

CITY PLANNING FOR SYRACUSE

THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
SYRACUSE, NEW YORK



SYRACUSE, N. Y.:
JOHN SINGLE PAPER COMPANY
1919

Note

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SYRACUSE, NEW YORK, March 15, 1919.

*To the Honorable Mayor, Members of the Common
Council, and Citizens of the City of Syracuse,
New York.*

Gentlemen:

The City Planning Commission has the honor to submit herewith a review of its work for the past four years.

Very truly yours,

DR. SARGENT F. SNOW,

Chairman,

NEWELL B. WOODWORTH,

Vice Chairman,

ADELE P. BLAUVELT,

Secretary,

HARRIET T. BIRDSALL,

HON. LOUIS WILL,

CLARENCE A. HILLS,

ANDREW J. MOYNIHAN,

ERNEST I. EDGCOMB,

NICHOLAS M. PETERS,

CLARENCE E. HOWARD,

City Planning Expert, 1914 to
November, 1917; (In Military
Service);

BENJAMIN E. HOLDEN,

City Planning Expert, substitute
for Mr. Howard, November,
1917, to August, 1918;

CARLETON E. RICE,

City Planning Expert, August,
1918, to date;

WALTER A. RICE,

Leveller.

History of Commission

The enabling act passed by the New York State Legislature in 1913 gave to all cities and incorporated villages of New York State the right to create and maintain a city planning commission, and at the same time designated the powers and duties of such a department of the municipal government. A copy of this act is printed in the appendix of this report.

The following ordinance adopted by the Common Council Monday, February 2, 1914, authorized the appointment of the original City Planning Commission:

Be it ordained, That this Common Council, in pursuance of the authority conferred by Chapter 699, Laws of 1913, has determined to create and hereby does create for the City of Syracuse, a city planning commission to be composed of nine (9) members who shall serve without pay and who shall have the powers and duties conferred by the statutes of the state and ordinances of this body; and be it further

Ordained, That the mayor of the city be and he hereby is authorized and directed to appoint said commission and fix the terms of office of its members so that as nearly as possible the term of office of one-third of the members shall be for one year, the term of office of one-third for two years and the term of office of one-third for three years.

City Planning Commission appointed by Mayor Louis Will, March 16th, 1914:

A. L. BROCKWAY	ADÈLE P. BLAUVELT
SAMUEL H. COOK	HARRIET T. BIRDSALL
NICHOLAS M. PETERS	ANDREW J. MOYNIHAN
JAMES E. DOLAN	SARGENT F. SNOW
CLARENCE A. HILLS	

Newell B. Woodworth appointed October 19, 1914, in the place of J. E. Dolan, resigned.

Dr. S. F. Snow, Newell B. Woodworth and C. A. Hills reappointed March 15, 1916, for three years.

John R. Clancy appointed March 15, 1915, in the place of A. L. Brockway, resigned.

Adèle P. Blauvelt, Harriet T. Birdsall and A. J. Moynihan reappointed March 15, 1915, for three years.

Ernest I. Edgcomb appointed August 28, 1916, in the place of S. H. Cook, resigned.

Nicholas M. Peters and Ernest I. Edgcomb reappointed March 15, 1917.

Louis Will appointed March 15, 1917, in the place of John R. Clancy, whose term expired on that date; this appointment for three years.

Adèle P. Blauvelt, Harriet T. Birdsall and A. J. Moynihan reappointed March 15, 1918, for three years.

Dr. S. F. Snow, Newell B. Woodworth and C. A. Hills reappointed March 15, 1919, for three years.

Introduction

While extraordinary economic conditions brought about by America's entrance into the war have retarded extensive accomplishments, some of the special features on the program of the City Planning Commission have been satisfactorily advanced.

The success of the commission's policy of taking the public into its confidence has been shown by the interest evidenced by the audiences at gatherings and meetings where informal lectures illustrated by both local and foreign pictures bearing on city planning work were thrown upon the screen. After such meetings open forums were always held, which have in all cases been interesting.

STATUS OF ITEMS ON CITY PLANNING COMMISSION'S PROGRAM

Major Street Plan

This project, for the reason previously explained, is held in abeyance for the duration of the war. There were, however, several detailed propositions for improvement at certain street intersections which were started and brought before the city officials through the efforts of

this commission and which we are glad to be able to say have been accomplished this past year or are well on their way to realization. Among these are the following:

Rugby Road Extension

Rugby road extension from Hampton road westerly, crossing Durston avenue and the Sedgwick farms tract to connect with Roby avenue, which is the main entrance from Dewitt street to Schiller park. This street opening project has followed the plan as originally prepared by this commission and gives a new entrance direct and from a high class residential district on eastern James street heights through a promising and as yet undeveloped area on the rear of the Sedgwick farms tract to Dewitt street. There is at present no east and west street in this vicinity between James and Manlius streets.

Twin Hills and Stinard Avenue Openings

This project has been materially aided by the co-operation of the City Engineer's office. The work is well advanced and will complete the tying up of the Twin Hills tract with the adjoining property upon the north and east and at the same time open it onto South Geddes street in a practical way.

Bellevue and Onondaga Avenues Intersection

The northwest corner at the intersection of these two streets has long been considered a particularly dangerous point both by pedestrians and automobile drivers. Several attempts had been made previous to the suggestion of this commission for its improvement in 1914. The cutting back of this corner and elimination of the sharp corner at the foot of the steep hill has actually been done this past summer and brings about a very much appreciated improvement.

Barge Canal Harbor Street System

The plan officially recommended by the City Planning Commission in 1917, for adoption, opened up the old salt marsh to a new future as homes for industries, gave direct easy access to the new harbor and at the same time connected with the existing street system admirably without any serious alterations becoming necessary. This street development scheme was accepted and followed by the City Engineer in the opening of the tract. The carrying out of this plan has been somewhat handicapped by reason of legal difficulties in acquiring permits to cross state properties. It is now understood that these objections are removed and that we may soon have this large future industrial area opened up by a first class street system. The map on page — shows the plan recommended by the City Planning Commission for the new street system for this area. The proposed new streets are shown in full black. Under the plan as shown the two main thoroughfares which are needed at once are, namely, the extension of Solar street north and of Kirkpatrick street westerly. This improvement can be carried out without in any way interfering with the further extension of the plan. This will give an immediate approach to the wharves and so serve reasonably well the present needs of the shippers.

Solar street will be extended north from Plum street to Hiawatha avenue, running directly in front of the east side of the harbor. The street as now planned will be 80 feet wide at the harbor entrance. This added to the 200-foot strip of the state property between the street and the water edge will provide ample trucking space in front of the warehouses which the state is to build. This extension of Solar street will cross Spencer street, so that traffic can go to and from the center of the city by the Plum,-West Genesee or the Spencer-North Clinton route.

Kirkpatrick street, which now comes only to the

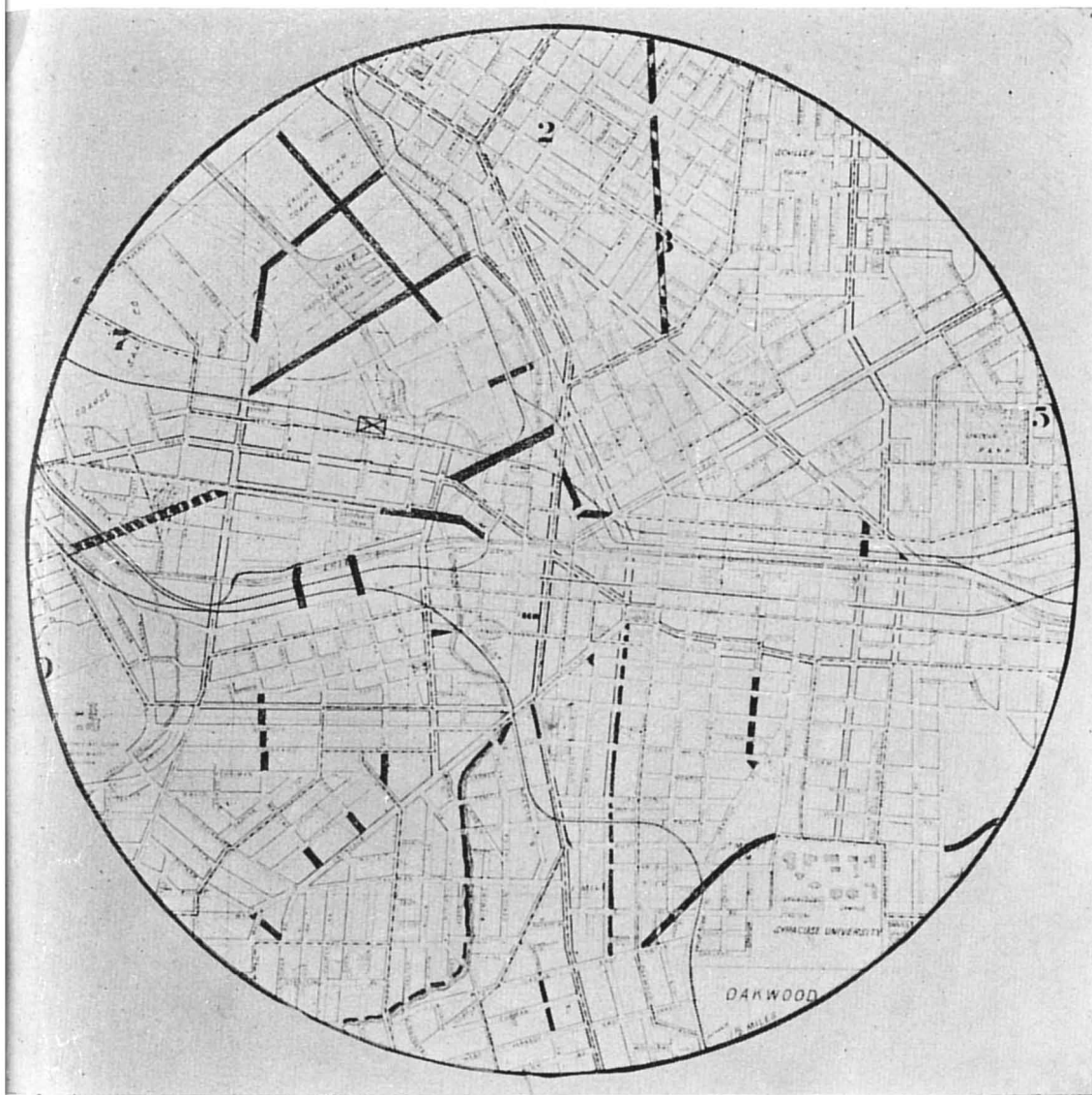


FIG. 1.
 Major Street Plan, Showing Suggested Street Extensions and Widenings Within the Mile Circle.

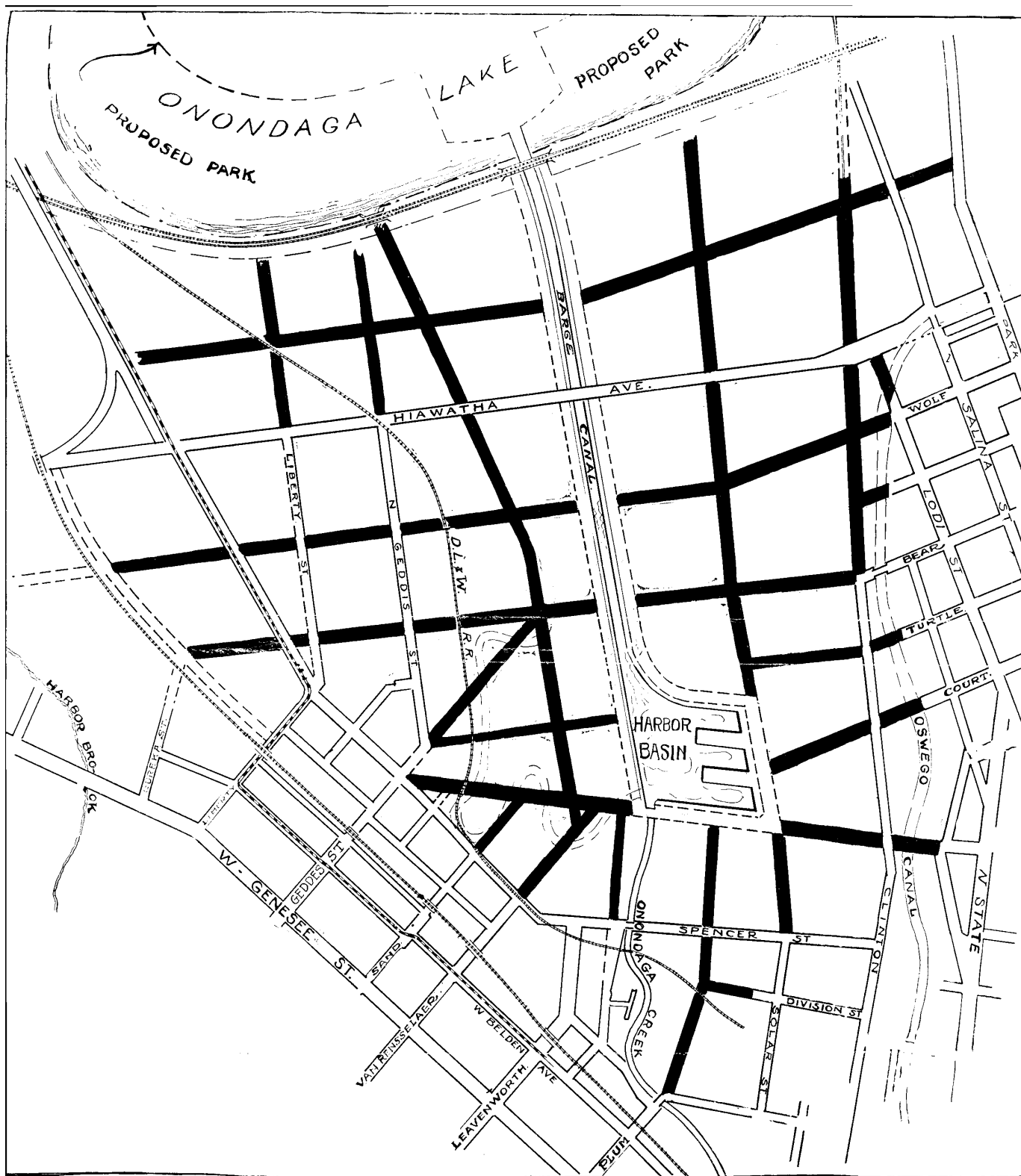


FIG. II.

