Chapter 9

PUBLIC SERVICES

Public service facilities required to serve residential communities include schools, branch libraries, health centers, post offices, police and fire stations, and in some cases buildings containing municipal offices.

In the Cincinnati Metropolitan Area the existing pattern of such facilities is greatly affected by the multiplicity of political subdivisions. Inasmuch as political boundaries rarely tend to follow logical community and neighborhood lines as proposed in the Master Plan, this study was not significantly influenced by them in planning for the best distribution of public service facilities. Existing facilities were taken into consideration but planning for future needs stresses the community and neighborhood pattern rather than political boundaries of any kind.

This does not contemplate elimination of separate political jurisdictions but subordinates them whenever necessary in recognizing the most efficient, logical performance of services. Public library and postoffice services as now organized serve as precedents for this approach.

For tabulations of existing facilities in the various categories of public services and more detailed Master Plan proposals relating to each, reference should be made to the report entitled Public Service Facilities.

Schools

In making recommendations regarding schools the "School Location Report" (City Planning Commission, 1935) was reviewed, as well as the report "A Survey of School-Building Needs of Cincinnati, O.," by Dr. T. C. Holy and Dr. John H. Herrick (Ohio State University, 1945). The latter has been officially adopted by the Cincinnati Board of Education.

Also taken into consideration was "A Proposed Plan for the Location of Public Schools" (Regional Planning Commission, July, 1937) and the study of school facilities prepared for the Cincinnati School District by the City Planning Commission, which it complemented.

The Holy-Herrick report is concerned essentially with the present Cincinnati School District. As the Master Plan includes the urban and urbanizing portion of the metropolitan area throughout Hamilton County some adjustments of the report's proposals are suggested, particularly in relation to the communities outside the Cincinnati School District. There are a few modifications resulting from the influence of Master Plan features other than schools which could not be foreseen at the time of that report.

These include such features as the community and neighborhood plans, with their respective recreation and shopping areas and other community facilities; and motorways from the standpoints of (1) their service to or within a community, and provision of access to other communities, and (2) together with railroads and industrial areas, their significance as separators between communities and neighborhoods.

Master Plan Proposals

The principle that long-range planning of public service facilities cannot be done most effectively if it must be governed by the limits of political subdivisions is particularly applicable to school district boundaries which are constantly subject to change. Seldom do they form logical social, economic or geographic units for providing educational facilities for the people they serve.

It seemed necessary or advisable to plan school locations as nearly as possible on the basis of communities and neighborhoods. Due consideration was given to the quality, age, capacity, etc., of existing structures as well as those currently proposed by the boards of education. Proposals were made for additional facilities where the longer range future need is apparent.

The plan recognizes the principle of consolidation of school districts. From the standpoint of economy in providing a balanced pattern of adequate and convenient facilities plus the advantages inherent in modern school systems of the metropolitan type, consolidation is a practical and desirable objective. Proposals involving changes of board of education jurisdiction cannot be accomplished simultaneously or overnight. What is offered is a long-range goal. (See Figs. 35 and 36.)
Public Library Facilities

The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County serves all territory within the county. Besides the Main Library it maintains 38 branches.

In addition there are 268 general service facilities in three categories. One type, library stations, offers part-time service to the general public with facilities located in rented store rooms, or in schools, or other publicly-owned buildings. The second type, which serves special groups, is represented in fire stations, industrial or commercial firms, institutions, and schools. The third type consists of bookmobiles which circulate throughout the entire county.

Finally, 32 deposit stations perform still another type of library service, generally involving a small store and a limited supply of books. Usually there is no attendant as the storekeeper is paid one cent for each book circulated through his store.

Residents of Northern Kentucky employed or attending school in Hamilton County may receive free library cards from the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County. Otherwise they must pay an annual membership fee of $3. Thus the library system is more nearly metropolitan in scope than the other types of public service facilities in the Master Plan.

