

D.C. Freeway Revolt and the Coming of Metro
Part 1
Revolt of the Agencies

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| Central Area Bridge | 3 |
| The E Street Bridge Controversy | 6 |
| The Roaches Run Bridge | 12 |
| Representative Broyhill Intervenes | 15 |
| Congress Confronts The Issue | 18 |
| The Bridge Dispute Nosedives | 26 |
| Southwest on The Drawing Board | 32 |
| Ole Singstad's Views | 47 |
| The 10 th Street Mall | 49 |
| Bridge Versus Tunnel | 53 |
| Grudging Support For The Bridge | 60 |
| The Endless Debate..... | 62 |
| Other Developments | 66 |
| The Tunnel Option – Again | 67 |
| Moving a Bill | 71 |
| Unraveling a Fiasco | 74 |
| To Break the Impasse..... | 77 |
| The House Tries Again | 85 |
| Trying to Get Construction Underway..... | 94 |
| Another Look at a Tunnel | 101 |
| Back to the Hill | 105 |
| The Last Gasp(s) | 108 |
| Getting U.S. 270 into the District of Columbia | 112 |
| The Old Road..... | 112 |
| The Road in the 20 th Century | 115 |
| A Modern Upgrade | 118 |
| Second Thoughts..... | 123 |
| The Chevy Chase Revolt..... | 128 |
| Curbing Capper-Cramton..... | 133 |
| Hardening Positions | 138 |
| Looking For Accord..... | 142 |
| Working For Compromise | 146 |
| The Olmsted Brothers | 153 |
| Compromise – Pure and Simple | 159 |
| An Election Issue | 162 |
| Undeciding | 164 |
| The Murray Resolution | 169 |
| Back to Court | 173 |
| The Interstate Map | 176 |
| Interstate Program Gets Underway | 178 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Glover-Archbold Park..... | 182 |
| Whitehurst Freeway | 186 |
| The Glover-Archbold Parkway..... | 194 |
| Congress Takes Up the Parkway..... | 200 |
| Getting U.S. 240 into the District | 210 |
| Alternatives for the DC Entrance..... | 212 |
| Back to the Public | 220 |
| The District's Decision | 224 |
| Public Hearing in Maryland..... | 226 |
| Decision Time..... | 229 |
| Still Thinking of Wisconsin Avenue..... | 241 |
| Premature and Divisive Factionalism | 244 |
| The Joint Committee Hearings | 248 |
| Aiming Towards The City | 251 |
| The Inner Loop..... | 253 |
| Evolving Inner Loop | 258 |
| A Couple Legs | 262 |
| Getting Underway..... | 265 |
| Searching for Connections..... | 271 |
| Preserving the Lincoln Memorial | 279 |

Part 1

Revolt of the Agencies

Although a citizen revolt against freeways would occur in the 1960s and 1970s, the 1950s saw several revolts among government officials and the affluent during the formative years of the freeway network. Officials understood the importance and especially the permanence of the freeways and bridges they were debating, leading to long battles that are largely forgotten today.

In the 1950s, one of those battles was over the need for another central area bridge across the Potomac River linking the District and Virginia. At the time, traffic crossed the Potomac River on Chain Bridge, Francis Scott Key Bridge, Arlington Memorial Bridge, and the 14th Street Bridge. The origin of the 14th Street Bridge was discussed earlier, but a brief history of the other crossings may be useful because they would be part of the debates of coming years.

Central Area Bridge

Chain Bridge carried traffic across the Potomac River at Little Falls, a cataract in Washington. As early as 1738, cross-river traffic, initially by ferry, was important for commercial development in the area. The Georgetown Bridge Company opened a toll bridge in 1797; it lasted only 7 years before the rotted wooden superstructure fell from its stone abutments. A second wooden bridge was destroyed by fire after only a few months in operation. The company built a third bridge that opened in 1810. It was a suspension span supported by chains, giving it the name that structures at the site have retained even though they lack the support chains. In the 1870s, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers replaced the chain-supported bridge with a bridge of seven iron trusses.

After a March 1936 flood partially submerged the bridge, the crossing was out of service until the opening of a steel-girder bridge that the District of Columbia, not the Federal Government or private interests, built. The three-lane bridge, with pedestrian walkways on both sides, opened on June 17, 1938, connecting with Canal Road in Washington and providing access to Arlington and Fairfax Counties, Virginia. “It will stand as a monument,” District Commissioner Hazen said, “to those who fought so long and so hard for a modern new structure.” [Emery, Fred A., “Washington’s Historic Bridges,” *Records of The Columbia Historical Society of Washington, D.C.*, Volume 39, 1938, pages 54-55; Horne, Robert C., “Bridges Across the Potomac,” *Records of The Columbia Historical Society of Washington, D.C.*, Volumes 53-56, 1959, pages 249-251; “Dedication Opens New Chain Bridge,” *The Evening Star*, June 18, 1938]

The **Francis Scott Key Bridge** was built to replace the Aqueduct Bridge. Construction of the Aqueduct Bridge began in 1833 to carry road traffic on its lanes and Chesapeake and Ohio Canal boats on a flume. By the 20th century, the bridge was deteriorating. On May 20, 1916, President Woodrow Wilson signed legislation authorizing a replacement bridge. It was named after Francis Scott Key who lived in Georgetown at 3518 M Street during the time he wrote the words to “The Star Spangled Banner” (1808 to 1828). The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers built the bridge, which opened on January 17, 1923, at a cost of \$2,500,000, including the approaches. In the 1992 *Weekend* feature on the bridges of Washington by Alan Bisbort, *The Washington Post* called Key Bridge “a crown jewel—with its aesthetics, convenience and user-friendliness.”

Motorists southbound on the George Washington Memorial Parkway are rewarded “with a view of the bridge that, no matter how familiar, is still capable of taking one’s breath away.” [Emery, pages 55-57; Bisbort, Alan, “The Draw of Bridges,” Weekend, *The Washington Post*, April 10, 1992, page 9]

Arlington Memorial Bridge spans the Potomac River to connect the Lincoln Memorial grounds with Arlington National Cemetery. Long before the Lincoln Memorial was planned, legislation approved on May 24, 1886, authorized the Secretary of War to study the feasibility of a bridge “from a point at or near the foot of New York Avenue or New Hampshire Avenue, on the public grounds, across the Potomac River and Anolostan Island [Roosevelt Island] to a point on the United States National Cemetery grounds at Arlington” Debate about the location and height of what was initially called the “Lincoln-Grant Memorial Bridge” delayed construction.

After authorizing the Lincoln Memorial in 1911 (opened in 1922), Congress approved the Public Buildings Act in 1913 that appropriated funds for a commission to investigate how to link Arlington National Cemetery to the tribute to the 16th President. (As noted earlier, the Public Buildings Act also provided funds for the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, approved by President Taft on March 4, 1913.)

On December 18, 1922, the commission met with President Warren G. Harding, who approved the plan. He had become a strong supporter of the need for a new bridge on November 11, 1921, while on his way to Arlington National Cemetery for the dedication of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. His automobile became trapped in what the Associated Press called “the worst traffic jam the National Capital has seen in many years.” The traffic jam, apparently started when a small touring car ran out of gas on the Highway Bridge, kept thousands from reaching the ceremony. The *Star* described how President Harding made it to the cemetery:

The President’s car left the White House on schedule When the machine, preceded by secret service men and policemen mounted on motor cycles [sic], reached the outskirts of the jam, it left the road three times and cut across the grass [of Potomac Park], reaching points ahead where the road was comparatively clear.

At times the secret service men in the car got out and walked ahead, clearing space for the White House car [getting it across the Highway Bridge]. When the presidential party reached the [Agriculture Department’s] Arlington experiment station the car was driven off the roadway and through the lanes which cut through the farm.

The *Post* added that the President’s crossing of the bridge was possible “only by the assistance of a flying squadron of special policemen.” [“Auto Causes Huge Tangle In Traffic,” *The Evening Star*, November 11, 1921; Associated Press, “Traffic Jam Blocks Roads to Arlington,” *The Washington Post*, November 12, 1921]

The bridge, which was designed by the influential architectural firm of McKim, Mead, and White, was built low to reduce impacts on the view of the Lincoln Memorial.

Officials arranged the opening of the Arlington Memorial Bridge in 1932 to coincide with the opening of the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, even though neither was completed. In 1928, President Coolidge approved legislation authorizing construction of the highway as part of the celebration in 1932 of the 200th anniversary of the birth of George Washington. BPR designed and built the 15-mile road as a parkway from Washington's home at Mount Vernon to Arlington Memorial Bridge, then under construction.

While work on the highway was underway, the Capper-Cramton Act of May 29, 1930, to be discussed later, authorized funds for construction of the George Washington Memorial Parkway on the Maryland and Virginia sides of the Potomac River. BPR would administer design and construction contracts for the parkway, which would be owned and operated by NPS. Mount Vernon Memorial Highway was incorporated into the parkway.

On January 16, 1932, a motorcycle escort of U.S. Park Police and a caravan of 12 automobiles carrying President Hoover, his wife, and others, left the White House at about 3 p.m. for the short trip to Arlington Memorial Bridge. The *Star* captured the moment:

Arriving at the bascule draw span, which was drawn apart, the party left the automobiles. A battery of cameramen took countless photographs of the party and then, to the tune of shrieking sirens that are part of the bascule draw span equipment, the two great leaves of the mid-bridge were lowered. President Hoover and his party walked at a rapid rate for the rest of the length of the bridge, almost to Columbia Island.

With the eye of an experienced engineer, the President surveyed the bridge project over which he had been many times before, and noted the spacious boulevard that keeps company with the Potomac River for many miles, until it terminates at the old home of George Washington. Two engineers of note accompanied the Chief Executive and Mrs. Hoover—Lieut. Col. U.S. Grant, 3d, executive officer of the Arlington Memorial Bridge Commission, and Thomas H. MacDonald, chief of the Bureau of Public Roads of the Department of Agriculture, under whose jurisdiction the highway has been built.

The presidential party then took to their automobiles again, after glancing at the quartet of giant eagles that sit atop the great pylons looking down upon the future Great Circle that is planned for Columbia Island. The file of automobiles then turned to the left and moved on to the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway on the island, passing then under the highway and railroad bridges and on down to Alexandria in a thin cloud of dust.

Once the caravan reached the straight stretches of the highway, the party traveled at speeds of 30 to 35 miles an hour on the sunlit day:

At Mount Vernon President Hoover and his fellow commissioners posed again for photographs, with the historic estate in the background. The party glanced at the parking spaces that will accommodate numerous automobiles and saw the landscaping plans for the terminus of the magnificent highway.

The party returned to the White House at around 5 p.m. “The President and Mrs. Hoover appeared well pleased with their riverside ride and with the bridge and the boulevard development. They conversed with Col. Grant and Mr. MacDonald about various features of the two projects.”

Neither the bridge nor the highway had lighting. Officials had not agreed on “the final design of illumination, in keeping with the dignity of the project.” The Commission of Fine Arts would determine the design for the bridge. In the meantime, the bridge and highway were open only during daylight hours on weekends.

Bisbort, in the *Post*, commented:

Considered by many Washington’s most beautiful bridge, its structure is relatively simple: eight neoclassical arches. The monumentality derives from all the extras, including eight-foot-bas-relief eagles atop 35-foot pylons, eight-foot bison (by Paul C. Jennewein), a pair of gold figures (by Leo Friedlander) and the elegant white stone (North Carolina granite). One curious note: It has a draw span, a rarely used 216-foot marvel of American engineering that was designed by Joseph B. Strauss, who later engineered the Golden Gate Bridge. [Emery, pages 57-58; Horne, pages 255-257; Bisbort, page 8]

(NPS opened the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway to daylight traffic late in March 1932, and to 24-hour traffic on May 3, after lighting had been installed. [Report of the Chief of the Bureau of Public Roads, September 1, 1932, page 35])

The E Street Bridge Controversy

In the late 1940s and 1950s, the city’s top priority for another Potomac River crossing was a span at E Street over Theodore Roosevelt Island. The island had been remodeled in the 1930s as a tribute to former President Roosevelt and was and remains under the jurisdiction of the NPS.

(The island had first been named Anacostine Island in 1682. In 1792, John Mason inherited what became known as Mason’s Island. The Mason family owned the island until 1833. In 1790, the island was included in the Federal capital, part of Washington County. (The District of Columbia was divided into three autonomous governments: Washington City, Georgetown, and the County. Under the Constitution, Congress was the overseer of the three governments.) By that time, the island also was called Analostan Island. The island went through several hands, before the Washington Gas Light Company acquired it in 1913. The company allowed vegetation to grow wild.

(The Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Association acquired the island in 1931 with the goal of erecting a monument to the former President. Congress, in 1932, passed legislation authorizing the statue, but did not appropriate funds for it until 1960. In 1935, the Civilian Conservation Corps began clearing what they found was an “almost impenetrable jungle.” [Curry, Mary E., “Theodore Roosevelt Island: A Broken Link to Early Washington, D.C. History,” *Records of the Columbia Historical Society 1971-1972*, The University Press of Virginia, 1973, pages 14-18,

also page 396, footnote 6, for three-part city in William M. Maury's "Alexander R. Shepherd and the Board of Public Works," same collection])

Like Commissioner Hazen before them, District commissioners in the 1950s favored a bridge from the District to Alexandria at Shepherds Landing or Jones Point as well as a crossing to Arlington at Nebraska Avenue extended.

(Jones Point is at the southern tip of the District of Columbia and the location of the first of 40 boundary stones identifying the original location. At the request of President George Washington, Andrew Ellicott and Benjamin Baneker, a free black with knowledge of mathematics and astronomy, surveyed the boundary, 10 miles on a side, placing stones at one-mile intervals. According to a history of the boundary stones:

In order to include then existing Alexandria and Georgetown, Jones Point was chosen as the starting point. On April 15, 1791, with proper Masonic toasts and ceremony, the South Stone was set in place. Subsequently the Jones Point Lighthouse was built and the stone was encased in a seawall but forty years later this condition was corrected and the stone exposed. [Nye, Edwin Darby, "Revisiting Washington's Forty Boundary Stones, 1972," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society 1971-1972*, pages 740-741])

In August 1952, the *Star* described the top priority:

The E Street Bridge would connect E street and New Hampshire avenue N.W., and the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, on the district side of the river, with the George Washington Memorial Parkway, Arlington boulevard, Wilson boulevard and U.S. Route 1, on the Virginia side.

The bridge, along with the Francis Scott Key Bridge and the Arlington Memorial Bridge, would carry 82 percent of traffic across the river; that traffic "cannot be diverted to outlying bridges." A six-lane E Street Bridge "would provide the greatest convenience for users and the most useful peak-hour capacity," carrying 48,500 vehicles per day. The proposed bridge would have a 63-foot clearance for vessels and "would pass over Roosevelt Island at a height of 40 feet." The city estimated that the bridge, itself, would cost \$9.1 million and take a little over 3 years to build, but with expenditures for right-of-way, approaches, and other needs, the total cost would be \$22.3 million.

The Shepherds Point Bridge was a high priority as well. It would serve as part of a bypass for traffic that did not need to go through Washington as through traffic had to do at the time. It would "draw almost entirely from the Highway Bridge [on Shirley Highway], relieving it of 15,206 vehicles on an average a day." The bridge would carry four lanes of traffic, with a swing span in the middle about 50 feet above water. That height would allow most vessels to pass under the bridge without an opening. The bridge would cost about \$8 million, but with approaches and other needed work, the total cost would be \$21.4 million. Construction would take a little over 4 years.

The lowest priority was a bridge that would connect an extension of Nebraska Avenue “with a planned network of highways on the Virginia side”:

Two additional connections on the District side also would be needed. These are the extension of the Whitehaven parkway, from MacArthur boulevard to Massachusetts avenue, and a connection between Canal road and Nebraska avenue. The bridge would make available a west side by-pass, connecting U.S. Route 240 on the District side with U.S. Routes 29, 211 and 50 on the Virginia side.

The District commissioners anticipated a four-span steel arch bridge, with four traffic lanes, that would cost \$5 million. The extensions, approaches, and related work would increase the cost to \$8.5 million. The reason for the low priority: “The bridge would do little to relieve the peak-hour traffic in the central section.” (This bridge would not be built.). [“How Three Proposed Bridges Would Serve Area Traffic,” *The Evening Star*, August 28, 1952]

In August 1952, the District commissioners and NCPC released competing consultant reports on the subject. The District’s report, prepared by the consulting firm of Modjeski and Masters, called for immediate construction of the E Street Bridge to relieve congestion.

NCPC’s report, prepared by Harland Bartholomew and Associates, rejected the E Street Bridge:

The additional traffic load which would be imposed upon the street system in the vicinity of its approaches in the District, as well as in Virginia, would aggravate an already critical situation during the peak traffic periods

Washington rapidly is approaching a crisis. Congestion in the central area of the city is becoming critical at many points, and the situation grows worse daily.

A decision soon must be made whether to attempt further saturation of the central area by introduction of endless numbers of vehicles or whether to accept, implement and carry out a basic, integrated transportation plan. The location of future bridges across the Potomac River is a fundamental part of such a plan.

NCPC opposed construction of any more bridges that would lead traffic into the center of the city. The *Star* explained that NCPC “recommended immediate work on the long-range highway plan for the District, which contemplates express highways around the perimeter of the central business and government section of the city.” NCPC also favored “a good public transportation system, which would move people rather than vehicles”:

This perimeter or ring route highway system would involve construction of the other two bridges—the Alexandria crossing and the Nebraska Avenue bridge, the report said.

General Bernard L. Robinson, the District’s Engineer Commissioner, said the District would have to decide how to proceed and work it out with NCPC before asking Congress for the funds. [Hendley, Jr., Coit, “Reports Clash on Location of 3 New Bridges,” *The Evening Star*, August 28, 1952]

A Truman appointee, Robinson had succeeded General Young on June 1, 1951. At the time of his appointment, then-Colonel Robinson had been division engineer for the South Atlantic Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, with extensive experience in flood control and river and harbor improvements. [“Col. Robinson Takes Oath as New D.C. Commissioner,” *The Evening Star*, June 1, 1951] With President-elect Eisenhower preparing for his inauguration, General Robinson left office on December 31, 1952, giving way to General Louis W. Prentiss, who took office on January 2, 1953. General Prentiss had been Assistant Chief of Engineers on the staff of the Chief Engineer, General Lewis A. Pick.

NPS Director Conrad L. Wirth opposed the bridge crossing of Theodore Roosevelt Island, as did the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Association. The association had deeded the island to the Federal Government in 1932, specifying in the deed that the Federal Government must not do anything inconsistent with park use and development of a wildlife refuge.

Wirth had come to Washington in May 1938 as a landscape architect with the National Capital Park and Planning Commission. He transferred to NPS in 1931 and became its director on December 31, 1951. As Director, he automatically was a member of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission. Wirth’s last day as NPS director was January 9, 1964, but President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed him to be a citizen member of NCPC. During the 1950s, he lived on Leland Street in Chevy Chase, Maryland. During the 1960s, he lived on East Bexhil Drive in Kensington, Maryland, a suburb that began in 1894 at the intersection of the Rockville-to-Bladensburg Road and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Extended Connecticut Avenue cuts through the Montgomery County town. [Wirth, Conrad L., *Parks, Politics, and the People*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1980, pages 15, 35, 285, 350-351]

Wirth asked Interior Department Solicitor Clarence A. Davis for legal guidance on the requirements related to the title transferred from the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Association. On August 7, 1953, Davis released his opinion. He agreed with District Corporation Counsel Vernon E. West that Congress, and only Congress, could authorize construction of the bridge:

There can be no doubt that a bridge across the island would be a use inconsistent with the purpose of the donation and dedication of the Roosevelt Memorial Association By the clear terms of the dedication and of the congressional act of acceptance, the Memorial Association retains an interest in the island for the taking of which the United States would be obligated to make just compensation. [“Congress Can Authorize Span, Interior Rules,” *The Evening Star*, August 8, 1953]

On September 24, 1953, NCPC formally considered an alternative prepared by staff planner Charles Conrad and NCPC Executive Secretary Blair Lee III. They proposed construction of two Potomac River bridges that they claimed could be built jointly and at less cost than the E Street Bridge: (1) a six-lane Southwest Bridge leaving Virginia downriver from the 14th Street railroad bridge and crossing the Potomac River and Washington Channel on a line with 10th Street, SW., to tie in with the Southwest Freeway planned for the F Street corridor; and (2) a four-lane bridge upriver of the Key Bridge linking the District’s Arizona Avenue with Virginia’s Spout Run.

The Southwest Bridge would emerge as the primary alternative to the E Street Bridge. Conrad explained that it could be built at low cost because it would involve federally owned land in Virginia and would tie in with street plans developed for the revitalized southwest. By linking with Shirley Highway, U.S. 1, and Arlington Boulevard, the bridge would provide a good alternative for Virginia commuters. He also contended that with a six-lane bridge in the corridor, District officials would not need to follow through on their plan to replace the 14th Street trestle-topped bridge, known as the Highway Bridge, carrying three lanes of one-way Virginia-bound traffic; a companion bridge opened in May 1950 carried traffic in the other direction. (The Shirley Memorial Highway had been built during World War II as part of the Pentagon Road Network and named for Henry G. Shirley, the head of the Virginia Department of Highways since 1922 who died during construction of the network.)

As for the E Street Bridge, Lee pointed out that there was strong opposition to crossing Theodore Roosevelt Island. Further, the structure would interfere with big apartment projects on both sides of the river, and District streets would be overwhelmed by the traffic.

Engineer Commissioner Prentiss disagreed with the cost comparison. He contended that the two-bridge plan would cost about \$4 million more than the E Street Bridge. According to S. R. Harrison, District highway engineer, the Southwest Bridge would not provide enough capacity to substitute for the 50-year old one-way trestle bridge. Further, the new bridge capacity would funnel more traffic through streets in a concentrated area that could not handle the vehicles. [Beveridge, George, "2-Bridge Plan Called Cheaper by NCPC Aides," *The Evening Star*, September 25, 1953]

Lee elaborated on the proposal in the *Star* a few days later. He cited the NPS' and Roosevelt association's objections to the E Street Bridge proposal based on how it would impact Theodore Roosevelt Island, but NCPC opposed the bridge for different reasons. "Indeed, if the island were suddenly to cast off its moorings and float down to the Chesapeake Bay, there is every reason to believe that the commission would not change its view." He cited the different road networks on either side of the Potomac River. Arlington Boulevard, he said, "looks like the New Jersey Turnpike compared to the District approaches" via D and E Streets and "poor old New Hampshire avenue." The city planned "to depress and grade-separate D and E streets as far east as Twentieth street":

The chaos will start wherever they come to the surface, whether it be Virginia avenue, Twentieth street, Seventeenth street, Fourteenth street or Pennsylvania avenue. The pressure of this new flow of east-west traffic on the very limited number of east-west passages between the White House and the Mall can't help causing trouble. The bridge will simply move the bottleneck several blocks east—into the heart of the city.

New Hampshire Avenue, in its lowest reaches, "is about as useless as an avenue can get." Traffic using the planned ramp to Virginia Avenue would face "a total impasse" at Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway. Assuming the traffic "survives that ordeal," it would reach Washington Circle. With priority already given to K Street and 23rd Street, a "three-level treatment" would be the only solution:

Finally, New Hampshire avenue gets to Dupont Circle, where the existing tunnel favors Connecticut avenue and the surface channelization favors Massachusetts avenue. Some expressway!

He disagreed with the District consultant's cost estimate because it did not cover all the street work that would be needed. "I do not see how the E street bridge and its approaches can fail to cost the District less than \$30 million."

The E Street Bridge also would "do considerable harm to two proposed real estate developments," namely Arlington Towers Apartments in Virginia and the Potomac Plaza project on land in Foggy Bottom that formerly housed the Gas Works of the Washington Gas Light Company (this is a reference to the future Watergate complex). The Arlington complex would be "caught in a pincers between the bridge's two main approaches—Arlington boulevard and Wilson boulevard." Similarly, the gas company's triangle "would be hemmed in by a solid wall of traffic on all three sides, and the handsome hotel proposed for the southern tip of the triangle."

Lee also stated that the "mood of Congress" was against the E Street Bridge, in part because of the impact on the island. In the Senate, the District committee blocked planning funds for the bridge from the 1954 District budget. Representative Joel T. Broyhill (R-Va.), who had joined the House in 1953 and would play key roles in transportation issues, "appears to have little enthusiasm for the E street proposal," while "one veteran committee aide on the House side predicted recently that there was no chance of congressional approval of the E street bridge over the Roosevelt Island."

As for alternatives, the Jones Point Bridge was much-needed, but was not a substitute for the central area bridge. In the "virtually unanimous view" of NCPC, the best alternatives were "a combination of a 6-lane bridge slightly downstream from the railroad bridge, followed a little later by a 4-lane bridge connecting Arizona avenue and Canal road with Lee highway via Spout Run parkway and also with George Washington parkway along the Virginia side of the river."

Lee added that the bridge downstream from the railroad bridge would blend with the District highway department's plans for the Southwest:

The highway department is about to launch the huge and highly commendable project of building a southwest freeway all the way across the southwest section on the line of F street, including a new bridge across the Washington Channel. The current idea is to tie the west end of this route into the Fourteenth street bridge approaches near the Jefferson Memorial.

Our proposal is to keep the southwest freeway clear of the present Fourteenth street bridges and instead to extend it across the river on a new bridge and tie into the Shirley highway, U.S. 1, Washington boulevard, and Mount Vernon highway between Roaches Run and the Pentagon.

By linking the southwest freeway to Shirley highway, the highway department can produce a continuous, east-flowing expressway extending from Woodbridge at the

Fairfax-Prince William County line [in Virginia] to South Capitol street [in the District] a few blocks from the Capitol Building The southwest-Shirley location would avail itself of a D.C. approach that is going to be built anyway rather than a lot of extensive construction necessitated entirely because of the bridge, as in the case of E street.

NCPC's proposal would affect neither Arlington Towers Apartments nor the Potomac Plaza project. Lee added that if the proposed bridge and the Arizona Avenue bridges could not be built for less than the E Street Bridge, "I will gladly eat the Modjeski and Masters' report page by page." [Lee III, Blair, "To the Editor of the Star," *The Evening Star*, October 1, 1953]

As a *Star* editorial about the Lee letter put it, "The Potomac River bridge problem is becoming more confusing with the passing of nearly every week." ["Another Bridge Plan," *The Evening Star*, October 1, 1953]

The Roaches Run Bridge

The NCPC proposal for a bridge linked to the Southwest Freeway would often be referred to as the Roaches Run Bridge. In 1937, the American Guide Series volume on the District of Columbia described Roaches Run:

A flat-arched fieldstone underpass carries the [Mt. Vernon] Memorial Highway under the Railroad Bridge, on the south side of which is the lagoon-like Roaches Run Waterfowl Sanctuary. Hundreds of wild ducks use these waters as a feeding ground in winter, and during the summer months there are often flocks of snowy egrets wading near the borders of the sanctuary or roosting in near-by trees. A parking space and picnic area is provided about midway of the lagoon, which is most appealing at sunset, when pastel colors, deepened by their transmission through smoke from passing railroad trains, are reflected in the quiet waters. [*The WPA Guide to Washington: The Federal Writer's Project Guide to 1930s Washington*, Pantheon Books, 1983, pages 449-450]

Representative Broyhill tried to play a "peacemaker role" by appearing in a closed session of NCPC in support of the Jones Point Bridge and the E Street Bridge. He argued that the Jones Point Bridge and a central area bridge were needed and it was senseless to jeopardize them by "squabbling over specific locations." [Beveridge, George, "Broyhill Sees Planners, Asks Truce on Spans," *The Evening Star*, October 29, 1953]

The day after meeting with Representative Broyhill, NCPC asked the District commissioners to study the Roaches Run location. Members of NCPC wanted better cost estimates before endorsing either proposal. Engineer Commissioner Prentiss, a member of NCPC, opposed the request because he thought District highway officials, NCPC, and BPR should be able to agree on cost estimates without a formal study. "I don't see any sense in spending a lot of money, which is hard to get, to hire someone to make a cost estimate because we can't believe each other."

Bartholomew argued that the realistic cost estimates should include the cost of the highway and street improvements on both sides of the river that should, in fairness, be charged to either

project. Prentiss agreed that some of the street changes should be part of the cost estimate but explained that some of the changes would occur regardless of which bridge is built and the cost of such changes should not be added to the cost of the bridge. [Beveridge, George, "Planners Urge Study of Cost of Bridge Below 14th St. Span," *The Evening Star*, October 30, 1953]

NCPC's request prompted John R. Searles, director of the District's Redevelopment Land Agency (RLA), charged with rebuilding southwest Washington, to express concern that a Roaches Run Bridge would route too much traffic into the area. The Southwest Freeway was designed to carry all the through traffic currently using residential streets. "I'm no traffic expert, but I doubt if the freeway would be able to handle all the extra traffic that would result from a new Potomac River bridge." ["Roaches Run Bridge Hit in View of Traffic Entering Southwest," *The Evening Star*, November 3, 1953]

In response to NCPC's request, General Prentiss instructed city officials to extend "every means of co-operation to come up with the answers." In addition, a four-member committee was established to conduct the cost inquiry: John Nolen, Jr., Director of NCPC; J. N. Robertson, the District's highway director; Joseph Barnett, Chief of BPR's Urban Roads Branch; and Robert C. Horne, chief engineer of National Capital Parks. ["Experts Study Costs of Roaches Run and E Street Bridges," *The Evening Star*, November 5, 1953]

A month later, General Prentiss informed NCPC that the Roaches Run Bridge would cost between \$33.9 million and \$53.2 million, compared with \$30 million for the E Street Bridge. The *Star* pointed out that:

The wide variance in cost estimates for the Roaches Run bridge depends mostly on what approach road improvements are included as necessary to tie the bridge traffic in with existing highway networks in Virginia and the District

It is considered likely that the planning commission, at its meeting this week, will challenge the inclusion of Roaches Run improvements that would result in high cost figures. At the same time, it also may balk at the absence of some improvements in figuring the \$30 million E street bridge cost.

The four-member committee had "agreed on cost standards to be followed but did not agree on what approach projects to include." As a result, approach estimates included "improvements extending as far north as Constitution avenue and as far east as Seventeenth street for the Roaches Run Bridge and as far east as Seventeenth street for the E street project." [Beveridge, George, "Roaches Run Bridge Cost Put At \$33.9 to \$53.2 Millions," *The Evening Star*, December 8, 1953]

On December 10, 1953, Governor John S. Battle of Virginia released a report by the consultant firm of Wilbur Smith and Associates proposing a \$107 million highway program for the State's connections with the District. As reported in *The Evening Star*:

The report generally represents a new approach to area traffic problems. It plays havoc impartially with major proposals of the Washington Area Regional Highway Planning Committee, District officials and area planners.

The report addressed the dispute over the location of a central area bridge:

The consultants told a reporter they agree with highway officials that most peak-hour traffic is headed for downtown Washington, which an E street bridge would serve. But they rejected the E street project on grounds that approach roads in that area could not handle increased traffic that would be generated by another bridge there.

Consistent with NCPC's views, the consultant report recommended two bridge locations. One would be down river from the 14th Street railroad bridge to tie into the proposed Southwest Freeway in the District. The other would cross at Three Sisters Islands—named after three Native American sisters in alternative legends—upstream from Key Bridge:

On the District side, it would lead into MacArthur boulevard, Canal road, and the proposed Arizona parkway through Glover-Archbold Park. In Virginia, it would follow the George Washington Memorial parkway for half a mile to its junction with Lorcom lane.

As perhaps the report's major feature, the two new bridges would tie directly into two of the three proposed expressways. The downstream, or Hains Point, bridge [Roaches Run], would feed into a proposed Potomac River expressway. This expressway, leaving the bridge, would follow the line of the present Mount Vernon Memorial highway nearly to Alexandria's eastern edge to link with U.S. Route 1 near Gum Springs.

The Three Sisters Bridge would connect with an 8.8-mile-long Falls Church expressway. This road would parallel Lee highway (Route 29-211) as far as Washington boulevard, veer northward around Falls Church and then cut sharply southward to connect with Arlington boulevard (U.S. Route 50) near Gallows road.

The report rejected or downplayed other planned facilities:

Specifically, the report recommended against the Cabin John Bridge It said the Cabin John span would not attract more than 2,200 cars a day. It said approaches to the Jones Point Bridge "might warrant immediate construction," but did not otherwise endorse the Jones Point Bridge as a high-priority project. [Beveridge, George, "Virginia's New Road Program Clashes With D.C. on Bridges," *The Evening Star*, December 10, 1953]

(Cabin John is a community about 8 miles northwest of Georgetown and six miles southeast of Great Falls. Who "Cabin John" or "Captain John" was is shrouded in mystery. Because of its location near the Potomac River, Cabin John has a long history that includes the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal; its locks are the explanation for Seven Locks Road that runs through the area. When the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers completed the Washington Aqueduct system in 1863, designed by General Montgomery C. Meigs, to provide water from Great Falls to the District of

Columbia, they included a tunnel and Union Arch Bridge to carry the water; farmers used the smooth, flat surface as a road.

(In the 1870s, Congress appropriated funds for a macadam surface on what was called Conduit Road. The Corps wanted the road to transport equipment between Cabin John and Great Falls, but it served east-west farm traffic better than nearby River Road, which was wide enough only for one horse, with little room for opposing traffic. In 1942, Congress passed legislation changing “Conduit Lane” to MacArthur Boulevard, to honor General Douglas MacArthur for his actions in defense of the Philippines at the start of U.S. involvement in World War II. [Welles, Judith, *Cabin John: Legends and Life of an Uncommon Place*, Signature Book Printing, 2008, pages 16-17; Stewart, Alice Fales, *The Palisades of Washington, D.C.*, Images of America, Arcadia Publishing, 2005, page 36])

The following day, NCPC postponed its decision on the location of the central area bridge, citing the Wilbur Smith report as a main reason. Bartholomew told reporters he was prepared to vote, but realized others needed time to review the Virginia report. He urged the members to come to the meeting on January 6, 1954, prepared to vote without further delays. [Beveridge, George, “Planning Commission Delays Bridge Vote Until January 6,” *The Evening Star*, December 11, 1953]

Representative Broyhill Intervenes

Representative Broyhill did not need more study time. In his view, the Wilbur Smith report was “all wet” on several points. It had not assigned a high priority to the Jones Point Bridge that he was trying to push through Congress, while criticizing the E Street Bridge across Roosevelt Island that he also favored. “I’m going to proceed and ask for hearings immediately after Congress convenes.”

He particularly disagreed with the report’s plan to link its proposed bridges to expensive new expressways. “With their plan, the bridge can’t be built without the costly expressway. With ours, existing approach roads are pretty well worked out to tie in with the Jones Point and E street bridges.”

While NCPC members liked the report’s rejection of the E Street Bridge, District and Maryland officials were displeased. General Prentiss, like Representative Broyhill, rejected the need for expensive freeway construction to go along with the District’s proposed E Street Bridge. Chairman Russell H. McCain of the Maryland State Roads Commission also was concerned that the report rejected the Cabin John Bridge because it would affect the location of the western leg of upgraded U.S. 240 (to be discussed later). “Maryland is going to have to study the report. After further study, we’ll have a comment.” [Beveridge, George, “Broyhill Attacks Virginia Plan Bridge Site,” *The Evening Star*, December 11, 1953]

One reason why NCPC delayed its vote until January 6 was that it wanted to know what the Regional Highway Planning Committee would do. Samuel R. Harrison, deputy director of the District Highway Department, headed the group, which included Maryland and Virginia officials as well as representatives of BPR, NCPC, Capital Transit Company, and the Military District of

Washington. The committee had been formed in July 1949 to analyze data, such as origin-and-destination records, collected in preparation for the 1950 Comprehensive Plan. On January 4, the committee voted 6-to-1 in favor of the E Street Bridge and rejected the Roaches Run Bridge. The NCPC representative was the only dissenting vote. (BPR's H. J. Spelman did not vote.) The committee also voted in favor of the Jones Point and Cabin John bridges, both rejected by the Wilbur Smith report. ["Regional Planners Favor E Street Bridge, Reject Roaches Run," *The Evening Star*, January 5, 1954]

Although NCPC members remained divided, the commission voted 6-to-4 on January 6 against the E Street Bridge and in favor of the Roaches Run Bridge:

Thus, the stage was set for another Capitol Hill feud, with the city's roadbuilders and planners attempting to sell Congress on conflicting bridge schemes. In similar battles in the past Congress has given the nod most often to District officials.

Today's vote climaxes nearly two years of bitter argument over the bridge issue.

As Congress convened, Representative Broyhill introduced a bill in support of the E Street Bridge. The bill named it the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Bridge. He warned NCPC that its opposition could endanger the chances for congressional support of any central area bridge. "Governing bodies in Virginia all favor E street. The planning commission stands alone in my opinion." He added:

If the planning commission opposes E street, I don't think Congress ever will approve the Roaches Run bridge, because there is not enough support for it. The only thing the planning commission can do is to kill the chances for E street. [Beveridge, George, "Planners Reject E St. Span, Back Roaches Run," *The Evening Star*, January 6, 1954]

Representative Broyhill recognized concerns about the effect of the E Street Bridge on Roosevelt Island:

I sincerely regret that some well-intentioned citizens have objected to the E street bridge location because the proposed span would go over Theodore Roosevelt Island. Theodore Roosevelt Island will not be destroyed, nor will the bird sanctuary there be disturbed. I am sure that were the great 'Teddy' alive he would be the last to stand in the way of progress and the great needs of the citizens of our communities. [Beveridge, George, "Bridge Hearings Will Start Soon, Broyhill Says," *The Evening Star*, January 7, 1954]

An editorial in the *Star* criticized NCPC's support of the Roaches Run Bridge. The vote against the E Street Bridge was not surprising, although "those votes were influenced by considerations that have little to do with the facts of traffic needs." The vote in favor of the Roaches Run Bridge was harder to understand:

The Roaches Run site, it is believed, will eventually be discredited—for it has been pulled like a rabbit out of a hat. It has received no serious study from an engineering or traffic point of view. It raises more questions than it answers. While it protects the artificial wilderness of Roosevelt Island . . . it would play hob with East Potomac Park,

Washington Channel and the Mall. Engineering studies will doubtless bring many objections into focus—including cost to local and Virginia taxpayers—that have received little or no attention up to now, because they have not been seriously considered up to now.

If Congress gave Representative Broyhill's bill a fair hearing, the members would be able to "decide between fact and nonsense." If not, his constituents would be the "chief victims" but "it will not be long before the traffic jams at existing bridge crossings will become so intolerable that action will be forced." As for NCPC, the editorial said:

The National Capital Planning Commission—heavily weighted down by non-residents who have no fixed responsibility for meeting local needs—has been proved wrong before and will doubtless be proved wrong again. ["No Way to Bridge the Arguments," *The Evening Star*, January 7, 1954]

One NCPC member who voted in favor of the E Street Bridge explained his reasons in a speech to the Board of Trade's River and Harbor Committee. John A. Remon, a NCPC member and chairman of the Washington Regatta Association, said the Roaches Run Bridge would destroy much of the city's water recreational activities. "The E street bridge is the logical site. It will not interfere with the waterfront or with water recreation." ["Ruin of Boating Seen With Span At Roaches Run," *The Evening Star*, January 9, 1954]

Another factor against the Roaches Run Bridge was its impact on plans for redeveloping Southwest Washington. Remon also was chairman of RLA, which debated the bridge dispute in a closed-door board meeting on January 13, 1954:

Mr. Remon said the reason for getting into the bridge controversy was limited to a fear that a Roaches Run span would further endanger the development of Tenth street S.W. as a major traffic gateway to a rebuilt Southwest area.

Tenth Street was seen as an attractive approach road for the new southwest, but the District Highway Department had long planned a bridge over Washington Channel to connect the 14th Street bridges with the Southwest Freeway in the F Street corridor and 10th street. Highway officials rejected the idea that 10th Street could serve both purposes. NCPC had supported the plan for the 10th Street gateway, but the RLA feared that NCPC's support for the Roaches Run Bridge reflected a change of views on the gateway plans.

Director Searles of the land agency said, "Every developer, investor and planning consultant we've had agrees Tenth street is vital to serve the Southwest. Now it looks like the planning commission has given up on Tenth street." [Beveridge, George, "Redevelopers See Bridge as Threat to Plans," *The Evening Star*, January 14, 1954]

Moreover, the bridge dispute was affecting plans for the Southwest Freeway. General Prentiss said that detailed planning was delayed because the design depended on whether the freeway would tie into the existing 14th Street bridge, as District officials wanted, or the proposed Roaches Run Bridge. The decision would affect, among other features, whether the new freeway

would be six or eight lanes wide. The dispute was in addition to uncertainty about whether 10th Street would be a gateway to the southwest or serve Virginia traffic. An early end to the bridge dispute was crucial because the Southwest Freeway was the city's next major freeway project. Planning would take a year, with construction expected to last 2 years. [Beveridge, George, "Bridge Quarrel Delays Design For Freeway," *The Evening Star*, January 17, 1954]

On January 29, 1954, Bartholomew, the new NCPC chairman, addressed the Committee of 100 for the Federal City, an organization that had been formed in the 1920s, initially to support development of the city. According to a *Star* account, he "expressed amazement" at the lack of city support for the comprehensive development plan:

Mr. Bartholomew said the contrast between Washington and other cities around the Nation is sharp. He said that elsewhere, once the overall plan for development of a city is adopted, the various city departments follow it.