Plan for Development of Street System in Barge Canal Harbor District. New Streets are Shown in Heavy Black.

present Oswego canal, will be extended west, running along the south front of the harbor and, like Solar street, it will be 80 feet wide. Continuing this extension further west, beyond the harbor, it will join North Geddes street, thus providing a direct route to the extensive factory section in the western part of the city. Before the full usefulness of Kirkpatrick street can be utilized, however, it will be necessary for either the city or the state to correct a mistake made when the plans for the terminal were made. These plans, in accordance with which the terminal was constructed, included only two bridges, one at Hiawatha avenue and the other at Spencer street. The three docks are on the east side of the harbor, so that all traffic to and from the western half of the city will have to go south one block to Spencer street, to cross the creek, or north three blocks to Hiawatha avenue, to cross the harbor inlet. The Kirkpatrick street bridge is fully as important as either of the other two provided for.

Although Kirkpatrick and Solar streets will provide direct access from all directions, it is planned to open several more streets. A new street is projected to parallel Solar street from Plum street to the south side of the harbor. On the east side, extensions of Court, Turtle, Bear and Wolf streets from their present terminals to the harbor channel are under contemplation. On the west side it is proposed to extend Liberty street through to Hiawatha avenue, and to extend North Geddes street through to meet the Bear street extension which is to cross, some time in the future, the harbor entrance by a bridge. When Bear and Geddes streets are joined they will form a splendid thoroughfare from the northeastern to the southwestern section of the city.

Geddes street today is an important trucking street and, fortunately, was laid out 100 feet wide from Edison street to Bellevue avenues. Under the plan discussed here

this street is made 100 feet wide its entire length northward from Edison street from where it now is narrowed. The industrial section just south of the New York Central and Lackawanna railroad yards, near the Franklin works, will be nearly entirely dependant upon Geddes street for its trucking service to the Barge canal harbor district.

Probably no other inland city in the country possesses so splendid an opportunity for industrial development. There are more than 600 acres in this tract available for use as sites upon which to build industries. This area is bounded on all sides by railroad tracks—the New York Central freight tracks (Syracuse Junction railroad) on the north, skirting the lake and crossing the harbor channel; the New York Central's Rome, Watertown & Ogdensburg tracks on the east, and the West Shore line of the New York Central at the south and west. Intersecting this tract, formerly covered by salt sheds, is the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western railroad. The tendency on the part of industries to group themselves within a zone which offers peculiar advantages, particularly as regards transportation, is emphasized by a map prepared by this commission. If the lines of logical development are to be followed, all of the salt lands will in time be occupied for industrial purposes.

It is not alone the unusual amount of railroad trackage within a comparatively small area, or the waterway possibilities, that make the salt lands, within the opinion of the City Planning Commission, a locality especially adapted to industrial growth. The absence of obstacles, such as the removal of substantial buildings; the lake, when the present sewage contamination is removed according to plans of the Intercepting Sewer Board, as a source of water supply; and an opportunity for the systematic building of group after group of new plants, are the items which help to make the situation favorable.

Looking into the future, the City Planning Commission can see a belt line railroad serving all of the industries within the zone and bringing transportation service for all to a high state of efficiency. If the section in question is to be developed on a large scale for manufacturing and shipping purposes, building operations will necessarily include new homes for workmen and their families. Dr. Werner Hegeman, of Berlin, an authority on city planning, foresaw this when he visited the salt lands over five years ago. He said:

The new barge canal gives to an enterprising community the occasion for a modern layout, combining all of the advantages of water and railroad transportation carried to the very doors of every factory. The opportunities to be found there are probably greater than anywhere else, since the building of the harbor can be combined with the reclaiming of a large part of the lake front. This opportunity should not be thought of without planning at the same time in a comprehensive way for the housing of the workmen who will have to be employed in the new industrial district, and for parks and playgrounds for their recreation.

Onondaga Creek Parkway

The proposition for the city to acquire and develop a parkway along the banks of Onondaga creek from Kirk park south was recommended by Mr. G. F. Kessler in his report to the Park Commission in 1907. This project has since been dormant, although it was at several times brought to the attention of the public by Mr. Allen, the city engineer, in some of his reports or talks before the business men of the community. During 1916 and 1917, in conjunction with the Intercepting Sewer Board, which has been making ready for the extension of the improvement of the creek channel through this territory, and with the Park Commission, the City Planning Commission worked out and presented a plan for this development as shown on page — of this report. This plan met with the hearty support of the city officials and includes the acquiring of both banks of the creek from Kirk park to the southern city line. This strip of land is to be beautified

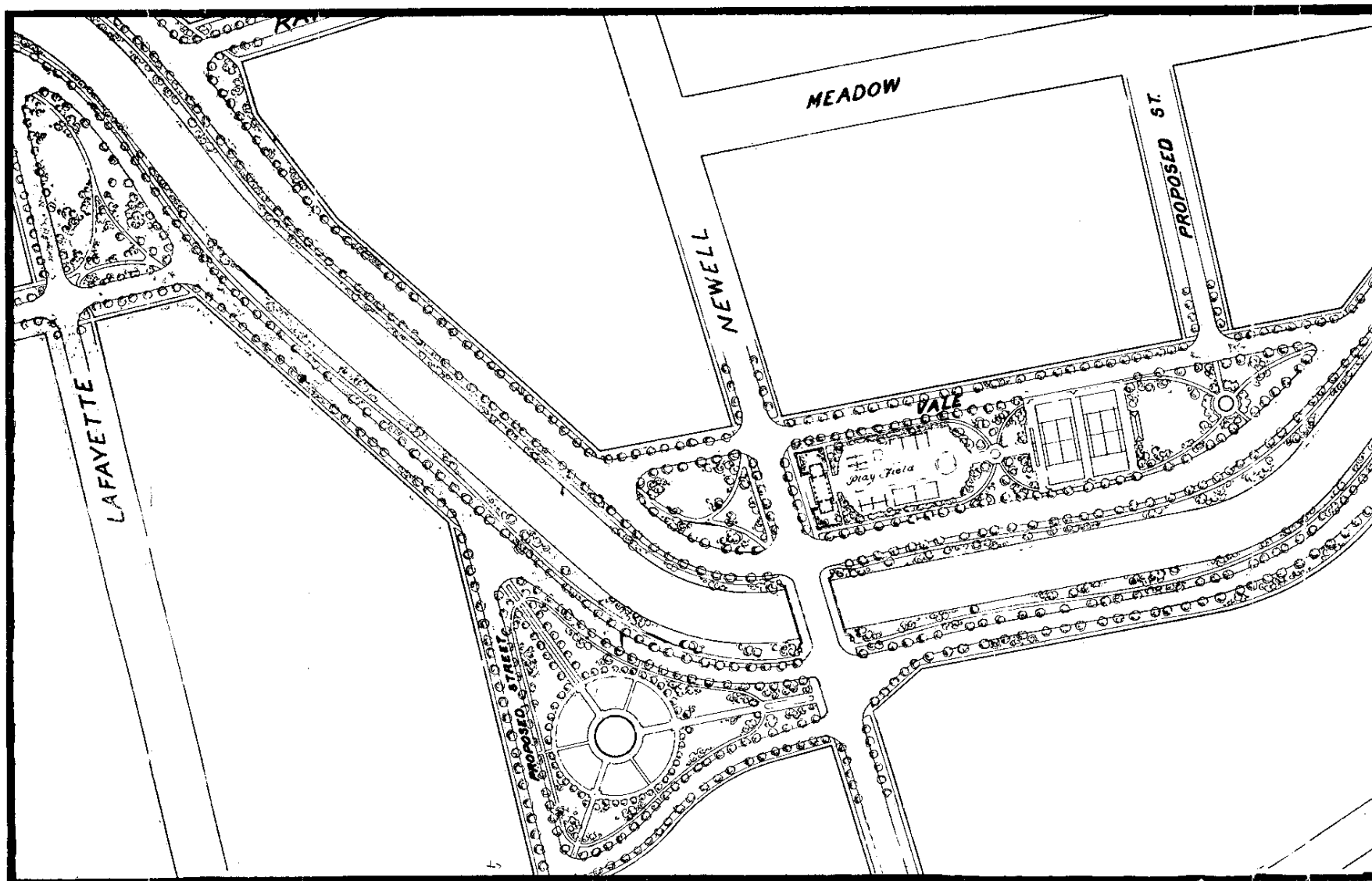
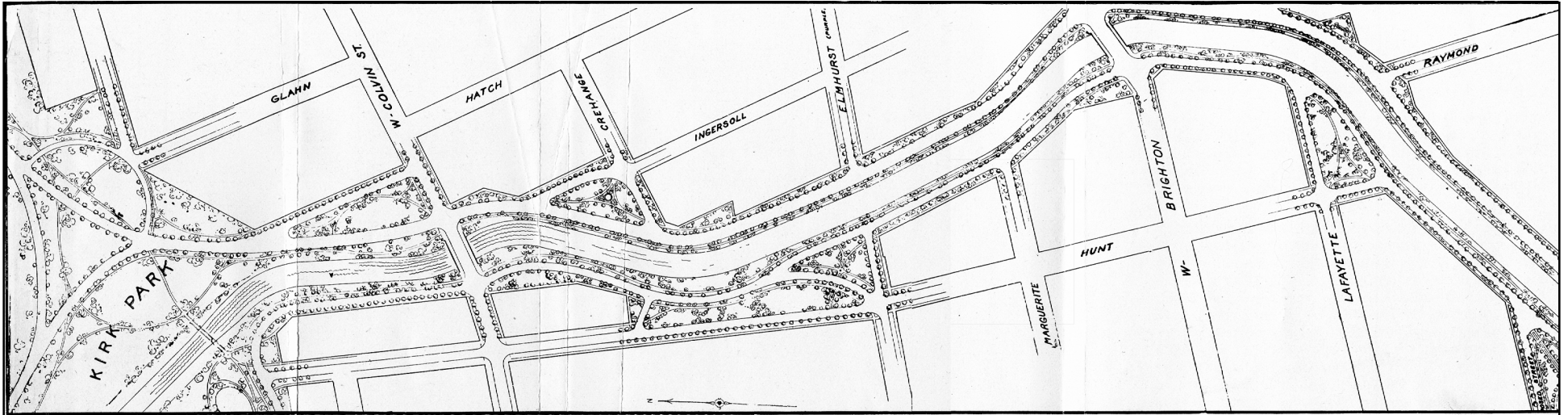


FIG. III.
Plan for Onondaga Creek Parkway Drive from Kirk Park
South to City Line.

Onondaga Creek Parkway Drive



for park purposes and utilized as a direct avenue for vehicular traffic, thus giving a new thoroughfare to Onondaga Valley and relieving the certain congestion which otherwise is sure to come if the two existing through routes to the valley are the only ones to be maintained.

Final plans for the improvement of the east side of the creek have not been made, and it has not been determined definitely just how much land will be taken. It is certain, however, that at least a strip fifty feet wide will be necessary, part of which will be used by the Intercepting Sewer Board for laying the large trunk sewer.

Practically all of the land on the west side of the creek is so low that it is nearly valueless for building development. The level of this land will be raised considerably by the spoil to be taken from the bed of the creek. There are many thousands of yards of excellent gravel in the bed of the creek which will have to be removed by dredging. This will not only be used to raise the level of the land acquired, but for the grading of the roadways also. The drives will be at a considerable height above the stream itself. When the work is finally done the water of the stream, free from all pollution, will flow in a concrete channel. The sloping banks will have a width of approximately fifteen feet, planted with grass, ornamental shrubs and trees. By this treatment, land which is now practically valueless for building purposes can be converted into one of the most beautiful residential sections of the city. The creek's banks, instead of being a convenient back yard rubbish heap, will be desirable gardens and lawns toward which builders on the abutting property will face their buildings. The drives will furnish an avenue to serve the Elmwood section and lower Midland avenue and will be free of trolley tracks and heavy trucking traffic. Many streets, whose development has been stopped because they were dead ended at the creek, will

take on new activities and a large area of the city which is now waste will be open for residential development. Among these streets are Vale, Meadow, Loomis, Ostrander and Emma.

Work will be started on the west bank of the creek as soon as the Intercepting Sewer Board begins work on the creek from Kirk park southerly.

Plans have also been made and the land acquired for the extension of this same drive from lower Onondaga park along the north bank of the creek from just south of Cheney street to connect with South avenue. In addition to the above advantages, this will give a new entrance to Onondaga park. The City Planning Commission has spent considerable time in preparing schemes for continuing this creekway drive from South avenue northward along the west bank of the creek into the downtown section or to West Onondaga street. This plan seems to be entirely practical and conflicts with no serious property damage until we reach nearly the north end of the route. It is the hope of this commission at some future date to see this plan in general executed, which will permit a creek parkway drive from West Onondaga street to Onondaga Valley.

Park Boulevard System

This project is really a scheme for encircling the city with a parkway boulevard tying together all our present segregated larger parks. This plan has never been worked out very clearly in detail on account of more pressing immediate problems for solution, but in general the scheme includes the following.

