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BEGINNINGS OF CITY PLANNING
IN DALLAS, TEXAS

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City planning in Dallas, Texas, gives insight into various aspects of the early planning movement in the United States. Dallas city planning offers an opportunity to study the initial work for a plan; citizens' involvement in the pre-planning campaign and later in the workings of the plan itself; the conception of the plan; its implementation; and the differences between the proposed and the implemented plan. Specifically, the 1911 plan for Dallas, Texas affords a chance to examine Kansas City landscape architect George E. Kessler's ideas on urban areas. He believed that planning for an adequate boulevard system would enhance the beauty of a city as well as improving the business climate.

The period of 1890 to 1920 was a period of reform and improvement for the cities of the United States. Social workers were helping the unfortunates of the slums, "goos" were cleaning up politics, and citizen organizations were replanning cities. These various groups were similar, in that they hoped to improve economic conditions.

City planning in Dallas fits many of the recognized patterns of this age. Contemporary newspaper accounts gave

the impression that once Dallas was planned and beautiful, not only would existing businesses prosper, but new companies would move to Dallas. Economic betterment often seemed to be the only reason for having a plan. Frequently those parts of the 1911 plan for Dallas which were implemented were those which would directly benefit businessmen.

While many sources were consulted for this study, specific secondary information was limited. The secondary sources were few in number and general in nature. In books on city planning, Dallas is only mentioned in passing. Primary sources, newspapers and minutes of various governmental agencies, provided some information. Materials from the Dallas Historical Society were more helpful than were other sources. Park Board personnel were most cooperative and helpful.

The work done by George B. Dealey of the Dallas Morning News and other prominent businessmen in order to initiate planning in Dallas is the subject of the first chapter. Dealey, through the News as well as personally, first began to educate Dallasites as to the benefits of urban planning. The next step was convincing City Commissioners of the necessity of hiring a planner. This work was done by the Dallas City Plan and Improvement League. By evaluating the

educational campaign of the News, conclusions were drawn as to the type of plan Dealey desired for Dallas.

A description of Kessler's proposed plan is the subject of the second chapter. Kessler's philosophy, his plan, and the need for it are included. A comparison of Kessler's and Dealey's ideas concludes the chapter.

The parts of the plan developed and a discussion of the unimplemented parts are the subjects of the third chapter. Kessler's ideas on city life and his plan for Dallas as related to his philosophy, are discussed. Because Dealey did not understand Kessler's ideas and did not openly support implementation of the entire plan, problems arose. Kessler's idea of a boulevard system was not completely implemented. However, both functional and beautification changes were accomplished. For example, the number of parks increased from one at the turn of the century to approximately forty by 1924, and the Texas and Pacific tracks were removed from Pacific Avenue.

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CHAPTER I

GEORGE B. DEALEY AND THE CAMPAIGN FOR CITY PLANNING IN DALLAS, TEXAS

In the period prior to 1910, groups of citizens in individual cities led the city planning movement in the United States. Prominent businessmen often formed planning societies in order to facilitate their campaigns. Private efforts were needed to instigate the movements, because there were no official planning agencies within municipal administrations. Hartford city officials, in 1907, established the first city planning commission in the United States. Dallas had no official agency until 1919; consequently private efforts were needed to promote planning.¹

These private efforts were started by George B. Dealey, manager of the Dallas Morning News (hereafter referred to as News). Dealey had been interested in civic improvement plans since his arrival in Dallas in 1895. These early efforts gave Dealey a chance to perfect a method of

¹Mel Scott, American City Planning Since 1890, p. 66. John W. Reps, The Making of Urban America, p. 524. City Planning Papers, Dallas Historical Society (DHS). Blake McKelvey, The Urbanization of America, 1860-1915, p. 124.

accomplishing projects which he deemed necessary for the growth of Dallas. He preferred to do organizational work only, leaving himself free to criticize through the News if necessary.²

The campaign for a plan can be divided into two parts. The first is Dealey's work with and through civic organizations. The second is the educational campaign waged in the News. Dealey's activity connected these two elements. It was Dealey who decided that Dallas needed a plan. He was a prime organizer of many civic groups, particularly ones which were influential in planning. By 1909, he was in complete control of the News.

In addition to Dealey, prominent men of different civic groups, the Cleaner Dallas League, the Civic Improvement League, the Critic Club, and later the Chamber of Commerce, were instrumental in the campaign. Henry D. Lindsley was a distinguished lawyer who was employed by three Dallas banks; Alex Sanger was one of the proprietors of Sanger Bros. department store. John Robert Babcock came to Dallas to take temporary charge of the Southland Hotel's business affairs and remained to become an influential businessman in his own right, and Yancy Lewis was a powerful attorney. These

²Ernest Sharpe, G.B. Dealey of the Dallas News.

men were typical members of one or more of the aforementioned organizations. Dealey's connections and this group of prominent businessmen were influential in gaining approval of the city plan idea.³

The campaign was climaxed by the city administrators' hiring of George E. Kessler, an eminent landscape architect, on May 26, 1910. He was to draw up comprehensive plans for Dallas; these plans were to include maps and drawings as well as recommendations concerning parks, streets, and other items necessary for the growth of Dallas. He presented broad suggestions to the City Commissioners on October 14, 1910, and thus, according to the News, Dallas had an official plan. Although the plan was official, the implementation of it was a different matter. Dealey never really understood the necessity of implementing a comprehensive plan, and often city administrators were not aware of it. Kessler did not feel that it was his job to educate Dallasites as to the need for carrying out all aspects of his plans.⁴ Both men, however, recognized that there were aspects of Dallas which needed improvements. Examples of the type of problems Dealey

³Memorial and Biographical History of Dallas County, Texas, pp. 377, 819, L.B. Hill, ed., Selected Biographies and Memories, p. 23. Sharpe, G.B. Dealey, p. 147.

⁴Sharpe, G.B. Dealey, p. 158. Dealey papers, DHS.

hoped to solve by a plan are increased population difficulties, inadequate streets, flooding of the Trinity River, and poor shipping facilities.

Dallas was chosen as the county seat of Dallas County in August of 1850. The 1860 census recorded Dallas County population as 8,665. From this time on, the city of Dallas continued to grow. The 1880 Dallas population was 10,358; and in 1890, it was 38,067. The population as recorded by the United States Census Bureau was 42,638 in 1900, and by 1910, it had reached 92,104.⁵ This was an increase of approximately fifty-four percent in just ten years.

The railroads entering Dallas in the 1870's played an important part in this growth. Dallas became the distributing point for farm and ranch supplies. Another factor influencing this growth was the switch from ranching to farming on the lands surrounding Dallas. Farm goods were brought to Dallas for shipping. These two elements plus the beginnings of manufacturing caused a rather large increase in population.⁶

⁵United States Bureau of the Census. Census of Population: 1860, 1870, 1880, 1890, 1900, 1910.

⁶Justin Ford Kimbal, Our City Dallas, pp. 1-50. James Howard, Big D is for Dallas, pp. 1-13.

This rapid urbanization occurred without planning for either present or future growth. The downtown area was congested due to the transfer of through goods, the presence of railroad tracks, and a lack of cross streets. There were only three main East-West streets and few North-South streets. Persons entering the downtown area often had to go many blocks out of their way to arrive at their destinations. To compound this problem travel from residential areas to downtown was just as difficult. Railroad grade crossings made existing through streets dangerous to cross.

The Trinity River, which divided East Dallas and Oak Cliff from the rest of Dallas, was also a hazard. Travel from one area to another was hampered in that there was only one bridge, which was in a state of disrepair. Flooding was another problem which often disrupted the business life of Dallas.⁷

Inadequate warehouse and storage space was also a hindrance. Freight was sometimes lost for weeks, because there was no general freight yard. All goods had to be unloaded and loaded at the individual terminals of each railroad. In the sorting and reloading process, goods

⁷George E. Kessler, City Plan, pp. 10-12.

would be misplaced. Seven separate passenger terminals posed another problem.⁸

There was only one park, City Park. It was located on Ervay Street, southeast of downtown, and consisted of 18.86 acres. There were few paved streets and even fewer sidewalks in Dallas at the turn of the century.⁹

It was because of these problems that Dealey decided that Dallas needed a comprehensive city plan. He felt that such a plan was necessary if Dallas were to become an important metropolitan area in the future. The plan was another means of civic improvement, a culmination of Dealey's prior civic projects.¹⁰

In order to understand how Dealey could instigate a campaign for a plan that would be adopted and partially implemented, it is necessary to know something of his background and character. Dealey's family immigrated to Texas from England when Dealey was eleven years old. In 1874 at the age of fifteen, Dealey went to work for Colonel Alfred H. Belo, owner of the Galveston Daily News. By 1885 he was considered competent enough to be awarded a

⁸News, October 1, 1935, VII, p. 5.

⁹Sharpe, G.B. Dealey, p. 57.

¹⁰Kimbal, Our City Dallas, pp. 8, 17.

position as head of the business department of the newly-established Dallas Morning News, which was also owned by Belo. Because of his diligence and hard work, he advanced to the post of general manager and by 1909 had asserted complete control over the News. This move was gradual and was made with complete approval of Colonel Belo.¹¹

While enhancing his position at the News, Dealey was also developing his ideas on civic improvement. He believed in Davey Crockett's motto: "Be sure you're right, then go ahead." Dealey also believed that it was a "newspaper's duty" to spur citizens to actions on programs of civic betterment.¹² He believed that whatever would improve the financial interest in a city would result in better conditions in general. This thinking was common among prominent businessmen in the United States at this time.¹³ Dealey's first opportunity to exercise these beliefs came in 1899, when he decided something should be done about the sanitary conditions in Dallas.

In May of 1899, Dealey and a group of citizens, the "best and most progressive citizens of Dallas," formed what

¹¹All biographical information on Dealey comes from Sharpe, G.B. Dealey and Dealey papers, DHS.

¹²Sharpe, G.B. Dealey, pp. 178, 81.

