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"Harmony in
Diversity"

PORTLAND CITY CLUB BULLETIN

"Active
Citizenship"

VOLUME V

PORTLAND, OREGON, MARCH 20, 1925

NUMBER 26

FRIDAY, MARCH 20

Hotel Benson 12:10

LADIES ARE INVITED

SPEAKER

MABEL T. BOARDMAN

of Washington, D. C.

Secretary, American National Red Cross

SUBJECT

**"Meeting the World's Needs Through the
American Red Cross"**

MISS BOARDMAN, a woman of international reputation and rare executive ability, has given her entire time for the last twelve years in promoting the work of the Red Cross. During the World war she directed work overseas and since that time has been active at Red Cross headquarters in Washington, D. C. In her many speaking tours, both in Europe and America, she has been received with great acclaim. Members of Red Cross Chapters and persons interested in Red Cross work are invited to attend this meeting.

ARTERIAL HIGHWAYS TO RELIEVE TRAFFIC CONGESTION

The Traffic Committee of the City Planning section of the City Club presents herewith a plan for the relief of traffic congestion on Portland bridges by constructing new arterial highway entrances to the city from the south-west and a new by-pass entrance from the northwest. The report has been approved by the Board of Governors and will be presented to the Club for adoption Friday, March 20th. The report follows:

To the Board of Governors:—

In studying the accompanying map of the city of Portland, we find few vacant spaces in the area between the hills and river on the West side, so that practically all our new population must find homes on the East side of the Willamette River.

As the city is growing rapidly, the congestion of traffic on our trans-Willamette River bridges is increasing accordingly. River traffic is also increasing, and the tendency will be for the draws

to be opened more frequently in the future, thus greatly accelerating this tendency for congestion.

In places, this East side settlement is now nine miles from the West side business district. Soon this will be increased to ten or twenty miles. The loss of time in transit, together with increasing delays at bridge crossings, will cause our people to do business in increasing numbers at the three or four business centers on the East side, which are now coming into prominence.

If something is not done soon to relieve this tendency, it is the opinion of your committee that it will take more than widened downtown streets and a new water front plan to cause people to come from the distant East side communities to do business on the West side of the river.

Where there is a chance for the main business district of a city to shift, and uncertainty

Continued on page 2

PORTLAND CITY CLUB BULLETIN

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THE CITY CLUB OF PORTLAND

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postoffice at Portland, Oregon, under act of March 3, 1879

City Club dues are \$1.00 per month, payable semi-
annually on May 1st, and November 1st. There is no
initiation fee.

NOMINATIONS TO BE MADE

With the City Club election day only six weeks away the Board of Governors has appointed the following Nominating Committee: C. W. Platt, chairman, William L. Brewster, Dr. J. Earl Else, Royce McCandliss and James J. Sayer. It is the duty of this committee to select one or more candidates for each of the offices to be filled for the coming year.

The annual election of officers will be held at the regular luncheon meeting May 1st. The Nominating Committee, under the constitution of the Club, must have completed its list of nominees two weeks before the day of election. This means that the list must be completed and announcement of candidates chosen be made to the Club not later than April 17th. On the following week, April 24th, other nominations may be made from the floor of the Club.

APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

The following applications for membership in the City Club of Portland have been received and will be presented to the Club for approval on Friday, March 27th:

E. S. COLLINS
477 Pittock Block
President, Ostrander Ry. and
Timber Co.

WALTER E. ROSE
Lang and Company

J. E. UPDIKE
616 Spalding Building
Updike Typesetting Co.

Proposed for membership by Dr. C. U.
Moore, George Mayo and C. C. Scott.

ARTERIAL HIGHWAYS

(Continued from Page 1)

as to which of several other centers will get the business, the great insurance companies which finance the construction of many of our downtown buildings will withhold their investments, thus greatly retarding the growth and development of our City.

Stabilize Business District

If our present business district could be made the geographic center of our population, we feel that there would be no question of its stability and permanence.