Beginning at a point near Avery avenue and Whittier street, at the northwestern corner of Burnet park, and going northerly, passing west of Myrtle Hill cemetery, through the village of Solvay, to the lake shore near the State Fair grounds. From this point there could be a

boulevard system completely encircling Onondaga lake. At the lower end of the lake there would be, on reclaimed lands, a fair sized park in itself. Passing on to the east through this park we would, by coming down through some of the wide streets of the First and Second wards, reach Schiller park. From here our route leads to Lincoln park. From Lincoln park via Teall avenue and a viaduct, to get over the railroad tracks in that vicinity, we reach the higher ground on East Genesee street and so strike Thornden reserve, which it is hoped will soon be acquired by the city as an addition to its park system. From Thornden our boulevard, as contemplated, would pass by way of Euclid avenue through the rear of the University campus and a natural ravine in Oakwood cemetery, coming out on Kennedy street and continuing on to Kirk park. Through Kirk and Onondaga parks we come to the present southwestern corner of the latter near the inlet to Lake Hiawatha, and following on through the Onondaga Heights tract southwesterly strike Glenwood avenue at its intersection with South Geddes street. From this point we would follow Glenwood avenue and Wadsworth street westward past the Bellevue golf club grounds to Bellevue avenue. From this point, in some route not yet determined, we would cross the valley to the Burnet park hill and the place of starting. The route is only a general one as yet, but appears to be very practical from all standpoints. The City Planning Commission does not advocate the building of this roadway as a single project, but rather accomplished piece by piece as local improvements, and when new streets are opened up on this route to bear in mind this ultimate plan and make these improvements conform to it. In this we have already been successful in some specific cases of land subdivisions along the route described.

Onondaga Lake Park

This commission, realizing the great advantages to be gained and the unusual opportunities possessed by Syracuse for having a water front park on Onondaga lake, has developed a scheme for building such a park on reclaimed land to the north of the New York Central railroad now located on the south shore of the lake. It is proposed to fill, either by dredging from the bottom of the lake, or by waste from the Solvay Process Company, for a distance of about one thousand feet from the present shore line. This fill would be retained at the northern end by a retaining wall or bulkhead to be built to about two or three feet above high water mark. Above this the filled area would be covered with top soil and planted with grass, trees, shrubs, and then laid out with drives, walks, etc. This would furnish an ideal site for boating and other club houses connected with aquatic sports as well as playgrounds. The construction and use of a modern sewage treatment plant, for which plans are now well advanced, will remove the cause of the greatest pollution now going into the lake, and it is altogether probable that some way will be found by the Solvay companies to also keep contamination from the lake water. Not so very many years ago Onondaga lake was widely known as one of the prettiest of inland lakes, and it surely should be put back into a sanitary and respectful condition by the city and made a place of recreation and beauty for her citizens.

Public Playgrounds

This is a need that every progressive city of any size has begun to take steps to provide for. Syracuse has made a good beginning. Let it continue along a definite program in supplying outdoor recreation grounds where these facilities are lacking. This commission, while not trying

to criticize the past in this matter, feels that greater attention, when selecting sites for new playgrounds, should be given to the amount of patronage the yard will receive in that particular section. It has been determined by careful observation that most children who patronize these playgrounds will go one-fourth mile and even sometimes one-half mile to the play center. The map shown Fig. IV shows the distribution of public playgrounds in this city, together with the one-fourth and one-half mile circle about each. A glance at this map will show precisely what districts are without this class of service. The playgrounds in the larger parks do not serve as large a number of children as they would if placed outside of the parks and near a neighborhood center, such as the schoolhouse. The reason for this is given above, in speaking about the one-half mile limit the children will go to play. If the playground is in the center of a large park we have all of that park area within this one-half mile circle, which might be replaced by the same area of homes, from which the children would come to play if the playground were placed directly in the residence neighborhood. The park playgrounds are necessary and fine, but to get the maximum use of the investment in these playgrounds they should be situated where the greatest number of children will use them. This commission contends that every public school should have nearby its modern public playground. We have a few such playgrounds already, which demonstrate what has just been quoted. Among these are Frazer and John D. Wilson playgrounds. The latter, being in a thickly populated section of the city, is particularly well patronized and appreciated by the neighborhood. The rapidly growing idea of making our public school buildings a community center for the citizens as well as a place of instruction for the young might well be broadened to include an outdoor playground with each school. Let the public buildings and property like these serve all of the people the year around.

Monuments, Memorials, Civic Centers

Clinton Square, a fine open place in the center of our city, at the intersection of the major north-south and east-west axes, lends itself to a particularly fine treatment for future development as a site for a permanent memorial to perpetuate the memory of our young men who served in the great war just passed, in keeping with the present soldiers' and sailors' monument.

It is expected that the Erie canal will be abandoned as a waterway this season. That being the case, the canal property will become available to the city for public improvements. It is assured that, in accordance with the Arnold report and the findings of the Grade Crossing Commission, the New York Central railroad will follow the bed of the present Erie canal from the eastern city line to a point about where the State street bridge now is. From here the tracks will swing northerly, passing across James street at the site of the present Alhambra block and continuing on westward over the West Shore right of way.

It is the suggestion of the City Planning Commission, when this piece of work shall have been accomplished, for the city to utilize the large open space now occupied by the junction of the Erie and Oswego canals at the rear of the present city hall for a plaza and civic center site. The present Erie canal line from Franklin street to State street will furnish the major axis for the street leading up to this group. A city hall, city museum and other public buildings would be grouped about this plaza where the two canal channels now come together. The depressed railroad tracks would of course be covered from where they leave State street going westward until after they had crossed Salina street. Plans have been made for the location of a new municipal auditorium and convention hall at the site of the present north side market. This is a type of building much needed in Syracuse.

Lincoln Memorial

The members of the East Side Improvement Association have started to raise a fund of five hundred thousand dollars for the purpose of erecting a large monument on the top of the hill in Lincoln park to be known as the Lincoln memorial. The City Planning Commission officially endorsed this site for the proposed monument.

Improvement of Surroundings of the Present Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument in Clinton Square

For a long time certain patriotic bodies and individuals have disliked the idea of using the paved spaces at the ends of this large memorial as a public parking place for automobiles, and in 1915 a petition was presented to the Common Council asking that these spaces be improved by creating ornamental flower beds or some other embellishment in keeping with the monument and at the same time do away with the use of these spaces as parking areas. The Common Council, by an ordinance passed March 22, 1915, requested the City Planning Commission to submit plans for this improvement. A plan prepared by this commission, calling for flower beds at each end of the monument, was submitted to the Common Council at its meeting held April 5, 1915. The Park Commission, by ordinance, was requested to make the improvement. At present this betterment consists only of having the space at the easterly end of the monument roped off and kept open, while the space at the opposite end is still used as a public automobile parking station. Now that the war is over, no doubt the work will be finished.

Grade Crossing Elimination

Our work on many vital problems seems to depend so much upon the solution of the grade crossing problem

that, until this is finally and definitely accomplished, many of the important improvement propositions, at the present time, can scarcely be more than touched upon. Among a few of the more important changes in the street system, we would suggest, in conjunction with the work of eliminating the grade crossings of the New York Central railroad according to the Arnold plan, the following:

1. Extension of Laurel street westward from Salina on its same course to intersect West Genesee street at North West street. This would enable traffic to go from West Genesee street to the north side section without being obliged to go down town into the already congested streets, and *vice versa*.

2. Another place where a direct connection from one part of the city to another is needed is from East Genesee street, in the vicinity of Columbus park, to Burnet avenue. This commission feels that Teall avenue should be the street carried over the railroad property by a viaduct and meeting Columbus avenue at Lombard street.

3. A street from the intersection of Tompkins street and Wilbur avenue, carried over the railroad tracks on a viaduct and coming onto West Genesee street near Geddes street would give a short direct route from the Burnet park residential section to the center of the city.

4. The extension of Oswego street to the north from West Fayette street by being depressed beneath the railroad tracks and connecting with Van Rensselaer street. This would make Van Rensselaer street one of the main heavy trucking streets from the south feeding the barge canal harbor. At present there is no street connection from north to south across the railroad yards for a distance of over three thousand feet, between West street on the east and Geddes street on the west.

5. The accepted plans for the New York Central grade elimination will also allow Burnet avenue to con-

tinue in its same course westerly from James street and connect with Willow street at Warren. These improvements in the present street system, with the railroad location arranged, are shown in the map on page —.

It might be stated in connection with this phase of the work that some consideration has been given by the City Planning Commission to the idea of bringing all of the interurban electric trains into a common central terminal, and underground so as to leave the streets free for other traffic. One of these propositions is to have a large underground electric terminal at Clinton square. Another is by using the present New York Central passenger station, as when the Central tracks are changed to their new location that road will have a new station on Belden avenue, in the vicinity of Van Rensselaer street or Leavenworth avenue.

Houston Avenue Extension

This embraces a plan for the opening of the property to the south of East Genesee street and between Fellows avenue and the Scottholm tract. At the present time this section stands by itself undeveloped and yet surrounded on all sides by pretentious homes of prosperous citizens. Westmoreland and Cumberland avenues are only partly accessible from East Genesee street, Allen street, or Euclid avenue, on account of prohibitory grades ranging from 18 per cent to 30 per cent. Houston avenue, a high class residential street in the Scottholm tract, is dead ended at the east line of the Fairview tract, and which if it were extended as proposed would give a nice broad street of easy grade and provide a new approach from the downtown section to the rear of the Scottholm tract. The block on the east side of Cumberland avenue between Genesee street and Euclid avenue at present is 2,800 feet long, without a cross street provided for. This is about three

times what the best subdivision experts consider should be the maximum length of city residential blocks for fire precautionary reasons alone. Other blocks in this section suggested for improvement have lengths of 1,700 and 1,800 feet.

The proposition for the improvement as here outlined involves the purchase of the property included within the limits of the immediate area of improvement, as shown on the map Fig. VI, and the replotting of the street system. This commission believes that in order to carry out the following plans the right of excess condemnation should be exercised and the lands shown inside the improvement area according to map Fig. VI should be purchased by the city. This area covers 11.8 acres and comprises as now plotted 117 vacant lots fronting on Westmoreland and Cumberland avenues. After replotting this parcel as shown on the map Fig. VII, we are able to obtain lots of better size having frontage on attractive residential streets and which have in no places grades in excess of 10 per cent. Houston avenue, by this plan, is enabled to come directly through from the Scottholm tract between two hills and meet Harvard place at Westmoreland avenue, thus giving a new diagonal entrance to one of our highest class developments in the eastern end of the city. By figures on file in the City Planning Commission's office and compiled through the aid of the real estate men, we find that these new lots (vacant) at present land values would be worth about \$15,000 over what they are worth as now plotted. At the present city tax rate this increased value would mean a direct annual revenue of \$500 additional to the city and indirectly would promote the development of the surrounding territory, which of course as soon as building operations started would again automatically raise the value of the property. There are no street improvements already made within the limits of

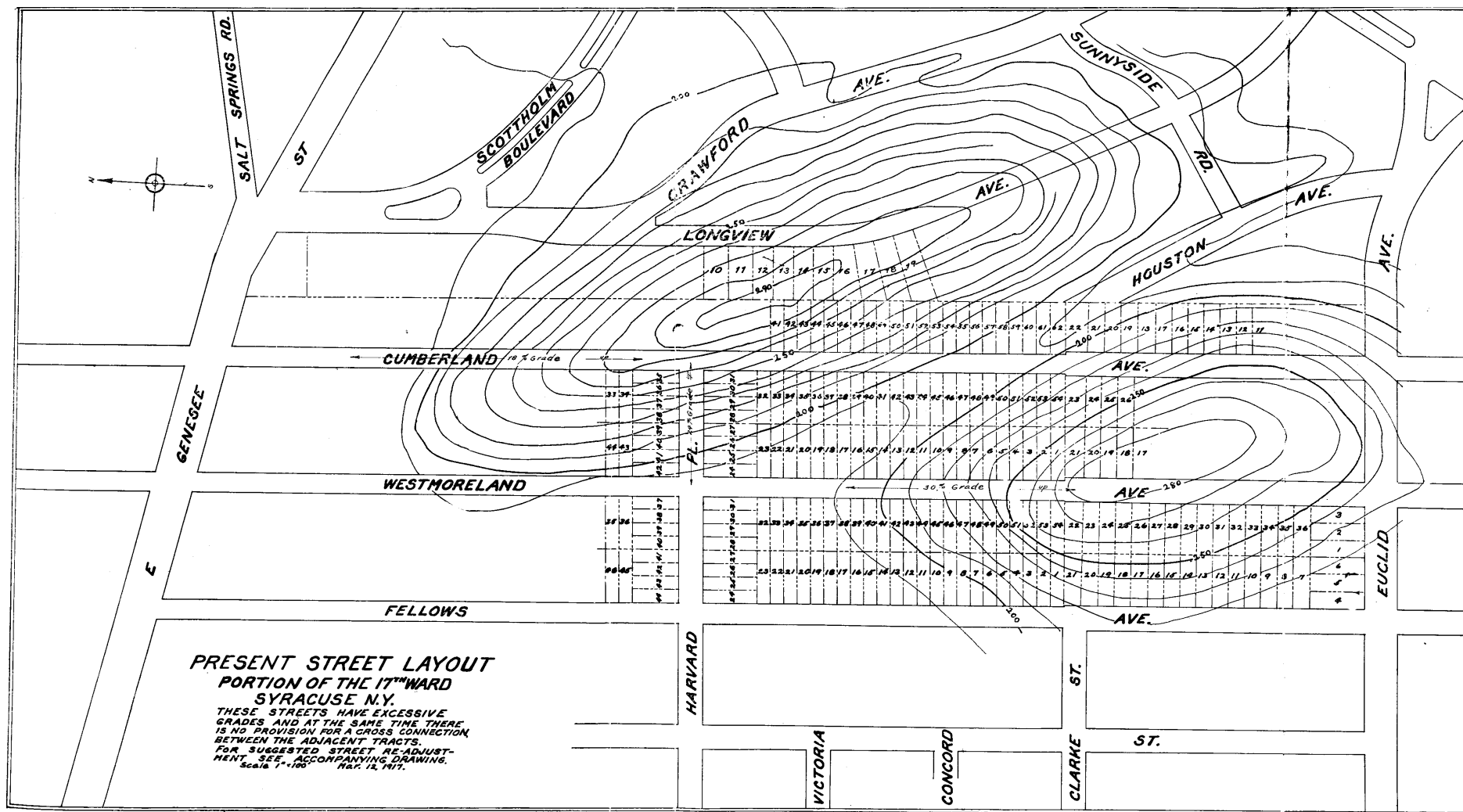


FIG. VI.
Present Plan of Street System Between the Scottholm and Fairview Tracts.

