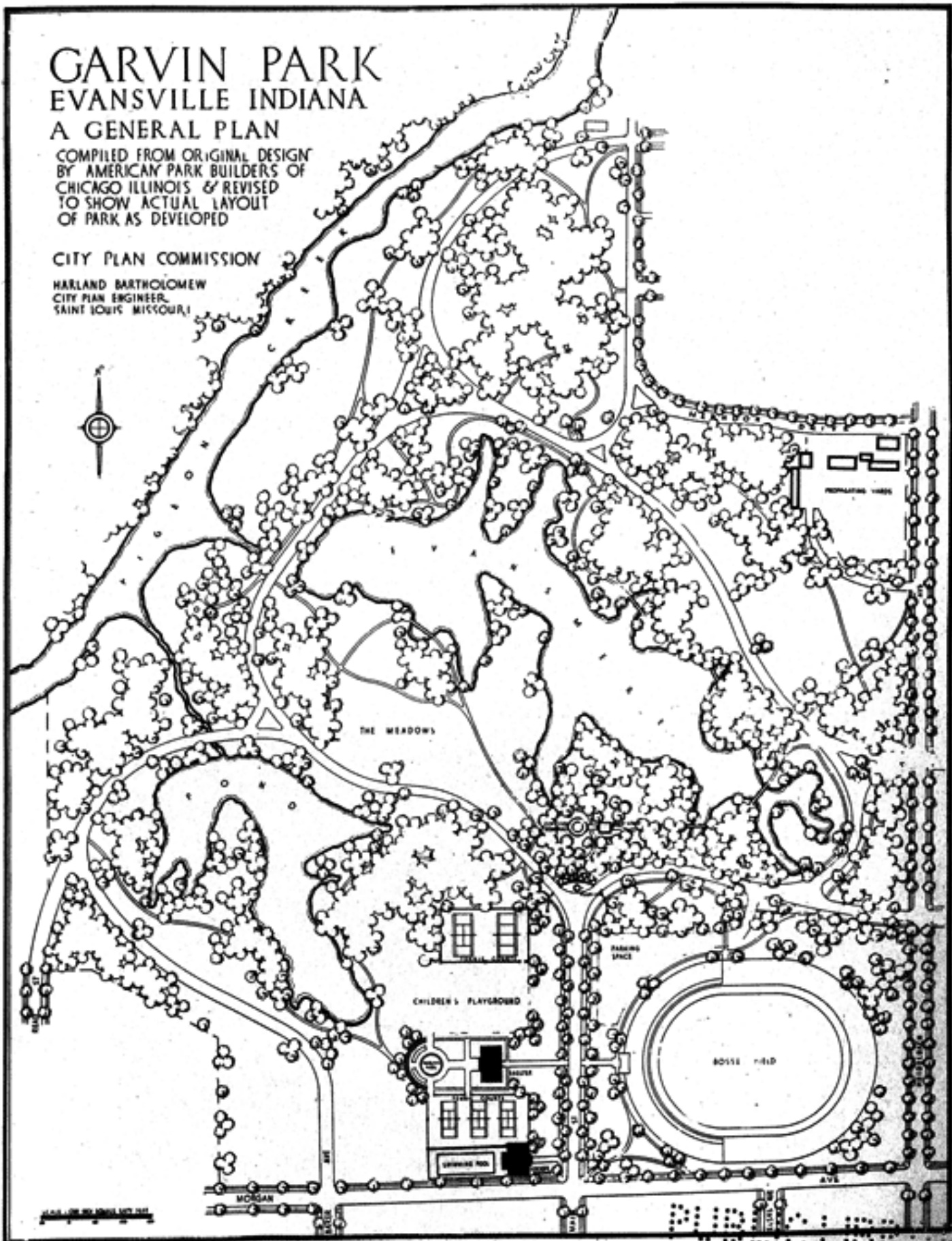
Rustic footbridge in Garvin Park.

