Because without their encouragement and support, I never would have made it this far, this book is lovingly dedicated to my parents, Harold and Georgia.
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This book is intended as a summary of the process undertaken as an architectural thesis project. The project: analysis, research, programming, design, and presentation was completed in the final year of studies at the College of Architecture and Planning, Ball State University.

This book will not be a record of every step or idea pursued in the course of the design, but, will explain the influences which shaped the final product, whether they be concepts or details that eventually occurred in the final design, or were discarded along the way.
HISTORY

The Fort Wayne Civic Center was first proposed in 1910 as part of a master plan for the city prepared by Charles M. Robinson. In 1916, the city's foremost architect, John Wing, presented plans for a 5000 seat auditorium, which was never built because of the onset of WW I.

The most recent wave of interest in constructing a Civic Center began nearly twelve years ago. Since then the project has been proposed, discussed, debated, and postponed by a number of various groups and organizations in the city. Nationally known architectural firms have completed designs for the Center. The week before the construction bids were due on one of these designs, the Fort Wayne Convention Authority stopped the process again, and fired the architect. Eventually the project was restarted from the beginning, by a new architect, and ground was broken in April, 1983.
An alternate suggestion for a convention center placed it at the northwest corner of Lewis and Harrison St. and tied it in with the proposed Union Railroad Station that was to be built at the exact south end of Harrison Street just prior to its slight jog to the east. The map shows the extent of Mr. Robinson's thorough planning.
Civic center, first sought 72 years ago

By KEVIN LEININGER

The more things change in Fort Wayne, the more they stay the same.

Take the proposed Fort Wayne civic center, for instance.

Last week, the convention and tourism authority approved plans for an $8 million, 85,000-square-foot center that would occupy the vacated lot across from the Embassy 1 Theater by mid-1994.

But the idea of a Fort Wayne civic center is nothing new. Such a proposal goes back at least as far as 1910, when a comprehensive city plan by Charles Mulford Robinson proposed a center be built on one of two sites — either along Main Street between Clinton and Berry or at the northwest corner of Harrison and Lewis.

By 1916, public support was widespread. In November, a referendum was conducted which by a 10,397 to 89 vote gave the city authority to issue a $225,000 fund for the erection of the center. A site at the southeast corner of Lewis and Clinton streets was purchased for $25,000, and Fort Wayne's foremost architect John Wing — was paid $5,000 to draw up plans for an 8,000-seat auditorium.

But then World War I intervened. With a surge of patriotism, the city council agreed to spend $180,000 of the fund on "Liberty" war bonds, putting an end to the civic center movement for the war's duration.

But the story doesn't end there. In 1918, a group of local movers and shakers began an effort to get the city to erect a larger (10,000-seat) auditorium north of the Nickel Plate Railroad tracks. The civic center — by this time renamed "Victory Hall" in honor of the county's war veterans — was to be funded by a new $1.5 million bond.

But backers of the original center plans took the mayor, city council and Victory Hall board of managers to court to stop the project. A 20-member group led by Chauncey Heilbroner contended the city had no right to sell its original civic center site without consulting the voters. Heilbroner was also upset the original $225,000 bond was supposed to be turned over to the Victory Hall managers — none of whom were ever elected by the public.

The issue went all the way to the State Supreme Court, which ruled the state law allowing the change of plans and issuance of a new bond had been unconstitutional. The Wing-designed civic center, though never built.

There's a footnote to the story. That 1910 Fort Wayne plan also called for construction of a park system along the city's three rivers. Work is just now starting on such a system — 72 years after it was first proposed.
A convention facility is desired in Fort Wayne because the city sees not having one as the missing of a major opportunity to attract revenue that is currently going to cities such as Indianapolis, South Bend, Evansville, Akron, Kalamazoo, and other similar cities that do have convention facilities. There is a large number of groups and organizations who must meet on a regular basis according to their own bylaws usually at least annually, and many more that meet more regularly, for whom it is not feasible to go to one of the primary convention markets (Chicago, Detroit, New York, etc.), and therefore a facility like one found more typically in a city such as Fort Wayne is more suitable.
ASSUMPTIONS