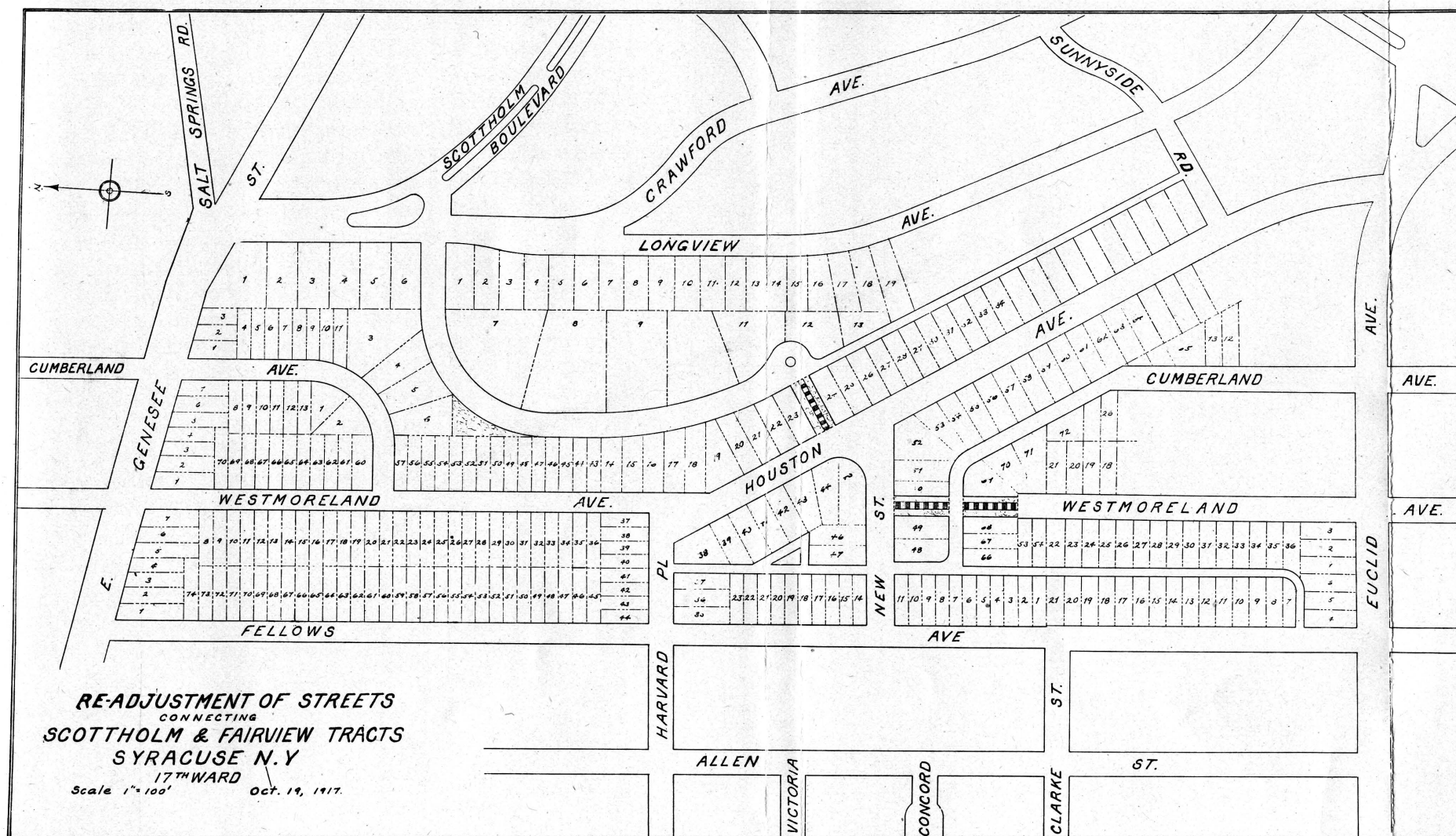


FIG. VII.
 Proposed Change for Street System Connecting the Scottholm and Fairview Tracts.

the section involved that would be sacrificed by the proposed change. The fact that the cost of making the ultimate necessary public improvements such as sewers, paving, etc., will be materially cut down through the eliminating of the excessive grades is a good argument for the adoption of the proposed alteration.

Other Street Improvements and Extensions

Fellows avenue and Lennox streets. Plans for improvement of this street intersection were made by the City Planning Commission in 1914 and the work accomplished in 1916.

2. Shotwell park and James street. Plans for the setting back or the flattening of the abrupt curve in James street at this point were made in 1914 and the work of making the improvement was finished the same season.

3. Roberts avenue extension. Studies for the extension of Roberts avenue southerly along the west side of Onondaga park were made in 1915 and a plan agreeable to the City Park Commission and this commission as well as to the property owners was finally adopted and the street opened in accordance with that scheme.

4. Pierce avenue. After three years an agreeable plan was arrived at between the property owners and the City Planning Commission for the extension westward of Pierce avenue so as to open into Durston avenue. This opening and relocating of the street about its width further south has already been taken up by the Engineering Bureau.

5. Lodi and Townsend. The intersection of these streets was improved by the city engineer in 1914 and the plans for the work as made in that office were officially endorsed by this commission.

6. Cortland and South avenues. A request for a plan as how best to improve the sharp corner at the north-

east corner in the intersection of these streets was made to this commission by the city clerk. Our report and plans were made to that office, but for some reason or other the persons who were petitioning for the improvement let the matter drop at this point.

Comfort Station

The selection of Veteran park as a site for the comfort station and the design of the building were submitted by the Park Commission in 1914 to this body for approval, which was given.

Bath Houses

The location and design for the Onondaga park bath house was also submitted to the City Planning Commission for its approval, which was given.

It is understood that plans are well along for the construction of a new municipal bath house on or near the site of the present one on Spencer street. This is a thing the City Planning Commission heartily favors.

Salina Street Widening

The business center of Syracuse is fed from the south by two principal arteries—Salina street and State street. (Warren street is not an artery, but a subdivision of Salina street.) Salina street is the one street to reckon with for the immediate future, because State street only borders the business center and does not receive the main tributary streets from the south. Salina street then, as the main carrier, receives practically all of the traffic from Brighton, Midland, Cortland and Glenwood avenues, Colvin street and Jamesville road.

In observing the map of the city proper, this system of streets serves an area inclusive of the Eighteenth and

Nineteenth wards and a portion of the Thirteenth and fourteenth, approximately 2,260 acres, or one-fifth of the city total, including a population of 21,500 in 1910, or one-seventh of the total population of the city at that time. During the periods from 1900 to 1910 the population of the Nineteenth ward increased 78 per cent and of the Eighteenth ward 25 per cent, while the village of Onondaga Valley increased 300 per cent.

The significance of these figures, considering only that area within the city limits to grow along the normal percentage of population increase (15 per cent for five-year periods) and the present valley population to increase at a slightly greater percentage, then in 1920 there will be a total population of approximately 25,000. This shows an increase of almost one-fifth, and in addition there still remains the rural population extending to the south.

Bearing in mind that the present development of street traffic and communication is but in its infancy, and that the business and social life demands more and more upon rapid and efficient service, for which the streets of our city have not been designed, we readily see the necessity of preserving a uniform width to Salina street, our only great north and south highway. In streets where there is not room for two rows of traffic, outside of the street car interferences, all traffic moves with the speed of the slowest moving vehicle. Vehicles standing at the curb on this type of street interrupt the continuous movement of traffic.

The proposition to widen South Salina street in the 500 and 600 blocks was the culmination of many sporadic attempts on the part of individual citizens to have this matter investigated years before. It was claimed that Salina street was originally 99 feet wide in these blocks, the same as it is north of Onondaga street and south of Temple street. It seems that some time between 1822 and

1833 the street was resurveyed and the portion reserved for public use was left only 70 feet wide, the difference between the 99 feet and the 70 feet being taken up by the lawns on the west side of the street.

This commission prepared maps and data showing the need of opening this narrowed neck on our main north and south business street so that the street might have a continuous width and relieve the present and the certain future congestion which would result from this stricture.

Legal action was begun by the city authorities to recover the 29-foot strip on the west side of the street alleged to be encroached upon by serving notice in 1915 upon the abutting property owners to remove their encroachments from over the street line. As the property owners paid no attention to this notice, the city cut the shade trees along the sidewalk in the 600 block in front of the residences and moved the curb line back. In the 500 block next north the city began action against some of the property owners. A decision from the Supreme Court, handed down in July, 1917, gave the city the decision on the ground that the abutting property owners were trespassers on the street and had been for years, as the deeds conveying their property for years back and the maps referred to in these deeds showed the street to be 99 feet wide from the eastern side, which line was undisputed. This test case was in regard to the property at the northwestern corner of the intersection of Salina and Adams streets. The suit for the recovery of the same width (29 feet) at the southwestern corner of the intersection of Salina and Onondaga streets, where the Florence apartments now stand, was tried in the same court in 1918 and a decision was made against the city. Whatever the outcome in these legal tangles, it is quite safe to predict that public sentiment and the necessity of a greater street width at this point will eventually force the restor-

ation of the street to 99 feet in width throughout the length of these two blocks, even though condemnation proceedings and consequent compensation to property owners be necessary.

Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad

In 1915 the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western railroad, having laid a double track from Jamesville to the southern limits of the city, asked permission from the municipal authorities for continuing this double track through the city on their present route, and in return offering to build more underpasses for streets now cut off by their road in the southern section of the city. The question was referred by the mayor to the City Planning Commission for an opinion. The action taken by this commission at a regular meeting held November 23, 1915, was as follows:

Motion made and carried that "An underpass be constructed at Matson avenue and also at McKinley avenue, but that they should be constructed under the usual regular procedure entirely irrespective of the granting of any additional franchise rights to the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western railroad."

Further, "In the opinion of the City Planning Commission, under no circumstances should a franchise be granted to the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western railroad for double tracking across Brighton avenue or Colvin street, pending the final settlement of the grade crossing problem."

South Geddes Street Widening

Street car and vehicular traffic have grown so rapidly on South Geddes street from Fayette to Delaware that the congestion is very annoying and particularly dangerous along that section where the street car tracks exist

(from Marcellus to Gifford). This trouble is most pronounced at the hours when traffic is the heaviest going to and from the shops in the vicinity and the Solvay works. Geddes street is 100 feet wide all of its length south of the canal and north of Bellevue avenue, but the paved width is only 34 feet. This width between curbs is not sufficient between Fayette and Delaware streets, and it is only a matter of a short time before the city will be obliged to set back the curbs here to relieve the congestion. A temporary relief for the three or four blocks traversed by the street car lines would be to prevent the parking of automobiles by the curbside within these blocks.

State Fair Boulevard Parkway

The neglect of the City of Syracuse to provide a safe, practical and attractive boulevard within the city to connect with the present boulevard between the city limits and the State Fair grounds is a source of unfavorable comment throughout the state against the city, and has been for some years past. This fact is cited more than any other argument by those who assert that the location of the State Fair grounds adjacent to our city is not, and has not been, appreciated by the people of Syracuse.

The number of people who seek access to the State Fair grounds by automobile has materially increased in the last few years and will continue to increase, thus rendering more imperative the necessity of an appropriate boulevard or parkway leading out from the city to the fair grounds.

A spacious and attractive improvement in this direction would demonstrate to the state at large that Syracuse appreciates the location of the State Fair, and is adopting a liberal attitude and policy in its effort to supply the most attractive, least dangerous, most expeditious and generally impressive route obtainable.

In the summer of 1914 the planning commission was requested by the city authorities to recommend a route for such a parkway boulevard. After a season of very careful study, deliberation and consideration of the Geddes street, Liberty street, Eureka street, the Lakeview avenue and the Harbor brook routes, this commission gave its recommendation to the Common Council in favor of the Harbor brook route, as shown in the accompanying map Fig VIII, with the following reasons for their conclusion:

A broad right of way, which will permit of a park being placed in the center, thus forming an attractive parkway, can be obtained at a minimum cost and without disturbing existing streets and improvements thereon.

The plan permits, as will be noticed from the map, of a broad, easy entrance on level ground from West Genesee street, and its general direction to the underpass under the West Shore railroad's right of way, and beyond this point, is such that there will be a straight course of over 600 feet on either side of the underpass. All right angles, abrupt turns, railway crossings and grades are avoided on the plan submitted.

This is in keeping with the best developed thought on the roadway construction of the present as to the elimination of sharp angles and grades as furnishing additional comfort in traveling and, of even more importance, avoiding angles and grades that experience has demonstrated have been productive of accident.

The broad, sweeping curve where the proposed boulevard branches out from West Genesee street, has the effect of making the new improvement appear as an actual continuance of West Genesee street.

The plan proposed also furnishes an opportunity for a very desirable, easy and inexpensive connection with Park avenue by extending the parkway from the south

side of West Genesee street to Park avenue through Sackett street, which is now already paved, or this street could be easily widened to correspond to the width of the proposed parkway by taking a strip of land now unimproved on the east side of the street. The cost of widening this extension to correspond with the width of the boulevard would be a comparatively small amount to the city.

