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PUBLICATIONS OF
THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCE
No. 451

The Development of Park Systems in
American Cities

BY

ANDREW WRIGHT CRAWFORD

Secretary City Parks Association, Philadelphia

Reprinted from THE ANNALS of the American Academy
of Political and Social Science for March, 1905

PHILADELPHIA:

THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

England: P. S. King & Son, 2 Great Smith Street, Westminster, London, S. W.

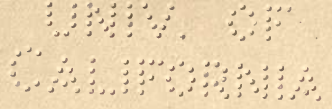
France: L. Larose, Rue Soufflot 23, Paris

Italy: Direzione del Giornale Degli Economisti, Rome, Via Monte Savello, Palazzo Orsini

Spain: Capdeville, 9 Plaza de Santa Ana, Madrid

Price, 25 Cts.

70 400
ABSTRACT



THE DEVELOPMENT OF PARK SYSTEMS IN AMERICAN CITIES
BY
WALTER W. RUSTENBOM
DIRECTOR OF THE BUREAU OF PARKS AND RECREATION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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IN AMERICAN CITIES**

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TO VINDICATE
AND PRAISE

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PARK SYSTEMS IN AMERICAN CITIES

BY ANDREW WRIGHT CRAWFORD, ESQ.
Secretary City Parks Association, Philadelphia.

The most promising feature of American civic life during the last decade has not been heralded with flourish of trumpets. The fashion of the newspapers and magazines of the day to decry indiscriminately all things municipal has spread to such an extent that the majority of us are loath to believe that there is anything to be said in actual praise of municipal government in this country. It would be interesting to inquire to what extent this fashion has prevented the success of many reform movements. The mis-statements of honest but ill-informed reformers have acted as boomerangs. Nothing needs accuracy more than a reform movement. Yet reformers exaggerate to such an extent that "the rank and file" assume that they are as far from the truth as the parties in power. One of the accomplishments of the parties in power, for which not only reformers but the public in general have failed to give due credit, is the improvement in appearance of cities, which has been effected chiefly by preserving places of marked natural beauty for the use of the public and by making attractive the communications between these natural parks and residential sections. If politicians have been brought to the point of appreciating natural beauty, and I believe this paper will note results that bear strong testimony that they have, and if the appreciation of beauty is really uplifting, it would seem that the general pessimism of the day as to municipal government fails to take into account the real facts of the case.

Progress of this kind is not likely to attract general attention at its inception. A large part of the general public do not understand "plans." They cannot visualize. The people who can visualize saw many plans on paper twenty or thirty years ago, but no execution of them. Consequently, it is only now, when concrete results

are visible, that the general public is beginning to realize that some things have been, not only planned, but done, and well done.

The acquisition of outer park systems is passing rapidly from the stage of undertaking to that of accomplishment. The creation of civic centers, the grouping of public buildings around a mall, is passing from the stage of agitation to that of undertaking. The development of the water fronts of American cities as the river-banks of European cities have been developed has passed from the stage of airy speculation to that of active agitation supported by plans and cross-sections.

The City Plan.

There is nothing abstruse about the things that make a city beautiful, unless it be the city plan. That can scarcely be called abstruse, but it is fundamental. As the increasing attention that is being paid to this apparently uninteresting topic is one of the results of the outer park movement, it would seem more logical historically to discuss it as a result. The preservation of places of natural beauty, which perhaps may be termed the battle cry of the outer park agitation, unqualifiedly demands that when a system of city streets approaches the boundaries of a natural park the rigidity of its lines shall give way to the flowing curves of the natural contour of the ground. But the instant the city plan gives way at one point, the question is raised why it should not give way even at points where parks are not projected. The result of raising this question has been the realization of the fact that the plan according to which streets of a city are to be opened is more fundamental than any of the functions to be provided for by that plan, and that what is called an outer park system is but one of those functions. Consideration of the city plan lies therefore at the very foundation of the subject.

While this consideration has not made great progress in this country, the signs of the times are noteworthy. Park and municipal art associations, formed frequently with no suggestion of a purpose to discuss that stupid thing called "the city plan," which is generally known as the map of city streets, are beginning to devote more and more attention to it. Several organizations of the larger cities have special committees on the city plan. Other associations have published reports advocating radical changes therein. Official art commissions, such as that of New York, have been

appointed to suggest improvements in street systems. Suburban owners are beginning to consider the wisdom, from the financial point of view, of making the lines of their streets follow the contour of the ground, and when that consideration is begun, the question of the wisdom of the entire city plan is brought to the front.

