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PORTLAND
City Club
BULLETIN

Mayfair Ballroom • Benson Hotel
Friday . . . 12:10 P. M.

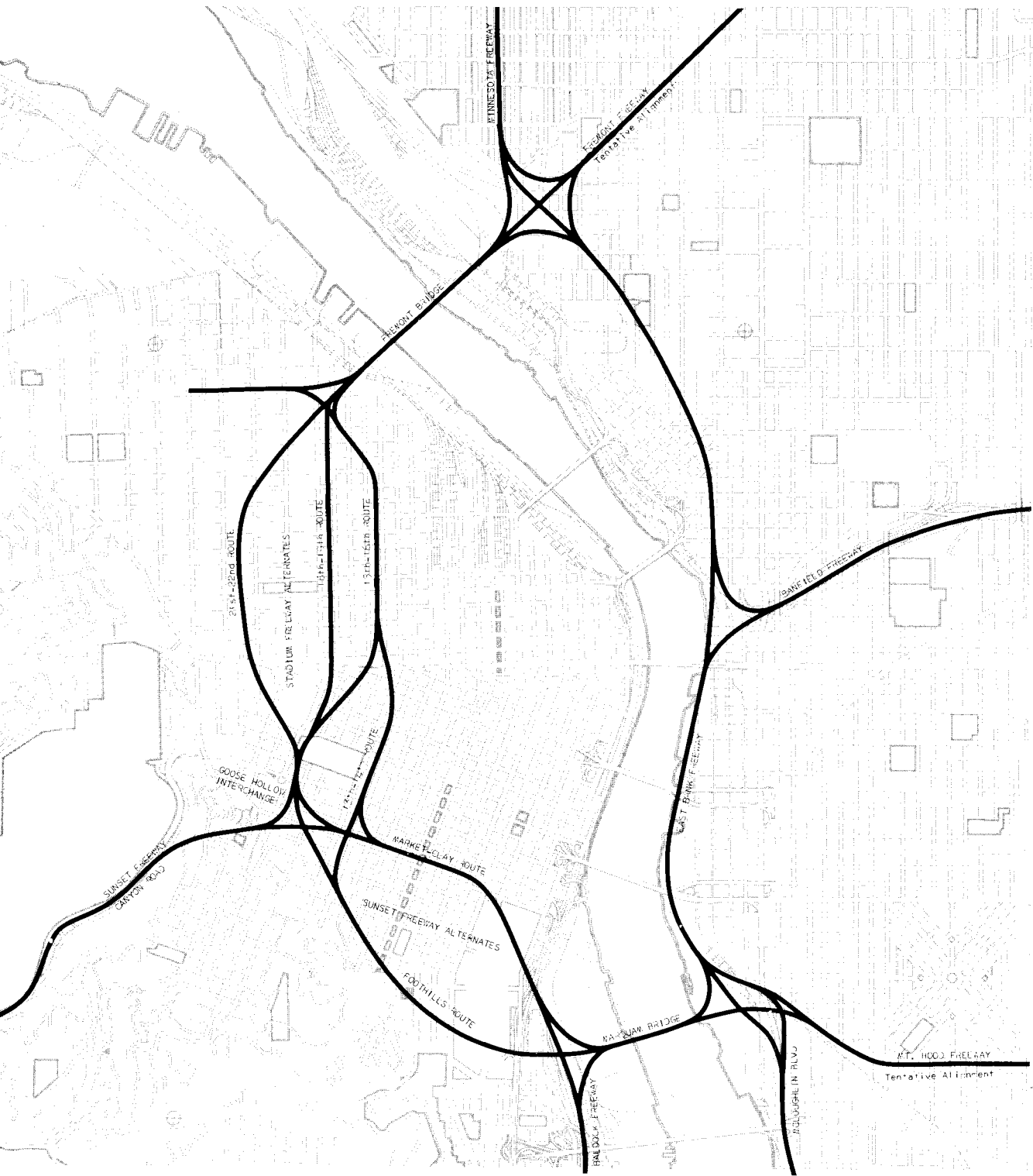
PORTLAND, OREGON - Vol. 41, No. 4 - June 24, 1960

PRINTED IN THIS BULLETIN FOR PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION AND
ACTION AT THIS WEEK'S MEETING,
JUNE 24, 1960

REPORT
ON
FREEWAYS LOCATION

The Committee: HOWARD L. GLAZER, PAUL E. HOCHELLE, JOHN R. SABIN,
CARL W. SHAW, and R. EVAN KENNEDY, *Chairman.*