Through the entrance to Park avenue, another street of approach from the southern and southwestern part of the city would be available with a material reduction in the congestion that would be encountered if the proposed boulevard had only one street of access, of ordinary width, as would be the case if the proposed boulevard should commence at a point further east on West Genesee street, than the point proposed in this plan submitted.

As to the item of expense, the proposed plan can be carried out at no greater expense than if use is made of the existing streets, as Eureka or Liberty streets, inasmuch as these streets are at present narrow and it would require the purchase of property along these streets if either should be selected, that the boulevard should be of proper width to accommodate the traffic.

The distance along the proposed route from the intersection of West Genesee street to Hiawatha avenue and the present State Fair boulevard is 2,375 feet. By the way of Liberty street it would be 2,950 feet, and practically the same distance by the way of Eureka street.

The section opened up by the proposed plan is now unimproved, and with the laying out of an attractive parkway the adjacent land would be increased in value because of the desirability attaching for residences along this right of way.

It subdivides a large tract of land, bounded by West Genesee street, Liberty street, the boulevard, Hiawatha avenue and Lakeview avenue, in nearly equal parts and

in such a manner as to be of great value in further subdivisions of this tract in the future. Its length is the shortest distance from West Genesee street to the objective point on Hiawatha avenue, where the present state boulevard to the fair grounds commences.

As this part of the city is generally more or less unsightly, this plan offers greater opportunities for artistic development and more pleasing vistas along its line than other suggestions.

An attractive gateway from Genesee street, a national thoroughfare, will be a feature of constant identification of the city with the State Fair.

This plan received unanimous approval by the State Fair Commission and the State Fair committees of the Chamber of Commerce.

For various reasons this plan was not adopted by the Common Council and the boulevard connection rested until the latter part of 1915. After considerable more study and conferences the commission decided that, pending the development of the Harbor brook route, the most practicable way to obtain an immediate connection of West Genesee street with the existing boulevard to the north of the city would be to improve and utilize some of the existing streets. The commission recommended the extension and the improvement of Lakeview avenue to the West Shore underpass at Hiawatha avenue and an improved right of way from this point to the existing boulevard, which was at that time under paving construction by the State Highway Department.

This recommendation by the commission was in no sense an abandonment of the Harbor brook plan for the boulevard route, but was merely a temporary expedient for the providing of an additional highway connection of West Genesee street with the State Fair boulevard beyond the city limits. This latter recommended route was im-

proved and has been open to the traffic for the past two seasons, and is a great advantage over the old roundabout dangerous line of travel to get onto the main boulevard north of the city.

Aerial Station at Syracuse

Syracuse has been designated as a station by the government officials in laying out national aerial routes for mail service, etc. This city is situated on both the New York-Chicago-San Francisco route, and the Washington-Ottawa route. Only recently has aerial traffic received much interest from the public. The use of aircraft in the great war has developed and brought about this method of communication and transportation to the front and great possibilities are predicted for its future. A few weeks ago the government announced that it was nearly ready to inaugurate this aerial mail service, and that Syracuse would be a stopping place if proper landing facilities, etc., were provided.

Foreseeing this opportunity to our city, the planning commission had already given considerable time and study to the selection of sites for landing points. The findings and suggestions of the commission are as follows: The plan calls for the creation of four landing places, a big aerodrome with shops and hangars, and a landing place for hydroplanes on Onondaga lake. Landing stages will be created north, south, east and west of the city, but sufficiently near to the business and industrial section as to cause no inconveniences. The eastern landing stage is planned to be in the present Lock square, where Beech street crosses the canal, near the tube works. The area at present available here will be extended by the conversion of the canal bed into a railroad channel and its covering over with a concrete roof.

The northern landing stage is suggested on a section

of the flats near the salt marshes, on the northeastern shore of the lake, between the water and the New York Central branch line running to East Syracuse. The western landing stage might be located on the flats to the southwest of Burnet park, and the southern landing stage in the proximity of lower Midland avenue.

The northern stage would be devoted to industrial traffic, in order to accommodate the factories which some time are sure to be located along this branch railroad and a canal system there. The western and southern stages would be mostly used by pleasure craft and miscellaneous traffic. They will open a tremendous stretch of country to the west and south of the city for home development.

It is not proposed to provide these four landing stages with large equipment in the way of shops or hangers. They are intended only for loading and unloading platforms, for incidental repairs, and for the replenishing of gas and the like. The location of these four landing stages are shown on the diagram on Fig IX.

Building and repairing will be carried on at a great airdrome to be established near the fair grounds on the filled land between that reservation and the lake. Here is already available an area of 1,000 feet wide by 2,500 feet long, as level as a ball room floor, and provided with all other means of transportation. In addition, there will soon be a fill which will add nearly 1,000 acres. The hydroplane station will be on the shore of the lake in this same neighborhood.

Plans are already under way for a system of shops for repairs and the manufacture of new machines and for hangars to provide shelter for a fleet, or for individual machines. It is also proposed to create on this area a flying school to train our young men of Syracuse who wish to enter this new and exciting field of like work. This airdrome area is of course far larger than will be neces-

sary at any of the other landing stages. The Lock square station will start probably with a width of about 400 feet and a length of 800 feet. There is provision for a considerable extension in length if that is found necessary. It is likely that the other landing stations will conform to the original plans for the Lock square station. It is well to note this fact: that all of the land proposed for conversion to air traffic purposes is either in possession of the public authorities or held under agreement with them. Whatever additional land is necessary is obtainable at a low price. Thus, literally, the base work is already done toward making Syracuse a first class modern aerial route station.

We do not propose to take chances with falling packages or machines themselves. A zone will be created of two miles in diameter over the city, within which it will be forbidden to air men to enter. This forbidden zone is indicated on the map Fig. IX. Interstate traffic must circle the city and not fly across it. Doubtless airmen will welcome such an arrangement, as the air currents over a community of closely packed buildings where heating and power plants are running, are invariably bad. No aviator likes to confront the possibility of tumbling toward earth in an air pocket. It is believed that other cities, seeing the wisdom of this course, will be prompt to follow suit. It is better to start with the safety first prohibition and modify it, if circumstances permit, than to allow free license to aviators and then be forced to take such restrictive measures after a disaster.

Surely we may visualize Syracuse as the throbbing center of this vast new industry, a port of call on the route from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and the half-way stop for officialdom passing between Ottawa and Washington. It is all there waiting for us. Let Syracuse be the first to seize the opportunity and make the most of it.

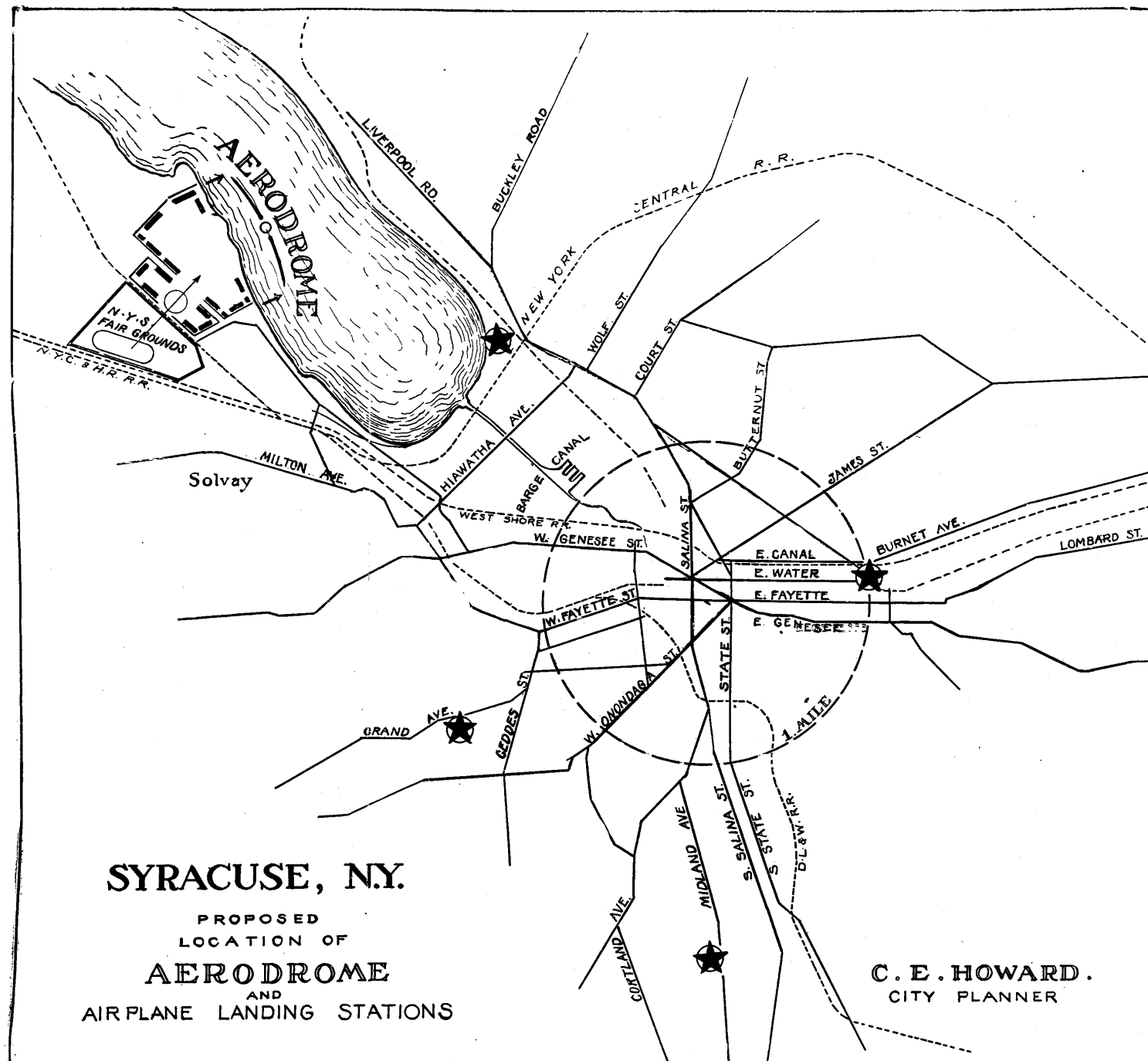


FIG. IX.
 Map of City, Showing Location of Four Aeroplane Landing Stages.

Land Subdivision Work

Syracuse, like most other cities, has suffered from lack of any definite plan for the future street system, as new streets were opened up. There are three main faults with the haphazard way some of our sections have been laid out:

1. No care was given by some people who laid out their property with regard to what their new streets were to be used for. That is, whether industrial, residential, semi-residential, main traffic arteries, etc.

2. Another fault in many cases was the lack of considering the development of the contiguous property, or the lack of any attempt to connect up with existing streets.

3. The conveniences in cutting up the piece into building lots along the lines of the old customary idea that streets had to be straight and at right angles to each other regardless of all the natural topographic features.

Examples of one or two or all three of these faults are too common in Syracuse.

Syracuse is much better off that a great many of our cities in the possession of diagonal streets reaching from the center to the outskirts. This allows a quick and short connection with the center for the outlying districts and is compatible with the best thought in city planning. No hard and fast rule can be applied or should be applied to a form of street system for all places, as each case must be treated as its individual conditions require.

In the first place, as stated above, the three things to be considered should be: what is the section being developed to be used for, the conformity or arrangement of the plan to connect with the bordering existing street system, and the topography of the area in question. In the first case, it is just as wrong to have a section developed without regard to its intended use as it would be for a carpenter or builder to construct a building, putting

the rear entrance where the front one should be. A more specific case, applied to subdivision work, would be not providing sufficiently wide thoroughfares where they are needed to handle heavy traffic as present conditions and future probabilities will demand. There should be a difference between the widths of streets for business, high class residential or ordinary residential street needs. Another point might be the cutting of too long blocks, the depth and frontage distances of lots, etc. All of these things should be determined to a great degree with what the property is going to be used for. A retail business section, obviously, should be limited to shorter blocks than those of a purely residential neighborhood. A high class residential district, to be occupied by handsome large homes and grounds, unquestionably needs a greater frontage and depth to its lots than those intended for the more modest homes.

The practice of Syracuse people cutting property up into home sites of thirty-three feet or less frontage is over with. Now the public authorities refuse to approve of such narrow building lots. The home builder realizes the advantage of open lawns, air and light in his house, with the lessened fire risk which is obtainable with wider lots. The real estate dealer realizes that the cramped, narrow lots are not desirable to his customers.

Perhaps the best way we can show what happens when some people cut up their property into streets and building lots without regard to the adjoining street plan, will be a map reproducing our street system in the southern end of the city. See Fig. XI. One of the outstanding faults to this plan is the long block on the south side of Elmhurst avenue between Cortland avenue and the creek, and no provision left for the opening of Bishop or Hunt avenues. A similar case on Colvin street between Cortland and Hunt avenues exists. Randall and Bishop

should be continuous streets. Similarly the long block bounded on the east and west respectively by May avenue and Clyde street and on the north and south by Colvin street and Cortland avenue should have been cut in two by the extension of Eastman street westward. Another flagrant example of this kind of error in street layout is shown on the map Fig. XII. Notice how closely Boyden street, as plotted, comes to being a continuous street. Mariposa, Beuna Vista and Eldorado streets also are dead ended inside of the block. The natural topography of this section, however, should have forbidden the laying out of these streets in the straight rectangular form. There is no reason, so far as the controlling topography goes, why Abell and Schiller avenues should not have had an outlet onto Boyden street. Likewise the streets shown in the lower left hand corner of the map, on the west side of Teall avenue, should have had some direct connection with those on the eastern side. Again at Dillaye avenue on the east the staggered streets are conspicuous. The reader's attention is particularly called to the lack of any street connection between the city street system and the Eastwood streets. This is a grave mistake and will prove to be an expensive adjustment before long. The long block left on the eastern side of Shotwell park, without any street connection for Sperry or Joy streets, is a woful lack of foresight on the part of some party or parties. This block is about 2,400 feet long without a break.