¹³Robert Wiebe, The Search for Order,

was called the Cleaner Dallas League (CDL). The concept behind the CDL and its actual formation give an insight into Dealey's philosophy of the duty of newspaper reporting. He had first thought of a sanitation movement when reading of the United States Army's attempts to control disease during the war with Spain. He believed that Dallas definitely needed improvements in the area of hygiene. "Its refuse-laden alleys, stinking privies, garbage-glutted back lots, acres of malodorous dump yards, and endless swarms of flies were enough to make hygienic-minded individuals despair."¹⁴

Doctors in Dallas had made spasmodic attempts to enlighten Dallasites to the need for cleaning their surroundings, but no enduring results were obtained. It was at this time that Dealey began to develop his idea of the "newspaper's duty." Not only should the filthiness be removed, but the citizens should be enlightened and aroused by the News. In order to carry out his plan, Dealey had to assume more managerial responsibility for policy determination. After getting permission from the owners for this move, Dealey continued his campaign. His activity not only strengthened his position with the News, but he "emerged a dynamic city

¹⁴ Sharpe, G.B. Dealey, p. 80.

leader, a man who could organize and get things done, a man who wielded the power of the News."¹⁵

After deciding that Dallasites should clean their city and securing permission to make editorial policy, Dealey commenced his first civic betterment campaign. This was the only campaign in which he had to be concerned about his position at the News. From 1899 to 1909, he would simply study a problem, and when he fully understood the background, he presented his ideas to the editors. The power of suggestion was enough for Dealey to make editorial policy, because he was thoroughly informed before he presented his ideas.

In order to enlighten Dallasites to the benefits of his improvements, Dealey would first approach a group of civic-minded citizens. Then information concerning the topic would appear in the News. Finally, he would help form a civic organization. This civic group would usually present the idea to city officials. The different committees of various civic organizations then would continue the work, and Dealey would only be in the position of an organizer. This left him free to criticize through the News, if he felt it were necessary. The CDL was the first of several

¹⁵ Sharpe, G.B. Dealey, pp. 81, 85-86.

committees organized to advance Dealey's various improvement programs. Some results of the work of the CDL were a Sanitation Inspector who possessed some authority, inspection for the entire town, and gray uniforms for the employees of the municipal sanitation division.¹⁶

The CDL campaign was a valuable experience for Dealey. He had advanced his control over editorial policy at the News office, tried out his philosophy of the responsibility of the press, and developed tactics which would be used in future civic betterment programs. Thereafter he would first decide what was needed; inform influential people of this need; alert city administrators; publicize, educate and report through the News. Dealey's active role was as an organizer. He worked through committees and the News. Dealey was in complete agreement with his brother James, professor of social and political science at Brown University, when James said, "'social progress, . . . , is not only a matter of complete indifference to man (except for the most enlightened), but it is for the most part undesired and unintended.'"¹⁷ Because of this belief, Dealey felt a moral

¹⁶Sam Acheson, 35,000 Days in Texas, p. 103. Sharpe, G.B. Dealey, p. 141. Dealey papers, DHS.

¹⁷Sharpe, G.B. Dealey, p. 142.

obligation to better conditions; however, he did not take an active part in the implementation of his recommendations. This failure resulted in certain aspects of Kessler's plan not being implemented. Dealey did organize but failed to continue working after the initial acceptance of his idea of city planning.

On December 16, 1902, Dealey helped form the Civic Improvement League (CIL), the Dallas chapter of the American League for Civic Improvement. The American League for Civic Improvement was a predecessor of the American Civic Association, from which Dealey took many of the articles and pictures used in the educational campaign in the News. In some ways the CIL was the successor of the CDL; Dealey was instrumental in establishing the CIL, and many of his colleagues from the CDL joined him. The difference between the two organizations was that the CIL was broader in its outlook. Cleanliness was not its only concern. According to one source, the ". . . object was stated to be to unite the efforts of all citizens who wanted to make Dallas a better place in which to live" A movement to establish a park system by means of a city-wide park tax was one project of this organization. The CIL in conjunction with the Critic Club was a forerunner of the Dallas Chamber

of Commerce, which played an important role in the development of a city plan.¹⁸

The Critic Club was organized as a literary club, the purpose of which was to allow members a chance to present topics which they felt were of civic importance; one member would present a paper at each monthly meeting. The club was composed of prominent businessmen who were essential for civic improvement in Dallas as in other cities. Some of the members were Yancy Lewis, lawyer; M.F. Hans, Unitarian minister; Dr. Edward H. Cary, physician; Edwin J. Keist, publisher; and Ceasar Lompardi, columnist. Dealey joined the club with the stipulation that he would serve as secretary and would not have to present a paper. He was instrumental in forming the group, but he did not like to speak in public.¹⁹

Circumstances changed Dealey's stipulation. He had always been concerned about the growth of Dallas, and in February of 1908, he read an article, the details of which if applied to Dallas, he felt would be beneficial. The article, "The Awakening of Harrisburg" by J. Horace McFarland, told how one city had solved problems caused by urbanization. Citizens of Harrisburg had first raised money to hire engineers

¹⁸ Dealey papers, DHS. Sharpe, G.B. Dealey, p. 120.

¹⁹ Sharpe, G.B. Dealey, p. 147.

to study the city, then made recommendations for improvements. A committee was formed, engineers hired, and the plan published. Dealey felt that if Dallas had a plan, citizens would be more willing to work continually for civic improvements.²⁰

No article of this title was located. Two articles by McFarland on Harrisburg were found, however. One, entitled "The Harrisburg Achievement," did not discuss any means of achieving the recommended plan. "The Awakening of a City" did go into implementation details. It is possible that Dealey read both of these articles.²¹ "The Harrisburg Achievement" article was similar to Dealey's actions on city planning and other projects because it did not go into details of the actual work.

After reading the articles on Harrisburg, Dealey felt that previous civic projects had failed because they were not being completed according to a plan. There was no way to sustain interest in individual projects. McFarland's articles not only gave Dealey the idea of a plan for Dallas, but also caused him to change his mind about giving speeches.

²⁰Sharpe, G.B. Dealey, p. 140-50.

²¹Horace McFarland, "The Awakening of a City," pp. 1930-32 and McFarland, "The Harrisburg Achievement," pp. 401-404.

As a result, on the night of February 23, 1909, Dealey read "Civic Responsibility" at a meeting in his home. Although he had, in 1908, requested that American Civic Association literature be sent to Dallas citizens, this was the first time that Dealey had advocated a city plan for Dallas.²²

Thus the campaign for a comprehensive city plan for Dallas began. The preceding organizations and work were stepping stones for the program which Dealey felt would solve all problems. He felt that if Dallas could be awakened as had Harrisburg, solutions would become readily available. He was using the Cleaner Dallas League method for advocating change. Typically, he first appealed to a group of citizens, second started a news campaign, formed an organization, and then went to the city commissioners. The news campaign began in January of 1910. The explanation for the time lag (February, 1909 to February, 1910) was that Dealey was occupied with other projects and was also waiting for the right time to educate the citizens of Dallas.²³

For analyzing the type of educational campaign waged in the News, the articles will be divided several ways: first,

²²Dealey, "Getting into Action for a City Plan," Dealey papers, DHS.

²³Sharpe, G.B. Dealey, p. 141.

the broad categories of Dallas and non-Dallas articles and editorials; second, within each of these categories will be the general, the functional and the beautification types. The articles classified as functional are those concerned with streets, water, or the performance type of recommendations. Beautification articles are those dealing with parks, playgrounds, and in general those subjects concerned with the appearance of the city, elements which were important to the City Beautiful Movement. The articles will be referred to as functional and beautification articles respectively hereafter.

During May of 1909, the News contained three editorials, one article from the Survey, by Charles Mulford Robinson, and two other articles, all concerned with city planning. One of the editorials had to do with a city beautiful type of plan; the other two dealt with plans of particular cities. "Planning Cities' Future Relatively New Procedure" was the title of Robinson's article, in which he concluded that planning was good business. The City Planning Conference meeting in Washington, D.C. was the subject of the two other articles.²⁴

²⁴News, May 9, 1909, p. 16; May 11, 1909, p. 8; May 16, 1909, p. 20; May 27, 1909, p. 6; May 30, 1909, p. 20.

Starting with January 1, 1910, citizens' opinions on city planning were printed in the News. Dealey had sent invitations to a number of Dallasites, offering them a chance to express their views. On the first and second of January, approximately eighty-two citizens responded to Dealey's invitation. The consensus favored a comprehensive city plan. The four most frequently mentioned recommendations concerned street paving, a union depot, the water supply, and sidewalks. The union depot and the water supply questions were being considered by the city administration at that time. In 1910, Dallas had only 75.76 miles of paved streets. That is, only 27.1 percent of all streets were paved; municipal officials were considering more paving. The general need for all of these items and the inconvenience caused by lack of them could account for their being mentioned as inclusions in a city plan.²⁵

In summary, although Dealey's initial campaign had been favorably received, citizens seemed to equate city planning with the physical or functional conditions of the city. Approximately six respondents mentioned parks, playgrounds, or city beautiful factors. While Dealey recognized that

²⁵News, January 13, 1910, p. 4; January 1, 1910, p. 4; January 2, 1910, p. 4.

functional components were necessary for a plan, the type of articles and pictures appearing in the News from January 26 to October 14, 1910, suggests that he desired more of a city beautiful plan than the majority of the citizens envisioned. He was concerned with the attractiveness of Dallas. However, the articles and pictures might just have been part of the educational campaign. He possibly emphasized the city beautification aspects of planning because citizens seemed to be informed on the functional phase. Since Dealey himself referred to it as an educational campaign, perhaps the second explanation is more accurate.²⁶

On January 20, an editorial council meeting was held, and preparations were made for the city plan campaign. Tom Finty, Jr., ". . . one of its [News] best writers . . . ," was to begin the campaign with three introductory articles; Luther W. Clark and William G. Sterrett were to prepare editorials to run at the same time as Finty's articles. The next step would be to reprint city-planning articles; these articles would come from a variety of sources. Some would be reprinted from newspapers in cities where work was being done according to a plan. For example, on February 22, 1910, an article entitled "Improvements in St. Louis" from the St. Louis

²⁶ Memo to Hooper, Dealey papers, DHS.

