THE ROLE OF CENTURY-OLD DESIGN IN THE 21ST CENTURY

A CREATIVE PROJECT

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BY

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 CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Project Overview:

This project revisits the historic Park and Boulevard System Plan prepared by landscape architect George Edward Kessler, in 1912, for the city of South Bend, Indiana, and suggests the same design principles are a viable solution to problems currently facing the city, a century after the original plan. The Kessler Plan used riverside drives, boulevards, and parks as an organizing mechanism for the planned development of the city. These features then became the green structure for South Bend’s growth. Now, as a former industrial city of the 20th century, it is burdened with acres of brownfields and vacant properties that disconnect the city, damage the environment, and diminish residents’ quality of life. This project will recall the city’s local heritage of supporting forward-thinking design, as is evident beginning with the Kessler Plan and continuing through the Studebaker Automobiles. Specifically, this project aims to revitalize Lafayette Boulevard, a thoroughfare proposed in the original 1912 Park and Boulevard Plan, by transforming it into a model street for the city.
As the landscape of South Bend continues to evolve with further
development, revitalizing Lafayette Boulevard provides an opportunity to organize
the planned residential and commercial development of the Renaissance District.
As a major north-south corridor running through downtown, the redesign of the
Lafayette Boulevard focuses on strengthening existing connections between the
Central Business District and Ignition Park, a technology park located on former
Studebaker manufacturing sites. Furthermore, the project emphasizes Kessler's
ideas for organizing the future development around public green spaces and
ensuring people have easy access to these places. This project transforms Lafayette
Boulevard from a deteriorating through street into an inviting, interactive
pedestrian-oriented public space connecting districts, neighborhoods, and parks.
Revitalizing this corridor will utilize local history to continue developing South
Bend's distinctive industrial character.

METHODOLOGY:
The methodologies of this project include a mixture of historical research,
analysis, and case studies. Specifically, the historical research consists of
understanding the reasons for the development and success of the City Beautiful
Movement in the early 20th century, as well as studying George Kessler’s design
principles and contribution to landscape architecture. In the process, old
photographs and newspaper articles were used to gain a better understanding of
Kessler’s intentions and significance. Likewise, a careful study of the recent and
historic urban and industrial development of South Bend, Indiana is at the core of
this creative project. Case studies were selected based on their similarities to South Bend in relation to mixed-use developments, baseball and downtown revitalization, and revitalization studies of similar size to South Bend. Landscape architecture urban design was used as a method for exploring possible solutions for revitalization and better connection of the site with the community and surrounding downtown.

The final portion of the project combines the research, analysis and creative development to produce a unified design proposal for Lafayette Boulevard based upon a clearly defined set of goals and objectives, but also in accordance with George Kessler’s design principles and the city's development and planning goals. The design encompasses a significant portion of this study and includes the development of alternative transportation options, as well as numerous other design decisions aimed at transforming the pedestrian experience of Lafayette Boulevard into an enjoyable, comfortable, and walkable district celebrating South Bend’s heritage.

ASSUMPTIONS AND DELIMITATIONS:

There are numerous issues surrounding the design and development of a mixed-use neighborhood, especially one that is located downtown. In order to focus on the potential benefits of such a design, the following assumptions and limitations were made and listed below.

- Streetcar is the preferred transportation addition.
• Changing the direction of traffic flow is acceptable and preferred.

• The 2005 Comprehensive City Plan is the most up-to-date plan and all developable land stated within the plan is still accurate.

• No market study for the number and type of housing units, retail, office, etc. exists. Eddy Street Commons is an acceptable reference for units per acre.

• This project is hypothetical and none of the design decisions will be applied.

**Project Scope**

In order to maintain a manageable project size, certain limitations were considered. While it is important to look at the entire length of Lafayette Boulevard and analyze how all parts of the corridor fit together, only one part was selected for a design proposal.
City Beautiful:

The City Beautiful Movement was an ideal that gained attention at the beginning of the 20th century, aimed at transforming cities into more livable places (Hines 30). This period was marked by a tremendous amount of innovation resulting from rapid growth, industrial development, and cultural diversity. Over the span of only a few decades, from 1860-1910, the country’s population increased from 31 million to 91 million (Hines). The number of cities with populations of 10,000-25,000 increased from 58 to 369 (Hines 31). Population trends shifted so rapidly that by 1910, nearly half of the United States population lived in urban areas (Daniels 179).

These numbers are noteworthy because they are essential in understanding the development of the City Beautiful Movement. In a time of unprecedented urban growth and development, little attention was being given to the social and physical
environments resulting from these “instant” cities. Air pollution from factories, prolific amounts of horse manure, and the lack of sewage management all contributed to unsanitary conditions that jeopardized human health. Combining these factors with the lack of green space, poor water quality, and inadequate housing resulted in poor living conditions, at best.

The City Beautiful Movement is often credited with beginning at the 1893 Chicago World’s Columbian Exhibition. Instrumental to the construction of the World Exhibition and the City Beautiful Movement was architect and planner Daniel Burnham. He believed in pursuing grand visions and lofty goals for the improvement of cities. He left a lasting impression on the period stating, “Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men’s blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work.” Fittingly, this became an unofficial motto for the City Beautiful Movement.

This statement was visible in Burnham’s work, most notably the Chicago Plan of 1909. This plan gained such fame because it is one of the most significant accomplishments of altering aesthetics and functions of an entire city for such a grand scale. The entire development of the proposed plans extended up to 60 miles from the city center. Within the plan radial and concentric boulevards extended from the city center, connecting suburbs with one another. Other features of the plan included the first double-level boulevard and a twenty mile long park system that weaved along Lake Michigan and through the city (102). Essentially, the
Burnham 1909 Plan for Chicago was a significant contributor to the continuation of the City Beautiful Movement, causing other cities to want their own plan.

The so-called “White City” of the Chicago World’s Columbian Exhibition demonstrated the effort to better organize cities in an attempt to manage the unwanted consequences of late-19th-century urbanization. The result was an attempt to duplicate many of the design features from the exhibition across the country as a conscientious effort to “ Beautify” the chaotic structure of many American cities. The movement is associated with improving the appearance of streets, often culminating in prominent tree-lined boulevards (Hines 38). Special attention was given to establishing views and creating landmarks along streets in an effort to make them more appealing to people. Also prominent during this period was the careful consideration of developing spaces. Significantly this was the beginning of a nationwide effort to design spaces for the physical, social and mental well-being of people in urban environments (Daniels 180). Conveniently, the designation of these spaces also resulted in a greater environmental awareness.

Also contributing to the development of the City Beautiful movement, was the progressive movement. In large part this movement was centered on spreading middle-class values, and promoting efficient government and private business practices. The Progressives believed they could create order out of the chaotic city growth and establish feelings of civic responsibility – thereby forming a sense of community. Through reform, their ultimate goal was to create a cleaner, more beautiful, and well governed city (Wilson 41).
As competition evolved to include industry, jobs, people, and reputation, city leaders began to invest in developing their cities. Ultimately, the City Beautiful spread across the country as communities began employing landscape architects and planners to develop master plans. Regardless of whether these plans were realized in part or full, the movement was unquestionably successful in altering the thinking of an urbanizing nation and inspired citizens to care for their cities. Most importantly, it illustrated that urban life could and should be beautiful, and the advancement of landscape architecture and urban design made healthier environments possible.