GARVIN PARK EVANSVILLE INDIANA A GENERAL PLAN

COMPILED FROM ORIGINAL DESIGN
BY AMERICAN PARK BUILDERS OF
CHICAGO ILLINOIS & REVISED
TO SHOW ACTUAL LAYOUT
OF PARK AS DEVELOPED

CITY PLAN COMMISSION

HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW
CITY PLAN ENGINEER,
SAINT LOUIS MISSOURI



Cross Sections of Pleasure Drives

TYPES OF PLEASURE WAYS AND MINIMUM STANDARDS

ROADWAY IN CENTER—NO STREET CARS

The minimum should be a four-line vehicular roadway—36 feet.
Two rows trees in each side parking.
Building setback—30 feet.
Minimum width—80 feet.

DOUBLE ROADWAY—NO STREET CARS

The minimum can be two-line roadway each side, 20 and 20, total 40 feet.
Center parking not much less than the total width of roadway—36 feet.
One row trees in each side parking.
Minimum width 100 feet. This type can be converted into a six-line thoroughfare when right-of-way is 120 feet or more, by widening each two-line roadway 6 feet, the widening to be from the side parking.
A four-line roadway on each side of a center parking requires a minimum width of 150 feet.

DOUBLE ROADWAY—DOUBLE CAR LINE

For cars, 20 feet.
Planting, either side tracks, minimum 6 feet, total 12 feet.
Three-line roadway each side 26 and 26, total 52 feet.
Double row trees in parking.
Minimum width 110 feet.

TRIPLE ROADWAY—VEHICULAR

Center roadway 4 lines, 36 feet.
Double row trees each side, 80 feet.
Side roadways, 2 lines each minimum 40 feet.
Minimum over all width 200 feet.

These are in no sense invariable proposals. A closer study of existing conditions at the time of making detailed plans will doubtless suggest modification of proportions and general treatment.



Lincoln Avenue, a useful and interesting street. It needs, however, among other things, greater width, systematic tree planting, and the removal of poles and wires to make it a true boulevard.

SCALE OF CROSS SECTIONS
 ONE INCH EQUALS TEN FEET.
 1922

SUGGESTED CROSS SECTIONS OF PLEASURE DRIVES EVANSVILLE - INDIANA

HIGHLAND BATHING
 CITY PLAN ENGINEER
 SAINT LOUIS MISSOURI

SINGLE ROADWAY BOULEVARDS SIX LINES

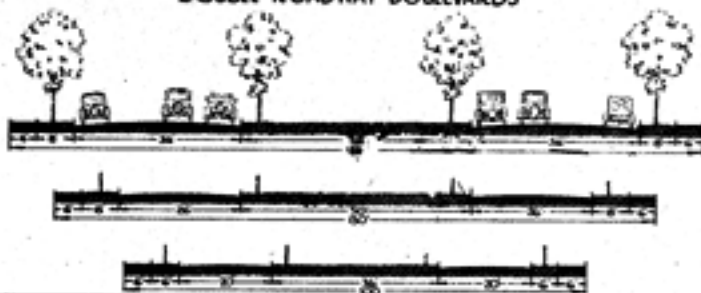


A BUILDING SET BACK OF 30 FEET OR MORE ADDS GREATLY TO THE DIGNITY OF THE STREET - PROPER TREE PLANTING WILL GIVE IT CHARACTER.

THE FOUR LINE BOULEVARD CAN BE REDUCED TO A MINIMUM OF 80 FEET IF NECESSARY BUT THIS WIDTH DOES NOT PROVIDE FOR A FIRST-CLASS TREE PLANTING.