Post-Dispatch appeared. Another source for information was the American Civic Association, an organization designed to foster improvements on local levels. A special city-planning edition of the Survey furnished materials, as did such specialized magazines as the American City and Town Development. Both of the latter periodicals reported information concerning work being done in various cities.²⁷

Reporter Kory K. Hooper was to become the city-planning expert by reading all materials on planning received at the News office. D. Prescott Tommey and Edwin B. Doran would do the reporting of particular developments in Dallas. With this group of men Dealey "... had writers who knew the problems of city government and municipal administration as thoroughly as most of the city officials" ²⁸

Finty, in three separate articles, attempted to explain what city planning was. In the first, "Use of Foresight in City Building," he mentioned that articles on street paving and sidewalks were to be a part of the forthcoming educational campaign of the News. In this article he also defined planning as "the adaption of a city to its proper function."

²⁷ Sharpe, G.B. Dealey, p. 155.

²⁸ Sharpe, G.B. Dealey, p. 141. News, February 22, 1910, p. 4.

Next Finty discussed how planning would have helped Dallas in the past. He mentioned that because Fair Park had been planned in 1904 by Kessler, it was now a definite business asset. He felt that planning the entire city would produce similar results for Dallas as a whole. In his second article, "Further Details of City Planning," Finty listed items which might be included in a city plan; his list included streets, heights of buildings, parks, zoning, and transportation facilities. The last article of this series dealt with the history of the movement. "Father of Country Set Pace in Nation" included histories of planning in such urban areas as Washington, D.C., Detroit, New Orleans, Salt Lake City, and Cleveland. Boston, according to Finty, was a good example of an unplanned city. The Harrisburg Plan, which had been instrumental in influencing Dealey's attitude on urban planning, was also cited. On the whole, while these articles did not contain any startling information, they did seem adequate to supply the public with general knowledge.²⁹

The next phase in the campaign was a series of articles beginning on January 29 and ending on February 8, 1910. They filled an interim period between Finty's introductory articles and the picture series starting on February 9. Four editorials,

²⁹ News, January 26, 1910, p. 3; January 27, 1910, p. 4; January 28, 1910, p. 4.

three articles on Dallas, and eleven non-Dallas articles comprised the bulk of city-plan information in this period.

All four of the editorials could be classified as informative endeavors. The first was an attempt to put paving in a proper context by explaining how it was a part of planning. The February 1 editorial emphasized the economic benefit of a city plan; Kansas City was cited as an example where such a concept had been financially advantageous. The third, while congratulating the Chamber of Commerce for approving the idea of a city plan, also stressed economics; cities should be planned just as business growth is planned. The necessity for parks was explained on February 6: "There is a fixed relation between the morality of a city and the means it provides for the pleasure of all its inhabitants."³⁰

The Dallas articles appeared on January 29, February 4, and February 7. In "A City Plan for Dallas" the point was made that the News was not trying to make money from the city plan campaign. Anyone could pick up the articles free from the main office. Also, in this piece appeared two slogans, one, "Build Dallas While We are Alive--Don't Leave the Work to Posterity," was from the News, and the other, "A City Plan for Dallas," came from the Chamber of Commerce. One

³⁰News, January 30, 1910, p. 20; February 1, 1910, p. 6; February 5, 1910, p. 6; February 6, 1910, p. 20.

of the reports told that J. Horace McFarland might speak in Dallas. The other reported that still another minister, in his Sunday sermon, had advocated city planning. This became a common practice after one such sermon had been printed in the News at the outset of the campaign.³¹

Three general, four beautification, and four functional articles made up the series of non-Dallas material in this section. Nine of the articles had authors listed, including one which had been previously published in the Survey. These could all be classified as informative and were equal with respect to functional and beautification types.³²

Starting February 9, a daily series of pictures and articles on city planning commenced. This feature was entitled "Examples of Civic Improvements" and usually appeared on page four of the News. Only a few times between February 9 and October 14, 1910, did such a presentation fail to appear. Of 187 articles, sixty-seven were of a general nature, ninety-two were beautification articles, and twenty-eight were of a functional type. Thus from the main thrust of the educational campaign, the beautification articles outnumbered the functional ones almost three to one. Dealey's campaign was

³¹News, January 29, 1910, p. 4; February 4, 1910, p. 4; February 7, 1910, p. 5. Sharpe, G.B. Dealey, p. 156.

³²News, January 29 through February 8, 1910.

weighted with materials pertinent to the City Beautiful Movement. The cities most frequently pictured were Detroit (eleven), Harrisburg (seventeen), Kansas City (sixteen), Los Angeles (eleven), and Dallas (eighteen). These articles and pictures were an attempt to show the people of Dallas what had been done or could be done with a city plan and an effort to make a city attractive.³³

The editorials continued to be of the educational type, whereas the articles were mainly reporting planning developments in Dallas. The picture-article series continued to run through 1918.³⁴

In evaluating the type of educational endeavor Dealey waged through the News, the city beautification articles appeared more often than did the functional type. While the campaign started enthusiastically with editorials occurring frequently, the number of editorials decreased as the campaign progressed. It also seemed that the caliber of the articles declined; they became less informative. The pictures and articles seemed to be moving away from city planning and toward more of a back-to-nature and school

³³Dealey papers, DHS. News, January 9 through October 14, 1910.

³⁴News, 1910-1918.

gardening concept, especially after October 14, 1910, when it was stated that Kessler's October visit was the beginning of an "official city plan."³⁵

As has been seen, Dealey thought of the city plan campaign as just another phase of his civic betterment program. He never, in the News or in available personal correspondence, gave the impression he understood what a comprehensive city plan was. He did advocate all elements of what later became the plan for Dallas, but he never envisioned the different parts as a whole. Paving, parks, and terminals were important and were recommended in the campaign, although no article mentioned how different elements of a plan, if coalesced, would increase the beauty as well as the value of land within Dallas.

In order to understand why Kessler was hired and how the city plan became "official," it will be necessary to look at the activities of the Dallas City Plan and Improvement League (DCP&IL) of the Dallas Chamber of Commerce, another of Dealey's civic groups. The Chamber of Commerce was formed in 1909, and on January 28, 1910, the city plan idea, as presented by Dealey, "met with unqualified support."³⁶

³⁵Peter J. Schmitt, Back to Nature. News, October 14, 1910.

³⁶Dealey and Sharpe say that the meeting was held on the 28th, but J.R. Babcock, in "The Campaign for a City Plan in Dallas," pp. 151-58, says the 27th. Dealey, "Getting into Action," Dealey papers, DHS.

The Chamber of Commerce was described by one contemporary in the following manner: ". . . its membership is of the highest class of business men; its sole purpose is to develop the city of Dallas along proper lines" This group of citizens was of the opinion that Dallas should ". . . plan to become a good city of the first class" In order to facilitate this scheme, a committee was formed primarily to engage ". . . a national authority on city planning" This committee was composed of several prominent businessmen: Rhodes S. Baker, lawyer; Alex Sanger, the dry-goods store owner; John B. Wilson, banker; Henry D. Lindsley, lawyer; and George B. Dealey.³⁷

The men went to work, and by February 9, it was announced by the News that J. Horace McFarland, president of the American Civic Association, was coming to Dallas to give a speech. The purpose of the visit was to arouse public spirit. McFarland lectured in Dallas on February 25. He said ". . . that the city beautiful is also the city practical, the city economical and the city efficient" At the end of McFarland's lecture, the DCP&IL was formed to continue the

³⁷Babcock, "Campaign for a City Plan," p. 162. Dealey, "Getting into Action," Dealey papers, DHS. Sharpe, G.B. Dealey, p. 155. Biographical History, pp. 377, 819. Hill, Selected Biographies, pp. 376, 23.

campaign for a plan. Thirty-eight people were charged ". . . that the duty of this committee shall be to obtain for the city of Dallas a comprehensive and thorough city plan" ³⁸

On March 15 an organizational meeting was held. Eight subcommittees were established, and a letter was sent to Kessler asking him to come to Dallas. Dealey was offered the Chairmanship of the City Planning Committee (CPC), which was to be the Executive Committee of the DCP&IL. He twice refused this position, saying that he did not have time to devote to it. He finally accepted the Vice-Chairmanship; Henry D. Lindsley was named Chairman. Edward Titche was elected chairman of the City and District Housing Committee. Other chairmen and their committees were Clinton P. Russell, municipal art and design; Mrs. William A. Callaway, parks and playgrounds and social centers; Charles R. Bolanz, transportation problems; Rhodes S. Baker, suburban extensions; Mrs. Joseph E. Cockrell, city beautification; Lucien V. LaTaste, educational. John R. Babcock was elected general secretary. The CPC was to be composed of the chairmen of these seven committees. ³⁹

³⁸ News, February 9, 1910, p. 4; February 26, 1910, p. 4. Dealey, "Getting into Action," Dealey papers, DHS.

³⁹ News, March 15, 1910, p. 4.