*"To inform its members and the community in public matters and to
arouse in them a realization of the obligations of citizenship."*



SECTIONS OF WEST CENTRAL AREA AND FREEWAYS

PLATE 1

Scale: 1" = 2400'



PORTLAND CITY PLANNING
COMMISSION
1960

**REPORT
ON
FREEWAYS LOCATION**

TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS,
THE CITY CLUB OF PORTLAND:

INTRODUCTION

Your Committee was appointed to study and report on the problems facing the community in the selection of the best route for the location of an augmenting loop of the Interstate Highway system passing through the City of Portland. The loop, encircling the area which lies west of the Willamette River but east of the hills, would extend from a proposed Marquam Bridge in southwest Portland, west via either a Foothills route or a Clay-Market route, thence north by one of several proposed routes to connect with a proposed Fremont bridge. A map of the proposed route is attached to this report.

The decision lies jointly in the hands of the City of Portland, the State Highway Commission and the U. S. Bureau of Public Roads. Announcement of the decision is anticipated for early July, 1960.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

In the course of its research, the Committee interviewed the following: Baird M. French, Regional Engineer and James Fraser Cameron, Senior Highway Engineer of the U. S. Bureau of Public Roads; W. C. Williams, Oregon State Highway Engineer; Fred Fowler, City Traffic Engineer and liaison with the state and federal authorities; Lloyd T. Keefe, Executive Secretary, Downtown Portland, Inc.; Lee Caufield, Chairman, Chamber of Commerce Committee on Freeways; Clay Pomeroy, representing the interested public at large; John Kenward, Director, Portland Development Commission (urban renewal), and Robert Keith, Director, Metropolitan Planning Commission. The Committee also had available the Sunset Freeway Report of Downtown Portland, Inc.; the Sunset-Stadium Freeway Report of the Portland City Planning Commission; the Stadium Freeway Report of the Oregon State Highway Commission; the U. S. Department of Commerce "Federal Transportation Policy and Program Report"; issues of Traffic Quarterly, and numerous periodicals and newspapers dealing with the freeway problems locally and elsewhere. At the time of the preparation of this report, the study prepared by Wilbur Smith and Associates for the Portland Development Commission was not available to your committee.

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

The automobile is creating a monstrous problem that Portlanders are only beginning to appreciate. It tends to transform people into impersonal machine operators who lose identity and who lose appreciation of the existence of a human in the other vehicle. This undesirable effect on the psychology of the individual is only slightly overshadowed by the problem created by the attempt of vast numbers of these machines to get to the same place at the same time.

The fact that the automobile was going to have to have a system of roads on which to operate was recognized by Congress in the early 1900's. Original federal participation in state highway construction was created by Congressional action in 1916. This basic law provided for a 50 per cent participation on the part of the Federal Government in the construction of interstate highways that met certain minimum standards. This basic arrangement was underway in 1917 on a very small scale. It gradually developed to a point where it had created a highway system throughout the United States that was well integrated and relatively well standardized, but came to be highly overloaded in some areas. Traffic congestion in highly populated areas was approaching a saturation point and had reached such proportions in some cities that people were no longer taking their cars to these congested areas, but rather were going elsewhere. About 1945, the decentralization movement was gaining momentum, and its impact and effect on the

growth of the country is still being evaluated. After World War II, it became widely accepted that something should be done to improve travel by automobile from city to city.

The result of this congestion was the creation in 1956 of an additional highway program by the United States Congress which set up the Interstate and Defense Highway System. Basically this law creates a trust fund from which 90 per cent of Interstate Highway cost is paid by the federal government. Ten per cent of the cost is furnished by the states.* The federal government's share comes from gasoline excise taxes and, in Oregon, the state's share comes from gasoline and weight taxes. The Interstate and Defense Highway System has collected its share of violent criticism as well as commendation.

The general intent is to create a basic network of very high-speed throughways to connect all major metropolitan areas of the United States. All automobile drivers who drove from Portland to Salem before the advent of freeways can appreciate the fact that this concept was indeed a laudable idea. In fact, the State of Oregon has been well acquainted with this problem, although perhaps it is not as heavily oppressed as such eastern congested areas as Chicago and New York. The Oregon State Highway Commission had undertaken the construction of major freeways prior to the 1956 Congressional action. The Banfield Highway up the Columbia Gorge was conceived and construction started before 1956, as was the Baldock construction between Portland and Salem. The plans for this type of construction in the State of Oregon, however, were limited and were restricted to the very heavily congested areas, due to the fact that prior to 1956 only the most congested districts could be considered as creating a great enough problem as to justify alleviation by the limited funds then available.

