

# PUBLIC BUSINESS



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To circulate facts concerning  
the City, County and State  
Governments for the Citizens  
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## Citizen Control of Government.

¶ Public officers are the employees of the whole people. They are engaged to carry out great business enterprises affecting the prosperity and well being of all.

¶ But individual citizens cannot examine every official act to determine the care with which such public trusts are exercised. Nor can private individuals co-operate with busy officials engrossed in daily routine, to the end that administrative methods are improved.

¶ But the representatives of citizens can do these things—examine, co-operate, and report.

¶ Walter Lippman writing in the Atlantic about the importance of such citizen co-operation in government, says:

“But administration, although it has become more important than legislation, is hard to follow, because its results are spread over a longer period of time, and its effects are felt in ways that no reporter can measure.”

“It was the recognition of these difficulties that was the cause of two interesting experiments in late years. One was the establishment of more or less semi-official institutes of government research; the other, the growth of specialized private agencies which attempt to give technical summaries of the work of various branches of the government. . . .”

“The principle is simple. They are expert organized reporters. Having no horror of dullness, no interest in being dramatic, they can study statistics and order and reports which are beyond the digestive powers of a newspaper man or of his readers. The lines of their growth would seem to be three-fold: to make a current record, to make a running analysis of it, and on the basis of both to suggest plans.”

“Record and analysis mean an experimental formulation of standards by which the work of governments can be tested. Such standards are not to be evolved off-hand out of any one’s consciousness. Some have already been worked out experimentally, others still need to be discovered; all need to be refined and brought into perspective by the wisdom of experience. Carried out completely the public would gradually learn to substitute objective criteria for gossip and intuitions. . . .”

“These political observatories will, I think, be found useful in all branches of government, national, state, municipal, industrial, and even in foreign affairs. They should be clearly out of reach either of the wrath or of the favor of the office holders. They must, of course, be endowed, but the endowment should be beyond the immediate control of the legislative and of the rich patron. Their independence can be partially protected by the terms of the trust; the rest must be defended by the ability of the institute to make itself so much the master of the facts as to be impregnably based on popular confidence.”

¶ To indicate the proportions to which citizen interest in efficient administration and reporting has grown, a partial list of citizen and semi-official organizations is appended:

**Akron, O.**—Bureau of Municipal Research.

**Alameda County, Calif.**—Tax Association.

**Boston**—Finance Commission (official).

**California**—Taxpayers’ Association.

**Canada**—Citizens’ Research Institute.

**Chicago**—Bureau of Public Efficiency.

**Chicago**—Efficiency Staff of the Finance Committee of the City Council (Official).

**Cleveland**—Municipal Research Bureau.

**Detroit**—Bureau of Governmental Research.

**Detroit**—Research Department of the Board of Education (official).

**East St. Louis, Ill.**—War Civics Committee.

**El Paso, Tex.**—Bureau of Governmental Research of the Chamber of Commerce.

**Grand Rapids, Mich.**—Research Bureau of the Citizens League.

**Humboldt County, Calif.**—Taxpayers’ Bureau.

**Indianapolis**—Bureau of Governmental Research of Chamber of Commerce.

**Kansas City, Mo.**—Department of Civics of the Chamber of Commerce.

**Knoxville, Tenn.**—Bureau of Municipal Research of the Board of Commerce.

**Mendocino County, Calif.**—Taxpayers’ Association.

- Milwaukee**—Citizens' Bureau of Municipal Efficiency.
- Minneapolis**—Bureau of Municipal Research of the Civic and Committee Association.
- New Jersey**—Bureau of State Research of the New Jersey State Chamber of Commerce.
- New Orleans**—Legislation and Taxation Bureau of the Association of Commerce.
- New Mexico**—Taxpayers' Association.
- New York**—State Bureau of Municipal Information.
- New York City**—Bureau of Municipal Research.
- New York City**—Institute for Public Service.
- New York City**—Committee on City Government of the Citizens Union.
- New York City**—Commissioner of Accounts (Official).
- Ohio**—Institute for Public Efficiency.
- Oklahoma City**—Research Department of the Chamber of Commerce.
- Pennsylvania**—State Bureau of Municipalities (official).
- Pennsylvania**—Research Bureau of the Pennsylvania State Chamber of Commerce.
- Philadelphia**—Bureau of Municipal Research.
- Pittsburgh**—Allied Boards of Trade of Allegheny County.
- Riverside County, Calif.**—Taxpayers' Association.
- Rochester**—Bureau of Municipal Research.
- San Francisco**—Bureau of Governmental Research.
- St. Paul**—Civics Department of the St. Paul Association.
- Sonoma County, Calif.**—Taxpayers' Association.
- Toledo**—Commission of Publicity and Efficiency (official).
- Toledo**—Public Research Bureau of the Commerce Club.
- Toronto**—Bureau of Municipal Research.
- United States**—Bureau of Efficiency (official).
- United States**—Institute for Government Research.
- Yonkers, N. Y.**—Bureau of Municipal Research.