George E. Kessler:

Numerous cities across the west and Midwest owe many of their defining characteristics to the insightful and progressive designs of landscape architect George Edward Kessler. Although highly recognized and world renowned at the time of his practice, his achievements are today vastly underappreciated and in some cases, perhaps unrealized. As a landscape architect, Kessler had a transformative hand in the profession’s early efforts, but his contributions to urban planning also shaped the developments of cities for many decades. In several instances these efforts are still seen and enjoyed today.

Born in 1862, in Frankenthal, Germany, Kessler’s family immigrated to the United States and eventually settled in the young town of Dallas, Texas. After the untimely death of his father, Kessler’s mother, Clotilde, saw the creative desire
within her son and understood that he needed a well-grounded profession in which to craft his potential. After returning to Germany, he enrolled at the Belvedere in Weimar, where he studied landscape design, forestry, and botany (Culbertson 100). His love for botany fulfilled his passion for making all things beautiful, while civil engineering proved a practical foundation that satisfied his mother (Wilson 41).

While studying in Europe, Kessler was greatly influenced by what he saw in the world around him. An essential component of his formal education involved traveling through much of west-central Europe, where he undoubtedly experienced the impressive boulevards of Paris and scenic parks of southern England. Furthermore, while although he only briefly attended the Gaertner Lehr Anstalt, he was able to directly study the garden designs of Peter Josef Lenne – the most prominent landscape architect in Germany at that time (Culbertson 100). Together, these experiences influenced how Kessler visualized design problems and became the foundation for how he thoughtfully integrated nature into his designs. After completing his studies in 1882, he returned to the United States and settled in New York City, where he sought the advice of Fredrick Law Olmsted, the forefather of landscape architecture in the United States. After only a few short months working in New York and with Olmsted’s support, Kessler decided to take a job in Merriam, Kansas (Wilson 41).

Although work was steady and his commitments plentiful, Kessler understood his own potential and that of the young landscape architecture profession. In just a few short years, he had successfully superintended parks for a
railroad company, managed a forest, designed a housing development, and opened his own practice (Wilson 43). While the scope of his professional work was extensive, Kessler gained his notoriety through the development of his park and boulevard system. During four decades of professional work, he established a set of design principles which are seen in many of his commissions, the first of which was the Kansas City Park and Boulevard System. Completed in 1893, the same year as the Chicago Columbian World’s Exhibition, it also illustrated many characteristics that came to exemplify the City Beautiful Movement.

Central to George Kessler’s designs was the notion that the creation of community spaces, often in the form of both neighborhood and larger community parks, was beneficial to the health of the city. Equally important to the designation of such land was the assurance that these parks would be easily accessible to all citizens through walking, carriage, rail, and later automobile (Culbertson 104). Often including playgrounds, the neighborhood parks served as relief from the densely populated parts of the city. Larger parks were intended to be an escape from the city annoyances and offer the benefits of fresh air, open spaces, and natural beauty (Culbertson 103).

Kessler assured equal access through his designs for orthogonal boulevards connecting parks, the city, and other boulevards. Through his writing and section details, he promoted 100 feet as a reasonable width for a “boulevarded” street. This typically meant the driving width was forty feet, leaving thirty feet on either side to be lined with one or two rows of street trees and sidewalks. The boulevards’
success is most evident in the way they established a clear sense of hierarchy among streets and spaces within the city (Wilson 49). Kessler envisioned streets as places for people to enjoy and the boulevards were consistently some of the nicest streets connecting community spaces.

Perhaps Kessler’s greatest achievement was his ability to understand and design for change. His work coincided with an era of rapid urban development, immense innovations, and evolving technology. Staying true to the Burnham’s theme of “Make no small plans,” Kessler anticipated the expansion of cities, designing boulevards for miles beyond the present city boundary. These boulevards also proved sensible because they could easily be adapted to fit the changing transportation needs. Furthermore, curvilinear parkways that bordered natural waterways effectively contrasted the perpendicular boulevards and successfully linked the park and boulevard system together. This effort to protect the waterways is an example of some of the earliest environmental planning (Cairns 11). Many cities across the Midwest and Western United States owe the accessibility of their rivers and streams to Kessler’s foresight, including several Indiana cities. Kessler created a Park and Boulevard plan for Indianapolis in 1905, and afterwards, Fort Wayne, South Bend, and Terre Haute sought his consultation (Culbertson 112).

Ultimately, Kessler’s achievements were fundamental to the development of the professions of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning. Furthermore, his progressive thinking provided a foundation from which cities grew, even as technologies and needs changed. In doing so, Kessler established a set of design
principles which became the strength of his many projects. Characteristics of these principles:

1. Protection of natural features (especially stream corridors)
2. Access to green space for present and future needs
3. Hierarchy of streets and spaces to promote efficient transportation
4. Aesthetic enhancements along streets and parks
5. Foundations for future residential and commercial growth
6. Improved gateways and city landmarks
7. Boulevards and parkways were viewed as enjoyable features for people

The best testament of Kessler’s influence on the region’s landscape is seen through the designs of his boulevards, parks, parkways, and rights-of-way; many of which still exist. These elements have been the foundations around which many cities have successfully grown and continue to do so. Rudisill Boulevard in Fort Wayne and 38th Street in Indianapolis provide good examples of building setbacks and figure grounds which allows a better understanding of Kessler’s intentions. As the designer, Kessler urged the implementation of a consistent building setback that aided in a more uniform design. Furthermore, wide margins paralleling the roadways were provided for planting rows of trees.
As designers in 21st-century cities, it is useful to study Kessler’s historical plans. They not only offer a proven source of knowledge, but contribute an immense amount of inspiration.

**South Bend 1880-1920:**

At the turn of the 20th century, from 1880-1920, Indiana was in the middle of a cultural golden age, at the forefront of American literature, art, and music. Second only to New York, Indiana had the most best-selling authors, including Booth Tarkington, Gene Stratton-Porter, Lew Wallace, and James Whitcomb Riley (“The Golden...”). Likewise, artists such as T.C. Steele and musicians like Paul Dresser brought attention to Indiana. This explosion of culture was not limited to the arts,
but is also evident in the progressive planning that occurred in some of the state’s largest cities. This planning proved to be an integral part of the City Beautiful Movement. This project primarily focuses on the historic Park and Boulevard Plan that George Kessler prepared for the city of South Bend, Indiana, in 1912.