This thesis project is somewhat unique in that the City of Fort Wayne is actually in the process of constructing a Civic Center at this time--ground was broken in early April, 1983. Because of this, a number of assumptions were made a priori concerning the project, and also, because it was felt that by doing so, the project would become better, a number of the "real" constraints were altered. The primary factor that was accepted as a "given" was the location of the site, in the 1000 block of South Calhoun. Also accepted as "given" was the functional program, and for the most part, the square footages in the program. Other factors, and especially the alterations made in the program, will be discussed as the process is explained.
Below, construction continues on the Botanical Gardens, in the upper center of the photo, The Embassy Theatre, next to the Botanical Gardens, recently finished a facelift to its exterior. The Civic Center, scheduled to be under way in the spring, will be built on the vacant lot in the center. Work continues on the second part of the municipal parking garage in lower left corner.
The site for the Fort Wayne Civic Center is the 1000 block of South Calhoun, bounded also by Jefferson Boulevard on the south, Washington Boulevard on the north, and Harrison Street on the west. This location is at the southern edge of the Central Business District and is central to the current phase of Downtown Redevelopment.

Nearby features and activities, both existing and in planning stages include:
EMBASSY THEATER--one of the oldest theaters in the city. The Embassy was closed some years ago with the growing popularity of the suburban twin and triple cinemas, and threatened with demolition. In a rare display of concern for a beautiful, historic building, the Embassy Foundation was formed, and raised, purely from donations, the money necessary to buy and restore the theater. Now on the National Register of Historic Places, it is the home of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, and is also used for other concerts, stage shows, and classic films. The Embassy is located on Jefferson Boulevard, directly south of the Civic Center site.
UPFRONT CITYSCAPES

Last of the line: Embassy preserves theater era

Last in a series on Fort Wayne theaters
By DICK BENHOUR
Of The News Sentinel

For nearly half a century, the Embassy (formerly the Emboyd) and the Jefferson theaters stood as neighbors along what used to be an active, thriving downtown block.

But now, only one of the historic theaters on Jefferson Boulevard survives, the Jefferson Theater having fallen prey to downtown redevelopment and the Embassy surviving because of it.

The Jefferson was one of a number of theaters constructed in the city during the early 1900s. The Fort Wayne Daily Sentinel heralded its opening in October 1912, noting: "Another big new theater for Fort Wayne was projected for the immediate future in the filing of incorporation papers at Indianapolis by the Jefferson Co." The Jefferson Co. was comprised of Alfred Randall, owner of the property, W. Sults and Sprague Green.

Green, a veteran theater manager, had made quite a success of the Lyric Theater, 1014 S. Calhoun St., Fort Wayne’s first nickelodeon, and was pegged to be the Jefferson’s first manager.

Situated in a block that was at one time the city’s prime shopping area, the Jefferson led a stable life, even surviving the Depression years, when other theaters were hardhit.

The first major change to the theater came in 1946, when the Alliance Theater group took a 90-year lease on the property. After extensive renovation, which included adding a wider screen and installing push-back seats, the theater opened with "Tuck Private Comes Home," with Bud Abbott and Lou Costello, and "The Dark Mirror," with Olivia de Haviland and Lew Ayres. On that day in August 1947, a full-page ad in The News-Sentinel proclaimed West Jefferson as one of the city’s most active.

The ad was underwritten by the dozen or so merchants and the two schools — the International Business College and the Warner College of Beauty — that lined the theater in the 100 block of West Jefferson.

Two decades later, hard times befall the theater. Even an attempt to make it an advance ticket operation showing long-run hits in the mid-1960s was not enough to ensure its survival.

The use of Jefferson Street as a main thoroughfare and the need for downtown parking led to the demise of the theater, as well as the businesses on the north side of that block. In 1978, the Jefferson was demolished to make way for the still-to-be-completed Civic Center.

The Embassy, built in 1927 as the Emboyd, has led the life of one of the city’s most attractive buildings. It has, however, had its own moments of insecurity.

The Emboyd’s official opening was on May 14, 1928, and the newspapers of the day called the moment the “crowning triumph from an artistic and architectural point of view.” The theater’s interior was appropriately described as a “veritable palace of enchantment radiating in brilliant coloring and rich picturesque embellishments gathered from the four corners of the earth.”