There are two public libraries in Kenton and Campbell Counties. One is in Newport at 4th and Monmouth Streets, the other in Covington at Scott and Robbins.

In Kenton County there are libraries in six secondary and intermediate schools for use only by pupils. In Campbell County students' libraries are maintained in four secondary schools and in Villa Madonna College. Ft. Thomas has no library but the high school has one for its pupils. Residents of Ft. Thomas must pay $2 a year to receive a card from the Newport Library unless (as also in the case of persons living elsewhere outside Newport city limits) they own property in Newport, or work or attend school there.

Current Proposals by Agencies Concerned

Relocation of the Main Library is the Hamilton County Public Library District's only definite proposal for construction at the present time. The Library Board recognizes the desirability of a long-range program for development.

Master Plan Proposals

A new location for the Main Library building is discussed in the chapter on Public Buildings.

In preparing the plan for branch libraries (Fig 37) many factors were considered, including distance from the Main Library and from other branches or distributing agencies, convenience of reaching a proposed new location, relation of local centers to population and business, proximity to school buildings in which new library service is available, facilities (existing or potential) for convenient parking, the hazardous and isolating effects of thoroughfares on juvenile patronage, classes of readers to be served, and likelihood of change in the population and characteristics of the neighborhood.

Proposals for new library branches have been made in the light of these considerations, giving due weight to requests that have been made to the Library Board for new or improved facilities. The Plan indicates espe- cial needs for branch libraries within the next 20 to 25 years.

Where library and school facilities are combined, there should be joint financial participation by the two agencies, at least in respect to costs of operation.

Health Centers

The national and local trend is for additional and more complete medical services by public health depart- ments, and a fine line is no longer drawn between prevention and treatment. Formerly these services were handled mostly by the types of private agencies sup- ported by the Community Chest.

The modern major health center is a community agency primarily concerned with preventive medicine and public health education, and involving an organi- zation of physicians, nurses and other health and social workers and volunteers. It offers a general, well-rounded service and is not specialized. It aims to reach all people within its district who need, but cannot afford, such services. It aims also to co-ordinate local health and medical service with recreation and social service activities.

The smaller sub-centers are more restricted in their activities, handling routine clinical matters. These in turn feed into the major center equipped with X-ray, fluoroscope, and other special facilities.

Health clinics and health stations are even less completely equipped than the sub-centers and are more specialized in the types of services they offer.

Proposals by Agencies Concerned

The Cincinnati Health Department and Norwood are the only agencies in the Metropolitan Area reporting proposals for future facilities. The Cincinnati agency recognizes that expansion of its work will be through
health centers and facilities of several kinds but has not given official approval to an expansion program.

The City proposes to take over the Shoemaker Health Center on Cutter Street.

Consideration is being given to the establishment of sub-centers in Mohawk, Mill Creek Center (Northside), Oyler, Madison and Walnut Hills.

It is also proposed that the existing Madisonville health sub-center be housed in its own building.

Norwood has passed a bond issue for a Veterans' Memorial Health Center. It is proposed to construct the Center in an existing city park at the northwest corner of Montgomery Road and Mills Avenue.

**Master Plan Proposals**

In Fig. 38 Master Plan proposals for major health centers and sub-centers are shown. The map does not show lesser health facilities such as clinics and stations.

Some comments are needed to clarify proposals in connection with some of the facilities indicated:

*Union Bethel*, at Third and Lawrence Streets, may be in the path of the junction of the Northeast Expressway with the Third Street Distributor and the connection of the latter to Columbia Modified Expressway. Much of the downtown residential area it now serves may be redeveloped and the need for local health services of the present type removed. Mt. Adams, too, is scheduled for redevelopment or rehabilitation, and in any case could be served by the Uptown sub-center.