This can be done by opening up new rapid transit arteries, over, under and around the hills west of Portland. Large areas in the Tualatin Valley are closer to our business center than Laurelhurst, Irvington and Rose City Park. Every new residence built in this new west side section would relieve just that much, the congestion on our river bridges.

In trying to ascertain why these traffic arteries to the south have not heretofore been built, your committee has come to the conclusion that it is *not* the western hills that retard development, so much as it is the lack of legal machinery for financing plans and construction work.

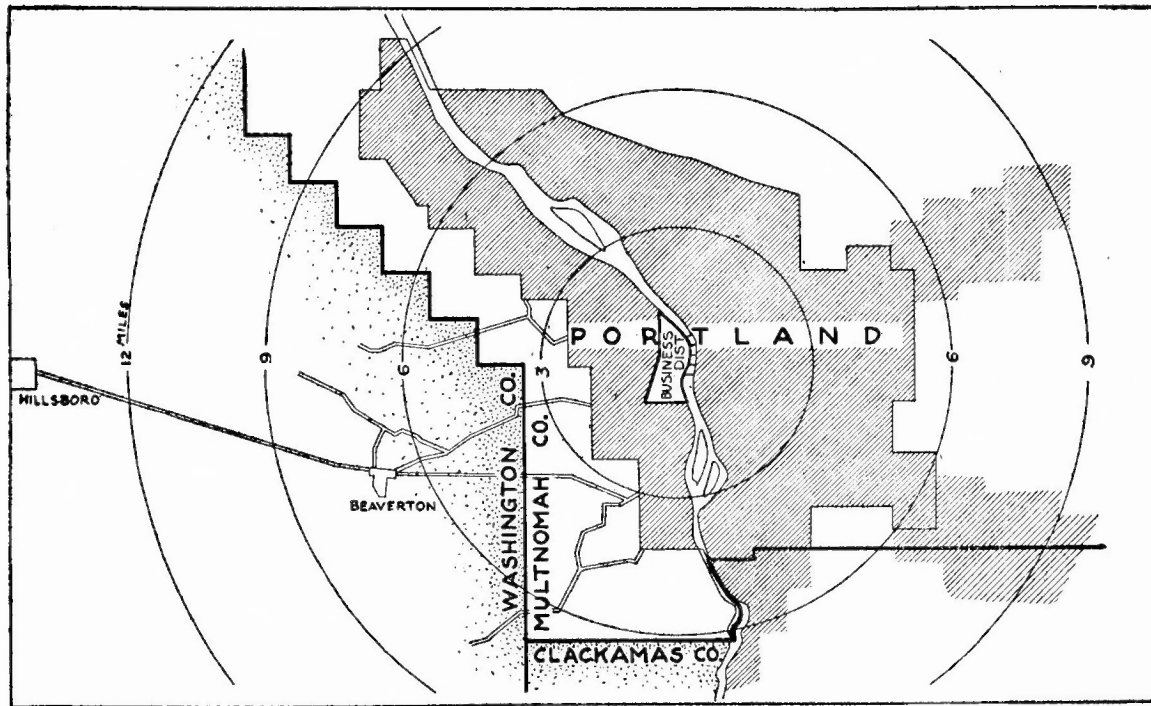
We find ourselves confronted with this rather startling state of facts, which we believe, if better understood by the public, would facilitate the solution of this problem.

Legal Machinery Is Lacking

1. The State of Oregon has expended millions of dollars on standard state highways through Newbert and Forest Grove, with 5% maximum grade, 24 feet in width, and of reasonable curvature, but it is absolutely impossible for *commercial vehicles* to get out of Portland onto such west side state highways without traveling grades much in excess of state standards.

2. The State Highway Commission has not built any roads in Multnomah county and is prohibited by law from doing so. It is, therefore, powerless to connect its expensive state highway system to the city streets by roads whose grade and alignment conform to state standards. Lack of a proper approach or entrance to such roads is therefore limiting their use, just as the lack of proper approaches to or adequate and free exits from our river bridges, is now limiting the use of such bridges.