In keeping with the method developed by the Cleaner Dallas League, on March 23 the DCP&IL took their plans to the City Commission. In this meeting, it was suggested that Kessler could handle the above-ground work and James Hillhouse Fuertes the underground work of a plan. Lindsley said Kessler had been chosen because he had lived in Dallas and had done the planning work for Fair Park in 1904. Another member said that Kessler and Fuertes had been chosen because they were the best in their respective fields. The City Commissioners approved of the idea of a city plan; however, Mayor Stephen J. Hay said that work could not be started until a new budget was approved around the first of May.⁴⁰

George Kessler came to Dallas on May 24, 1910. He toured the city, and on May 25 Mayor Hay called a joint conference to be attended by members of the City Commission, Park Board, DCP&IL, and Kessler. At this meeting Kessler made some suggestions and said that he could have a complete, comprehensive plan prepared within a year. On May 26 it was announced that Kessler was to be the planner for Dallas. Dealey had thus succeeded in getting his man hired. Just two months after the DCP&IL approached the City Commission, and

⁴⁰News, March 29, 1910, p. 4.

approximately four months after the educational campaign had begun, Dallas had a planner.⁴¹

Kessler was hired for one year; the Park Board and the City Commission would split the cost; and Kessler was to furnish assistants and tools. He was to be paid \$5000.00, and for this amount he was to do planning for streets, parks, alleys, and public ways. He was to submit a report which included maps and illustrations.⁴²

Kessler returned to Dallas in October and made a preliminary report to the City Commission. This report was concerned with the building of an eleven-mile boulevard, with cross connections, around the city; improvements of Turtle Creek to make a parkway; straightening of the Trinity River channel; grouping of public buildings around a Union Station; and elimination of grade crossing by removal of the railroad tracks from the heart of the city. And on October 14, the News declared that Dallas had an official plan.⁴³

In conclusion, it can be seen that Dealey and his co-workers made a small group, the Chamber of Commerce,

⁴¹News, May 24, 1910, p. 4; May 25, 1910, p. 4; May 26, 1910, p. 4.

⁴²Minutes of the City Commission, Vol. 6 (August 11, 1911), p. 309.

⁴³News, October 11, 1910, p. 4.

aware of the need for a change. Dealey educated the public; then the Chamber of Commerce presented the plan to the City Commission. By using a proven method, Dealey and the Chamber of Commerce led the way to a plan. Kessler's ideas were to be the basis for future planning in Dallas.⁴⁴

⁴⁴Dallas Master Plan Committee, A Look at Past Planning for the City of Dallas.

CHAPTER II

GEORGE E. KESSLER'S COMPREHENSIVE CITY

PLAN FOR DALLAS, TEXAS

George Edward Kessler had been chosen to prepare the first comprehensive city plan for Dallas. Kessler was born in Frankenhausen, Germany in 1862. He and his parents moved to the United States in 1865. After living in Missouri and Wisconsin, they eventually moved to Dallas, where Kessler lived until returning to Germany, in 1878, to study forestry, landscape design, and botany. Upon re-entering the United States, he worked for a short time at Central Park in New York City before taking a job as Superintendent of Parks for the Kansas City, Fort Scott, and Gulf Railroad Company. Thus Kessler had started on his career as a landscape architect. He published his plans for Kansas City in 1893, and from there went on to do work in Denver, Syracuse, Memphis, St. Louis, and at the St. Louis World's Fair; in 1904 he was chosen to help plan the fairgrounds for the State Fair of Texas located in Dallas.¹

¹William H. Wilson, The City Beautiful Movement in Kansas City, pp. 40-45. George E. Kessler, Unpublished Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Missouri.

While Kessler can be considered part of the City Beautiful Movement, mere beautification was not his sole concern. He wanted to make cities as liveable as possible. One method for doing this was to improve the means of circulation. Boulevards would accomplish this objective and improve appearance at the same time. The boulevards, according to Kessler, would serve yet another purpose. He thought that particular types of land were suited for particular purposes. For example, higher lands were best suited for residential purposes. Dallas was already developing along topographical lines. Boulevards would enhance this development. Lands surrounding boulevards would increase in value, thus upgrading the type of structures built in the area. Facilities needed by inhabitants of these structures would be attracted to the area, thus urban sprawl could be avoided. Kessler preferred a densely settled urban area if boulevards were provided, thereby restricting and beautifying the area.

In this particular respect, Kessler seemed to be more akin to the early landscape architects such as Frederick Law Olmsted than with the planners of the City Beautiful Movement. As these early architects hoped to increase land values around parks, so Kessler hoped to enhance values

around boulevards. Men concerned with the City Beautiful Movement seemed to feel that beauty was an end in itself where Kessler felt that beautification would increase property values.

Another major concept of Kessler's was that government should control the appearance of properties next to parkways and boulevards. Trees, grass, and sidewalks should be regulated by officials throughout the city.

Kessler's plan for Dallas is an example of his means for enhancing property values. All seven of his suggestions are related to his desire to direct the growth of Dallas and make the city more inhabitable. Kessler used the term "zoning" more broadly than it is usually used. He did not intend to rely on zoning plats or laws but upon topography. Different levels of lands were suited for particular purposes. The lower lands, for example, were better for industrial and wholesale use. The value of the land would also zone the city. Boulevards would attract residential buildings to higher levels as well as increasing land values and in this way keep the area residential. If land was used or zoned according to potential value, the city would benefit both financially and aesthetically. Dealey did not completely understand this concept. He only worked for

implementation of individual parts of the plan. He did not realize that all parts of the plan were interconnected and that in order for the plan to succeed, as Kessler envisioned it, all of the suggestions would have to be realized.²

The suggestions proposed by Kessler and published by the Park Board in 1911 had seven major areas: levees; belt line railroad; union station and Civic Center; grade crossings elimination; street openings and corrections; parks, partways, and boulevards; and playgrounds. Of these major recommendations, Kessler considered the elimination of grade crossings in downtown Dallas to be the most radical as well as the most pressing.³

The levees suggested by Kessler were central to the rest of his plan. Not only would the proposed levees protect Dallasites from the hazards of a flood similar to the one in 1908, but would also allow useless land to be made functional. Kessler, as well as many Dallasites, felt that the Trinity River would, at some time in the future, be made navigable, thus necessitating facilities for handling freight from barges. He proposed levees of twenty-five feet

²Charles Glabb, The American City, pp. 257-263.

³George E. Kessler, City Plan, p. 15.

in height and about 1200 feet apart. He felt that the levees should be wide enough to accommodate railroad tracks. The dirt from between the levees could be used not only for the levees themselves but also for filler in the surrounding area. If some means were not devised for controlling and crossing the Trinity River, Kessler felt that the growth of Dallas would be hampered. Dallasites agreed with Kessler and had already made plans for a viaduct to connect the Oak Cliff area with the rest of Dallas.⁴

The suggestion of a belt line railroad was related to the levee, in that the area around the reclaimed land could be used as a location for freight terminals. The belt line was to consist of a double track and was to circle the inhabited area of Dallas, East of the Trinity River, with a second set of tracks circling West Dallas and Oak Cliff. All railroads entering Dallas would do so on one of these two loops; the two loops would connect on the reclaimed land of the Trinity River bottom. Such an arrangement would accomplish three objectives. First, it would eliminate tracks from residential areas. Second, by preventing through goods from entering the downtown area, it would relieve

⁴Ernest Sharpe, G.B. Dealey, pp. 142-144. Kessler, City Plan, pp. 10-12. News, January 1, 1910, p. 4; January 2, 1910, p. 4. Sharpe, G.B. Dealey, p. 145.

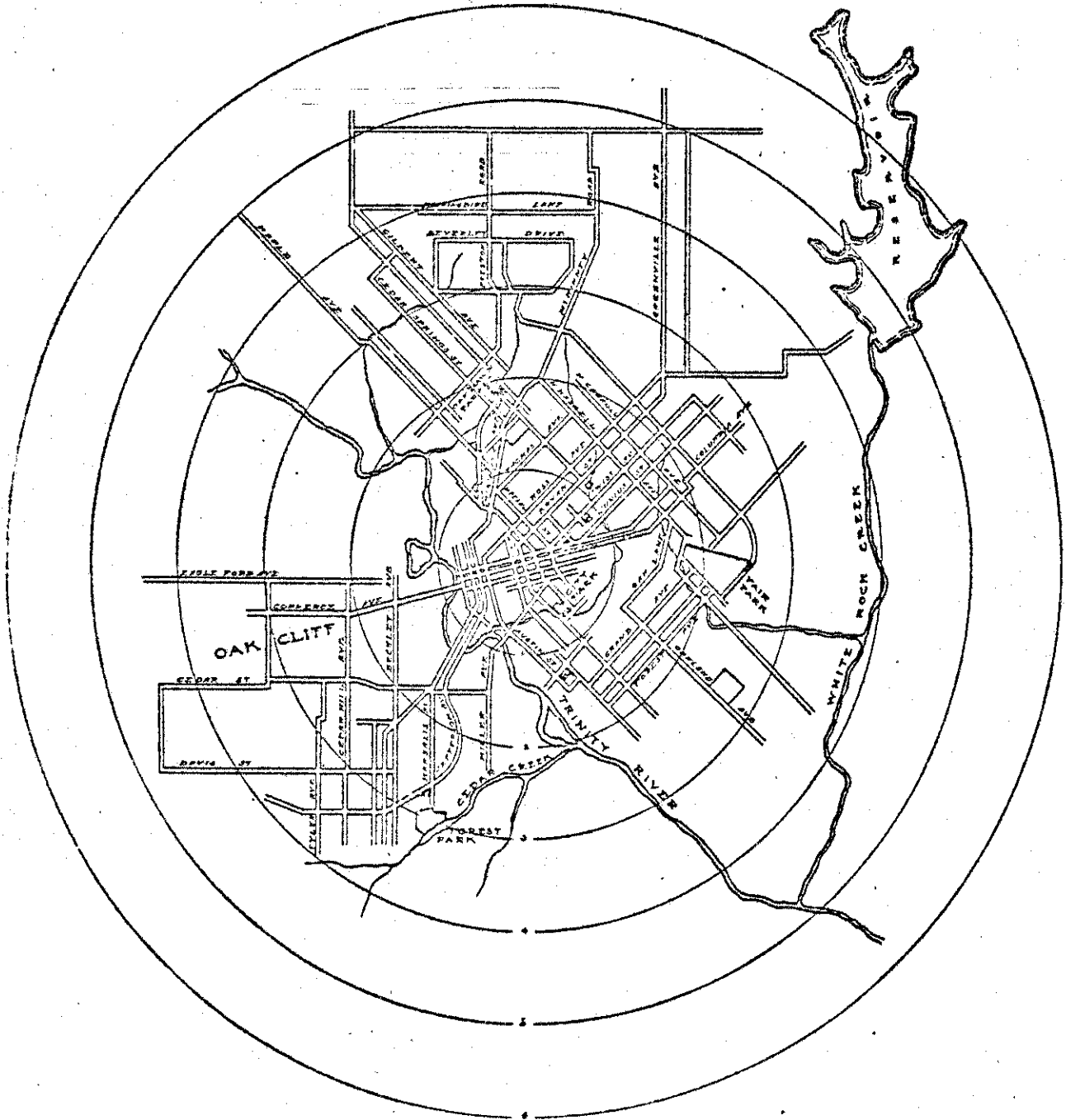
congestion. The goods would be handled at outer or clearance terminals, which Kessler suggested should be built along White Rock Valley (See figure 1).⁵ Third, this track plan would encourage the building of freight terminals south of Wood Street, near the Trinity River between Akard and Broadway. Thus the city would be zoned along topographical lines.⁶