It was realized at that time that the creation of the throughways would produce a problem that would have to be solved sooner or later—they were going to deliver a large number of cars to their end points, which cars had to be distributed to their destinations. This problem was well known to engineers of early throughways and was being studied by experts prior to the creation of the current interstate highway program.

As recently as March, 1960, a report published by the U. S. Department of Commerce entitled, "Federal Transportation Policy and Program" discusses this very situation as follows:

"Metropolitan areas are increasingly congested with mass highway transportation, and are afflicted by rush-hour jams, parking area deficiencies, and commuter and rapid-transit losses.

"This is primarily a local problem. But the Federal Government contributes toward the problem with its huge highway program . . .

"The Federal Government should encourage communities to make broad land-use plans with transportation as an essential part. It should consider as a long-run problem means by which such forward planning can be encouraged . . . Jointly with the communities, the Federal authorities should consider the total urban transport situation so that Federal participation may contribute to the efficiency with which urban transport as a whole is performed."

The creation of the 1956 Federal Highway Interstate System greatly accelerated the program Oregon had been dreaming of for the past few years. It brought to immediate attention problems that had been considered as being far in the future, and created a condition that demanded solutions. The law established the policy that highway systems that pass through cities to carry interstate traffic are eligible for matching funds from the Federal Government so long as these throughways are built to federal standards.

The result is that the cities, the states, and the Federal Government all now have to be in agreement on the solution of the problem of carrying traffic through metropolitan areas on Federal throughways. The Federal government under this program is not primarily interested in the distribution of the traffic within the metropolitan area, but does take cognizance of local traffic problems in their review of proposed routings.

* In Oregon, the ratio is 92 per cent to 8 per cent, because of the large proportion of federally-owned land in this state.

The State Government is the agency responsible for the actual location of the throughways and endeavors to plan them so they will carry the traffic brought to the area by the rural freeway in the manner which is most efficient to the traffic itself. This means that the State Highway Commission is charged with providing facilities for the automobile driver who is trying to get through town, the driver who is trying to get downtown, and the driver who is trying to get to other parts of the city. Fully satisfying all three drivers with one or two basic routes is a major accomplishment.

West Side Freeway Developments

The early thought of the highway from Salem to Seattle was to bring the traffic up Harbor Drive and across Steel Bridge, thence to the Columbia River and across the two Interstate Bridges. This route proved to be impractical due to the inadequacies of the Steel Bridge for the job. It was impractical to rebuild this bridge, which is owned by a railroad company.

The result was a shift in thinking, wherein the major traffic was conceived as coming up the Baldock Highway, crossing the Willamette River on a new bridge north of the Ross Island Bridge, and proceeding north on the east side of the Willamette River to the Interstate Bridges. This major throughways route was adopted and was considered to be the solution to the problem of carrying traffic north and south through the city, until a demand arose on the part of the city to furnish a facility for drivers to reach the west side downtown area. This demand was backed up by a condition somewhat peculiar to the State of Oregon: a high percentage of all drivers in the state is trying to get to the West side downtown area each day. This percentage of all state automobile drivers trying to get to the central part of one city is an unusual condition and one that could not be ignored by the Federal Government. Therefore, the Government agreed to a second link in its north-south freeway. This link would be on the west side of the river and would furnish connections to the downtown area. Thus was created the problem of furnishing a freeway on the west side of the Willamette which would satisfy Portland, the State, and the Federal Government.

The Federal Government agreed to make this freeway a part of the Interstate System and thereby eligible for matching funds, but insists that it meet the federal standards and be reasonably located. However, the government does not seem to hold any demanding attitude concerning its exact location, and appears willing to place it in the locale that seems best suited to serve its purpose for all who will use it.

The west side loop now under discussion would swing westward from the west end of the Marquam Bridge and proceed to the southwest corner of the Core Area to the so-called Goose Hollow region in the vicinity of 19th and Jefferson. It then goes northerly to the proposed Fremont Bridge which is planned to soar to a height of approximately 190 feet over the Willamette River some half a mile north of the Broadway Bridge and then to connect with the East Bank Freeway. Two general routes are under consideration in the length from the Marquam Bridge to the Goose Hollow area—one would generally follow along the foot of the hills facing the downtown area; the other would be closer to the downtown area and would occupy the property between Clay and Market Streets.