This map also shows what harm and retardation to real estate development results when streets are laid out on the rectangular plan without regard to local topography. Here we have the steep Melrose Hill, as shown, and the streets were plotted without regard to this and on the checkerboard plan. To one not familiar with the ground surface and the contours, not shown, the lots shown on such a map would appear to be just as good as

any other lots. The result of this treatment was that Hastings, Clifton, etc., were developed and built on up to the base of the hill from the north. The slope being so steep that the streets could not be constructed further as plotted and maintained without unwarranted cost and expense, caused further development to come to a standstill. The lots on top of the hill, shown in the shaded portion, became city property due to default of tax payments. All of this was to a large measure due to a lack of any way of street service for these lots. In order to protect its title in these lots, the city has to pay the county and state taxes year after year.

A revised plan for getting this property opened up onto streets of a nice easy grade and at the same time giving a connection with the Eastwood street system is shown on Fig. XIII.

To foresee and prevent these mistakes by the supervision of the laying out of real estate both inside and in the immediate districts has been one of the largest duties and most appreciated part of the functions of the City Planning Commission. In 1913 the state legislature passed the following act in regard to restricting the filing of maps of land subdivisions in and near Syracuse:

“A map of the subdivision of lands, or the plotting thereof into streets, in the City of Syracuse or outside of and within three miles of the limits of said city, but not within the limits of an incorporated village, shall not be filed in the clerk’s office of Onondaga county, or become effectual or binding as a dedication thereof unless said map shall have thereon the written approval of the city engineer of the City of Syracuse.”

Since 1904, when the City Planning Commission was organized, the city engineer has made it a rule of his office not to accept such maps without their first having the approval of this commission. The usual proceeding for

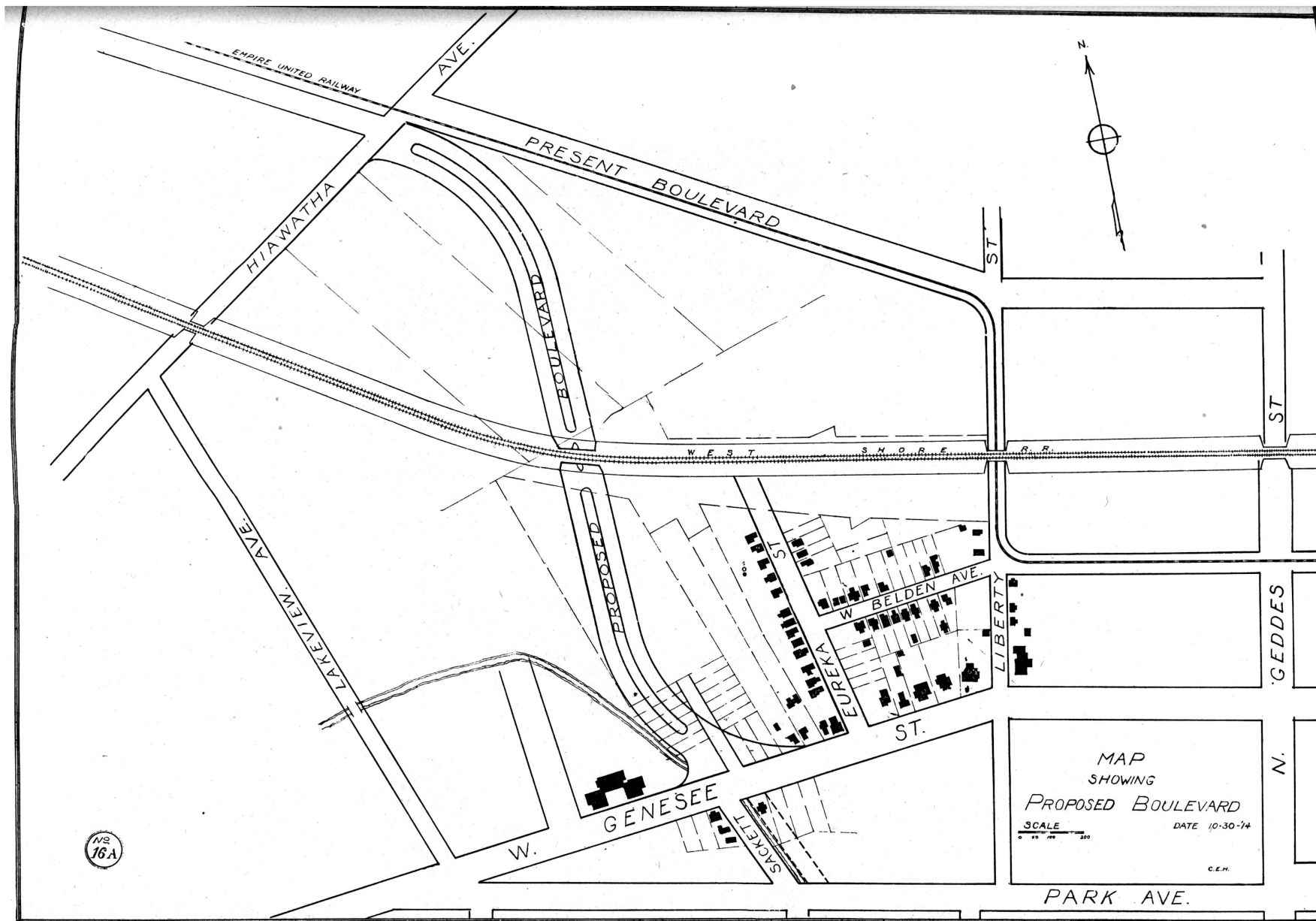


FIG. VIII.
Plan Showing Suggested Route of State Fair Boulevard.

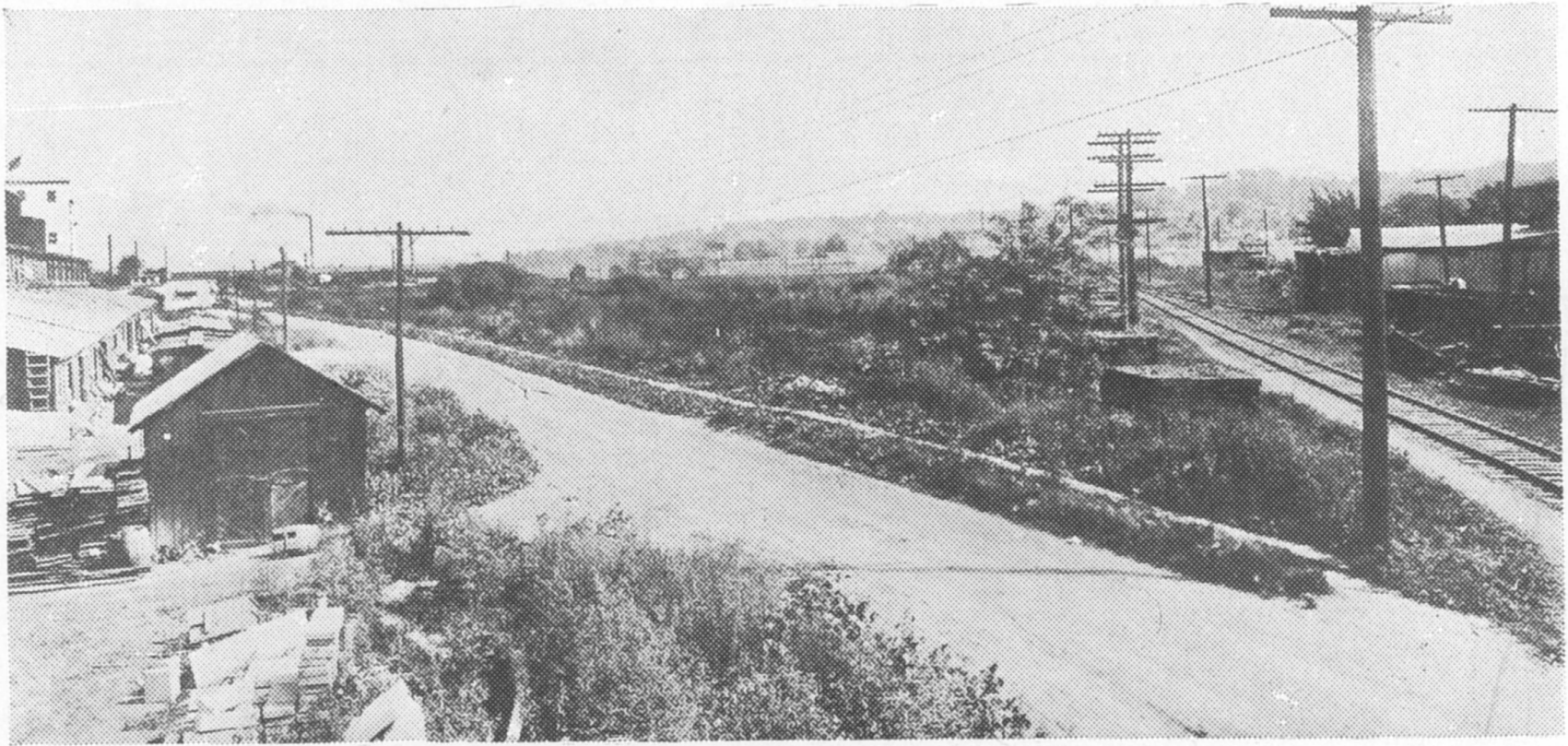


FIG. X.
Present View of the Proposed Lock Square Aeroplane Landing Stage.

developers of real estate within three miles of the city, after their map is made, is to send it to this office for action by the City Planning Commission. The engineer in the City Planning Commission's office becomes familiar, if he is not already, with the topographical features of the land proposed for subdivision, even if necessary making a hurried survey, and after studying the submitted plan with regard to its adaptability to these conditions, the existing street system which it must connect with, etc., he reports his opinion on the submitted plan to the commission. If the layout as submitted is approved by this body, it is so signed by the chairman and sent to the city engineer for his approval. If the commission disapproves of the submitted plan, the matter is taken up with the developers and their engineer, with the reasons for the attitude of the commission pointed out. In most cases the developers have been very responsive to make such alterations, when they are shown that it is not only a benefit to the public but also for themselves. The Syracuse real estate men are very good in the co-operation of these matters and the City Planning Commission finds it a pleasure to deal with them. Only on one or two occasions have disagreements arisen between the operators and the planning commission over the proper plan, when a quick and satisfactory adjustment has not been made. These instances were with out-of-town developers and, as far as the commission has been able to learn, these promoters are of the type that do not care for the future interests of either the city or their customers.

Some of the larger real estate developers of Syracuse make it a practice, before undertaking a proposition of this nature, to come to the City Planning Commission's office to get its ideas and suggestions as to the proper treatment of a particular section, before they actually begin any work. This saves considerable time and ex-

pense in the end. A concrete example of this method is the layout of the Onondaga Heights and Twin Hills tracts southwest of Onondaga park, and Genesee Heights and Genesee Park tracts. The plan adopted by the separate owners had been carefully worked out by the experts in the city planning office and this plan directly adhered to when it was finally laid out on the ground. This scheme gives a development of both of these two separate tracts in harmony with each other, fitting with the existing street system, the local topography and also provides with a view to the future, a connecting link for our encircling boulevard system mentioned earlier in this report.

The following list gives the names of some of the tracts, plans for whose subdivisions have been submitted and approved by this commission:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1—Bungalow Heights tract. | 19—City View Homesteads tract. |
| 2—Crestmont tract. | 20—Van Vleck and Belle Isle road tract. |
| 3—Montclair tract. | 21—Genesee Park tract. |
| 4—Messina Springs tract. | 22—Genesee Heights tract. |
| 5—Wadsworth and Court streets tract. | 23—Dennison tract. |
| 6—Mapleton tract. | 24—Pierce avenue tract. |
| 7—Park Hill tract. | 25—Burdick tract. |
| 8—Grand View Heights tract. | 26—Sunset Heights tract. |
| 9—Scottholm tract. | 27—Randall tract. |
| 10—Pennock tract. | 28—Johnson estate tract. |
| 11—Meier tract. | 29—Clover Hills tract. |
| 12—Parkway Terrace tract. | 30—North Syracuse tract. |
| 13—Oak Ridge Annex tract. | 31—West Syracuse tract. |
| 14—Wadsworth tract. | 32—Nuffer tract. |
| 15—Kandace street tract. | 33—Syracuse Villa Sites tract. |
| 16—Onondaga Heights tract. | 34—Salisbury Farms tract. |
| 17—Twin Hills tract. | 35—Barge canal harbor district. |
| 18—Fairview tract. | |

List of Plans Prepared in City Planning Office for Future Subdivision Work

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1—Stolp farm and lands to the southwest of the city. | 4—Salt Springs road section. |
| 2—Court and Seventh North street section. | 5—Grand View Heights subdivision. |
| 3—James street and Teall avenue section. | 6—Sedgwick farm tract. |
| | 7—Scoville tract. |
| | 8—Essig tract. |

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 9—Southern section of the city, Kirk
park to Atlantic avenue. | 12—Trump hill. |
| 10—Melrose hill. | 13—Randall farm, Green Point road. |
| 11—Myrtle hill. | 14—Pass tract. |

Surveying and Mapping

Because of the lack of maps and data on the topography of many sections where proposed subdivision plans are submitted, the engineering force of the commission has started, with its limited means, to make a topographical survey just outside the city line, where such work has not already been done by some other department, such as the Water Bureau or the Intercepting Sewer Board. It is not the intention of this commission to duplicate any of this work already done, but rather to supply what is missing and to tie the whole up with the city topographical map so as to make a complete unit and source of information of this kind for its future use. This is a large piece of work, but a good start was made last summer on the outside work and it is hoped to be able to continue it the next season. The City Planning Commission has prepared a very useful map at 600-feet to the inch scale, showing the city street system, together with the country roads and villages for some distance outside of the city. These outlying roads, that had been surveyed either by the state or the county highway departments, were plotted from their survey notes. Besides this large key map, there are over six hundred other maps, charts and drawings on file in the city planning office relating to the different problems of the work.