In many ways, the story of South Bend’s development through prosperity to disparity is similar to other Midwestern cities of the same era. Situated on the southern bend of the Saint Joseph River in north-central Indiana, South Bend began as little more than a fur trading post in 1823 ("Local..."). In the span of three decades, from 1850-1880, the small town grew more than 800% to become the state’s seventh largest city (Esslinger 19). This population increase can largely be attributed to the development of industry in South Bend. As it would happen, some of the largest corporations of the late 19th and early 20th centuries flourished out of South Bend. Oliver Chilled Plow Works, Studebaker Corporation, and the Singer Manufacturing Corporation all had roots in the city (Esslinger 19). This aura of innovation and pride situated the city perfectly for the City Beautiful Movement and further urban development.

The growth of industry and innovation experienced during the latter part of the 19th century continued into the 20th century, inevitably increasing the population of South Bend. Yet, with the increased urbanization came problems that the city needed to address, including transportation, green space, and water quality. However, the way the city met these issues is what separates South Bend from other
cities. The progressive, design-oriented thinking that is so much part of the city’s identity began during these formative years.

South Bend’s urban boom coincided with Indiana’s cultural age and the City Beautiful Movement. The era was marked by growth and innovation, but also pride and competition. People began caring about their cities, but also competing with one another for industry and reputation (Hines 43). Even prior to City Beautiful, there was evidence of this competitive thinking. In 1882, South Bend constructed an electric overhead wire streetcar system – the very first project of its kind in the world (“Local…”). This era of progressive thinking culminated with the hiring of landscape architect George Kessler to design a park and boulevard plan, which he completed in 1912. Hiring Kessler to produce a master plan for the city allowed South Bend to stay competitive with other Indiana cities such as Fort Wayne and Indianapolis, securing South Bend’s reputation as an emerging city in the Midwest.

**The Plan:**

By 1910, South Bend had grown to become the fifth largest city in Indiana, with a population of more than 53,000. In an attempt to compete in business and culture, the South Bend Park Commissioner’s hired George Kessler in 1911, to construct a master plan for the development of a park and boulevard system. The plan was published and presented to the city in November, 1912. The public’s reaction was overwhelmingly positive and filled with excitement for the city, as seen
through cartoons and newspaper articles (Figure 2.4). Residents even petitioned that their street or neighborhood might be included in the plan (“Plan...”).

Figure 2.2 1912 Park and Boulevard Plan designed by George Kessler for South Bend, Indiana
Mirroring other Kessler plans, the South Bend Park and Boulevard Plan was designed similarly to the Fort Wayne and Indianapolis plans. Specifically, it used perpendicular boulevards as an organizing mechanism for the development of the city. Boulevards such as Lafayette, St. Louis, Colfax and Ewing were used to facilitate the increased traffic, but also served to control residential and commercial growth. Together, the system of drives was intended to be an organized structure around which the city could grow and prosper. At the time of its design, the boulevards extended well over one mile beyond the 1912 city limits. Kessler preferred wide rights-of-way, often specifying 100 feet or greater when possible.
This was evident in his suggestion for Ewing Boulevard, stating that it and any other new street should be made 100 feet wide (“Park…” 10). A second characteristic of his “Boulevarded” streets was the addition of a singular or double row of trees. The intention was to transform the street into an inviting and pleasurable experience. He describes the transformation of Lafayette Boulevard in the following, “Every effort will be made to make it the prettiest driving street and boulevard in the city (“Boulevard…””).

Intersecting these boulevards were Riverside Drive and North Shore Drive. These parkways bordered both sides of the St. Joseph River, connecting major city parks, and effectively protecting the waterway from further development while assisting in flood protection. Some of the parks included in this design were Rum Village, Howard, LaSalle, Pinhook, Pottawatomie, Studebaker, Leeper, and Kaley Parks. In total, 12 parks were mentioned in the plan, with detailed designs prepared for Leeper and Kaley Parks (“Plan…”). Together, the drives were meant to effectively connect inner and outer city parks, while providing a multitude of recreational opportunities, and protecting the natural features of South Bend.

**CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW – South Bend Today:**

In 2010, the population of South Bend, Indiana, was 101,166, making it the fourth largest city in the state. Although this is nearly a 24% decrease from its peak population of 132,445 in 1960, South Bend still remains the economic and cultural hub of the Michiana region (City Plan 67). The progressive thinking and emphasis
on design and innovation that catapulted the city in the early and mid-20th century is still prevalent. Recent infill development has been more pedestrian-oriented and offers an increase in mixed-uses. These developments are beginning to change the diversity of neighborhoods, while new technology and research parks are replacing former manufacturing zones.

Through the early and mid-20th century, much of the city’s growth and prosperity resulted from the continued successes of the Studebaker and Bendix Corporations. Through the expansion of these two industries, transportation developed as a significant part of South Bend’s identity. As these businesses prospered, so too did the city. Continuing to embrace the fields of innovation and design, South Bend became synonymous with design. The Studebaker Corporation hired industrial designer Raymond Loewy in 1936, and he launched his first vehicle design in 1938 (Bonsall 189). This marked the beginning of a friendship that lasted twenty years and produced timeless icons for both Studebaker and Loewy, such as the “lazy S” Studebaker logo and Avanti car model. Known as the father of industrial design, Loewy’s design work aided in the transition of design styles from art deco to more modern and streamlined designs. His ability to capture beauty in streamlined, but highly functional designs ultimately became his signature style (“Raymond…”).
Arguably equally as important in terms of innovation and design, Vincent Bendix revolutionized both the automobile and aeronautics markets by securing numerous patents—including innovations in automobile braking systems and a pressurized carburetor for airplane engines. (“Vincent”). He further extended his fame in aeronautical innovation by establishing the Bendix Transcontinental Air Race in 1931 and designing the first four passenger helicopter (“Vincent”).
The site selected for this project is focused on one of the major boulevards of Kessler’s 1912 Park and Boulevard plan, which at one time passed through the heart of the city’s manufacturing district including the historic Studebaker factories. Sadly, Studebaker’s more than 100 years of vehicle manufacturing in South Bend ended in 1963, after years of financial trouble. This resulted in a substantial economic decline in the city, the effects and memories of which remain visible today. As businesses closed and buildings sat empty, South Bend went through an urban renewal program from the late 1960s through the 1970s. The city demolished numerous historically and architecturally significant buildings, only to be replaced by surface parking lots (City Plan 100). This resulted in a fragmented and uninviting downtown. However, traces of forward-looking transportation initiatives are beginning to emerge again.

In 2010, the League of American Bicyclists designated South Bend as a Bicycle Friendly Community—making it the first community in northern Indiana to
receive this honor ("Bicycle"). The city consistently supports public transit such as the South Shore Railroad, and annually boasts more public ridership compared to all other Indiana cities except Indianapolis (City Plan, 38).