Opening night was a gala affair, featuring a vaudeville show, an overture played by a specially-formed Emboyd Symphony Orchestra, a movie and some songs performed by Percy Robins, noted local musician, at the Page organ.

The Emboyd was one of a number of theaters operated by the Quimby family. In July 1962, it became part of the Alliance chain. The theater was closed and a $75,000 renovation program begun. Except for new stainless steel show, the appearance of the theater was not changed. It reopened the following November.

During the 1970s, the Embassy was closed for awhile, and at one point, the future of the building looked dim. But the Embassy Foundation conducted a successful fund-raising drive in the mid-1970s and the theater stands today, refurbished, refreshed and restored. It is considered one of the jewels in the Civic Center Renewal project.
FORT WAYNE BOTANICAL CONSERVATORY—scheduled to open November 5, 1983. The Botanical Conservatory will be a year-round attraction to the area, both for residents and visitors to the city. It is a relatively unique facility in the region, and many larger cities nationwide do not have such an attraction. The 38,000 square foot Conservatory is housed in four connected glass roofed buildings, with a landscaped park at the entrance and is located on the same block as the Embassy Theater.
Forget winter, revel in greenery of indoor gardens

By GARY PENNER
Of The Times Herald.

Tired of the gray dreariness of Fort Wayne winters? Let your mind enter the sensual world of the Fort Wayne Botanical Conservatory, where flowers and plants tease your eyes with flecks of color. Where the cascading sound from a distant waterfall whisps into the air. Close to the source, where the sweet fragrances of blossoms and luscious soil tantalizes your nose. Where tiny succulents ask to be watered and fed. Where winter's touch is replaced by the softness of spring.

But only your mind and spirit can go; your body will have to wait until it opens Nov. 3. Construction crews only began clearing the ceiling this week. And even when it opens, plant displays may seem a bit sparse. Experts say it takes at least two years for plants to grow large enough to make a botanical garden lush.

But Larry Walter, the Parks and Recreation Department's horticulturist, who will manage the botanical conservatory, has wandered through the three plant houses at the conservatory many times in his mind. Walter, landscape architect Barbara Moore and floriculturalist Karen Shadron are the masterminds behind the plants. Their skills and knowledge will be put to use as the conservatory opens.

There are displays set for Nov. 1 to 7, providing something for everyone. The Botanical Conservatory will be open weekends, but evening hours and admission prices have not been set.

They're in the process of acquiring plants from other conservatories and donors - and of starting plants at the greenhouse in Lawton Park. But when they're finished, the impressionist experience of walking through the conservatory, Walter says, may induce a horticultural shock.

Here is your first visit to the conservatory:

A small park on the southwest corner of Jefferson and Calhoun streets awaits you to the main entrance. Immediately inside, a gift shop and an information area - everything you need to know about the Botanical Conservatory. But within a few steps, you discover the Showcase House, a seasonally changing display of flowering plants. A path of serpentine chocolate-red bricks circles through the 10,000-square-foot room.

"It's the kind of man-made garden you would expect to see around a castle grounds. The kind of garden someone with all the money in the world would have," Walter says. Describing his vision is easy. A childlike glee twinkles in his eyes.

Showcase House displays change five times annually, drawing visitors back. The opening display: thousands of mums in a myriad of colors. Weeping figs reach to the peak, the 40-foot glass ceiling, Japanese pagodas, podocarpus and junipers fill the room. A wall of cascading mums camouflages the north rock wall, which is part of the solar heating system. In the summer, a hose spraying from a system which keeps the Showcase House 10 degrees cooler than outside air.

Yellow scabia, deep green hollies, purple orchid trees, and red and yellow bells accent the room with color. At night, imperfections disappear. Spotlights bring out the best of colors in every plant.

Near the south side of the Showcase House, you hear the distant sound of water tumbling over a rock formation 18 feet high. The sound mimes you down a hallway to the Tropical House.

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Near the south side of the Showcase House, you hear the distant sound of water tumbling over a rock formation 18 feet high. The sound mimes you down a hallway to the Tropical House.

Stepping inside onto a platform, you look down on tropical plants from around the world. You are looking into the crown of a palm tree. Dozens of plant species fill the 19,000-square-foot room.