The planning of the direction of city streets, of their width, and of their grades, determines fundamentally the possibilities of a city's development, both with reference to its attractiveness and to its adaptability for the transaction of business. The city of the future will depend for its pre-eminence upon the ease of inter-communication between its different sections.

Inter-communication can be greatly facilitated or greatly hindered by the way the streets are laid out. Consider New York. Its underground system of rapid transit was necessitated largely by the scarcity of streets running north and south, and New York City has paid roundly in dollars and cents for that mistake, while its citizens, particularly its clerks and stenographers, have suffered every morning and night for a decade because of the congestion caused in large part by a street system unintelligently planned. Consider, on the other hand, Washington. Its street system is directly responsible for its attractiveness and for the promise of greater attractiveness in the future. Consider Philadelphia. Its system of rectangular blocks materially interferes with transit and causes a monotonous architectural effect. As has been said, it compels the citizen to run his latitude and longitude generally, instead of taking a direct or diagonal route. It is curious how we strain at a gnat and swallow a camel in city making. Recently the Mayor of Philadelphia suggested a fountain for the centre of the City Hall court-yard, which would compel a slight detour. There has already been opposition because of this detour, and yet the enormous detours compelled by the street system are passed over in silence; if attention is called to the matter, the right of property owners to lay streets so as to erect the greatest number of buildings is declared paramount. This is recognized in Germany where alternative plans have frequently been presented, showing a scheme of streets both with and without regard to these demands of individuals ("*A ohne, B mit Berücksichtigung der Eigentumsgrenzen*"). The Germans frankly accept the necessity of deciding between the interests of the real estate operators and those of the community between the inter-

ests of the individual and the greatest good of the greatest number.

While the discussion of this subject in America has been confined chiefly to occasional articles in more or less technical magazines, such as engineering and architectural monthlies, and to special reports of associations, its progress throughout Europe, both in England and on the continent, has been considerably greater, and in Germany the development of the subject has been quite remarkable. The question of planning the suburban sections of the smaller and larger German cities has secured the attention of the public to such an extent that at the beginning of 1904 a beautifully illustrated magazine, devoted principally to the discussion of plans for street extension, was launched upon the public. We have not reached the point where publishers recognize that there is a business probability that a magazine entitled "The City Plan" will be successful. It is probable that we will reach that point before many years, and this as a direct result of the movement for the City Beautiful.

Outer Park System.

The most striking results of the movement so far secured consist in what are termed outer park systems. The word "outer" in this connection is misleading; it seems to convey the idea that somewhere away beyond the built up portions of a city there are natural parks which the city has secured so that for all time its inhabitants will have some place to go in the country. Yet in fifty years it is probable that the outer parks of to-day will be as completely inner parks as Madison Square in New York, Washington Square in Philadelphia and the Commons in Boston, are to-day. The site of the Fifth Avenue Hotel in 1852 was a truck patch. Again the term "outer" seems to imply that the agitators of the movement are making the same mistake that was made a generation ago when during the sixties and seventies the majority of the large parks of the country, such as Fairmount Park in Philadelphia, Franklin Park in Boston and Central Park in New York, were being secured. That mistake consisted in being so completely absorbed with the idea of the single great country park as to fail to recognize the value of the small open spaces four and five acres or less in extent. The term "comprehensive park movement" is more descriptive of the character of the agitation to-day.

In the eighties there began an agitation for the creation of these

small open spaces that were then sometimes called "squares," sometimes "parks," never "playgrounds." It may be it was the cost of these squares compared with the cost of the great parks that made the agitators of the park movement realize the importance of avoiding the mistake of former generations in not securing open spaces all around the city before they were built upon. To take a somewhat later example, because the figures are at hand, what more convincing argument from the economic point of view could be advanced than is offered by the fact that for three parks covering less than ten acres in the congested portion of the East Side, New York recently paid more than it paid for Central Park in the fifties and sixties.¹ Another example may be taken from Philadelphia. That city lately condemned for park purposes a triangle of ground, two and a half acres in extent, covered by buildings, at a cost of \$400,000, while at the same time a number of organizations were bringing to the attention of the city authorities a tract of ground forty acres in extent, covered by magnificent woods, which could be purchased for five-eighths of that cost, and this woodland is located just at the limit of the built up area of the city.