In addition to these two basic routes there is a third plan for future construction which swings off the Baldock Expressway at the south edge of Portland, crosses to the east side of the Willamette and goes north through the eastern part of Portland in the neighborhood of the Laurelhurst district. This long range loop would proceed north to the Columbia River where a new bridge would take it across to a highway that would by-pass Vancouver and swing on north towards Seattle.

PRESENT PROBLEMS

General

The west side freeway, generally termed the Stadium Freeway by the State Highway Commission, is made up of two basic parts: One part takes traffic in an east-west direction from the proposed Marquam Bridge to the southwest corner of the so-called Portland Core Area, and the other part takes the traffic north-south past the west side of the core area.

Clay-Market Route

The first concept for handling the east-west traffic was a location which provided a thoroughfare by removing the entire block between Clay and Market and putting it in a right-of-way 200 feet wide, which is depressed over most of its length, with surface streets carried overhead on bridges. At the west end, present planning brings this depressed roadway up and onto elevated structures in the vicinity of 18th and 19th streets, with an alternate route in a depressed roadway in the vicinity of 13th and 14th streets, proceeding north to the proposed Fremont Bridge.

While the basic route was first conceived in the early 1940's, its present details were developed about 1956 by the city traffic engineer, in cooperation with the City Planning Commission, and were submitted to and accepted by the State Highway Commission as the Clay-Market route. A considerable amount of refined planning on the route has been done in an effort to reduce its effect on the adjoining property. This planning has included parking fields and garages near the off-ramps to relieve surface street traffic congestion. There would be no added traffic created through or near Portland State College, thus making campus enlargement to the west attractive, if future needs require.

Foothills Route

After detailed studies were made on this first route, a second route was examined. This resulted in the development of a route that leaves the proposed Marquam Bridge, going through the south end of the urban renewal area in the near southwest district of Portland, swinging northwesterly along the toe of the hills that face the city in a depressed roadway until Canyon Road is reached at Goose Hollow. Present planning brings this roadway between 18th and 19th streets onto an elevated structure as it swings northerly to the proposed Fremont Bridge, or, alternately, as a depressed roadway between 13th and 14th streets north. This route is designed to disperse traffic through streets and has no provision for parking areas near the off-ramps.

Comments

Both routes have been laid out in engineering detail by the State Highway Commission, and they have been checked in terms of traffic conditions by the city traffic coordinator.

Neither route at the time of preparation of this report has been definitely selected, although the Highway Commission has announced its selection will be made on or about July 7, 1960. Neither has either location been definitely accepted by the city. Consequently the federal government has not been called upon to agree to the location of the highway on either route. Your City Club Committee has been told that all three agencies—city, state, and federal—have to be in agreement on the location of a throughway, and any one party can veto the location if it so desires. We understand the City Council has to approve definitely the location of the final construction, as do the state and federal government. The City Council apparently has exactly the same amount of power in deciding the location of this construction as has either of the other agencies involved.

Comparison

Principal advantages advanced to your Committee by proponents of the respective routes can be summarized as follows:

Clay-Market Route

1. Closer to the downtown core area, thus bringing a large percentage of the Freeway users closer to their ultimate destinations.
2. Would permit and encourage expansion of Portland State College into an area to its west, with low traffic loads passing through it.
3. Desirable parking areas near the off-ramps would relieve downtown traffic and parking congestion.

4. Would permit development of high-rise, high income-producing apartments in the area southwest of Portland State College, resulting in increase in value of real estate in that area.
5. Being closer to downtown, it will relieve the heavy north-south traffic congestion now existing in the narrow corridor between S. W. Fourth and Broadway.
6. Does not create as many odd-shaped parcels of land in its development as the other location.
7. Would protect fringe of downtown area from developing into marginal use areas by generally outlining the downtown core.

Foothills Route

1. Provides the best technical solution to conveying autos at 50-mile design speed.
2. Permits traffic bound for downtown to disperse through streets and thus absorb more autos before any back-up into freeway occurs.
3. Would more easily connect with the 13th-14th west side leg, probably the most desirable of the north-south routings.
4. Cost is estimated to be four million dollars less than on other route.
5. Would not affect the Auditorium..
6. Would allow for a broader horizontal expansion of the downtown area.