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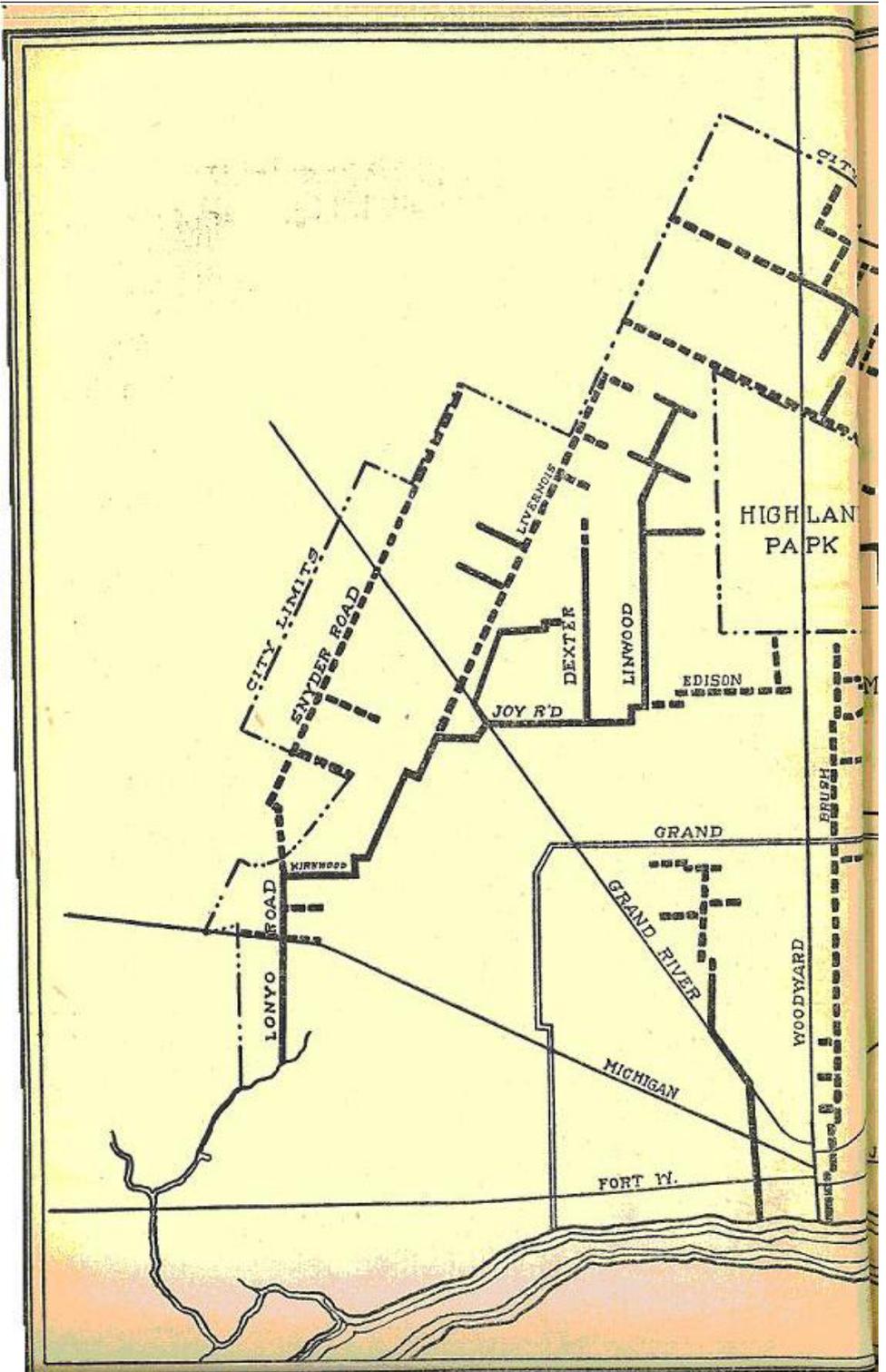
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542 Griswold Street Detroit, Mich.  
The Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research is a non-partisan organization, taking no part in the election or appointment of persons to office. The Bureau is supported by the voluntary contributions of citizens, and has a two-fold purpose:

1. To get things done for Detroit through cooperation with persons who are in office, by increasing efficiency and eliminating waste.
2. To serve as an independent, non-partisan agency for keeping citizens informed about the city's business.