The example of European cities in replacing their walls by encircling parks (perhaps the most perfect instance is Brunswick, though Brussels is better known), may have had much to do with the institution of the movement in America. At any rate, in 1893 we find the first conscious beginning of the agitation for comprehensive park systems in this country. This agitation has resulted in ten years in several fairly complete systems, now being reproduced throughout the country. The city of New York had already five years previously begun the acquisition of the Bronx parks, but that acquisition appears to have been inspired by the same idea, of an outlet for the people to the country, that secured Central Park. The idea that now dominates the movement is that country parks should be preserved on a clearly defined scheme in order that each section of the city, as it develops, may have a wide expanse of park land easily accessible, and that the various parks shall be completely connected by parkways, which shall not only tie them together but link them with residential sections as well.

¹The official figures for the cost of the land alone are: Central Park, total area, 839.9 acres; cost, \$5,028,844.10. Mulberry Bend, Corlear's Hook and Seward Parks, total area 9.9 acres; cost, \$5,237,363.27.

The two pioneers in the movement were Kansas City and Boston. In each a definite, complete, co-ordinated scheme was worked out. Unquestionably Boston has exerted the greater influence, but Kansas City has given an example which the cities of the Middle West are following more and more. Since 1893 the most important part of the Kansas City plan has been carried out. The city has largely secured the ground for the parks and parkways which the plans contemplate. The development of the ground is always the less important part and can wait. There are now ten and a half miles of completed boulevards, land has been secured for about sixteen miles more and the construction work is going on. The total area in parks and parkways, nearly all acquired since 1893, is over two thousand acres. While the statistics of this system are not as impressive as the ones to be quoted for Boston, yet its nearness to the heart of the city, its equitable distribution by which every section of the city shares in its benefits, make it worthy the study of its sister cities.

It is interesting to note that while Kansas City is cursed by the usual gridiron city plan, this park system tends largely to break up the regularity of that system. Omaha, following the course of Kansas City, has a park system fairly complete; and there, too, the park system produces a pleasing irregularity in the street system of square blocks. As the development of its park system is extended attention is bound to be drawn to the fundamental error of extending the existing street system further than it has already grown.

The results that have been accomplished in Boston are much more widely known than those achieved in any other part of the country. Indeed the majority of readers have doubtless so identified the park movement with Boston as to be almost totally ignorant that anything of a similar nature has been undertaken elsewhere. Without wishing to derogate from the importance of what Boston has accomplished in this line, I do want to produce some facts and figures to show that this movement for civic improvement is wide as the nation, and that many cities are undertaking what in Boston has not yet reached the stage of perfection. Boston is but one of many, and even as a pioneer has a rival in Kansas City, if the establishment of the Bronx park system in New York does not rob both of the right to that name.

But, while in a general way the Boston park system is known, its extent is not appreciated, and the difficulties to be overcome are assumed by many to have been necessarily indifferent, otherwise such a thing would not have been done in this country. Authorities in other cities will tell you that for this or that reason the situation in Boston was better adapted to carrying out the program, either because of its financial condition, its natural location, or some other advantage not enjoyed by the sister city which occurs to the political authority in question as a plausible excuse for not buckling down to the task of finding a way to do likewise.

There are within eleven miles of the State House at Boston thirty-eight separate cities and towns. Many of them had small parks, some large ones, so that there was a total acreage of nearly seven thousand acres. It was necessary to devise a plan by which all of these separate corporate entities would be compelled to bear their portions of the expense. A way was found in the appointment of a Metropolitan Commission, which did not take charge of these separate holdings, but has secured others and joined many of the new and old ones by parkways. The cost has been adjusted by a separate commission.

Under the lead of Charles Eliot, a preliminary commission was appointed in 1893 to consider the possibility of carrying out a scheme which he had gradually evolved. The commission reported favorably a year later. A loan of \$5,000,000 was secured for beginning the work and a permanent commission was appointed. Other loans have since been authorized. The commission in its tenth annual report shows that it has spent over \$11,000,000, with the result that within the radius of eleven miles of the State House, an area inhabited in 1900 by eleven hundred thousand people, there are now fifteen thousand one hundred and seventy-five acres of park land, which includes all separate park holdings of the many cities and towns of the district. Fifteen miles of parkways have been constructed and land has been secured for ten miles more. Ten miles additional will soon be acquired. The average annual cost of maintenance of the entire park area is slightly over \$500,000. The commission has been authorized to spend \$300,000 in addition in each of the ensuing five years and thereafter \$1,500,000 additional, in order to complete the system. And yet more. The Charles River reservation ends at the Harvard Bridge. That reservation is now

to be continued by the Boston Park Commission along the south side of the river to the Charlesbank Playground.