DISCUSSION

The City of Portland no doubt will adjust to the location of this proposed freeway, no matter where it is built. There is a great deal of thinking that should be done in planning for an overall solution to the problem of getting people moved from one place to another. This means there should be planning for the development of comprehensive public transportation as well as for the private auto. We should avoid putting all of our eggs in the freeway basket. In the long run, the most efficient mass transportation is by means other than private automobile. All major cities have found this out, and major West Coast cities such as Los Angeles and San Francisco are now integrating comprehensive mass transit planning into their programs. These plans include imaginative proposals of monorails and "elephant" trains, as well as the utilization of established methods. Cities have found that catering to the whims of the individual in his own automobile has proven to be an outrageously expensive luxury which the cities cannot possibly continue to satisfy fully. The use of property for a thoroughway is justifiable only if that is the very best use for that property. This best use comes about when the thoroughway does not remove so much space from the region that the region itself cannot support its share of the thoroughway costs. It is with this in mind that we strongly believe long range planning should be done for the entire metropolitan area of the City of Portland.

Such planning is being done by the Metropolitan Planning Commission.* The

* In January, 1958, officials of the City of Portland, Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington counties signed an agreement forming the Metropolitan Planning Commission which is composed of one member appointed from each of the four governing bodies. The purpose of the Commission is to facilitate the coordination of localized planning activities, and to make studies which must logically include the entire urban or metropolitan area. In brief, their activities now in progress include:

1. Draw appropriate base maps of the metropolitan and urban areas.
2. Make a gross population forecast, by age group, for the metropolitan area for the period 1960-75.
3. Make a population distribution study, which will indicate generally the areas where residential growth resulting from population growth and change can be expected to occur.

(Continued on page 24)

efforts of this agency to develop a total plan for the total needs of the area are to be commended and fully supported. If adequate planning had been done prior to the location of this particular link of the throughway now under consideration, there would be less emotion applied to its location and more factual data available to decide its logical routings.

Now underway and due to be completed in 18 months is a very comprehensive traffic origin-destination survey, financed by a \$250,000 Federal grant. This survey will be available for use in planning a transit program capable of meeting future transportation needs. Such a plan is critically important in the location of all facilities that will have to be developed for the transporting of Portlanders in the next 25 years. The fact that the results of this planning are not available for the current discussion of the location of the west freeway loop is regrettable. Some members of the Committee felt such information could be of great importance in the decision involving Foothills and Clay-Market routes as well as alternate possibilities; others of the Committee felt the broad findings of such a study would be of lesser importance in the present detailed decision, inasmuch as the general traffic pattern is already set in the comparatively narrow corridor between the foothills and the Willamette River. It is agreed, however, that this information would have great significance in the overall planning of general facilities.

The Committee early took the view that either routing of the freeway would cause considerable dislocation of the community and demand a great amount of readjustment on the part of many people. It also agrees with the generally accepted public principle that a depressed freeway, in contrast to an elevated structure, does far less damage to adjacent property, thereby preserving both the aesthetic and economic values. For instance, a connection over the 18th-19th street routing north would require an elevated structure adjacent to several major new churches, while a 13th-14th street connection could be a depressed route, diminishing some of the undesirable aspects of an urban freeway. Several agencies and parties who are interested in specific problems have talked to the Committee. It is felt, however, that either route will have a comparable effect on existing facilities it will have to go through, and that neither has a sharp advantage over the other in this regard. As an example, the Civic Auditorium will be affected by the Clay-Market route, but some people wonder if the Auditorium is of such great importance as to be a critical factor in the location of a freeway that will not be in use until about 1968. Some point out that the Foothills Route would remove several apartments which are valuable and functioning satisfactorily now, but the Committee feels that this would be true of either route..

There seems to be a basic difference in approach to the two locations of this freeway. Advocates of the Clay-Market location are concerned about the maintenance of the downtown core area's value, and are proposing to furnish parking for the cars that will come from the freeway into this core area. These advocates also are concerned about the effect of the freeway on the general growth of the community and have more the comprehensive outlook of the planners than the analytical approach of the engineers. The Clay-Market location seems to have been planned for the general growth of the community, while the Foothills Route seems to have been engineered primarily as to construction details and cost.

The engineering studies claim that the Foothills Route would be a more economical construction, with less backup of automobiles getting off the ramps, with easier solution of such problems as minimum grades and minimum curvatures. Proponents of the Foothills Route do not agree that this route will have a deleterious effect on the Portland State College area, but they do admit that they expect this area to be utilized by traffic filtering into the core area.