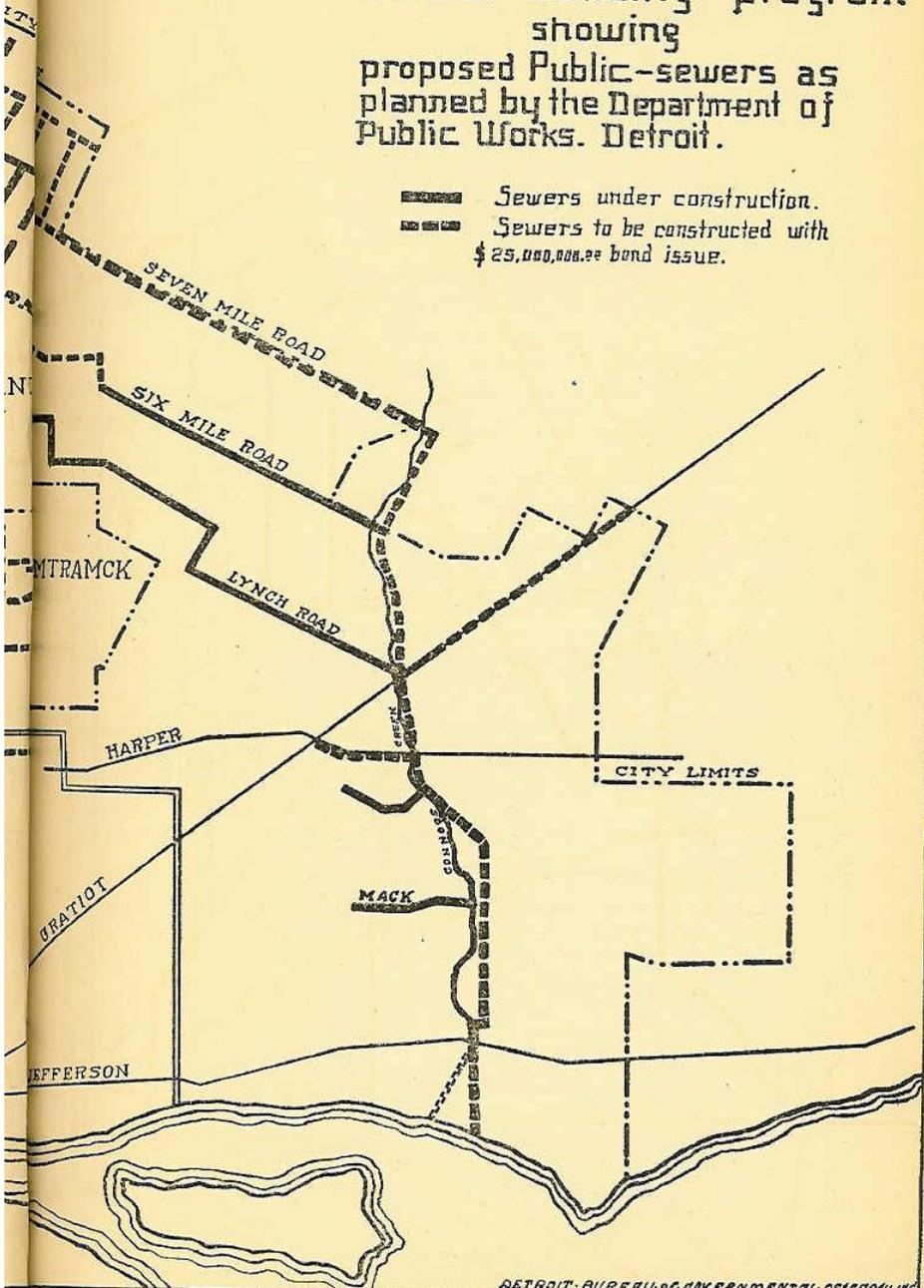
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# Map of Sewer-building program showing proposed Public-sewers as planned by the Department of Public Works. Detroit.

-  Sewers under construction.
-  Sewers to be constructed with \$25,000,000.00 bond issue.



## To Be Voted Upon

¶ At the primary election to be held August 31, 1920, citizens will vote upon three charter amendments and two propositions to issue bonds. These proposals are—:

—Charter amendment proposing an increase in the number of supervisors representing Detroit on the Board of Supervisors of Wayne County.

The law permits twelve supervisors for the first 100,000 population in cities; one supervisor for each 10,000 population additional up to 500,000, and one supervisor for each 40,000 population over 500,000. Detroit now has thirty-seven supervisors and is entitled to sixty-five. If the charter is amended the additional supervisors will be appointed by the Council. The present Detroit supervisors are largely city officers who are ex-officio supervisors.