Embraced within the system are the three river valleys of the Charles, Mystic and Neponset Rivers, an encouraging example of the increasing appreciation of water fronts. The Middlesex Fells and the Blue Hills Reservation include the highest land facing Massachusetts Bay. The latter is the largest city park in America, covering 4,857 acres. These various reservations are largely connected with each other, but some links are yet to be forged. One instance of a complete link may be described to indicate what is meant by a park system. The Commons are connected by the Public Gardens with Commonwealth avenue, which leads westwardly to the Back Bay Fens, and the latter southwestwardly and southerly to Olmsted Park and Franklin Park, which is connected by Columbia road, running northeastwardly, with the Strandway. The latter in turn leads along the shore to Marine Park, which is linked by a parkway, running eastwardly, with Fort Independence, which lies well out in the bay. This is the park zone lying nearest Boston on the south. A number of the parks named are connected by parkways with other not named.

It has been noted that the movement for small parks that began in the eighties was for open spaces sometimes called "squares," sometimes "parks," never "playgrounds." The nineties added the latter, and they are gradually assuming a position of more importance than the old-fashioned type of public square. This is because they are more used. Boston has the honor of being the pioneer in this movement, which has been exactly contemporaneous with that for the outer park system, a conspicuous proof that the need of small open spaces is not overshadowed by the more magnificent idea of a great co-ordinated system of outlying country parks. These playgrounds are out-door gymnasias. They are well supplied with apparatus of all kinds and are furnished with running tracks. Gymnasium instructors are placed in charge. Whosoever will may go. Boston has seventeen such playgrounds, officially classified as such in the report of the Park Department. The last report notes that other sites are being investigated. The general idea of the system of playgrounds of Boston is that playgrounds for the smaller children shall be located within a half mile of every

home, and that recreation grounds for the larger boys shall be nowhere more than a mile distant from their homes.

This playground movement is gaining headway throughout the country; all the larger cities are rapidly falling into line. One of the achievements of Mayor Low's administration in New York was the opening of eight such playgrounds. Chicago, as will be noted later, is also securing a considerable number of them.

The cities that have followed to some extent the example of Boston in preserving places of natural beauty, in addition to Kansas City and Omaha, are Hartford, Buffalo, Minneapolis, and to a smaller extent its twin city of St. Paul, the borough of the Bronx, and to some extent Brooklyn. Cities that have somewhat less developed systems are Cleveland, the upper portion of the Borough of Manhattan, N. Y., and Memphis, Tenn. Cities that are at the beginning of the acquisition of comprehensive systems are Washington, D. C.; Baltimore, Philadelphia, Harrisburg, Providence, Portland, Ore.; Seattle, Wash.; Louisville, Milwaukee, Staten Island, St. Louis and Ottawa, Canada. Such lists as these are accurate one day, but inaccurate the next because of a new recruit.

In Baltimore the movement was undertaken by the Municipal Art Society, which secured the services of the Olmsted Brothers in planning a system. Their plan, which was published in the summer of 1904, will, when carried out, give that city twenty-four new small parks, covering two hundred and four acres, additions to existing parks amounting to three hundred and twenty acres, and park connecting links, either formal or valley parkways, fifty-eight miles in length, their width varying from two hundred feet to a quarter of a mile, with yet larger outlying reservations several thousands of acres in extent. Despite the fire, a beginning has been made toward executing the plan.

In Providence the park agitation, which has been going on for some time, resulted in the appointment of a commission in November, 1904, which is to report to the Legislature in January, 1905; which report will therefore have been rendered before this sketch of the park movement is published.

In Philadelphia, forty-five organizations, including official representatives of the city government, philanthropic organizations, local improvement associations and civic organizations of many kinds, have joined with park associations under the title, "Organ-

izations Allied for the Acquisition of a Comprehensive Park System." The formation of the alliance has been accompanied by a good deal of agitation and that city now has one parkway, ten miles in length and three hundred feet in width throughout its entire length, under construction. It has approved a plan for a parkway from the City Hall, the centre of the city, to Fairmount Park, a distance of a mile, and has voted \$2,000,000 toward its construction; one-half of this parkway will probably be in use within a year. The city has provided \$500,000 for an approach to its second largest park and has placed one of its creek valleys, two miles in length, upon the city plan as a park.