While visiting Dallas prior to drafting his plans, Kessler noticed that Dallas was already being zoned topographically. That is, lower lands were being used for retail purposes, the next elevation was being used for industrial purposes, and the highest for residential purposes. In connection with this Kessler remarked that ". . . regard for the people at large means that a city should be divided into areas and zones each devoted to its own particular purpose" ⁷ By means of the belt line railroad, Kessler not only hoped to keep unnecessary traffic from the downtown area, he also hoped to encourage the building of freight terminals in one particular location. This

⁵Map taken from Kessler's 1911 "A City Plan for Dallas" and used with the permission of the Park Department, City of Dallas, Dallas, Texas.

⁶Kessler, City Plan, p. 12.

⁷Kessler, City Plan, p. 8.



MAP OF DALLAS-TEXAS.
 SHOWING PRESENT PARK AREAS.
 SCALE IN FEET

APPROVED FOR
 PARK BOARD
 1911

GEO E. KESSLER & CO.
 LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
 KANSAS CITY - ST. LOUIS

Figure 1. Present Park Areas. Source: Kessler's 1911 "A City Plan for Dallas." Used with Permission of the Park Department, City of Dallas, Dallas, Texas.

building in turn would attract warehouses and factories to the particular area or zone. By this method, Kessler was planning in 1911, to zone Dallas, whereas it was not until 1926 that the United States Supreme Court recognized the concept of zoning and 1927 when the Texas legislature passed a zoning law.⁸

Kessler's suggestion for a better railroad system and his reasons for making such a suggestion were similar to what was being proposed in other areas of the country. In 1907, a member of the Committee on Congestion of Population of New York recommended a belt line railroad as a means of attracting manufacturers to the outskirts of the city. The manufacturing in turn would attract employees, and thus would relieve the inner city of some of its population. Daniel Burnham, in his plan for Chicago, 1909, wanted to eliminate all but essential goods from being transported into the downtown area via the use of a belt line railroad. In addition to alleviating inner city population and eliminating unnecessary traffic, Kessler hoped to consolidate the number and locations of individual freight stations and eliminate railroad tracks from residential areas.⁹

⁸Euclid case as discussed in Mel Scott, American City Planning, p. 238. Vernon's Annotated Civil Statutes of the State of Texas, p. 730.

⁹Scott, American City Planning, pp. 98-99. Daniel Burham, Plan of Chicago, pp. 63, 64-65. Kessler, City Plan, p. 12.

The next suggestion, that of a union station, was a necessity for travelers coming to Dallas. With the belt line, not only could all freight terminals be located in one place, but passengers for all lines could use one station. Kessler recommended that the union station be located in the vicinity of Main and Broadway. (See figure 1) He hoped that a park would be established near the station, that other public buildings would be erected around it and that this would give ". . . Dallas a dignified and worthy railroad entrance" This concept of a union station and plaza with public buildings surrounding it was similar to Kessler's 1907 suggestion for Kansas City.¹⁰

The union terminal station was the first of Kessler's suggestions to be supported by the News. Since the formation of the Dallas Terminal Railway and Union Depot Company in 1895, a similar station had been frequently discussed although nothing had been accomplished. Articles on why a union station was necessary appeared first; then between January 5 and February 9, approximately 150 citizens expressed their opinions of the idea. The majority approved of a union station. The dissension seemed to be more as to the

¹⁰Kessler, City Plan, pp. 12-14. Wilson, City Beautiful Movement, pp. 111-112.

location of the terminal and public buildings rather than whether or not to implement the suggestion. One citizen expressed the viewpoint that buildings, namely city hall, located close to the railroad station would result in noise and inconvenience for those working in and going to the public buildings. He felt that the wholesale district was no place for a woman to go to conduct business. Another felt that Kessler's arrangement would result in too much dirt and noise around public buildings. One Dallasite, while condemning the plan for the location of city hall, suggested that Kessler not only had picked a bad site but that he was not original in his selection.

It is extremely unfortunate in my judgment that Mr. Kessler was ever employed, for he offers nothing new and the people are being duped into the indorsement of something that cannot be fulfilled and what as stated, is the creation of another man's brain.

No other mention was found of Kessler's borrowing another's specific ideas.¹¹

Also connected with the belt line railroad and the union terminal was the elimination of grade crossings in downtown Dallas. In order to eliminate the grade crossings, three

¹¹ News, December 25 through 31, 1910, January 1 through 2, 1911. Letter from Curtis P. Smith, City Planning files, DHS. Letter from O.K. Harry of O.K. Harry Steel Works, City Planning Files, DHS. Letter from John S. Aldehoff, Aldehoff Insurance Company, City Planning Files, DHS.

methods could have been chosen. The streets could have been depressed and the railroad tracks raised, the streets could have been raised and the tracks depressed, or the tracks could have been removed. The raising or depressing of tracks would be unsightly and costly; therefore, Kessler thought that the latter method was the best. It would allow a more beautiful downtown area as well as provide more retail space. When Kessler made this suggestion in October of 1910, the City Commissioners were ". . . thunder-struck at the thought of removing the tracks from Pacific Avenue"12

Kessler was not only concerned with the Texas and Pacific tracks but also thought that the Houston and Texas Central and the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas tracks would eventually have to be moved to the Belt line tracks. Railroad tracks in the retail area and in the residential sections were not only dangerous, they were unsightly and occupied valuable land as well.¹³

Kessler's suggestion for street openings and corrections was more detailed than had been his other suggestions. He was concerned with making the downtown area more traversable;

¹²Kessler, City Plan, pp. 14-16. Sharpe, G.B. Dealey, p. 159.

¹³Kessler, City Plan, pp. 14-16.

however, he was just as concerned with making all streets in Dallas pleasant places upon which to travel. He wanted all streets to ". . . be made as attractive as any boulevard"14

First, in order to facilitate downtown traffic, Kessler suggested opening several North-South streets. (See appendix A and figure 2).15 He felt these additional openings were necessary to eliminate congestion and would in the future increase the value of downtown property. The public was not cognizant of the value of this suggestion and had to be convinced by the News. Downtown congestion was a major problem according to Kessler; a belt line railroad, widening of existing streets, additional East-West through streets, and increasing the number of North-South cross streets were his solutions to this problem.16

Another downtown matter for concern was what Kessler called the "pioneer construction results." The evident elements of this pioneer construction were poor street

¹⁴Kessler, City Plan, p. 21.

¹⁵Map taken from Kessler's 1911 "A City Plan for Dallas" and used with the permission of the Park Department City of Dallas, Dallas, Texas.

¹⁶Kessler, City Plan, pp. 17-25. J.R. Babcock, "Street Opening and Widening in Dallas," American City, X (May, 1914), 473.

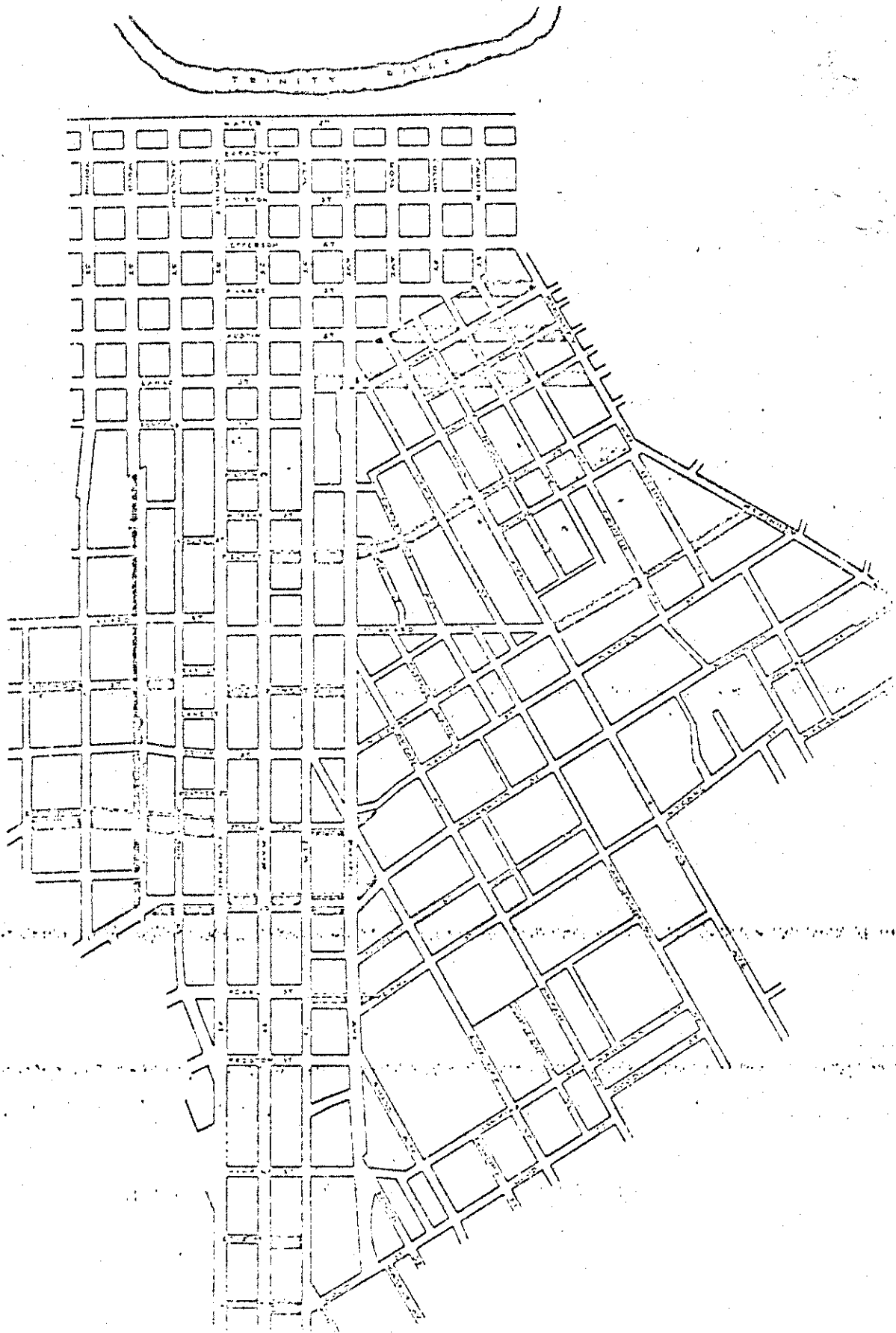


Figure 2--Street Corrections. Source: Kessler's 1911 "A City Plan for Dallas." Used with permission of the Park Department, City of Dallas, Dallas, Texas.