"If a department doesn't agree, it doesn't hire consultants, publish a separate report and go to the newspapers," he commented

He said the comprehensive plan for the development of Washington drawn by the planning commission, should be followed in general, if the city is to avoid serious mistakes. "The White House is in danger of becoming the center of the business district," he commented.

He said the downtown business district has a tendency to grow to the west. More should be done to strengthen the east end of the business section and stabilize what business is there, he added.

The Roaches Run Bridge would serve better than the E Street Bridge for two-thirds of government workers east of 16th Street and would avoid routing them past the White House. Good planning called for creating "circulation" around the central area instead of directing more traffic toward downtown:

Mr. Bartholomew also advocated a good mass transportation survey to help plan for the increasing problem of traffic. He suggested that expressways be designed now with room for a rapid transit system, saying that is the only way a city can acquire a system now. ["D.C. Adherence To Planning Decisions Urged," *The Evening Star*, January 30, 1954]

The Committee of 100, after a presentation by Nolen, backed the Roaches Run Bridge on February 19. ["Committee of 100 Hears Nolen, Backs Roaches Run Span," *The Evening Star*, February 20, 1954]

Congress Confronts The Issue

At NCPC's request, Representative John P. Saylor (R-Pa.), whose years in the House reflected a strong environmental perspective, introduced a bill directing the District commissioners to build the Roaches Run Bridge. The Saylor bill provided for District and Virginia approaches as well as a central entrance to Washington National Airport, an overpass of the railroad, and an

interchange with U.S. 1. ["New Bill Proposes \$26 Million Bridge At Roaches Run," *The Evening Star*, February 26, 1954]

Representative Saylor explained that he introduced H.R. 8096 mainly "to provide an opportunity for Congress to consider the merits of the Planning Commission's proposal." He was concerned that otherwise, congressional consideration would go to the E Street Bridge, which was the District's preferred option even though it was opposed by NCPC, the Interior Department, and the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Association:

I am informed that the E Street bridge location proposed by the District Commissioners does violence to all well accepted concepts for the protection and enhancement of the western terminus of our world-famed Mall. It would project a commercial type steel girder bridge across Roosevelt Island and in many other respects be out of harmony with the standards set for that area by the Lincoln Memorial, the Arlington Memorial Bridge, and the flanking parkways along the river.

The Roaches Run site, on the other hand, accords with well considered plans for the National Capital Planning Commission . . . [NCPC] is composed of key public officials and eminent citizens qualified in city planning matters. Its present chairman, Harland Bartholomew, was appointed by President Eisenhower last August. He is one of the Nation's leading city planners and has been a consultant on the Washington plan for more than 25 years. I believe we should give the Commission's plan full consideration and weigh carefully the broad issues involved in the decision on a new bridge location. ["Roaches Run Bridge Bill, Extension of Remarks of Hon. John P. Saylor," *Congressional Record-House*, March 3, 1954, pages 2614-2615]

On March 1, the House District Committee began hearings on the Broyhill bills in support of the E Street Bridge and the Jones Point Bridge. The first day was devoted to the District's case for the E Street Bridge. General Prentiss explained that the E Street Bridge was the District's highest priority, followed by the bridges at Jones Point and Nebraska Avenue extended. The

E Street Bridge, he said, was designed to relieve morning and evening congestion snarls. He was satisfied that approaches could be designed in the District and Virginia to handle any new traffic the bridge would generate in the corridor. He said the District had considered the tunnel option but concluded it would be impractical because of cost and river front terrain.

General Prentiss emphasized that the District had considered other locations for the central area bridge, but E Street emerged as the "sound solution." Other options included Arizona Avenue,

K Street, H Street, Roaches Run, and extensions of Constitution and New Hampshire Avenues. "I have satisfied myself that none would serve the purpose so well as E street." It would serve commuters, but not without attracting high amounts of through traffic.

District Highway Director Robertson said the 19 lanes of existing Potomac River bridges carry 210,000 cars a day, compared with 190,000 vehicles crossing on the 19 lanes of Anacostia River bridges. Despite this disparity, the District was building a six-lane East Capitol Street bridge to

boost Anacostia River capacity. A new Potomac River bridge was needed. Already, the 14th Street bridges carried 105,000 cars daily, which he called the highest concentrated bridge total in the world.

Robertson estimated the cost of the E Street Bridge to be \$32 million and said it would be financed by Federal-aid and District revenue. He estimated Virginia's cost to be about \$2 million for connections. Representative Broyhill indicated he would amend his bill to reflect the higher cost.

Representative James C. Auchincloss (R-NJ) asked Robertson if the District had considered suspending the E Street Bridge over Roosevelt Island instead of building piers on it. Robertson replied that the District had considered but discarded that option because it would increase the cost to \$58 million. As planned, General Prentiss said, the bridge would include three piers resting on the island and would pass about 40 feet over it.

Frank M. Masters of Modjeski and Masters, was one of the other witnesses on the first day. His firm gave the E Street Bridge the top priority among the sites studied, with E Street the most logical site. "Within a couple of years' time, there are going to be long delays in getting across the Potomac River unless additional facilities are provided."

No opposition was expressed to the Jones Point bill, which called for the Federal Government to pay for the new bridge. [Beveridge, George, "E Street Bridge Urged by D.C. at House Hearing," *The Evening Star*, March 1, 1954]

Throughout the discussion of the location of a central area bridge, officials had debated the extent and cost of the approaches to the new bridge. On March 3, the issue erupted during the hearing on the Jones Point Bridge when Virginia Highway Commissioner James Anderson's blunt letters to subcommittee members stated that while Virginia favored the E Street and Jones Point Bridges, there was "no possibility" that the State could pay for the approaches to either structure. His letters, as the *Star* put it, raised the "subcommittee's ire." Several subcommittee members said they would not support either bridge without a Virginia funding commitment, while one "influential member" said he would insist on documentation of Virginia's financial situation before he would support the bridges.

For the E Street Bridge, the District planned to use District and Federal-aid funds to pay for approaches over federally owned park land in Virginia (\$2.8 million), but expected Virginia to pay \$2.2 million for land and approaches on State land.

W. Frank Smith, an urban engineer with the Virginia Highway Department, explained that Virginia spent about \$40 million a year (including about \$10 million a year in Federal-aid) on new highways, but could afford only about \$1 million a year for the area within a 15-mile radius of Washington. That area had about \$35 million in "immediate needs," none of which included the bridge approaches.

When Representative Broyhill pointed out that northern Virginia contributed a much higher percentage of revenue than it was receiving, Smith explained that the department allocated funds

based on a rigid formula of area, population, and mileage established by the State legislature. He would determine if any of the \$1 million could be diverted to approach work. "I wish I could tell you that we could do that, but the other needs in this area are so great I don't know." (The formula Smith mentioned was a longstanding point of frustration for northern Virginia; the State legislature, dominated by rural politicians, took revenue from the heavily populated northern Virginia for road projects in the State's rural counties.)

Representative Broyhill said, "While I'm proud to be a Virginian, I'm not proud of the position of the Virginia Department of Highways this morning." He arranged a meeting with Commissioner Anderson for the following day, a Saturday, in Richmond to try to convince the State to pay for the E Street Bridge approaches.

Witnesses supported the Jones Point Bridge. Chairman Carroll D Kearns (R-Pa.) asked General Prentiss how he could justify full Federal funding for the new structure. General Prentiss replied that the new bridge would be of some value to area residents, but its major benefit would be "to the general riding public" since it was intended to be an area bypass for motorists not bound for local jurisdictions. It would be a "vital link" in the area's planned circumferential for through traffic.

The Broyhill bill authorized \$20 million that would cover construction of a four-lane bridge, approaches through Alexandria to connect with the Shirley Highway in Virginia, and a short approach in Maryland to connect with Overlook Avenue at Chesapeake Street, SE., in the District. The Modjeski and Masters study estimated the Virginia approach would cost \$7 million while the approach in Maryland and the District would cost about \$2.1 million. General Prentiss recommended increasing the authorization by \$4.5 million to allow for a six-lane bridge.

George N. Lewis, Jr., traffic engineer with the Maryland State Roads Commission, explained that Baltimore was planning a harbor tunnel as a bypass for through traffic. "My feeling is that if the Jones Point bridge is not built, Washington will be one of the last cities, from New England on down the coast, not to have a bypass system." He added that if the Federal Government was willing to pay for the bridge, "Maryland will be glad to consider an agreement with Virginia and the District to take over its maintenance and operation." [Beveridge, George, "Broyhill to Attempt to Prod Virginia on Funds for Bridges," *The Evening Star*, March 4, 1954]

On March 6, Representative Broyhill had a 2-hour meeting with Commissioner Anderson and State Senator Fenwick to discuss funding issues. On Monday, March 8, Commissioner Anderson provided what the *Post* called a "guarded statement" to Representative Broyhill and Senator Fenwick on State funds for the two approaches. The commission was willing to develop general approaches to the E Street Bridge but was not willing to seek a special appropriation for the approach to the Jones Point Bridge.

The Virginia Department of Highways, Anderson said, was responsible for maintenance and improvement of the main road affected by the E Street Bridge, namely Arlington Boulevard (U.S. 50). Already, the department had committed millions of dollars for development of Arlington Ridge Road and two overpasses on Glebe Road. However, the Department would be "happy to work with the Arlington County Board in a restudy of priorities and will accord the

utmost consideration to any request by Arlington County and its representatives for a high priority to future work on Arlington Blvd.”

As for the Jones Point Bridge, the commission “did not have and would not have the means to provide reasonably adequate highways” in the Arlington-Fairfax area. The commission had spent twice as much in Fairfax County as in any county in the State, but Anderson quoted from the Wilbur Smith report saying “traffic problems of Northern Virginia are largely the problems created by Washington.”

Representative Broyhill said he was “very pleased” that Anderson agreed about the need for a contribution toward the E Street Bridge. This view, the Congressman said, was a reversal of Anderson’s claim that the commission would not put up a single cent for bridge approaches. “My impression is that the State Highway Department is willing to assume its obligation. Unless the State is willing to do this much, Congress will not be willing to approve either bridge and I would not expect it to.” [McDade, matt, “Va. Bridge Help Hinted by Highway Commission,” *The Washington Post*, March 9, 1954]

Commissioner Anderson, contacted by telephone in his Richmond office, told a reporter that the memorandum was neither a reversal nor a restatement of position, but a clarification. “We went into that hearing not knowing just what the situation was. We now find that most of the money we’ve been spending up there [in Arlington] for years may be considered as providing approaches to the bridge.” As for the Jones Point Bridge, he said the E Street Bridge would be built first. Virginia officials could decide about the approaches to the Jones Point Bridge later. [“Virginia Held Willing to Aid E Street Span,” *The Evening Star*, March 9, 1954]

On March 9, the subcommittee heard from opponents of the E Street Bridge. Joseph C. Grew, a former ambassador to Denmark, Switzerland, Turkey, and Japan, led the opposition as a trustee of the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Association. He called the E Street Bridge a “direct violation” of the plans for the island and said the proposal was “an effort to persuade Congress to break its word.” The goal in deeding the island to the Federal Government was to provide a public park in a state of wilderness. As planned, a terrace and balustrade would be the only artificial constructions on the island. “It is essentially a place of solitude and repose.”

Representative Broyhill told Grew that the planned “Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Bridge would be a much greater memorial than the wild island that looks like the very devil right now.” During his drive to Richmond over the weekend, he had questioned 81 people, only one of whom had even heard of Roosevelt Island, while 66 had heard of the George Washington Bridge in New York City.

Grew replied that the Federal Government had failed to live up to its agreement in accepting the deed but that the Eisenhower Administration was prepared to provide the funds needed to prepare the island for its dedication on October 27, 1958, the centennial of Theodore Roosevelt’s birth. He argued that bridge standards appropriate in any other city were not appropriate in this case; the “aesthetic must be considered in Washington because it is so material in Washington.”

Secretary of the Interior Orme Lewis told the subcommittee that the bridge would detract from the entire monument area near the Lincoln Memorial. The massive high-level bridge would divert attention from the area’s carefully planned memorial and park features. At one point, he

had suggested construction of a tunnel but it was ruled out because of cost. "I don't think Washington, D.C., is a place where money is so doggoned important."

Bartholomew called the E Street Bridge a "grievous and costly mistake." It was, he said, in "an illogical and fundamentally unsound location" that would create acute new traffic congestion and disrupt property values by shifting the retail business district. Part of the congestion problem was that Arlington National Cemetery forced traffic around it to points away from the area to be served by the E Street Bridge. The Key and 14th Street bridges were at their "logical locations." The E Street Bridge would serve north Arlington, while growth was expected to occur near Alexandria and Fairfax County. In the District, much of the bridge traffic would be headed east of the White House, making it a "center of traffic congestion." The high cost "cannot be justified."

Since it was "never pleasant to appear against public improvement," NCPC had offered the Roaches Run Bridge as an alternative. The funds for the E Street Bridge could better be spent for the Inner Loop road that also would tie into the Roaches Run Bridge.

Mrs. Alice Roosevelt Longworth, President Theodore Roosevelt's daughter, sent a letter to the subcommittee rejecting any bridge over the island and naming the proposed bridge in her father's memory. [Beveridge, George, "Opponents Call E Street Plan 'Ruinous.'" *The Evening Star*, March 9, 1954; Beveridge, George, "Planners Push New Attack on E Street Bridge," *The Evening Star*, March 10, 1954]

On March 10, Representative Howard W. Smith (D-Va.) testified before the subcommittee in opposition to the E Street Bridge. Representative Smith, a member of the District Committee but not the subcommittee, had represented Alexandria and Arlington and Fairfax Counties until redistricting in 1950; Representative Broyhill's district included those areas now, while Representative Smith's district covered 20 counties to the south. (Representative Smith would become chairman of the powerful Rules Committee in 1955 and serve in that capacity through 1989.)

He had long favored an Alexandria bridge, "which becomes more essential every day." However, he had opposed the E Street Bridge "since its inception." It would "channel more traffic into an already congested area" of Washington. Further, he considered the deed transfer a firm contract that nothing could be done on the island without the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Association's consent. "Unless you get the consent of the association, it is a complete waste of time and motion to submit such a proposition to Congress." Proceeding without the association's consent would be "an unmoral act which in my opinion Congress would not consider for three seconds."

Representative Smith also addressed the issue of Virginia funding for approaches. The State always had done its share. "I can say confidently that when the chips are down Virginia is going to do its share, but they have to have something definite to work on." [Beveridge, George, "E Street Bridge Called Waste of Time," *The Evening Star*, March 10, 1954]

In view of the bitter opposition to the original proposal, General Prentiss surprised the subcommittee by sending a proposal on March 11 for a combination bridge-tunnel across the Potomac River at E Street. The *Star* described the plan:

The bridge would start from the District side of the Potomac like any other low-level bridge [about the height of the nearby Arlington Memorial Bridge]. As it approached the controversial Roosevelt Island, it would decline to land level and pass under the island surface through tubes. On the Virginia side of the island it would rise again and continue to the shore as a conventional bridge.

The tunnel would be built by “open-cut construction,” then covered over so that the island would appear unchanged. The District contended that the revised plan would cost about \$3 million more than the E Street Bridge.

General Prentiss explained, “We want to put everything possible before the subcommittee and that is why we sent this plan up today.” The original high-level bridge was less costly than a tunnel and “sounder from an engineering point of view,” but the bridge-tunnel idea “has certain advantages.” The obvious one was that it answered objections about the impact on Roosevelt Island, the Lincoln Memorial, and surrounding area.

Chairman Kearns said he was “definitely undecided” about the E Street and Jones Point Bridge proposals, but said, “I resent the idea we have been wasting our time in these hearings on the E street bridge,” as suggested by Representative Smith. The chairman announced he would postpone hearings until everyone had a chance to review the District’s bridge-tunnel proposal.

Representative Broyhill thought the new concept might “overcome some objections” to the original proposal. However, he preferred the original high-level bridge “from a standpoint of beauty and practicability.”

He also had made some progress in his weekend meeting with Commissioner Anderson, who was at least no longer totally opposed to participating in the cost of the approaches to the E Street Bridge. His original bill for the Jones Point Bridge had assigned the cost of the approaches to the Federal Government:

The Virginia legislator said today he has decided to amend the bill to cut about \$6 million from the cost and have the Virginia approach routes extend through Alexandria only as far as Route 1. He said this would open the way for a firm understanding that the connection from there to Shirley highway would be a clear-cut responsibility of the Virginia Highway Department.

The highway department, in a follow-up letter, has taken the position that the bridge approaches need go only as far as Route 1 immediately, and added: “As traffic develops over the years and as additional funds become available, the southern approach could be, and undoubtedly would be, extended from Route 1 to the Shirley highway.” [Beveridge, George, “Bridge-Tunnel Now Proposed At E Street Site,” *The Evening Star*, March 11, 1954]

At the time, about half the island was below the high-water flood mark, with about 17 percent under water at high tide. Further review of the tunnel concept revealed that it would require about 35 percent of the island to be raised by 35 feet. The added cost would mostly be for a draw-span in the low-level bridge. [Beveridge, George, "Bridge-Tunnel Would Require Raising of Island," *The Evening Star*, March 12, 1954]

The *Star's* Metropolitan Scene columnist, John W. Thompson, Jr., wrote, "It's a good bet that you saw the death of the E street bridge at the Capitol the other day." He attributed the death to Representative Smith. He was a powerful member of the District Committee and the influential Rules Committee, which determined which bills reached the House floor. Technical issues aside, his view that the Congress would not consider a bill that violates the agreement with the association "is very apt to be correct." His opposition to the E Street Bridge might also mean the demise of any central area bridge. "For it remains to be seen whether supporters of a crossing at Roaches Run . . . can muster the strength to get it through." If the District commissioners continue to oppose the Roaches Run Bridge, "it is hardly likely that Congress will approve it." [Thompson, Jr., John W., "The E Street Bridge Looks Dead," Metropolitan Scene, *The Evening Star*, March 14, 1954]

The Bridge Dispute Nosedives

With a hearing on the Roaches Run Bridge scheduled for March 30, the Northern Virginia Regional Planning Commission voted to support the Roaches Run Bridge after a presentation by Executive Director C. C. Robinson:

He said the Roaches Run span, downstream from the present Highway (Fourteenth street) Bridge, could be tied in with Mount Vernon boulevard, U.S. 1, Glebe road and Shirley highway. By connecting with the proposed Four Mile Run parkway, the bridge route into Virginia would lead also to Columbia pike, Arlington boulevard and Lee highway.

The commission, in 1952, had voted to support the Jones Point and Nebraska Avenue bridges, but had refrained from endorsing the E Street Bridge.

Arlington, represented on the commission by county board member Alvin K. Kimel, preferred the E Street Bridge. However, as Kimel explained, the E Street Bridge was looking like a losing proposition. The Roaches Run Bridge was his second choice. ["Northern Virginia Planners Indorse Roaches Run Span," *The Evening Star*, March 25, 1954]

On March 30, the Kearns subcommittee heard from NCPC and other supporters of the Roaches Run Bridge. Bartholomew explained that the Roaches Run Bridge idea grew out of NCPC's desire to find an alternative to the E Street Bridge. In Virginia, the greatest growth was expected to be south of Arlington Boulevard, an area that would be better served by the Roaches Run Bridge:

On the District side, he argued that—unlike the E street bridge—it would funnel traffic east of the White House in areas with the highest land values, business properties that

need strengthening, most parking facilities and the highest volume of Federal employment in permanent buildings.

By tying into the limited access Southwest Freeway in the F Street corridor, he said, the bridge would allow traffic to use several north-south streets to enter the road system.

Bartholomew said the Southwest Freeway was part of an important inner belt that was essential immediately. The Roaches Run Bridge would feed directly into it, as well as into the Four-Mile Run belt.

Representative Broyhill questioned Bartholomew's statement that the E Street Bridge would provide fewer major benefits for people living south of Arlington Boulevard. Asked by Representative Broyhill to choose between the Roaches Run and Jones Point Bridges, Bartholomew said they served different purposes and that "if a person has a bad cold and an upset stomach he has to take two different types of medicine." NCPC had not made a choice, and he was reluctant to offer his own view, but said that "from an actual relief of congestion standpoint the Roaches Run bridge would probably do more than any other we could build at the present time." Congress would have to decide the priorities for these two bridges as well as others that NCPC supported (Jones Point and Cabin John spans for the outer beltway, Roaches Run and a bridge upriver from Key Bridge tying into the inner belt).

Nolen, NCPC's director, testified that the Roaches Run Bridge and its approaches would cost \$26.3 million or about \$6 million below the estimated cost of the E Street Bridge and approaches:

Mr. Nolen said this takes advantage of plans already in preparation for the Washington channel bridge, a Potomac Yards overpass and eventual construction of a Four-Mile Run expressway, which does not now exist.

Other witnesses who testified in favor of the Roaches Run Bridge included Robinson; General Grant, now president of the American Planning and Civic Association; and Edward J. Kelly, National Capital Parks superintendent, on behalf of the NPS. [Beveridge, George, "D.C. Planners Stress Savings in Roaches Run Bridge Site," *The Evening Star*, March 30, 1954]

The second day of hearings featured mainly critics of the Roaches Run Bridge. Engineer Commissioner Prentiss led the opposition, saying "it simply will not work." Critics argued that the bridge would bring more traffic just east of 14th Street than the north-south streets in the area could handle:

Contending that studies show 80 per cent of the cars crossing the river have destinations north of Constitution avenue, they argued there is no practical means of getting increased traffic beyond Constitution and Pennsylvania avenues.

In addition—sometimes in biting language—they criticized the planners' cost estimates as too low and attacked proposed Virginia approach routes as impractical.

General Prentiss recognized that Congress might not approve his preferred E Street Bridge. In that event, he said, he outlined a nine-point second-best option:

1. Immediate authorization of the Jones Point Bridge,
2. Increased authorization, from \$7 million to \$11 million, for early construction of a south-bound four-lane 14th Street bridge to replace the three-lane trestle structure,
3. Replace the streetcar tracks and sidewalks on Key Bridge with additional traffic lanes,
4. Construct an off-ramp from the Whitehurst Freeway to the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway,
5. Construct an underpass at Washington Circle in the K Street line,
6. Improve roadways around the Lincoln Memorial for better connections with Arlington Memorial Bridge,
7. Extend 15th Street, NW., through the Washington Monument grounds to provide better service to the 14th Street bridges,
8. Determine how to improve the traffic bottleneck at Independence Avenue and 17th Street, NW., and
9. Swift construction of the Southwest Freeway simultaneously with the Washington Channel bridge connecting the freeway with the 14th Street bridges and Ohio Drive.

(Ohio Drive dates to the early 20th century. The Road Drivers and Riders' Association, formed by horse lovers in 1903, wanted a roadway "where drivers may speed their horses," as the *Star* explained. The association called it the Speedway, although it was sometimes called the Centennial Speedway. ["The Proposed Speedway," *The Evening Star*, October 5, 1903] The Speedway opened in West Potomac Park on May 11, 1904, with thousands of spectators observing the festivities. It extended from the Tidal Basin to 26th Street, SW. It would be reconstructed and extended through East Potomac Park as Riverside Drive. In 1949, as will be discussed, Ohio's congressional delegation succeeded in renaming the road Ohio Drive.)

All these projects were in the District's proposed 10-year public works plan, but should be bumped up in priority if Congress did not approve the E Street Bridge. Asked by Representative Auchincloss if all these projects would cost as much as \$100 million, General Prentiss replied, "No, sir, far less than that."

Representative Saylor, testifying on behalf of his Roaches Run Bridge bill, said the testimony reminded him of "a group of children who have presented their case to their parents and have had the parents, in their wisdom, turn them down." The parents, in this analogy, were the members of NCPC who had rejected all of the District's arguments. NCPC, he reminded the subcommittee, had been established to resolve such disputes.

John E. Harwood, representing the Virginia highway agency, read Commissioner Anderson's letter saying his department had agreed to cooperate within its means by building approaches for the E Street or Jones Point bridges:

Mr. Anderson's letter said a "very hurried study" by the planning commission indicated that the Roaches Run approach cost could be "many times the approaches needed for an E

street bridge.” Then Mr. Anderson said he doubted that Arlington officials would approve of spending State funds it gets for such a bridge.

The District’s engineering and planning chief, G. I. Sawyer, disputed NCPC’s cost estimate of \$26 million for the Roaches Run Bridge:

He said that it would cost \$33.2 million to do what the planners proposed, exclusive of land costs in Virginia. But he contended it would cost either \$46.6 million or \$50.6 million to carry out either of two plans needed to make the bridge “a partly workable highway facility.”

The Roaches Run Bridge, according to District Highway Director Robertson, could “never be made to function to its full capacity.” To get the increased traffic north of Constitution Avenue would require a tunnel from south of the avenue to north of G Street. The District hadn’t done a detailed estimate of what the tunnel would cost but “it would be plenty.”

Clifton G. Stonebruner, Arlington County’s highway engineer, opposed the Roaches Run Bridge. The county favored the E Street Bridge, but in view of concerns about its effect on Roosevelt Island, Stonebruner suggested shifted the bridge to pass over a small triangle of land downriver from it.

H. J. Spelman testified on behalf of BPR in opposition to the Roaches Run Bridge:

In a lengthy statement, he attacked the proposal on grounds that: The Virginia approaches were not capable of sufficient traffic capacity; District streets could not handle the new load; the bridge would “bring an obstruction” close to the main runway of Washington National Airport; it would be unwise “from a civilian defense standpoint” to add another bridge to the Fourteenth street concentration; the Potomac River approach road would conflict with Federal land use plans near the airport.

Mr. Spelman said nearly one bridge lane’s traffic capacity (between 800 and 1,000 cars per hour) can be added to the existing Washington-bound Fourteenth street bridge if the District carries out plans to connect the bridge to a Washington Channel span leading to the proposed Southwest freeway.

Another full lane’s capacity can be added when a new four-lane bridge is built to replace the trestle-topped, three-lane Virginia-bound Fourteenth street bridge, he declared.

In closing the 2-day hearing, Representative Kearns announced that he did not expect to call the District subcommittee into executive session to decide the central area bridge dispute until the end of April. [Beveridge, George, “Prentiss Offers Alternate Plan In Dispute Over Bridges,” *The Evening Star*, March 31, 1954; Beveridge, George, “House Unit Study of Bridges Not Expected Until Late April,” *The Evening Star*, April 1, 1954]

On April 3, NCPC chose second-best options if Congress decided against the Roaches Run Bridge. In that event, it favored immediate construction of the Jones Point Bridge, immediate

replacement of the trestle-topped 14th Street bridge, and the nine-point plan that General Prentiss had outlined.

During the meeting, Bartholomew and General Prentiss stressed that neither was conceding defeat or giving in to the other. Instead, they were simply acknowledging the possibility that Congress would not approve either central area bridge. NCPC added several conditions to the nine-point plan. It wanted the District to ensure that the bridge over the Washington Channel did not preclude construction of the Roaches Run Bridge and that the six-lane Southwest Freeway be designed to allow for expansion to eight lanes.

Star reporter George Beveridge explained that “the fact that the two groups are united on even a second-choice plan puts them closer together on a single bridge proposal than they have been for years.” [Beveridge, George, “Jones Pt. Span Agreed To as Second Choice,” *The Evening Star*, April 3, 1954]

On April 20, Bartholomew and General Prentiss met to discuss their different estimates of the cost of the Roaches Run Bridge. They did not intend to agree on the cost, but only to identify the reasons for the differences so they could let the subcommittee know what they were. In a joint cover letter to Chairman Kearns, they said the main reason for the difference was that NCPC compiled its estimate on a net basis while the District used gross cost figures:

On the one hand, the planning commission reasons that credit should be allowed for construction that would take place, regardless of the bridge and which had already been included in the District’s highway improvement program or contemplated as a Federal or Virginia project.

On the other hand, the District contends that the legislative authorization for the bridge should include the cost of all construction required to permit it to function, even though a large part of this construction may be needed whether or not the bridge is constructed.

General Prentiss told reporters that he and Bartholomew had not tried to reconcile their differences on which bridge would serve the area better. “We simply explained our differences on cost estimates and set them out on paper.” [“Officials Agree On Variance In Bridge Costs,” *The Evening Star*, April 21, 1954]

In late May, the District submitted its budget for FY 1955 to the House Appropriations Committee. The city requested \$2,794,000, to be matched equally by Federal-aid highway funds, to build the Southwest Freeway from South Capitol Street to 4th Street. According to J. N. Robertson, construction could begin about 8 months after the District begins detailed plans for the freeway. However, several factors were delaying the detailed plans, including whether Congress would approve the Roaches Run Bridge; if so, the freeway would include eight lanes instead of six.

The dispute on the role of 10th Street, SW., was another cause of delay. District highway officials wanted 10th Street to carry large volumes of north-south traffic, but developers planning the new southwest, represented by the New York consulting firm of Webb and Knapp, wanted

10th Street to be a mall-like entrance to the redeveloped southwest waterfront. [Beveridge, George, "Budget Asks \$2,794,000 Freeway Fund," *The Evening Star*, May 23, 1954]

Chairman Kearns, who had postponed a decision on the central area bridge dispute, decided on May 26 to poll subcommittee members on the issue by mail when a quorum did not appear for a meeting. As Beveridge put it, chances for the E Street Bridge and the Roaches Run Bridge "nosedived when the two proposals became bitterly deadlocked" between NCPC and District officials.

The subcommittee's focus was clearly on the Jones Point Bridge. Representative Broyhill had prepared his amendment authorizing Federal construction of the bridge on condition that Maryland, Virginia, and the District pay for the approach roads. He told reporters the total cost of the project was \$24.3 million, divided among the Federal Government (\$14.8 million), Virginia (\$7.3 million), Maryland (\$885,000), and the District (\$1.2 million).

Representative Broyhill was optimistic about the Jones Point Bridge, but he and Representative Kearns agreed that the timing for a central area bridge was uncertain. Representative Kearns said, "In the future, I think the city might go to a tunnel beneath the river. If the cost of that is prohibitive we will probably have to resort to a toll system because another central area bridge is needed." [Beveridge, George, "Kearns to Poll House Unit on Bridge Needs," *The Evening Star*, May 26, 1954]

The subcommittee members informed Representative Kearns of their views on the central area bridge in time for a June 3 meeting. The members agreed on Representative Broyhill's revised Jones Point Bridge bill. Under the Broyhill bill, the District would build the bridge after receiving commitments from Maryland and Virginia regarding the approach roads. The four committee members present for the meeting supported to bill, while Representative Kearns had proxy letters from the other members favoring it. He hoped the District Committee would complete the bill in time for consideration on the House floor in June.

The results of Representative Kearns's poll of members on the central area bridge were not reported, but must have been inconclusive, unlike the poll on the Jones Point Bridge. He decided to leave the issue open until the next session of Congress. Referring to the agencies disputing the location of the central area bridge, he said, "One thing this has proved to me is that these people are going to have to get together before they bring their proposal up here for us to consider." [Beveridge, George, "House Unit Approves Bridge Across Potomac at Jones Point," *The Evening Star*, June 3, 1954]

On June 11, the House Committee on the District of Columbia unanimously approved the Jones Point Bridge bill. The full House approved the bill on June 14, sending it to the Senate. It passed without debate on a voice vote, one of 13 District bills the House approved in a 14-minute period. [Proposed Potomac River Bridge at Jones Point, VA., *Congressional Record-House*, June 14, 1954, pages 8176-8178; Warren, Don S., "House Adopts Bill for Bridge At Jones Point," *The Evening Star*, June 14, 1954]

Southwest on The Drawing Board

In some ways, the southwest redevelopment plan was a model of the urban theories described in *Toll Roads and Free Roads* and *Interregional Highways*. In this case, as Gutheim and Lee described, the District of Columbia Redevelopment Act of 1945 set the stage:

The National Capital Park and Planning Commission was authorized to designate redevelopment areas and boundaries and to prepare and adopt plans in accordance with the existing comprehensive plan The five-member Redevelopment Land Agency was created and empowered with the unique public authority to acquire property designated for redevelopment. The land would then be prepared for transfer to public and private developers. To attract private developers, on whose participation the program depended, the cost of the land could be reduced by as much as two-thirds of the original price. [Gutheim and Lee, page 262]

The commission selected the southwest, the smallest of the District's quadrants, to be the first area redeveloped:

According to the 1950 Comprehensive Plan, much of the small southwest quadrant and large areas in the northwest and southeast quadrants possessed high concentrations of "obsolete dwellings," overcrowding, and other potential threats to public health. When these separate conditions were overlapped, however, the Southwest emerged as the principal first target for renewal. [Gutheim and Lee, page 267]

Contemporary accounts of the process invariably described the existing southwest as filled with "slums," but the area provided neighborhoods for thousands of low-income residents, including many African-Americans:

Of all the post-World War II redevelopment projects in Washington, the southwest quadrant was the most dramatic. It involved the clearing of four hundred acres and the forced removal of 23,500 people, of whom 76 percent was black residents. The redevelopment process exacted a huge human toll, mainly on the large number of people displaced because no replacement housing was provided. Many blocks of potentially historic buildings were leveled. The effects of the southwest redevelopment reverberated for years afterward in citizens' attitudes toward planning, local governance, and neighborhood conservation. [Gutheim and Lee, page 259]

The RLA asked Washington architect Louis Justement and architect-planner Chloethiel Woodard Smith to prepare a radical redevelopment plan for the area:

Reminiscent of Daniel Burnham's legendary advice to "make no little plans," the Justement-Smith plan aimed at a "whole process of rebuilding the city in a purposeful and accelerated fashion"

The new residential areas planned in the redeveloped section of Washington were to be attractive enough to bring back the suburbanites who had fled the city. As the planners pointed out, the process of dispersal coupled with the inability of the historic ten-mile

square District to annex suburban territory (and thus maintain a large affluent tax base) made the specter of the bankrupt city very real.

The broad and original concepts outlined by the Justement-Smith plan included a new entrance or “front door” esplanade to the Southwest, along 10th Street, passing over the railroad tracks and the planned expressway. The entrance was planned to link the formerly isolated quadrant with the cultural facilities along the Mall, most notably the original Smithsonian Building. “The view down Tenth Street to the channel, uninterrupted by buildings, over-passing the highway, bordered by parks on the east and a wide planted park set back along the west, would provide an inviting entrance leading to main east-west access avenues to residential areas and to the attractive drive leading to Fort McNair.” The functional success of this new artery depended on its connection with Maine Avenue, which paralleled the Washington Channel. [Gutheim and Lee, page 268]

The residential area was to include “groups of buildings, high-rise apartments and town houses like those in Georgetown, with front and back yards” as well as neighborhood stores and public buildings to create a “richly varied and human urban area.” The report also considered the impact of the freeway:

Intended to cut across this newly molded quadrant was an expressway designed to connect the 14th Street Bridge with South Capitol Street. In relation to the proposed 1950 Comprehensive Plan’s Inner Loop, the freeway would serve as the first stage of this central thoroughfare. The freeway would not only carry through traffic above the “central congested part of the city,” but it would also give residents in the Southwest access to the rest of the city. Rather than cutting through the quadrant as tentatively outlined in the 1950 Comprehensive Plan, the freeway suggested by the Justement-Smith plan should bound and define the residential area to be developed. When the artery was later built, it became that boundary (and barrier) and separated the new federal buildings complex south of Independence Avenue from the residential area. [Gutheim and Lee, pages 268-269]

The Justement-Smith vision was filtered through other ideas and geographic realities, resulting in compromise:

The 1952 compromise report approved large areas for clearance but recommended replacement by low-rise buildings that would follow in form and location the old row-house configurations. This compromise report by design avoided the “extremes of idealism—such as the complete wiping out of this area and of its replacement by a forest of multi-story apartments, and, on the other hand . . . the extreme of expediency, such as replacement or face-lifting of the existing development” The compromise report agreed to the desirability of the 10th Street Mall or esplanade but expressed reservations about the interchange between the terminus of the new mall and Maine Avenue. Based on this report, a final redevelopment plan was proposed. [Gutheim and Lee, pages 270-271]

Having agreed on general concepts, the RLA selected a firm to carry out the plan:

The flamboyant New York City real estate developer William Zeckendorf, representing the firm of Webb and Knapp and recruiting the design and technical guidance of architects I. M. Pei and Harry Weese, took charge of the vast project. The detailed plan was developed between 1954 and 1959 and was based on the general plan approved in 1952. The detailed plan was largely a response to the spirit of the Justement-Smith plan. Zeckendorf envisaged the new Southwest as a showcase of unusual architectural beauty.

The detailed plan included 10th Street as a gateway:

Zeckendorf's Southwest was to be entered via a 10th Street Mall and was to be inhabited by four thousand families of varying incomes. There was to be a modern town center, as well as enlarged waterfront restaurants, marine activities, and a cultural complex.

Zeckendorf's 10th Street Mall took inspiration from the vision of the Justement-Smith plan. The mall or esplanade in the Zeckendorf plan was described as a "wide and impressive span, flanked by stately government buildings." Contrary to its earlier proposed function as an entrance linked directly with the waterfront along Maine Avenue, this mall would end "in a circular overlook providing motorists or pedestrians a grand view of the waterfront and residential Southwest Washington." [Gutheim and Lee, pages 271-272]

Zeckendorf met with President Eisenhower on July 8, 1954, to discuss issues associated with redevelopment of southwest Washington. The meeting lasted 40 minutes. The developer told reporters he briefed the President on the proposal and its potential, leaving behind a schematic drawing of the plan. He would not discuss details of the discussion but did say the President's reaction "was far from unfavorable."

He apparently also talked with President Eisenhower about the Auchincloss bill, introduced in the Committee on Public Works, that would allow for construction of Federal office buildings in the redeveloped area to replace temporary buildings built during World War II on the Mall. The *Star* drew this conclusion because Zeckendorf "held a copy of it in his hand as he left the White House."

In addition, according to Webb and Knapp counsel Harold Riegelman, Zeckendorf talked with President Eisenhower about the "effects of various bridge proposals" on the plans. Riegelman did not elaborate, but the *Star* speculated that this was a reference to the Roaches Run Bridge that "would pour an inordinate amount of traffic into the Southwest area." Zeckendorf's firm also was concerned about plans to use 10th Street, SW., as a major traffic artery connecting with the 14th Street bridges. "The New Yorkers want to use Tenth street as a tree-lined mall to serve as a grand entrance to the rebuilt waterfront area." The *Star* pointed out that a traffic consultant hired by the New York firm was planning to meet with Highway Director Robertson to try to resolve the issue. ["President Sees Zeckendorf on Slum Project," *The Evening Star*, July 8, 1954]

Constitution Avenue Bridge

Senator Francis H. Case (R-SD) decided to try to resolve the dispute among the agencies on the central area bridge. He had been a newspaper editor before his election to the House of Representatives in 1936. He had won election to the Senate in 1950. At the time of the central area bridge dispute, he was chairman of the Senate District Committee. In Washington, Senator and Mrs. Case lived in the Brandywine Apartments, built in 1953-1954, on Connecticut Avenue between Albemarle and Brandywine Streets, NW., in the Forest Hills neighborhood.

On June 16, 1954, he proposed a compromise to end the bitter dispute. Meeting with Bartholomew and General Prentiss, he suggested construction of a bridge in a direct line from extended New Hampshire Avenue, NW., that would miss Theodore Roosevelt Island while serving the same traffic. It would pass downriver from the island, crossing a small, partially submerged island known as South Island and tie in with Arlington Boulevard and Jefferson Davis Highway in Virginia.

His idea, similar to one proposed by Stonebrunner during the House hearings, would address concerns about the effect on Roosevelt Island while a parking area and footbridges included in the plan would make the island more accessible. The low-level bridge (15 feet above South Island) also would answer complaints that the high-level E Street Bridge would affect views of Roosevelt Island and the Lincoln Memorial. Senator Case also thought it would be less costly than the E Street Bridge while using New Hampshire and other north-south streets to better advantage.