4. Carry out an industrial development study. The Portland City Planning Commission has completed a report of the economic prospects of the metropolitan area, which forecasts the employment by industry for 1975. The industrial study will include the translation of the manufacturing and wholesaling employment forecasts into projected land needs. An evaluation of the future industrial land needs in light of the supply of such land in the area, as affected by industrial locational factors, will result in an estimate of areas where industrial development can be expected in the next 15 years.
5. Begin a preliminary plan of freeway arterials and transit facilities.
6. Begin a preliminary school and park plan for the metropolitan area.

Your Committee is aware that no one knows exactly how the city will grow, but that its growth is certainly affected by facilities available, by demand, and by zoning. The facility of the freeway will affect the use-demands on areas which in turn will exert great pressure on zoning. From a planning concept, the development of the city would be best served by the Clay-Market route because of the deleterious effect on its growth pattern by the Foothills Route. Some of the undesirable effects of the Foothills location, in the opinion of your Committee, are: It seems probable that the off-ramps would attract motels, truck terminals, gasoline stations, drive-ins, and such facilities that are attracted by the markets provided by high volumes of traffic. We believe more valuable use and thereby more tax income can be obtained in that area by reserving it to a high quality development, such as high-rise apartments. Your Committee also gives weight to the improved appearance afforded by an area developed by apartments rather than by scattered, commercial uses. Such clutter is incompatible with the concept of a well-planned, beautified, and concentrated core area.

It may be that the core area has seen its peak as a primary shopping area. Perhaps it will develop into a central business core, where the client can walk a few blocks to see his attorney, or the business developer can go next door to the banker. This business "togetherness" is developing more of a general appeal than the shopping in many core areas. If this is so, then the core area may not develop into a competition with the sprawled-out shopping center, but into a concentrated high-rise administrative area. Clay-Market lends itself to this future growth concept better than does the Foothills.

It is a fact that military requirements are not a major factor in the requirements and evaluations applied by the federal government. This is due primarily to two reasons: (1) Military requirements set would be obsolete in a matter of months (even if they could be agreed upon), and (2) the military view now seems to be that if it is necessary for military troops and equipment to go through town, they will clear the streets and go through town. Therefore, no military objections apparently exist to either route.

CONCLUSIONS

The Committee feels that the ideal solution for the location of these freeways would be to delay the decision until information from studies now in process, and planning now underway, is available to aid in the determination and characteristics of the construction. Since highways determine land-use, they greatly affect the future of the areas in which they are built. It would certainly seem to follow that highway engineers should conform their highway plans to metropolitan land-use expectations of the areas which they affect. The greatest value to the City of Portland from the construction of these freeways would accrue if they were coordinated with land-use planning. The present program has shown effects of planning, but does not seem to be thoroughly integrated into the planning concepts of the metropolitan area. While a delay might work a hardship on agencies and parties waiting for an answer, it would produce a better freeway development in the long run.

However, the pressures for immediate decision are such that the Committee has concluded, on the basis of available evidence, that the Clay-Market route is the best location for the freeway. The Committee believes that the Clay-Market route has the advantage of additional planning, integrating it into city traffic, transit, parking, and land-use development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Your Committee recommends as follows:

1. that every effort should be made to keep all throughways depressed, and that elevated throughways should be adopted only after depressed throughways have been absolutely proven to be completely impractical.
2. that extremely strong efforts should be made to plan a Clay-Market connection with a 13th-14th to 15th-16th combination to the north.
3. that the planning of either location should keep clearly in mind a very widely accepted fact: Most of the users will be going downtown,

not around town, and this fact affects such things as the number and location of ramps.

4. Since a decision apparently will be made at the present time, that the City Club go on record as favoring the Clay-Market route.

Respectfully submitted,

HOWARD L. GLAZER
PAUL E. HOCELLE
JOHN R. SABIN
CARL W. SHAW
R. EVAN KENNEDY, *Chairman*

(Editor's Note: The entire committee unanimously agrees on the report and the above four recommendations; two members of the committee feel the following additional recommendation should be included.)

5. Because studies in progress at the present time can greatly strengthen the validity of a decision, that the City Club go on record as favoring a postponement of the selection of a route until the results of these studies are integrated into a comprehensive metropolitan transportation plan.

HOWARD L. GLAZER
CARL W. SHAW

Approved June 15, 1960, by the Research Board for transmittal to the Board of Governors.

Received by the Board of Governors June 20, 1960, and ordered printed and submitted to the membership for discussion and action.