Furthermore, South Bend built the country’s first certified LEED Platinum transit facility in the country in 2011, echoing the city’s tradition of the first electric streetcar in 1882 ("TRANSPO"). In 2010, then Mayor Steve Luecke promoted the idea of improving the city’s transportation by stating his support of streetcars in his state-of-the-city address. In January 2013, the South Bend Public Transportation Corporation (TRANSPO) approved an alternatives and analysis study on improving transportation options for the city. The purpose of the study is to identify costs and feasibility, benefits, needs, and impacts of improving the transportation connections within the urban corridor (Pancoast). The corridor being reviewed consists of the area between Eddy Street Commons, downtown, and Ignition Park. The three options being considered include bus, bus rapid transit, and streetcars (Pancoast.)
SUMMARY OF THE 2005 CITY PLAN

The 2005 City Plan was South Bend’s first attempt in forty years at creating a comprehensive vision for what the city could become over an extended period of time—up to 2025 in this instance. It remains the most up-to-date plan for the city. For purposes of this project, the most relevant sections of the plan are land use and growth, transportation, housing, urban design, and how these sections of the
comprehensive plan relate to Lafayette Boulevard. Few streets in South Bend can boast the historical significance that Lafayette Boulevard possesses, yet it remains in dire need of intervention. This north-south thoroughfare has witnessed all of the city’s economic, environmental, and cultural transformations throughout the past century.

LANDUSE AND GROWTH

According to South Bend’s comprehensive plan, the decades of tearing buildings down and separating commercial, industrial, and housing are an antiquated way of thinking. In 2005, the city had over 4,500 acres of developable land, including some along Lafayette Boulevard (City Plan 20). In its analysis, the city stated the four primary issues that are detrimental to the appearance and successes of the Commercial Business District:

- Low-Density resulting from surface parking
- Few mixed-use structures
- Limited pedestrian-oriented uses
- Deterring traffic patterns

The goal for this land use and growth section is to “Encourage sustainable growth that preserves and enhances the character of South Bend and ensures compatibility of land uses in the community” (31).

HOUSING

In 2025, South Bend envisions itself to be a city of safe and unique neighborhoods with diverse housing choices. This requires making well-informed
decisions regarding the built environment, while embracing their history. Although
the city has experienced a decline in population over recent years, the population is
projected to increase to just over 110,900 by 2025. However, neither civic leaders
nor the general public felt that this was a desirable estimate. Ultimately, they
established a more ambitious goal of 16,500 new residents by 2025.
Accommodating this growth will require roughly 6,735 new housing units (City Plan
64).

In addition to estimating their need for new housing based upon population
gain, the city also examined the quality of their existing housing. They found that an
additional 5,472 units will be needed due to the deterioration of housing stock over
recent decades. In total, over 12,000 units are needed to replace units lost and meet
the desired growth (City Plan 66). Furthermore, the city recognizes the need to
diversify their housing options to diversify its population, thereby including people
at different life stages, income levels, and lifestyles. Two trends the city has
identified are the increasing percentage of senior citizens looking for housing and
the desire to attract young people. In both instances, people are looking for a wider
variety of urban housing options--far different than South Bend's current housing
mixture of more than 76% single family detached (City Plan 69).

Ultimately, the goal of the city is to create a housing market that offers
appealing neighborhoods and diverse housing options. The following selected
housing objectives from the city's plan best fit the scope of this project.
• Objective H3 – Strive for livable, mixed-income neighborhoods that collectively reflect the diversity of income levels of the region.

• Objective H6 – Stimulate housing development in the Central Business District.

URBAN DESIGN

The challenge of urban design is to create both public and private spaces that reflect the community’s history, but more importantly fit together. The comprehensive plan highlighted four primary issues: inadequate density, lack of gathering places, too few pedestrian-oriented designs, and weak connections.

During the decades of urban renewal, numerous decisions were made to tear down buildings, ultimately deconstructing the city’s urban form. This has resulted in large surface parking and vacant lots throughout the city, especially downtown along Lafayette Boulevard. The following goal and corresponding objectives best fit this project.

Goal: Promote an attractive and aesthetically pleasing public realm that preserves and enhances the city’s history and built environment.

• Objective UD 1 – Enhance the aesthetic appeal of the built environment.

• Objective UD 3 – Preserve, enhance, and create aesthetically pleasing visual and physical connections.

• Objective UD 4 – Improve the character of the community’s entryways and corridors.
SITE INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS:

Today Lafayette Boulevard is anything but the most beautiful street in the city of South Bend. As a secondary arterial street, the limits of this project span from the Studebaker Buildings in the south to Leeper Park in the north. The length of the study area is 15 city blocks, totaling approximately 1.2 miles. Lafayette maintains the same right-of-way of 82 ½ feet as it did in the 1912 plan. This seemingly arbitrary number is likely the length of 1 ¼ chains of a surveyor. Transecting the entire length of the street through downtown, the boulevard can easily be separated into three zones according to aesthetics, function and history: Renaissance District, Central Business District (CBD), and Chapin Park Neighborhood. Most of Lafayette Boulevard is zoned as part of the CBD, but it also has a mixture of adjacent uses. These adjoining areas are zoned as light industry to the south, high-density west of Coveleski Stadium, and mixed-used west of the middle part of the boulevard. The nearby area located west of the northern end of Lafayette Boulevard is zoned as medium-density. While each of the parts must be carefully considered, the main focus of the design will be the industrial zone nearest the Studebaker buildings (see pages 39-40).
Figure 3.2 Zones along Lafayette Boulevard
Figure 3.3 Zoning according to the 2005 comprehensive city plan
In this study, the southern portion of Lafayette Boulevard, called the Renaissance District, still maintains the strong appearance and integrity of an industrial district. Coined by Kevin Smith, owner of Union Station, the name Renaissance District refers to the movement of South Bend embracing and restoring its history as a national and world leader in innovation ("Union Station Tech"). While the Renaissance District has no official boundaries, for the purposes of this study, it is proposed that the district spans from Bronson Street to Jefferson Boulevard. Areas south of the elevated rail are zoned for light industry, while the rest is zoned as part of the CBD. The key remaining buildings are the Studebaker Manufacturing Plant 84, the Studebaker Administrations Offices, and the 1929 Art Deco Union Station.

The Union Station was designed by Fellheimer and Wagner, the same architects as the Cincinnati Union Terminal and Buffalo Central Terminal. Built as a medium-sized station, it shares the barreled ceiling with Cincinnati’s terminal and the brickwork from Buffalo’s ("Historic"). Recovering from years of neglect, the South Bend Union Station is now home to a thriving technology center, Global Access Point. While the adjacent Studebaker factory is currently vacant, the expanding Global Access Point is in the process of renovating it to meet the increased demand for business. At six stories high and approximately 800 hundred feet in length, the Studebaker buildings are a visually imposing site as people approach the active elevated tracks.
Figure 3.4 South Bend art deco Union Station

Figure 3.5 Studebaker Plant 84
Global Access Point is only one part of the technology and manufacturing businesses planned for this area. Like Innovation Park, a technology park near Notre Dame, Ignition Park is a new 140-acre development being built south of the remaining Studebaker buildings, on the former Studebaker manufacturing sites along Lafayette Boulevard. Adjacent to Ignition Park is the new LEED TRANSPO building. Ignition Park is far larger than Innovation Park and is expected to be the
location for much of South Bend’s growing new employment in nanotechnology ("Accelerator"). Ignition Park produces an opportunity for a new mixed-use development along Lafayette in accordance with South Bend’s most recent development plan, much like the Eddy Street Commons near Innovation Park. It also illustrates the need to discuss what type of transportation would best connect the new technology parks and Central Business District.