The waterfall is thundering now - you're standing next to it. The pathway leads to your right, under the falls and into a cloud forest. Ferns and mossy bromeliads grow from cracks in the rock formations. A major fern collection sprays from the rocks.

The pathway curves around the west side of the room, along the south side of the Tropical House. Near the center of the Tropical House, you hear the distant sound of water tumbling over a rock formation 18 feet high. The sound mimes you down a hallway to the Tropical House.

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A stairway takes you up to a terrace, overlooking the Tropical House's terrace, 100 square feet roof, protects North American desert plants from Fort Wayne's freezing winter. Expecting you are looking into the crown of a palm tree. Dozens of plant species fill the 19,000-square-foot room.

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TRANSIT MALL--construction to begin in Spring, 1983. Two blocks of Calhoun Street, from Washington Boulevard north to Berry Street, will be closed to all traffic except busses of the Public Transportation Corporation. The street will be narrowed from four to two lanes and the remaining space will be given over to landscaping, planters, benches, etc.

ALLEY MALL--a proposal for the block directly north of the Civic Center, first considered in 1974, and recently revived. The plan calls for cleaning up the alleys, and enclosing the space with a glass roof to create a climate-controlled mall. The businesses on the block would open on to the alley, and new offices, shops, and restaurants would be added.
A TWO-BLOCK CALHOUN STREET MALL FOR BUSES and pedestrians will look something like this artist's rendering when it is completed next year. The $3.8 million mall, from Berry Street to Washington Boulevard, is scheduled to be built in five months beginning next spring. It is midway between two new bus stops 10 blocks apart on Calhoun Street that will become the hubs of Fort Wayne Public Transportation Corp.'s bus service.
Calhoun-Harrison Alley to Become Outdoor Mall

Alley-Mall Combination for Downtown
ONE SUMMIT SQUARE--office tower. At 26 floors, Summit Square is the tallest building in the city. It is owned jointly by Indiana & Michigan Electric Co. and Peoples Trust Bank and houses their main offices, and also includes leasable office space. The latest available information is that the leased spaced is 84% occupied. Summit Square is located at the corner of Calhoun and Washington, north-east of the Civic Center site.
CIVIC CENTER PARKING GARAGE--scheduled for completion in late 1983. The garage is being built in two phases. The first phase has been complete for some time and has approximately 425 parking spaces. The second phase is currently under construction and will be able to accommodate just over 600 cars. The garage is located directly east of the site.
THE CATHEDRAL OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION--
built in 1859, this stone structure is the
city's oldest church. Located on the block to
the south-east of the Civic Center, the Cathed-
ral itself is surrounded by auxilliary buildings
such as a chapel, rectory etc., and beautifully
landscaped grounds.
The program used for this project was derived from a number of sources, chiefly discussions with Paul Seybert, the chairman of the building committee, and Janice VanDer Griff, of the Fort Wayne Convention Bureau; and a study of the program and plans produced by CRS, Architects, when they were the project architect.

The program itself was not so inflexible as to prohibit changes as the design evolved, and so a number of spaces were added through the course of the year, and some spaces deleted. This program summary reflects the final revision and the final design as presented.
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*See discussion of Hotel in Elements section of this book for clarification.

**Additional long-term storage of 10,000 s.f. located on basement level.
The Civic Center is seen by the City as the focus of the current phase of Downtown Redevelopment. Because of this, the design will have to respond to more than the simple, internal square footage and functional requirements. The Civic Center should serve as an orientation point for, and a connector of, the various activities in the area.

People ought to feel free, and be encouraged by the design, to pass through and experience activities and events within the Civic Center in going, for example, from the Alley Mall to the Embassy.

Careful attention will need to be paid to the circulation spaces within the Center in order that they serve the internal functioning of the building and act as circulation to and from the surrounding activities. Also important will be the outdoor spaces created by the Center, and the use of these areas, for circulation and as gathering points.
Because of the analysis of the site, and the need to have the Civic Center serve as a connector of so many other buildings and spaces in the nearby area, one concept arose at the very start of work on the project and as it turned out, the major portion of the design effort went into refining, redefining, and "fine-tuning" that element—a "street."
The earliest scheme was that the lobby space should be stretched the length of the building and made relatively wide so that it became the street, with the Exhibit Hall on one side and the other support and meeting spaces on the other. The street cut across the site diagonally, so that a direct path was made from the Transit Mall to the entrance of the Embassy Theater.