General Prentiss and Bartholomew agreed to study the proposal. [Beveridge, George, "Case Proposes A Compromise Site for Bridge," *The Evening Star*, June 16, 1954]

Senator Case's efforts to resolve the central area bridge dispute achieved success on July 28, 1954, during a breakfast meeting at the Cosmos Club. General Prentiss, Bartholomew, and NPS's Wirth agreed to a low-level bridge downriver from Roosevelt Island tying into 24th Street, NW. The original Case plan to cross South Island proved doubtful when the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Association opposed it because the little slip of land was subject to the terms of acquisition of the larger island. The *Star* explained:

The new Twenty-fourth street bridge agreed upon today would miss South Island completely, presumably taking it outside any jurisdiction controlled by the island association.

As the *Star* added, the Cosmos Club meeting resulted in agreement on other issues:

1. Construction of a second bridge from Roaches Run, Va., to tie into Twelfth street N.W., in lieu of District plans to rebuild the old trestle-topped Fourteenth street bridge at its present location. Presumably—as part of the Fourteenth street bridge complex—the new Roaches Run bridge would carry Virginia-bound Potomac traffic and the existing new Fourteenth street bridge would continue to handle city-bound traffic.

2. Reconstruction of Twenty-fourth street N.W. as a “full expressway” from the new downtown bridge connection as far north as R street N.W. The plan, Senator Case indicated, is to have the rebuilt street serve as the western leg of the city’s proposed “inner belt road system.” The location previously has been in conflict.
3. Construction of a tunnel beneath the Mall west of Lincoln Memorial through which Twenty-fourth street would connect with the new downtown bridge. This would obviate a maze of above-ground construction on the Mall—highly objectionable to park officials.

Senator Case planned to amend his Jones Point Bridge bill, which included his New Hampshire Avenue bridge plan, to reflect instead the 24th Street plan:

Senator Case said he hoped the agreement reached today would mark the start of a settlement of major problems which have held up area development. [“Case Reports Agreement on 24th St. Span,” *The Evening Star*, July 28, 1954]

On July 28, NCPC formally endorsed the compromise plan, noting that the long dispute about the central area bridge stemmed from NCPC’s conviction that new Potomac River bridges should tie into the Inner Loop. NCPC referred to “substantial agreement” on the immediate need for the Jones Point Bridge, a new Highway Bridge from Roaches Run to 12th Street, SW., the upriver bridge linked to 24th Street, and early construction of the 24th Street and Ohio Drive freeways to serve as legs of the Inner Loop. NCPC also referred to a “future needs” program that included another bridge between Key and Chain Bridges and a third bridge near 14th Street “when additional traffic volume warrants it.”

The Roaches Run Bridge, the *Star* explained, “would serve as a replacement for the 50-year-old trestle-topped Fourteenth street bridge, which is to be demolished.” The article continued:

Highway officials had planned earlier to rebuild the old bridge in its present location. District officials plan to use the new Highway Bridge for one-way Washington-bound traffic, and reverse the one-way traffic flow on the Fourteenth street bridge built in 1950. The latter bridge now handles Washington-bound cars.

General Prentiss told NCPC that the District did not have a timetable for the projects. “What we have here is a plan. The next step is to set up a work program within the Highway Department—a definite schedule of projects within the ability of the District of Columbia to pay for them.” The 24th Street bridge project was the first priority, assuming Congress approved it. The District would use \$400,000 in the current budget to begin work on the bridge. [“Bridge Accord Paves Way for Other Major Highway Projects,” *The Evening Star*, July 29, 1954]

On July 29, Senator Case’s District Committee approved a bill authorizing the compromise central area bridge and the Jones Point Bridge. The bill referred to the 24th Street bridge as being in the vicinity of Constitution Avenue; it would subsequently be referred to as the Constitution Avenue Bridge. The bridge was to connect with 24th Street, the reconstructed north-south expressway, and Constitution Avenue. The bill authorized \$24.5 million for the project.

It was to be located “north of the Memorial Bridge and south of the southern portion of Theodore Roosevelt Island sometimes referred to as ‘Small Island’” As part of the project, officials were to build and maintain pedestrian access to Small Island.

The key was that the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Association approved the plan. Hermann Hagedorn, the association’s secretary, described it as “an excellent plan . . . a masterly compromise”:

Mr. Hagedorn, who had come to Washington from New York yesterday to fight an earlier bridge plan, stayed on as a guest at today’s luncheon-business session of the committee. One subcommittee aide quipped: “He came down to give us the dickens and stayed for lunch.”

After Senator Case reported agency agreement, the committee completed work on the bill in about 5 minutes.

The hope was that following Senate approval, the House would substitute the Senate’s two-bridge bill for Representative Broyhill’s Jones Point Bridge bill, a move that would avoid a conference committee. [Beveridge, George, “D.C. Bridge Bill Wins Approval Of Committee,” *The Evening Star*, July 29, 1954]

Star columnist John Thompson discussed how the compromise came about. Each party in the dispute, he explained, was strong enough to kill the plans of the other parties. It would take high-level compromise to reach agreement. “That’s just what has happened.”

Earlier, as reflected in the hearings, each party fought for its solution. The Roosevelt association “dealt some of the most damaging blows to the E street proposal.” Senator Case had met with association leaders in New York City to try to win their support for his original New Hampshire Avenue plan:

He failed at the time but succeeded even better than perhaps he himself knew. He had impressed the warring camps with his determination to get a downtown bridge of some sort now—not tomorrow but today.

At a subsequent NCPC meeting, General Prentiss suggested that he and Bartholomew try to work things out:

What probably cracked the impasse between the two groups was reaching accord on a proposed inner belt by which through traffic would be able to bypass or move around the central downtown area. Almost the core of the planners’ objection to an E street span had been that it would cut across their suggested inner belt instead of feeding into it. The Federal Park Service also was opposed to the District plan that the west leg of the inner belt should go through Rock Creek Park. After conferences with his staff Gen. Prentiss was able to suggest a freeway up Twenty-fourth street N.W., instead of through the park and this was close to the Twenty-third street leg the planners had been thinking about.

After working out the details, Bartholomew withdrew his objections to the low-level bridge that would miss Roosevelt Island and tie into 24th Street.

As for the District's motivation to compromise, General Prentiss felt that the highway bridge to replace the inbound trestle-topped bridge was too far upstream:

Instead of replacing the present Highway span, why not build it downstream about at Roaches Run and tie into the Southwest freeway? This sounded good to the planners.

The resulting compromise announced by Senator Case “was a major development . . . the first in many years between the traditionally warring District Building and the Planning Commission.” Thompson attributed it to “the persistence of Senator Case, the initiative of Gen. Prentiss and the willingness of Mr. Bartholomew to get together before all was lost.” [Thompson, Jr., John W., “How Did Bridge Compromise Happen?” *Metropolitan Scene, The Evening Star*, August 1, 1954]

Star editors rejoiced at the end of the “battle of the bridges.” News of the agreement was “as welcome in this area as a drought-relieving shower.” An editorial hoped that Senator Case's plan to include the compromise central area bridge in his Jones Point Bridge bill “will be successful, so that planning for the new span can be started at once.”

The agreement on the Roaches Run Bridge was more problematic:

This phase of the “peace pact” between the District and the NCPC calls for more careful study than obviously has been given to it so far. Congress some years ago vetoed the idea of a single bridge at Fourteenth street in favor of twin bridges, one of them to replace the present Highway bridge. The Roaches Run proposal would run counter to congressional intent.

Nevertheless, Senator Case “deserves praise for his mediation service,” while the other parties “have shown good sense in sitting down together and working out a solution to one of Washington's more pressing traffic-bottleneck problems.” [“End of the Central Bridge Battle,” *The Evening Star*, July 29, 1954]

The Senate approved the two-bridge bill on August 12, 1954, without discussion, and the House followed suit on August 17, again without debate. [Construction of Bridge Over Potomac River, *Congressional Record-Senate*, August 12, 1954, pages 14255-14257; Construction of Bridges Over Potomac River, *Congressional Record-House*, August 17, 1954, pages 14878-14878]

On August 30, 1954, President Eisenhower signed Public Law 83-704 on construction of bridges over the Potomac River. Title I authorized the District to construct, maintain, and operate a low-level bridge over the Potomac River “from the vicinity of Constitution Avenue in the District of Columbia to the Virginia side of the Potomac River, such bridge to be constructed north of the Memorial Bridge and south of the southern portion of Theodore Roosevelt Island sometimes referred to as ‘Small Island’,” along with approaches. The District also was to build a structure for pedestrian access from the new bridge to the “Small Island,” subject to approval by the

Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Association. The NPS would build a pedestrian bridge linked to Roosevelt Island.

The law authorized \$24.5 million from the District's highway fund for the bridge and other structures. The funds also were to cover "construction, reconstruction, and repair of all roads which are changed or made necessary" by the bridge project.

In addition, the law directed Federal Agencies controlling needed land to transfer it to the District upon the request of its commissioners for the bridge and its approach and connecting roads as shown on plans to be prepared and approved by the District commissioners and BPR.

Title II authorized \$14,925,000 from the general Treasury for the Secretary of the Interior to construct a six-lane bridge over the Potomac River in the vicinity of Jones Point:

The bridge shall be of deck girder structure with a swing span having a one-hundred-and-fifty-foot horizontal clearance above mean low water

Construction was not to begin until Maryland and Virginia had given assurances that they would construct and maintain "approaches to such bridge as will be reasonably adequate to make possible the full and efficient utilization of such bridge."

In a signing statement, President Eisenhower called title 1 "a compromise solution for the long-standing controversy as to the location of a central area bridge across the Potomac." He had signed the bill even though it "contains serious defects which should be corrected as soon as possible." Some of the defects could be corrected by Executive action, but others would require legislative action:

Title 1 of the enrolled bill, in providing for the construction of the central area bridge by the Commission of the District of Columbia, fails to provide statutory recognition and adjustment of the relationship of the bridge, together with its approaches and connecting roads, to existing and potential improvements on park lands. The bridge, with its high traffic volume, will have a serious impact on some of the most important of the National Memorials. It can affect importantly the effectiveness of the memorial concept of the Arlington Memorial Bridge, which symbolizes the reunion of the North and South and provides a monumental approach to Arlington National Cemetery. It can infringe upon the Water Gate design as a monumental entrance to the Mall from the Potomac River. Most serious of all could be the effect of the bridge on the beautiful setting of the Lincoln Memorial.

In order to minimize the possible impairment of the monumental design and artistic setting of the Lincoln Memorial and other monumental structures in that area, the Secretary of the Interior should continue to keep control and jurisdiction over all park lands in the vicinity of the bridge except the actual bridge structure and the road and street surface between curbs necessary for maintenance by the District of Columbia. The Secretary of the Interior also should be authorized to approve all plans for the bridge and the approach roads and interchanges at both ends of the bridge since park structures and

land are involved. Trucks should be prohibited on the bridge and its approaches, and all passenger-carrying buses now utilizing the Arlington Memorial Bridge should be required to use the new bridge upon its completion.

As for title II, he saw “no logical basis” for giving the Secretary of the Interior the responsibility for building the Jones Point Bridge. He recommended that Congress pass legislation to shift responsibility “for the construction, maintenance, and operation” of the bridge to the Commerce Department for construction by the Bureau of Public Roads or to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

(Public Law 84-534, which President Eisenhower signed on May 22, 1956, transferred responsibility for the project to the Secretary of Commerce. The President signed Public Law 84-535 the same day renaming the "Jones Point Bridge" the "Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge," reflecting the centennial of President Wilson's birth on December 28, 1856. BPR began construction in 1958.

(The existing authorizing statutes had not addressed operation and maintenance of the bridge. Public Law 87-358, approved by President John F. Kennedy on October 4, 1961, provided that Maryland, Virginia, and the District were to maintain and operate the new bridge, with the District’s portion of the cost not to exceed one-third of the total annual cost.

(The three jurisdictions entered into a maintenance agreement on December 18, 1961. With that issue concluded, officials dedicated the bridge on December 28, 1961, and opened it for traffic. Because the Federal laws authorizing the bridge project had not addressed ownership, BPR owned the bridge.

(For more information on this bridge, see “Why Is The Woodrow Wilson Bridge Named After Woodrow Wilson?” on this Web site at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/wrambler.cfm>)

Reopening the Central Area Bridge Debate

With the Case compromise in place, NCPC, the District Highway Department, and National Capital Parks established a three-man committee to work on details of the project:

- Douglas Brinkley – District Highway Department
- Ellis Price – NCPC
- Merel Sager – National Capital Parks

Even before President Eisenhower approved the two-bridges law, the *Star* reported on several lingering controversies about the central area bridge. One dispute was where the bridge would touch down in the District. The *Star* reported that, “Washington’s proposed ‘Twenty-fourth street bridge’ over the Potomac River . . . may turn out to be a ‘Twenty-fifth street bridge.’” Both streets were in the vicinity of Constitution Avenue, and a link to Constitution Avenue was possible as well. NCPC favored Constitution Avenue, but District highway officials were afraid “that this simply would pour more traffic into the same bottlenecks without developing entirely new approach roads.” Under the compromise worked out with Senator Case, “whichever street

is selected would then become the west leg of the proposed 'inner loop' highway around the District's downtown area." ["Central Bridge May Tie Into 25th Street," *The Evening Star*, August 18, 1954]

General Prentiss addressed the District connection on an appearance on WWDC's "Report to the People" program. He said the District might drop its opposition to a connection with Constitution Avenue if it could be closed during peak periods, with traffic forced to use 24th or 25th Street, NW. He understood the desire of planners in the Interior Department to keep traffic away from the Lincoln Memorial by moving most traffic from the Arlington Memorial Bridge onto to the new structure, leaving Arlington National Cemetery, the Lincoln Memorial, and the bridge connecting them for sightseers. However, he said, "we have got to insure the maximum use of our bridges." The District was resisting their idea of linking the new bridge to Constitution Avenue as a way of diverting it from the park area. He pointed out that the "capacity of Constitution avenue to absorb traffic" must be considered.

He acknowledged President Eisenhower's statement about prohibiting trucks on the new bridge and shifting buses from Arlington Memorial Bridge to the new structure. General Prentiss was concerned that under this "substitution" concept, still more bridges would be needed. ["Compromise May Link Bridge With Constitution Avenue," *The Sunday Star*, September 5, 1954]

One option was to widen Constitution Avenue west of 12th Street, NW. A mall-like center strip would be added on the south side of the present 80-foot wide avenue and another 80-foot roadway would be added south of the center mall. One advantage of the plan was that it would require demolition of several war-time temporary office buildings that officials had wanted to remove for many years. The temporary buildings were on the Washington Monument grounds and along both sides of the Reflecting Pool east of the Lincoln Monument. A connection between the new bridge and Constitution Avenue would be attractive to motorists currently using Arlington Memorial Bridge because it would eliminate the "headache of winding around the perpetually-clogged Lincoln Memorial circle." [Beveridge, George, "D.C. Studying Plan to Double Width of Constitution Avenue," *The Sunday Star*, September 12, 1954]

On September 17, NCPC unveiled tentative plans developed by a three-man committee consisting of Conrad Wirth, BPR's Spelman, and Leon Zach representing the Army's chief of engineers. They had developed the plan with the Brinkley-Price-Sager technicians committee established in August. Both groups acknowledged that the remaining issue of the District connection was the subject of ongoing traffic studies to determine the feasibility of widening Constitution Avenue. "My feeling," the District's Robertson said, "is that we are in general agreement on this as a tentative plan, but subject to later revision when the traffic studies are all in."

The technicians' report indicated that Arlington Memorial Bridge would continue carrying its "just traffic load" during peak periods, but the approaches to the two bridges were designed so that traffic could be "shifted from one to the other in only a few minutes." The plan included a barricade that could be imposed if traffic overloaded Constitution Avenue.

Aside from Constitution Avenue, the technicians included only one District link. The new bridge would connect to a north-south expressway just west of 25th Street, NW., that would be the western leg of the Inner Belt. The expressway would be carried over Virginia Avenue and under K Street just west of Washington Circle. The *Star* summarized other details:

Southward, the new expressway would follow the present road beside the Lincoln Memorial's Watergate steps to tie into Independence Avenue and Ohio Drive. The technicians said this would require widening the Watergate road and the arches of the Memorial bridge. But they favored it over other proposals, just as costly, to tunnel under the steps or build a new roadway over the river edge.

Virginia-bound traffic on Twenty-third Street N.W. and the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway would have access only to the Memorial Bridge. Westbound Constitution Avenue traffic could use either bridge—getting to Memorial via a new wide-arc ramp connecting with Twenty-third Street.

On the Virginia side of the river, Washington-bound motorists would have less choice about the bridge they would use. The new bridge, for example, would take motorists only from Arlington Boulevard, southbound lanes of the George Washington Memorial Parkway and from Jeff Davis Highway. Motorists from the south—using Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, Shirley Highway via Washington Boulevard or the Pentagon roads—would be able to connect only to Memorial Bridge.

(The Watergate was a performance area during warmer months when a barge would hold performers before as many as 12,000 people who sat on the steps and surrounding areas. The concerts ended in the mid-1960s because they were disrupted by noise from frequent jets using Washington National Airport. However, the name survived in the Watergate complex of buildings.)

NCPC approved the Wirth-Spelman-Zach plan, subject to resolution of the Constitution Avenue issue. Bartholomew complimented District and Federal officials who had so quickly reached agreement on the main bridge feature. [Beveridge, George, "Detailed Plans For Downtown Bridge Unveiled," *The Evening Star*, September 17, 1954]

On October 19, the three-man technicians committee presented their plan to the Wirth-Spelman-Zach committee, which secured NCPC approval on November 6 for the plan for handling traffic leaving the bridge in the District. Beveridge, in the *Star*, summarized the three main features of the plan:

1. New three-lane roads would be built paralleling the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool to carry traffic to and from the Lincoln Memorial Circle and around the Washington Monument to connect with existing Mall roads east of Fifteenth Street N.W.
2. These new roads would serve only the Arlington Memorial Bridge, but would be capable of handling all the rush hour traffic using the bridge. They would require demolition of the Navy and Munitions Buildings on Constitution Avenue and other tempos [sic] on the Monument Grounds and south of the Memorial Reflecting Pool.

3. The new Constitution avenue bridge, located about 1,200 feet upriver from Memorial Bridge, would connect directly with Constitution avenue. It also would route traffic southward to Independence avenue and northward on a proposed “Twenty-fifth street expressway” to feed such east-west streets as E, H, and I.

By giving each bridge its own traffic escape valves, the problem was solved to every one’s satisfaction.

The roadways paralleling the Reflecting Pool would be 38 feet wide, with 14th and 12th Street, NW., underpassing the roadways while 15th Street would be realigned.

The plan satisfied park officials, Beveridge explained, “because it develops the Mall roads to their original purpose of carrying motorists in a ‘park-like’ setting from the Capitol all the way to the Lincoln Memorial Bridge. [sic]” The report before NCPC stated:

The removal of the temporary office buildings built on the Washington Monument grounds and on both sides of the reflecting pool will make it possible to complete this part of the central motif of the Nation’s Capital.

The new bridge opposite Constitution avenue would take much of the traffic now being handled by the Arlington Memorial Bridge and that bridge could then be returned to its originally planned use and could still take a good share of the morning and evening rush-hour traffic involving downtown east of Fourteenth street.

With NCPC’s agreement, the District planned to begin design work on the new Constitution Avenue Bridge. [Beveridge, George, “Bridge Accord Clears Way to Draw Up Plans,” *The Evening Star*, November 6, 1954]

Although the key actors in the long running dispute over a central area bridge had reached agreement, other parties with a say in the matter had not been involved in the meeting with Senator Case at the Cosmos Club.

In October, the Commission of Fine Arts reversed course. It had helped kill the 24th Street Bridge because it would cross Roosevelt Island. Now, the commission members concluded that a crossing of the island was preferable to the impact of the congressionally authorized bridge on the Lincoln Memorial grounds, the National Mall, Arlington Memorial Bridge, and Arlington National Cemetery. As Beveridge put it, members considered the area “one of the most carefully-planned beauty areas of the world.” The commission members “feel the new bridge, which has no esthetic part in the scene, would dominate it and detract from the view from any vantage point.”

A member of the commission, Joseph Hudnut of Dover, Massachusetts, a former Harvard University Professor of Architecture, put the commission’s view in a letter to the *Star*. If additional lanes were needed, he argued, they should be carried across the river in a tunnel financed by the Federal Government. Asked by Beveridge if any other option were acceptable, Professor Hudnut said the commission had discussed the “two-span bridge across the upper part of Roosevelt Island.” He quickly added that the only “real answer” was a tunnel:

But Dr. Hudnut said such an island crossing as be described “would not do nearly the damage” that the approved bridge would to esthetic values of the Lincoln Memorial and the monumental parks and structures that surround it.

As Beveridge pointed out, the Fine Arts Commission’s opposition to the bridge was not a surprise since it had testified before Congress on the subject. What was a surprise was that it now preferred a crossing of Roosevelt Island if a tunnel could not be substituted for the bridge. [Hudnut, Joseph, “Bridge Question Revived,” Letters to the Star, *The Sunday Star*, October 3, 1954; Beveridge, George, “Fine Arts Unit May Ask Island Site for Bridge,” *The Sunday Star*, October 3, 1954]

The Committee of 100 for the Federal City also had not been present at the Cosmos Club meeting. On November 2, the committee adopted a resolution calling on NCPC for a careful, detailed study to pick a new site for the 24th Street bridge upriver from Arlington Memorial Bridge. Members were concerned that the bridge, which would be visible from the Lincoln Memorial grounds, would, as one member put it, mar the “full emotional significance” of the memorial.

Elbert Peets, landscape architect of the Fine Arts Commission, argued that a crossing over the north end of Roosevelt Island would be a better choice, although a tunnel would be preferable. As planned, the 24th Street bridge would mar the view of visitors to the island. He called it a “tragic situation.”

General Grant, who also had helped block the E Street Bridge, argued that Roosevelt Island was the “wrong place” for the structure. He favored NCPC’s plan for the Roaches Run Bridge and thought it should have priority. “If it turns out that there is need for another bridge farther upriver, let the next generation take care of it.” The committee considered endorsing the Roaches Run Bridge, but was discouraged from doing so by AAA’s Washington I. Cleveland. He told the committee, “There isn’t a ghost of a chance for that location at this time.” [“New Study Is Urged to Change Site for Central Area Bridge,” *The Evening Star*, November 3, 1954]

Although bridge opponents suggested a tunnel would address their aesthetic issues, the cost of a tunnel remained a concern. Representative Broyhill asked Ralph Smillie, a consultant engineer involved in tunnel projects in New York City, for a cost estimate. Smillie concluded that a tunnel would cost approximately \$73 million. He added that he would not support a tunnel because merging traffic lanes in a tunnel would invite disasters, fires, and explosions. The high cost, traffic considerations, and the length of time needed to build a tunnel argued against the idea. [“Fine Arts Unit To Weight River Crossing Site,” *The Evening Star*, November 10, 1954]

In July, just before agreement had been reached on the Potomac River bridges, NCPC hired Wilbur Smith and Associates to study future Potomac River bridges in the Washington area. The study was to indicate general locations and traffic volumes expected in 10-15 years. It would also consider population growth, employment trends, and residential development. [“Planners Hire Firm to Study Need of Potomac Bridges,” *The Evening Star*, July 28, 1954]

The firm released its report in December. The report recommended immediate construction of several facilities, including the Inner Loop expressway around the center of town, with priority for the Southwest Freeway segment. District highway officials were working on the loop, including traffic studies, location of grade separations, and cost estimates. According to Highway Director Robertson, previous estimates indicated the entire loop would cost \$130 million. Under present funding levels, construction would take 10-12 years, but the city wanted to begin construction on a bridge first.

As a second priority, the Wilbur Smith report identified a central area bridge as needed, but in what the *Star* called “the report’s biggest surprise,” questioned whether projected traffic would best be served by building the bridge at Constitution Avenue as authorized by the law, or over the Three Sisters Islands upriver from Key Bridge. The District was preparing a contract for preliminary engineering of the authorized bridge.

The consultants did not choose among the two proposed bridges, saying the Constitution Avenue Bridge would be “better adapted” to trips downtown while the Three Sisters location “appears to have better long-range planning possibilities,” particularly in view of projects included in Virginia’s as-yet-unfunded plans. The *Star* summarized the report’s comparison:

Three Sisters is the only proposed bridge that would give good connections between Virginia and outer Northeast Washington. But to make adequate connections to the inner-loop it would require very expensive connections.

Constitution avenue would give direct access to the central area. But it would create problems on Washington streets, generate restrictive traffic volumes on already crowded Arlington boulevard and involve esthetic values in the Lincoln Memorial area.

Noting that the Commission of Fine Arts preferred a tunnel to a bridge for aesthetic reasons, the report said of the tunnel option:

This type of facility would be very costly and would, because of grade, preclude contact with the inner loop. All traffic would tend to be unduly concentrated on Constitution avenue. Extensive approach roadways would be required.

Further, among immediate needs, the report gave priority to improving District streets before building the central area bridge:

Coincident with the improvement of existing bridges, and their approaches, and taking precedence over the construction of new crossings, it is essential that additional street capacity be provided on the Washington side of the river.

Roadways are currently taxed during peak hours and cannot accommodate the additional loadings which would result from increased bridge capacity.

The concern was that the bridge would open before the Inner Loop Freeway, thus compounding congestion on the local streets that would have to carry the traffic.

On the issue of timing, General Prentiss told reporters the plan was to open the Inner Loop before the bridge, but not necessarily to full freeway standards:

We plan to have the loop ultimately built to limited-access characteristics and consultants are studying it. I've asked them to plan the ultimate development and also to give us an interim plan. For some parts of the loop, for example, we've been talking in terms of using existing streets with parking banned temporarily.

We can't just sit back until we build the belt to its ultimate. I want to see the money spent as judiciously as possible to develop the most critical parts of the loop and the most critical intersections, and to use existing pairs of streets until we have money to go further.

Third, the report recommended replacing the trestle-topped bridge and widening the approach roads to the 14th Street Bridge completed in 1950. The report did not specify where the trestle replacement would be, but under the District-NCPC agreement, it would be built downriver from the existing 14th Street Bridge near Roaches Run. It would carry one-way northbound traffic while the existing bridge would carry southbound traffic.

The fourth immediate need was to increase the capacity of Key Bridge up to 15 percent by removing streetcar tracks and moving the sidewalk off the bridge proper. These changes would allow the District to add two traffic lanes. The report also recommended improving the District approaches by, for example, building a grade separation structure at M Street. Robertson indicated the city was preparing to make these changes.

Finally, the report recommended immediate improvements to the approaches on both sides of Arlington Memorial Bridge to increase automobile capacity by 10 percent. The NPS, which was responsible for the Virginia approaches, had not planned any changes. In the District, highway officials and NCPC had agreed on a plan for improving traffic flow in the vicinity of the Lincoln Memorial.

The report also recommended bridge projects that should be under construction by 1960:

- A six-lane Roaches Run Bridge downriver from the 14th Street railroad span;
- Improved approaches to Chain Bridge by improving Canal Road;
- Construct a four-lane bridge at Jones Point.

By 1965, a replacement bridge would be needed at Cabin John, Maryland, as part of the outer loop beltway. Maryland and Virginia had conducted traffic studies for the bridge, but did not have funds for construction. ["Planners Consider Consolidated Area Development Data," *The Evening Star*, December 4, 1954; Beveridge, George, "Bridge Report Proposals Win D.C. Approval," *The Evening Star*, December 5, 1954]

As 1954 neared an end, Webb and Knapp reopened discussions with NCPC about reconstructing 10th Street as a wide, mall-like "grand entrance" to the District's redeveloped southwest quadrant, free of heavy through traffic. Under the developer's plan, 10th Street would be a divided street

from Maine Avenue along the Washington Channel to Independence Avenue south of the National Mall. The plan included a roadway east under Independence Avenue to 9th Street. Fourteenth Street would be a one-way expressway from Maine Avenue to Constitution Avenue, carried under the National Mall in a tunnel. To avoid heavy through traffic, 10th Street would not be connected by interchange with the planned Southwest Freeway.

In a letter to NCPC's Bartholomew, Zeckendorf suggested ways of handling traffic without including 10th Street as a major artery and requested formal approval of principles for other elements of the redevelopment plan that NCPC had indicated it supported. Bartholomew reconstituted the Wirth, Spelman, and Zack committee to consider the proposals. [Beveridge, George, "Webb & Knapp Offers 3 plans For Southwest," *The Evening Star*, December 21, 1954; "Webb & Knapp Calls For Mall Policy Decision," *The Evening Star*, December 22, 1954]

Ole Singstad's Views

On January 8, 1955, Representative Broyhill revealed that the NPS had asked Ole Singstad, a well-known bridge and tunnel expert based in New York City, to consider whether a tunnel would be a feasible alternative to a bridge in the vicinity of the Lincoln Memorial. In New York City, he had designed the ventilation system for the Holland Tunnel and completed the tunnel project after the death of chief engineer Clifford M. Holland. He designed the Lincoln, Brooklyn-Battery, and the Queen-Midtown Tunnels. His firm had designed the Big Walker Mountain Tunnel in Virginia and the Baltimore Harbor Tunnel as well as tunnels in other countries.

Wirth had agreed to the compromises negotiated by Senator Case the previous July. However, he agreed with the Fine Arts Commission's doubts about the aesthetic impact of the Constitution Avenue Bridge that Congress had authorized.

The District had rejected the tunnel idea several times, in part because of cost and because of the difficulty of connecting the tunnel with its approaches. Now, highway officials expected to approve a contract soon to prepare detailed plans for the bridge. Representative Broyhill understood the District's thinking on the matter but said:

I'm in entire accord with this further exploration of the tunnel idea. But I'm not optimistic about the possibility because of the problems involved. At the same time, this will not delay plans already under way for the bridge. [Beveridge, George, "Expert Asked for Views on Potomac Tunnel," *The Evening Star*, January 9, 1955]

In a telephone interview with George Beveridge, Singstad revealed that he had been studying the matter for several weeks at the request of the District Chapter of the National Society of Professional Engineers, which had adopted a position in support of a tunnel on November 16, 1954. "Don't expect a complete and final report. But I'm not discouraged about the prospects of a tunnel, and I'll be in Washington to exchange views." Although a tunnel would present "complex problems, especially on the Virginia side of the river, I don't see anything insuperable about it as far as I've gone." [Beveridge, George, "Expert to Back Practicality of Tunnel Here," *The Evening Star*, January 11, 1955]

Singstad was in Washington on January 15 for a meeting at the Interior Department with representatives of about 30 Federal and District agencies and private organizations. He rejected the District's estimate that a tunnel would cost \$80-90 million as "absolutely fantastic—just baloney." He expected a much lower cost, but could not provide a specific figure until he had studied the conditions of rock and mud that the tunnel would fit into. Those conditions would determine the feasibility of a tunnel as well as what it would cost, which also would be affected by whether the tunnel carried four or six lanes of traffic.

He had developed a plan to address the District's concern about the difficulty of connecting a tunnel with roads on either side of the tunnel. In his rough scheme, the tunnel would be built under the river bottom only for the length of the navigation channel. It would then begin a 5-percent grade rise to emerge on Columbia Island, just off the Virginia shore, to begin above-ground connections with Arlington Boulevard, Jefferson Davis Highway, and the George Washington Memorial Parkway. The District links, which he had not developed, would be less difficult.

Singstad said that the District's borings for the bridge would provide some of the information he needed about underwater conditions, but he would need a "super-sonic sounding device" to complete cost estimates. The NPS was looking for the device. Wirth said, "I'm very pleased and encouraged by all this. I just hope everyone will be reasonable enough to wait until all the facts are in."

Chairman David E. Finley of the Fine Arts Commission said that Singstad's preliminary report was "very reassuring" based on the group's concerns about the bridge option. At the same time, however, he was concerned that the tunnel's tall ventilating towers would have a negative aesthetic impact.

During this period, the District had a new engineer commissioner, Colonel Thomas A. Lane. He had taken office on December 10, 1954, replacing General Prentiss who assumed command of the Engineer Center at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. Colonel Lane had been commissioned in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1928, serving during World War II and had entered Japan in 1945 with the occupying forces. In 1950, he became District Engineer of the Okinawa District, a post he held for 2 years. He said his work on Okinawa most closely paralleled what he expected to do in the District. On Okinawa, "we built a complete community from scratch for more than \$200 million, including highways, harbor improvements, power plants and housing." His position before becoming engineer commissioner was engineer of the Army Field Forces at Fort Monroe, Virginia. Colonel Lane's address was 3915 Livingston Street, NW., in the District's Chevy Chase neighborhood near the Maryland State line. [Giles, John A., "Gen. Prentiss Named to Head Engineer Center," *The Evening Star*, November 24, 1954]

Colonel Lane did not attend the Interior Department meeting but based on an earlier briefing, said that the data presented thus far "wasn't sufficient, certainly, for us to start thinking seriously about a tunnel instead of a bridge." [Beveridge, George, "Expert Assails \$80-90 Million Tunnel Figure," *The Evening Star*, January 16, 1955]

On January 19, 1955, National Capital Parks officials conducted the sonar tests Singstad had requested. In “Operation Sonar,” they mounted the device on a World War II-era amphibious DUKW (usually referred to as Duck) borrowed from the Beach Erosion Board and passed over the Potomac River several times upriver from the Arlington Memorial Bridge. On the Virginia side, the route ended near the north end of Columbia Island where the tunnel would link with Arlington Boulevard. The route swerved on the District side to line up with Constitution Avenue. [Beveridge, George, “River Bottom Tested by Sonar To Learn Feasibility of Tunnel,” *The Evening Star*, January 19, 1955]

Singstad presented his report to NCPC on February 4. A four-lane tunnel at Constitution Avenue could be built for \$25 million; a six-lane tunnel, for \$35.8 million. These costs covered only the tunnel, not approach changes. The Operation Sonar data gave him “far more information than is usual when an engineer is called upon to make a preliminary estimate.” He favored the four-lane tunnel option, but provided the six-lane estimate because the proposed tunnel was intended to replace a six-lane bridge.

District highway officials quickly discounted Singstad’s figures. They said the cost of approach structures would be \$17 million. Since a six-lane tunnel would be needed, the total cost would be over \$52 million. Congress, they said, would have to be induced to authorize funds to make up the difference in the cost of the bridge and tunnel. [“Singstad Estimates 4-Lane Tunnel Cost as \$25 Million,” *The Evening Star*, February 4, 1955]

In an editorial, the *Star* predicted that Congress would be interested in Singstad’s estimates, but asked:

Who is going to pay the extra cost of a tunnel, the main purpose of which is said by the Fine Arts Commission to be avoidance of “conflict” with the Lincoln Memorial and the Memorial Bridge? Obviously, the District should not be asked to pay the bill for this esthetic enterprise. Which prompts another question: Just what is esthetically wrong with the idea of building another attractively designed bridge over the Potomac in the central area? A properly designed bridge can be a monumental asset to any city, as well as a utilitarian structure. [“Tunnel Versus Bridge,” *The Evening Star*, February 5, 1955]

The 10th Street Mall

NCPC’s three-man committee reported on February 4 that it rejected the 10th Street Mall that Webb and Knapp favored for its southwest redevelopment plan. The committee would recommend shifting the 300-foot wide mall to 9th Street. Tenth Street was needed for heavy traffic going through southwest from the Potomac River bridges and the new freeway in the F Street corridor.

Zeckendorf’s firm had chosen 10th Street for its grand entrance partly because it could easily pass over the existing Pennsylvania Railroad tracks that rose sharply to the east. The three-man committee answered this concern by proposing to move the tracks underground near D Street between 4th and 12th Streets or simply build the 9th Street mall over the existing tracks.

The committee's report indicated that its plan could "readily adapt itself [to] any proposal for redevelopment of the Southwest area," adding:

It was also evident from these studies that the successful redevelopment . . . did not depend upon a mall specifically located at Tenth street: however, it does depend upon proper handling of the abnormal traffic that must traverse this area.

The report assumed construction of the Roaches Run Bridge across the Potomac River and Washington Channel to touch down in line with 10th Street. The *Star's* Beveridge described the committee's plan:

Their plan showed Tenth street as the major Southwest street for through north-south traffic, with a big traffic interchange at Tenth and the F street freeway. Tenth would be a single street as far north as D street. Then it would separate widely to Independence avenue, with north bound lanes connecting to Ninth street and southbound lanes connecting from Twelfth.

Both Ninth and Twelfth would underpass roads on the city's main east-west mall, providing non-stop expressways all the way to Constitution avenue.

The committee's report stated that a grand entrance at 9th Street would have a "much longer, gradual approach to the waterfront" and would permit adequate service for through traffic on other existing streets. It would leave the produce market in place and accommodate the Smithsonian Institution, which was planning a National Air Museum at 10th and Independence. The Smithsonian plan was in direct conflict with the Zeckendorf redevelopment plan. [Beveridge, George, "Tentative Approval Given by Planners to S.W. Mall Revision," *The Evening Star*, February 4, 1955]

The *WPA Guide* described the produce market:

Washington's water front, along Maine Avenue east of 14th Street, SW., on the north bank of the Washington Channel, is, after the ponderous monumentality of the Mall and the impounded elegance of posted parks, a realm of welcome small things and the reassuring clutter generated by humans going about their essential business. The buildings are modest, inclined to dinginess, and take character from the kind of merchandise that is handled in them There are excellent sea-food restaurants, wholesale and retail markets for fish, poultry, vegetables, and groceries, yacht clubs, yacht brokers, boat chandlers—in short, the water front, apart from the potentially lethal truck traffic, is probably just about as Pierre L'Enfant visualized it.

Immediately east of 14th Street, Maine Avenue dips under southbound railroad tracks separating Washington Channel from the Tidal Basin. In this blind end of the Channel are Government-built slips, complete with fresh-water and electrical outlets, which can be rented by owners of self-propelled craft. Across Maine Avenue from the public wharves are a series of busy wholesale markets where barrels, sacks, baskets, and boxes are perpetually shifted by stevedores from trucks into high piles, into warehouses and out

again. Immediately east of the public wharves are fish markets, where the customer may name it and get it fresh. Or he may go out on the whitewashed wharf and bargain first hand for "SALTY WATER OYSTERS AND CLAMS" with fishermen who hawk from the decks of their boats, and who offer samples of raw oysters shucked on the spot. [*WPA Guide*, page 324]

Zeckendorf agreed to study the committee's proposal, but added in a statement that if the plan could not be reconciled with the principles behind the Webb and Knapp plan, "We shall regretfully be forced to withdraw" from the southwest redevelopment. Except for "paramount reasons," if the principles could not be carried out, the development plan would become "purely academic." ["Planner Agreed To Study New Mall Proposal," *The Evening Star*, February 5, 1955]

In March, the consulting firm of DeLeuw, Cather completed a southwest traffic study for the District. Based on traffic projections for 1980, the firm recommended that the main north-south routes for heavy traffic through the southwest should be 9th Street for southbound traffic and 12th Street for northbound traffic. Tenth Street would be reserved for Zeckendorf's 10th Street Mall. The consultants recommended replacing the trestle-topped bridge with a structure slightly upriver from its present location.

Based on traffic projections for 1980, DeLeuw, Cather dismissed NCPC's favored Roaches Run Bridge. The consultants did not rule out the bridge; they said "no plan should be so inflexible that it cannot be modified to accommodate unforeseen developments." However "if and when" the bridge were built, it should not connect with the Inner Loop, but lead directly into redeveloped southwest.

The Southwest Freeway would continue over the Washington Channel from 12th Street, cross diagonally over West Potomac Park, and connect with two one-way Potomac River bridges near 14th Street. The freeway would contain eight lanes, not the planned six lanes. Within the District, the freeway would continue along Ohio Drive (instead of Independence Avenue as NCPC preferred) toward the Lincoln Memorial to complete the south leg of the Inner Loop. Using Independence Avenue for the freeway extension, although favored by NCPC, was impractical in the view of Deleuw, Cather. It would "require that substantial areas be taken from the Washington Monument grounds, the lawn bordering the Reflecting Pool and from the Tidal Basin."

To resolve the dispute on the grand entrance to the new southwest, President Eisenhower had asked George A. Garrett, president of the Federal City Council, to meet with the parties. (In 1954, 50 business and civic leaders formed the Federal City Council to provide citizen leadership whenever needed to promote civil development projects and attack problems threatening the economy and development of the Nation's capital. They selected Garrett, an investment banker and former ambassador to Ireland, to be the council's first president. ["Federal City Council Registers Charter, Prepares to Aid D.C.," *The Evening Star*, September 13, 1954; "Garrett, Investment Banker, Heads Federal City Council," *The Evening Star*, November 16, 1954]

Garrett had met with Zeckendorf on March 23. Zeckendorf, Garrett reported, was working on plans to resolve the controversy in time for NCPC's April 7 meeting. [Beveridge, George, "New Highway Plan For Southwest Gets Federal Study Today," *The Evening Star*, March 24, 1955; "Report Denies Roaches Run Span Needed," *The Evening Star*, April 7, 1955]

Somewhat surprisingly, NCPC voted "tentative approval" of Zeckendorf's 10th Street Mall in April, reversing NCPC's tentative approval in February of a plan that retained 10th Street as a major traffic route. The vote, with four members absent, including Bartholomew, came after a report by BPR's Spelman on behalf of the Wirth committee on the issue:

Key points in the planners' approval were that the new plan does far less damage than earlier proposals to the wholesale produce market center on the waterfront and does not preclude eventual construction of a Roaches Run bridge—a pet planning commission project.