—Charter amendment to provide for a single Commissioner of Recreation in place of the present Recreation Commission.

When the new charter was prepared it seemed inexpedient to make radical changes in the city's departmental organization, although common practice indicated a tendency to abolish boards in favor of one man commissioners. This is the first proposed amendment to the charter in this direction.

—Charter amendment proposing a change in the section applying to the Department of Buildings and Safety Engineering.

The charter now provides that the building code may not be amended within one year after enactment, and thereafter within periods of two years each, with certain exceptions. These restrictions were principally intended to prevent the Council allowing frequent exceptions to the code. However, to make a new code workable, frequent changes will be necessary at first and the proposed amendment is designed to make these changes possible where found desirable.

—A proposition authorizing the issue of public utility bonds in the sum of \$12,000,000.

\$7,000,000 will be used to extend the pumping system of the water works, and \$5,000,000 will be used to extend the pumping system and build a filtration plant. This proposal is outlined in another part of the "Public Business."

—A proposition authorizing the issuance of public sewer bonds in the sum of \$25,000,000.

This money will be used for carrying out the present sewer building program. The proposal is outline in more detail in another part of "Public Business."

## Direct Versus Indirect Administration

¶ By charter the recreation department is managed by a commission of four citizens, appointed by the Mayor, and serving without pay. The superintendent, actually operating the department is appointed by the commission.

¶ The commission's function is to outline the policies of the department and to appraise results. Meetings are held usually once a week.

¶ The modern tendency in city government is to eliminate administration by boards and commissions. The practice is cumbersome, responsibility of the mayor is indirect.

¶ Experience indicates that where a commission or board employs a weak executive there is a tendency for the commission, which is a policy-making body only, to act as administrator of the department. Where the board employs a strong executive the board becomes a "rubber stamp" because the executive is on the job all of the time and, therefore, has a better basis for making decisions and formulating plans.

¶ On August 31 the people of Detroit will vote on an amendment to the charter that provides for the substitution of a single paid commissioner to serve in place of the present Recreation Commission. This commissioner is to be appointed by the mayor, responsible directly to him and to serve at his pleasure. Our departments of police, parks, public works, buildings, and purchasing are now so operated.

¶ Under the proposed form of organization there is no doubt as to responsibility for the activities of the department.

## For Water Filtration

¶ The Council has finally authorized the issuing of \$12,000,000 of public utility bonds subject to approval by 60 per cent of the voters at the August election. These funds will be used by the water commission:

—To erect a filtration plant, in connection with the present pumping and distribution system, for the purification of all water used for domestic purposes.

—To begin the construction of a second pumping station, filter plant and distribution system which will be required after the full capacity of the present station and system is utilized—estimated to be by 1925.

¶¶ For two years experiments have been under way to determine the proper type of plant, and plans for construction are prepared. Machinery is purchased and the contract is let for a low lift pumping station which will increase the capacity of the present pumping station and be a unit of the new filtration plant when such filtration plant is completed.

¶¶ If funds are allowed, it is believed that purified water will be available in about four years.

¶¶ The proposed plant will normally supply 300,000,000 gallons per day, or sufficient for 1,500,000 people.

### For Continuing Sewer Construction

¶¶ In 1916 the city annexed about 31 square miles of territory, the increase being 75 per cent of the previous area.

¶¶ At this time there were only about \$14,000,000 of sewers in the ground. It became necessary to provide for the drainage of this newly annexed territory and supplement the drainage facilities within the former limits.

¶¶ For this purpose the expenditure of \$16,000,000 has already been authorized.

¶¶ Additional drainage facilities are to be provided from a bond issue of \$25,000,000 which will be voted upon by the people on August 31.

¶¶ This proposed bond issue will provide the following sewers:

Linwood System Extension .....	\$ 150,000
Six Mile Road, Conant to Linwood .....	1,759,000
Third Street Extension .....	900,000
Michigan .....	80,000
Small Arms .....	1,200,000
Livernois .....	1,500,000
Conners Creek Project .....	13,000,000
Bates Street Addition .....	2,100,000
Joy Road Extension .....	1,160,000
Six Mile Road, Linwood to Livernois .....	611,000
Seven Mile Road .....	2,200,000
Snyder Road .....	2,000,000
Conner's Creek Interceptors .....	<u>1,035,000</u>
Total .....	\$27,695,000

¶¶ \$25,000,000 instead of \$27,695,000 is asked for because of anticipated fall in prices.

¶¶ A map of the sewers now authorized, and of the sewers to be built out of the proposed bond issue appears in another part of "Public Business."