4-27-1940

To Bowes from Wisconsin Taxation

Milwaukee (Wis.). Supervisor of Assessments
Mr. William A. Bowes,
Commissioner of Public Works,
Portland, Oregon.

Dear Sir:

Absence from my office prevented an immediate answer to your telegram regarding Milwaukee waterfront. The city of Milwaukee really has had two projects at the waterfront. One has been the construction and operation of municipal docks and piers. This project has had, so far as we can see, no influence upon the value of private dock property along the several rivers which flow down through the city of Milwaukee and empty into Lake Michigan. What the effect of this municipal competition will have in the future is impossible to determine at this time.

I feel, however, that your telegram referred rather to the other city waterfront project which consisted of the filling in of the shore line along Lake Michigan; the construction of an automobile drive along the water, furnishing better access to several bathing beaches; the creation of lagoons and the creation of park areas and areas for the parking of cars along the waterfront. This development has unquestionably added to the enjoyment of many thousands of people. In answer to your question, will say that this project, in my opinion, has had absolutely no effect upon the so-called blighted areas in downtown Milwaukee. First of all the blighted areas are not contiguous to the waterfront project, and further, I can see no change in the real estate immediately adjoining the waterfront which can in any way be traced directly to the creation of the project.

There unquestionably has been a decline in real estate values in the area immediately adjoining the waterfront due to the migration of people of means to newer neighborhoods farther out from the city.

The drive for autos along the waterfront unquestionably diverts much traffic off from streets previously used, and unquestionably has improved access to downtown Milwaukee from suburbs lying north of the city. So many influences are at work incidental to the decentralization of the city of Milwaukee with people preferring areas farther out, both for residential purposes and even for local business, that it would be impossible to trace any direct result of this waterfront.
up upon the adjoining real estate values.

Summing up the whole question, my answer to you would be the waterfront project has had no special effect upon the values of real estate immediately adjoining, nor has there been any effect upon the so-called blighted areas of the city.

Yours very truly,

\[Signature\]

PS: RP

Supervisor of Assessments
Milwaukee District