The plan calls for the Tenth street mall to be angled slightly eastward from Tenth as it approaches the waterfront, ending in a wide circular "overlook" atop Maine avenue and the Washington Channel.

Several problems remained. One was that the plan would divide the area where the Smithsonian Institution planned to build its National Air Museum south of Independence Avenue near 10th Street. Others included Zeckendorf's plan to add 6,000 to 7,000 more Federal workers to the area than NCPC had proposed in its comprehensive plan. Spelman said the committee had not considered the possibility that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) also was considering a southwest location that would add as many as 10,000 more workers.

Garrett said that NCPC's action was "a great encouragement to me and to the Federal City Council." Zeckendorf also appreciated the tentative approval. He said his firm looked forward "to continued reconciliation of any divergent details which may remain to be worked out toward realization of a definite comprehensive plan." [Beveridge, George, "Key Proposal Of Zeckendorf Is Accepted," *The Evening Star*, April 9, 1955]

Wilbur Smith and Associates, NCPC's consultants, reported on May 5 that the Roaches Run Bridge was needed, although not necessarily right away. The 14th Street bridge provided convenient access to the downtown area, but handled only 38 percent of total peak hour traffic. "The limitations of available bridge capacity are clear." With volumes expected to reach over 390,000 trips a day, the Roaches Run Bridge would serve as a "Southwest portal" and, combined with the 14th Street bridge, accommodate 37 percent of that traffic.

Like the DeLeuw Cather study, the new Smith study saw the Roaches Run Bridge as a future need, not a current one. District officials agreed. Director Robertson said he would not object to the bridge "if it becomes necessary in the future."

That same day, NCPC approved the District's plan to proceed to detailed design of the eight-lane Southwest Freeway between South Capitol Street and 9th Street, SW. Several critical issues, including the dispute between Zeckendorf and the Smithsonian Institution over the 10th Street

mall, remained to be decided at NCPC's June meeting. However, the Roaches Run Bridge continued to be a sticking point as the District presented its plan for the Inner Loop Expressway as proposed by DeLeuw Cather and Company. Beveridge summarized:

Charles DeLeuw, explaining his plan, said the loop expressway was drawn to meet 1980 traffic estimates and contemplates a new Potomac River bridge at Constitution avenue. He said he wouldn't argue that a Roaches Run bridge might never be needed. But he contended the loop expressway, big as it is, "could not handle traffic from any other bridge in any location" in 1980.

Mr. DeLeuw proposed that the loop system be six lanes wide except for four lanes along Ohio Drive from Fourteenth street to Lincoln Memorial; eight lanes between South Capitol and Fourteenth street S.W., and eight lanes on the north leg east of New York avenue.

The firm's report estimated that the Ohio Drive expressway leg of the Inner Loop would cost \$13 million, compared with \$17.2 million for NCPC's proposed substitute of an Independence Avenue leg. [Beveridge, George, "Planners Add Up Facts To Speed S.W. Project," *The Evening Star*, May 6, 1955]

Bridge Versus Tunnel

By March, top Eisenhower Administration officials were studying the bridge-versus-tunnel issue for the Constitution Avenue Bridge in the vicinity of the Lincoln Memorial. A White House spokesman said the tunnel was under study, but the issue had not yet been presented to President Eisenhower. Engineer Commissioner Lane said that if the President approved the tunnel, the District would not object on one condition: that the Federal Government pick up the difference in cost:

I don't believe the Board of Commissioners has ever taken a position on the question. But as one member, I'd say that as long as the facility were [sic] equally useful for traffic and meant no additional cost to the District, I'd certainly have no objection to it.

Representative Broyhill agreed that "the extra cost should not be charged to the District." He added, "I don't believe the House District Committee would stand for higher costs being levied against the city." ["Tunnel Acceptance By D.C. Indicated If U.S. Pays Extra Cost," *The Evening Star*, March 18, 1955]

In early March, the *Star* revealed that Maryland, Virginia, the District, and BPR had hired Wilbur Smith and Associates to study the feasibility of charging tolls on Potomac River bridges. The \$15,000 study was to consider existing bridges and those bridges the consultant thought were "likely to be required" based on

- Projected 1970 traffic volumes;
- Traffic volumes and toll revenue;

- Traffic and toll estimates and “the rate of retirement of such costs through the collection of tolls”;
- The use of special license plates to give “special rate privileges to commuters; and
- Whether individual planned bridges could be financed through toll collection.

The three jurisdictions and BPR decided on the study after conferences to discuss financial responsibility for the cost of several planned bridges.

The *Star* pointed out that Wilbur Smith and Associates had studied tolls for Virginia in 1953, taking “an extremely dim view of toll prospects here”:

Citing “administrative and political obstacles,” the 1953 report said there appeared to be “little hope unless a plan can be devised whereby tolls could be imposed on all of the river-crossings.” It also said the inter-jurisdictional problems would be so complex they “would likely be unworkable.”

. . . Some toll proposals affecting major bridges here, it is felt, would be certain to raise a storm of controversy. One argument is whether tourists should have to pay to get access to the Nation’s Capital. Any suggestion of tolls affecting Arlington Memorial Bridge also would be a red-hot issue.

Although Congress has never taken a position on tolling the bridges, officials “felt the possibilities should at least be explored”:

Aside from policy, some officials are worried about space considerations. They question whether existing spans, particularly, would have sufficient space for installation of toll gates. Two or three lanes of gate space are needed for each lane of bridge space, these officials said. [Beveridge, George, “Survey Made on Feasibility of Tolls for Potomac Bridges,” *The Evening Star*, March 6, 1955]

Representative Broyhill, learning of the study, told reporters the study was a “ridiculous . . . waste of the taxpayers’ money.” The idea of imposing tolls on citizens to visit the Nation’s capital was “an affront to every one of them.” He would vigorously oppose the idea. [Beveridge, George, “Broyhill Calls Study of Tolls on Bridges ‘Ridiculous Waste,’” *The Evening Star*, March 20, 1955]

In May, the *Star* summarized the consultant’s conclusion: “Prospects of tolls on Potomac River bridges, never exactly bright, appeared even dimmer today, after a preliminary discussion of the financial feasibility.” As a practical matter, tolls were not feasible if they were charged on some, but not all the bridges. Even the outer bridges (Jones Point and Cabin John) would not carry enough traffic to pay for themselves through tolls. They were, however, the only ones the consultant seriously considered. However, for tolls to be feasible, all the bridges would have to charge tolls. Even Arlington Memorial Bridge, despite the lack of space for toll plazas at the Lincoln Memorial or Arlington National Cemetery that would “not appear intrusive,” would have to be a toll bridge or motorists would use it to avoid tolls on the other crossings. [Beveridge, George, “Consultant Doubtful Over Prospects of Potomac Bridge Tolls,” *The Evening Star*,

March 15, 1955; Beveridge, George, "Tolls on Bypass Bridges Seem Doomed by Survey," *The Evening Star*, May 1, 1955]

As NCPC prepared to meet on April 7 to decide on the tunnel option, the Bureau of the Budget was pressing for a decision. Under the compromise worked out by Senator Case, NCPC was on record supporting the Constitution Avenue Bridge authorized by law. However, the Interior Department was working on legislation to amend the law to substitute the tunnel and authorize \$28 million in Federal funds to pay the additional cost to the District. The Budget Bureau wanted a decision by April 15 from the District commissioners, NCPC, and the Commission of Fine Arts.

At its closed-door April 7 meeting, NCPC received the special committee report on the issue. The report stated:

The objections which have been urged to the bridge are based upon esthetic grounds. Your committee believes that from a general planning and service standpoint, either the bridge or the tunnel will be suitable.

The committee has not attempted to pass upon the question as to whether the esthetic advantages of a tunnel . . . are worth the large increase in cost involved.

The committee believed the approach roads for the six-lane tunnel option would operate suitably, although the tunnel would have only 90 percent of the traffic capacity of the bridge.

During the meeting, Colonel Lane reportedly attempted to force NCPC to decide between the bridge and tunnel options. That did not happen, as the *Star* explained:

The farthest the Federal planners would go . . . was to "accept" a committee report saying that, from "a general planning and service standpoint, either the bridge or the tunnel will be suitable" . . . Mr. Bartholomew made it plain to reporters, meanwhile, that the planners believe a new bridge at Roaches Run – downriver from existing Fourteenth street spans – would be better than either a bridge or tunnel in the Lincoln Memorial area.

Asked if there was concern that a tunnel would provide only 90 per cent of the Constitution avenue's bridge capacity, he said he feels too much traffic is being brought into that area anyway. "We believe a Roaches Run and Fourteenth street bridges would handle enough traffic that it is not necessary to worry about squeezing every bit of capacity in that (Lincoln Memorial) area," he said.

NCPC planned to send a letter to the Budget Bureau, but would not release its contents to reporters following the meeting. However, the *Star* reported that the reply would point out that:

- The commission already has approved a traffic plan for the bridge.
- The commission will be glad to consider a specific tunnel plan if one is submitted.
- The question of whether the Federal Government should pay as much as \$28 million because of esthetic considerations involved is basically one for the Federal Fine Arts Commission and Congress to decide. [Beveridge, George, "Quick Answer By Planners

on Tunnel Asked,” *The Evening Star*, April 7, 1955; “Planning Group Avoids Firm Stand on Tunnel,” *The Evening Star*, April 8, 1955]

On May 6, the White House held a conference to discuss the bridge-versus-tunnel question for the Constitution Avenue crossing of the Potomac River. Participants included Bartholomew, Robertson, Wirth, District Commissioner Samuel Spencer, Finley of the Fine Arts Commission, Ambassador Grew of the Roosevelt association, and Rowland Hughes, director of the Budget Bureau. Officials conferred for 40 minutes with former Governor Sherman Adams, the presidential assistant who served informally as President Eisenhower’s chief of staff.

After the conference, the White House’s assistant press secretary, Murray Snyder, issued a statement:

There was no decision reached but a committee consisting of Commissioner Spencer as chairman, and Mr. Wirth and Mr. Bartholomew was set up to work with the Bureau of the Budget in developing the Government’s position on whether this should be a bridge or a tunnel. In other words, to iron out whatever differences there are and reach a conclusion. [“Three Named to Settle Bridge-or-Tunnel Issue,” *The Evening Star*, May 6, 1955]

The District asked the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for a permit to build the low-level Constitution Avenue Bridge with an immovable span. Colonel Ray Adams of the Corps’ Washington District, took testimony in early May not only on the Constitution Avenue Bridge but on whether opening of the existing Potomac River moveable bridges should be stopped. He estimated that review of the testimony would take several months.

The District Highway Department favored permanent closure of the bridges, in part to save money on operations. The District also calculated that if the new bridge were built with a draw span, the change would add \$1.9 million to the construction cost and cost about \$109,000 a year for operation. BPR and AAA testified in support.

Several businesses testified against permanent closure. A representative of Spentonbush Fuel Transportation Services, Inc., said that his company made 132 trips between Norfolk and Rosslyn, Virginia, to provide oil to American Oil Company (best known for its Amoco service stations). The shipments could not be made by barge; fixed spans “definitely would mean our tank operation would cease.” American Oil estimated that shipping the oil entirely by truck would increase costs by about 18 cents a barrel.

The District Fire Department also opposed permanent closure of movable spans. Deputy Chief Fred Litteral said it was “very essential” that fireboats be able to pass the bridges to reach Georgetown industries along the waterfront. [“Closing Drawspans of All Potomac Bridges Studied,” *The Evening Star*, May 11, 1955]

The White House-appointed committee, which was expected to complete its report in early June, was unable to reach a decision. On June 2, Commissioner Spencer, the chairman, said he had told Governor Adams that the committee could not agree and would not submit a report on the subject. Despite the committee’s failure, Spencer was hoping for an early decision by the Budget

Bureau. ["No Agreement Reached Yet on Bridge or Tunnel," *The Evening Star*, June 3, 1955; "D.C. Seeks 'Yes' or 'No' On Bridge vs. Tunnel," *The Evening Star*, June 5, 1955]

After the committee failed, Representative Broyhill wrote to President Eisenhower urging him to decide the issue in favor of immediate construction of the bridge. He did not "concur in the fear . . . that a bridge would mar the beauty of the Nation's capital." He added that the possibility that Congress would approve a tunnel that would far exceed the cost of a bridge was "highly improbable." Congress was "friendly to the bridge idea," he said:

The mood of economy is merely a reflection of your own policies to cut Government spending to achieve a balanced budget and a reduction in the heavy tax load.

With the Senate about to begin hearings on the District's budget, now was "an excellent opportunity to obtain money for the project." Therefore, he wrote:

I request that you give immediate attention to this problem and that you direct the Bureau of the Budget to submit to Congress as soon as possible an estimate of the amount necessary to begin the erection of another bridge . . . in the area previously designated by Congress. [Beveridge, George, "Broyhill Urges Eisenhower to Decide for Span," *The Evening Star*, June 7, 1955]

Commissioner Spencer revealed on June 13 that the Budget Bureau had ruled out a tunnel:

It appears in the light of all the circumstances that a bridge will best meet the needs, and studies are now being made to determine whether some change in the site of the proposed bridge may be possible which will be satisfactory to the Fine Arts Commission and others concerned and at the same time will meet traffic needs and cost limitations.

This involves making certain engineering studies which it is hoped may be completed within about 10 days.

The Fine Arts Commission has never advocated a tunnel, except as an alternative to a bridge in the Lincoln Memorial area and would be in favor of a bridge at some other location.

The alternative location would cross the upriver part of Roosevelt Island. ["Bridge Proposal Gets Backing Over Tunnel," *The Evening Star*, June 13, 1955]

At NCPC's June meeting, the planning commissioners considered an objection submitted in a jointly signed letter from all but one member of the Ohio congressional delegation. Having worked hard to get a main city street named after their State, they objected to conversion of Ohio Drive to an expressway. "This is very disconcerting," they wrote. "This is the most important section of Ohio drive. We are strenuously opposed and urge that it be retained as a park drive." Aware of the delegation's concern, NCPC had formed a subcommittee to study the issue but it had not reached a conclusion. DeLeuw, Cather submitted an alternative during the meeting. The *Star* described it:

This would be a cutoff just south of Lincoln Memorial and use . . . Independence avenue paralleling the Mall and crossing the north end of the Tidal Basin before swinging into Southwest Washington.

Mr. DeLeuw said, however, he prefers Ohio drive for the freeway, although he realizes this involves one of Washington's nicer park areas. The point is, he said, that the Independence avenue route would cost about \$4 million more than the \$12 million estimate on the Ohio drive route.

On another familiar issue, District highway officials reported to NCPC that the Roaches Run Bridge would cost about \$5.5 million more than the estimated \$19-million cost of the bridge replacing the 14th Street trestle-topped bridge. ["State Delegation Protests Ohio Drive as Freeway," *The Evening Star*, June 17, 1955]

The Roosevelt Association's New Position

On June 16, 1955, the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Association conditionally approved construction of a bridge across the northern tip of Roosevelt Island as a substitute for the congressionally approved Constitution Avenue Bridge. The association listed three conditions as summarized by the *Star*:

- Both the National Park Service, the National Capital Planning Commission and the Federal Fine Arts Commission [sic] also have the right to approve the final "character and design" of the bridge and its location.
- The bridge be named "The Theodore Roosevelt Bridge."
- The bridge be a low-level one preferably of masonry construction similar to the Arlington Memorial bridge.

A low-level bridge might address the esthetic issues in the vicinity of the Lincoln Memorial, but a "fairly high span probably would be needed near the Virginia shore in order to rise from the river to connect with Arlington boulevard north of the new Arlington Towers Apartments."

The association, in a letter to Chairman Finley of the Fine Arts Commission, made clear that it would not support a bridge such as the E Street Bridge that would cross the middle of the island.

Reaction to the association's new stand was mixed. NCPC vice chairman Remon said, "We've studied this thing uphill and downhill. I don't want it to drift any longer." Donald E. Gingery, a Rockville-area developer who had served on the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission since his appointment in 1949, expressed irritation. "It is beyond my comprehension how a private organization, like the Roosevelt association, can sit and dictate how and where a bridge can be built with taxpayers' money."

District sources told Beveridge that city officials were perplexed about why Congress did not simply authorize funds for the Constitution Avenue Bridge approved by Congress and President Eisenhower under the Case compromise instead of waiting for, as Beveridge summarized, "this agency and that for new decisions." Nevertheless, Commissioner Spencer called the move "the

biggest step forward that's happened," adding that a bridge over the north end of the island was "a very good solution of the whole thing." General Lane said, "The decision clears the way for a possible alternate solution."

One interested observer was Senator John C. Stennis (D-Ms.), a former Circuit Court judge who had been in the Senate since winning a special election in 1947; he lived in the city's Wakefield neighborhood at 3609 Cumberland Street near Connecticut Avenue, NW. As chairman of the Appropriations Committee subcommittee handling the District's budget, he was about to chair a hearing on the budget on June 17 where the bridge issue was expected to be discussed. Reporters had the impression that his patience was growing thin:

"I don't want to appear to be threatening anyone," he said last night. "But here we are in a situation where a law authorizing a bridge at a certain place (Constitution avenue) is on the books, the money (\$1.5 million for 1956) is available and the need for a bridge becomes more urgent every day.

"Time is short. This matter should not be put off any longer."

Commission Chairman Harland A. Bartholomew had announced that the planning body was prepared to hold a special meeting if "prompt action" is requested before Congress adjourns.

Senator Stennis said his subcommittee wants a decision within a few days. "We are not thinking in terms of getting something before Congress adjourns," he said. "I am not interested in where the bridge is placed—there's a law on the books stating where—but I just don't like to see this matter suspended any further," the Mississippian said.

After the Friday hearings, Senator Stennis said he wanted a decision by Monday, June 20, when the subcommittee was scheduled to complete markup of the District appropriations bill. [Beveridge, George, "Budget Problem Arises In Dispute on Bridge" and "Stennis Presses District For Decision on Bridge," both *The Evening Star*, June 17, 1955]

As District officials worked over the weekend to study the feasibility of the plan adopted by the Roosevelt association, Senator Stennis postponed markup to June 22 at the request of the District commissioners and Budget Bureau director Hughes. Senator Stennis said he wanted "an all-around agreement" by all agencies involved and a detailed report on the "feasibility of the new location from the standpoint of engineering and of service to the public, as well as the cost thereof." [Beveridge, George, "D.C. Engineers Rush Plans for Island Bridge," *The Evening Star*, June 18, 1955]

On June 22, District officials met with Senator Stennis to discuss the city's findings. The bridge across the northern tip of Roosevelt Island would cost \$43.2 million. Although the city had studied the proposal, city highway officials emphasized that they did not support it. Highway planner Brinkley said, "We don't believe there is any good substitution for the Constitution avenue bridge." District officials explained that they were willing to consider other ideas, but

were not going to support a plan that would cost so much more than the Constitution Avenue span.

In response, NCPC rejected the District-drawn plan for the Roosevelt Island bridge as well as a proposal by Wirth to support concurrent construction of a Constitution Avenue tunnel and the Roaches Run Bridge. Instead, NCPC reaffirmed its support for the Constitution Avenue Bridge. Bartholomew concurred despite his doubts that it was wise to “keep concentrating traffic in the Lincoln Memorial area.” He was concerned that if the bridge were built, people would view it as the solution to the Potomac River crossing problem. He urged, again, early construction of the Roaches Run Bridge.

Remon addressed the point before the vote:

I feel that approval now of the Constitution avenue bridge is the current solution to this whole problem. What comes after is another matter.

Based on these actions, Senator Stennis’s subcommittee included \$1.5 million in construction money for the project. He said he wanted a bridge built, but during the meeting, no viable alternative had been presented. [Beveridge, George, “Constitution Ave. Bridge Is Backed by Planners,” *The Evening Star*, June 22, 1955]

The full Senate, with the support of the White House, approved the District appropriations act for FY 1956 on June 23, including the \$1.5 million for the Constitution Avenue Bridge. The vote was unanimous. The only change since Senator Stennis’s subcommittee added the provision came when the Senate adopted Senator Case’s amendment allowing, within a strict timetable, a possible shift of the bridge somewhat upstream. The amendment permitted the bridge to be built over South Island if the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Association gave its consent by August 1, 1955. Senator Stennis accepted the amendment because it would not cause a delay in construction of the bridge. He added, “This bridge must be built to take care of mounting traffic demands.”

The Senate’s action, as the *Star* put it, “pointed today toward early construction of the \$24.5 million Constitution avenue span Congress already has authorized.” [Beveridge, George, “Senate Passes Bridge Funds,” *The Evening Star*, June 23, 1955]

The bill now went to a conference committee with members of the House, which had passed its version of the bill a month earlier without a provision on the bridge. The conference committee had to reconcile many issues, not just bridge funding.

Grudging Support For The Bridge

While the conference was underway, bridge proponents and opponents continued to work toward their goals. Harry T. Thompson, associate superintendent of National Capital Parks, objected to plans for the Constitution Avenue Bridge between South Island and Arlington Memorial Bridge because he wanted Roosevelt Island to be the sort of place Theodore Roosevelt would have loved:

We have acquired a house with a view, and someone has come along and painted over the windows. It seems a great tragedy that the wealthiest nation in the world would suffer an irreparable damage to the greatest assembly of memorials in the world for the sake of a few dollars. We as a nation are not that poverty-ridden that we can afford to mar and almost commit a public act of vandalism against the men whom we have enshrined in our memorials.

If that is the will of Congress, “we will just have to live with the situation.” He promised that Interior Department officials were “not going to be bad losers. But we’re sorry about it.”

Thompson indicated that the NPS, NCPC, and the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Association would take a second look at their plans for the island. The Interior Department had \$135,300 for a proposed new ferry landing. Other projects included a terraced memorial observation overlook, foot bridges, and a second comfort station. With the bridge project, however, the restudy may find that the present program would be a “waste of money.” [“Revision Seen In Plans for Island Retreat,” *The Evening Star*, June 24, 1955]

Officials put pressure on the association to allow the bridge to cross the upriver end of South Island. Commissioner Spencer said he would approach the association in support of the shift, which he thought was “feasible” for traffic needs and to answer aesthetic objections. Peets of the Fine Arts Commission sent the association a sketch of the proposal, including his idea that South Island could be built up with fill soil to screen part of the bridge from Roosevelt Island. His plan, which would leave the Lincoln Memorial area free of visual intrusions, would “infinitely decrease” the damage the original plan would do to the area.

One drawback to the shift was that the District had not worked out plans for a span across South Island. Peets thought it would hit Constitution Avenue. Senator Case, who had written to the association to request its support for the shift, thought the new bridge would tie into E Street. He said he had proposed the South Island crossing to the association a year earlier and was turned down:

The situation now, however, is different. Then, no bridge had been approved. Now, if nothing is done, the bridge will be built as a straight extension of Constitution avenue over the river. [Beveridge, George, “New Proposal Made to Solve Bridge Impasse,” *The Evening Star*, June 26, 1955]

Representative Saylor had not given up on the possibility of a tunnel to handle cross-river traffic in the vicinity of the Lincoln Memorial. He had asked Wirth why he did not support NCPC’s endorsement of the Constitution Avenue bridge. In a letter dated June 27, Wirth said it was “evident that more than one river crossing is needed.” Traffic relief in the vicinity of the Lincoln Memorial was needed, but the Constitution Avenue Bridge, “no matter how well designed or how much traffic relief it might give . . . would be greatly destructive of more important national values.”

Wirth recommended, first, shifting the \$24.5 million that Congress had authorized for the Constitution Avenue span to a six-lane bridge at Roaches Run. Second, he believed the Interior

Department should build a four-lane tunnel at Federal expense to carry traffic across the river in the vicinity of the Lincoln Memorial. In favor of his proposal was that while the tunnel had been rejected previously because of cost, the proposed tunnel had never been tied to concurrent construction of the Roaches Run Bridge. As for the difference in cost between a bridge and tunnel, he argued that the disparity was mainly for related road improvements that he did not think should be charged to the tunnel. ["Saylor Plans Another Pleas For Tunnel," *The Evening Star*, June 27, 1955]

House-Senate conferees on the District of Columbia appropriations act, 1956, resolved the longstanding controversy over the Potomac River crossing in favor of building the Constitution Avenue Bridge between south of South Island and Arlington Memorial Bridge. They included \$1.5 million in the bill for the bridge at this location, dropping Senator Case's amendment allowing a shift to South Island if the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Association agreed to it. The House conferees had insisted on dropping the Case amendment because they believed that District officials did not strongly favor it.

On June 30, the House and Senate approved the conference report on the appropriations act and sent the bill to the White House for the President's signature. During floor consideration, no one in the House or Senate objected to the bridge provision included in the conference report.

Senator Case still thought his idea was worth pursuing. He was "not weeping" about the Constitution Avenue Bridge location, which he noted was the result of a compromise he had helped to forge. He also did not want to delay construction of the bridge, wherever it might be located. If the Roosevelt association changed its position, he would introduce a "quickie bill which I think probably could get through before Congress adjourns" permitting the shift to South Island. He cautioned, however, "I'm certainly not going to make another move myself unless something is done by them." [Beveridge, George, "Congress Oks Bridge Funds, Ending Wrangle," *The Evening Star*, June 30, 1955]

President Eisenhower signed the FY 1956 appropriations act on July 5, 1955 (P.L. 84-131).

The Endless Debate

On July 8, 1955, the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Association reversed its position and approved a crossing of the memorial island, most likely in a straight line from Constitution Avenue to South Island's southern tip. The concept was described as two short bridges, linked at South Island, which would screen the bridge from the Lincoln Memorial area. Director Hermann Hagerdorn included the decision in a July 8 letter to Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay. Members, the letter said, had undertaken considerable soul-searching:

On the one hand they have the obligation, bequeathed to them by their predecessors, to defend the integrity and sanctity of the island as an area of wild solitude in the very heart of the Nation.

On the other, the trustees recall the part that Mr. Roosevelt as President played in conserving and developing the grand plan of the National Capital. They remember that

he encouraged, supported and defended the McMillan Commission in its (1901) efforts to salvage and revitalize the L'Enfant plan, and that he established the National Commission of Fine Arts to watch over the plan's development in the future.

In reconciling their loyalties to President Roosevelt, the Nation, and the memorial island, they realized that "their paramount obligation is to the National Capital":

They have, therefore, agreed to approve, in principle, the construction of a low-level bridge across South Island, provided that the proposed bridge shall be named the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge, that it provide access to the main island, and that its design be approved by the National Commission of Fine Arts.

During a morning meeting, Hagerdorn, the Interior Department, and the Fine Arts Commission agreed to meet with District officials to discuss the new route. They also would meet with congressional leaders to seek a legislative fix. [Beveridge, George, "Trustees Okay Bridge Over Roosevelt Island; Association Paves Way For Project," *The Evening Star*, July 8, 1955]

District and Federal officials quickly agreed to seek an amendment allowing the shift. The Fine Arts Commission, NPS, and District commissioners agreed that NPS would submit legislation permitting the location change. Meanwhile, their technicians would work on a practical location and design for the bridge.

Aside from numerous technical details, officials also had to reconcile broader concerns. Wirth insisted that the legislation give Interior Secretary McKay powers to approve all features of the bridge and its approaches, citing President Eisenhower's statement on the subject when he signed the Constitution Avenue Bridge legislation:

The Secretary of the Interior also should be authorized to approve all plans for the bridge and the approach roads and interchanges at both ends of the bridge since park structure and land are involved.

The current law left "no check whatsoever" on District officials. Wirth said that such an arrangement had "never been done in the history of the development of the city of Washington."

Commissioner Spencer asked Wirth to submit a bill for District review and, if he did, promised quick reaction.

Although Wirth and Hagerdorn endorsed the "two bridge" idea on a straight line from Constitution Avenue, District officials called the idea unworkable. The concept would not allow sufficient navigation clearance. Further, moving the bridge as far upriver as Wirth and Hagerdorn suggested would cause problems for the Virginia connections. With Congress due to adjourn soon, all parties hoped to resolve these differences promptly. [Beveridge, George, "Quick Plea to Congress On Island Span Planned," *The Evening Star*, July 9, 1955]

The District commissioners quickly agreed to yield their authority over the bridge. With the endorsement of the Budget Bureau and NPS, the commissioners agreed to an amendment that would permit construction of the bridge over the south end of Roosevelt Island and give the Fine

Arts Commission and Interior Department approval authority over the design and connecting roads. The amendment also would allow the District to revert to the location between Roosevelt Island and Arlington Memorial Bridge if technical details for the shift could not be worked out. In that case, the Fine Arts Commission and Interior Department would retain approval powers.

Despite the Federal-District battles over the past 3 years regarding the central area bridge, General Lane said he expected that with all parties in support, the amendment “will not delay this bridge in any way.” [Beveridge, George, “District Yields Strong Voice to U.S. on Span,” *The Evening Star*, July 16, 1955]

As Congress moved toward the August 2 adjournment of the first session of the 84th Congress, the amendment passed in the Senate, but not the House.

Failure of the amendment left the location of the bridge in doubt. Despite the lack of congressional action, all parties favored the new location. On August 4, 1955, NCPC voted unanimous approval of the bridge over the south end of Roosevelt Island. With this action, District officials could begin immediate plans for the bridge. However, congressional action on the amendment permitting construction in the new location would still be needed.

Despite agreement on the bridge location, NCPC and others were concerned about the connections in the District and Virginia as displayed on a diagram that District Highway Director Robertson submitted. The *Star* described the approach roadways in the District as resembling “the layout of the Union Station railroad yards.” It included “no less than 25 traffic lanes running more or less parallel and about half as many separate roadways between E street and Constitution avenue to provide access to or by-pass of the bridge.” The sketch drew “tart criticism.”

Robertson responded that the use of so many roadways resulted from the limited space for the approaches. Engineer Brinkley added that the sketch outlined adequate connections for the bridge in Virginia with Arlington’s Jefferson Davis Highway as well as direct connections with Constitution Avenue and the west leg of the Inner Loop. The *Star*’s summary of the meeting added:

The plan, Mr. Brinkley said, also offers the novel feature of tunneling the inner belt under the west grounds of Lincoln Memorial, preserving the vista there.

These explanations did not satisfy Douglas Orr of the Fine Arts Commission. To avoid marring the National Mall, he favored a District connection north of Constitution Avenue and completely off the Mall.

Although the District was prepared to begin design, Robertson said he would not begin until he received approval in writing from the Fine Arts Commission and the Roosevelt association. “Not that we don’t trust these gentlemen,” he told NCPC with a laugh. “We just want it in writing so that when we go back for the necessary legislation next session there won’t be any more changes.”

NCPC also approved construction of a four-lane bridge to replace the trestle-topped three-lane bridge at 14th Street in the approximate location of the existing structure. The District had

completed plans for the bridge and, with NCPC approval, could include \$9 million in the budget request for FY 1957 construction. NCPC approved this project with the understanding that it would not jeopardize the NCPC-supported Roaches Run Bridge or allow District officials to seek approval for new highways that NCPC opposed. [Beveridge, George, “Planners Back Bridge Location” and “Bridge Location Remains Hazy For Planners,” *The Evening Star*, August 4, 1955]

As will be discussed later, BPR released sketch maps in September showing the tentative outline of Interstate highways in urban areas. The maps showed black lines representing unnumbered Interstate highways on an outline of the metropolitan areas with limited details of jurisdictions and no depiction of other roads and streets. The map of the Washington area showed four Interstate crossings of the Potomac River:

- (1) the Jones Point Bridge as part of a circumferential,
- (2) the Chain Bridge crossing, also part of the circumferential,
- (3) the extension of Shirley Highway across the Potomac River and Washington Channel carrying traffic to the Southwest Freeway, and
- (4) a U.S.-50 bridge crossing south of Roosevelt Island and cutting across the northern tip of Columbia Island.

The map did not show the Roaches Run Bridge favored by NCPC.

By early September, District officials were hoping the Commission of Fine Arts would approve relocation of the Constitution Avenue Bridge to cross the lower tip of Roosevelt Island in the compromise worked out by District highway officials, NCPC, and National Capital Parks. On September 16, the commission replied that the revised location was “acceptable in general,” but could not “give approval in detail.”

The commission wanted the bridge to be as low as possible to reduce visibility from the Lincoln Memorial grounds. However, the main concern involved the approach connections on the District side of the river where it would connect with Connecticut Avenue and the Inner Loop. The commission wanted to move the complex interchange as far north of Constitution Avenue as possible to get it away from the Lincoln Memorial. The limitation was that as part of the Interstate System, the bridge and connections would have to meet Interstate standards. [“Bridge Details Stir Objections from Fine Arts,” *The Evening Star*, September 16, 1955]

By November 1955, all agencies involved had worked out their differences on the Constitution Avenue Bridge. The agreement shifted the crossing away from the Lincoln Memorial and the Arlington Memorial Bridge to cross the southern end of Roosevelt Island. Although referred to as the Constitution Avenue Bridge, the bridge would enter the District midway between Constitution Avenue and E Street, NW. The approach road network in the District was still complicated (one planner referred to it as looking like a “bowl of spaghetti”) but was a compromise that all parties accepted. In Virginia, the bridge would connect with George Washington Memorial Parkway, Arlington Boulevard, Wilson Boulevard, and Jefferson Davis Highway.

The District highway department had \$3 million to complete the bridge plans and start construction. An additional \$20 million would be needed to finish the project. Securing this additional funding might be easier because BPR had included the crossing in the Interstate System. Congress had failed to agree in 1955 on how to pay for construction of what was still officially called the “National System of Interstate Highways” but would return in January 1956 to try again.

The *Star*, in an editorial on November 3, 1955, commented that, “It is gratifying that an agreement apparently has been reached among all agencies on the location and approaches for the new central-area Potomac River bridge.” After summarizing the agreement, the editorial pointed out that another 3 years would be needed before traffic could start using the new bridge. “So the importance of getting an early start on the long-delayed undertaking is obvious.” The editorial was titled “Agreement at Last.”

In early 1956, Oscar S. Straus II, president of the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Association, wrote to Engineer Commissioner Lane. Straus observed that the Commission of Fine Arts had suggested a change “in order to keep the necessary network of approach roads, on the District side, away from the Lincoln Memorial.” He added, “We in the association would not quarrel with that decision.” The association had only one condition, namely that the bridge “provide access to the island not only for pedestrians but also for motor cars” that would need parking spaces. He added:

We recognize the problems of parking involved, but believe that these can be worked out to the satisfaction of all the Government agencies concerned as well as of the association and the visiting public.

The city was awaiting formal letters of support from the Interior Department and the Fine Arts Commission, but Commissioner Lane said he would begin pressing immediately for House action on the needed legislative amendment. [Beveridge, George, “Island Trustees Back Span Plan,” *The Evening Star*, January 5, 1956]

Other Developments

Several other developments were moving in a positive direction for bridge projects in the southwest redevelopment area. The Smithsonian Institution had identified an alternative site for the National Air Museum that would remove the conflict with Zeckendorf’s planned 10th Street Mall. The new site was between Independence Avenue and C, 4th and 7th Streets, SW. [“Alternate Site Is Studied for Air Museum,” *The Evening Star*, November 5, 1955]

(The National Air and Space Museum opened in 1976 on the opposite side of Independence Avenue between 4th and 7th Streets.)

Meanwhile, CIA Director Allen W. Dulles had decided to locate the agency’s headquarters at Langley, Virginia, on a 749-acre Federal tract partly occupied by BPR’s research facility. A consultant, Gilmore D. Clarke of the New York firm of Clarke and Rapuano, had studied the Langley site and one other candidate for CIA headquarters on the 100-acre Winkler tract at

Shirley Highway and Seminary Road in Alexandria. As the *Star* explained, planned transportation improvements made the Langley site superior in Clarke's view:

He noted that the George Washington Memorial parkway would be extended from its present terminus near Key Bridge all the way to the Langley site, a new Constitution avenue bridge is slated near the Lincoln Memorial and Key Bridge is to be widened.

These improvements alone, he declared, "would make the Langley tract more serviceable to CIA employes [sic] than the Winkler tract, even if Shirley highway is ever widened to six lanes"

The consultant conceded that drastic improvements to Chain Bridge, Canal Road and Virginia highways should be made. But his view was that they would be made in time, and that, meanwhile, the new parkway and its connections would take "more than 70 per cent of CIA commuters." [Beveridge, George, "Planners Start Study Of Langley as CIA Site," *The Evening Star*, November 5, 1955]

On November 3, 1959, President Eisenhower attended the ceremony laying the cornerstone for the CIA building at Langley. "Upon the quality of your work," he told the 2,000 spectators, "depends in large measure the success of our effort to further the Nation's position in the international scene."

On the way to the ceremony, he stopped at Spout Run to cut a ribbon opening a 5-mile section of the George Washington Memorial Parkway from Lorcom Lane to State Route 123:

Although the extension goes all the way to the CIA site, traffic will be shunted off at the cloverleaf intersection with Virginia Route 123. Contracts have already been let to carry the parkway beyond CIA to connect with the projected Washington circumferential highway at Cabin John.

The presidential ceremony took no more than 2 minutes. Mr. Eisenhower, wearing a gray felt hat and gray tweed overcoat, was handed two pairs of gold-plated scissors bearing the National Park Service seal by Roger Ernst, Assistant Secretary of Interior for Parks.

After clipping the red, white and blue ribbon in two places, Mr. Eisenhower was presented with one of the shears as a memento of the occasion. The President also kept a bit of the ribbon as a trophy.

Representative Broyhill, NPS Director Wirth, Superintendent Harry T. Thompson of National Capital Parks, and about 100 others attended the brief ceremony. ["President Lays Stone, Says CIA Helps Peace," *The Evening Star*, November 3, 1959]

The Tunnel Option – Again

With the agreement on the new location of the Constitution Avenue Bridge, the next step was action by the House, where the bill amending the 1954 law was bottled up in the District subcommittee headed by Representative James C. Davis (D-Ga.). The problem was that

Virginia's Representative Smith, chairman of the House Rules Committee, opposed the bridge. He acknowledged as much to a reporter, adding that he would "not oppose" a tunnel across the Potomac River. Without Chairman Smith's approval, the bill could not reach the House floor for a vote. If the amendment did not pass, the city's only option was to complete work to build the bridge on the previously approved location.

The Interior Department was still promoting the idea of a tunnel instead of the bridge, whatever the location. In late March 1956, the department was preparing a bill for Representative Broyhill authorizing full Federal funding for a four-lane tunnel under the river near the Lincoln Memorial. The department had not secured White House approval for the bill; the Budget Bureau had objected to a 1955 version of the bill that called on the Federal Government to pay the difference in cost between a bridge and tunnel.

Now, Interior officials planned to argue that the Federal Government should pay 100 percent of the cost in view of vital importance of the Lincoln Memorial area. They added that if pending legislation to authorize the Interstate System became law, BPR would pay 90 percent of the cost of the bridge; additional Federal funds would have to cover only 10 percent of the cost.

District officials continued to favor the bridge across the south end of Roosevelt Island. They disputed the Interior Department's plan for a four-lane tunnel, arguing that a six-lane bridge or a six-lane tunnel was needed to accommodate traffic volumes. [Beveridge, George, "Bill to Propose U.S.-Financed Potomac Tunnel," *The Evening Star*, March 25, 1956]

Chairman Davis planned for his District subcommittee to hold hearings on the crossing, but as the day neared, the subcommittee gave conflicting information on what would be considered. In what Beveridge called "an on-again-off-again comedy of errors," the subcommittee said it would consider only the bridge amendment during the hearing. It planned to hold a separate hearing on the tunnel bill, but then decided to combine the bills in one hearing. Then it went back and forth, limiting the hearing to the bridge amendment, then switching back to both.

Beveridge, after talking with committee sources, suggested two possible reasons for the flip-flops on hearing plans:

One was that Mr. Broyhill, author of the tunnel bill, hasn't always had the vigorous support of other District Committee members for some of his proposals, so there was no great enthusiasm about considering his bill.

The other was that Representative Smith, Democrat of Virginia, and one of the District Committee's most influential members, is dead-set against the bridge, so his feeling probably helped rule out a hearing on the bridge alone.

Representative Broyhill, Beveridge explained, still supported the bridge, but had submitted the Interior Department's tunnel bill "only because the bridge matter appeared to be stymied."