Brighton and Glenwood Avenues Connection

Brighton avenue, being a crosstown street east and west and connecting at the east with the improved Jamesville road, is an important thoroughfare. At the western terminus of this street, just west of Cortland avenue on the flat at the foot of the Onondaga hill, it is only about

200 feet distant from connecting with Glenwood avenue. Glenwood avenue is the main thoroughfare from Elmwood to the reservoir section, which has been more recently popularized by the development of the Bellevue Club and the opening of the Onondaga Heights tract on the plateau southwest of Onondaga park. It seems almost too bad to have this distance of 200 feet separate two such important thoroughfares and prevent a direct crosstown route in the southern section of the city from the east to the western highlands. The City Planning Commission has formulated a plan for the connection of these two streets, in conjunction with giving an entrance at the same point to the beautiful glen on the south side of Glenwood avenue. This glen will at some time become a city park and in the future development of this section, in which this commission is influential, that fact will be recognized and given due consideration.

Investigation and Reports on Property Owned by the City and Held Under Tax Title

Recently the city has found a way in which to sell some of the numerous tax title lots it has had to acquire. In a few instances it might be advisable for the city to look ahead to see if some of these lots might not be desired in the future for engine house sites, school houses, or playgrounds, etc. If such a lot should be needed in the future, and this need could be foreseen, it would of course be folly to let it go. For this reason this commission has been requested to report as to whether in its opinion it were advisable to retain certain lots which a market has been found for. Some of these cases investigated and reported on are as follows: 1—Lots 17 and 18, block L, on Cole-ridge avenue; 2—Old Vine street school site; 3—Block C, lots 21, 22 and part of 23, on the Welch and Webster tract at Lafayette avenue.

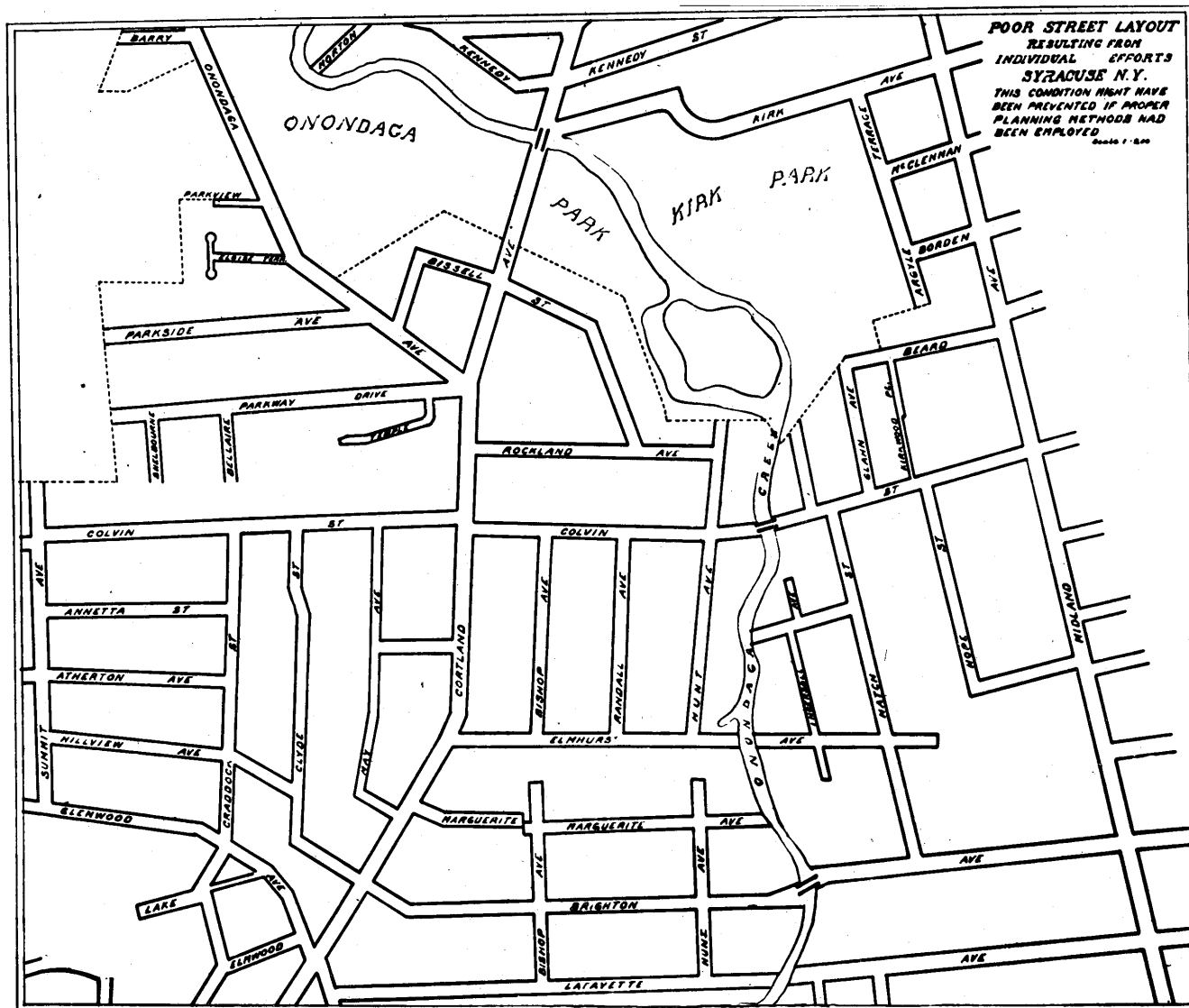


FIG. XI.

Map showing existing street system in a portion of the southern end of the city. Note irregularities and lack of any definite plan for any future expansion of the street system as each separate tract was cup up into tracts and

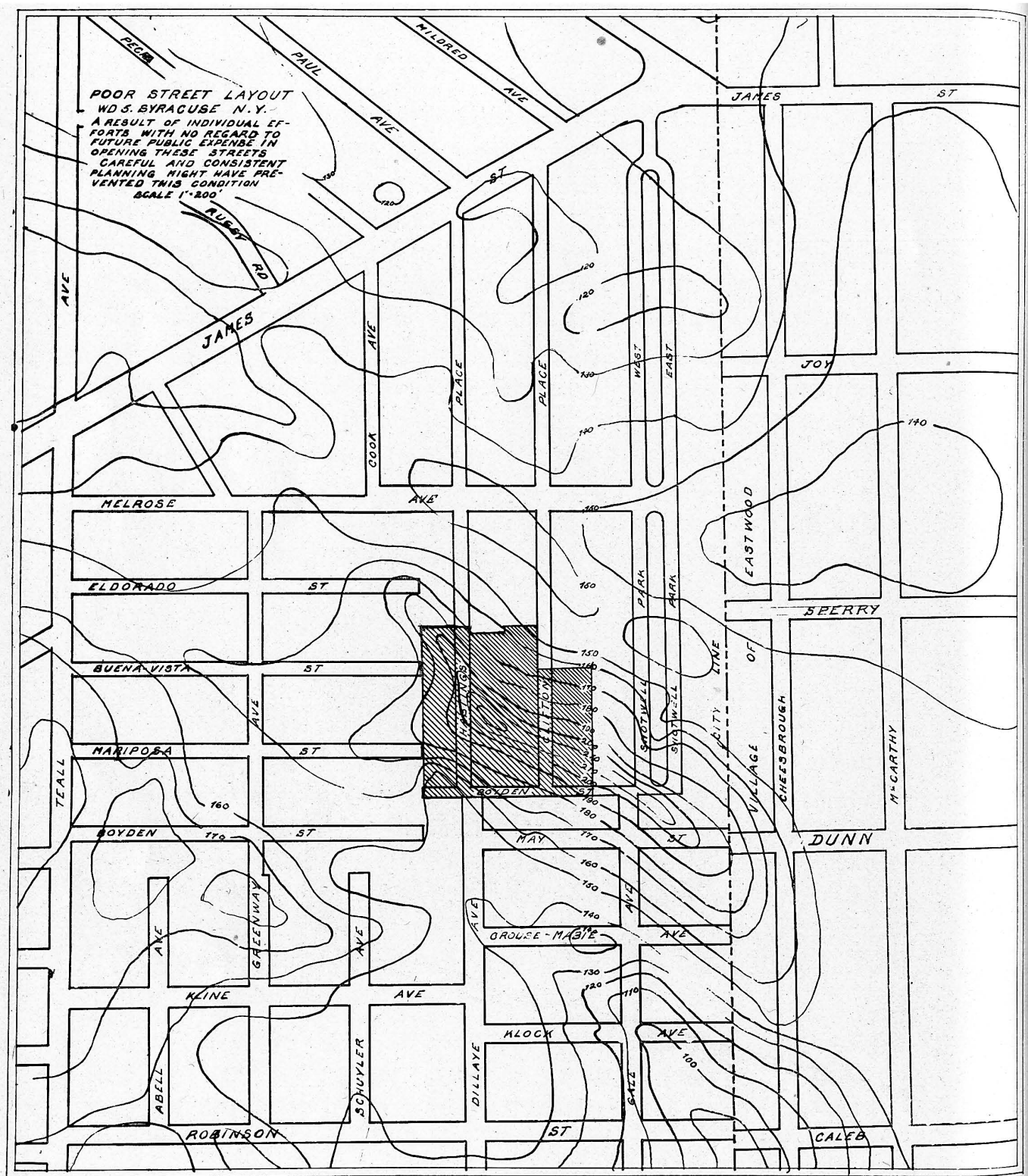


FIG. XII.

Plan of existing street system in east end of city, south of Jamesstreet. Cross-hatched area in center of map shows property acquired by the city through default of tax payments.

Extension and Educational Work

1. Cleveland City Planning Conference.
2. Toronto City Planning Conference.
3. Detroit City Planning Conference.
4. St. Louis City Planning Conference.
5. American Civic Association, at Washington.
6. National Housing Association conference on war housing problems, held at Philadelphia, 1918.
7. National city planning exhibit at court couse, 1916.
8. Exhibit at the conference of New York state mayors, 1916.
9. Exhibit of the lake park model (First National Bank), 1916.
10. Lectures given before improvement societies, church societies, schools and clubs.
11. Joint public meetings of the City Planning Commission with the Real Estate Association and the city officials.

The commission has been represented in conferences with the Chamber of Commerce on the subjects of paving, the municipal auditorium, and public markets; with the Solvay Process Company, in regard to the filling of the lowlands adjacent to the Syracuse Memorial Hospital; and with the state engineer's department concerning the barge canal harbor.

Oneida-Onondaga Canal

The map Fig. XIV indicates the line of a suggested canal from Oneida lake to Onondaga lake—a canal large enough to carry the same boats as the state barge canal. By following this route, selected by the City Planning Commission, Syracuse bound canal freight from the east is shortened by about thirteen miles and a gain of three hours in time.

Cicero swamps are 395 feet above sea level, Oneida lake 370 feet and Onondaga lake 364 feet. That means that this proposed channel must have at some places a depth of 30 feet. At present the water route from Oneida lake to Onondaga lake is roundabout, via Brewerton and the crooked Oneida river to Three Rivers, then southward. It seems to be most simple to bring this straight channel from Oneida lake to Syracuse, a distance of twelve miles, and extend it as shown in a semicircular shape on the one side to Onondaga lake and on the other to East Syracuse, with proper docking facilities at the water's edge. The Syracuse Junction line of the New York Central railroad forms exactly this same semicircle, and when such a canal is parallel to these railroad tracks ideal transportation facilities would be given for manufacturers to locate in this section.

There are three main benefits to be derived from this scheme, if carried out:

1. A better waterway service for Syracuse.
2. The draining of Cicero swamps, thus reclaiming thousands of acres of virgin soil for truck gardening purposes.
3. The opening of a new industrial section, which we must have within a few years.

Syracuse Army Expansion Camp

When the government, in 1917, decided to use the New York State Fair grounds and the Pleasant Beach hill beyond for a military expansion camp, the City Planning Commission's expert, Mr. Howard, was loaned for a short time by the city to the authorities to make plans for the layout of the camp. This was an act of courtesy much appreciated by the government and eventually led to Mr. Howard's entering the service on that kind of work and temporarily being sent from Syracuse.