Figure 3.7 View of Ignition Park master plan
While parts of the Renaissance District retain its industrial heritage, it also bears witness to the urban renewal of the 1960s and 1970s, during which numerous historically and architecturally significant buildings were demolished. In some
instances, entire city blocks still sit vacant. The empty lots do nothing to promote a welcoming downtown; rather, they create a completely uncomfortable walking and driving environment that is far from inviting. At the intersection of Western Avenue and Lafayette Boulevard, vehicular flow changes from two directions to a one-way traveling north, further suppressing walkability.

![Vacant or developable land downtown according to the 2005 Comprehensive City Plan](image)

In recent decades, South Bend has tried to re-energize this part of the city with the construction of the Stanley Coveleski Regional Stadium, home of the South Bend Silver Hawks minor league baseball team. Built in 1987 and located across
from the old Union Station, this ballpark was, and still is, intended to be the anchor for new development. As recently as 2010, the stadium was renovated to update structural issues and add more entertainment features, such as a splash pad and centerfield concourse. A new centerfield entrance constructed at the intersection of Lafayette and Western consists of a diagonal walkway leading to a centerfield gate and the concourse. Further renovations included retrofitting a Jewish synagogue, located beyond left field, into the team gift shop in 2012 ("Stadium").

Figure 3.10 Conceptual plan of the recent renovations for Coveleski Regional Stadium

The intentions of the new entrance and gift shop were to establish a stronger connection with downtown. However, even with these additions, this 5,000 seat
stadium remains isolated and is still surrounded by vacant lots and large surface parking. Additionally, it does not take advantage of the nearby TRANSPO bus station as it offers neither a bus stop nor a pleasant walk from the transit station.

Figure 3.11 View of the empty lots disconnecting Coveleski Stadium with the rest of downtown

Figure 3.12 Looking east towards the TRANSPO bus stop at the intersection of Lafayette Boulevard and South Street
Nonetheless, excellent views of the historical Studebaker and Union Station buildings are abundant. As the first feature located past the elevated rail line, the Lafayette Boulevard and South Street intersection has the potential to serve as a gateway into the downtown. In doing so, it has the opportunity to draw inspiration from the surrounding buildings and reflect this district’s immense history. The remaining buildings also provide a nice palette of materials from this period, including brick, iron, and glass. Although the current elevated railway is not visually appealing, the sound is not that noticeable.

Figure 3.13 Views of Studebaker buildings and Union Station standing at Lafayette Boulevard and Monroe Street Intersection
The middle part of Lafayette Boulevard, roughly the area between Jefferson Boulevard and Marion Street, forms a critical part of the downtown Central Business District. Situated on the western edge of the district along Lafayette are several civic buildings including the Saint Joseph County-City Building, Historic Courthouse, and the Saint Joseph Historic Preservation Commission. Additionally, well known services such as The South Bend Tribune and news channel WSBT are located beside Lafayette (fig xx). While it has far more businesses and services, this section of the street is only slightly more inviting and comfortable than the southern industrial zone. The disengaging street environment is the result of the overall lack of consideration for the pedestrian experience. At three to six stories tall with 18-foot-wide sidewalks, the building-to-sidewalk ratio does feel comfortable in places where buildings exist. Plus, the large expanses of surface parking lots between buildings effectively disrupt the comfortable downtown urban environment.
Furthermore, the absence of streetscaping except for a handful of trees creates a concrete corridor. The lone attempt at streetscape exists between Jefferson Boulevard and Wayne Street. However, at only half of a block in length, it creates greater discontinuity in the appearance of Lafayette Boulevard because it does not relate to the rest of the street. Furthermore, the design of this streetscape is neither engaging nor ecologically beneficial. It offers no opportunity for pedestrians to pause and sit, nor is there anything that would cause them to want to. Additionally, the general lack of storefronts does not invite pedestrians to pause, adding to the bleak street. As for the ecological failings of the streetscape design, the curbed planter is missing the opportunity to collect stormwater and allow it to
slowly percolate into the soil. This would be a useful measure for a city in the process of spending $500 million to reduce combined sewage overflows (“South”).

Figure 3.15 View of the curbed planter along Lafayette Boulevard

In general, this middle section through the CBD is suffering from a disconnection between buildings and the street, plus a lack of physical and visual connections to other parts of the downtown. This is even more evident in the lack of attempt to engage people and establish pedestrian spaces near civic buildings. In some instances, alleyways offer visual connections to Main Street and Michigan Street, presenting an opportunity to better connect the downtown as a whole by
transforming these spaces into more pedestrian-oriented designs and connecting adjacent streets. One successful example of this already exists between Main Street and Michigan Street, near the South Bend Chocolate Company. While it does not capture stormwater, it does turn an unpleasant walk between a parking lot and building into a visually welcoming pedestrian alley. It achieves this by using a row of trees and a low brick wall to establish a comfortable ceiling.

The third zone along Lafayette Boulevard is the area located between Marion Street and Riverside Drive, adjacent to the Historic Chapin Park Neighborhood and Leeper Park. This portion of the boulevard is interesting because it looks and feels the most residential, but it also has the city’s second largest employer--Memorial Health System (”100”). The zone achieves this through clearly identifying the
separation of public and private spaces. A visible and physical change in the height of building entrances helps communicate the difference in spaces. Additionally, as the only portion of the boulevard lined with trees, it fits the expected “boulevarded” appearance. The tree-lined street and large homes effectively make this zone far different than the others. It offers the best glimpse of what Kessler envisioned for Lafayette Boulevard, as the street was largely residential at the time he designed the plan. It maintains the consistent building setback and wide margins. Leeper Park, situated at Lafayette Boulevard’s northernmost end, is adjacent to the Chapin Park Historic Neighborhood and Madison Primary Center. It is a fundamental representation of Kessler’s original intention of providing passive and active recreational opportunities accessible via the system of boulevards and parkways.

![Image](image.jpg)

Figure 3.17 Example of Lafayette Boulevard near the Chapin Park Neighborhood

The intersection of Lafayette Boulevard and Marion Street is an important location where aesthetics and building types transition from urban to residential. Additionally, the street pattern begins to break from a grid to include diagonals. The
visible differences present an opportunity to further strengthen a northern gateway and establish a better understanding of where a person is coming or going. However, since this area is bordered by the historic neighborhood and feels comfortable, it has less need for intensive redesign. Instead it is more critical to ensure the changes relate to other parts of Lafayette Boulevard, creating a unified design.

**Additional Observations:**

South Bend obviously wants to establish the downtown as a friendly, walkable, and healthy place. Signs throughout downtown encourage people to walk by stating how many minutes walk it is to a destination. Furthermore, the commitment to transforming South Bend into a bikeable community is becoming visible. As of 2012, more than 61 miles of designated bike lanes have been established within the city ("Bike South"). A number of these exist along several downtown streets, including Lafayette. Businesses are encouraged to support biking by installing city-provided bicycle racks, provided by the city ("Bike Rack").