In lieu of a location in Fairmount, proposed by the Cincinnati Health Department, the Plan proposes one in Walnut Hills. Although the latter is not far from General Hospital, access to the hospital is inconvenient. Density, volume, and character of the older portions of this community also suggest a greater localized need than in the case of Fairmount, which can be served satisfactorily by health facilities in Oyler and Northside. Because of its convenient location to main thoroughfares the former West End Library branch, now abandoned, or a site nearby is suggested for the health sub-center.

The study for a community center for Norwood contained in the Master Plan Communities report indicates the preference of a site for the proposed new health sub-center west of City Hall rather than that of the existing small park farther south on Montgomery Road.

**Post Offices**

An independent post office is one which functions separately from any other. It may or may not serve an incorporated city or village, but where it does the postal service area is not restricted to the territory comprised within the corporation line. The boundaries of an area to be served by an independent post office are based on topography, population density, extent of physical improvements, and relation to other post offices. Establishment of a post office is based on demonstrable need within an area, rather than on a minimum expectable revenue or volume.

**Current Proposals by Agencies Concerned**

Sites have been acquired and money appropriated for new post offices in Milford and Harrison. These are the only definite projects. There is talk of a new post office in Norwood facing the small city park at Wells and Montgomery.

There is the possibility of a new post office in the future for Newport. A suggested site is one south of Fourth Street between York and Monmouth. Newspapers have mentioned a possibility that Dayton, Kentucky, may be allocated funds for a Federal Building. The Newport office, however, has no official confirmation.

**Master Plan Proposals**

Because they involve Federal rather than local ownership, consideration of post offices differs from that of the other types of public service facilities. It is the normal policy of the Post Office Department to rent buildings for branches or stations rather than to erect its own structures. This policy is based mainly on a feeling that mobility is desirable in view of possible instability of population and of neighborhood demands for service.

More important, however, than the question of ownership (from the standpoint of the local tax base, Federal rental appears preferable to ownership) is Federal policy in selection of sites for branch buildings and stations. By their very nature these facilities have tended to be located within or close to community or neighborhood shopping centers as focal points of public patronage. Master Plan community civic center studies indicate that in general such locations are the logical ones for grouping of community public service facilities. The branch of Federal Government having jurisdiction over choice of locations might well seek to locate such structures, whether rented or owned, so they will participate if possible in eventual development of a community civic center. The localities in which such potentialities are apparent are indicated in the Downtown Motorways Plan which appears as Fig. 30 in the Motorways chapter of this volume.
Municipal Offices

Cincinnati and every other Hamilton County municipality has a City or Village Hall.

The cornerstone of Cincinnati’s City Hall was laid in 1888. This building is antiquated, overcrowded, inefficiently planned, poorly located in being remote from other important public buildings, and inconvenient to most public transit routes.

In Kentucky there are municipal office buildings in all the cities and in some of the larger towns. In the smaller or more recently incorporated municipalities, official meetings are held in space rented or lent for the purpose.

Current Proposals by Municipalities

No actual steps have yet been taken to replace Cincinnati’s obsolete City Hall. Plans have been prepared for new village halls in Mt. Healthy and Silvertown and early construction is anticipated. Mt. Healthy’s administration building, to be built at Perry and McMaken Streets, will house the police and fire departments, while Silvertown’s hall, to replace the present building on the same site, will incorporate the existing fire and police stations.

Indian Hill has acquired a 14-acre site at the southeast corner of Drake and Shawnee Run Roads for a new village hall and community center to be built soon. Reading hopes to erect a new municipal building but has made no provision for funds. In the latter two villages, the administration buildings will house police and fire departments.

Covington is considering erection of a new courthouse. The present city hall will then be too large for the city’s use alone and since the building is old it might be replaced by a new municipal building.

Master Plan Proposals

In the organization of the Metropolitan Area by communities it is desirable to decentralize certain administrative activities for the convenience of the public to the fullest extent consistent with efficiency of operation. With these factors in mind, it is suggested that consideration be given to the feasibility of establishing an office in each community civic center where certain public functions involving contact with the public could be performed, to obviate trips from suburbs to City Hall, Court House or Federal Building.

