

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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SPECIAL REPORT OF THE STATE PLANNING BOARD (AS SUCCESSOR TO THE DIVISION OF METROPOLITAN PLANNING) DIRECTED TO INVESTIGATE THE ADVISABILITY OF LAYING OUT AND CONSTRUCTING A HIGHWAY IN THE TOWNS OF BRAINTREE AND WEYMOUTH AS A BY-PASS OF WEYMOUTH LANDING.

[Metropolitan Affairs.]

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BOSTON, December 1, 1942.

*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled.*

The Legislature of 1941 passed the following resolve for an investigation by the Division of Metropolitan Planning, or its successor, relative to highway traffic conditions in Braintree or Weymouth:

CHAPTER 26.

RESOLVE PROVIDING FOR AN INVESTIGATION BY THE DIVISION OF METROPOLITAN PLANNING OF THE METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COMMISSION, OR ITS SUCCESSOR, RELATIVE TO A CERTAIN HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT IN THE TOWNS OF BRAINTREE AND WEYMOUTH.

*Resolved,* That the Division of Metropolitan Planning of the metropolitan district commission, or its successor, is hereby authorized and directed to investigate the advisability and feasibility of laying out and constructing a highway or highways in the towns of Braintree and Weymouth as a by-pass of Weymouth Landing so called. Said division or its successor shall make the preliminary plans and

estimates necessary to determine said advisability and feasibility and shall report the results of its investigation and its recommendations, if any, together with drafts of legislation to carry its recommendations into effect, by filing the same with the clerk of the house of representatives on or before the first Wednesday of December in the year nineteen hundred and forty-two. *Approved June 24, 1941.*

Chapter 466 of the Acts of 1941 abolished the Division of Metropolitan Planning and transferred its powers and duties to the State Planning Board.

#### TRAFFIC SITUATION AT WEYMOUTH LANDING.

Although highway traffic in general is less than heretofore, due to gasoline rationing and the rubber shortage, the traffic through Weymouth Landing continues at or near peak figures owing to the proximity of the Fore River Shipyard and other defense plants and the resulting defense traffic. This heavy traffic is always noticeable at certain times of the day, but particularly after three o'clock in the afternoon when the day shift forces are going home. At that time a steady stream of traffic — automobiles and buses — pours into Commercial Street in Braintree from Quincy Avenue and thence southerly along Washington Street in Weymouth. This portion of Commercial Street is wide, nearly 90 feet between building lines, but only for a block to Brookside Road at the Weymouth line. The street continues to grow narrower for another block to Front Street and thence Washington Street is only 60 feet wide southerly from that point.

The bottleneck appears to be most acute in that section of Washington Street between Brookside Road and Front Street where the gradual narrowing of the road occurs.

Throughout the length of these two blocks, where business is concentrated, diagonal parking is permitted on both sides of the street. This is not quite so serious in the block where the road is wide, but as the roadway narrows, the condition becomes very bad.

Off-street parking has been provided by the towns at considerable expense, and a total of four hundred cars can be parked in these off-street areas, if they are fully

utilized, within 200 or 300 feet of the stores. Unfortunately, this is not the case, and, as there is no time limit enforced, many cars are parked all day in front of the stores, and the width and efficiency of the street wasted and lost. According to information received, it would seem that some of the store employees are the worst offenders.

Furthermore, every time a car backs out of a diagonal parking space it must temporarily utilize the greater part of three lanes of width. In the case of too narrow streets this means that all traffic must stop, sometimes hundreds of cars, just so that one person can be inconvenienced. Furthermore, such interference with traffic may be very serious in the event of fires and the movement of fire fighting equipment.

#### SUGGESTED REMEDIES.

1. During the duration of the war, parallel parking be limited to fifteen minutes in these blocks during the day, and all the available off-street parking areas be utilized.

2. Diagonal parking be prohibited and parallel parking be permitted only if there be enforcement of a reasonable time limit.

Stores should find the adoption of one or the other of these suggestions advantageous to them and to their customers, as the traffic and parking problem would be simplified.

If either of these suggestions be adopted by the towns of Braintree and Weymouth, they will have the solution of their principal traffic troubles in their own hands and at no expense other than a little inconvenience. When the war is over and funds are once more available for state highway projects, then a complete solution of traffic in this area may be possible.

#### MAJOR HIGHWAY ROUTES.

A study of the subject matter of this resolve discloses the real need for several highway improvements to facili-

tate traffic movement from Boston toward the south and in the area south of Boston. It is generally believed that the proposed Shawmut Trail or Milton-Quincy Highway should be constructed to provide an east-west route between Mattapan and the traffic circle on Washington Street west of the Fore River bridge, but by-passing the congested areas of Quincy. If constructed, this would also relieve a serious traffic problem in the vicinity of the Bethlehem shipyard. While this so-called Shawmut Trail is not directly concerned with the Weymouth Landing traffic problem, its ultimate construction would be of great value to Quincy and to the surrounding towns in diverting traffic from congested areas. This study also indicates the need for a major highway which would not only by-pass the congested areas in the vicinity of Weymouth Landing, so called, but also by-pass and relieve traffic conditions in Quincy. A map<sup>1</sup> accompanying this report indicates one of the by-pass routes studied. This is shown in red. Shown in blue on the map is the proposed Shawmut Trail route, and the highways indicated in black are the existing routes of major importance in this area south of Boston. This proposed by-pass will necessarily be expensive, and for that reason it is not recommended at this time when highway funds are available only for vital access roads, but after the war is over and funds are again available for highway construction it is hoped that this matter will receive the consideration it deserves.

Several routes have been studied and discarded, wholly or in part, for various reasons. The proposed highway indicated on the map starts at the intersection of the Southern Artery and Granite Avenue in Dorchester, follows southeasterly along a widened Granite Avenue and requires a new bridge over the Neponset River, thence southerly via the right of way of the Granite Branch Railroad or along Granite Avenue in Milton and Willard Street in Quincy as far as West Quincy, thence southeasterly over the Granite Branch Railroad right of way or over new location paralleling the Granite Branch

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<sup>1</sup> Map filed with the Clerk of the House of Representatives.

tracks to the Quincy-Braintree line, thence southeasterly over new location to a point on Washington Street in Weymouth north of the intersection of Routes 3 and 18.

Owing to the uncertainty as to when funds will again be available for highway construction, housing projects and other building that may affect the location of the route, and the changing conditions affecting costs of construction, the Board has not included cost estimates in the report at this time.

Our only recommendation at present, therefore, is with regard to parking methods at Weymouth Landing. It would seem that diagonal parking may well be a luxury we could do without in our anxiety to aid the war effort. If parking were prohibited or restricted during the day in those two blocks in Braintree and Weymouth referred to above, the main traffic route would be kept clear for the movement of vehicles which, after all, is the main purpose of highways. This would provide a temporary solution of the traffic problem for the war's duration, and no expenditure of public funds would be required now.

Respectfully submitted,

STATE PLANNING BOARD.

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*Chairman.*

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