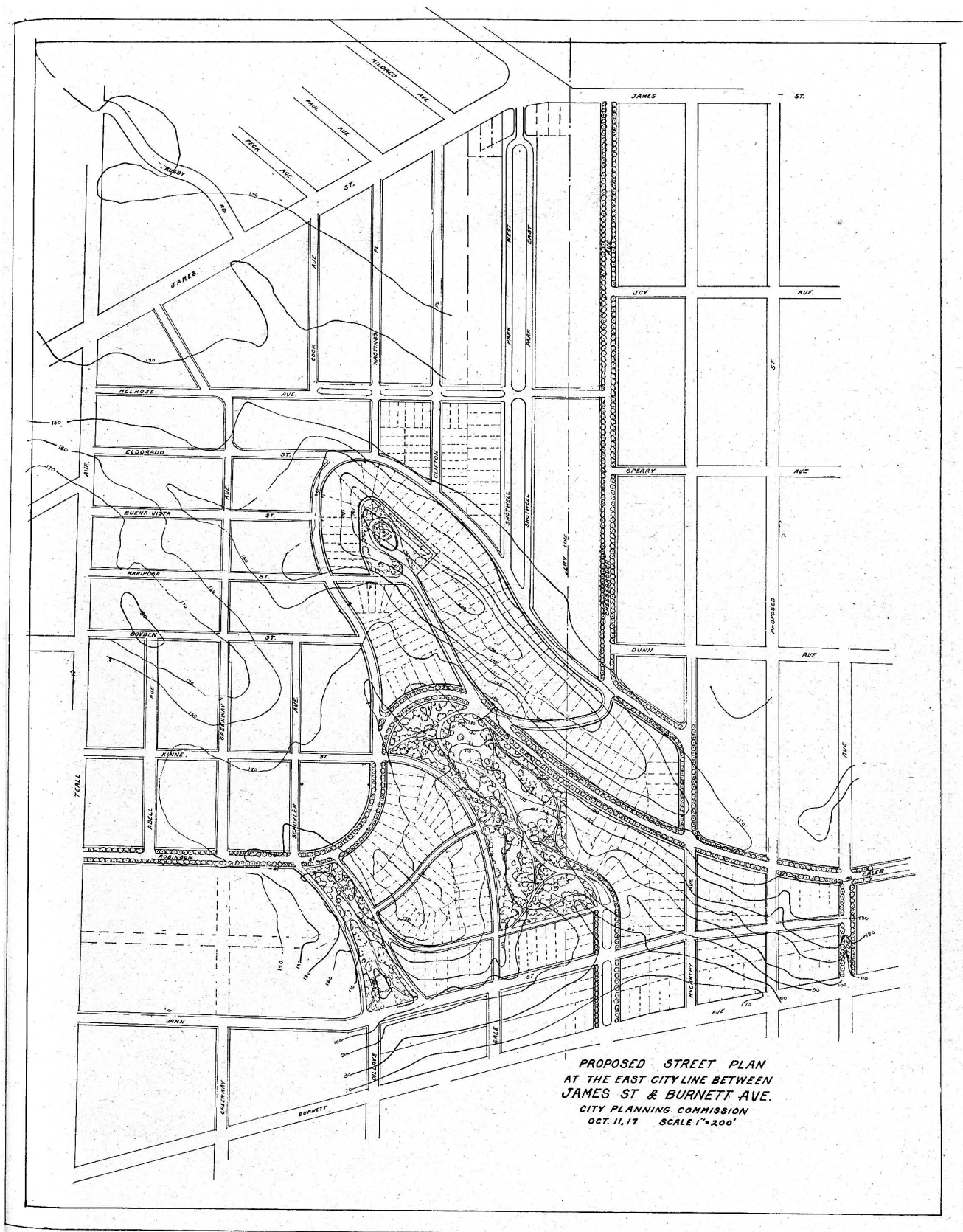


FIG. XIII.
Plan for Readjustment of Street System in Eastern End of City South of James Street.

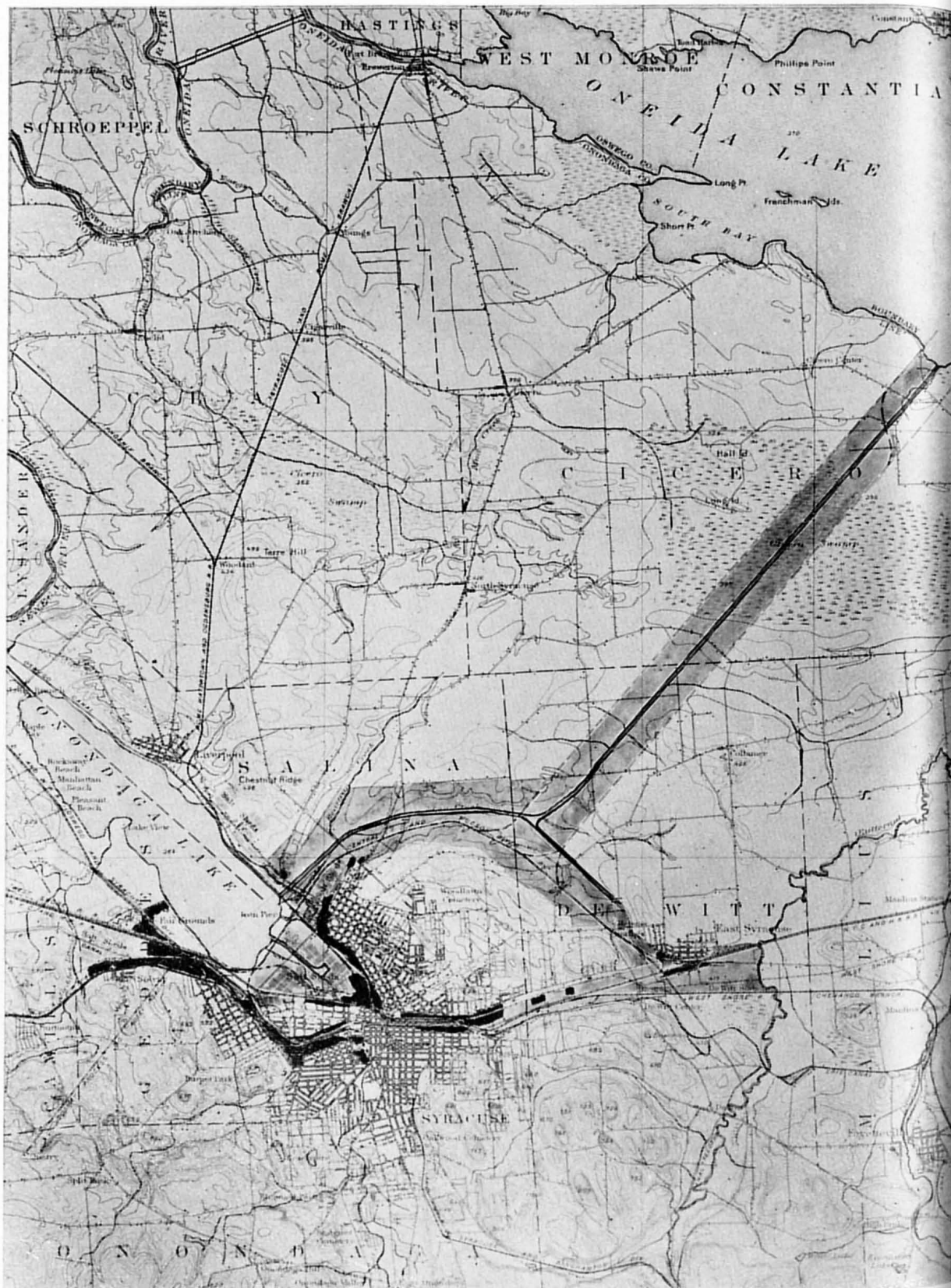


FIG. XIV.
Map Showing Route of Suggested Oneida-Onondaga Canal.

Financial Statement for the Year 1918

ITEM	EXPENDITURES	BALANCE
Office supplies.....	\$ 377.80	\$ 22.20
Communication	58.27	1.73
Dues, National Conference	25.00	
Salaries and wages.....	2,918.25	81.75
Transportation	101.33	123.67
	-----	-----
Totals.....	\$3,480.65	\$ 229.25

The balance of \$229.35 was transferred to the printing fund balance of \$78.50, making a total of \$307.85. Out of this balance \$300 was spent for the publication of this report, leaving a final balance of \$7.85. The total appropriation for the year's work was \$3800.

Conclusion

The event of a final conclusion in regard to the elimination of the grade crossings within the city will permit the consideration of the larger problems of city planning, by fixing definitely the nucleus around which nearly all the other functions of the city must develop, and in view of this prospect the commission looks forward to greater activities the coming year as well as a greater number of accomplishments.

This commission wishes to state its appreciation of the valuable aid and co-operation given it by individual private citizens, butniness men's organizations and the other city departments in facilitating the gathering of information and in the presenting of ideas for various improvements.

There is hardly any need for giving an outline for our future work. All of the projects treated in this report not yet accomplished will be on our program until they are finished, as well as any new proposition to better or

to make for a larger and a more prosperous city. The supervision of the city's adjacent land subdivision we consider one of our most valuable services, as will be so considered by any one observing the unfortunate street conditions existing in certain sections of the city which have been developed by individual effort alone.

APPENDIX

Legislation Covering the Authorization of the Syracuse City Planning Commission

Laws of New York—By Authority

Chapter 699

AN ACT to amend the general municipal law by adding thereto a provision authorizing cities and incorporated villages to appoint planning commissions, and to appropriate money for the same.

Became a law May 24, 1913, with the approval of the Governor. Passed, three-fifths being present.

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. The general municipal law is hereby amended by adding thereto a new article to be numbered twelve-a, to be entitled city and village planning commissions, and to read as follows:

ARTICLE 12-a.

CITY AND VILLAGE PLANNING COMMISSIONS.

- Section 234. Creation, appointment and qualifications.
235. Officers, expenses and assistance.
236. General powers.
237. Maps and recommendations.
238. Private streets.
239. Rules.
239-a. Construction of article.

Section 234. *Creation, appointment and qualifications.* Each city and incorporated village is hereby authorized and empowered to create a commission to be known as the city or village planning commission. Such commission shall be so created in incorporated villages by resolution of the trustees, in cities by ordinance of the common council, except that in cities of the first class, having more than a million inhabitants, it shall be by resolution of the board of estimate and apportionment or other similar local authority. In cities of the first class such commission shall consist of not more than nine, in cities of the third class and incorporated villages

of not more than seven members. Such ordinance or resolution shall specify the public officer or body of said municipality, that shall appoint such commissioners, and shall provide that the appointment of as nearly as possible one-third of them shall be for a term of one year, one-third for a term of two years, and one-third for a term of three years; and that at the expiration of such terms, the terms of office of their successors shall be three years; so that the term of office of one-third of such commissioners, as nearly as possible, shall expire each year. All appointments to fill vacancies shall be for the unexpired term. Not more than one-third of the members of said commission shall hold any other public office in said city or village.

Sec. 235. *Officers, expenses and assistance.* The commission shall elect annually, a chairman from its own members. It shall have the power and authority to employ experts, clerks, and a secretary, and to pay for their services and such other expenses as may be necessary and proper, not exceeding, in all, the annual appropriation that may be made by said city or village for said commission. The body creating the commission shall by ordinance or resolution provide what compensation, if any, each of such commissioners shall receive for his services as such commissioner. Each city and incorporated village is hereby authorized and empowered to make such appropriation as it may see fit for such expenses and compensation, such appropriations to be made by those officers or bodies in such city or village having charge of the appropriation of the public funds.

Sec. 236. *General powers.* The body creating such planning commission may, at any time, by ordinance or resolution, provide that the following matters, or any one or more of them, shall be referred for report thereon, to such commission by the board, commission, commissioner or other public officer or officers of said city or village which is the final authority thereon before final action thereon by such authority: the adoption of any map or plan of said city or incorporated village, or part thereof, including drainage and sewer or water system plans or maps, and plans or maps for any public water front, or marginal street, or public structure upon, in or in connection with such front or street, or for any dredging, filling or fixing of lines with relation to said front; any change of any such maps or plans; the location of any public structure upon, in or in connection with, or fixing lines with relation to said front; the location of any public building, bridge, statue or monument, highway, park, parkway, square, playground or recreation ground, or public open place of said city or village. In default of any such ordinance or resolution all of said matters shall be so referred to said planning commission.

The body creating such planning commission may, at any time, by ordinance or resolution, fix the time within which such planning commission shall report upon any matter or class of matters to be referred to it, with or without the further provision that in default of report within the time so fixed, the planning commission shall forfeit the right further to suspend action, as aforesaid with regard to the particular matter upon which it has so defaulted. In default of any such ordinance or resolution, no such action shall be taken until such report is so received, and no adoption, change, fixing or location as aforesaid by any final authority, prior thereto, shall be valid. No ordinance or resolution shall deprive said planning commission of its right or relieve it of its duty, to report, at such time as it deems proper upon any matter at any time referred to it.

This section shall not be construed as intended to limit or impair the power of any art commission, park commission or commissioner, now or

hereafter existing by virtue of any provision of law, to refuse consent to the acceptance by any municipality of the gift of any work of art to said municipality, without reference to the matter, by reason of its proposed location or otherwise, to said planning commission. Nor shall this section be construed as intended to limit or impair any other power of any such art commission or affect the same, except in so far as it provides for reference or report, or both, on any matter before final action thereon by said art commission.

Sec. 237. *Maps and recommendations.* Such planning commission may cause to be made a map or maps of said city or village or any portion thereof, or of any land outside the limits of said city or village so near or so related thereto that in the opinion of said planning commission it should be so mapped. Such plans may show not only such matters as by law have been or may be referred to the planning commission, but also any and all matters and things with relation to the plan of said city or village which to said planning commission seem necessary and proper, including recommendations and changes suggested by it; and any report at any time made, may include any of the above. Such planning commission may obtain expert assistance in the making of any such maps or reports, or in the investigations necessary and proper with relation thereto.

Sec. 238. *Private streets.* The body creating such planning commission may at any time, by ordinance or resolution provide that no plan, plot or description, showing the layout of any highway or street upon private property, or of building lots in connection with or in relation to such highway or street shall, within the limits of any municipality having a planning commission, as aforesaid, be received for record in the office of the clerk of the county where such real property is situated, until a copy or said plan, plot or description has been filed with said commission and it has certified, with relation thereto, its approval thereof. Such certificate shall be recorded as part of the record of said original instrument containing said plan, or description. No such street or highway which has not received the approval of the planning commission shall be accepted by said city or village until the matter has been referred to such commission under the provision of section two hundred and thirty-six of this article. But if any such street is plotted or laid out in accordance with the map of said municipality, adopted according to law, then it shall not be necessary to use such copy, or obtain or record such certificates.

Sec. 239. *Rules.* Such commission may make rules not contrary to law, to govern its action in carrying out the provisions of this article.

Sec. 239-a. *Construction of article.* This article shall be construed as the grant of additional power and authority to cities and incorporated villages, and not as intended to limit or impair any existing power or authority of any city or village.

Any city or incorporated village in order to appoint a planning commission under this article shall recite, in the ordinance or resolution so creating the commission, the fact that it is created under this article.

Sec. 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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