3. *Commercial vehicles* are prohibited from using Terwiliger Boulevard, which is the only outlet in a southwesterly direction conforming reasonably close to state standards.



Map showing overlapping political jurisdictions paralleling the hills west of Portland which have made the construction of high class traffic arteries in that direction impossible thus forcing new development east of the river. Some of the newer residential sections are nine miles or more from the west side business district. This unbalanced development results in increasing traffic congestion on our TransWillamette river bridges.

The opening of satisfactory traffic arteries westward would permit growth in that direction, thus relieving bridge traffic and insuring stability and permanence of the west side business district, as it would then become the geographic center of the city's population.

4. Commercial vehicles going from Portland to Beaverton must traverse one of the following roads, the first two of which cross the hills through passes 750 feet above the average city streets level, and the last two are about three miles longer owing to the necessity of going around the hills.

Canyon Road.....	Maximum Grade	8%
Patton Road.....	Maximum Grade	12%
Slaven Road.....	Maximum Grade	8%
Taylor's Ferry Road.....	Maximum Grade	9%

Work Hampered By Divided Jurisdictions

5. The County Commissioners cannot expend county funds for the construction of new roads within the city limits, conforming to modern standards for automobile travel.

6. Without such a road within the city, it is useless for the county to consider building such a road across the narrow strip of land between the Portland city limits and Washington county.

7. Such a road cannot be built within the city limits, because in the hilly country above the Terwiliger Boulevard, where such road should probably be located to avoid numerous street crossings, and thus make possible fast travel, the present value of the property is not sufficient to permit construction under the Bancroft Bonding act.

8. That because of the division of jurisdiction in highway construction, in this short distance, between the city of Portland, the two County Courts and the State of Oregon, there is no money available for the making of detailed surveys covering the entire territory, as a basis for solution of this complicated traffic problem, nor for the construction of the same if surveyed out and approved.

9. That the arterial highways, the grade and alignment of the road, also distance and the elevation to be overcome, are just as serious in retarding the growth of communities and flow of traffic as it is with railway traffic. The extra cost to the public of going over or around an obstruction would in many cases pay the interest on the cost of removing the obstruction.

10. For the foregoing reasons it is the opinion of the undersigned committee that the lack of development in the Tualatin Valley is not due so much to the hills west of Portland, as to the complete lack of legal machinery applicable to such expensive construction in so many different political subdivisions and that under present conditions it seems impossible to get all these different jurisdictions to co-operate on some approved plan, except perhaps under the Tunnel District Bill, hereinafter mentioned.

11. Portland traffic, in going to Newberg, crossed a corner of Washington county between Rex and Tigard. Washington county, having no direct interest in this traffic, neglected the road in times past so that it became almost impassable during wet seasons. This, and similar problems in other counties forced the adoption of the State Highway plan for constructing trunk highways, uniformly built and maintained without regard to county lines, thus over-riding all local jurisdiction as to such roads.

Tunnel Bill Considered

12. The Tunnel District bill, enacted by the Legislature in 1921, is an enabling act authorizing districts to be organized irrespective of city or county lines, and provides for building tunnels for automobile or street car traffic and assessing the cost to the district benefitted, based upon the assessed value of the land, without improvements. It leaves to the counties or to the city, the problem of constructing the necessary approaches. We believe this law is workable, the plan of assessment reasonable, and that the west side business district, as well as Tualatin Valley will greatly benefit by proceeding without delay to organize and begin construction thereunder. This law over-rides the complicated legal subdivision lines shown on the accompanying map, just as the State Highway system is independent of county lines.