On Lafayette, striped bicycle lanes currently extend from South Street south past the Studebaker buildings. Other cross streets with bicycle routes include Colfax Avenue and South Street. Plans exist to
extend the route along Lafayette all the way to Leeper Park and connect with Riverside Drive. However, there is a significant opportunity to connect with the existing Bendix-Studebaker Heritage Bike Trail.

![Figure 3.19 Example of signs encouraging people to walk to destinations](image)

Presently, the heritage bike trail is a route people can ride along the streets of South Bend by following signs attached to light poles. It takes riders around to different locations in South Bend where Bendix and Studebaker buildings used to exist and operate, including along parts of Lafayette Boulevard. However, as it currently exists, the trail is not easy to follow due to a lack of visibility. Something this significant to South Bend’s history should be more prominent and well known. It makes sense to expand the existing trail and tie it into the city’s goals to extend bicycle lanes all along Lafayette. There is also an opportunity to transform the idea into a larger heritage trail--further connecting the proposed development with the existing “Cultural District.”
1) Studebaker Blacksmith Shop and Carriage Factory Shop  8) Former First Presbyterian Church
2) Highway Marker                                  9) St. Paul’s Memorial Methodist Church
3) Studebaker Administrations Building             10) City Cemetery
4) Studebaker Factory Site                         11) Bendix Corporation Headquarters
5) Oliver Factory Site                             12) Bendix Field/ South Bend Regional Airport
6) Museums at Washington and Chapin               13) Bendix Woods County Park
7) Tippecanoe Place

Figure 3.20  Map of Studebaker-Bendix Heritage Bike Trail
Source:  http://files.itimarketing.mobi/studebaker/map.pdf

Just as the Renaissance District has no specified borders, South Bend has no officially defined Cultural District. For the purposes of this project, I am defining the Cultural District as the area bordered by LaSalle Street, Main Street, Wayne Street, and St. Joseph Street because this area contains the Morris Performing Arts Center, South Bend Museum of Art, and most of the downtown restaurants. While all three of these zones along Lafayette Boulevard should respond to their immediately surrounding context, they must also maintain a unifying element--something that is currently missing.
Figure 3.21 South Bend Cultural District
These studies were selected as case studies based on similarities of being a mixed-used development, downtown redevelopment, being a similar project size. The case studies included Harrison Square Redevelopment in Fort Wayne, Indiana, Eddy Street Commons in South Bend, and Portland's streetcar system.

**Harrison Square – Fort Wayne, Indiana**

The Harrison Square Redevelopment is a downtown revitalization project on a former industrial site in Fort Wayne, Indiana. The development features a mixed-use building, hotel, and park, all surrounding the cornerstone of the development, Parkview Field. It is a useful study because this site deals with many of the same complexities that the study site in South Bend has, most notably connecting with the surrounding downtown. Adjacent downtown buildings include the Grand Wayne Convention Center, Embassy Theatre, and Allen County. The development consists of the following:
• 250 room hotel
• 100,000 square feet of leasable space
• 44 apartment units
• Park
• 900 space parking garage

Figure 4.1 Aerial of Harrison Square, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Figure 4.2 Perspective of Harrison Square Apartment Building
Source of both images: http://www.cityoffortwayne.org/harrison-square-downtown/updated-harrison-square.html
Eddy Street Commons – South Bend, Indiana

Eddy Street Commons is a 25 acre mixed-use development located in South Bend, Indiana, adjacent to the southern edge of Notre Dame’s campus. The proximity of this development is important because it was built as part of the revitalization of the Eddy Street neighborhood in combination with the first of South Bend’s two new technology and research parks, Innovation Park. This research campus is located just east of the mix-use development. Furthermore, it had to connect with the Notre Dame campus to the north.

The Eddy Street Commons is a relevant study because the scale of the project is similar in size to the proposed design site along Lafayette Boulevard. Additionally, it provides an opportunity to see what type of developments the city of
South Bend is interested in investing in with relation to aesthetics, size, and uses.

The development consists of the following:

- 90,000 square feet of retail
- 82,000 square feet of office
- 119 Room Fairfield Inn
- 226 Apartments
- 190 (+) For Sale Residential Units
- 1276 Parking Spaces

Figure 4.4  Plan of Eddy Street Commons
Source: http://eddycommons.com/leasing/plat-map
Pearl District – Portland, Oregon

Portland’s streetcar system opened in 2001, after 50 years without one. It operates on a 3.9 mile loop that connects districts such as the Pearl District and the Brewery Blocks. This is a useful study because the implementation of the streetcar has resulted in an increase of development along its corridor. This streetcar system has resulted in a larger push for denser, but more livable and pedestrian-oriented developments (“Portland” 5). In only three years after the streetcar completion, 4,600 housing units and more than 2 million square feet of commercial development were built within two blocks of the streetcar line (Ohland, 12).

Figure 4.5 Aerial view of Eddy Street Commons.
Source: http://eddycommons.com/
Figure 4.6  Portland streetcar map
Source: http://www.portlandstreetcar.org/node/4

Figure 4.7  View of a Portland streetcar stop
Summary

Each of these case studies offers valuable lessons that can be applied to this project. The Harrison Square development illustrates a useful example of building orientation that draws people into the site. Furthermore, the separate buildings of the design are unified using a centerfield park that doubles as an entrance into the ballpark. The Eddy Street Commons is an extremely useful study because it provides a reference for the type of density South Bend is trying to achieve with their urban infill development. At 25 acres, the project has a housing density of 19 units per acre – far greater than the average density. Additionally, the plan provided references for building sizes. Lastly, Portland’s Pearl District offers a proven example of revitalization and urban infill development in combination with a streetcar system. The streetcar system is helpful in understanding traffic flows and how people board the streetcar itself. Although Portland is much larger than South Bend and the size of the streetcar system may differ than the design proposal, understanding how they address transit stops will still be useful.
As mentioned in previous chapters, South Bend has an incredibly rich history of innovation and design, especially in terms of transportation. Even the name Renaissance District is referencing this character defining history as South Bend is making changes to become a leader of innovation again. This history of design and designers in South Bend was the source of much of the inspiration for the design proposal.

**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

*Distinctive Character*

**Restore City Beautiful in keeping with Kessler’s original plan**

**Further develop South Bend’s distinctive character through promoting local history.**

- Make a connection with the Bendix-Studebaker Heritage Bike Trail
• Establish Lafayette Boulevard as an urban gateway to better connect the cultural district with the technology park
• Retain and celebrate views of historic buildings
• Draw awareness to Kessler’s original plan

Transit

Promote Lafayette Boulevard as a premiere example of a transit-rich street in the region.

• Develop a streetcar system that connects Ignition Park, Downtown, and Innovation Park.
• Expand the existing Heritage Bike Trail through downtown
  o Connect to existing bicycle routes and Leeper Park
• Provide clear bicycle connections and improve amenities
  o Connect to existing bicycle routes
  o Increase bicycle parking
• Retain on-street parking along Lafayette Boulevard
  o Identify opportunities for flexible lanes during off-peak hours.