DOUBLE ROADWAY BOULEVARDS

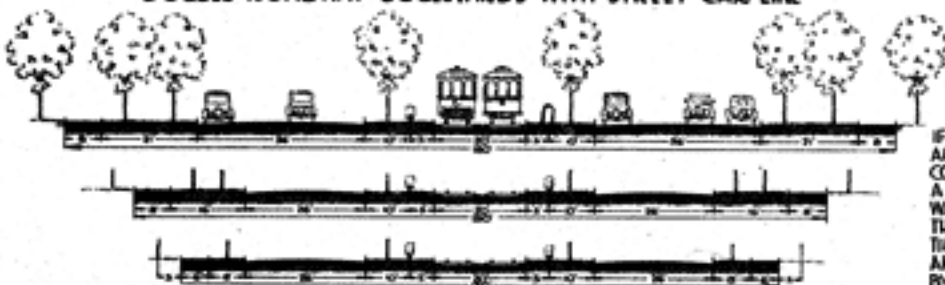
EIGHT LINES
 SIX LINES
 FOUR LINES



THE CENTER STRIP OF DOUBLE ROADWAY BOULEVARDS SHOULD BE GENEROUS. A THOROUGHFARE OF THIS TYPE SHOULD NOT BE LESS THAN 100 FEET WIDE.

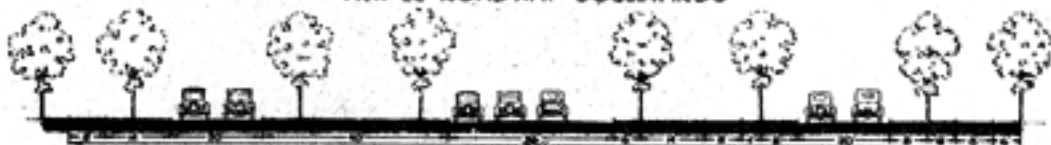
DOUBLE ROADWAY BOULEVARDS WITH STREET CAR LINE

EIGHT LINES
 SIX LINES
 SIX LINES



IF STREET CARS ARE TO BE ACCOMMODATED ON A DOUBLE ROADWAY BOULEVARD THEY SHOULD BE IN THE CENTER STRIP AND OBSCURED BY PLANTING.

TRIPLE ROADWAY BOULEVARDS



THE NATURALISTIC PARKWAY



NOTE ARRANGEMENT OF LOTS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF PARKWAY.

LOTS SHOULD ALL FACE PARKWAY AT RIGHT ANGLES TO STREET LINE.



Riverside Avenue, illustrating the dignity and impressiveness of a wide boulevard.
Note absence of poles and wires and the charm of tree masses.

CROSS SECTIONS OF PLEASURE DRIVES *(Continued)*

The fundamental principles to be followed in the design of the system may be summarized as follows:

Boulevards and parkways are to be created for a distinct purpose—PLEASURE. This pleasure may come from living upon them or driving or walking on them. The pleasurable effect is to be secured by special treatment and attention to matters not usually considered in the development of ordinary streets.

- (1) Pleasure drives should be wide—which means dignity, impressiveness, comfort.
- (2) Traffic should be restricted—to preserve the street scene from incongruous, disturbing notes.
- (3) Paving should especially contribute to the pleasure of using these thoroughfares.
- (4) Private building development should be regulated—to secure unity and harmony.
- (5) Access to garages on abutting lots should be through alleys where possible in order to avoid cutting up the planting strip along the boulevard with numerous driveways.
- (6) Planting should be of the highest type, for upon this one feature depends a considerable portion of the effectiveness of either formal or informal pleasure drives.
- (7) Special care should be given the lawn areas and planting and proper maintenance of roadway should be assured.

(8) A generous building setback will add spaciousness to the pleasure drive and permit a wider planting of trees.