Chicago has a system of boulevards which is perhaps the best known of any in the country. Its citizens seemed to believe for a long time that sufficient had been done in this direction, but it has recently been rudely awakened from that belief and has voted to remedy its needs. Mr. J. F. Foster, general superintendent of the South Park Commission, thus epitomized the situation in February, 1904: "The North Side Commissioners have authority to expend one-half million dollars for small parks or playgrounds, the West Side Commissioners one million, and the South Park Commissioners one million. The South Park Commissioners have also been authorized to expend three millions in the acquiring and improving of larger parks. These funds are available and will be used by the South Park Commissioners at any rate, without delay in the carrying out of the intention of the law. Fourteen new parks have been selected, the land has for the most part been purchased and the plans for most of them have been adopted. The president of the Board of County Commissioners has appointed a committee of members of the County Commissioners, the different park boards, the Common Council and public-spirited citizens, for the purpose of taking what steps are necessary to bring about the establishment of an outer system of park reservations, something similar to that existing about Boston."

In a letter to the writer, dated December 27, 1904, Mr. Foster shows the situation ten months later. "As I wrote you last February, the South Park district has acquired twelve new parks, and two more are under condemnation. Five of these ten are small playgrounds; that is, from six to ten acres in extent, in the densely populated part of the city. The others are larger parks ranging

from twenty-two to sixty acres. I understand that the other two park boards have made some selection for new parks for playgrounds, but have not as yet acquired any property therefor. There are five or six municipal playgrounds of perhaps an acre or two acres in extent, managed by a special park committee under the control of the mayor, that have been in operation for two or three years.

"The cost of maintaining the five new playgrounds which the South Park Commissioners have created is estimated at from fifteen to twenty thousand dollars a year each."

The committee formed to bring about the establishment of an outer park system secured the appointment of Mr. Dwight Heald Perkins by the city of Chicago and Cook County to prepare a complete plan. This plan is to be published in February, 1905.

In describing the system in a letter to the writer, Mr. Perkins says: "We have divided Chicago and Cook County into four zones. The first is inside of the present chain of parks; the second zone is comprised of the existing large parks; the third zone circumscribes them and is itself circumscribed by the fourth zone. The third zone has a park sixteen miles long in what is known as the Skokee Marshes, which lie northwest of the city; west and southwest this zone is taken care of by separate parks varying from forty to three hundred acres, connected by boulevards and country drives. The fourth zone comprises one park twenty-five miles long in the Desplaines Valley and other parks and drives in the Sag Valley about fifteen miles in length. Some portions of these parks are twenty-two miles from the centre of the city.

"No formal estimate of prices has been made nor can it be at this time. . . . My own idea is that \$25,000,000 will cover the cost. You will understand that the entire report is suggestive, that other boards will take up and execute it as rapidly as possible in the future. The suggestions have been approved, but nothing of a legal or financial nature has as yet been done to carry them into effect."

"The Kingshighway Commission" presented a report in the spring of 1903 on a plan for joining four existing large parks of the city of St. Louis with other outer parks by means of a continuous parkway, the estimated cost of which is three and a quarter million dollars.

The plan for Milwaukee is less interesting than the proposals for other cities, because the parkways are projected to follow the line of the gridiron system of streets. One admirable feature is the proposal to join two small water front parks with a large park by securing other ground fronting on Lake Michigan, which will give a continuous drive along the water front from a point near the Court House, northwardly to the end of the built-up portions of the city.

The plans for park systems for Portland, Ore., and Seattle, Wash., show that the park movement is general throughout the country. These plans were drawn up by the Olmsted Brothers, who have also drawn a plan for a somewhat less interesting system for Louisville, Ky.

The movement has spread north of the United States, and the Dominion of Canada recently appointed a commission to study the beautification of the city of Ottawa. This city offers a most magnificent opportunity for park construction. It is intersected by so many waterways that its water front is perhaps more extensive than that of any inland city in the world. The Ottawa River, the Rideau River, the Gatineau River and Dow's Run are some of the water courses in which that "City of the North" rejoices. Naturally the recommendations urge the wisdom, nay, the necessity of taking advantage of this tremendous opportunity.

