12-7-1935

Press release

Unknown
December 7, 1935

Have you any comments to make concerning the proposed Front Avenue and Foothill Boulevard development?

There is much mis-information being given out which of course has made the project look pretty bad, and it is unfortunate that each property owner cannot get definite, accurate information upon which to make his decisions. The property owner is entitled to know everything there is to know about the project.

Are you in favor of the project?

I believe that it will have to be done some time if the west side is to remain an important business part of our city. All experts who have studied Portland have been unanimous in insisting that both Front avenue and the Foothill Boulevard are of major importance to the west side.

Are you sponsoring the project?

No. I am simply carrying out the necessary steps as required by the law under which the project is proposed. If the people do not want it, I am not for it.

Who did propose it?

The Metropolitan Association (being the consolidating of the former Down-town and the Up-town Associations), representing the owners of a majority of the business district on the west side of the river. The law under which the project is proposed was suggested to the 1935 legislature by this association.

Do you believe this a good time to do it?

I certainly would be opposed to a large bond issue for anything now unless there was a goodly proportion of federal funds to go with it. Taxes and assessments are high enough unless a grant of some kind makes it too attractive to pass up.

What funds are now available other than by assessment?

The Highway Commission has agreed to furnish approximately $100,000.00 this year and will probably continue some such sum each year. The WPA has assured us that they have $1,000,000.00 available for tearing down buildings and grading.

Approximately how much per $1,000.00 assessed value will the proposed project cost the property owner?

Approximately $31.50 per $1,000.00 assessed value if paid in cash, or $1.50 per year (not per month) for forty years if bonded.
How much would a property owner pay if he now pays $185.00 in taxes?

Approximately $96.50 if paid in cash, or $4.74 per year if bonded for forty years.

How much would he pay additional if he now pays $50.00 in taxes?

Approximately $1.88 per year if bonded and $31.00 if paid in cash.

If a property owner pays cash, would it be possible to sell his property with a clear title?

Yes, I believe so - just the same as a person now sells his property with a clear title and yet there is an indebtedness against the city as a whole of approximately $30,000,000.00, and, therefore, against your property.

If a property owner bonds his assessment, could he sell his property?

Yes, just the same as a person can now sell where a street or sewer assessment is against the property. The purchaser would assume the assessment lien or you would have to pay it off. That is what you would have to do with any assessment - sewer, street, or widening.

Is the law clear in all its requirements?

No. I believe there are some points which will have to be settled by the courts.

What will happen to the $500,000.00 State Highway money now being held for this project if it does not go ahead?

There has been no definite statement from the Highway Commission but it is understood that it will be used on the east side to purchase right of way and finish the McLoughlin Boulevard connection to Union Avenue.

Why doesn't the Highway Commission purchase right of way on the west side if they can on the east side?

I cannot answer for the Highway Commission but I suppose that the difference in value of the right of way is so great that the Highway Commission feels forced to go where the purchase price is the lowest.

Do you believe that the Highway Commission will continue spending money in city boulevard construction?

Yes. The law under which the Highway Commission receives the federal money requires 33% be spent within incorporated cities, and as Portland is the only large city it will of necessity receive future money.
Will this be spent on the east or west side?

I believe that the Highway Commission will try to spend it where it will do the most good and that can very easily be divided fairly between the east and west side, but money spent on the east side will go much further than on the west side unless the property owners help out.

Is there any cost of construction included in the proposed project charged to the property owner or the city?

No. The project is set up to purchase right of way only. The Highway Commission and the WPA are to do the grading and construction.

Are these figures exact?

No. They are estimates by the city engineer only, and may vary either way. Past experience in street widening and extension have shown a variance of from 5% to 15% in excess of the early estimates, and I believe in this case it would be well to figure, say 10% over the estimates. It might be lower but it is better to guess high.

Why were the boundaries of the assessment district placed as proposed?

It was thought that all of the city below the hillside in the central part of the city would be benefited most by the improvement. The Heights contain a large proportion of vacant property and it would be difficult to show substantial benefit to that portion.

Will the Foothill Boulevard connect with the Fremont Bridge?

Yes. It was so planned by the city engineer and the Highway Commission engineers. The Fremont bridge will be built sometime, although it may be many years in the future. The Foothill Boulevard would connect with it and also furnish a connection between St. Helens Road and Barbur Boulevard, and the new short road to Salem through Aurora.

Do the property owners along the Foothill Boulevard help carry cost of the Front Avenue improvement?

No. The assessed value of the district is such that the property west of approximately 10th Avenue would pay for the Foothill Boulevard, and the property east of 10th Avenue would pay for the Front Avenue improvement. In other words, it is figured that the portion near the improvement carries its own load and does not help carry the load of the improvement far removed. Yes, that is correct.

Will this project take over the Public Market?

No. The street in front of the market is now 100’0” wide. It will not be widened unless it is determined to extend.
the highway between the market and the river. If so, then right of way would have to be purchased.

Will the market be assessed for the improvement?

Yes, on the basis of its assessed value — the same as all other property in the district.

If the property owner pays his assessment in cash, will he have to pay an additional tax on assessment for others who have bonded their assessment, or who have not paid their assessment?

No. The assessment is based upon the assessed value of the property but is an individual assessment against the particular piece of property and collected by the tax collector at time of tax collection, not as a tax but as an assessment. If the assessment is paid in cash there would be no assessment to add to the regular tax even if others bonded their property or did not pay.