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To Bowes from Henry F. Long

Henry Long

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Dear Mr. Bowes:

I have your telegram but am not really in a position to give you the sort of information which it occurs to me would be of value to you.

There has been practically no water front artery rejuvenation in Massachusetts, although for many years we have had along our water front from one end of Massachusetts to the other highways which have opened up areas in a way that have made them very valuable. We have had a lot of shore frontage that is not as yet available, so far as roads are concerned, but other parts of the State have clearly profited by highway improvement. If you centralize attention on the cities and towns which are strictly water front communities, it occurs to me that most of them will be found to have had arteries, however, almost from the beginning of the Colony, about 1630.

Speaking in a general way, however, there has been no abandonment of the water front arteries, so far as Massachusetts is concerned, but rather a constant tendency to improve them or to keep them in good condition. There has been no major artery development because, as I have indicated, we have had those arteries for 300 years or more and have merely expanded them as more modern things
have required changes in their capacities to meet that which should be available for these more recent times. Speaking in a general way, it occurs to me that unless the expenditure is wholly disproportionate to values to be developed, one cannot speak other than with approval of developments along the water fronts.

It is axiomatic that an improvement of this nature does tend to enhance the value of properties just as a disregard of good water front artery facilities tends to depress the values of property. It is further axiomatic that complete disregard of a blighted water front does not tend to increase it in value but rather to decrease it still further, but some sort of an activity is likely to change the trend and from a blighted area move the area to a more valuable position. Whether or not there is some other activity than a water front artery to do this, I do not know, but it occurs to me that a water front artery at least is an obvious way in which a blighted water front can be restored because, while the result may not be instant, the opportunity to develop is thus made possible, and on the doctrine that nothing can stand still, it either must go forward or go backward, a water front is likely to restore to value rather than to continue a still further decline. Perhaps to the impatient who want instant reflection of values a water front artery development might not seem to be a good investment, but those not impatient and thinking
in the long term benefit would undoubtedly find that if a waterfront was actually blighted, the opportunity of developing through a waterfront artery would be important because if values are low, property can be acquired without any great cost and the waterfront thus can be put into position for the development which must come from the land rather than from the sea. So far as Massachusetts is concerned, however, the only answer I can give you is that we have not made any major changes simply because the situation to which you call attention has not developed in Massachusetts, but to the extent it has, and in some instances in a small way, it is to be found that there has been a rejuvenation of waterfronts by improvements, some of them in the nature of boulevards and the like, opening up that section of the community to commercial, industrial and recreational activities.

Cordially yours,

[Signature]

Commissioner of Corporations and Taxation

HFL: BK