Pedestrian

Transform Lafayette Boulevard into a celebrated, multi-modal boulevard that attracts people to live, visit, explore, and enjoy downtown.

• Create a multi-generational, family-friendly experience
  o Integrate interactive and educational features for pedestrians
Strengthen connections to nearby neighborhoods using bicycle and pedestrian modes of transportation.

Develop way-finding signage

- Transform the street into an inviting and comfortable public space.
  - Improve lighting and retain wide sidewalks
  - Increase public amenities such as restrooms and seating
- Develop diverse housing options that appeal to a variety of lifestyles, life stages, and income levels.

**Green**

**Develop Lafayette Boulevard as a downtown green corridor using low-impact development techniques and further reestablish South Bend as an outdoor downtown.**

- Integrate sustainable stormwater management solutions
  - Create bioswales and permeable paving
- Establish a new downtown park using vacant land or brownfield
- Create the feeling of a green public realm by adding streets trees and landscaping in the public right-of-way
- Reinforce Lafayette Boulevard’s original purpose as a connection between park spaces
  - Establish a connection between the newly proposed park and Coveleski Stadium
- Retain connection with Leeper Park at the northern end of the boulevard
- Encourage the designation of Lafayette Boulevard as a bikable and walkable street

CONCEPTUAL DESIGN

The greatest design challenge for this site is making sure that the design meets all of the goals and objectives while fitting seamlessly within the surrounding urban context. The design proposal includes some decisions that extended the length of Lafayette Boulevard; however, the primary area of focus was the Renaissance District on the southern part of my study area. Additionally, the development was limited to only the land deemed vacant and developable by the 2005 Comprehensive City Plan, totaling nearly 19 acres. The design must create an environment that is comfortable and engaging for pedestrians. In order to achieve this, a consistent building setback should be established when possible, just as Kessler did. Also, a landmark or some form of way-finding should be placed at key intersections. Lastly, the proposal should be centered around green spaces with easy access to it.
Figure 5.1  General site design boundary and developable land
DESIGN PROPOSAL

The master plan for the Renaissance District is presented over the next few pages and is organized according to the goals and objectives established earlier. The design is aimed at furthering the revitalization of the Renaissance District by creating a mixed-use and pedestrian-oriented development that celebrates South Bend’s distinctive industrial character. The Renaissance District achieves this by offering alternative transportation options, celebrating local history, strengthening
connections and way-finding, providing recreational opportunities, and supplying a variety of housing options.

KEY FEATURES

Retail/Office Space

- 131,450 square feet

Housing

- Apartments – 202 units
- Lofts – 76 units
- Townhomes – 41 units
- Senior Housing – 42 units

Specialty

- Grocery Store – 18,950 square feet
- Day Care – 7,350 square feet
- Fitness Center – 22,500 square feet
- Hotel – 260 rooms

Parking

- 886 off-street spaces

Transportation

- Streetcar Route
- Heritage Bicycle Trail
Figure 5.3  Master Plan
As mentioned previously, Lafayette Boulevard was the main boulevard in George Kessler’s 1912 Park and Boulevard Plan. Although it is currently an urban collector street, it becomes the primary street of the new Renaissance District. In the design proposal the traffic flow changes from one-way in the Central Business District to both directions the entire length of the street up to Leeper Park. This was an assumption made based on recent traffic flow discussions in the *South Bend Tribune*. While the public right-of-way remains the same width of 82 ½ feet, the traffic lanes and sidewalk widths have been altered. In the proposed design, Lafayette Boulevard will only have one driving lane in each direction, with parallel parking on the sides.

In addition to lane widths changes, a streetcar system is proposed for South Bend. This was selected as the transportation alternative for several reasons, the
first being that it was one of the options being discussed by the city. While other
types of transportation such as a Bus Rapid Transit or other traditional bus
services require less capital, can be implemented faster, and offer more flexibility, a
streetcar system offers something they cannot – visual permanence. This sense of
permanence is far more effective in creating retail development. Furthermore,
according to the District of Columbia Office of Planning, people tend to prefer
streetcars over other bus alternatives because of lower noise levels, better ride
quality, and limited emissions (Clancy 7).

The proposed streetcar route begins at the LEED TRANSPO building and
covers north along Lafayette Boulevard through the Renaissance District, finally
connecting to the Central Business District. From this point it will turn northeast
and connect with Eddy Street Commons and Innovation Park before finally looping
back towards the TRANSPO station. The intention of this streetcar is to create
better connections between districts, as well as transform South Bend into a more
easily publicly accessible community. Furthermore, the streetcars would be replicas
of earlier models of South Bend streetcars. The reestablishment of a streetcar line
becomes a highly visual and physical reminder of South Bend having the first
electric streetcar in the United States. Furthermore, the design of a streetcar system is a
problem that George Kessler would also have had to address.
Figure 5.5 Proposed streetcar route and study area.
A third transportation change made along Lafayette Boulevard is the extension and elaboration of the Heritage Trail. This bicycle trail was extended to the northernmost extent of Lafayette Boulevard, Leeper Park. In doing so, the trail connects to several other bicycle lanes on cross streets. It also reiterates Kessler’s original design intent of connecting people to parks using boulevards.
Figure 5.7 Existing and proposed bicycle lane connections
PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE

In order for the revitalization of the Renaissance District to be successful, the area needs to be transformed into a more walkable, livable, and diverse place. Significant components that were considered and addressed to make this a realization include housing, access, and recreational opportunities.

Housing

Since there was no market study available for the design of this development, Eddy Street Commons in South Bend, Indiana was used as the reference for attaining a similar housing density and leasable space. The proposal addresses the lack of buildings in the district and substantially altered the building footprint of the downtown. In total, 340 new housing units were designed for this site, achieving a density of nearly 18 housing units per acre. Housing typologies include loft and studio apartments, townhomes, and senior housing.

Figure 5.8  Comparison of existing and proposed figure grounds
Each mixed-use building is three stories tall with retail and office space on the ground floor and residential units on the top two floors. The proposal includes 286 off-street parking, plus an additional 700 spaces in the two parking garages. The parking garages are located near Coveleski Regional Stadium and the City-
County Building to meet the high demand of parking. In most instances, parking was not significantly altered, but instead, proposed buildings were placed to fit around existing parking (Figure 5.13).

