

## **1913 Olmsted Brothers General Plan Summary**

The city of Ypsilanti commissioned a report from the Olmsted Brothers outlining a basis for a General City Plan, which was published in 1913. This plan sought to develop the city as a small but growing industrial center with desirable housing for the influx of new workers. The Olmsted Report was a call to centralized city planning in Ypsilanti for the purpose of fostering industrial growth without changing the character of the city. Though it did not specifically recommend zoning, the report clearly believed zoning was the future of city planning as it urged the City's government to understand that not all areas of the city can be subject to the same set of regulations. Instead it recommended that subsets be created for separating industrial and residential uses with public space set aside as a common area for the city's center.

The Olmsted Plan specifically recommended developing industry towards the east side of Ypsilanti where there was easy rail access, and developing the road system radially from the city's center. Locating industry to the east side would prevent undesirable land uses in the city but provide an area for future growth as the rail infrastructure would provide as a regional draw for new development. In clear City Beautiful fashion, the center city was to be focused on what is now Riverside Park, with additional public space along the length of the river valley, and commercial development on the roads that immediately border it. The report sought to create main thoroughfares on Cross Street and Congress Street extending out from the city, connecting the city to future residential development. New development was to be regulated at the project level in regards how it would have fit with Ypsilanti's general plan. By providing the city with practical reasons for a general plan and basis to create that plan, the Olmsted Report sought to create logical infrastructure expansion to guide future growth efficiently and attractively.