Beveridge characterized the "confused Potomac River bridge-tunnel mess" as "more muddled than ever." [Beveridge, George, "Davis Sets Tuesday For Bridge-Tunnel Airing," *The Evening Star*, April 29, 1956]

The hearing took place on May 1. As in the past, Engineer Commissioner Lane favored the amendment and rejected the tunnel option. He explained that the proposed four-lane tunnel would be unable to handle the projected traffic, adding that because of grades on both sides of the Potomac River, even a six-lane tunnel would not be adequate. He estimated that a six-lane tunnel would cost three times the proposed bridge and require 30 times the annual maintenance cost. He added, in a new argument, that because the tunnel opening would be below water level on the District side, the project would have to include “a tremendous unsightly levee” northward from the Lincoln Memorial to prevent flooding of the tunnel.

Representative Smith, a member of the District committee but not the subcommittee, participated in the hearing as a courtesy. Beveridge summarized the exchange between the Congressman and the commissioner:

Mr. Smith questioned Gen. Lane sharply on several points. He said he thought the District’s decision to build a 27-foot high bridge with no drawspan threatened future development of the Georgetown Harbor and pointedly suggested that the District reconsider this.

Mr. Smith also drew from Gen. Lane a concession that the Interior Department must oppose the bridge since it has failed to respond to requests for approval Gen. Lane has been seeking since December.

Director Robertson pointed out the widespread agency support for the amendment. He was, he said, “highly disturbed” that Representative Broyhill had introduced the tunnel bill “at this late hour.”

Ole Singstad, after the hearing, told reporters that talk of a high levee was ridiculous. The grade of the District shore could be raised gradually to keep the tunnel out of danger. [Beveridge, George, “D.C. Fights Tunnel At Lincoln Memorial,” *The Evening Star*, May 1, 1956]

The subcommittee expected to hold an additional hearing to give the Interior Department and other tunnel advocates an opportunity to testify. However, by June, the subcommittee had not scheduled the hearing.

Appearing on the WWDC radio program “Report to the People,” General Lane said that if the House did not act, the District would move forward with construction of the Constitution Avenue Bridge as described in the current law. Construction, he said, could begin in about a year. [“House Nudged On Bridge Plan,” *The Evening Star*, June 3, 1956]

Chairman Davis scheduled a second day of hearings for June 13 to give tunnel advocates an opportunity to present their case. Ahead of the hearing, Chairman Davis predicted early action. He told reporters he was impressed by the case District officials made for the amendment to allow construction across Roosevelt Island, but reserved judgment on the bridge-versus-tunnel debate.

The issue of navigation clearance, raised by Representative Smith, would also be considered. He made clear his concern that the planned low clearance would harm Georgetown business

interests, such as Smoot Sand & Gravel Company, which had a harbor plant near 30th and K Street, NW., and American Oil Company, which had a terminal in Rosslyn, Virginia. (Much of Smoot's success resulted from its rights to the gravel at Gravelly Point, useful for construction throughout the area. [Kelly, John, "Gravelly Point Park's moniker is one that should just be shoveled aside," *The Washington Post*, February 6, 2018]

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had held a hearing on these concerns in 1955, but granted the District's request for a bridge 26½ feet above mean low water without a draw span. It concluded that Smoot operated with tugs and barges that would be able to pass under the bridge. It could substitute land-based transportation for the occasional shipment requiring a higher clearance. The oil company would incur additional costs because it would have to use barges instead of tankers, as well as "supplemental trucking" in bad weather. These additional costs, the Corps concluded, were "not considered unreasonable in the light of the public interests involved." [Beveridge, George, "Davis Predicts Action on Span," *The Evening Star*, June 10, 1956]

During the hearing, Chairman Davis heard from tunnel supporters. He did not get to hear from bridge supporters but indicated that if the subcommittee did not hold another hearing, they could submit their views in writing for consideration.

Harland Bartholomew appeared before the subcommittee as a member of NCPC, not as chairman speaking for it. Between a bridge and tunnel, he favored a four-lane crossing. As he had often said, he was concerned that any crossing at this location would strain the capacity of city routes unless the city also adopted the plan NCPC had approved – a widened Constitution Avenue, new roads on either side of the Reflecting Pool, and reconstruction of E Street as a major thoroughfare.

The Fine Arts Commission's Finley opposed any crossing at Constitution Avenue because of the damage it would do to the landscape in the memorial area. He favored a tunnel, but if a bridge must be built, he preferred that it cross Theodore Roosevelt Island instead of the route specified in the law.

Ole Singstad appeared to debunk criticisms of the tunnel option. A four-lane tunnel and its approaches, he assured the subcommittee, would cost \$25.5 million.

Other groups sending representatives in support of the tunnel were the Society of Professional Engineers, the Freedom Foundation, and the Marine Corps Memorial Fund. Time ran out before Conrad Wirth of the NPS or C. Melvin Sharpe of the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Association had testified in favor of the tunnel.

District officials attended the hearing but were not called as witnesses before time ran out. They indicated they would submit a statement in favor of the bridge:

J. N. Robertson, District director of highways, said he would explain to the subcommittee that the city heads still favor a bridge and hope to build one. He made public estimates of cost ready for the subcommittee showing that a six-lane crossing [was] now estimated to be \$47,842,000 for the tunnel, \$18,699,000 for a steel bridge and \$15,550,000 for a pre-

stressed bridge. [Rogers, Harold B, "River Tunnel Urged At Construction Site," *The Evening Star*, June 13, 1956]

Moving a Bill

Chairman Davis did not hold another hearing. However, the subcommittee amended the Senate-approved bill. With the House amendments, S. 2568 would:

- Name the structure the "Theodore Roosevelt Bridge."
- Allow the bridge to cross either of the two islands constituting Roosevelt Island as agreed upon by the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Association and the District commissioners.
- Subject the general plan for the bridge to approval of the Commission of Fine Arts.
- Give the Secretary of the Interior approval of the general location of the bridge and its approaches, interchanges, and connecting roads, as President Eisenhower had suggested in his signing statement for the original Potomac River bridges bill in August 1954.
- Maintain the monumental character of the area as far as possible.
- The Secretary of the Interior would retain control and jurisdiction of all park lands in the vicinity of the bridge upon completion of the bridge except those needed for the bridge structure and the approach roads and streets, which would become the responsibility of the District of Columbia, also as suggested by the President.
- Call for construction of a "six-lane bascule span bridge" in response to concerns about the low-level fixed structure required by the original law and the Senate amendment.

The House considered the bill on July 9, 1956. Chairman Davis told his colleagues that the bill was a result of agreement by the Roosevelt association to allow the bridge to cross South Island. All parties, he said, agreed this new location was preferable to the location in the 1954 law; even the Interior Department agreed. He referred to the hearings on the bridge-vs.-tunnel issue, but said the consensus of the District Committee was that "this bill, as now amended, provides the best disposition of the problem which is presented by the need for another bridge in the area at or near Constitution Avenue.

After brief discussion of the cost of the bridge and approaches, the House approved the bill without a recorded vote. [Construction of Bridges Across Potomac River, *Congressional Record-House*, July 9, 1956, pages 12192-12194]

Because the House bill differed from the Senate bill approved in 1955, a conference committee would be needed to reconcile variances to create a bill both Houses could approve.

For conferees, the critical issue was the change from a low-level fixed span to a bascule bridge. However, conferees agreed on July 23 to retain the bascule bridge approved by the House.

On July 25, the House approved the conference report without debate. [Bridges Across the Potomac, *Congressional Record-House*, July 25, 1956, page 14448]

The Senate planned to take up the bill on July 27, the final day of the 84th Congress. However, Senator Albert Gore, Sr. (D-Tn.), chairman of the Subcommittee on Roads, Committee on Public

Works, presented a major obstacle. Senator Gore explained why he objected to the construction of a bascule bridge:

He told *The Star* last night he would fight any move for provision for the draw span in the new bridge, declaring that if it meant a six-month delay for a congressional decision he thought that would be worthwhile.

“With prospects of enormous growth of Arlington, Fairfax and the Alexandria area, several more bridges across the Potomac will be needed in the foreseeable future,” He said. “It would be far more economical, if necessary, to compensate the two concerns involved in the Georgetown harbor for their losses in connection with the occasional passage of vessels that will not clear the 27 feet allowed in plans for the new Constitution avenue bridge.

“I am perfectly willing to be reasonable with these two concerns but I am unwilling to let two concerns impose unreasonable requirements on the thousands of people who will use the bridge and on the taxpayers of the country and the District.

As one who lived in Arlington, I can testify to the inconvenience occasioned by the use of the draw span on a Potomac River bridge. I speak of the Arlington Memorial Bridge and the Fourteenth street bridge. By reason of the draw spans there I have missed roll calls, I have missed appointments. I have missed planes.”

(In 1938, Gore won election to the House of Representatives. He lived in Arlington, with his address shown in the *Congressional Directory* as 203 Arlington Village, then simply Arlington Village, and finally 1303 South Barton Street in Arlington. By the time he won election to the Senate in 1952, the Gore family, including future Senator and Vice President Al Gore, Jr., had moved to Suite 809 on the top floor of the Fairfax Hotel at Embassy Row, 2100 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., near Dupont Circle. They spent the rest of the year in Carthage, Tennessee. [Maraniss, David, and Nakashima, Ellen, “Al Gore, Growing Up in Two Worlds,” *The Washington Post*, October 10, 1999]

Senator Gore had helped write the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 that called for completion of the Interstate System in 13 years. Senator Gore’s willingness to delay the bridge bill raised questions about whether the District would be able to complete the bridge within the timeframe of the new Interstate program. It had only \$6.3 million in Interstate construction funds at present; District officials were concerned that eventually, some of the projects might not be completed in time and would cost the District more than the 10 percent local share authorized by the legislation. [Warren, Don S. “Senate Fight Expected On Draw for New Bridge,” *The Evening Star*, July 27, 1956]

On the final day of the 84th Congress, the Senate acted on many bills but did not consider the Potomac River bridge legislation. Senator J. Glenn Beall (R-Md.) took to the Senate floor to ask the Senate Majority Leader, Senator Lyndon B. Johnson (D-Tx.), why the bill was not called for a vote. Senator Johnson replied that as he had told Senator Beall privately, the problem was that

Senator Gore said he would not let the Senate approve the conference report if he could prevent it:

If the conference report in question had been called up tonight, I was fearful that we might be here all night. I did not think Senators would want to spend all night debating the proposed bridge.

Senator Beall accepted Senator Johnson's explanation, but added:

At this time, when we are thinking about the necessity of building a bridge over the Potomac River, whatever the merits of it may be, and we do not consider the conference report, and we adjourn without agreeing to the conference report, we have something to explain to the people of the District of Columbia and Virginia This is something all of us should think about. [Proposed Potomac River Bridge, *Congressional Record-Senate*, July 27, 1956, page 15146]

With that, the bill died.

Senator Gore had killed the bill by simply sitting in his seat on the Senate floor. With him present and ready to object, Senator Johnson would not call the bill for a vote that probably would have taken only a few moments. [Warren, Don, "White House May Decide Fate of Roosevelt Bridge," *The Evening Star*, July 28, 1956]

The *Star*, in an editorial, said the best that could be said about "the latest Constitution Avenue Bridge fiasco" was that the project "has had tougher controversies to work its way out of before." The editorial explained that powerful Representative Smith had insisted on a movable span bridge that House and Senate conferees agreed to include in the bill. However, "Senators, contesting the need and added cost, wouldn't hear of it." As a result, the "carefully worked out House and Senate agreement on a new and superior route for the bridge, across Roosevelt Memorial island, went by the boards."

The editorial stated that the House position was "indefensible." The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the real experts on the matter, had approved the navigation clearance of a fixed span.

The District could wait for January and hope the new Congress would approve the improved location, with or without a movable span. City officials could approach the White House for guidance on the best path forward. Or they could proceed with the bridge as approved by Congress and President Eisenhower in 1954. The latter would, however, "be a grievous mistake":

There is general agreement on the upstream location of a bridge passing over the island and that location should be retained, although the delay in starting construction will add to the inconvenience of Representative Smith's constituents who work in Washington.

The editorial agreed with General Lane's decision not to make a snap judgment. He wanted to talk with the White House and see if any other possibilities would allow the District to proceed. "He should do so without delay."

The editorial was titled “Bridge Fiasco.”

Unraveling a Fiasco

On July 30, 1956, General Lane discussed the Constitution Avenue Bridge in a meeting with representatives of the Fine Arts Commission, National Capital Parks, and NCPC. They agreed to delay action in hope that the new Congress would approve the amendment shifting the bridge to cross the southern tip of Roosevelt Island. If Congress did not do so, the District would have no choice but to proceed to build the bridge at the 1954 location. However, Finley and others from the Fine Arts Commission made clear they would oppose proceeding on the line called for in the 1954 legislation.

After the meeting, General Lane told reporters that everyone agreed “very strongly” that they should do everything they could to secure congressional approval for the shift in location. However, no one had a “very explicit” idea how to secure the needed approval in view of the disagreement on the draw span. As a result, he said there was “very little likelihood” construction could begin before January. [“Officials Agree To Push Newer Bridge Sites,” *The Evening Star*, July 31, 1956]

Clinging to a slim hope, the District asked the General Accounting Office (GAO) for a ruling on whether, in view of congressional support for the new location, the District could use the available \$8.2 million to begin work on the crossing of Roosevelt Island. GAO ruled that the city could not legally spend the funds on the preferred route. The funds must be spent on the basis of the legislation approved in 1954, for a bridge between Arlington Memorial Bridge and a location that did not cross Roosevelt Island, unless Congress amended that law. Further, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers added that it would not issue a permit for the bridge to cross Roosevelt Island unless Congress passed legislation changing the location. [Beveridge, George, “Ruling by GAO Forbids Funds For New Span,” *The Evening Star*, September 16, 1956]

With the fixed-bridge remaining the key obstacle to congressional action, General Lane wrote to Colonel George B. Sumner, the District Engineer for the Corps, to say the District would not object if he reopened the issue of a draw span. General Lane said he understood “new evidence” had been presented on the issue and, although he was concerned about the added cost of a draw span, he thought navigational needs should be the deciding factor:

If your conversations with interested parties indicate that there is substantial evidence available which would have affected the . . . Army’s decision on this approval, and which was not presented at the original public hearing, the Board of Commissioners would make no objection to your reconsideration of this approval in the light of the additional evidence.

He asked Colonel Sumner for “prompt action” to review the new evidence so all information on the subject could be presented to the 85th Congress when it convened in January 1957.

Colonel Sumner confirmed to reporters that American Oil Company had presented additional information. He added, “We have not yet determined, however, whether the new evidence is

sufficient to justify another hearing.” He added that any change would apply equally to which ever location was eventually selected. [Beveridge, George, “D.C. Agrees to Review Of Draw Span Dispute,” *The Evening Star*, September 25, 1956]

In the final days of the 1956 election, Representative Broyhill’s opponent cited the central area bridge situation as one reason voters should vote against the incumbent. On October 10, Democrat Warren D. Quenstedt, appearing on WMAL television, recalled that Representative Broyhill had promised “more Potomac River Bridges” in his campaign 4 years earlier. “Well, what do we have? We have the same number of bridges as we had in 1952, but we have more people using them How long does it take to plan a bridge? How long does it take to build one?” He singled out Representative Broyhill’s role in the central area bridge:

Here Joe Broyhill’s record is one of inconsistency and confusion. Repeated attempts to get action here have failed mainly because Joe Broyhill first opposed a tunnel in favor of a bridge and after it looked like this would become a reality, he suddenly threw the whole matter into a turmoil by advocating construction of a tunnel.

How long must people of the 10th district put up with this failure to produce? We have no new bridges and we have no tunnels despite Joe Broyhill’s four long years in Congress. [“Broyhill Cites Democrats to Defend Record,” *The Evening Star*, October 13, 1956]

Despite such criticisms, Representative Broyhill would win reelection.

When the 85th Congress convened, Senator Gore quickly made clear during an early hearing on the big new Interstate program that he still opposed more draw spans on Potomac River crossings. When Robertson, the District’s highway director, appeared before the subcommittee, Senator Gore raised the Potomac River issue. Robertson said the city would soon send the same amendment to Congress as in 1956.

Senator Gore explained that he did not want to be unfair to water traffic, but with motor vehicle traffic increasing, the opening of draw spans would cause additional delays. He planned to introduce a resolution calling for the District commissioners to survey ways to prevent draw spans, including the possibility of limiting water traffic to heights that would not require movable spans. He also thought that one solution might be acquiring the property along the waterfront to force businesses that needed draw spans to relocate. [“Gore Pushing for Bans On Potomac Draw Spans,” *The Evening Star*, January 10, 1957]

Senator Dennis Chavez (D-NM), chairman of the Committee on Public Works, had attended the subcommittee hearing. Instead of waiting for Senator Gore’s resolution, Senator Chavez wrote to the District commissioners to ask them to cooperate with BPR to investigate the wisdom of eliminating draw or lift spans on Potomac River bridges. The committee, he said, desired “that a study be made of the economics of providing draw or lift span bridges across the Potomac River as contrasted with the construction of fixed span bridges.”

He added that “it would be helpful to the committee if detailed information were available relative to the value of navigational facilities to those persons or firms now exercising them, and

the damage which would accrue from the termination of such facilities, and the cost to such persons or firms of modifying navigational equipment so as to eliminate the necessity of draw spans.” He requested a report by February 15. [Rogers, Harold B., “Chavez Seeks D.C. Probe of Potomac Drawspans,” *The Evening Star*, January 20, 1957]

In case anyone doubted Representative Smith’s views on the issue in the new Congress, he predicted that much additional study would be needed before a decision could be reached on the Constitution Avenue Bridge. He remained a “tunnel man,” he said, adding that he thought a better idea was to avoid any additional crossings of Potomac River in the central area. [“Smith Balks at Changes In Jones Point Bridge,” *The Evening Star*, February 7, 1957]

On February 15, the District commissioners submitted a response to Senator Chavez, arguing that Congress should not require draw spans on any future Potomac River bridges above Hains Point. The report, prepared by the District Highway Department and BPR, made the case for a fixed span for the Constitution Avenue Bridge. It also rejected the need for a draw span on the new Virginia-bound 14th Street bridge and the planned Roaches Run Bridge.

The report acknowledged that the fixed-span Constitution Avenue Bridge would affect American Oil and Smoot Sand and Gravel, but predicted they could make satisfactory adjustments. For example, American Oil could build two 10-inch pipelines from Four Mile Run, near National Airport, to Rosslyn. Smoot could use barges and towboats low enough to pass under the new bridge. Moreover, using taxpayer dollars to favor American Oil against its competitors would not be in the public interest “under circumstances which would not benefit the general public through a reduction in commodity prices.”

Pressure to substitute a tunnel for the Constitution Avenue Bridge continued. The same day that the District and BPR again rejected the option, Leon Chatelain, Jr., president of the American Institute of Architects, urged a tunnel across the Potomac River. A bridge would, he said, “irreparably damage the character and beauty” of the city. [“Commissioners Ask Future Ban On Draw Spans,” *The Evening Star*, February 16, 1957]

Chairman Davis convened a hearing of the District subcommittee to consider the location of the Constitution Avenue Bridge and Representative Broyhill’s re-introduced tunnel bill. The parties remained firm in their longstanding positions. Wirth of the NPS was one of many witnesses advocating a tunnel instead of a bridge on the first day of the hearing. He contended that a four-lane tunnel with approach roads could be built for \$25.5 million. He wanted to dispel any public misunderstandings regarding cost. The estimate was “a firm one we are prepared to defend.” He cited studies that he said demonstrated that tunnels were “at least equivalent to the efficiency of bridges in their capacity to handle traffic—lane for lane.”

The Fine Arts Commission’s Finley stressed that the tunnel was the only option that would not “sacrifice the beauty” of the area. Bridges at many other locations along the Potomac River would be satisfactory. “But that is not true of the area surrounding the bridge and Theodore Roosevelt Island.”

Bartholomew told the subcommittee that NCPC had approved either a bridge or tunnel, but he reiterated his concern about forcing six lanes of traffic into the Lincoln Memorial area. He estimated that the central area needed 14 new lanes to handle projected traffic, but they could be dispersed above Key Bridge and below the 14th Street bridge, where the Roaches Run Bridge would be located, as well as in the Constitution Avenue location.

In addition to testimony, the subcommittee accepted for the record a letter from Roger W. Jones, assistant legislative director of the Bureau of the Budget, to District Commissioner Robert E. McLaughlin, indicating the bureau was “inclined” to favor a six-lane bridge, but with a significant change from past views:

The Budget Bureau wishes to point out that while it inclines to agree with the District Commissioners in advocating a bridge . . . we recognize that the Congress may wish to take into account esthetic values and other considerations in advocacy of a tunnel.

A tunnel would cost more than a bridge, Jones wrote, and that was important with the Federal Government and the District trying to hold down expenditures:

However, except on cost grounds we express no opinion as to the tunnel. If the Congress should find considerations other than cost sufficiently overriding to enact legislation authorizing a tunnel . . . the bureau would be prepared to accept this decision.

[Beveridge, George, “Budget Bureau Gives Nod to 6-Lane Potomac Span,” *The Evening Star*, February 19, 1957]

To Break the Impasse

On March 1, Senator Case introduced S. 1445, a bill to authorize construction of highway bridges across the Potomac River under the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956. The bill specified bridges at two locations long favored by NCPC, namely the Roaches Run Bridge and one crossing the Three Sisters Islands between Key and Chain bridges. He emphasized that his bill was not a substitute for the Constitution Avenue Bridge, which he had helped secure approval for in 1954. “My new bill has no effect on that. If the other controversy unravels itself, well and good.”

In a letter to Representatives Smith and Broyhill, he recommended the District should abandon its plan to rebuild the 14th Street trestle-topped bridge as part of the Interstate System:

It seems poor use of interstate funds to take out of use and build a replacement bridge when (1) the Fourteenth street bridge functions so well and (2) the great need is for additional bridges.

As long as we tolerate some of the temporary buildings that we do, certainly new money can better be spent in adding bridges than in destroying and replacing one as useful as the Fourteenth street bridge.

He favored the Three Sisters location for a bridge as a result of Maryland’s plans for U.S. 240. As will be discussed later, Maryland planned to route traffic on rebuilt U.S. 240 to a link with the

Potomac River Freeway as the entrance to Washington. Senator Case thought an upstream location at Three Sisters would keep Virginia traffic out of the heavily congested central area of the District.

In response to reporter inquiries, General Lane explained that the Roaches Run Bridge and the Three Sisters Bridge are in the District's long-range plans approved by the city and NCPC. The "most immediate and urgent need" was the Constitution Avenue Bridge, but the 14th Street trestle-topped bridge had "outlived its usefulness." The District had been planning the replacement project for 10 years, he said. Senator Case's bill "raises a lot of complex issues," General Lane said, adding, "I don't want to criticize Congress, but it is desirable for sponsors of a new plan to take it before the Planning Commission, where problems can be discussed, before reaching the legislative stage." [Bills and Joint Resolutions Introduced, *Congressional Record-Senate*, March 1, 1957, page 2852; Beveridge, George, "Case Bill Asks 2 More Bridges," *The Evening Star*, March 3, 1957]

The city was working to increase the lanes available for traffic moving between the District and Virginia. Aside from the plan to replace the trestle-topped bridge, the city was widening Key Bridge and removing streetcar tracks to add two lanes for motor vehicles. The city also planned to paint another lane on Chain Bridge to increase its capacity. [Beveridge, George, "A Primer on That Aging 'Bridge Problem,'" *The Evening Star*, February 24, 1957]

On March 20, District officials testified before Chairman Davis's subcommittee in support of the Constitution Avenue Bridge to be built across the southern tip of Roosevelt Island. They disputed many of the assertions of tunnel advocates. The District, they said, could build the six-lane bridge for \$15 million as a fixed span or \$18.6 million with a draw span, noting that whichever design was used, BPR would pay 90 percent of the cost as part of the new Interstate program. If Congress did not act, the District would build the bridge Congress had approved in 1954, regardless of the views of any other group.

Representatives of Smoot Sand and Gravel and American Oil testified in support of a draw span or, failing that, a tunnel.

The subcommittee also considered the project to replace the trestle-topped 14th Street bridge. The District's Robertson testified that adding a draw span would increase the cost by \$1.5 million, which the subcommittee, having previously approved \$9 million for the project, would have to authorize. Chairman Smith told Robertson that he'd better "get that draw span straightened out right fast. If you propose to cut off [navigation] traffic on the Potomac River, you're going to have trouble."

In executive session, the subcommittee approved that the new bridge contain a draw span. The new bill also increased the amount of funds authorized in the 1946 Act to \$17.5 million for two new 14th Street bridges. The subcommittee added a draw span to the project despite the possibility that passage of the bill in the Senate would have to overcome Senator Gore's objections. [Beveridge, George, "House Group Approves Bill For Draw Span," *The Evening Star*, March 21, 1957]

Earlier in the month, the Senate District subcommittee approved funds for replacing the trestle-topped bridge, but did not require a draw span. When the House District Committee approved the subcommittee's bill and sent it to the House floor, the committee was setting up a confrontation between the powerful Chairman Smith, who was unalterably opposed to a fixed span, and Senator Gore, who was unalterably opposed to a draw span. ["New 14th Street Bridge Clears Bar, Faces Another," *The Evening Star*, March 26, 1957]

On April 8, 1957, the House approved the bill amending the 1946 legislation authorizing funds for two four-lane bridges to replace the existing 14th Street bridge. The primary opposition came from Representative H. R. Gross (R-Ia.), a journalist who had won election to the House in 1949 and was known as a penny-pinching fiscal conservative who used every parliamentary device to slow down bills authorizing expenditures. His primary concern in this case was not the draw span, but why Federal taxpayers should pay for a bridge that would primarily benefit residents of Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

Supporters replied that Virginia and the District were paying for changes in the approach roads and that the new bridge would serve Federal facilities such as the Pentagon and the Navy Department Building. Chairman Smith said:

There are large Federal Government installations situated on the other side of the river. Virginia did not tell them to put them over there. They just put them over there for the convenience of the Government. Those people have got to move back and forth across the river.

Chairman Davis added, "The reason for that [Federal expenditure] is, as the gentleman knows, that this bridge is on the main United States Route No. 1." ["House Passes Bill for Second Bridge at 14th," *The Evening Star*, April 8, 1957; Authorizing Commissioners to Construct Bridges, *Congressional Record-House*, April 8, 1957, pages 5270-5278]

The next day, April 9, the House District subcommittee approved a bill authorizing \$25.5 million to pay 100 percent of the cost for the Secretary of the Interior to build a tunnel instead of the Constitution Avenue Bridge. Representative Kearns cast the only vote against the measure after the subcommittee rejected his amendment calling for financing the tunnel with tolls. He later told reporters that with a 25-cent round-trip commuter toll, the tunnel could be paid for in 13 years. He thought the 14th Street bridge bill that the House had approved the day before should be "the last free bridge or tunnel over the Potomac the House will vote."

In the face of this defeat in the subcommittee, District officials hoped for a better result in the Senate. As the Senate District subcommittee prepared for hearings on the issue, Engineer Commissioner Lane said he and other officials would "continue to oppose a four-lane tunnel, as we have in the past." [Beveridge, George, "D.C. Officials Turn to Senate In Bridge Fight," *The Evening Star*, April 10, 1957]

On April 11, the Senate District subcommittee began hearings on the issue. During the first day, George Beveridge wrote, advocates of a bridge and tunnel "began to retrace the tortuous arguments over whether a six-lane bridge or a four-lane tunnel should be built over or under the

river at Constitution avenue.” Amid these familiar arguments, he reported that the “most lively testimony, however, was an exchange between Senator Gore and Mr. Smith over the draw span,” with Senator Alan H. Bible (D-Nv.) trying to intervene. Chairman Smith appeared before the panel as a witness:

Senator Gore, chairman of the Senate Highway Subcommittee, said he opposed draw spans on Potomac bridges “now and forever hereafter,” because the “safe and efficient movement of traffic” must have priority on the huge new Federal system of interstate highways.

Mr. Smith argued for a tunnel at Constitution avenue which would eliminate the draw span issue.

He also noted that the House this week passed a bill authorizing the old Fourteenth Street replacement with a draw span, however. Since the existing Fourteenth Street Bridge has a draw span, Mr. Smith said, he hoped Senator Gore would not oppose that.

“No, I’m also for closing those bridges that do open now,” Senator Gore said.

Mr. Smith said he hoped Senator Gore was “not as adamant on this as you sound.”

“He was pretty adamant about the Constitution avenue bridge last year,” put in Senator Bible.

“Yes,” observed Mr. Smith. “And we haven’t got any bridge, either.”

Beyond the drawspan issue, Senator Gore said he had no position on the bridge-versus-tunnel fight.

When it came to draw spans, neither Senator Gore nor Chairman Smith “intends to yield in the deadlock over whether the bridge should contain a draw span.” [Beveridge, George, “Gore and Smith Feud Again Over Draw Span,” *The Evening Star*, April 12, 1957]

On April 20, the *Star* urged the Senators to, as the title of its editorial put it, “End This Farce.” Congressional testimony over 5 years “proved conclusively that a six-lane river crossing is essential” and that a four-lane tunnel would be a bottleneck “connecting systems of six and eight lane expressways.” While Chairman Smith and Senator Gore “wield strong influence in the House and Senate, some resolution of the impasse must be found.”

Testimony on April 25 demonstrated the wide differences on the bridge-tunnel debate. Lloyd Rivard, a District traffic engineer, testified that park and planning officials were distorting the fight with “vague generalizations.” He particularly attacked their argument that a four-lane tunnel would carry adequate traffic while a six-lane bridge would generate too much traffic for local streets. Tunnel advocates, he said, cited “meaningless estimates” of traffic over a 24-hour period to show that a four-lane tunnel would be satisfactory. The real test was whether four lanes could handle traffic during the morning and afternoon peak periods. Rivard stated that a six-lane bridge would carry twice as much traffic as a four-lane tunnel during these periods on weekdays.

He added that the traffic capacity of the bridge should be understood in the context of planned expressways that park officials preferred to ignore in arguing for a tunnel.

By contrast, National Capital Park's Thompson questioned whether all the capacity of a six-lane bridge was really needed for full use only a few hours 5 days a week:

He took the position that a tunnel would handle all the traffic that should go into the Lincoln Memorial area and that new bridges elsewhere could provide for other needs.

Mr. Thompson showed the Senators a model of precisely how approach roads to a tunnel and the tunnel itself could function. He said the total cost would be \$25.4 million.

When Senator Beall suggested that the tunnel option might be the only way to overcome the draw span stalemate between House and Senate, Senator Bible pointed out that the same issue would affect the 14th Street bridge project. It would have to be resolved. He planned to order a committee study of the issue to resolve conflicts. He hoped to decide between a tunnel or bridge in about 2 weeks.

Smoot and American Oil Company officials also testified. Smoot vice president A. M. Parker said that his firm required openings only about 10 to 12 times year. Under present rules, the openings occurred outside peak periods and did not interfere significantly with traffic. American Oil's G. H. Montgomery contended that without access to the Potomac River, the company would have to shut down its storage plant at Rosslyn, shift operations to Baltimore, and truck oil into the Washington area. The result would be the loss of \$675,000 in payroll as well as substantial local taxes.

Walter Kurlo, a BPR attorney, testified in support of the six-lane Constitution Avenue Bridge. The bridge, which would be part of the Interstate System, would be adequate for traffic while the tunnel would not. He also referred to studies by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that ruled out the need for a draw span, prompting approval of a permit. He did not believe the Corps would have issued the permit if the fixed-span posed a real threat. As for American Oil, he suggested that the company could deliver oil downriver from existing bridges, then transport it by a pipeline that would cost about \$1.5 million.

AAA officials testified that a possible compromise would be to include the draw span but prohibit openings between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. However, he and Arlington County Engineer Clifton G. Stoneburner supported the six-lane bridge. General Grant, on behalf of the Committee of 100 on the Federal City testified in support of the tunnel on aesthetic grounds. [Beveridge, George, "Rivard Assails Tunnel Backers," *The Evening Star*, April 25, 1957; Beveridge, George, "Bible Seeks Bridge Decision in 2 Weeks," *The Evening Star*, April 26, 1957]

In early June, the Senate District Committee's Subcommittee on Fiscal Affairs voted 2 to 1 for a bill, S. 1707, calling for a six-lane fixed span for the Constitution Avenue Bridge. Senator Bible discounted the testimony of witnesses who were concerned about impacts on the two businesses that needed a draw span. A fixed span would cause them some difficulties, but he was convinced they could overcome them. Senator Beall, the dissenter, indicated he would take his arguments

to the full committee but if he lost that vote, would not attempt to block the bridge. [Warren, Don S., "Potomac Bridge Issue To Be Debated Thursday," *The Evening Star*, June 5, 1957]

Senator Bible, as chairman of the subcommittee, may have expected to prevail when the full committee took up the bill. If so, he was surprised the following day when the full committee voted, 5 to 3, to support S. 944, which would amend the August 1954 legislation to authorize a tunnel connection between the District and Virginia. Senator Beall, noting that he was not opposed to a bridge, summarized the deciding factor:

We all voted for a fixed span bridge at the last session, and sent it over to the House only to have it die. [Carper, Elsie, "Senate Unit Kills Bridge, Favors a Tunnel," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, June 14, 1957]

Senator Bible, in the odd position of writing a majority report when he was in the minority, explained:

This tunnel would be constructed north of the Arlington Memorial Bridge and south of, or under, Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Island, together with approaches and roads connecting the tunnel and approach ramps with streets and park roads in the District of Columbia, with streets and park roads on the Virginia side of the Potomac River

Proponents of this measure felt that the construction of a tunnel would provide a suitable traffic facility, and would result in a minimum of damage to the memorial character of the area, as well as the park lands on the Virginia side of the river which would be affected by such a crossing.

While writing the majority report, he endorsed the minority views included in the committee's report. Based on the hearings held April 11, 17, and 23, 1957, the dissenters were convinced that a four-lane facility, whether bridge or tunnel, "would not accommodate traffic demands." BPR, they pointed out, shared this view and had approved the bridge, but would not approve a four-lane facility for funding under the Interstate program. That was because the 1956 Act required that designs "shall be adequate to accommodate the types and volumes of traffic forecast for the year 1975."

The capacity of a six-lane fixed span was 4,500 vehicles per hour in one direction, but only 2,200 vehicles going in one direction through a four-lane tunnel.

The minority view also covered the aesthetic issue:

One of the very purposes of S. 1707 is to change the location of the bridge . . . and move it to an upstream location . . . so as to minimize its impact on the memorial area, the proposed location being controlled at both ends by physical considerations. For example, on the Virginia side, Arlington Towers and the Marine Corps War Memorial fixed the alinement of the bridge. On the District side, the connections to Constitution Avenue and the inner loop fixed that end of the bridge. We are convinced that bridge structures can be architecturally beautiful to the enhancement of the area, and would have the advantage

of not plunging those who use the crossing into a tunnel as they approach the monumental area and bring them to the surface after they have passed it.

The minority report commented on the navigation clearance:

The Secretary of the Army has concluded that the cost to the public involved in providing a movable span in the Constitution Avenue bridge alone could not be justified on the basis of any benefits accruing to the two companies which now require the spans to be opened, and all other benefits to other navigation interests. [*Amending the Act of August 30, 1954 . . .*, Report Together With Minority Views (To Accompany S. 944), Committee on the District of Columbia, United States Senate, 85th Congress, 1st Session, Report No. 477, June 20, 1957]

On July 3, the Senate considered two bills amending the August 1954 legislation authorizing the fixed-span Constitution Avenue Bridge. S. 944 authorized the Secretary of the Interior to construct, operate, and maintain a four-lane tunnel from the vicinity of Constitution Avenue in the District to Virginia, to be built north of the Arlington Memorial Bridge and south of, or under, Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Island, as well as approaches. In planning the approach ramps and connecting roads in the District, the Secretary was to consult with NCPC, the Commission of Fine Arts, the District commissioners, and BPR. For the Virginia approaches and connecting roads, the Secretary was to enter into agreements with Arlington County and the State Highway Commission. The amendment authorized \$25.5 million to cover all costs, including the cost of approaches and connecting roads.

An alternative bill, S. 1707, was identical to the bill the Senate approved in 1956. It authorized a six-lane fixed span bridge crossing the southern tip of Roosevelt Island.

Senator Bible informed his colleagues about the long history behind these bills, saying that S. 944 brings into focus the key question about the Constitution Avenue crossing, namely “whether that crossing is to be a 6-lane bridge crossing or a 4-lane tunnel crossing.” He summarized the history of his committee’s review as well as the testimony pro and con.

Senator Beall summarized the arguments for S. 944, adding, “I think, if we wish to have a crossing of the river, the main thing we must work out is a bill which will be approved by both bodies of Congress.”

Senator Joseph C. O’Mahoney (D-Wy.) was the chief sponsor of S. 944 and floor manager for it during the debate. Senator O’Mahoney, an attorney, had won election to the Senate in the Democratic landslide of 1932 and had strongly backed President Roosevelt’s New Deal legislation. He became chairman of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs in 1949, and served in that capacity until he was defeated for reelection in 1952. He was elected again in 1954 and returned to the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, although not as chairman. While in Washington, he lived in the Sheraton-Park Hotel, a largely residential hotel at Connecticut Avenue and Woodley Road, NW., just west of the National Zoological Park. (The hotel is now known as the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel.)

Senator O'Mahoney said that he had introduced S. 944 as vice chairman of the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Association. The proposed bridge, he said, "would mar the scenic beauty of this area." The Federal Government "has been endeavoring to make this region of the Potomac River . . . a scenic center for the people of the United States." For the record, he entered a letter dated March 27, 1957, from Secretary of the Interior Frederick A. Seaton, a former Nebraska Senator who had taken office as Secretary on June 8, 1956:

I am, of course, vitally interested in this problem and am anxious that it be resolved in the total public interest.

As custodian of our national shrines, monuments, and memorials, which would be affected by either a tunnel or a bridge in the location now being considered, I wish you to know that you have the full support of the Department in pursuing the objectives of constructing a tunnel in the general vicinity of Constitution Avenue extended [The] Department of the Interior is opposed to a bridge trafficway in this vicinity

He also referred to the statement President Eisenhower issued upon signing the Potomac River bridges bill on August 30, 1954. President Eisenhower said he wanted trucks to be prohibited on the Constitution Avenue Bridge and that all passenger-carrying buses that were using the Arlington Memorial Bridge should use the new crossing. The Secretary continued:

This is an indication, it seems to me, that the President of the United States would not prefer the bridge to a tunnel which would carry the traffic.

Senator J. Allen Frear, Jr. (D-De.), a bridge supporter from the District Committee, asked if NCPC, the Commission of Fine Arts, and other organizations favoring a tunnel were willing to pay for the difference in cost between the tunnel and a bridge. Senator O'Mahoney claimed to believe that the cost of a six-lane bridge would be "much greater" than the cost of a four-lane tunnel and that, in any event, a four-lane tunnel "would carry much more traffic per square foot than any bridge which was ever built." Supporters of the two options disagreed on the cost, but Senator O'Mahoney added:

It is much more desirable to construct even a more expensive tunnel than to destroy the beauty of the memorial center of Washington.

With the vote nearing, Senator Bible urged his colleagues "to bear in mind that if a four-lane tunnel is built at the proposed Constitution Avenue crossing, the expert testimony is to the effect that from the day the tunnel is constructed it will be packed to capacity."

He then asked his colleagues to approve amending S. 944 by striking out the bill after the enacting clause and substituting S. 1707. Before the vote, Senator O'Mahoney said:

The result of the adoption of the amendment offered by the Senator from Nevada would be to reverse the action of the Committee on the District of Columbia, to repudiate the recommendation of the Department of the Interior, to violate the recommendation of the Fine Arts Commission, and other bodies, and to kill the tunnel.

Senator Bible responded that adopting the amendment would sustain the views of the District commissioners, BPR, and AAA.

Without a recorded vote, the Senate rejected Senator Bible's amendment. It then promptly voted in favor of S. 944 and the tunnel option. [Construction of Bridges Over the Potomac River, *Congressional Record-Senate*, July 3, 1957, pages 10881, 10883-10889]

The House Tries Again

The Senate action encouraged Chairman Davis, who told a *Star* reporter, "Now that the Senate has passed the four-lane tunnel plan, I think we will get some action and move along." Recalling the debate over whether a four-lane tunnel would be adequate, the reporter asked if Representative Davis agreed. "Well, I think so." ["Sponsors Seek Action Soon on River Tunnel," *The Evening Star*, July 7, 1957]

On August 1, the House took up H.R. 6763, a bill to amend the Potomac River bridges act approved on August 30, 1954. The bill replaced Title I of the law with a 10-section substitute headed "Tunnel in Vicinity of Constitution Avenue." Six of the sections reflected the Senate-approved S. 944, including authorization of \$25.5 million to carry out the provisions of the act. In addition, H.R. 6763 provided:

There is hereby authorized to be expended from the appropriations available to the National Park Service the sum of \$1 million for the preparation of plans, designs, and construction purposes.

