

HOUSE No. 62

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COMMISSION,
November 30, 1926.

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives.

In accordance with the provisions of section 33 of chapter 30 of the General Laws, as amended by section 43 of chapter 362 of the Acts of 1923, I herewith submit so much of the abstract of the annual report of this department for the year 1926 (Pub. Doc. No. 48), authorized by section 100 of chapter 92 of the General Laws, as contains recommendations for legislative action, together with drafts of bills embodying the legislation recommended.

Respectfully,

DAVIS B. KENISTON,
Metropolitan District Commissioner.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

I. RELATIVE TO METROPOLITAN PARKS, ROADWAYS AND BOULEVARDS.

The Metropolitan Boulevards were intended by those who planned the Metropolitan Park System to be special pleasure ways, made for light traffic to give easy access to the Metropolitan Parks and Reservations. The commissions which have had charge of these boulevards have, so far as possible, carried out this intention. Heavy traffic and commercial use has been excluded, and use for overhead and underground structures for public service utilities, except where necessary for abutting property, has been denied.

Commercial development of abutting property that detracted from the appearance of the boulevards or interrupted travel has been discouraged and prevented so far as possible, through a rule that no person should enter or leave the boulevards except at regular designated entrances.

The increasing use of the boulevards has caused an ever increasing demand for use of land abutting the parkways for public garages and gasoline stations. The Commission has consistently in recent years refused to grant permits for entrances for these purposes. A recent decision of the Supreme Court has held that abutting owners are entitled to an entrance regardless of the purpose for which it is to be used.

If these boulevards are to bear the burdens and incidents of business streets the Commission believes there is no reason why they should be constructed and maintained by the Metropolitan District rather than by the municipality in which they are located. The Commission has no authority under the decision rendered to prevent the development and use of property abutting the parkways for public garages and filling stations.

If it is desired to retain these boulevards as planned and constructed, legislation giving the Commission authority to regulate locations for such uses is required.

II. RELATIVE TO A GENERAL OFFICE AND HEADQUARTERS BUILDING.

The Commission for a number of years has occupied the buildings numbered 1 and 3 Ashburton Place for its administrative and engineering forces. The rent for these buildings, while in itself moderate for the space obtained, includes all taxes and upkeep of the property, making the whole expense not inconsiderable. The buildings are old and not well adapted to the needs of the Commission, and has insufficient space for its increased work. The Planning Division and the new special Water Supply Commission are now renting space in an office building.

The Commission suggests that it would be good policy for the Metropolitan District to acquire a relatively inexpensive site in the vicinity of the State House and construct an office building large enough to accommodate all its activities with an allowance for future growth. The space not needed for immediate use could be leased to other State departments requiring outside quarters. If the proper legislation is passed this year the building could be constructed and ready for use at the expiration of the present lease of the property on January 1, 1929. The investment cost and charges of upkeep and maintenance should be less than that now paid for rental and result in a net saving.

III. RELATIVE TO THE NORTHERN TRAFFIC ARTERY.

The Northern Traffic Artery from Lechmere Square, Cambridge, to Mystic Avenue, Somerville, will have been substantially completed and opened for travel before the end of the year. The section along the Charles River Basin and on Bridge Street to Lechmere Square will be constructed in 1927. The work of construction will exceed the original estimate by \$200,000 and the land damages by \$300,000. Interest charges up to the date of payment by the cities and towns to the Commonwealth may amount to another \$200,000. If the betterments could be assessed and collected before the completion of the way they would, in part at

least, offset the additional amount required. Under the original act the Commonwealth assumed a quarter of the cost of the way, the remaining cost being assessed upon the cities and towns benefited. As the act now stands the cities and towns will receive the entire benefit of the betterments assessed. The legislation recommended will provide for the additional amount required and will give to the Commonwealth its share of the betterments collected.

IV. RELATIVE TO THE COTTAGE FARM BRIDGE.

The contract for the construction of the Cottage Farm Bridge has been awarded and work has started. The long delay caused by changes in the plans and amendments to legislation have required the expenditure of a considerable sum not originally contemplated in the maintenance of the old structure and of the temporary bridge. An additional sum of \$50,000 should be provided to cover these expenditures as well as \$100,000 for interest charges upon the loans to the probable date of repayment to the Commonwealth.