layouts, buildings constructed with no thought for the future, poles, wires, awnings, and signs obstructing sidewalks. Kessler noted that "The mistaken idea of the need for glaring advertising has produced the most positive injury to the appearance of our American cities." While Kessler thought that Dallas presented a fairly business-like image, he felt that a study of the changes that had been wrought in Denver could be emulated, particularly the removal of obstructions from sidewalks, uniform materials, and cleanliness of sidewalks.¹⁷

In his discussion of residential area streets, Kessler seemed to think that a lack of uniformity and control were the biggest problems.

The result is the absence of dignity, which comes from proper proportions of street spaces, the use of uniform materials for considerable distances, uniform position of sidewalks, and consequently uniform lawn spaces and uniform distances for street trees. No control whatever has been exercised over the kind and condition of trees nor their care.¹⁸

Beyond these considerations, there was a definite need for proper street lighting; however, Kessler felt that the municipal planting and control of trees were the most important aspects of beautifying the residential areas. If a

¹⁷Kessler, City Plan, pp. 19, 20.

¹⁸Kessler, City Plan, p. 20.

governmental agency would plant the trees, property owners would be encouraged to improve the appearance of their property.¹⁹

Having proposed means of insuring circulation, Kessler turned next to parks, parkways, and boulevards. According to Kessler, parks promoted individual and public health. In order to benefit citizens, they must be ". . . provided within easy walking distance of their homes" ²⁰

Kessler planned for all existing and proposed parks to be connected by boulevards and parkways. The parkways were to serve a two-fold purpose: they were part of the route leading from one park to another; and they were to serve as neighborhood parks in areas where a large park was not within walking distance.

Turtle Creek and Mill Creek were the parkways proposed. The Turtle Creek Parkway would consist of a forty-foot drive on either side of Turtle Creek. The sidewalks and green areas would make it a serviceable as well as a beautiful drive. This parkway would be a connecting link with other park areas, a thoroughfare to the inner city, and a ". . . direct means of conserving the high class

¹⁹Kessler, City Plan, p. 22.

²⁰Burham, Plan for Chicago, p. 80. Kessler, City Plan, p. 25.

character of an important residential section" ²¹
Mill Creek Parkway would begin as a regular 100 foot wide boulevard and then broaden into a double drive along Mill Creek. Kessler felt that this parkway would uplift the area through which it passed. Both parkways would serve as local parks and playgrounds. ²²

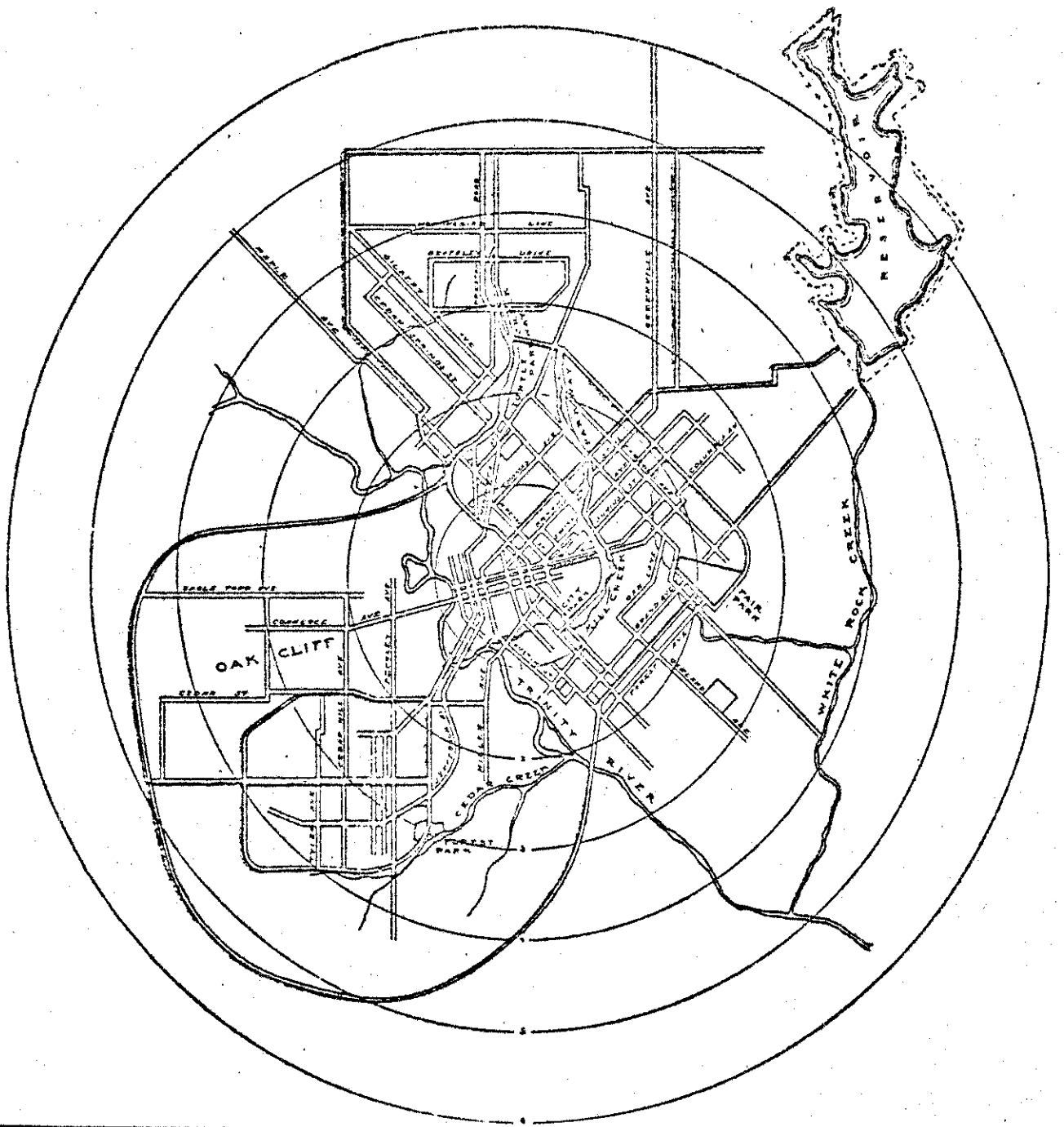
The parkways would connect to the boulevard system. The numerous boulevards (see appendix B) were to be 100 feet wide, some would widen into parkways of 200 feet at times, and all would serve to connect parks and parkways. One would then be able to travel from one open space to another by means of a pleasant, beautiful drive. The Oak Cliff-Dallas viaduct would be used as a boulevard connecting Oak Cliff parks with those in the whole of Dallas. Kessler hoped additional viaducts would be built so that Oak Cliff-Dallas boulevards could be planned; this would be another method of improving the traffic circulation in Dallas.

Four new Parks were proposed in addition to the eight existing ones for Dallas and Oak Cliff to complete the boulevard system (See appendix C and figure 1). ²³ Kessler's

²¹Kessler, City Plan, p. 31.

²²Kessler, City Plan, p. 32-33.

²³Map taken from Kessler's 1911 "A City Plan for Dallas" and used with the permission of the Park Department, City of Dallas, Dallas, Texas.



-MAP OF DALLAS - TEXAS -
 -SHOWING PROPOSED PARK & BOULEVARD SYSTEM -
 SCALE IN FEET

PREPARED FOR
 THE PARK BOARD

GEO. E. KESSLER & CO.
 LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
 KANSAS CITY - ST. LOUIS

Figure 3--Proposed Parks and Boulevards. Source: Kessler's 1911 "A City Plan for Dallas." Used with permission of the Park Department, City of Dallas, Dallas, Texas.

main concern was acquiring property for these parks before the price of land made acquisitions impossible. Related to parks were the playgrounds, and Kessler listed three as being in operation in 1911 (See appendix D). He felt that playgrounds should be handled by educational authorities and for this reason did not plan for any playgrounds per se. Both the large and small parks could be utilized as playgrounds and should contain gymnastic equipment. When speaking of City Park, he said

City Park illustrates the possibilities of such a combined park and playground. In this park there is ample opportunity for gymnastic equipment, which in no sense need become a detriment to the park or to the surrounding residence properties, and there is opportunity to cultivate in the children enjoyment and appreciation of beautiful surroundings as an important educational incident in their play.²⁴

Kessler also proposed an outer boulevard system which consisted of extensions of pre-existing or proposed boulevards. This system was to include the anticipated land growth of Dallas in the boulevard system. By planning for future needs, Kessler hoped to direct growth to a particular area, as yet another way to zone Dallas.²⁵

In his discussion of parks and boulevards particularly, Kessler seemed to have more in common with Frederick Law

²⁴Kessler, City Plan, p. 26.