The bill authorized the Interior Secretary, at his discretion, to employ professional engineers, landscape architects, or other consultants as needed. He was "granted authority to incur obligations and enter into contracts [that] shall be deemed a contractual obligation of the Federal Government for the payment of the cost thereof" Finally, H.R. 6763 provided:

There shall be transferred to the Department of the Interior so much of the records, property, and funds of the District of Columbia as may be appropriate by reason of the enactment of the foregoing provisions of this act. Such measures and dispositions as the Director of the Bureau of the Budget shall deem to be necessary to effectuate the said transfer shall be carried out in such manner as he shall direct.

That this aspect of the bill would be contentious became clear when Chairman Smith of the Rules Committee introduced House Resolution 375 establishing the terms of debate. Almost immediately, debate began on the merits of a tunnel rather than the resolution. When Chairman Smith completed his initial comments on the resolution, Representative Arthur L. Miller (R-Ne.), a member of the District Committee, pointed out that the resolution referred to construction of bridges but the underlying bill was for construction of a tunnel. "I think the gentleman must admit that there is quite a vast difference in an efficient overhead bridge and a tunnel."

After Representative Broyhill briefly explained the background, Representative Miller requested evidence as to the efficiency of the tunnel for meeting the traffic demands. Chairman Smith

explained that the evidence would be presented when the bill, not the resolution, was up for consideration.

After a brief exchange with Representative James G. Fulton (R-Pa.) about the difference in cost, Representative Gross, the penny pinching obstructionist from Iowa, said he opposed the resolution because it waived points of order, one of his primary methods of delay since they allowed him to question whether a measure was in accordance with House rules. In the case of H.R. 6763, he said he realized “there are very good reasons why points of order are waived on this bill,” citing the \$1 million taken from the NPS appropriation and the transfer of records, property, and funds from the District to the Interior Department. The NPS and District funds, he said, were appropriated for one purpose and designating them now for a different purpose without action by the Committee on Appropriations was improper:

I submit that these are two reasons why this bill is brought here under a rule waiving points of order. The rule ought not be adopted, and we can dispose of the bill quickly by defeating the rule.

As far as Representative Gross was concerned, “the taxpayers of this country should not be saddled with the cost of building a tunnel under the Potomac River for the benefit, in part at least, of the State of Virginia.”

With the resolution still under review, other congressmen began debating whether a four-lane tunnel could handle traffic as well as a six-lane bridge. Representative Miller, for example, pointed out that “a four-lane tunnel under the river would be obsolete and not adequate to handle the traffic as soon as it is finished.” He favored a six-lane bridge, but if the House wanted a tunnel, he hoped it would have at least six lanes.

Finally, the House agreed to the resolution, allowing debate on H.R. 6763 to get underway. Debate would last an hour, with Chairman Davis given 30 minutes in support of the bill and Representative Sidney E. Simpson (R-II.) given 30 minutes in opposition.

Chairman Davis discussed the history of the debate in recent years and past congressional action, as well as the hearings held and Ole Singstad’s testimony, that allowed the subcommittee to draft the bill. He said:

The engineers and the traffic experts state that by 1970 we will need 17 additional traffic lanes from the Virginia side over to the District of Columbia. Very careful plans have been made to provide these 17 traffic lanes. Two of them have already been provided by the widening of the Key Bridge and the adding of two lanes to the Key Bridge [sic, probably Chain Bridge]. One of them will be provided by the construction of the new outgoing 14th Street bridge, which now has three lanes and the new bridge will have four lanes. A bridge is planned at Roaches Run which will provide six lanes. This tunnel will provide four lanes. Another bridge at Three Sisters will provide four lanes also.

With all these added lanes, the four-lane tunnel “will be able to take care of all the traffic that ought to be funneled into Constitution Avenue from Virginia.”

Further, the experts said “it would be a mistake to funnel more vehicles into the Constitution Avenue [sic] than could be carried through this tunnel.” He pointed out that NPS Director Wirth stated that “a four-lane tunnel would provide crossing [sic] for the maximum number of vehicles which Constitution Avenue and the streets in that area should be called upon to handle.”

Several congressmen expressed the view that, as Representative Louis C. Rabaut (D-Mi.) put it, “It certainly is apparent to anyone that on 6 lanes you are going to move more traffic than you are on 4.” Here and throughout the debate, Chairman Davis tried to convey they idea that six lanes were not needed at this location because with a total of 17 added lanes, Virginia traffic would be dispersed over several crossings:

It must be dispersed. It must be brought in so that it will not congest the approaches to these various crossings. So that when [traffic] is delivered over into Washington it will not all be funneled into one point.

When Representative Alfred J. Westland (R-Wa.) expressed support for the bill and commended Representative Broyhill for his presentation of the case, Representative Gross said he also wanted “to commend the gentleman from Virginia when it comes to tapping the Federal Treasury for the benefit of his people. He is always on the job.”

Another frequently raised issue was why the Federal Government should pay 100 percent of the cost of the bridge. Representative Broyhill had said that since the tunnel would tie into land owned by the Federal Government, “it is not different than the various national parks throughout this great country.” Of course, the people of Maryland, Virginia, and the District would be the primary users of the tunnel, “but since this is the Nation’s Capital, it will be used by all the people of the country.” He added that since the route was on the Interstate System, the Federal Government was going to pay 90 percent of the cost of whatever was built in the corridor, “so the only thing we can argue about is 10 percent of the cost of construction.”

Representative John M. Robsion, Jr. (R-Ky.) was one of several congressmen who took exception to the comparison with National Parks. “It would seem to me that 90 percent of the traffic over this bridge would consist of people who live in Virginia and work in the District of Columbia. I do not know on what theory the State of Virginia should be relieved of any responsibility for this expense, when they are getting taxes from the homes that are being built over there and from the people, yet they shift the entire responsibility to the Federal Government.”

Representative Broyhill replied that it was “the extension of the Federal Government through its nontaxpaying Federal installations that has caused the necessity for construction of this facility here in the District.”

He also pointed out that building a bridge across Roosevelt Island would affect planned memorials, including one to President Theodore Roosevelt on the island named after him and the Freedom Foundation Memorial to the Bill of Rights planned for construction near the Iwo Jima Memorial (Marine Corps War Memorial) in Virginia. (Sarcastically, Representative Gross said “that would be in the national park known as northern Virginia.”)

During the 2 days of debate, the House considered why Virginia and the District did not pay for the tunnel, possibly by making it a toll facility. Representative Kearns introduced an amendment calling for a 25-cent toll round trip. “Then nobody can go home and be accused of favoritism or that they voted for a tunnel to take care of Virginia.” As a member of the District Committee, he acknowledged that Virginia’s agreement to pay for the approaches would be a sufficient contribution to the project.

Some congressmen wondered where the District funds were coming from. Representative John Taber (R-NY) asked, “Would part of it come out of the school lunch program or the school education program?” This question and several others, including confusion about the cost of a tunnel versus a bridge plus the approaches, prompted him to add, “this is all mixed up You cannot tell a single thing about what the bill does or what it means. It is just a mess.”

The \$1 million taken from NPS was another sticking point. Several members called Director Wirth to ask his views on the transfer. One of those was Representative Michael J. Kirwan (D-Oh.). He recognized the need for the tunnel, but not at the expense of National Parks. He asked Wirth if he had a hand in shifting this \$1 million from park needs:

I just called the Director of the Parks, and he said no, that he made no such request for a million dollars I served notice on him then that “if we overgave you a million dollars this year for the Park Service, I will guarantee you will not get it again.”

As Representatives objected to the bill and the debate process, an impatient Chairman Smith took the floor to say:

I think more misinformation has been spread around this thing in an effort to defeat a good bill than anything I have seen around here lately. The most absurd questions have been raised about this. Gentlemen get up and talk about using the money for school lunches, and they will have some people think that is true. It has nothing in the world to do with this bill. This is a bill to build a tunnel across the Potomac River.

The issue had been debated for 3 years and he did not want to spend a day or two “on a filibuster about this bill.” He said, “If you want to strike out the enacting clause, go ahead and do it, and we will swim across the river if we have to.”

He was particularly upset by the debate over who should pay for the tunnel:

Now, if you want to throw this thing out of the window without any consideration, all right, but when you realize the Navy Department and your Pentagon Building employ thousands and thousands of people who use these bridges every day, that it is not for Virginia, it is not for Maryland, it is not for the District of Columbia, but it is for the United States of America Your Federal employees have to come across that river every morning and every night, coming and going to work, and that condition is getting bad.

As for the number of lanes, he pointed out that between the four-lane tunnel and six-lane Arlington Memorial Bridge, “you have got together there in one area 10 lanes of traffic that are

going to be turned in daily to the downtown area of Washington where the traffic is congested.” He asked:

Now, do you think you ought to make it any worse than we have to make it under this bill? If you put 12 lanes around the White House and the Jefferson Memorial into the business part of Washington, you just will not be able to handle it.

As a member of the District Committee, he could say that these factors and the expert testimony had been behind the committee’s creation of the bill:

If our thoughts on it, if our work on it, if the time we have spent on it, if the work of the various and sundry engineers and other experts we brought here are worth anything, then let us go ahead and pass this bill. If you do not want to pass any bill, if you want to go home and say, “Yes, we would not let them build a bridge across the Potomac for the people of Virginia and Maryland and the District,” if you want to demagog [sic] about this thing, then let us get through with it.

Representative Clare E. Hoffman (R-Mi.) immediately raised a point of order regarding the use of the “demagog business.” Chairman Smith replied, “If anybody is out of order on any occasion, on any bill, talking about demagoguery in this Chamber, I do not know him.” During the remaining debate, the phrase would be referenced repeatedly.

Representative Hoffman, who often used a humorous tone in the debate, discussed how the bridge approved in 1954 had turned into a tunnel. He said “the evidence is, and it is not disputed, that the engineers came up, as I got it anyway, with a six-lane bridge and that will cost less than a four-lane tunnel.” They also agreed a bridge would carry more traffic than a tunnel:

Then why do we not have a bridge recommended? Is it because two private enterprises, an oil company and a gravel and sand company, for their own profit want a draw in any bridges that may be built? Is that it? Or is it because over in the other body they insisted that if they built a bridge, they have a draw on it and they could not get a bill [with] a draw in the Senate because of the opposition of a gentleman from Tennessee?

. . . . So not being able to get a six-lane bridge with a draw, it is now a four-lane tunnel to accommodate those two companies and we soak the taxpayers. I cannot accept it.

Representative Gross said, “So they just sent this bill in to try it on for size and see how it will fit, and maybe next year we will have another one.”

Representative Hoffman continued, “I cannot soak the taxpayers for a tunnel when a bridge will better serve the people at a far less cost.”

Representative Saylor introduced an amendment to drop the \$1 million transfer from the NPS. Representative Walter H. Judd (R-Mn.) thanked him for the amendment, saying “This is the worst thing in the bill, from the standpoint of a great many of us.” He was for the tunnel, but not “this business of reaching over into somebody else’s pocket and taking money that was appropriated or planned for other purposes that are also equally worthy.”

When several representatives asked whose idea the \$1 million transfer was, Representative Broyhill said that the Interior Department's representatives had suggested it "to proceed with the drawing of the plans and construction of this facility because of the emergency. They stated that they had funds they could transfer over for temporary use until funds were appropriated for the specific purpose later on." However, in view of the controversy the provision had provoked, he planned to support the Saylor amendment. Chairman Davis agreed that he would not object if his colleagues dropped the provision.

Representative Gross offered his own amendment that authorized the District of Columbia and Virginia to build the tunnel. He explained:

Mr. Chairman [of the Committee of the Whole House], a little while ago those of us who were opposed to this bill were accused of being demagogues. I do not know anything that smacks more of demagoguery than to try to shift the building of all the bridges from Maryland and Virginia into the District of Columbia onto the taxpayers, all the taxpayers of this country, including those in Iowa.

Like many of his colleagues, he thought the District and Virginia could finance the tunnel as a toll facility, just as his own State had done to pay for replacement of a Mississippi River bridge that had collapsed in Representative Schwengel's district "only a year or so ago." Instead of coming to Congress asking for funds to replace the bridge, Representative Schwengel "asked for an authorization so that a new bridge might be built with private funds across the Mississippi River, a toll bridge . . .")

As for the \$1 million transfer from the NPS, he said he was "suspicious of committee members yielding so quickly when somebody offers an amendment as in the case of the gentleman from Pennsylvania . . ." Representative Hoffman suggested that "they be commended for acknowledging it was wrong and they took it out." To that, Representative Gross replied, "I wish they would acknowledge that the rest of the bill is wrong."

The House rejected the Gross amendment. [Authorizing Construction of Bridges Over the Potomac River, *Congressional Record-House*, August 1, 1957, pages 13365-13387]

On August 2, the House resumed debate on H.R. 6763. Chairman Davis, after stressing several points in response to the issues raised the day before, pointed out that since the Senate had already approved a bill authorizing a four-lane tunnel, "if we pass a four-lane tunnel bill we can coordinate the two bills, go ahead and move, and solve the traffic problem."

Representative Hoffman again wondered why a bridge bill had become a tunnel bill. The night before, he said, he had asked several Senators why they had passed a tunnel bill and the "answer from everywhere was that they understood that the House would not build a bridge but had to have a tunnel." He favored an amendment that would leave the 1954 law as the solution to the traffic problem. "If you gentlemen want a way of getting across the river, this amendment which will be proposed will give it to you and give it to you now."

In addition, he referred to Chairman Smith's comment about demagogues. "Well, now, my feelings are not very easily hurt, and I am not sure they were hurt at that time, but they should have been." Chairman Smith was hurling that charge "at everyone who opposed the position the gentleman takes on his bill."

Representative Broyhill observed that many of his conservative colleagues were trying to kill the bill under the impression that doing so would save taxpayer money. That was not the case, he said, because if the bill died, the District could proceed with the bridge project authorized in the 1954 legislation, with Federal-aid funds:

We are only here trying to work out a compromise so that these people whom we have charged with the responsibility of preserving these beautiful areas around our Nation's Capital can work out this problem. So far as paying the cost of construction is concerned, you have already answered that question before in the approval of Public Law 704.

Representative Hoffman introduced his amendment that would change four-lane tunnel to a "6-lane bridge." When Representative Broyhill pointed out that that the 1954 law already called for a six-lane bridge, Representative Hoffman replied:

Then why not see that it is built. Call for the ousting of the bureaucrats who defy the Congress. Cut off their compensation. Refuse to give them funds to operate. Who are they? Where do they get their power?

Chairman Smith said that the Hoffman amendment "raises a very fundamental question," namely whether a bridge or tunnel should be built:

Underlying the question of the bridge is the question of the use of the Potomac River by transportation. At Georgetown there is one of the oldest ports in the United States. There is important business there now. There is a movement on now to improve the ports of Alexandria and Washington for international shipping. If the amendment passes in its present state, there is no provision for a bascule span to permit traffic to go up and down the river Every bridge there now has a bascule span and if you put one in without such a span, you close up the oldest port in America.

He suggested amending the Hoffman amendment by adding "with a bascule span" to the wording. Representative Hoffman agreed, but said:

The cat is out of the bag now exposed by what the gentleman from Virginia said. And it is a sorry looking alley cat. Navigation. Navigation. Sometime in the future we are to have a seaport up the river in Georgetown.

In short, he said, the beneficiaries were "a couple of boatowners [sic] and oil company and a sand and gravel company":

The sand and gravel company and the oil company, their officers, their stockholders, their employees stand to profit—not the folks who want to cross the river We are to build this tunnel to pay a less cost for these two companies, private industries to operate

Do we need an investigation to learn why officials refuse to build a needed bridge and what kind of, and who is doing the lobbying for a tunnel instead of a bridge.

The House agreed to Chairman Smith's amendment of the Hoffman amendment.

As debate continued, Representative Gross offered another amendment, this one providing that for the purpose of building the tunnel, "the Secretary of the Interior shall offer for sale to the State of Virginia, at a fair appraised value, such lands and other property held by the Federal Government as may be necessary for construction of the said tunnel and approach ramps."

Chairman Smith pointed out that as a result of the approved Hoffman amendment, "this is no longer a tunnel bill." The House rejected the latest Gross amendment.

Undaunted, Representative Gross offered another amendment, this one authorizing \$25.5 million, one half to be contributed by the District of Columbia, the other half by Virginia. Without debate, the House quickly rejected the amendment.

Representative Kearns recognized that the amended bill now referred to a bridge, but he offered an amendment drafted earlier to require a toll of 25 cents, round trip, through the tunnel referenced in the original bill. By explanation, he cited the Holland Tunnel in New York City, which was paid for "in 7 years at a cost of 50 cents per car." Based on projected travel on the crossing of the Potomac River, "we could amortize this tunnel in 10 years, and I think we could keep the toll on for another 10 or 11 years, we would have sufficient money for maintenance for 25 years." He acknowledged the long-running dispute over a bridge versus tunnel. "It has rightly been said that we have enough bridges over the river; in my opinion, we must go to tunnels eventually. They are more consistent."

Representative Broyhill opposed the amendment. It was, he said, "rather superfluous" since the bill now called for a bridge, not a tunnel. As for the toll idea, he said that with the Arlington Memorial Bridge 1,000 feet away and Key Bridge about 2,000 feet away, Virginia motorists would have three choices, one of which involved paying a toll:

I believe if such a crossing were built it would not be used up to 10 percent of its capacity. It would certainly be a foolish thing for the Federal Government to do to the entrance to our Nation's Capital.

When Representative Kearns asked about the possibility of reducing the toll, Representative Broyhill replied:

As the bill is presently written—and I do not know anyone who knows how it is written with all these amendments in it—it is a superfluous bill. We have a law on the statute books now with certain funds appropriated for a six-lane bridge. The way this bill is now written we might just as well vote the whole thing down, because we already have a law to permit the building of a bridge.

Several congressmen tried to determine what would happen if the bill were returned to committee, leaving unchanged the bill approved on August 30, 1954. As for whether the District

of Columbia could use the available funds now, Representative Taber replied, “They would not have to wait 10 minutes.” Perhaps confused or in despair, Representative Broyhill pointed out that the language transferring the funds to the Department of the Interior had been stricken from the bill on the floor. Representative Taber replied that nothing had been stricken out of the 1954 law:

Representative Broyhill. As the bill stands today practically everything has been stricken out.

Mr. Taber. The money is there and they would be ready to go.

As the debate came to an end, the House took a roll call vote on the Hoffman amendment, as amended to include “bridge with bascule span.” The House voted for the amendment, 226 to 109.

Representative Miller offered an amendment to recommit the bill to the District Committee, which the House quickly approved. [Authorizing Construction of Bridges Over the Potomac River, *Congressional Record-House*, August 2, 1957, pages 13489-13503]

Recommitting the bill essentially killed it but gave the committee members a chance to redraft it if they wished.

On August 6, the House was debating a supplemental appropriations act that included funds for a new airport to serve the Washington-Baltimore area, with expansion of existing Friendship International Airport in Maryland or a new airport in what is now called now Burke Lake Park, Virginia, as options. Representative Hoffman observed that:

The local Congressmen cannot agree where they want it—Burke or Friendship. Many of us do not care where it is constructed just so one is built.

The situation is like this bridge-tunnel controversy; we would have had a bridge the other day if the bill had not been recommitted. If the gentlemen from Virginia want their people to have service, why do they block it? Already there is legislation on the books saying that there shall be a bridge, but someone does not want it where that bill authorizes its construction, so we do not have a bridge anywhere.

What is the situation? Our good friend from Virginia [Mr. Broyhill], our delightful friend from Virginia [Mr. Smith], they are keeping people waiting Why? Because they cannot make up their minds. Yes, of course they have; oh, yes; they want a tunnel or they want a bridge, with a draw in it, so those two companies up the river can make larger profits.

Chairman Smith’s comment about the port of Georgetown was still on Representative Hoffman’s mind:

Well, now, the aristocratic population that lives up there in Georgetown may not welcome a lot of dockworkers under their noses, however fine the workers may be. They would not mix any more than oil and water.

And when is Georgetown going to be a seaport? Are we to dredge the channel of the river from Georgetown way down to the bay entrance? They are talking now about the channel not being deep enough to take boats up to Baltimore. What do the gentlemen want to do? Make a seaway to Georgetown? And after you get the seaway what are you to use it for? What do the gentlemen propose to ship up to Georgetown. The talk of Georgetown as a seaport, seems to be nonsense.

There is something about that bill or, rather, about the refusal to build that bridge, that was authorized a long time ago, that just smells to high heaven, and it would not be too bad a thing if the Congress, with the investigating committees it has, would just appoint another to find out what is loose somewhere around. It is all right to represent your constituents, but, after all, other people have some interest in what we do.

I asked the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. Broyhill]: “What makes you think you will get a tunnel any quicker than you would a bridge? He replied: “There have been a lot of folks who have wanted a bridge over there for a number of years, but they will not build it.” I asked him who would not build it, and he said the Department of the Interior.

Well, let us get after them. Who are they? It may be all right for the Supreme Court to defy the Congress and tell us we do not know what we are legislating about and that we do not mean what we say, but are we to let the Department of Interior come along and usurp the function of criticism which the Supreme Court has assumed? It is about time we sat down on the Department of the Interior, and if they will not do what we tell them to do, cut off their appropriations; they come to time [sic]. [Supplemental Appropriations for 1958, *Congressional Record-House*, August 6, 1957, pages 13778-13779]

On August 7, he introduced a bill to amend the 1954 Potomac River bridge act to shift the bridge to Roosevelt Island. With Congress due to recess on August 30, any consideration of the bill or of the issue would have to wait for the second session of the 85th Congress beginning on January 7, 1958.

(As Representative Hoffman suspected, a Georgetown seaport, if ever under consideration, never became a reality.)

Trying to Get Construction Underway

At the end of July, Engineer Commissioner Lane left office. Speaking of his two and a half years as Engineer Commissioner, General Lane said he favored home rule to replace the current government by presidentially appointed commissioners. “This gives our friendly rivals in the suburbs more control over the spending of our tax dollars than we have ourselves.” His next assignment was Commanding Officer, Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri.

At a farewell party for him on July 25, the *Star's* principal political cartoonist, Jim Berryman, gave the departing commissioner a recent editorial cartoon about the battle over the Constitution Avenue Bridge. It depicted General Lane at his desk, happily waving his "Transfer Order to Command of Fort Leonard Wood." Behind him was a filing cabinet labeled "Potomac Crossing," with bulging drawers for "Bridge vs Tunnel." The caption read, "Hooray . . . Back to the Old PONTOON BRIDGES!" [Bassett, Grace, "Cool Controversy Marks Lane's Rule in District," *The Evening Star*, July 7, 1957; "Officials Laud Lane, Hail Welling at Party," *The Evening Star*, July 26, 1957; Berryman cartoon, *The Evening Star*, July 22, 1957, page 8]

General Lane's successor was Colonel Alvin C. Welling, a 46-year old civil engineer who had joined the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1938 after graduating from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. During World War II, he was stationed until 1943 in Alaska where he was involved in construction of the Corps' Southern Sector portion of the pioneer Alaska Highway in 1942. In 1943, he was reassigned to New Delhi, India, as executive officer to the Chief of Engineers, Service in Supply, in the China-Burma-Indian theater where he had been a staff officer on construction of the Assam-Burma Road. He had served several times in the Washington area: at Fort Belvoir, Virginia (1939), Office of Chief Engineer at Gravelly Point (in 1943, for 6 months, and again in 1951), and Fort McNair War College (1955-1956).

When President Eisenhower named him to the post of Engineer Commissioner, Colonel Welling was stationed in Heidelberg, Germany, as deputy engineer of the U.S. Army in Europe. He, his wife, and two school-age children moved into a home at 4629 Rockwood Parkway, NW., in the Spring Valley neighborhood of the District south of American University, just north of the Palisades, and not far from Glover-Archbold Park. The family included a beagle, named Gerald Kanine Beagle, that the Wellings had acquired in Arlington a few years earlier when he was a pup, (Having been shipped by mistake to Albuquerque, New Mexico, during the transfer, "Jerry" arrived belatedly in Washington.) ["Officials Laud Lane, Hail Welling at Party," *The Evening Star*, July 26, 1957; "Welling to Succeed Lane As D.C. Commissioner," *The Evening Star*, July 3, 1957]

After arriving in Washington, the family stayed at the Berkshire, a deluxe rental apartment building at 4201 Massachusetts Avenue, NW., where he talked to reporters in the lobby. None of his assignments had been "tame." As the *Star* put it:

Whether the task involved the 500-inch rainfalls of Assam, the 79-below zero cold of Alaska or running a teeming metropolis like the Nation's Capital, Col. Alvin C. Welling says he regards every last one as a challenge and source of enjoyment.

He told reporters, "Please. I don't want to talk about the Southwest Freeway, home rule, the Constitution Avenue Bridge or River Beno Dam. Right now, I'd rather talk about finding a house." He wanted to meet with his friend, General Lane, for updates on all the issues facing the new engineer commissioner, some of which Colonel Welling was familiar with from earlier postings to the area. He was looking forward with "keen anticipation" to his new assignment.

On July 29, General Lane and Colonel Welling paid a courtesy call on President Eisenhower at the White House. They declined to tell reporters what they discussed with the President, but

General Lane did say that he had not brought up any particular problems. They had discussed, he said, the position of engineer commissioner. [Stepp, John W., "Col. Welling to 'Enjoy' Challenge of D.C. Post," *The Evening Star*, July 19, 1957; "New Commissioner and Gen. Lane Call on President," *The Evening Star*, July 29, 1957]

By the time Colonel Welling took his oath of office on August 1, District officials had had enough. They were ready to move on the Constitution Avenue Bridge at its original location between Roosevelt Island and Arlington Memorial Bridge as approved in 1954. The District Highway Department asked the commissioners to authorize the project. Colonel Welling was believed to support the proposal, but Commissioner McLaughlin wanted time to examine cost estimates.

(Further, the Corps' permit for the fixed span was to expire on August 23. Robertson had requested an extension. The Corps extended the permit for 2 years to start construction and 4 years to complete the bridge.)

Two Senators stated they agreed with the District Highway Department. Senator Bible said the record was "abundantly clear" that the bridge was not only needed but congressionally authorized. "I urge that the bridge be built without further delay." Senator Gordon L. Allott (R-Co.) also recommended that the city "should start to build and build quickly." He acknowledged that he was "torn between loyalties" as a member of the National Monuments Commission. His preference was to keep the west shore of the Potomac clear for a monument to the Five Freedoms, but he felt that traffic needs overrode his preference. ["Officials Ask Go-Ahead On Constitution Bridge," *The Evening Star*, August 6, 1957]

On August 16, District officials announced they would go ahead. Colonel Welling predicted that construction would begin by the middle of 1958:

Commissioner Robert E. McLaughlin, who announced the decision jointly with Col. Welling, said the White House has offered no objection to proceeding with the bridge authorized in 1954. He said the city had agreed, however, to follow certain suggestions made by President Eisenhower at the time the 1954 legislation was signed. Included, he said, is a provision that trucks be banned from the bridge.

The District authorized Modjeski and Masters to begin designing the planned steel bridge while selecting a Chicago firm, Freyssinet-Preload Corporation, to design a bridge of prestressed concrete. The more cost-effective alternative would be chosen.

Design work on the bridge had begun after approval of the 1954 bridge, but approaches had been redrawn based on consultation with other organizations. The 1954 Act required consultation with NCPC and the Fine Arts Commission, but did not give them approval over the plans. As Beveridge pointed out:

This fact, nevertheless, is not likely to rule out heavy controversy during the next year among city highway officials and the planners, Fine Arts Commission and National Park Service.

Representative Broyhill, after the bruising battle over his tunnel bill, issued a statement:

I am of course gratified that we have no further obstacles to encounter and that the Commissioners intend to go ahead with construction. While there were a lot of annoying and disagreeable procedures we had to go through in Congress recently, we had to debate the issue to let the people know that Congress does not desire to amend the bridge authorization law which I sponsored in 1954. [Beveridge, George, "Work Expected to Start On Bridge by Mid-1958," *The Evening Star*, August 17, 1957]

Representative Broyhill later said he had conferred with White House officials since failure of his tunnel bill and had urged them to support the 1954 bridge location. They were, he said, primarily concerned about the traffic impact on the Lincoln Memorial area and the possibility of trucks on the roads in the memorial's vicinity.

Colonel Welling said the city had "a firm understanding" with BPR that the bridge would qualify for Interstate funds at a Federal share of 90 percent despite the truck ban. He also was reaching out to NCPC and the Fine Arts Commission to gain their support. Neither had, as yet, commented, but in a broadcast on WWDC's "Report to the People," Commissioner McLaughlin was asked if he thought the bridge would finally be built. "I certainly do. It is the full intention of the Commissioners and the Highway Department to go ahead with construction as fast as possible." [Beveridge, George, "Inter-Agency Accord Sought On River Span," *The Evening Star*, August 18, 1957]

Chairman Smith accepted the District's decision, saying he had exhausted his legislative efforts to secure a draw span. "There's nothing I can do," he said. "Congress passed the law." As for the businesses calling for a draw span, he said that if "the engineers who have the power to block the river want to do that, that's up to them." Still, he said, "I just don't like abandoning the age-old theory that rivers are highways" that should not be closed. ["Smith Stops Efforts to Get Draw Span," *The Evening Star*, August 19, 1957]

Before commenting formally, the Commission of Fine Arts asked for a model of the bridge and its approaches. Colonel Welling refused, saying the preparation of such a model would be a needless delay. On November 21, he gave the commission the plans for a multiple-arch span, faced with masonry, patterned after the Arlington Memorial Bridge. The *Star* praised the design, saying it was "far from the 'ugly scar' foreseen by one prominent opponent." It was "in short, a handsome design." The editorial pointed out that the 1954 law required consultation with the Fine Arts Commission, not its concurrence. "We hope, however, that the commission and the highway engineers will come to an early agreement on the design, so that actual construction of the long-awaited bridge can be started in the near future." ["Hardly an 'Ugly Scar,'" *The Evening Star*, November 25, 1957]

The commission did not agree. On December 19, David Finley replied in what Beveridge called "a bitter denunciation" of the city's plan to move forward with the bridge project. Finley said the commission strongly opposed the location of the bridge and hoped Congress would pass a law in 1958 shifting the bridge to a location across Roosevelt Island. However, if the city insisted on proceeding, the commission favored a masonry-type bridge. Finley also said the city should seek

the commission's advice on the architectural features of the connecting roadway structures in the District and Virginia:

In any event, the Commission of Fine Arts does not concur in or take any responsibility for the grave decision arrived at by the District Commissioners to proceed with the bridge in the short time intervening before the re-assembling of Congress.

You are at liberty, of course, under the law, to disregard such advice. We are not at liberty, however, to give you anything less than our considered, disinterested opinion as to what is best for the City of Washington.

He explained that the bridge was only a part of the project, which included roadways, overpasses and other structures. "These structures are hardly less important than the bridge itself, in the effect they will have on the appearance of the city." The commission was especially concerned about a planned 23rd Street overpass of Constitution Avenue which it said would "deposit a stream of traffic practically at the base of the Lincoln Memorial." In addition, the commission was concerned about how the approaches would affect Roosevelt Island, Arlington Memorial Bridge, and the Iwo Jima Marine Memorial:

Since you have refused to furnish the information requested, the commission is not in a position to advise as regards the proposed structures, except in the case of the bridge over the Potomac River at Constitution avenue.

In that regard, the commission would approve a masonry-type bridge "at some other location." To avoid any doubt, Finley added:

In considering the merits of the design, however, it must be understood that the commission does not, either directly or by implication, approve the erection of a bridge and its network . . . so near the Memorial bridge and the Lincoln Memorial. [Beveridge, George, "Fine Arts' Protest On Bridge Studied," *The Evening Star*, December 20, 1957]

The *Star* referred to the letter as "merely one opinion . . . expressed by an agency specifically created to give it." The editorial said that "after more than five years of interminable wrangling," the District commissioners had no choice but to proceed in view of the actions of other agencies and the Congress. "There has never been a more dismal demonstration of their utter incapability of working together in the common interest."

The point was not that the location was ideal. It was a compromise, worked out with Senator Case, that "Congress approved in its own confused exasperation over the hopeless conflict between the various executive agencies involved." The commissioners "seem powerless" to do anything but proceed. "Only the President of the United States can straighten out the inexcusable mess created by the inability of his executive agencies to reach agreement." There was still time for President Eisenhower to send "a forthright request" to Congress to approve legislation shifting the bridge to the tip of Roosevelt Island, and for the House and Senate to act. "If it is not done, and quickly, we shall have our own Bridge of Sighs near the Lincoln Memorial." ["Monument to Confusion," *The Evening Star*, December 22, 1957]

The day after the editorial, Colonel Welling replied to Finley's letter, saying the District was "pleased to have that architectural advice in writing" and adding that, "If it represents the commission's final advice on the bridge, then the commission and the engineers of the District could perhaps go on to further consultations."

He ruled out further discussions of the approaches and affected roadways. He planned to confine future consultations with the commission to design of pedestrian access between Small Island and Roosevelt Island:

The District has written the Theodore Roosevelt Association in search of the association's wishes concerning the pedestrian access from the bridge to Small Island. The item has since been discussed telephonically with a representative of the association.

The District would seek the Fine Arts Commission's advice after the Roosevelt Association offered its views on the pedestrian access.

As for the approaches, the District had consulted with the commission in 1955-1956. "The commission's views are well known, and every reasonable effort is being made to accommodate them." Colonel Welling added, "Any adequate bridge or adequate tunnel in that general vicinity will lead to the same general approach road system." ["Fine Arts Angered, Bridge Plans Pushed," *The Evening Star*, December 24, 1957]

In early 1958, Secretary Seaton informed reporters that he had written to the District Commissioners and spoken with Commissioners McLaughlin and Colonel Welling to request all plans for the Constitution Avenue Bridge. His request, he explained, was in accordance with President Eisenhower's August 1954 signing statement that the Secretary "should be authorized to approve all plans for the bridge and for approach roads and interchanges" to protect Federal interests. Secretary Seaton hoped to meet with Colonel Welling soon to discuss procedures for moving forward.

Asked if the NPS would continue to work on Capitol Hill against the bridge, Secretary Seaton said, "I have not any such intention." As for whether he thought he would approve the city's plans, he replied:

I certainly would hope so. I am entirely convinced that we need more ways and means of getting across that river. No one needs to convince me of that. But whether I can approve the plans, I can't say until I see what they are. I have never seen them at all.

He added that the President, in 1954, had given him "a heavy responsibility—I have to certify that whatever is done there will not be inimical to the interests of the Lincoln Memorial."

The NPS's Wirth indicated he had not initiated further discussions with Congress on the tunnel option.

Asked if he would meet with Secretary Seaton, Colonel Welling replied that he was "interested in working with anyone who has a legitimate interest in the various phases of the project—

provided the conversations are in the direction of progress rather than in the directions of impediments and delays.” He added:

I am not interested in a tunnel or in a four-lane bridge. From a considerable position of strength, I am opposed to efforts to amend the existing legislation, either in favor of a tunnel or to choose a new location for the bridge.

He said the District Highway Department had been working with National Capital Parks to ensure its concerns were addressed. [Beveridge, George, “Seaton Stresses Right to Okay Bridge Plans,” *The Evening Star*, January 12, 1958]

At the invitation of the District commissioners, they escorted Secretary Seaton and Under Secretary O. Hatfield Chilson on an inspection tour of the bridge site on January 27. Secretary Seaton also asked to see the site that would have taken the bridge over the tip of Roosevelt Island. The *Star* described the tour:

The inspection party first visited the District side of the river. The officials walked over ground which already has been staked out with the five roadways which would interlace park land near the Lincoln Memorial and link the projected bridge with Rock Creek and Potomac parkway, the Memorial roadways and the city street system.

The bridge would touch the shore slightly south of Constitution avenue near the ornamental Watergate, which flanks Memorial Bridge.

Mr. Seaton questioned particularly the elevation of the bridge approaches. Highway officials said the bridge at the shoreline would be 18 feet above the ground. The roadway would slope downward and reach ground level about 300 feet west of Twenty-third street

Later, the party crossed Memorial Bridge to the Columbia Island end of the proposed new bridge. Mr. Seaton there checked the vista which include [sic] the Lincoln Memorial, Washington Monument and Capitol dome.

Motorists, District officials told the Secretary, would have an unparalleled view of these sites. However, Associate Director Harry T. Thompson of National Capital Parks, “told a reporter . . . that in his opinion construction of a bridge at the proposed site would ruin this vista, which he called the finest in the area.”

The excursion did not resolve all concerns. Secretary Seaton was concerned about whether people in the vicinity of the bridge would be able to see the Lincoln Memorial. Although he had wanted to see the Roosevelt Island site that had been subject of recent legislative wrangling, he said of the 1954 location, “I’d rather work this plan out if I can.” [Deane, James G., “Seaton Hopes For Accord on Bridge Soon,” *The Evening Star*, January 27, 1958]

During a joint meeting of the Senate and House District Committees on February 4, Representative Broyhill asked the District commissioners when they would begin work on the Constitution Avenue Bridge. Commissioner McLaughlin replied that the city was waiting to see

how Congress would act on pending matters, including the bill authorizing a tunnel instead of a bridge. "I'd like to have that indication today," he said. That would not be possible, Senator Bible explained, until the Senate committee held hearings on a resolution that Senator O'Mahoney was about to introduce on the subject. Although Senator Bible favored the bridge, he did not want to deny tunnel supporters prompt opportunity for their views to be heard.

Colonel Welling, who was sitting in the crowd, tried to get Representative Broyhill's attention, stage whispering "Joel . . . Joel." When recognized, he told the joint committees that the District had submitted plans for approach roads on both sides of the river to Secretary Seaton 3 weeks earlier. "This is a procedure we always follow when roads cross park land." As soon as he received approval from Secretary Seaton, he said, he would start construction.

Despite Commissioner McLaughlin's hesitation, Colonel Welling and Commissioner David B. Karrick told reporters they were satisfied that the District had congressional authorization to build the bridge approved in August 1954. Karrick said, "I think we have all the congressional authority we need to build the bridge." ["Commissioners Differ On Bridge Go-Ahead," *The Evening Star*, February 4, 1958]

Another Look at a Tunnel

On February 4, Senator O'Mahoney introduced a "sense of Congress" resolution calling on the District to halt preliminary work on the Constitution Avenue Bridge until Congress had "an opportunity" to consider the O'Mahoney tunnel bill. Representative Saylor introduced an identical resolution on February 5. (A "sense of Congress" resolution, if approved, does not require presidential approval or have the force of law. It is simply advice from Congress that Federal agencies may take – or not.)

The resolution angered Representative Broyhill, who said, "It doesn't have a chance." It also was, he said, ridiculous to say the House had not considered the tunnel alternative. "The House did, in effect, act on that proposition when it had my bill up late in the session and refused to pass it." [Preston, Alex R., "House Move Made to Block Bridge Project," *The Evening Star*, February 5, 1958]

Senator Bible was named head of the Senate District Committee on February 6, taking the place of Senator Matthew M. Neely (D-WV), who had died on January 18, 1958. The *Star* told its readers:

Senator Bible, a traditional friend of the District, has championed home rule, immediate construction of a Constitution avenue bridge and a study of Washington Metropolitan Area problems.

He parted with the District Commissioners and the Eisenhower administration on local suffrage by favoring an elected mayor, city council and school board in the past. The administration wants instead a territorial form of government for Washington. ["Senator Bible Named D.C. Committee Head," *The Evening Star*, February 6, 1958]

On February 6, Representative Broyhill introduced a resolution to the House that he said would “shore up, if necessary, the Commissioners so they won’t think there’s too much sentiment up here to halt the job.” Referring to action on his 1957 tunnel bill, he said, “After the battle we had, I don’t see how anyone can contend that that issue has not been settled in the House.” As for advocates of a tunnel in the House and Senate, he would ask Chairman McMillan to call up the O’Mahoney-Saylor bill at the committee’s next meeting:

If it’s action they want, by golly they’ll get it. I am confident they’ll back me up
Their whole proposal is ridiculous.

He would not seek House action on his resolution at this time, but if the commissioners hesitated, he said:

I shall press for action up here. My resolution is here to back them up in case they are getting any kind of pressure to hold off I can understand why they wouldn’t act last year while Congress was thrashing out the question of a tunnel or a bridge and its location. It was only after Congress acted and settled the matter—I thought once and for all—and they got the nod from the White House that they went into action. [Preston, Alex R., “Broyhill Moves To Block Delays On New Bridge,” *The Evening Star*, February 6, 1958]

Senator O’Mahoney issued a new attack on the bridge on February 13. He was particularly concerned about the cost of the project, which had been estimated to be \$24.5 million in 1954. Given inflation in construction costs since then, he said, “it is not too much to say the proposed bridge . . . eventually would cost as much as \$40 million.”