On the simplest level, this solution was a valid response to the criteria established, but there were many shortcomings. The street was not well defined enough to become an active space. The functions and spaces used to line either side of the street were not uses that would generate a level of activity high enough and/or consistently enough to support the kind of interior street that was desired. A second problem became apparent in that any scheme which placed the Exhibit Hall on the outside of the building would end up with at least one oppressive, solid facade.

Because of the way the street in this scheme was placed on a diagonal, the Exhibit Hall was also sited on an angle, thus creating some triangular, very awkward, exterior spaces. A more careful study needed to be made of how the exterior space on the site should be used.

The jury which reviewed this scheme produced some interesting suggestions for improvement, in terms of rethinking the role and usage of both the street and the main hall. The suggestion was that the Exhibit Hall be a central element, physically as well as functionally, rather than being a room at the end
of a circulation path, and that the supporting functions form a thin building that completely surrounds the main hall, and the street will exist at either side of these spaces, as necessary to take advantage of and reinforce the existing streets and circulation on the site.

The next scheme was an attempt to incorporate these suggestions into the design, but many of the same problems still existed. The street was beginning to take on its eventual form, but still the spaces were not handled in a way which allowed and encouraged activity in the interior space. In fact, the street itself had not been used to its full potential. The circulation was not readable as a coherent space, and it was not yet the element which could tie together the project. Many spaces, both interior and exterior, were still very ambiguous as far as the manner in which they were used was concerned, and the relation of the circulation street to the Exhibit Hall still left a large blank wall on the west facade.

At this point a number of important decisions were made concerning the program of the building. In order to better define the use of spaces within the building the program was expanded to include retail space, and the amount and type of dining facilities was expanded. To make the usage of the outdoor spaces more defined it was decided that instead of, as had been attempted in the latest scheme, to create an open plaza as an end for the Transit Mall, and a transition between the Mall and the Civic Center, the need was to extend the Mall for one more block to the south, i.e.,
along Calhoun on the site of the Civic Center, to a more logical terminus, the park on the corner in front of the Botanical Gardens.

The street was now beginning to be a successful space. In the next scheme it became closer to its final form, that of a circulation ring all the way around the Exhibit Hall. The overall building plan was now like it would be in the final solution—the main hall in the center surrounded by a building 60 feet wide. This scheme, the closest yet to what would become the final solution, still had some of the problems of the earliest plans, yet this was finally a part that had the potential to be refined to a successful solution. At this stage, the continual problem of how to best use the spaces along the circulation street to re-inforce it and generate activity necessary for the complete success of the space was still not totally resolved, but the opportunity was there. The outdoor space also was better defined because of the decision to "continue" the mall on the site.

Further development gradually worked out the problem by placing activities and sub-spaces on both sides of the circulation ring, cutting some into the "boundaries" of the main hall. The ring concept was used in every way possible, even carried through the service spaces on one side of the hall, and to the second floor.
ENTRANCES

Because of the nature of the existing and anticipated circulation around the site, and the size and zoning of the building, several entrances of equal importance had to be created. Two secondary entrances are located at the north and south ends of the main lobby space, near the east side of the building. These are positioned in line with one another, to facilitate and encourage people passing into and through the building moving north and south.

The main, formal entrance is located on the Calhoun Street side of the Center, in the middle of the block. This entrance was moved around quite a bit in the course of the design, but finally placed in the center of the building to take advantage of the formality implied by symmetry, and functionally, a large number of users will be arriving from the Parking Garage, which has circulation cores in the middle of the block.

Additional entrances are located at the other corners of the building to accept people arriving from those directions, and to give more immediate access to the retail area of the Center and the counter food service.
INTERIOR STREET

As the unifying concept of the project, a circulation ring was created around the Exhibit Hall, which is the center of the building. The street is as much as possible a double-loaded circulation path, with retail and dining spaces of various sizes and types along the outside for the most part, and display niches and smaller shops, in addition to the entrances to the Exhibit Hall on the inside.

Although the ring does exist all the way around the hall, one side, the west, is not for public use but is the service corridor from the receiving area and short-term storage.