Figure 5.10 Location of typical housing typologies
Figure 5.11 Section view of the townhomes

Figure 5.12 Typical plan view of townhomes

Figure 5.13 Existing parking versus proposed off-street parking location
Access

In order for the Renaissance District to be truly livable, it needs to be walkable—meaning people need to be able to reach a variety of services within a 1/4 mile radius. In this project, the key additional features of the master plan that were included to make this development more livable were a grocery store, daycare, and fitness center. These were included because these are services that can greatly impact the livability of a community and for the most part, they are absent from the area. Although there is an ethnic grocery store and a Save-Alot within a ¼ mile walk, these stores are limited in their offerings. Likewise, with the addition of Ignition Park, it is likely that many of the new tenants of the district will be professionals and prefer to shop someplace other than Save-Alot.
Figure 5.14 Location of important services for a livable community
The location of the streetcar stop was positioned at the intersection of Lafayette Boulevard and Western Avenue. It is conveniently located across the street from the entrance to the Coveleski Stadium Park, diagonal to the grocery store, and near the day care. This allows people to easily pick-up their children or groceries on their ride home.

Figure 5.15 Location of the streetcar stop

Figure 5.16 View of the streetcar stop and entrance to Coveleski Stadium Park
Recreational Opportunities

A key feature of the 1912 Park and Boulevard Plan was providing the community with parks for passive and active recreational opportunities. In addition to the heritage bike trail that connects with Leeper Park and other trails, two other parks were created for the community. For purposes of managing the scope of the project, only the park that connects with Coveleski Stadium was designed in further detail.

![Plan of the proposed Coveleski Stadium Park](image)

Figure 5.17 Plan of the proposed Coveleski Stadium Park

Significant components of the park include the playground, plaza, water feature, and the eating terrace. The intention of this park was to strengthen visual and physical connections between Coveleski Stadium and Lafayette Boulevard. The
recent changes that were made to the outfield concourse were left as is. The design for the park began at the centerfield gated entrance and extended up to the intersection of Lafayette Boulevard and Western Avenue. The playground placement is adjacent to the daycare center. The plaza is the dominating feature of the park, but it is intended to provide multiple uses. At any time during the year, it can be used for holding festivals, markets, or pregame entertainment. During the winter months, part of the plaza can be transformed into an ice rink, thereby providing active winter recreational opportunities.
The water feature of the park is a gently flowing water course with steps that allow people to touch the water. The intention of the water is to create an urban oasis and add interest between the intersection and the centerfield entrance. On the east side of the water course, an S-shaped bench separates the water feature and the elevated eating terrace. The bench effectively doubles as seating for the lower level and provides a bar table for the terrace. The terrace was positioned to accommodate outdoor dining of the hotel restaurant.
DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER

Emphasizing the design history and celebrating the distinctive character of the district is a significant component of this design proposal. This was accomplished by improving visual and physical connections by creating signage and landmarks. First and foremost, the concept behind the existing Heritage Trail – connecting former Studebaker and Bendix sites was expanded. While the original trail will still provide a tour of those former industrial sites, the new Heritage Trail is intended to be a greater exploration of significant people, industries, and design that helped form South Bend. In order to achieve this, a two piece sculpture was designed. The first part of the design includes 3 foot bas-relief sculptures placed in the sidewalk pavement, each having a different design.
The second piece of the sculpture is a light pole. In addition to adding greater visibility because of the vertical form, an explanation of significance attached to the bas-relief will be engraved on the side.

Figure 5.20 Examples of bas-relief sculptures
Figure 5.21 View of proposed sidewalk and heritage bike trail

**Signage**

A critical feature in attaining the goal of highlighting South Bend’s distinctive character was by developing signage for the new district that reflected both the district and city’s history. The purpose of creating the signage is to help create a more visually unified district, but also serve as a reminder of South Bend’s heritage. With that in mind, street crossings and a new logo for the district were created. Inspirations were found in the old Studebaker buildings and the Union Station, both historically significant buildings of the district. Throughout this project, countless pieces of South Bend’s history were read. Few pieces of history stand out more than the history of the Studebaker Avanti. At its inception, this car model was the
epitome of quality design and beauty, far ahead of its time. It was the Studebaker Corporation’s last great innovation in automobile design.

The Avanti symbol was adopted for the logo and crosswalks of the Renaissance District for the following reasons. Firstly, Avanti is an Italian word meaning forward. This not only creates a playful association with the district name, Renaissance, but in many ways it embodies the mindset of the city today. As the city is in the process of redeveloping its identity, this is a reminder to embrace its history of design and resiliency. The second component of the logo is the gears, representing the area’s manufacturing history.

![Logo and signage for the Renaissance District](image)

Figure 5.22 Logo and signage for the Renaissance District

The pattern for the crosswalks was inspired by the art deco Union Station. The straight lines mimic the lines found on the stations’ sides, while the arch represents the barreled ceiling. It also has the Avanti symbol running through the center, representing the district’s history and current attitude of moving forward. This art deco theme is intended to be a unifying element that also extends to the streetscape design.
Figure 5.23 Crosswalk design for the Renaissance District

Figure 5.24 View of the art deco Union Station in South Bend, Indiana
Landmark

The intersection of Lafayette Boulevard and South Street was selected as a good location for a landmark because it is the first intersection past the overhead railroad and will serve as the entrance into the district from the south. The design
of the landmark is both a sculpture and clock. The gears not only represent the
districts’ industrial past, but also allude to the South Bend Watch Company.
Founded by the Studebaker brothers, this company created pocket watches that
were sold nationally. Before it closed during The Great Depression, it employed
more than 500 employees (“Brief”). The creation of such a landmark is similar to
Kessler's design intentions, as he often would create landmarks as visual references
along the boulevards.

Figure 5.27 View of the landmark sculpture at the intersection of Lafayette Boulevard and South
Street
While sustainability and green have become trendy words in the profession of landscape architecture, being mindful of design decisions and their implications is always a good thing to strive for. In this project, streetscape bioswales were designed to help capture and retain stormwater from the sidewalks and buildings. Although George Kessler did not directly consider stormwater in his street designs, he was preserving and protecting riverfronts from development at a time when few other designers were even considering that sort of thinking. Without a doubt, some form of stormwater management would be in line with his thinking.
As the previous chapters have shown, South Bend has a rich and lengthy history of producing high-quality design and innovation. The goal of this design proposal was to make this distinctive cultural heritage more visible. Although a century has passed since George Kessler’s original plan, this project showed that many of his original intentions are still relevant for the contemporary city. This proposal reinforced Kessler’s objective of providing green space for South Bend to grow around and ensuring equal access to it. This was accomplished by extending the Heritage Bicycle Trail the length of Lafayette Boulevard up to Leeper Park, and connecting it with other bicycle routes along the way. Likewise, the addition of a streetcar system reinforced Lafayette Boulevard as an important urban street and provided hierarchy to the streets in the district.

Additionally, public history was used to improve the gateways and landmarks of the city. The street crossings, sculptures, bioswales, and seating emphasized the distinctive character of the district, but also improved the site aesthetics. Lastly, the housing proposed was in accordance to South Bend’s 2005
city plan and their recent housing decisions. Together these decisions reestablished
the boulevard as an enjoyable space for people.

While no two design problems are exactly alike, this project may serve as a
useful example of how to effectively use public history to help resolve issues.
Ultimately, the proposal for the Renaissance District aims to be an example of
revitalization in a city that struggled for decades, but most importantly, it is an
example of using local history to create public spaces that all the residents of South
Bend can claim as their own.
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