The cities have not a monopoly of the movement to secure park systems. It has spread to suburban counties. In Essex County, N. J., there were in 1894 twenty-six acres of park land. There are now 3,500 acres, and three miles of parkways, the beginning of a more extensive system. In this county, Newark and the Oranges are situated. In the adjoining Hudson County, Jersey City is the principal municipality. The Hudson County Park Commission, recently appointed, has not yet issued its first annual report. It is proposed to connect the system of that county with the Palisades Interstate Park. The fourth annual report of the Interstate Commission shows that on January 1, 1904, six of the eleven miles of shore frontage had been secured, thus preserving that much of this stretch of remarkable scenery.

These three commissions are really working out an outer park system for Greater New York. They are all accessible from Wall street as are the Bronx Parks. In the latter system are two notable parkways; one, the Mosholu, connecting Van Cortlandt Park with

Bronx Park, is six hundred feet wide and a mile in length; the other, the Bronx and Pelham parkways, connecting parks of the same names, is four hundred feet wide and two miles in length. In Brooklyn the Bay Ridge Parkway reaches the great width of nine hundred feet. For Staten Island, now almost devoid of parks, its Chamber of Commerce has proposed a complete system to occupy about four thousand acres, or one-tenth of the area of the island. This report was presented in December, 1902.

One of the most important park systems is being planned for Washington. In 1901 the United States Senate appointed a commission composed of Messrs. McKim, St. Gaudens, Burnham and Olmsted to report a plan for the District of Columbia. The report that was presented dealt largely with the development of the Mall, of which hereafter, and recommended in addition an outer park system, which, if adopted, will give the Capital of the United States an imperial system of parkways sixty-three miles in length, connecting parks eight thousand acres in extent, the outer link of which, completely surrounding the city, north of the Potomac, will connect fourteen forts built during the war for the protection of Washington. The commission calls attention to the plan of the city. That plan is fundamentally right and the commission was therefore fundamentally right in bringing it forcibly to the attention of the American people. A radial system by which streets running north and south and east and west are intersected by many diagonals offers an opportunity for embellishment which Baron Haussmann quickly realized. It is curious how many people think that Washington is based upon the plan of Paris. Man after man will tell you so, and yet Washington was founded in 1800 and its plan adopted a year or two earlier, while it was Baron Haussmann, the prefect of the Seine under Napoleon III, who beautified Paris by the radial system of streets. It is significant that the two most beautiful cities in the world, Paris and Washington, are not built upon the gridiron plan. That significance has been pointed out and the lesson is being learned. It is likewise significant that Paris has been made the most beautiful city in the world in only forty years.

Group Plans.

The outer park movement is likely to be overshadowed in popular appreciation by that for the realization of "group plans"—

plans for the grouping of monumental public buildings about a Mall. These plans contemplate the embellishment of the centres of cities, and for that reason movements for their realization appeal to a larger group of citizens.

Again, the most important illustration of these is Washington. The Senate Commission proposed a plan for grouping public buildings along the Mall leading from the Capitol to the Washington Monument and thence to the White House. This will involve the destruction of the tenderloin and the demolition of the otherwise undesirable section south of Pennsylvania avenue. The idea has received a remarkable amount of support throughout the country, and the construction of no less than nine buildings has been authorized in accordance with it. In other words, the entire plan seems to be in a fair way of realization.

The first step towards carrying it out was taken when Congress passed an act appropriating \$4,000,000 toward the total expense of \$11,000,000 involved in the removal of the railroad tracks from the Mall and the erection of a Union Station north of Massachusetts avenue. This again involved the removal of the Baltimore and Ohio railroad tracks that now make the one ugly spot in that beautiful thoroughfare, already embellished by forty-five small green spots. The importance of this is due to the fact that Massachusetts avenue will be the main connection through the heart of the city between the eastern and western portions of the park system. In addition, the location of the following buildings has been authorized in accordance with the recommendations of the commission: the Senate building, the House of Representatives building, the building for the Department of Agriculture, the Hall of Records, the District Administration building, the building for the National Museum,—all these government buildings,—and two other buildings, for the Washington University and the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Next in importance is the group plan of the city of Cleveland, the conception of which was doubtless due in large measure to the creation of the Court of Honor at the Chicago World's Fair. Several public buildings were to be erected at about the same time. It was suggested that they should be grouped in some way, and a plan has been developed whereby, from the heart of Cleveland, a Mall will extend to a monumental railroad station on the