The District’s highway chief, Robertson, denied the Senator’s claim. Land and construction costs had jumped since 1954, but the bridge still could be built for \$24.5 million. In part, that was because some of the approach road projects previously assigned to the bridge were now part of other projects, including the Inner Loop.

Senator O’Maloney also wanted to delay the project because he understood the State Department was concerned that the approaches might affect the new State Department building at 23rd and C Streets, NW. The department had asked Secretary Seaton for a report on the issue, but, according to the Senator, “the District Commissioners refuse to give the information.” Robertson told reporters that conferences with the State Department were planned to clarify that the bridge approaches “would not disturb the State Department layout in any respect.” [“O’Mahoney Hits Bridge As Costing \$40 Million,” *The Evening Star*, February 13, 1958]

Senator Bible’s announcement that hearings would be held on the O’Mahoney/Saylor resolution prompted Senator John M. Butler (R-Md.), who lived in Baltimore, had not taken a firm view on the Constitution Avenue crossing, to announce his support for the six-lane bridge on February 25. He urged the District to begin construction of the bridge immediately. Hundreds of his Maryland constituents were delayed in daily bottlenecks trying to cross the Potomac River. Congress, he said, “already has spoken” in support of the bridge. He particularly denounced lobbying by Federal agencies against the bridge project:

This opposition obviously is spear-headed by the National Park Service. Personally, I resent the lobbying of Federal agencies for their pet projects in Congress, and I respectfully urge the President to call a halt to Federal agency lobbying against the already-approved bridge legislation.

It is high time that the District Commissioners brush the minority opposition aside. They should proceed without further delay to build the Constitution avenue bridge.

The same day, District officials met with Department of State officials regarding the approach road near their new building under construction to serve 9,000 employees. Robertson said after the meeting that he thought State Department officials felt the approach road plan would help traffic flow around the building, not hinder it. Colonel Welling agreed, saying “the result of the conferences which I have attended is that the conferees end up agreeing that the Highway Department proposals are the most efficient and, all things considered, the most acceptable.” [“Butler Blasts ‘Lobbying’ By Agencies on Bridge,” *The Evening Star*, February 25, 1958]

Reacting to Commissioner McLaughlin’s desire for an “indication” of congressional intent, the House District Committee on March 3 rejected the “sense of Congress” resolution by Senator O’Mahoney and Representative Saylor calling on the District to delay construction of the bridge until the House had acted on Senator O’Mahoney’s Senate-approved tunnel bill. In an executive meeting, the committee adopted a resolution stating:

It is the sense of the committee that the Commissioners proceed forthwith with the construction [of] the Constitution avenue bridge project. The committee further requests the President of the United States to facilitate immediately through the Federal Government any clearances bearing upon the initiation of the bridge project construction.

With no delaying action likely in the House of Representatives, the last obstacle was approval by Secretary Seaton. Publicly, he indicated he was trying to work with District officials to resolve concerns about the impact of the approaches on the Lincoln Memorial. He was, he said, “very hopeful of having the whole thing ironed out next week,” adding that “nobody wants more time to go by” without another crossing of the Potomac River. [Beveridge, George, “Seaton Seeking Bridge Accord By Next Week,” *The Evening Star*, March 6, 1958]

On March 25, the District commissioners met with Secretary Seaton to present revised proposals for the approach roads. The new plans included “significant reductions,” according to Colonel Welling, in the elevations of roadways and overpasses in the vicinity of the Lincoln Memorial. In addition, the city planned to slope the embankments along the roads to create the appearance of gently rolling terrain. In addition, the commissioners presented photographs of current views from the planned location of approach roads. The roads, in the District’s view, would be only slightly visible from the memorial. The photographs also showed that the new approach roads would be concealed by existing vegetation.

Secretary Seaton conceded that the changes moved “toward” his objectives, but he declined to offer any judgment until his staff had reviewed the plans in detail. “This has given some

renewed hope that we can work this thing out,” he said. His goal was to allow the much-needed new river crossing without doing “violence” to the memorial area. [“Interior Officials Study New Bridge Road Plans,” *The Evening Star*, March 26, 1958; “Approaches Set Lower at Bridge,” *The Evening Star*, March 30, 1958]

Secretary Seaton submitted his report to President Eisenhower in April. He conceded the “urgent need for an additional bridge across the Potomac between Memorial Bridge and Key Bridge,” but in view of the limits imposed on location by the 1954 legislation, he “recognized the vital necessity—in the public interest—of minimizing the possible impairment of the monumental design and artistic setting of the Lincoln Memorial and other memorial structures in the area.” It was “regrettable” that the legislation was so specific as to location and type of bridge, thereby limiting the ability of “responsible executive agencies to carry out their obligation to preserve and protect to the maximum possible extent the distinctive aesthetic values associated with what has been universally acclaimed as one of the world’s outstanding national shrines.”

The focal point of the Interior Department’s concerns was the “location of approach roads and interchanges . . . lying directly northwest of the Lincoln Memorial bounded on the north by Constitution avenue, on the east by Twenty-third street and on the south and west by the Rock Creek-Potomac parkway.” Although the District had modified these facilities to address the department’s concerns, the result was that “within this relatively compact area and on immediately abutting lands, it will be necessary to place a maze of structures running as high as 22 feet above present grade, and involving a number of overhead grade separations.” Nearly 400 trees would have to be removed along with most of an evergreen grove at Ohio Drive and other plantings.

To avoid “such an encroachment on the dignity, beauty, serenity and magnificent setting of the Lincoln Memorial,” he asked the President to support “one last effort to secure from the Congress the slight modification of the controlling legislation” to shift the bridge to cross Small Island on Roosevelt Island:

Given full support of the executive branch, I firmly believe that communication of the facts as we now know them to the Congress might well result in a favorable response.

If Congress acted promptly, the shift in location “need not cause an appreciable delay in initiation of construction.”

He added:

Failing favorable action by the Congress during this session, and in light of the history of the entire matter and the present traffic situation, we would have no choice but to proceed—however regretfully—as expeditiously as possible to carry out the directive of the Congress [in the 1954 Act] within the strict limitations laid down by it.

On April 19, the White House announced that President Eisenhower endorsed Secretary Seaton’s recommendation. The President opposed immediate construction at the planned location to

allow for “one last effort” in Congress to shift the bridge so that the District end would be between Constitution Avenue and E Street, NW.

District officials were concerned about the delay, but considered the President’s decision to be final. Colonel Welling said:

It has been obvious for months that this bridge proposition would have to go to the White House for a decision. Now we have it, and that’s that.

Representative Broyhill, too, was disappointed about the delay, but was encouraged by Secretary Seaton’s assurance that if Congress did not act in the current session, the District would be authorized to proceed with the existing plans.

Members of the House and Senate District Committees promised quick action. [Beveridge, George, “New Site for Bridge Asked by President,” *The Evening Star*, April 20, 1958; Secretary Seaton’s letter is reprinted in the same issue]

Colonel Welling agreed with the President that shifting the bridge was preferable for aesthetic reasons, although the \$250,000 expended on the proposed bridge at its present location would be lost. He also noted that a “hard core of tunnel advocates” were not ready to give up on eliminating the bridge altogether. Further, he said, the draw span issue would remain to be resolved wherever the bridge was built.

The *Star* editors considered the President’s desire to shift the bridge “the only really satisfactory solution to an almost hopelessly complicated dilemma.” Three years earlier, “all Federal and District agencies” agreed on the shift, but “it was sabotaged on Capitol Hill by Federal park and planning officials who wanted no bridge at all.” The editors thought that with the President’s support “such a spectacle is not likely to be repeated.” [“Welling Cites Tunnel Bill,” *The Evening Star*, April 21, 1958; “Most Satisfactory Solution,” *The Evening Star*, April 21, 1958]

General Grant urged the Committee of 100 on the Federal City to remain firm in support of the tunnel, especially since the Senate had approved the tunnel bill. The committee continued to support the tunnel option, but conditionally approved President Eisenhower’s recommended shift of location, if a tunnel were not possible, as preferable to the one approved in 1954. [“Ike’s Choice Of Span Site Is Supported,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, April 29, 1958]

Back to the Hill

Secretary Seaton submitted a bill on May 1 to authorize the location shift. In a letter to congressional leaders, he called the shift “a desirable and harmonious solution” to the long fight over the bridge. He also disclosed that the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Association had submitted written approval of the plan to cross the tip of Roosevelt Island. To avoid any concern that the NPS would continue to fight the project, Secretary Seaton said, “agencies of this department are prepared to co-operate fully with the Board of Commissioners of the District in carrying out this project expeditiously.” [Beveridge, George, “Fast Action Urged On Shifting Bridge,” *The Evening Star*, May 2, 1958]

The bill amended Title I of the 1954 law to read:

That (a) the Commissioners of the District of Columbia are authorized and directed to construct, maintain, and operate a low-level bridge, to be known as the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge, over the Potomac River, from a point north of and in the vicinity of Constitution Avenue in the District of Columbia to the Virginia side of the Potomac River, such bridge to cross such portion or portions of the two islands comprising Theodore Roosevelt Island at the location approved in writing on April 30, 1958, by the Theodore Roosevelt Association,

The bill also amended subsection (b) of Title I to authorize the commissioners “to construct and maintain structures providing pedestrian access or vehicle access, or both,” to Roosevelt Island if requested by the Interior Department.

The House District Committee approved the bill on May 12, 1958, although six members voted “present” or “no” to protest the long delay in the bridge project. The committee’s report stated:

The committee voted reluctantly to report this legislation favorably to the floor. However, it is the feeling of the committee that there has been entirely too much procrastination and delay in the construction of a bridge in this area, particularly in view of the fact that the original location approved by Congress in 1954 was the result of a compromise by various groups

The Commissioners’ efforts in the construction of the project should no longer be subjected to delaying tactics on the part of the Commission of Fine Arts, Park Service, National Capital Planning Commission, and the Theodore Roosevelt Association. In fact it is only with the understanding that the President will keep the above-listed organizations in support of the bridge project that the committee has expressed a willingness to go along with the proposal to change the location of the structure.

Nevertheless, in view of “the great importance of maintaining the navigability of the Nation’s waterways,” the committee recommended that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, “in acting on any application for a navigation permit for the upstream bridge location, give serious weight to the requirements for vertical clearance by existing navigation.” [Amending the Act to Authorize and Direct the Construction of Bridges Over the Potomac River, Committee on the District of Columbia, House of Representatives, 85th Congress, 2d Session, Report No. 1721, May 14, 1958, page 3]

This reference to the permit, which the Corps issued for the low-level bridge in 1954, was seen as being included in deference to Chairman Smith, despite his promise not to try to block the bill. Asked about this committee statement, Robertson said that increasing clearance from the planned 27.5 feet would not delay construction. [“Robertson Discounts Delay for Higher Span,” *The Evening Star*, May 13, 1958; and “House to Act Monday On New Site for Bridge,” *The Evening Star*, May 15, 1958]

Chairman John L. McMillan (D-SC) predicted prompt House action.

When reporters asked Chairman Smith if he would oppose the bill, he replied:

I don't agree with a fixed span, but we need the bridge so badly I'm going to stop fighting it. They can build anything they want with no fuss from me. [Preston, Alex, "House Group Reports Relocated Bridge Bill," *The Evening Star*, May 12, 1958]

Senator O'Mahoney and Representative Saylor also conceded the measure. The Senator said, "If the administration takes such a conclusive position, I am willing to accept the bridge. And if the [Roosevelt] association accedes to Secretary Seaton's recommendation, then I accede."

Representative Saylor agreed. "If the administration feels that way about it and if the Theodore Roosevelt Association feels that way about it, I am willing to go along." ["Early Vote Due on Span As Tunnel Fight Fades," *The Evening Star*, May 14, 1958]

Chairman McMillan introduced the bill on the House floor on May 19, explained the measure, and secured House approval without debate in 30 seconds. [Amending the Act to Authorize and Direct the Construction of Bridges Over the Potomac River, *Congressional Record-House*, May 19, 1958, page 9005]

The Senate Committee on the District of Columbia approved the bill on May 20. Its report contained a sentiment similar to the view expressed in the House committee report, referring to "too much procrastination and delay":

The Commissioners' efforts in the construction of the project should no longer be subjected to delaying tactics on the part of the Commission of Fine Arts, the National Park Service, the National Capital Planning Commission, the Theodore Roosevelt Association or any other body. [Amending the Act to Authorize and Direct the Construction of Bridges Over the Potomac River, Committee on the District of Columbia, United States Senate, 85th Congress, 2d Session, Report No. 1622, May 21, 1958, page 3]

On May 26, the Senate approved the bill, with minimal discussion limited mainly to praise of committee members for moving the bill and expressions of support for the relocated bridge. [Construction of Bridges Over the Potomac River, *Congressional Record-Senate*, May 26, 1958, pages 9448-9449]

The congressional action earned praise in a *Star* editorial titled "New Era of Progress" on May 27. "It is a rare occasion when District legislation . . . swishes through Congress with such unanimity and speed . . ." The editors singled out Secretary Seaton, calling him "an earnest and effective mediator" who resolved "the heated controversy between his own park conservationists and the District Highway Department." The editorial ended:

So there now dawns for Washington a bright new era of building for a greater and more beautiful city. The whole community is grateful to all concerned in paving the way for this epochal progress.

Without fanfare or a statement, President Eisenhower approved the bill on June 4, creating Public Law 85-446.

The Last Gasp(s)

The Commission of Fine Arts was still not convinced. On June 26, it approved preliminary design for a twin to the 11th Street Bridge over the Anacostia River. To be built in 1962, the bridge, located about 300 feet upstream from the existing bridge, would carry westbound traffic, with eastbound traffic crossing on the existing span. The commission acted on a number of other matters, but wanted further conferences with the District Highway Department on design details of the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge. [“Fine Arts Group Oks 11th Street Bridge Plan,” *The Evening Star*, June 27, 1958]

On September 11, the commission gave “general approval” to the design for the new 14th Street bridge to replace the trestle-topped bridge. With the new bridge scheduled to open in 1962, District officials indicated they would make some improvements to the trestle-topped bridge to keep it open until then. The commission requested some changes in the ramps for the Washington Channel bridge connecting to the Southwest Freeway, but they were not considered to be serious problems.

However, the commission was still not satisfied with “all the details” of the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge. A commission official said the problems resulted “from the basic difficulty of getting a satisfactory bridge in that area.” The commission held a closed-door meeting with District highway officials, during which, according to reports, a District official told participants that the two agencies “have never been closer in their aims than they are now.” [“Fine Arts Unit Oks 14th St. Bridge Plans,” *The Evening Star*, September 12, 1958]

By October, the final hurdle was Secretary Seaton’s approval of the bridge and the approach road network in the vicinity of the Lincoln Memorial. On October 30, Secretary Seaton informed the commissioners by letter that he was in “complete agreement” on the basic approach design, but wanted further discussion of three details based on traffic and engineering data. The three areas were road layouts south and east of the Lincoln Memorial; whether a bridge will carry 23rd Street over Constitution Avenue or an intersection with a traffic light would suffice; and, in Beveridge’s words:

The precise location of the opening of a tunnel which will carry the District’s “inner loop” freeway beneath the Lincoln Memorial grounds to the west of the memorial. Interior wants this tunnel portal moved as far as possible north of the memorial. The District says it must be near it, in order to permit “inner loop” traffic to get to the Arlington Memorial Bridge and to the Rock Creek and Potomac parkway.

Although these issues remained to be resolved, General Welling ordered highway officials to begin immediately to work on detailed plans and construction drawings for the bridge. (Engineer Commissioner Welling had been promoted to Brigadier General on August 9.) The first step would be approval of a contract with Modjeski and Masters for this work. The Interior Department’s issues about approach road details would not affect the bridge itself.

Further, Interior officials said the Secretary was not unalterably opposed to the existing approach details, but just wanted “a final look” at the most recent data on the three topics. General

Welling held a press conference, during which he said he was “confident” the data would convince Interior officials to approve the planned approach network. He said he also had instructed Highway Director Robertson to develop a contract for design of the Potomac River Freeway east from Key Bridge. According to Beveridge:

Gen. Welling also disclosed details of design for the new Constitution avenue bridge, which he said have agreement of the Federal Fine Arts Commission. These include decisions to build only six bridge piers, equally spaced, across the river with 222-foot spaces between them, and to build the “end piers” on each side of the river of stone masonry. [Beveridge, George, “Work Ordered On Potomac Bridge Design,” *The Evening Star*, October 31, 1958]

The remaining issues proved more stubborn than General Welling expected. As late as November, he responded to a question about the project on WWDC’s “Report to the People” by saying that if the District and Interior could not resolve remaining issues, “someone else” would have to reach a decision. Asked if “someone else” meant President Eisenhower, General Welling would not clarify his meaning. He did not expect the reviews to lead to an “impasse” and remained confident that traffic would be crossing the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge in 1962. [“White House Seen Getting Bridge Row,” *The Evening Star*, November 2, 1958]

One issue was resolved in January 1959 when BPR approved the plan to have sidewalks on both sides of the bridge. For safety reasons, BPR preferred to eliminate pedestrians from Interstate highways. In this case, however, BPR agreed to the plan approved by the Commission of Fine Arts that included a sidewalk on both sides, with steps to the island. [“Crossing the Bridge,” *The Evening Star*, January 27, 1959]

Mid-afternoon on April 19, 1960, the District held a ceremony near the intersection of Constitution Avenue and the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway to mark the start of construction of the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge. With several hundred spectators on hand, General Welling presided over the event. He said the bridge had been a “prime project of mine” that had come “out of debate . . . into action.” He observed that approval of the bridge had broken the logjam of area projects, leading to construction of a Cabin John Bridge as part of the outer beltway, an underpass at Washington Circle, the Culture Center (today’s Kennedy Center), and an “interceptor” for removing raw sewage from the Potomac River.

Commissioner McLaughlin, calling the project “a tribute to the reasonableness” of the agencies involved, said the subtitle of the bridge should be “Potomac Compromise.” Reflecting the long debate, Commissioner Karrick said he “never expected to live to see the start of its construction.”

Representative McMillan described the legislative battles behind the bridge and said he hoped “to walk across this bridge some day.” Senator Frear of the District committee observed that it was “always a pleasure to see progress.”

As part of the ceremony, General Welling asked three officials to press three buttons. The first button prompted the District’s fireboat to shoot jets of water into the air. The second button would signal the start of the piledriver. The third button would begin three blasts from a 75-

millimeter cannon to signal that construction was underway. The fireboat shot the jets of water and the piledriver began, but the cannon failed due to a broken firing pin. Nevertheless, construction had begun. [McKelway, John, "Mighty Cannon Is Mute Witness At Roosevelt Bridge Ceremony," *The Evening Star*, April 20, 1960]

The Cabin John Bridge opened on December 31, 1962. In a ceremony on May 30, 1969, the bridge was renamed the American Legion Memorial Bridge.

Although NCPC's Roaches Run Bridge was not built, the \$7 million Washington Channel Bridge that was part of the compromise worked out by Senator Case was opened in a ceremony on July 31, 1962. During the ceremony, NPS's Wirth told the crowd that the District had "one of the best highway departments in the Nation." District Engineer Commissioner Frederick J. Clarke said the bridge was "the symbol of what can be accomplished by co-operation between city planners, the Park Service, the Redevelopment Land Agency and highway builders." ["Channel Bridge Passes Test," *The Evening Star*, August 1, 1962]

Senator Case, who would have been an honored guest during the ceremony, died a few weeks earlier on June 21 after a heart attack in his Senate office. Efforts to name the bridge in his honor began almost immediately. On September 25, 1965, Congress approved a Joint Resolution that the bridge be named the "Francis Case Memorial Bridge" and urging the District commissioners to place a plaque with the name in a visible location. The name, and the sign containing the name, remain in place.

(He was preparing for a reelection battle against his Democrat opponent, former Representative George McGovern, who most recently had been administrator of the Kennedy Administration's Food for Peace Program. McGovern would win the election against Senator Case's appointed replacement.)

(Although the Southwest Redevelopment Plan would continue, Zeckendorf would not be part of it. With Webb and Knapp in financial distress, the company signed a contract on November 2, 1964, transferring its commercial land holdings in the area to a consortium that included David Rockefeller of Chase Manhattan Bank (and brother of New York Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller). The company had lost its residential property interests in August to a group headed by local developer Charles S. Bresler. Webb and Knapp declared bankruptcy in 1965. [Ottenberg, Miriam, "Syndicate Buys SW Holdings Of Zeckendorf," *The Evening Star*, November 2, 1964; Gutheim and Lee, page 273]

(By the 1970s, the Tenth Street Mall had been completed. It formed an arrow-straight street that is now called L'Enfant Plaza. The mall was surrounded by tall office buildings, a hotel, and a plaza in the center of which was an impressive fountain. The grand mall consisted of sidewalks and a wide median walkway between traffic lanes. The development included a hidden shopping mall called The Promenade that officially opened on November 16, 1968, with over 30 stores, service establishments, and eating places, as well as a movie theater. The Promenade opened amidst great optimism, but over time, depended almost entirely on lunchtime business from nearby office workers.

(The boulevard-like mall Zeckendorf had envisioned stretched only from Independence Avenue to an overlook high above the restaurants and the Maine Avenue fish market along the Washington Channel, with a steep pedestrian path and traffic lanes connected to Maine Avenue. Beyond weekday work hours, the Tenth Street Mall sees infrequent foot traffic, with little to attract the public except parking spaces for visitors to the National Mall across Independence Avenue. As for the link between the Tenth Street Mall and the Maine Avenue waterfront, a 2017 book about southwest Washington explained:

An outgrowth of the Zeckendorf-Pei plan for Southwest, the Tenth Street promenade that was envisioned was unfortunately terminated with a fountain in 1968 at the Banneker overlook due to the exit ramp for I-395, and it remains an anomaly of urban vision from the 1960s Southwest residents and tourists headed to the Metro station from the waterfront continued to scale a non-landscaped hill on a dirt path from the popular Maine Avenue waterfront almost 50 years later. [Williams, Paul K., and Alexander, Gregory J., with the Southwest Neighborhood Assembly, *Southwest DC*, Arcadia Publishing, 2017, page 17]

(A paved path is also available.

(The James V. Forrestal Building straddles the entrance to the mall, stretching along Independence Avenue from 9th Street to nearly 12th Street; it was built in the late 1960s only after much conflict with the Smithsonian Institution, NCPC, Zeckendorf, the General Services Administration (GSA), and others. It initially housed the Department of the Navy and now is home to the Department of Energy. To the east of L'Enfant Plaza, the Department of Housing and Urban Development was on the west side of 7th Street, SW. Across 7th Street, the Nassif Building housed the Department of Transportation until 2007, when the department moved to two buildings on M Street, SE. (The Nassif Building, now known as Constitution Center, houses several Federal agencies).

(Richard F. Ward's 1978 history of the District's southwest described the Tenth Street Mall at the time:

Originally envisioned as the grand entrance to the Southwest, the Tenth Street Mall/Overlook has lost its purpose. There are several reasons for this. First, Tenth Street is not one of the streets which continues from the Northwest across the Mall and into the Southwest. It is a truncated street, always has been and always will be as long as there is a Smithsonian Castle on the Mall. Secondly, the original plan to build a parking garage under the Overlook fell through. People were to have been attracted to the Overlook not only for the fine view but also because of a national aquarium across the channel in East Potomac Park. A Ponte Vecchio on the channel (a touch of Italian in the area would be welcome) would span the Washington Channel so people could walk to the park. The idea is fine but has to wait for times when such things are given higher priority. And, finally, the true center of the Southwest is probably Fourth Street. The Tenth Street entrance is more of a side entrance. [Ward, Richard F., *South and West of the Capitol Dome*, Vantage Press, 1978, pages 83-84]

The waterfront restaurants, including Hogate's and Phillips Flagship, have disappeared, replaced by The Wharf, a multi-billion dollar mixed-use development. The first two buildings of The Wharf opened in October 2017.

Getting U.S. 270 into the District of Columbia

The Old Road

The road from Frederick, Maryland, to Washington, D.C, can be traced to pre-colonial times. A history of Rockville, Maryland, described the Indian trail that initially followed the route:

Indians defined the original path ten thousand years ago. Groups of Piscataways, Senecas, and Susquehannocks followed game, set up seasonal camps, and marked an inland north-south route along this piedmont ridge. By the 1690s, European settlers had displaced the Indians and appropriated the old road known as the Sinequa Trail.

[McGuckian, Eileen S., *Rockville: Portrait of a City*, Hillsboro Press, 2001, page 3]

A historian of Germantown, Maryland, stated:

The native Americans in this part of the country also used mainly waterways to travel from one place to another and the Indian paths usually connected one waterway with another. The Indians had a path along part of the eventual route of the Frederick Road, for they also had to have some way to get around the falls of the Potomac River; but their path veered off to the west above Germantown to proceed to the mouth of the Monocacy River. [Soderberg, Susan, *A History of Germantown, Maryland*, published by the author, 1988, pages 24]

During colonial times, the road was gradually improved as settlers formed towns in the corridor and farmers needed a path to market:

Travelers and planters in the area of present-day Rockville relied on the colonial route. They appreciated the Maryland Assembly's attempt to keep the roadway cleared of obstructions, notched for directions, and free of standing water. As early as the 1740s, local planters shipped hogsheads of cured tobacco down the *rolling road* to the port of George Town. Pioneers heading to western Maryland, the Ohio territory, and beyond traveled the Great Road. [McGuckian, page 3, italics in original]

In 1755, the road was part of one of the more disastrous moments in the French and Indian War. British General Edward Braddock took a force north to a French post at Fort Duquesne (site of Pittsburgh) in an attempt to force the French out of British colonial territory. From Williamsburg, Virginia, he led his army to Georgetown, then north, stopping initially at Owen's Ordinary (or inn) near the present site of Rockville. The British army continued north to Dowden's Ordinary (Clarksburg) and Frederick before turning west to Cumberland. From there, army engineers had to carve a wider road out of an old Indian trail to get the force to Fort Duquesne:

West of Fort Cumberland the road dwindled to a narrow path, and Braddock's army yielded to colonial engineers who cut a new twelve-foot right-of-way for the advancing army. On July 9, having marched two hundred miles to within sight of Fort Duquesne, they were surprised by French regulars, French Canadian militia, and Indian warriors. Braddock's troops were handily defeated, and Braddock was fatally wounded.
[McGuckian, pages 1-2]

Braddock made many mistakes on this expedition, including not listening to his aide-de-camp, a young Virginian named George Washington, and others who explained that a British-style assault would not work in the wilderness:

Benjamin Franklin, who was called in to help procure supplies for the army, reports that it was Braddock's ignorance of wilderness fighting that was the cause of the failure.
[Soderberg, page 25]

Following independence and creation of the United States of America, the road between Georgetown and Frederick remained important. "It is shown on the 1790 census map of Maryland as one of only seven major roads in the state at that time." [Soderberg, page 24]

Its importance increased when the general government built the National Road from Cumberland, Maryland, to Wheeling (then in Virginia) as a portage between the Potomac and Ohio Rivers. Construction took place from 1811 to 1818; soon, the general government began extending the road west. Maryland had chartered the Frederick Turnpike in 1805 and extended it to Boonsborough. With revenue from bank charters, Maryland financed the "Bank Road" to complete the road from Baltimore to Cumberland, reaching it in 1820, with only a few gaps.

In 1805, Maryland embarked on a network of turnpikes, many centered in Baltimore but in other parts of the State as well:

In 1805, the Maryland Assembly chartered the Washington Turnpike Company, the first in Montgomery County. Originally, the plan was to improve the existing roadway from the District of Columbia line, through Rockville and Clarksburg, to the main square in Frederick. This would be financed by shares of capital stock for twenty dollars each, with George Town, Washington City, Frederick, Elizabethtown (Hagerstown), and Rockville each responsible for raising subscriptions.

The twenty foot wide roadway . . . was completed by the mid-1820s. The company erected guideposts and milestones to inform travelers of distances from the District to toll gates, other turnpikes, and destination towns The turnpike company depended upon user revenue to keep the road in repair. Travelers paid tolls at gates in Tenallytown, Bethesda, and the Wilson farm (now Georgetown Prep). The Maryland legislature set the rates.

Tolls varied for herds of sheep, hogs, or cattle (measured in scores of 20); every horse and his rider or led horse; a chariot, coach, or stage with two horses and four wheels; and a carriage with four horses [McGuckian, pages 29-30]

The Great Road, as it was also called, was heavily traveled:

George Washington traveled the road many times and often stayed at Peter's Tavern (later Tabler's) that stood on the south bank of Bennett's Creek on Frederick Road. Other famous visitors to Tabler's were Lafayette and President Andrew Jackson. In the 1840s James K. Polk stayed at the Hyatt House, an inn in Hyattstown, on the way to his inauguration.

There was a considerable controversy from 1829 to 1831, when there was a push to replace [the Great Road] with a road from Washington to the National Road which would run further east, through Brookeville and New Market. The proposition was defeated, however, and the road remained as it was.

During the Civil War the Frederick Road was used by both the Union and Confederate armies [Soderberg, page 25]

Conditions gradually improved:

The turnpike company constantly attempted to improve service. Horse and foot travelers between George Town and Frederick in the 1820s shared the road twice weekly with a two-horse stage, which cost three dollars. By 1828, a passenger stage went daily; for four dollars, a passenger could ride from George Town or Wheeling. By then, the loops between Bethesda and Montrose, present-day Old Georgetown Road, had been bypassed with a straighter route

The Washington Turnpike Company remained solvent through most of the nineteenth century It fought constant wash-outs and could not raise funds to install planks in the deep wheel ruts in 1852. Public financing of the canal and the railroad westward from Baltimore provided an edge that road-connected towns did not match until the mid-twentieth century. [McGuckian, page 30]

New technology had been the turnpike's downfall. Transportation by "foot, horseback, carriage, and stage" had dominated for many years:

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the alternatives greatly expanded. The steam railroad came into Montgomery County in 1873, connecting remote areas to markets in Washington and triggering a real estate boom that dramatically changed the size, appearance, and character of Rockville. Two decades later, the electric trolley opened another connection to the nation's capital

By the last decade of the nineteenth century, the Washington Turnpike Company had lost all incentive to maintain the Rockville Pike. The road was rutted and muddy, particularly during winter. Users paid insufficient tolls to warrant keeping the tollbooths open. The turnpike declared bankruptcy and deeded the roadway to the Montgomery County commissioners. [McGuckian, page 71]

In 1898, a report by the Maryland Geological Survey said of the road in Montgomery County:

The most extensive piece of road-construction undertaken in this state for a number of years is the rebuilding of the old turnpike between Rockville and Georgetown. No road in the county was more in need of improvement both on account of its condition and of its importance as the direct route from Rockville to Washington. It has long been known as one of the worst pieces of main highway in the state. The old foundation stones, many two or three feet in size, formed the surface of the roadway proper which was but little used. At the sides a rough single-track dirt road had been worn sometimes five to ten feet below the level of the old road-bed As a result where there should have been a well-traveled road and much improved suburban property there was but little travel and land values below those of other neighborhoods no farther removed from Washington.

As provided by State law, Montgomery County issued road bonds to raise \$25,000 to improve the road from Rockville to the District, a distance of 7.5 miles. To prepare the road for a macadam surface, the contractor removed the foundation stones of the old turnpike “which are taken out and thrown to one side and afterwards crushed to form the material for the new road.” Considerable grading was necessary “on account of the depth to which the sides have been worn and also to reduce the grades to 6 per cent, as required by the law authorizing the improvement.” Despite this recycling of material, “much additional stone” was needed. The result:

The road as constructed has 16 feet of macadam flanked on either side by a 12-foot dirt road. Broken stone is put on to a depth of 12 inches for a short distance from Rockville but elsewhere it is 9 inches At the present writing, October, 1899, about 3 miles have been completed.

The report listed three turnpikes in the county, including the Georgetown and Rockville Turnpike. At the time, tolls were not collected. [*Report on the Highways of Maryland*, Maryland Geological Survey, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1899, pages 242-243]

For Frederick County, the survey indicated that tolls were collected on 129 miles of stone road:

It is a noticeable feature that nearly all of the main thoroughfares in the county are turnpikes. This is especially true about Frederick from which radiate nine turnpikes that are very well traveled within three to five miles of the city.

A list of the county’s turnpikes included “Frederick and Washington (or Georgetown)” along the path of future U.S. 240 (now State Route 355). The listing indicated the road was “Piked” from Frederick to Araby (near the Monocacy River). The report did not comment on the condition of the road. [*Report on the Highways of Maryland*, pages 231-232]

The Road in the 20th Century

The automobile revived interest in road travel. During the early 20th century, the Washington-to-Frederick road was included in the National Old Trails Road, a transcontinental route from Baltimore to Los Angeles, mostly over historic roads such as the National Road. In 1916, good roads writer Robert Bruce included a description of this segment in his book about the National Road. Beyond Dupont Circle, he wrote, motorists could leave Washington on Connecticut

Avenue or Wisconsin Avenue (reached via Massachusetts Avenue), with both connecting in Rockville. Either route took the motorist to the “suburban village of Bethesda.” Bruce described the route just beyond the District line:

Thence it passes over the railroad to the fork beyond; here leave the trolley by keeping practically straight ahead on the Rockville Pike. That part of this highway from the District line to Rockville, which had already been graded and macadamized by Montgomery County was taken over about three years ago by the Highway Department of the U.S. Government, and is now maintained by it for the purpose of experimenting with the different kinds of road surfacing. Signs giving the number and character of the “experiment” will be noted along the way.

A motorist would cross the trolley line alongside the road into Rockville. Riding through Gaithersburg, Bruce found:

At the west end of Gaithersburg begins a stretch of concrete road, part of which is a relocation taking the place of the former highway over Middlebrooke Hill. The points where the old route enters and leaves the present concrete road are easily identified.

After leaving this good road, the motorist reached Henderson’s Corner, near Brink:

From here on there is a choice of two routes, the one straitaway to the left being the continuation of the road followed by Braddock’s expedition of 1755, over which we have been traveling; this is about eight miles shorter than the other and a typical old-style pike, rough in spots and next to impassable in wet weather.

The alternate route “should always be taken after any considerable rain.” (Henderson’s Corner survives today as a sign at the intersection of Ridge and Frederick (MD 355) Roads.)

Crossing into Frederick County, the motorist would “pass through the first one of the three toll gates (8 cents toll), which are among the last in Maryland.” It was called the Monocacy and Urbana Turnpike. Beyond Urbana, the road passed through the field where the Battle of Monocacy took place on June 9, 1864, when Confederate General Jubal Early pushed back Union General Lew Wallace as the southern forces headed for Washington. Just before crossing the Monocacy River, the motorist reached the second toll gate:

Then we pay 10 cents at the second toll gate, and cross an iron bridge over the Monocacy River; almost immediately beyond is a bridge over the B & O R.R. tracks (“Monocacy Junction”), and to the left of it the monument to the New Jersey volunteers.

Also on the left our route passes a very large boulder overlooking the Monocacy battlefield and erected to the memory of the Confederates who fell in that struggle. The road here is level and fine, fully equal to the approach into Frederick by the direct road from Baltimore. Next is the third and last toll gate (8 cents), beyond which we enter South Market Street in Frederick. [Bruce, Robert, *The National Road*, Published in Cooperation with the National Highways Association, 1916, pages 89-93, maps on pages 86-87]

In September 1916, the Maryland State Roads Commission agreed to take over the three privately owned turnpikes along the road in Frederick County: the Washington Turnpike, the Buckeystown Turnpike, and the Monocracy and Urbana Turnpike, with a combined mileage of about 17 miles. Including toll-free county road mileage, the State acquired 25 miles for \$25,000. [“More Tollgates To Go,” *The Baltimore Sun*, September 30, 1916]

Maryland gradually improved the road to meet the needs of the automobile. On September 24, 1925, the State held a ceremony in Hyattstown to celebrate completion of the last mile of improved road, just south of that community. Prominent citizens participated in a parade over the last link of the new 42-mile highway and were entertained at supper. Ceremonies included a concert by the Browningsville Band, fireworks, and a dance, as well as addresses by officials such as John N. Mackall, chairman of the Maryland State Roads Commission, Maryland Secretary of State E. Brooke Lee, and U.S. Representative Frederick N. Zihlman (R). According to the *Star*:

The new road is shorter by 10 miles than either of the other two routes, through this county between Washington and Frederick, and is expected to promptly become popular with autoists generally. The other roads—by way of Rockville, Gaithersburg and Dickerson, and by way of Rockville, Gaithersburg and Ridgeville—are about the same distance—52 miles. [“New Highway Link Opened With Parade,” *The Evening Star*, September 24, 1925]

The improved road was one of the original U.S. numbered highways approved in 1926. Its number, U.S. 240, indicated it was the second branch off U.S. 40, then a transcontinental route from Atlantic City, New Jersey, to Oakland, California, “across the bay from San Francisco,” as the initial log put it. That same log, which the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHO) published in 1927, described U.S. 240:

United States Highway No. 240.

Total Mileage, 39

Maryland Beginning at Frederick to the Maryland-District of Columbia line at Washington. [*United States Numbered Highways*, American Association of State Highway Officials, 1927, pages 18-19, 43]

The second log, published in 1929, listed U.S. 240 as continuing into Washington, adding 4 miles to the route (43 miles). The logs did not identify control points within cities, which were responsible for deciding on the routing. The District gave U.S. 240 several routings over the years, but by the 1950s, it reached the District line at Chevy Chase, followed Wisconsin Avenue to K Street, NW., continued on 23rd Street, NW., to the Lincoln Memorial Circle, and ended at a connection with U.S. 50 before U.S. 50 crossed Arlington Memorial Bridge into Virginia. (Today, the former U.S. 240 roadway is designated Maryland Route 355.)

A Modern Upgrade

In 1947, Maryland Governor William Preston Lane asked the State legislature to approve a \$200-million, 5-year plan to create “a system of highways second to none in the nation.” With legislative approval, Governor Lane’s 4 years in office (January 3, 1947 – January 10, 1951) included construction or reconstruction of 757 miles of roads at a cost of \$106 million, planning and the start of construction of Maryland’s expressway system, and early work on his pet project, the Chesapeake Bay Bridge.

A 1958 history by the State Roads Commission of Maryland discussed Governor Lane’s plan:

To finance it he asked for a 100-million-dollar bond issue, an increase in the gasoline tax from four to five cents, an increase in motor vehicle license fees with emphasis on the heavy trucks, allocation of the titling tax fees to the Roads Commission instead of to the general funds of the State, support of the State Police out of general revenues instead of motor vehicle receipts and a re-distribution of such funds on a 50-30-20 basis to the Roads Commission, Baltimore City and the counties which thereafter were to finance their own road construction and maintenance.

(The city of Baltimore is not part of Baltimore County or any other county; therefore, it received a share of the fund along with the counties.)

The General Assembly approved most of Governor Lane’s request in time for his administration to begin the 5-year program during the construction season of 1948:

One of the great contributions of the Lane administration to the highway system was the planning and partial construction of some expressways designed on the controlled-access principle.

The Baltimore-Washington Expressway, the Baltimore-Harrisburg Expressway, and the Washington National Pike south from Frederick were planned with full control of access except at traffic interchanges

Controlled access was slow to catch on in Maryland, as in the other states. From time immemorial people had gained access to their roads wherever they wanted; they did not take kindly to long detours to get on roads in front of their properties

The Lane administration made the courageous move to begin whole new highways on this principle—a worthy inheritance to future motorists of Maryland and to the next administration. This step was formalized by the Expressway Act of 1947. [*A History of Road Building in Maryland*, State Roads Commission of Maryland, 1958, pages 157, 161]

From Frederick south, the new expressway would be built on a new alignment, a proposition that caused concerns in Montgomery County, particularly in the heavily populated area near the District line. *The Evening Star* explained the route of the Northwest Freeway in May 1947:

The freeway is a proposed high-speed, limited access, divided highway that would be an alternate of Route 240 and would run from a point near Gaithersburg, west of Rockville and Bethesda, to take traffic off Wisconsin Avenue leading into Washington

When the freeway route first was announced a year ago, strong protest was made by owners of highly developed properties centering in the Bradley boulevard area.

As Maryland began planning an expressway in the U.S. 240 corridor, one issue that would have to be resolved was the connection with the District of Columbia. Officials were considering construction of two entrances. One route would enter the District in the vicinity of the current alignment along Wisconsin Avenue. The second route bypassed the Wisconsin Avenue corridor and the western side of the city. At Cabin John, the new expressway would connect with a road into the District parallel to the Potomac River.