²⁵Kessler, City Plan, pp. 38-39.

Olmsted and the early landscape architects than with planners of the City Beautiful Movement.²⁶ Kessler was concerned with the natural beauty of the parks. He made no proposal for ". . . fountains, ornamental benches, statues and memorials" ²⁷ He was not one of the "Keep Off the Grass" group of landscape architects. His parks, large and small, were not reserved solely for ". . . that quiet and peculiar refreshment which comes from contemplation of scenery" ²⁸

In general Kessler felt that a city had to be beautiful in order to attract business; however, this was not his only reason for wanting a beautiful city. He believed that city life was not natural. As did Olmsted, Kessler thought that the buildings of a city were lacking in beauty. Beauty could only be made possible through parks and boulevards. ²⁹

Dealey did not understand the importance of the park aspects of Kessler's plan. Although some articles on parks

²⁶Scott, American City Planning, pp. 45-46.

²⁷Scott, American City Planning, pp. 45-46.

²⁸Peter J. Schmidt, Back to Nature, pp. 66, 66-77.

²⁹Glabb, The American City, pp. 257-263. Julius G. Fabos, et. al., Frederick Law Olmsted, p. 13.

and playgrounds appeared in the News, the articles did not stress the value of open spaces to the business community. Kessler felt that not only would parks enhance property values, but that they could also give the working man a place for recreational activities thereby making a more happy, healthy worker. Dealey hinted at this only one time when discussing land to be purchased for a park.³⁰

Another area of apparent misunderstanding was zoning. Kessler had this to say about zoning:

The occupation of lands generally within the city will be encouraged and will henceforth be in accord with the uses to which these lands are best adapted. Values of lands within the city will reach a level in harmony with the uses to which the lands are best suited, and those uses having definitely established values, instead of being variable and uncertain, will become fixed.

This concept was evidently not clear to Dealey. No mention was made of it in the News. Although zoning, such as Kessler advocated, was legalized in Texas in 1927, neither articles in the News nor Dealey stressed the importance of controlling the growth of particular areas of Dallas.³¹

As will be seen from the proceeding chapter, the elements of Kessler's plan which were emphasized by the reports in the

³⁰Glabb, The American City, p. 260. Sharpe, G.B. Dealey, p. 146. News, 1909-1924.

³¹Glabb, The American City, p. 263. News, 1909 through 1924. Vernon's Civil Statutes, p. 730.

News were functional aspects which would obviously benefit the business community. Although the park department added approximately thirty parks between 1909 and 1920, little mention of these additions was made. Nor was there much coverage of the donation of land for the Turtle Creek Parkway, which was one of the first elements of Kessler's plan to become a reality. It seems as though Dealey did not really understand Kessler's plan. Parts of it were supported, parts implemented. However, the idea of making a city a place for ". . . the poor man's boy to grow into a cheerful, industrious and contented man . . ." failed to gain support.³²

³²Kessler, Park Report. Glabb, The American City, p. 260.

CHAPTER III

THE PROBLEMS OF IMPLEMENTATION

The advocates of city planning found many obstacles. They had to compromise the Union Terminal, Civic Center concept. They accepted changes in the location of some park areas. Not all aspects of the plan were developed. On the other hand the initial work of purchasing land for a wholesale district was completed. Then too, Kessler's proposals were the guidelines for later planning developments. From 1916 to 1930 Dallasites spent some \$100,000,000 on city planning.¹

For Kessler, the heart of the problem lay in "the absence of direct lines of comfortable communication between the different residence districts and in turn between these districts and the business city" ² All seven of these suggestions were related to this major problem. Kessler was convinced that unplanned growth, misplaced railroad tracks, flooding, and the absence of beauty were bound up

¹George Dealey, "Publicity for Planning," p. 212.

²Census of Population, 1880 and 1910. George Kessler, City Plan, p. 7.

with inadequate circulation. Each of these could be corrected in conjunction with the attack on the circulation problem.

Dealey's newspaper ignored Kessler's comprehensive approach. The first section of Kessler's plan to be supported by the News, and one of the first completed, was the Union Terminal. The struggle to obtain a union station was begun in 1895 and was climaxed by the arrival of the "St. Louis Southwestern" from St. Louis on October 8, 1916. Although the concept was an old one, Kessler's plan was instrumental in making it a reality.³

Possibly a description of passengers' transferring from one train to another will suffice to explain why a union station was advocated as early as 1895. "Transfer passengers in such instances, had to get out in the mud, walk to a cab stand and hasten to another station, hoping that the outgoing train would not be late." The reasons for the delay are perhaps less readily seen. An article in the News, October 17, 1910, implied that restaurant and hotel owners and other businessmen benefited when passengers missed their transfers; therefore, these men did not want one union station. The major problem, however, was that in 1895 as in 1903, 1906, and 1908, the different railroad lines

³News, October 1, 1935, VII, p. 5; October 18, 1916, p. 6.

could not reach an agreement as to the location of and other details pertaining to a union station.⁴ Finally state legislation was passed which allowed the Railroad Commission to force railroads to build union terminals when ". . . demanded by public necessity" On September 27, 1910, the Commission asked the state Attorney General to bring suit against the railroad companies in Dallas.⁵

It was in October of 1910 that Kessler made his initial proposal, including a union terminal, and in December a campaign was started by the News for the adoption of a union terminal as proposed by Kessler. These items, combined with the threat of a law suit, compelled the railroads on February 8, 1911, to announce plans to build. Actual work was begun in January, 1914, and was completed in October, 1916. Citizens and railroad officials met approximately 263 times to discuss and complete arrangements for the project. Jarvis Hunt designed the station, which could handle 50,000 passengers. All of the latest equipment was included, and the total cost was \$6,500,000.⁶

⁴News, October 1, 1935, VII, p. 5.

⁵News, October 1, 1935, VII, p. 5.

⁶News, October 1, 1935, VII, p. 5.

A plaza was included in the disposition, thus fulfilling another of Kessler's suggestions. His Civic Center idea was not developed, because of controversy over location of the City Hall and because the United States government purchased land located elsewhere for a post office. However, a .918 acre plaza, with an electric fountain which had been donated by Royal A. Ferris, did give Dallas ". . . a dignified and worthy railroad entrance" The plaza was purchased by the park department in 1918. Ferris plaza, located on the block bounded by Wood, Young, Houston, and Jefferson, is still in existence today.⁷

Besides the Civic Center change, another deviation from Kessler's plan was the actual site of the terminal. Kessler recommended a location at the junction of Main and Broadway. The place chosen was at the East end of Young Street, approximately four blocks South of Kessler's proposed spot. The placement of the wholesale district had influenced this move. The Union Terminal and freight terminals were to use the same tracks and equipment. The leveeing of the Trinity River and work done on the belt-line railroad helped make possible the completion of the wholesale district and in turn

⁷Louis P. Head, The Kessler City Plan, p. 8. Kessler, City Plan, p. 13, Park and Playground System, 1921-1923. "Dallas Park Properties."

the union and freight terminals. The wholesale area was located, as Kessler had outlined, south of Wood between Akard and Broadway. Not all of the freight terminals used the location, however. The wholesale district and the removal of the Texas and Pacific tracks from Pacific Avenue in 1921, helped relieve downtown congestion.⁸ The removal of the tracks had taken over 500 conferences, publicity from the press, money from banks, ground work by a real estate firm, and a helpful railroad official.⁹

The Wholesale Trackage Committee (WTC), Harry L. Seay, Chairman, was formed to work with railroad officials on the removal of the tracks. The railroad was represented by John L. Lancaster. The WTC was responsible for finding land for the Texas and Pacific in the wholesale district as well as for raising part of the money to pay for such land. The cost was to be shared by the citizens, the city government, and the railroad company. Land was acquired, and the actual work of removing the tracks began in July of 1921. The work was completed in the spring of 1923; Pacific Avenue was paved and lined with lights. The retail district now

⁸News, October 18, 1916, p. 6. Kessler, City Plan, p. 12.

⁹News, August 1, 1921, p. 13.

had an additional street. Of the implemented portion of Kessler's suggestions, the removal of the Texas and Pacific tracks was the most celebrated.¹⁰

Downtown street corrections also received massive citizen support. Two citizen organizations were formed to work for downtown street corrections: the Metropolitan Development Association and the Dallas Property Owners' Association. Jointly these two organizations invited Kessler back to Dallas in 1919 and 1920. During these two visits, Kessler made additional suggestions in regard to street openings and widenings. It was not until after Kessler's visits that much work was done pertaining to streets. Some work had been done on Pearl Street in 1913. Harwood was completed in 1921, St. Paul and Lamar in 1923, and Field in 1925. Kessler made changes in his original plan because of the increase in automobile traffic, the continued growth of Dallas, and because his earlier plans had been ignored and buildings had been constructed where some streets should have run.¹¹

Perhaps the most significant development resulting from the street work was a law which allowed property owners

¹⁰Head, City Plan, p. 10.

¹¹Babcock, "Street Openings," p. 472. Head, City Plan, pp. 11-22.

to be assessed for highway construction purposes. This law, passed in 1923, permitted the city of Dallas not only to condemn land for highway purposes but also to assess surrounding property on the basis of benefits which would occur as a result of the highway formation. The approximately \$377,000 spent on Field Street was raised in this manner as was the \$308,972.75 for St. Paul.¹²

After 1927 the Park Board operated under a similar law by which it could improve or acquire park lands. Before this date Park Board finances were supplied by a Permanent Ten Cent Park Tax and city bonds. The board did not have authority to tax or to sell bonds; it received a fixed amount of city taxes and bonds.¹³ Between 1913 and 1925 there were four different improvement bond issues which totaled approximately \$1,625,000. During this time about twenty-five parks were added to the Dallas park system. All of the parks proposed by Kessler in 1911 were developed with few alterations. Some were modified in order to adapt Kessler's plans to changes which had occurred and were occurring in Dallas. For example, the park proposed for the

¹²Vernon's Civil Statutes, p. 1141. Head, City Plan, pp. 11-22.