Such an office might take care of payments of water and tax bills, licenses, and possibly some details in connection with social security. These activities might occupy limited space in a police or fire station, public health center, or some other public service facility. With some additional remuneration, existing personnel such as police and firemen might be used. Part-time employees might be needed during peak periods.

Because of the character of space occupancy involved in such a plan, proposed Municipal Offices are not identified in Table Q in the report on Public Service Facilities but such a facility would be called for in every community.

Police Department Facilities

Separate police departments are maintained by Cincinnati and practically all the other cities and villages in the Metropolitan Area. There are separate police forces in each of the three counties—Hamilton, Kenton and Campbell. Co-operation and mutual use of facilities and equipment exists among these numerous departments.

Current Proposals by Agencies Concerned

A five-year building program was submitted in 1943 by the Cincinnati Police Department to the City Joint Improvement Program Committee. It suggested:

1. Erection of a new police headquarters and municipal courts building.
2. Relocation of District Stations 4 and 6.
4. Relocation of Patrols 4 and 7.
5. A more recent report suggested:
6. Relocation of District 4 Station in the general vicinity of Sixth and Mound Streets.
7. Relocation of District 6 Station from 2855 Eastern Avenue to a more central location in Hyde Park or Oakley.
8. Creation of a District 8, to include the northern portions of Districts 6 and 7, taking in Bond Hill, Rose-lawn, Pleasant Ridge, Kennedy Heights, Carthage and Hartwell, the new station to be located either in Bond Hill or Carthage.

Suggestion No. 6 has now been adopted with the acquisition of a site on the south side of Erie Avenue near Victoria and plans for the building are now being prepared.

With respect to Suggestion No. 7 the Police Department advocates Bond Hill, in the vicinity of Seymour and Reading Road, as a site for the new station.

It has been suggested unofficially that Patrols 1, 2 and 3 be housed in one building.
The Police Department feels that a new Central Police Station should be built near the Court House. Such a location would be convenient to the courts and would facilitate transfer of prisoners between the Central Station and the Court House.

Other Police Department programs of improvements are contemplated by Mt. Healthy, Reading, and Terrace Park. The new administration buildings of these cities are expected to house police and fire departments. Only Mt. Healthy has a building under construction.

Master Plan Proposals

Proposals for revised Police District boundaries and for locations of Police Stations in Cincinnati are shown in Fig. 39.

The Master Plan concurs with the proposal to make a new District 8 of the northern part of District 7 and the western part of District 6.

The proposed location for the new police station for District 8 is the south side of Seymour Avenue just east of the Longview State Hospital grounds. This accords with a proposal whereby the Recreation Commission and School Board would acquire property in addition to the present site purchased by the Board of Education for two new junior and senior high schools. The police station would occupy that portion of the site about the level of Seymour Avenue, the lower or valley portion to be used for playfield purposes.

New stations are proposed for Districts 1 and 4 in the West End. Station and district proposals shown in the plan are based on anticipation of extensive redevelopment of the Downtown Basin Area outside of the Central Business District. Master Plan proposals visualize eventual industrialization of the area west and south of the Mill Creek Expressway.

The immediate problem is to select a location permanently satisfactory for a new district station in the future to serve the entire West End but which meantime will be conveniently located in relation to present district boundaries. A desirable permanent site for such District 1 would be on the west side of Linn Street between Lincoln Park Drive and Armory Avenue, the logical locality for the future business district of the redeveloped community of Linconia.

The remaining problem of new headquarters for District 4 may be solved temporarily by serving both Districts 1 and 4 from the Linn Street location or through use of an existing building within District 4 boundaries.

The Police Department's position on these two locations is that District 1 quarters should be in the vicinity of Armory and Linn or on Linn somewhere between Armory and Findlay, and District 4 quarters in the vicinity of Court and John.