13. If such tunnel district is formed, there is much intervening territory that will need developing. Side-hill roads are expensive. No scheme of financing can be devised or recommended until some comprehensive plan is presented. At the City Hall we find no large scale topographic maps of this territory which is largely within the city limits. Such a map is now badly needed in planning sewer extensions, in approving plats for new subdivisions by the City Engineer and City Planning Commission, and for other purposes. City authorities, say commercial vehicles cannot travel the Terwiliger Boulevard. It therefore, seems to us to be the duty of the City to say where such commercial vehicles can find a route of like grade and alignment so that public sentiment can crystalize for its construction. Some say such road shall be above the Terwiliger Boulevard in a territory now practically without access to the city. There are others who say below such highway. We would, therefore, recommend that the city out of its general fund, appropriate at this time sufficient money for its engineering department to run several trial lines between Portland and Bertha, taking topography there-

on, so that roads can be projected and preliminary estimates of cost made. As soon as possible thereafter we would recommend that a sufficient item be put in the budget for making of a large scale topographic map of the underdeveloped hill territory west of the city so that arterial highways can be projected. Individuals can then plat and improve their own property with reference to such plan as is adopted by the city. Private holdings are so small that there is not sufficient incentive for any individual to prepare an arterial highway traffic plan for the west side hill district.

State, County and City Should Co-operate

14. Without further study, and some comprehensive plan before us, we are unable to outline any general plan for development, but at this time, we believe it very important that H. B. No. 285, authorizing the city and county to co-operate in the building of arterial highways be adopted by this legislature. (This paragraph was approved by the Board of Governors prior to the adjournment of the legislature, and such bill has since been enacted into law.)

15. Owing to the fact that much inter-county and inter-state traffic will pass from the west side state highways, over the first new highway entrance to the city, on state standards of grade and alignment, we see no reason why the state should not co-operate in its construction. The tunnel district bill authorizes such co-operation.

Multnomah county contributes more money for state highways than any other county, and under present law the state highway commission is prohibited from constructing any state highways within Multnomah county. We therefore believe that the time has come, when this legal restriction should be removed by the legislature, at least to the extent of permitting state co-operation in the construction of a proper connection between Portland and the west side state highway.

New North East Entrance Needed

The above suggestion for new arterial highways from the southwest, will tend to relieve the growing bridge congestion by opening up new districts for settlement which can be reached without crossing such bridges.

But the inevitable growth of the east side business area with its cross town street car and other traffic will continued to clog traffic going in a northeasterly direction, no matter how wide our bridges are, unless we can devise some by-pass route to avoid this cross traffic every two hundred feet.

The opening of new by-pass routes for through traffic around congested city districts, is a common method employed by some cities in solving such traffic problems.

We wish to suggest, that for a short distance, Sullivan's Gulch can be used as a by-pass route for all fast moving through traffic going to the northeast portion of the city, and out the Columbia River Highway. Such a route, of any width desired, can be constructed with the removal of only one small house at East 20th street. From the east end of Burnside bridge, traffic will turn north on East 3rd street; thence through existing openings under Union and Grand Avenue viaducts in almost a straight line, to the present street grade at 11th and Irving streets; thence on Irving street to 12th and by diagonal scenic line in front of the Benson Polytechnic school, following the edge of the gulch to 15th and Pacific streets; thence on Pacific street to Sandy Boulevard at 28th street. The last eight blocks are now paved and the present width of Pacific street will probably care for through traffic for many years to come, as much traffic will cross 12th and 21st street viaducts before this section is reached, which cannot be widened without removing a number of houses.

By thus following the gulch, all danger from cross traffic will be removed except at the 12th, 21st and 28th street viaducts. We will thus have a safe and fast line for through traffic and relieve the east side business district of much unnecessary congestion. The wide entrance will also serve to distribute local traffic to east Burnside, Couch and Davis streets, thus avoiding the necessity of widening one or more of these streets.

Much of the cost of the new route, which will doubtless be considerably less than the proposed east Burnside street widening project, can be charged to, and doubtless will be gladly paid by the owners of property in all this great northeast district to the city limits, as they will be greatly benefitted by such a fast, safe arterial highway which will avoid two street car crossings and danger of collision every two hundred feet, incident to crossing the growing east side business district as at present. Bridge congestion will be correspondingly relieved by this fast exit for east bound traffic.

Respectfully submitted,

W. C. BECKETT
 - JOHN H. HARTOG
 - ROSCOE P. HURST
 - LEO R. LANGE
 - JOHN H. LEWIS
 Chairman