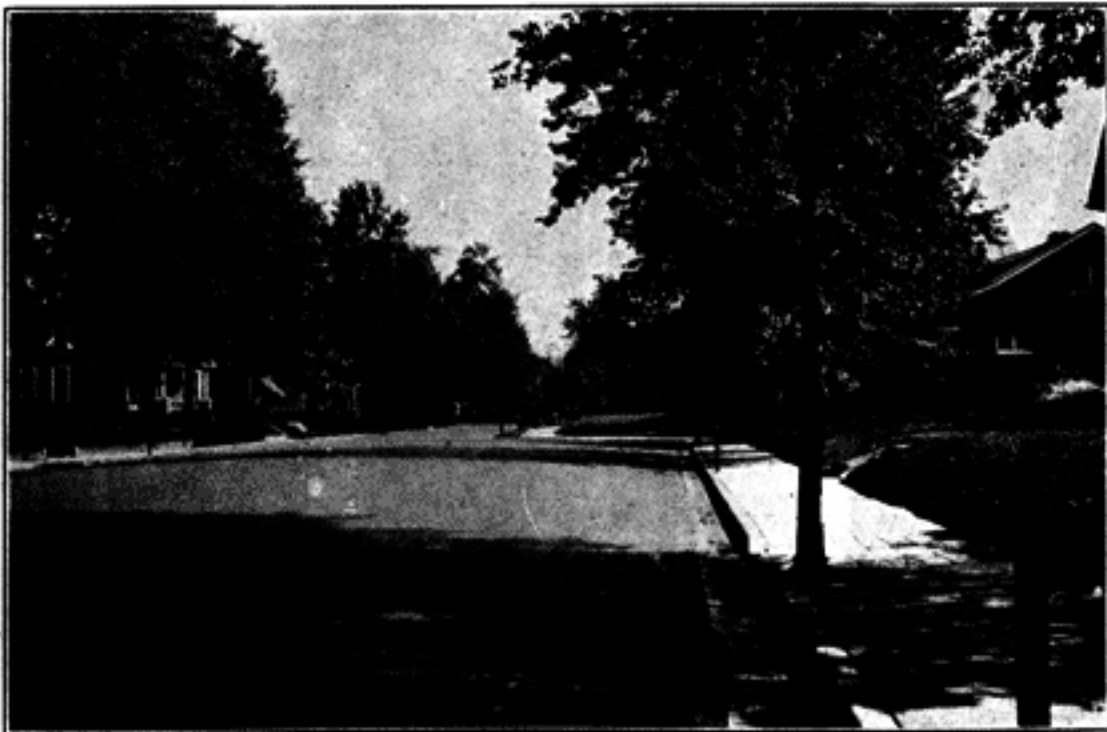
(9) Car lines if need be can be accommodated on streets of this type, but they should be planned for and isolated as much as possible in a wide central strip bordered by planting.

All these measures will contribute to the creation of a first-class pleasure drive system. Most of them cost little or nothing beyond the regulation costs of an ordinary street.

The eleven miles of old streets designated as pleasure drives are selected because of their fitness for this service. Those which can be widened, and the larger portion of the eleven miles is of this sort, should have building lines established upon them immediately and should be planted uniformly with trees. The city should announce its intention of creating the pleasure drive system and enlist the support of property owners in transforming their particular street to conform to plans. Where widening is not feasible, the effort should be to stimulate the interest of the property owners and by tree planting, removal of poles and wires and signs, by paving, maintenance and so forth, to give the street a distinctive character.

In discussing a pleasure drive system for Evansville a distinction must be made between boulevards and parkways. The former are straight, uniformly planted, formal thoroughfares, the latter informal, irregular, meandering drives of varying width.

Evansville's system of drives uniting the larger parks should be composed of varying lengths of both boulevards and parkways. Boulevards are adapted to fairly level, treeless terrain. Parkways should occupy valleys, hillsides and river-banks. Wherever topographic conditions permit, the formal boulevard should change in character and become a sort of rambling natural drive. The variation adds greatly to the interest of the drive system.



Here where Riverside Avenue becomes narrow, it loses its dignity.

Summary of Indiana Park Law

Outlining Authority and Procedure of Park Boards in Second-Class Cities
in the Acquisition and Development of Park and Boulevard Systems
Inside and Within Five Miles Outside of City Limits.

By HENRY T. HARDIN, City Attorney

(Laws of 1905, Municipal Corporations Act, Sec. 141-155.
Laws of 1911 and 1915, Amendments to above.
Laws of 1917, Chap. 68, Park District Act.
Laws of 1923, Chap. 67, Public Parks in Second Class Cities.)