lake front, with a small park dividing the station from the lake. At the end of the Mall, near the centre of the city, the post-office building, now in course of erection, is to be balanced by a proposed public library. Just before the railroad station is reached, a city park, already owned by the city and running at right angles to the Mall, is to be turned into an Esplanade. Fronting on the Esplanade and also on the Mall, on each side, it is proposed that a City Hall and Court House be erected. The ground for these two buildings has been bought and the plans for them are in process of preparation. The ground in the centre of the Mall is being secured by the city. In other words, this plan, which would a few years ago have been pronounced "ideal but absolutely impossible of fulfillment," is now in process of construction. Cleveland has begun the acquisition of a surrounding system of parks, the encircling ring now extending a quarter of the way from the lake shore on the east to the shore on the west.

Spurred on by the success of the Cleveland group plan, the city of St. Louis appointed a commission to prepare a group plan and that commission presented its report in October, 1904, showing alternative schemes, similar in many aspects to that of Cleveland. It is believed that one of them will be carried out. In St. Paul a magnificent capitol has recently been erected and the Park Commission has approved a plan which shows three parkways, branching from the capitol in as many directions. Around one of the parkways it is proposed to group such public buildings as may be erected in the future. St. Paul and Minneapolis have secured a great part of their water fronts on the river and inland lakes as parks and parkways. The Minneapolis inner park ring is almost complete. A more extended system of outer parks and parkways has been proposed and formed one of the notable exhibits of the Twin Cities at the Municipal Exhibition of the St. Louis Exposition. The Fairmount Park parkway will give Philadelphia an opportunity for the grouping of public buildings, which is one of the reasons advanced for its construction.

Water Fronts.

The preservation of the water fronts of American cities is beginning. The general plan is to preserve the valleys of the smaller streams in their entirety, but for the banks of greater

rivers more extensive plans are being devised. In nearly every city of Europe the water front is beautified by a solid bank of masonry, sharply defining the limits of the river, to which access is furnished by lower roadways. The higher roadways are embellished as parkways. The Seine in Paris and the Victoria and Albert embankments in London are but the more familiar examples of what hundreds of cities throughout Europe have done. This is bound to be done in America sometime, and when it is it will pay in dollars and cents.

In Washington a plan combining many of the good points of the water front treatment of Algiers—for that African city can give a great lesson to the Capital of these United States in this regard—Buda-Pesth, Vienna, Paris and Antwerp, has been recommended by the commission. In New York one of the duties of the commission recently appointed is to consider the treatment of the water front. In Philadelphia an agitation has been steadily growing for wiping out the slum which marks the line of the Schuylkill River, from the southern limit of Fairmount Park to the southern limit of the built-up portion of the city. Within a quarter-mile of the centre of the Schuylkill on either side is a section at present very undesirable for any purpose. Yet it ought to be the most aristocratic section of the entire city. It is bound to be so in time. A dozen addresses have been given during the past year urging this improvement, and this is one of the objects of the alliance of the forty-five organizations heretofore mentioned. Perhaps, after all, this development of the water front will become the most famous result of the movement for the City Beautiful.

It is significant that business organizations of the country are largely responsible for this progress of American cities. The Business Men's Association of San Francisco was instrumental in securing approval of a loan of \$18,000,000 a year or two ago, \$4,000,000 of which are to be devoted to parks, parkways and public buildings. The three most prominent trade organizations of Philadelphia are among the forty-five allied organizations. It is the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce to which, along with the Cleveland Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, the principal credit for the carrying out of the Group Plan is due. Similarly

there are three business organizations among twenty-three associations allied for the improvement of the Borough of Queens of New York City, and it was the Chamber of Commerce of Staten Island that secured the park report heretofore mentioned.

There have been difficulties in the way, but they have been surmounted. The Boston park system was secured only after thirty-eight differing municipal governments had been either mollified or compelled to surrender. The system of Providence will face a similar difficulty, only less extensive. The Philadelphia park system will not be complete unless two adjoining counties unite in the work and that co-operation has already been considered at a meeting of representatives of the counties, namely, the State Senators of the respective counties and the Mayor of Philadelphia. The park system of Kansas City was made complete by the action of an adjoining county. St. Paul and Minneapolis have together begun the creation of a co-ordinated system. The States of New York and New Jersey have joined hands in the preservation of the Palisades as a park, and the State of New York and the Dominion of Canada have preserved the Falls of Niagara.



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