¹³1907 charter, City of Dallas.

junction of Fitzhugh Avenue and Mill Creek was divided and two small areas were purchased. They now provide a park on each side of a busy thoroughfare.¹⁴

Apparently Kessler's idea of a boulevard system was never implemented. Turtle Creek Parkway was developed, however. The land for the project was donated and the drive constructed at a minimal cost to the city treasury.¹⁵

When Dallas citizens were first asked to express their opinions about city planning, the improvements most often listed as being desirable were paving, a union depot, water supply, and sidewalks. Each of these is a functional aspects of a city. The citizens did not envision any changes which would result in enhanced city life in general. The parts were to be improved, but nothing was to be done to alter the overall environment of the city. The first opinions of Dallasites, the campaign of the News, the parts of Kessler's plan implemented, and newspaper coverage of the implementation gave the impression that Dallasites never understood the

¹⁴Vernon's Civil Statutes, p. 787. "Dallas Park Properties." Kessler, Park Report. Interview with L.B. Houston, director of Dallas Park Department.

¹⁵Nothing was mentioned in the News as late as 1924. The increase in automobile traffic coupled with failure to understand Kessler's recommendations are reasons the system was not developed. City Planning Commission minutes leave the impression they just desire streets which allow movement of traffic and nothing more. News, February 21, 1911, p. 4.

composite problem in Dallas; they were concerned with solving immediate problems only.¹⁶

Another area which illustrates this lack of understanding was the work of the Dallas City Plan and Improvement League. After presenting its idea of city planning to the City Commissioners, the DCP&IL seems to have had no other function. Perhaps its duty was only to obtain a plan. This would leave the City Commissioners with the job of implementing the plan.¹⁷

Because the Dallas government did not have a city planning department until 1919, there was no way to direct work on Kessler's plan. Memorandums from and to Dealey suggest that city administrators were not aware of Kessler's plan, much less concerned about it. K.K. Hooper, city planning expert of the News, mentioned in one instance that the mayor did not know that Dallas had a plan until Dealey informed him of this. Although there was no city planning department, the Commissioners could have retained Kessler on a consulting basis. He could have directed the work as funds and time permitted.¹⁸

¹⁶News, January 1, 1910, p. 4; January 2, 1910, p. 4.

¹⁷Dealey, "Getting into Action."

¹⁸City planning papers, DHS.

Kessler prepared a report for the Park Board in 1916. This was the only instance found of Kessler's being retained between 1913 and 1919 when he was employed by the Metropolitan Development Association and the Dallas Property Owners' Association. Correspondence between Dealey and Kessler reveals that Kessler was consulted occasionally. He wrote of the advisory position in a letter addressed to Dealey dated February 16, 1918. "I wonder whether this is on a per diem basis or the old consideration of zero per year and no expenses." Thus, it seems that neither the Park Board members nor the City Commissioners were willing to pay for advice during this period.¹⁹

If funds were not available and municipal officials not informed, it seems that Dealey, in person or through the News, should have done something. He had originally advocated planning; it would seem logical that he would be interested in the implementation of the plan once it was official. Dealey wanted Kessler to show officials that Kessler was needed in Dallas.

You (Dealey) have repeatedly told me that I should teach these gentlemen how I could serve them best. What I can do for them, and all that sort of thing.

¹⁹Kessler, Park Report, Head, City Plan, p. 12.

My experience is against attempting to illustrate to people that or how they need any class of service. If they are not conscious of such needs and do not entirely understand their particular value then it has always seemed to me an utterly²⁰ hopeless thing to attempt to render such service.

If neither the citizens, the City Commissioners, the Park Board members, nor Kessler were willing to assume responsibility for planning in Dallas, it seems as though the "Father of city planning in the Southwest," as one source called Dealey, should have taken the initiative and educated the people as to the need for action in regard to the city plan. Still, Dealey did not take the initiative and work for the development of the comprehensive plan.²¹

Dealey, like other prominent men throughout the country during this era, seemed to be concerned only with reform, not results. He was "caught up in the Progressivism pervading America" It seems as though Dealey thought getting a planner and a plan would of itself make Dallas a better city. Like reformers of the period, Dealey felt that the ". . . turning out of the rascals . . . ," changing the form of government, or planning a city would correct any inadequacies within a metropolis. The flood of 1908 had

²⁰Dealey papers, DHS.

²¹Typed biography of Dealey in Dealey papers, DHS.

caused Dealey to realize that Dallas did have problems; therefore, it was up to a public spirited citizen like himself to do something.²²

As far as Dealey knew, there were no rascals, the form of government had been changed, a city plan was all that was needed. As has been seen, though no real support was given to the plan as a whole, Kessler, Dealey's choice for planner, felt that boulevards would serve to eliminate congestion, enhance property values, zone land, and improve the circulation of a city as well as make it more beautiful. Boulevards were not publicized in the News, and no mention was found of them in either Dealey's papers or his public writings. Nothing suggests that Dealey ever understood Kessler's concept of boulevards. Kessler believed that if circulation and open spaces were provided, cities would not only be more beautiful, they would also be more functional. Thus the difference between Dealey and Kessler was that Dealey thought having a plan would of itself solve problems whereas Kessler knew changes would have to be made. Kessler wanted to change the urban environment rather than patch up what existed.²³

²²Scott, American City Planning, p. 67. McFarland, "The Great Civic Awakening," p. 917.

²³Glabb, The American City, pp. 257-263. News, 1909-1924.

Kessler realized as had Olmsted that city life was preferable to rural life. However, plans must be made to make the city livable. The boulevards and parks would do this. By bringing images of rural life into cities and making them accessible to all citizens, Kessler hoped to improve city life. This is perhaps the most misunderstood aspect of plans proposed by men like Kessler. By planning urban growth via zoning (boulevards), and by providing open spaces akin to rural areas, they believed that they would solve urban problems. Kessler implied that once boulevards were built in slum areas, the district would improve. Rather than ignoring slums, Kessler was advocating a different means of making urban areas more habitable.

In summary, planning in Dallas during this early period was primarily the work of two men, George B. Dealey and George E. Kessler. Dealey, originator of many civic projects in Dallas, did the initial work required to impress citizens with the need for planning. His methods for so doing were civic organizations and reports in the News. Dealey's initial campaign was successful and the second phase of planning in Dallas commenced. Kessler was hired to submit a plan. He did this and by October of 1911, Dallas had an official plan in published form. It was in the last segment that difficulties

arose. Kessler had developed a plan that would not only cure immediate ills but would prevent problems from occurring in the future. Dealey did not work for the implementation of such a comprehensive plan, and as a result only parts of the plan were implemented. The parts developed were those most important to the business community.

APPENDIX A

Street Openings and Corrections

"MARKET STREET--To be opened full width from Collin Street to McKinney Avenue.

"AUSTIN STREET--From Ross Avenue to McKinney Avenue.

"LAMAR STREET--From Elm Street to McKinney Avenue.

"FIELD STREET--From Main Street to Pacific Avenue.

"MAGNOLIA STREET--From Ross Avenue to Jackson Street.

"STONE STREET--From Commerce Street to Pacific Avenue.

"WOOD STREET--From Harwood Street to Poydas Street.

"ERVAY STREET--From Ross Avenue to McKinney Avenue via School Street.

"EVERGREEN STREET--To be opened up 100 Feet Wide from Marilla Street to Commerce Street.

"ST. PAUL STREET--To be widened on the east side from Elm Street to Pacific Avenue.

"HARWOOD STREET--From Wood Street to Commerce Street by taking a strip on the east side of Harwood Street.

"--From Commerce Street to Elm Street to be widened by taking a strip on the west side of Harwood Street.

"--From Elm Street to Pacific Avenue by taking a strip on the east side of Harwood Street.

"--From Pacific Avenue to Live Oak Street by taking a strip on the east side of the present street.

"PEARL STREET--To be widened from Elm Street north by taking a strip on the west side of the present street.

"DOVE STREET--To be opened from Main Street to Elm Street.

"LLOYD STREET--To be opened from Main Street to Elm Street to connect with Good Street."¹

APPENDIX B

Boulevards

Dallas

"Boulevard along Fitzhugh Avenue"

"South Boulevard"

"Boulevard along Masten, St. Paul, and Colonial Avenues"

"Boulevard on Ross Avenue"

"Boulevard on Hall Avenue"

Oak Cliff

"Boulevard on Marsalis Avenue"

"Boulevard along Cedar Creek"

"Boulevard running North"

"Boulevard running South and West"

"Paseo Along Davis Street"

"West Dallas Boulevard"²

¹Kessler, City Plan, 18-19.

²Kessler, City Plan, 31-34.

APPENDIX C

Parks

Dallas

Oak Lawn Park--existed

City Park--existed

Park along and South of Turney Avenue--proposed

Park along and South of Fitzhugh Avenue and Mill
Creek--proposed

Monument Triangle--existed

Park Row--existed

Park at Wall Street, Grand Avenue and South Boulevard--
proposed

White Rock Park--proposed

Oak Cliff

Forest Park--existed

Park along Burr Oak Avenue--proposed

Turner Plaza--existed³

APPENDIX D

Playgrounds

Central Square Park--existed

Kindergarten Playgrounds--existed

³Kessler, City Plan, 34-38.

Trinity Park Playgrounds--existed⁴

APPENDIX E

Outer System of Boulevards

Dallas

Extension of Turtle Creek Parkway

Oasis Boulevard

Richmond Boulevard

Boulevard along Brown Street

Extension of South Boulevard

Oak Cliff

Boulevard along ridge South of Cedar Creek

Boulevard running North

A connecting Boulevard across Trinity bottoms

Boulevard along Davis Street extended

Connection⁵ between Marsalis and Boulevard South of Cedar Creek

⁴Kessler, City Plan, 22.

⁵Kessler, City Plan, 38-39.

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