The park board in any second-class city, such as Evansville, has power,

- 1st. To acquire, lay out and improve land for public parks, parkways, and boulevards and to maintain, regulate, and direct the public use of same.
- 2nd. To vacate streets and alleys, or parts thereof, within lands under the control of said board, or which may hereafter be under the control of such board, in the same manner as to form and procedure as the board of public works may vacate the same.
- 3rd. To take over and control streets, roadways and public passageways, or parts thereof, within the city, and convert the same into boulevards or pleasure driveways whenever the same connect with or run into or through any park, parkway, or boulevard, or are necessary for the establishment of any park or boulevard system of the city, and to grade, improve and beautify such streets, roadways, alleys and passageways; and to relinquish to other proper departments of the city the control and management of any street or any roadway, passageway or parkway in streets taken over, which shall not be necessary or desirable for maintenance as a part of the park system of such city.
- 4th. To petition the board of public works of the city to construct any necessary drainage or sanitary sewers in any boulevard, parkway or street bordering park property and to order and require any public service corporation to lay, install and connect water and gas mains and electric light conduits in and along any boulevard or park drive reasonably necessary.
- 5th. To recommend to the common council that the latter pass an ordinance laying off and dividing the territory of the city into any number of park districts for the convenience of the citizens of the city and of the administration of the department of public parks, and the boundaries of such districts shall be entered by the board at full length in their records and shall be recorded in the office of the recorder of the county and a duly authenticated copy thereof shall be filed with the comptroller of the city.
- 6th. To acquire property or secure property rights by eminent domain within the boundaries and limits of the city and outside of the city within five miles of the limits thereof and to award damages to landowners for real estate and property rights taken or injuriously affected and assess benefits to real estate beneficially affected.
- 7th. To appropriate property, when in its discretion it is advisable, for the following purposes:
 1. Establishing any park.
 2. Widening or extending any park.
 3. Opening, widening or extending any route or right-of-way for a sewer or channel of any watercourse connected with or necessary for the protection of any park.
 4. Constructing any bridge or viaduct connected with such work.
 5. Constructing any embankment or levee along any watercourse for the protection of any park.
 6. Converting any street or alley connecting any parks into a boulevard or pleasure driveway.
- 8th. To change and fix the grade of any boulevard or public driveway, on ground under its control, to the same extent as the board of public works has power in changing the grade of streets, alleys, etc.
- 9th. To order the improvement of any parkway, pleasure driveway or boulevard or part thereof, by surface grading and paving the same, curbing and constructing sidewalks thereon, in the same manner and subject to the same limitations as is conferred upon the board of public works.

In case a majority of the resident free-holders, upon such proposed improvement, remonstrate in writing against such improvement, the park board may, upon giving ten days' notice to such remonstrators, petition the circuit court to specifically order the improvement. If said board is able to establish, at a hearing on said petition, the public necessity of the proposed improvement, and that the benefits will equal the assessments against the lands of the remonstrators, such order shall be made.

When the total cost of such improvements cannot be assessed against abutting property, it may be distributed over the park district against the property benefited; and in case the park board determines that no part of the improvement is assessable against the property of a district, or districts, in which the improvement is made, the same may be paid by such city out of any funds available for such purpose.

If said board shall finally order appropriation and construction at any time they shall, as provided by law, advertise for bids, let contracts, assess benefits and damages, make the awards and assessments, and hear remonstrances.

The park board shall adopt a resolution declaring the city or district, as the case may be, to be a park district whenever five hundred resident taxpayers petition the park board for the creation of such a district. Thereupon, the park board shall call a special election within 60 days thereafter, to present the question to the legal voters of the district. If such election carries, the park board may purchase or appropriate land for park purposes, etc., and may issue non-taxable park district bonds to raise money to pay for such land and improvements. Such bonds would not be an obligation or indebtedness of the city, but would be payable, including interest, out of the special taxes levied upon the property of the park district. The total issue of such bonds could not, at any time, be in excess of one per cent. of the total assessed valuation of the district or city. The proceeds from the sale of such bonds and interest thereon would be kept as a separate and specific fund to pay the costs of lands acquired and construction work done in the development of parks, boulevards, etc.