On the second floor, because of the different nature of the spaces, the ring is not as complete, but still is a strong element on the east side, where it is partly visible from the main lobby in the atrium space.

VERTICAL CIRCULATION

Public circulation cores are logically and conveniently located at each of the four corners of the Exhibit Hall. Each of the four cores contains an open stair and an elevator, accessible from the circulation street, plus a vertical mechanical chase.

The east two cores arrive at the upper main lobby space discussed earlier, and the two on the west side of the building open into smaller lobbies, each serving a cluster of meeting rooms and offices.
EXHIBIT HALL

The largest space of the building, the main exhibit hall has 30,000 square feet of space on the first floor with an additional 12,000 of balconies on three sides. The ceiling height is 30 feet, and the space is covered with an exposed space frame.

Access to the hall can be from any of the three public sides of the first floor, and from the north and east sides of the second floor.

Each of the entrances on the first floor has adjacent to it an alcove which may be used as a registration desk area for large meetings or banquets, or as a ticket-taking booth for events, or simply as a smaller display area.

RETAIL

Four large retail stores are located on the north side of the Center, nearest to existing retail in the downtown area and the Alley Mall development.

Each store has a private entrance both inside and outside, a private office and access to storage space in the lower level of the building.

Several additional smaller shops are located in other places along the street.
DINING/KITCHEN

Several different opportunities exist for dining within the Civic Center.

At the south-west corner of the building is located a cluster of three separate counter service restaurants, serving specialty foods of a type not usually associated with "fast-food" type service, but of a better quality, with unusual menu items. Seating is provided in this area in the circulation zone and it is also possible to open a portion of the south wall to give access to an outdoor eating area.

Slightly more formal is a cafe on the south-east corner. A kitchen is located on the inside of the street in that area, and seating is in the circulation ring, towards the east side. Again the opportunity exists to slide open doors to provide access to an eating area in the main plaza.

A bar is located on both levels at the north end of the main lobby.

The most formal of the restaurants is on the second level, near the hotel lobby, and is more associated with the hotel, operationally, than the other facilities. This is a formal dining type of restaurant, with its own lounge. The kitchen for this restaurant is located adjacent to it, and this kitchen is also the catering kitchen for functions in the ballroom and meeting rooms.
MEETING ROOMS

Meeting rooms of various sizes are clustered around the two smaller lobbies at the top of the west circulation cores.

OFFICES

The building administration offices are located on the west side, and accessible from the north-west core.

HOTEL

In the "real" program for the Civic Center, the hotel was to be a completely separate entity, with provisions made for a connection at a later date. As I worked on the project with this in mind, it seemed that a far better solution could be made in the long run by designing the connection and the "ground floor" type areas of the hotel. As the design progressed, the hotel became more and more integrated into the Civic Center, though only the "ground floor" areas were designed to any level of detail at all.

The hotel lobby/front desk is located on the second floor of the Center, on the south side of the atrium. Other offices and support areas are located primarily on the third floor, overlooking the main lobby atrium, and service areas will be on the lower level, with access through service elevators in the south-east corner of the building. The restaurant is also located off of the hotel lobby, as discussed earlier.
BALLROOM

The Ballroom is a room more suited for banquets and receptions than the Exhibit Hall, primarily because of the ceiling height. Access is from either of the north circulation cores, and the lobbies at either end of the ballroom. The Ballroom is directly across the corridor from the balcony of the main hall, and in rare cases the two could be used together for an event or exhibit.

SERVICE

The loading dock and service area for the Civic Center is located on the west side, along Harrison Street, since that is the least congested of any of the streets adjacent to the site. The dock has space for three full-sized trucks, and is directly adjacent to a holding and storage room. Access is possible directly from the dock to the Exhibit Hall, for loading and unloading of exhibits, displays, and equipment. A provision has been made for driving of small trucks and vans in to the main hall, for ease of access for smaller displays or booths. From this first floor storage room, a service elevator allows access to the additional storage on the lower level.
A number of people provided valuable guidance and assistance in the course of this project. Thanks are in order to them.

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City of Fort Wayne, Office of Community Development and Planning
City of Fort Wayne, City Plan Commission
"Sure it's earthquake-proof and tornado-proof, but is it child-proof?"