In the proposed plan for police stations, no effort has been made to account for territory outside Cincinnati as police stations are primarily an administrative facility to which there is almost no occasion for visits by the public. They are more closely related to the pattern of municipalities than to the communities. It would appear academic at this time to attempt to suggest police district boundaries and station sites outside of Cincinnati, presumably based on assumption of some kind of countywide administrative arrangement, or on annexation of a number of municipalities to Cincinnati.

Fire Department Facilities

Separate fire departments are maintained by Cincinnati and most of the other municipalities on both sides of the Ohio River. There are no official county fire departments comparable to the police departments in Hamilton, Campbell, and Kenton Counties.

Current Proposals by Agencies Concerned

The Cincinnati Fire Department contemplates a building program designed to bring its building needs up to date and to modernize its stations. The five-year building program submitted in 1943 to the City Joint Improvement Program Committee made these suggestions, with priority ratings as shown:

1. Move Co. 13 to southeast corner of Central and Freeman Avenues. (Mohawk)
2. Move Co. 31 to Marburg opposite Cardiff Avenue. (Oakley)
3. Combine Cos. 17 and 25 in a new building at 8th and Burns Streets. (Oyler)
4. Rebuild Co. 2 at same site, 9th and Freeman. (West End)
5. Relocate Co. 49 in vicinity of Prentice and Whetzel Ave. (Madisonville)
6. Relocate Co. 5 in vicinity of McMicken and Vine St., depending on plans for extension of Race Street northward. (Over-the-Rhine)
7. Relocate Co. 16 in vicinity of Peebles Corner. (Walnut Hills)
8. Relocate Co. 36 in vicinity of Eastern and Heekin. (Linwood)
9. Relocate Co. 1 on Third St., above flood level. (Lower Basin)
The sites for the first three proposals have been acquired and plans drawn.

Engine companies 3 and 44, displaced from their former location at Seventh and Sycamore, will be housed in a new structure on Ninth, Broadway and Cheapside.

The Fire Department in its current thinking, contends that:

1. Station 21 in the Fairmount shopping center is in a good location for its area but is poorly placed because of traffic congestion at the west end of the Western Hills Viaduct.

2. Station 37 in Riverside is handicapped by floods above the 69-foot level.

3. Station 32 is on the site for the new Avondale School. When the school is built a new site might be found at Rockdale and Washington, or Harvey and Rockdale Avenues.

4. Station 18 at Eastern Avenue and Strader Street is in the high water area.

5. If 12th Street is widened to Reading Road, Station 42 must seek a new site in the neighborhood.

Official proposals elsewhere in the county concerning fire departments are:

Norwood: A .2 mill levy for the city failed at the polls in November, 1946. The funds were intended to purchase additional equipment and to open a third firehouse. A bond issue of $75,000 for these purposes was voted on by the people in November, 1948 and carried by a wide margin.

Terrace Park: Plans are nearing completion for a civic center in the present village green, including an administration building with a wing to contain the fire and police stations. Plans will probably not become a reality for 10 or 15 years.

Mt. Healthy: This community approved a bond issue in November, 1945, for a new municipal building, with space for the Volunteer Fire Departments, at the northeast corner of Perry and McMaken Streets. This building is now under construction (November, 1948).

Northern Hills Volunteer Fire Department: This department, at Galbraith and Winton Roads, has purchased equipment and awaits erection of its building.

Reading: A proposed bond issue of $300,000 for a new municipal building and war memorial combined, with quarters for police and fire departments, was defeated in the November, 1948, election. However, $30,000 for additional fire equipment was approved. A site for the proposed municipal building has not been acquired.

The only suggestion current in Northern Kentucky pertaining to fire facilities is one by Newport concerning possible future need of a station near Grand and Water Works Road.

Master Plan Proposals

A proposed plan for Fire Stations is shown in Fig. 40. Additional comments are called for in a few instances:

DISTRICT 1

Company 1—The Riverfront Redevelopment Plan pre-empts the space south of Third Street from Central Avenue to Butler Street. A fire station might fit into that plan but it seems preferable to place it on the north side of Third Street. Master Plan proposals for downtown parking facilities cover the north side of Third westward to about the middle of the block between Elm and Race Streets. The remainder of that block frontage, or preferably frontage between Elm and Plum, would be the best location for a future fire station.

DISTRICT 3

Company 13—The Motorways Plan and the plan for a redevelopment in the West End (Lincinia) will close Freeman Avenue between Liberty and Central, to provide a larger tract for redevelopment. There is proposed an improvement of the jog of Linn Street at Bank, and a connection northeastward from Linn to Central Parkway and Mohawk Place. The new fire station would be located in the vicinity of these improvements.

Company 21—Elimination of the present building at Harrison Avenue and Beekman Street is desirable to improve a traffic bottleneck. Advantages of the present site would be retained by locating a new station just north of it.

Company 16—The Master Plan recommends relocation of William Howard Taft Road a half block north from Ashland Avenue to near Hemlock Avenue. Taft Road would become a modified expressway and remove through traffic from this section of the present route. A fire station placed just west of the Cummins School site which the Board of Education proposes to abandon and which is recommended as a playground, would be on a wide street with good connections to all parts of the community, without the interference from traffic congestion presented on McMillan Street.

DISTRICT 6

Company 18—Delta Avenue, near Columbia and Eastern Avenue, appears preferable to Eastern Avenue as a site for relocation of this station from the standpoint of convenience of access to these main thoroughfares. When the new Columbia Elementary School is built,
COMMUNITY CIVIC CENTERS
PROPOSED PLAN

SCALE IN MILES

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
CINCINNATI, OHIO

METROPOLITAN MASTER PLAN
the present Lincoln School site which will probably be abandoned would be a satisfactory spot for a new fire station.

Company 36—A rather extensive interchange will be required with the grade separation project where Linwood Avenue, Columbia Parkway and Eastern Avenue intersect. There will be advantages in having a new fire station to replace the one on Heekin Avenue readily accessible to all three of these routes. A more satisfactory site will probably be found in the development of the interchange.

No fire stations are proposed outside of Cincinnati. There is the significant factor that fire district boundaries are determined by the National Board of Fire Underwriters. In view of this and other considerations it appears futile to attempt to devise a pattern for fire station locations in neighborhoods still in early stages of development especially since a required site consists of no more than two average-sized building lots.

Community Civic Centers

The Master Plan for Public Buildings brings out the advantages of grouping public or quasi-public buildings which serve the entire Metropolitan Area. The same reasoning applies to locating community service facilities in close proximity to each other.

From the standpoint of appearance, sharing an attractive setting, joint parking, and other factors, as well as public convenience, it is desirable that conscious effort be made to group the facilities wherever possible, as distinguished from merely being comprised within the same general setting. A community civic center may serve potentially as the hub around which the social and civic activities of the community will revolve and constitute a source of community pride.

Schools are used increasingly as centers of community activity. Wherever possible they should be incorporated in community civic centers or the group built around the school as a nucleus. So located, the school will serve as an educational, cultural, social and recreational center for people of all ages.

There are also types of quasi-public buildings which under certain circumstances may share and help to provide a joint setting. Buildings which might appropriately be included are churches, lodges or club buildings, or any others with some degree of public use and which call for dignity and attractiveness of setting and harmony of arrangement. The dominant character of the center should be public rather than commercial.

Fig. 41 shows the localities in Hamilton County where conditions favor concentration of community public service facilities. Favorability is not necessarily indicated by the number of present or prospective units.

Design studies for each community, showing the kind of potential treatment contemplated for public service facilities where conditions are favorable for their grouping, are included in the Master Plan report on Communities.