The Maryland-Capital Park and Planning Commission would play a key role in the routing. The commission grew out of the need for planning in the two Maryland counties (Montgomery and Prince George's) surrounding the District of Columbia following establishment of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission in 1926. The national commission, whose authority did not extend beyond the District's border, was directed to cooperate with local planning organizations, none of which existed. Gutheim and Lee explained:

The Maryland legislature passed legislation in 1927 providing for a district containing the two counties contiguous to the District of Columbia. The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission was provided authority to plan, acquire land in the public interest, levy taxes to pay for park acquisitions, and draw up zoning ordinances

The relationship between the National Capital Park and Planning Commission and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission was one that saw suburban planners identifying with the aspirations set forth by the federal commission. This relationship between the suburbs and the city was characterized by the similarity in the name selected by the Maryland commission. [Gutheim and Lee, pages 215-217]

The commission attempted to shift the western alignment to less developed land:

The second route would extend north from MacArthur boulevard near Cabin John, through Cabin John Run valley and Thomas Valley to Tuckerman lane and then to an intersection with 240 near Gaithersburg.

The commission was trying to keep the two alignments clear of new obstacles by withholding approvals for proposed subdivisions, but was running out of patience with the failure of the Maryland State Roads Commission and the PRA to agree on a route. On May 17, 1947, the commission released the text of a resolution, adopted unanimously, threatening to abandon protective measures for the Northwest Freeway "should current agreement, at least as to plan, now prove impossible between these agencies" ["Threat to Drop Freeway Made By Planners," *The Evening Star*, May 18, 1947]

By December 1949, Maryland roads officials were still undecided, but had a new proposal under review:

Maryland planning officials today were studying a Federal recommendation to change the route of the proposed new dual Northwest freeway from Rockville south so that it would bypass Washington, instead of entering the District via MacArthur boulevard.

Divulged for the first time yesterday by the commission, the suggested rerouting would require another Potomac River bridge near Glen Echo, it was said. The plan was to be taken up later today with Virginia officials and also will be incorporated into the comprehensive highway plans now being prepared for the metropolitan area.

Federal officials said the rerouting, which would bring through trucks and passenger cars down the east side of the Cabin John Valley, would cost less than the previous plan. It would also have the additional advantage of permitting traffic to flow uninterruptedly north and south across the Potomac.

Traffic crossing the Potomac River near Glen Echo would enter the George Washington Memorial Parkway. The parkway provided access along the Potomac River to Alexandria, U.S. 1, and Shirley Highway:

Southbound trucks from Rockville destined for points in Washington, it was explained, would continue to use Wisconsin avenue. [Shepard, Nelson M., "Planners Delay Action on Bridge Over Anacostia," *The Evening Star*, December 8, 1949]

While the routing in the vicinity of the District remained uncertain, Maryland began construction of the Washington National Pike near Frederick. On December 29, 1949, the Maryland State Roads Commission awarded \$13.4 million in contracts, bringing the year's total to \$56,123,549, a record to that date, fueled by Governor Lane's roads program. Among the new contracts was a 4.6-mile section of the Washington National Pike in the Frederick area. [Associated Press, "Maryland Lets \$13,447,900 in Road Contracts," *The Evening Star*, December 29, 1949]

The routing close to the District remained uncertain for several years, but in January 1951, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission recommended expressway construction through the Maryland portion of Rock Creek Park. The expressway would connect with the existing Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway. The commission's vice chairman, Blair Lee III, said the expressway was the keystone of a plan that would be similar to the network of roads in the suburbs of New York City:

Under the plan, the expressway would continue north from its junction with a Rock Creek Park parkway to a point southeast of Kensington where it would fork. One prong would run northwest to join the new Northwest freeway (relocation of Route 240) and the other would go northeast to hook up with the new Columbia pike to Baltimore (relocation of Route 29).

In addition, an express highway would leave the George Washington Memorial Parkway along the Potomac and extend up Cabin John Branch to join the relocation Route 240.

Mr. Lee pointed out, however, the plan is opposed by the National Capital Park and Planning Commission and the Regional Highway Planning Committee. The latter, he said, favors bringing Route 240 into Washington through the Landon School, Wood Acres, and Sumner developments.

The planning committee's idea, he contended, would "mutilate" existing neighborhoods and seriously affect several school and playground sites, if carried through.

But the Maryland commission's proposal, he insisted, "would follow natural barriers and split no neighborhoods. The increased construction cost would be somewhat compensated by the fact that the right-of-way is either already in public ownership or is undeveloped." ["New Expressway In Rock Creek Park Proposed," *The Evening Star*, January 7, 1951]

In October, engineers of the Maryland State Roads Commission decided on a route through Montgomery County, subject to commission action. The new plan included the western alignment southwest of Rockville, down Thomas Branch and Cabin John Creek Valleys to MacArthur Boulevard parallel to the Potomac River. With completion of the George Washington Memorial Parkway in Montgomery County, passenger vehicles to and from the District would shift to the parkway. A new bridge across the Potomac River at Cabin John, if built, would provide for traffic bound to or from Virginia.

In addition:

Construction of a truck cut-off from the vicinity of Tuckerman and Lux lanes to Wisconsin avenue—or Route 240—just north to Grosvenor lane. An eventual parkway through Rock Creek Park extended would connect with Silver Spring and upper Sixteenth street.

A third element of the plan was to rebuild River Road from the new highway west of Burning Tree Country Club to the District.

The National Capital Park and Planning Commission had long advocated the route along the two stream valleys. ["National Pike Approach to D.C. Selected by Maryland Experts," *The Evening Star*, October 4, 1951; Roberts, Chalmers, "Route of District-Frederick Superhighway Settled at Last," *The Washington Post*, October 4, 1951]

The roads commission approved a plan on October 18, 1951, that included two entrances to the District. South of Rockville, the expressway would split, with one leg continuing south to MacArthur Boulevard and the other reaching East-West Highway between Silver Spring and Bethesda where traffic could use Wisconsin and Connecticut Avenues for District access. Basically, the roads commission had adopted the National Capital Park and Planning Commission's plan. A commission announcement explained:

The plan will carry traffic southeastward from the Brink area and will distribute it by means of new connecting roads, over the fan-shaped network of traffic arteries already

serving the suburban area northwest of Washington, from MacArthur boulevard to the East-West highway.

The plan involved construction of about 25 miles of new highways and extensive upgrading of about 10 miles of existing roads. [“Maryland Plans Roads Leading To New Pike,” *The Evening Star*, October 19, 1951; “Progress on an Important Highway,” *The Evening Star*, October 29, 1951]

A former Republican mayor of Baltimore (1943-1947), Theodore R. McKeldin, defeated Democratic Governor Lane’s reelection bid in 1950, part of a Republican wave against Democratic incumbents, and became Governor on January 10, 1951. As discussed by Anne E. Bruder in *Tomorrow’s Roads Today*, the new Governor’s experience in Baltimore gave him a good understanding of the need for better highways:

As [M]ayor he had received a 1944 proposal from New York City Planning Director and consultant Robert Moses to demolish blighted areas near the Central Business District (CBD) in order to construct a new expressway through the City. The area that Moses proposed for the new expressway was on the north side of the CBD in Baltimore City near the Mount Vernon District. The proposal would displace a number of residents, including business elites. The Mount Vernon residents opposed the plan, and it was dropped from consideration.

As Mayor, McKeldin also made the final decision on the location for the Baltimore-Washington Parkway entrance to the City. The City Public Works Department extended Russell street south to meet the Baltimore-Washington Parkway at the City-Baltimore County boundary. As with other portions of the highway, at-grade intersections were made into interchanges while other portions were made into bridges to avoid railroads. [Bruder, Anne E., “*Tomorrow’s Roads Today*”: *Expressway Construction in Maryland, 1948-1965*, Maryland State Highway Administration, September 2011, page 28]

While these efforts were underway to improve access to Friendship International Airport, Mayor McKeldin ran for Governor. He campaigned, in part, on taking a fresh look at Governor Lane’s highway building and financing policies.

With the Lane program providing funds for another year or two, Governor McKeldin did not announce his road plan until 1953, known as the Twelve-Year Program, to rebuild Maryland’s highway system by 1965.

Governor McKeldin appointed Russell H. McCain of Frederick to be chairman of the Maryland State Roads Commission. McCain had been on the commission since 1945, serving as a minority member during the two previous Democratic administrations. [*A History of Road Building*, page 165]

With construction well underway on the new expressway from Frederick to the Montgomery County line, a *Star* reporter talked with McCain about the progress:

The State Roads Commission, he said, decided to start the new highway near Frederick when the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission and other agencies could not agree on an approach to Washington.

Difficulties in planning a “northwest freeway” from Washington began after the war. A direct route would have gone through the Landon school property and many estates in which much money had been invested.

Route 240, at the time, was carrying 40,000 cars a day across the District line, making it one of the busiest roads in the State:

The difficulties of getting into Washington have not all been solved, but it has been decided to swing the highway well west of the direct route, down a valley called Thomas Branch to Cabin John Creek.

Entry to Washington from this road would be by River road and a new connecting link to Massachusetts avenue and then to Wisconsin avenue; or straight down the river along MacArthur boulevard. Sometime in the distant future, entry also will be possible along the Maryland section of the George Washington boulevard, to be built from Great Falls to the Key Bridge in the river valley.

Because the George Washington Memorial Parkway would ban trucks, the State would use River Road or Massachusetts Avenue for the connection. [Kennedy, George, “Frederick Superhighway Goes Nowhere and Most Motorists Don’t Know It Exists,” *The Evening Star*, November 14, 1951]

On November 20, 1951, the commission awarded a contract for the first construction of the Washington National Pike in Montgomery County. It was a 3.8-mile grading and surfacing project straddling the Frederick-Montgomery County line. [Associated Press, “Low Bid Announced On Pike Surfacing,” *The Evening Star*, November 21, 1951]

Second Thoughts

Even as officials planned construction of the Washington National Pike in Montgomery County, the Maryland State Roads Commission began encountering opposition to the southwestern leg linking the road with Massachusetts Avenue, River Road, and MacArthur Boulevard. Meeting at Bethesda County Club on November 30, 1951, about 400 property owners from the area bounded by Bradley Boulevard, the District Line, Massachusetts Avenue, and Seven Locks Road urged the State to abandon the plan until Maryland and Virginia determined the location of the Cabin John Bridge across the Potomac River. The *Star* listed the owners’ concerns:

There is no present need in the area for such a route. Moderate expansion of existing highway facilities should meet the needs of the foreseeable future.

The proposed route would sharply increase traffic congestion along Wisconsin avenue, River road and Massachusetts avenue and would open the door to commercialism.

The commission's plan for a cutoff in the vicinity of Tuckerman lane to lead to East-West highway near Silver Spring would handle all through traffic originating outside the Massachusetts avenue-River road area. ["National Pike Link Proposal Opposed By Property Owners," *The Evening Star*, December 1, 1951]

In April, the commission hired consultants Wilson Ballard and Joseph Knoerle of Baltimore to prepare a report on how to address traffic problems in Montgomery County. They were already working on the final routing of the Washington National Pike near the District but now would expand their work to include the inter-county freeway plan that was part of the outer circumferential for the area. During a meeting in Baltimore, McCain emphasized to other commissioners that the two projects were closely related, in part because they were affected by the location of the Potomac River crossings. According to the *Star*:

Ballard said the National pike must serve to drain local traffic in the lower Montgomery County area. He pointed to the difficulty of obtaining rights-of-way for new construction in the highly developed sections, owing to high prices. The highway will cost around \$20 million, he explained.

He said the Cabin John and River road locations are among those being studied to bring the National pike into Washington.

The commissioners also heard from the county manager, Irving G. McNayr, who complained about delays in fixing the location of the road. The county, he said, was delaying construction of schools until the plans were known. [Millen, William A., "State to Assist Montgomery on Road Problems," *The Evening Star*, April 10, 1952]

State Senator DeWitt S. Hyde, a Republican running for election to the U.S. House of Representatives, addressed the subject during a Cosmos Club luncheon at the Carlton Hotel. "I think it is certain that the road will come down Thomas Branch [near Burning Tree Golf Club] as that is the only place that's feasible." With work stalled at Brink, he recognized that the location of the Cabin John bridge was a factor in developing the western leg:

The new National Pike would connect with that bridge, under a long-range program, he said.

"If we had effective regional planning that covered Maryland, Virginia and the District and the various jurisdictions would agree, we would save time, money and avoid many mistakes," Senator Hyde told his audience.

Senator Hyde pointed out that under legislation recently enacted by Congress, a regional council would be set up. But he explained this is only advisory and "the final say is in the hands of the local authority."

"Regional planning is urgently needed to take care of the Washington metropolitan area," he declared. ["National Pike Likely To Enter Capital Via Thomas Branch," *The Evening Star*, July 18, 1952]

(Hyde won the election and took office on January 3, 1953. His predecessor, Representative J. Glenn Beall, was elected to the United States Senate.)

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission was working on a long-range master highway plan. By early October 1952, the commission had distributed copies of a proposed plan to the Maryland State Roads Commission, BPR, NCPC, and county officials. The commissioners identified a system of high-speed highways as the backbone of their comprehensive plan.

The plan assumed construction of the hub-and-spoke layout that was common in expressway proposals for the Nation's big metropolitan areas. In the Washington area, the inner hub would surround the downtown business district, while the Inter-County Belt Freeway would serve as the rim. The commission's plan for the Maryland suburbs called for five spokes or radials:

1. Washington National Pike from the District to Frederick,
2. Northern Parkway (Silver Spring to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania),
3. Relocated U.S. 29 (between Silver Spring and Burtonsville, Maryland),
4. The Baltimore-Washington Parkway, and
5. The Annapolis Freeway.

The *Star* described the general location of the Inter-County Belt Freeway in Maryland:

The freeway would extend from a proposed new bridge across the Potomac at Cabin John, Md., completely around the Nation's capital to another proposed bridge in the vicinity of Alexandria, Va. It would cross the Annapolis Freeway at a point near Ardmore, Md.

The Inter-County Belt Freeway would connect the arterial routes leading out of the capital at distances varying from two to five miles from the District line.

The circumferential would bypass the District, providing a bypass for traffic not bound for the city. ["Highway Plan For Maryland Nears Windup," *The Evening Star*, October 5, 1952]

By the end of the month, the park commission had to assure area residents that criticism of the plan was "premature" because it was not final and was not even due for publication until the middle of November. The criticism centered on relocation of U.S. 240 in Montgomery and the location of the Inter-County Belt Freeway. Residents, the park commission indicated, would have an opportunity for comment and their recommendations would be considered. ["Park Planners Assail Highway Plan Critics," *The Evening Star*, October 31, 1952]

On November 15, about "300 irate Berwyn" residents attended a protest meeting of the Berwyn Citizens Association to object to the way the route of the Inter-County Belt Freeway "dips in" toward the University of Maryland and Berwyn instead of continuing a logical path farther north. On the park commission's map, the freeway would cross Baltimore Boulevard (U.S. 1) at Berwyn a mile north of the university. State Delegate J. Frank Lillard, Jr., told the residents, "I intend to investigate whether there has been any pressure from the 'kingmaker on the hill' to

bring the freeway closer to the university. And you can draw your own conclusions as to who I mean.” He was referring to university president Dr. H. C. Byrd.

The park commission contended that the routing was affected by the large tract of Federal lands north of Berwyn (Beltsville Agriculture Research Center) and the heavy development to the south. The commission was exploring options for shifting the beltway routing through the area. [“Freeway Route Fight Flares at Berwyn Session,” *The Evening Star*, November 15, 1952; “New Route Suggested North of Berwyn for Proposed Freeway,” *The Evening Star*, November 17, 1952]

On October 26, the Maryland State Roads Commission completed work on *Proposed 12-Year Program for Road Construction and Reconstruction, 1954-1965*. With former Governor Lane’s 5-year plan ending in 1953, the plan called for \$568 million beginning in 1954. The commission asked for authority to impose tolls on roads already under construction or planned; a 1-cent increase in the gas tax; increased motor vehicle registration fees; and authorization for additional State highway construction bonds totaling \$330 million.

For the Washington area, the report identified priority for the inter-county circumferential route, completion of the Washington National Pike, and the Washington-Annapolis expressway (U.S. 50). Among the suggested toll possibilities that might raise a total of \$50 million for construction were the Washington National Pike, Annapolis expressway, and an Eastern Shore Expressway from Queenstown to Warwick. (The report did not cover the Baltimore-Washington Parkway or its Baltimore extension because they would be completed before the 12-year plan began.)

When the commission released the report on November 12, the *Star* included a map of planned new roads. The map showed the Washington National Pike ending on the west side of Washington at an indefinite point. “The new U.S. 240 from Frederick will be continued into Washington over a route not yet determined,” the caption read. The map also showed the Maryland portion of the inter-county circumferential, touching the Potomac River at Cabin John and Alexandria. The only town identified on the map of the circumferential was Berwyn Heights, which also the northern terminus of a plan to reconstruct Edmonston Road from Defense Highway. The plan, however, did not include either bridge. [“Maryland Maps Huge Road Plan,” *The Evening Star*, November 12, 1952; Bruder, page 28]

Governor McKeldin endorsed the program, including the call for additional revenue:

Despite the large sums of money involved, the program is based on economy and careful spending because it would be far more costly in the long run to permit our present inadequate roads to deteriorate than it will be to have a progressive program of modernization. [“McKeldin Voices Support Of State Roads Program,” *The Evening Star*, November 13, 1952]

According to the State roads history:

The Legislature of 1953 passed the entire Twelve-Year Program substantially as proposed except the increase in the registration fees was postponed to April 1, 1955, instead of 1954 as requested.

Subsequently, the Legislature postponed it again and finally repealed the increase altogether, thus eliminating one of the important arches of the 3-arch financial structure. The raids on construction funds for maintenance continued

The man tapped to carry on the new program was Norman M. Pritchett. He is a career man, having started with the Commission in 1928 as rodman on a survey party. As a result of his highway location work he is completely familiar with the road system in all its ramifications. [*A History of Road Building*, pages 168-170]

Governor McKeldin approved the initial legislation, covering the first 4 years, on April 27, 1953.

The park commission held a public hearing at the Glenbrook Club in Bethesda to present its plan to about 300 people on December 16. The *Star* summarized the public comments:

Each speaker urged that the big thoroughfares go through some other neighborhood than his own. Warm applause greeted a suggestion that major highways for through traffic be constructed to carry cars and trucks across the Potomac River to Virginia at a point well west of Bethesda

Most of the opposition fire was directed at plans for completion of the National Pike, a new route 240, through Bradley Hills Grove Residents of [the] Thomas Branch Valley route, west of the Bradley Hills Grove location, said they believe they have a commitment from the State commission not to build the pike through their area.

A resident of that area, Attorney David Fegan, warned of “guile and deceit among officials of the State Roads Commission.” Mr. Fegan charged that the State commission already has received a report on a study of the new route 240 made by the Ballard engineering firm of Baltimore, and he said the report recommends against the Thomas Branch route. But State commission officials still hope to use this approach, he asserted.

Mr. Fegan said he had been told by a State official that when the State commission gave the Ballard firm the contract, “it expected and understood that Ballard would recommend the Thomas Branch-River road route.”

He planned to ask the General Assembly to investigate the contract and, if necessary, “I shall name names and dates and be more specific in a situation that appears to be a waste of the public’s money and a fraud upon many of us property owners.” He said that Ballard and Knoerle had done “a thorough job,” adding, “It appears that the State Roads Commission is casting reflections on Ballard’s ability so that the commission can be whitewashed in the situation.” [“Wary Reception Given Highway Master Plan,” *The Evening Star*, December 17, 1952]

In a report to the General Assembly on the 12-year program, the Maryland State Roads Commission indicated that it planned to construct the Washington National Pike from Clarksburg to the Brink interchange in the first 4 years, along with extending the pike to Seven Locks Road, a distance of around 14 miles. At Seven Locks Road, the pike would split. For the southeast leg:

A Rock Creek parkway connection would run from the end of the pike to Wisconsin avenue at Grosvenor lane Another connection . . . would extend the route beyond Wisconsin avenue to East-West highway at or near Beach drive Also planned for the first four years would be acquisition of rights-of-way for the last .9 mile to bring the link all the way to the District line.

The southwest leg, from Seven Locks Road to River road, a distance of 4.5 miles, was scheduled for the second 4-year period. “The final 1.8 mile stretch from River road to the George Washington Memorial parkway on the Potomac River would be delayed until the last four-year period.” The current plan was to run this final segment down Thomas Branch, but the location remained to be determined. [“National Pike Slated to Reach D.C. Area Within 4 Years,” *The Evening Star*, January 21, 1953]

On January 24, 1953, the State opened the 4-mile section of the Washington National Pike from Frederick to U.S. 15 south of Urbana. Amid intermittent rain, Governor McKeldin failed to appear as planned to snip the ribbon, leaving McCain to open the road. The *Star* noted that, “The Governor, who seldom misses an opportunity to snip a ribbon and pass out some of his autographed photos, decided the weather this morning was fit only for dedicating duck ponds.” Following the ceremony, participants drove to Frederick.

The State was already constructing the extension to Hyattstown, about 5 miles south, to be opened during the summer, and the segment to Clarksburg, scheduled for completion by the end of 1953. [“National Pike Section Dedicated at Urbana; McKeldin Rained Out,” *The Evening Star*, January 25, 1953]

The Chevy Chase Revolt

At the same time, the Maryland State Roads Commission had to deal with growing protests from the Chevy Chase area to the eastern leg of the link to the District of Columbia. Chevy Chase was one of the country’s earliest 19th century streetcar suburbs. Two entrepreneurs developed the area:

- William Morris Stewart, whose fortune stemmed from mining gold in California and silver from the Comstock Lode in what was then Utah Territory, and
- Francis G. Newlands, an attorney and friend of Stewart who had married the daughter of a financier who had also benefited from Comstock Lode silver mining.

Stewart and Newlands secretly bought about 1,700 acres of farmland between Calvert Street in the District and Jones Bridge Road in Maryland (just south of today’s Capital Beltway). They incorporated the Chevy Chase Land Company in June 1890.

To connect this farmland with the District, they extended Connecticut Avenue and an electric railway to the end of their property at a cost of \$1.5 million. They formed the Chevy Chase Club to attract wealthy buyers, dammed a small stream at Coquelin Run near Jones Bridge Road to create Chevy Chase Lake, and built an amusement complex to provide fare-paying streetcar riders. A history of Chevy Chase explained the attractions that would appeal to District residents with streetcar fare:

An amusement complex there drew people to the area on weekends; the complex eventually included boats for hire, refreshment kiosks, a merry-go-round, a bandstand where the Marine Band often played, and a dance pavilion where Irene and Vernon Castle introduced the Castle Walk in the ragtime era.

Growth was slow, in part because of the devastating Panic of 1893 and the slow recovery over about 4 years. As late as 1922, the Chevy Chase Land Company had not paid a dividend to investors. Activity picked up in the building boom that followed World War I.

Today, the lake is gone as is the streetcar line, but the company survived, as the 1990 history reported:

Today the company is going strong, with far-flung interests. In our area, it owns the Chevy Chase Shopping Center and the Metro building which it built in Friendship Heights on the northeast corner of Wisconsin and Western Avenues. It also owns land on Connecticut Avenue just south of the bus terminal in Chevy Chase, D.C.

In the area where Chevy Chase Lake once stood, the company owns the office and retail complex—land and buildings—on both sides of Connecticut Avenue between Manor Road and the railroad tracks, as well as the townhouses and garden apartments on Manor Road. [Town History Committee, *The Town of Chevy Chase: Past and Present*, Town of Chevy Chase, 1990, pages 11-14]

Citizens from 12 area organizations in the Chevy Chase area formed the Citizens' Action Committee for Fair Highway Planning headed by former Senator Gerald P. Nye (R-ND). A former journalist, he had joined the Senate on November 14, 1925, filling the seat of his recently deceased predecessor, and served until January 3, 1945, following defeat of his reelection bid. By then, he had purchased 3 acres of pasture land in Chevy Chase on a hill above Rock Creek Park; he lived at 6 Farmington Drive.

Attacking the roads commission for "secrecy" in preparing the plans, the new committee claimed that the State's goal was to open Rock Creek Park in Maryland and the District for commercial traffic on a six-lane superhighway:

The group specifically is objecting to what they call "Alternate B" plan [sic] for construction of the southeast leg of Route 240 from the vicinity of Grosvenor lane and Wisconsin avenue to a terminal point on East-West highway in the vicinity of Beach drive. The road planned, they say, calls for the route to follow the east boundary of the Bethesda Naval Hospital, cross Jones Bridge road via an overpass and head southeasterly

across Connecticut avenue by way of an overpass. The latter overpass would be 100 yards south of Jones Bridge road and would call for an elaborate cloverleaf interchange there.

The route then would cross the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad by overpass and, elevated to about rooftop level, would proceed along Cocquelin run over Jones Mill road coming into East-West highway, the group asserts.

The original plan made public recently in the State Highway Commission's 12-year program called for the southeast leg of Route 240 to run considerably north of Jones Bridge road and then along Rock Creek park to East-West highway.

The committee urged the State to abandon Alternate B, preserve Rock Creek Park from commercial traffic, and rely on existing regional planning agencies. Alternate B, they contended, would pass through more heavily populated areas than the original plan, thus reducing property values.

J. B. Hartranft, Jr., the committee's vice chairman, said "it was only by coincidence that the skullduggery was discovered in Baltimore." Alternate B had been "conceived under a veil of unprecedented mystery demanding public investigation." ["Super-Highway Plan Blasted at Chevy Chase," *The Evening Star*, February 9, 1953]

During a meeting with legislators and the citizens committees in Annapolis, Norman Pritchard admitted the commission had approved the shift because the new route would be six-tenths of a mile shorter. However, the approval came on November 7, too late to be included in the printed plan.

This explanation did not satisfy Senator Nye. He charged that the shift had occurred because the original plan would have required the taking of the home of an official of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. Pritchard denied this allegation.

Senator Nye claimed that the new plan included overpasses at Jones Bridge Road, Connecticut Avenue, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad tracks, and Jones Mill Road. This amounted to construction of an elevated highway "alongside of and above the roof level of scores of new homes in the communities known as Rock Creek Knolls, Coquelin Terrace, North Chevy Chase and others." He pointed out that Senators Hubert H. Humphrey (D-Mn.) and Russell B. Long

(D-La.) lived in the affected area, as did several members of the U.S. House of Representatives. The expressway would affect 50 or more homes built in recent years at a cost of about \$40,000 each. Land in the area was worth \$30,000 to \$40,000 an acre. [Goodwin, Gene, "Restudy Sought On Chevy Chase Elevated Road," *The Evening Star*, February 13, 1953]

Donald E. Gingery was the accused member of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. Gingery, who lived at 9504 Jones Mills Road, denied any involvement in the road commission's shift to Alternate B, claiming that his home would not have been affected by the original plan. He stated, however, that Alternate B "in my opinion is the more logical and cheaper route":

Mr. Gingery urged a greater understanding by residents of the need for limited access, modern highways in the heavily populated suburban area.

He said the only open land left for a north-south route through the District was Rock Creek Park. But, he added, he opposed any such super highway being made accessible to truck traffic. ["Highway Foes Step Up Fight In Chevy Chase," *The Evening Star*, February 15, 1953]

Representative Hyde, who also opposed Alternate B, joined other critics in a conference with Governor McKeldin in Annapolis. Participants raised their concerns about the plot to open Rock Creek Park to a superhighway for trucks.

The roads commission defended Alternate B, pointing out that the plan did not call for overpasses at Jones Bridge Road and Connecticut Avenue. Rather, it called for underpasses. Moreover, Alternate B would cost nearly \$1.9 million less than the original plan and only one house was in the path of the right-of-way.

Ballard and Knoerle, the consultants who conceived Alternate B, also defended the plan, which would cost about \$2.6 million to build:

Mr. Knoerle said the route was nearly .6 mile shorter than the northern alternate, a plan that would have followed Rock Creek. He added the gasoline saving to motorists would justify spending \$2 million more for purchase of the right of way.

"The fact is however," he said, "we can purchase the alternate B right of way for about \$15,000 less than the northern right of way."

. . . The two consultants freely admitted that a major road eventually will go down the west side of Rock Creek Park. They denied, however, the Roads Commission was attempting to force such construction.

After listening to the concerns, Governor McKeldin promised to give the plan "thorough consideration."

Meanwhile, the Parkwood Civic Association of Bethesda and Kensington charged that

Alternate B favored trucking interests over residents. The association had launched a campaign to bombard Governor McKeldin with telegrams and night letters charging that the route would be "a permanent and continuing nuisance." ["McKeldin Talks To Chevy Chase Road Critics," *The Evening Star*, February 20, 1953]

Senator Nye and his committee continued their bitter attacks on the roads commission for conspiring with the District Highway Department to dump traffic on Beach Drive to open Rock Creek Park to truckers. The route would undermine the value of choice residential property in both jurisdictions.

At a protest meeting on February 27, Senator Nye accused the roads commission spokesman of switching his story about the number of overpasses, underpasses, and cloverleafs needed in less than 1 mile of the highway:

The freeway, he said, either would have to be “a replica of Glen Echo amusement park,” climbing and dipping at intersecting roads or an elevated highway above the rooftops and gardens of the residential communities.

The group and its allies promised to do everything they could to protect Rock Creek Park. [“Chevy Chase Area Picks Group to Fight Superhighway Plans,” *The Evening Star*, February 28, 1953]

By contrast, a Silver Spring Board of Trade resolution stated that an eastern entrance for relocated U.S. 240 to Washington in the vicinity of Rock Creek Park “is of vital necessity to the development of all sections of Maryland bordering on the District of Columbia.” The board was “not opposed to any relocation of leg B (the connecting link) of Route 240 either along the B & O Railroad or any other reasonably direct route that will reach the now planned Washington entrance.” [“Silver Spring Board Backs Commission On D.C. Road Plan,” *The Evening Star*, February 5, 1953]

On March 7, NCPC opposed Alternate B, as did the Committee of 100 on the Federal City. NCPC favored widening the existing road in Rock Creek Park to Colorado Avenue, then channeling traffic onto 16th Street and Tilden Street. John Nolen, Jr., NCPC’s director, said, “There is no need for an expressway into the northern regions” of the park. He favored an entrance for relocated U.S. 240 with the proposed George Washington Memorial Parkway in the vicinity of MacArthur Boulevard. Moreover, funneling traffic into the center of the city would merely increase congestion in the area. [“Two District Officials Oppose Chevy Chase Highway Plan,” *The Sunday Star*, March 8, 1953]

Additional groups announced opposition to Alternate B, including the Montgomery County Council, the Woman’s Club of Chevy Chase, and the Junior Woman’s Club of Chevy Chase.

The Silver Spring Board of Trade published a text advertisement in the *Star* on April 7 headlined, “Citizens of Montgomery County . . . We Believe You Should Know All The Facts!” Citizens opposing Alternate B “do not realize the large and continuing disservice to their own motoring safety and convenience their opposition may bring about.” If the eastern leg plan were not built “there will be no other route to the West remaining on the Bethesda, Chevy Chase, or Silver Spring side of Seven Locks Road, Burning Tree Golf Club, Bethesda Country Club, or Rockville, depending on where you will have to drive to reach the relocated and modern

Route 240.” The western leg of U.S. 240, bypassing the District, would be 5 miles from Georgetown and was designed to take truck traffic around the city, not serve residents in the Chevy Chase-Bethesda-Silver Spring area in their daily access to the District:

We Believe . . . that the west side of Rock Creek Park within the District of Columbia is the only location in which a modern, dual, limited-access highway can be built to move

motor vehicles quickly and safely from the central and northwestern Maryland suburbs of Washington to Massachusetts Avenue or to K Street, or down the Mall into Constitution Avenue.

So, when Route 240 reaches the East-West Highway at Rock Creek Park, it is inevitable that this fine, dual, limited-access, modern highway will be continued to the Potomac River along the general alignment of the west side of Rock Creek Park.

Construction of this highway was the “only salvation for the continued” mobility of the area. The advertisement concluded:

We Believe . . . that, if you as a citizen, who is constantly required to motor into Washington, allow the avenue of modern motor transportation to be closed to you at this time, you will regret its loss and suffer from its unavailability for all the years to come.

You should support this far-sighted plan of the Maryland State Roads Commission, before this opportunity to use a fast, safe route into Washington and return, or to conveniently reach the same route for western traffic is lost. [Italics in original]

Curbing Capper-Cramton

On April 7, 1953, the *Star* reported on its front page that the Budget Bureau was “spearheading an economy move to scrap or modify” the Capper-Cramton Act, which President Herbert Hoover had approved on May 29, 1930. The authors of the legislation – Senator Arthur Capper (R-Ks.), chairman of the Senate District Committee, and Representative Louis C. Cramton (R-Mi.), chairman of the House District Committee – secured approval of \$16 million to acquire parkland. Gutheim and Lee described the legislation:

The Capper-Cramton Act provided land acquisition funds for the regional George Washington Memorial Parkway along both sides of the Potomac, on the Virginia side from Mount Vernon north to Great Falls and then south again on the Maryland side to Fort Washington. For the land in Virginia and Maryland needed for the parkway, both states were required to commit one-half the cost, either directly or through eight-year no-interest federal loans

The primary legacy of Capper-Cramton legislative efforts on the city of Washington’s behalf was the creation of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. The Capper-Cramton Act also provided \$1.5 million in funds for an extension of Rock Creek Park into Maryland and extension of the Anacostia Park system farther up the valley of the Anacostia River. In this act, Washington finally possessed the makings of a truly regional park system and at the same time had an important opportunity for demonstrating cooperation among the National Capital Park and Planning Commission and the Virginia and Maryland planning agencies. [Gutheim and Lee, pages 214-215]

Now, the *Star* reported, the Eisenhower Administration would reverse the Truman Administration’s final budget proposal, which called for \$1.25 million in funds for land purchases. (With the Korean War underway, Congress had not appropriated park acquisition

funds for 2 years.) At present, NCPC had no funds for land purchases. The Budget Bureau move would have many repercussions, including putting NCPC's master plan on the shelf, leaving park projects uncompleted. It also would abandon large tracts of land in Maryland that were being held in reserve from developers until funds became available for purchase of parkland. According to the *Star*, some Budget Bureau officials "want the act repealed outright," while others advocated killing only certain sections. [Hendley, Coit, Jr., "Budget Bureau Seeks to Scrap D.C. Parks Law," *The Evening Star*, April 7, 1953]

As Members of Congress and local organizations reacted to this news, a few days passed before the relocation of U.S. 240 was raised. The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission issued a statement on April 9:

Either outright repeal of the act or establishment by Congress of a definite policy of failure to make appropriations thereunder would be fatal to the metropolitan park system for the Nation's Capital.

The United States has a tremendous stake in these parks which would be sacrificed either through outright repeal or indirect repudiation of its commitments.

Congressional action also could affect the Federal Government's voice in acquiring Maryland park lands, as well as whether arterial highways should be routed through Capper-Cramton Act parks. The commission cited the Maryland State Roads Commission's proposal to extend one leg of relocated U.S. 240 through Rock Creek Valley:

It would be most unfortunate if the Congress should decide to abandon these controls and forfeit all interest in and control over the park system in Maryland thus far acquired.

The changes would repudiate agreements that President Hoover had reached with Maryland Governor Albert C. Ritchie under the Capper-Cramton Act. Paragraph 5 of the basic agreement that President Hoover, Governor Ritchie, Colonel Grant for the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, and Irvin Owings for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission approved on November 19, 1931, for extension of Rock Creek Park into Maryland, stated:

It is further understood and agreed, in accordance with the Capper-Cramton Act and said Chapter 370, that the title to all lands acquired under the provisions of this Basic Agreement or any Supplementary Agreement shall vest in the State of Maryland, and that no part of any land purchased for park or recreational purposes with the funds provided by the National Commission, in whole or in part, shall at any time be conveyed, sold, leased, exchanged, or in any manner used or developed for other than park purposes by the Maryland Commission, and the development and administration of said lands shall be under the Maryland Commission but the development thereof shall be in accordance with plans approved by the National Commission, or the necessary approval of the Congress of the United States.

Such repudiation “would necessarily require Maryland to re-examine the park plan from the standpoint of Maryland alone.” Reconsideration might result in disposal of parkland to raise funds for future purchases. [“Planners See Repeal as Fatal To Park System,” *The Evening Star*, April 10, 1953]

Even as the House Appropriations Committee voted on April 17 to deny funding for the third year in a row to expand the area’s park system and slashed NCPC’s operating budget, the Committee of 100 on the Federal City opposed such changes. NCPC’s executive officer, Blair Lee III, told the Committee of 100 that the Budget Bureau had not yet attempted to repeal the Capper-Cramton Act, but “would be receptive to ideas from the outside.”

In addition, the Committee of 100 opposed construction of Maryland freeways in any part of the Rock Creek Park valley. General Grant, president of the American Planning and Civic Association, raised the issue before the committee:

The Maryland Freeway dispute arose when Gen. Grant protested plans for a road he said would extend from Maryland’s Route 240 through Rock Creek Park to the District line. He said such action would force the District to build a freeway through the city section of the park, and proposed a resolution opposing construction of a freeway in any part of the Maryland park.

Lee said the resolution also would apply to the Inter-County Belt Freeway that would enter the park on an east-west path for about a mile between Kensington and Wisconsin Avenue. District and Maryland planners had approved the route, in part because an alternative routing would require acquisition of valuable residential property:

“By prohibiting that East-West section of the park to the inter-county belt route, it will be killed because there just isn’t any place else it can go,” he declared. [“44 Pct. Cut Recommended In Planners’ Operating Budget,” *The Evening Star*; Beveridge, George, “Parks Growth Support by 100 Committee,” *The Evening Star*, both April 17, 1953]

On May 7, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission released its 25-year master highway plan. The plan omitted the southeast leg of U.S. 240 that the Maryland State Roads Commission proposed to build across Chevy Chase to East-West Highway at Beach Drive. The planners decided to stay out of planning for the route because of the effect that action in Maryland would have on District decisionmaking. A spokesman said, “We are not in favor of dumping a lot of traffic on the East-West highway before the Rock Creek expressway is built.”

However, the commission did call for a change in the southwest leg of relocated U.S. 240. Under the commission’s plan, the Washington National Pike would be located about 1.5 miles to the west of Burdette Road; traffic would move along Thomas Branch to MacArthur Boulevard as the entrance to the District. [“Maryland Planners Omit Chevy Chase High-Speed Route,” *The Evening Star*, May 8, 1953]

Star editors understood the commission’s “wait-and-see attitude” regarding the southeastern leg of the Washington National Pike. In view of the plan to route the expressway through Rock

Creek Park, the “dispute over the expressway is the traditional one between park conservationists and highway engineers.” The editors, acknowledging the concerns of Chevy Chase residents and others, agreed that any further “invasion of Rock Creek Park by traffic would be unfortunate”:

But if, as the District highway planners assert, the highway is essential to the solution of Washington traffic problems, and if, as they also assert, it can be built along the western valley of the park in a way that will not seriously interfere with recreational use of the park or with its natural beauty, some concessions eventually may have to be made in the interest of the general public. [“Washington Must Decide,” *The Evening Star*, May 9, 1953]

On May 12, 1953, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved a bill that kept the Capper-Cramton Act program alive. It included more funds for NCPC than the House bill as well as funds for land purchases, including funds for park purchases in Maryland and to extend George Washington Memorial Parkway to Old Georgetown-Leesburg Pike. [“Senate Group Backs Capper-Cramton Act For Park Site Funds,” *The Evening Star*, May 12, 1953]

The Senate approved the committee’s proposal on May 20. Differences between the Senate and House appropriations bills would have to be resolved by a conference committee.

On May 26, Governor McKeldin met in Baltimore with opponents of the southeastern leg of the Washington National Pike. Republican political leaders told him that he could lose 4,000 to 5,000 votes in Montgomery County if the southeastern leg were built as planned. Senator Nye explained that he opposed the plan because it would open up Rock Creek Park for an expressway into the District. Norman Pritchard conceded the point:

That’s the way we had it planned. District highway authorities seemed very enthusiastic about using Rock Creek Park for that purpose.

Doing so would be logical, economical, and necessary in view of the heavy traffic between that part of the county and the District.

Senator Nye contended that the southeastern leg was unnecessary. The Inter-County Belt Freeway would provide needed access via existing roads into the District. That would not, responded State road officials, solve the area’s traffic problem:

“If the road is extended to the District through Rock Creek Park,” said Wilson T. Ballard, engineering consultant to the commission, “it would be along the west edge. It won’t destroy the park; it won’t do it any great damage.”

Senator Nye said NCPC had not consented to use of the park for an arterial highway. He also read a letter from the NPS indicating that the agency was “alert to the threat posed by the southeast leg” and would “vigorously oppose use of the Rock Creek Valley for any arterial highway.”

Regarding the politics of the dispute, Senate Nye told the Governor that Chevy Chase had “been a healthy community from a Republican standpoint. We’d like you to get credit for stopping this

thing.” [Goodwin, Gene, “McKeldin Asked To Block Work On Pike Route,” *The Evening Star*, May 26, 1953]

District Commissioner Renah F. Camalier, a local attorney and Masonic leader who had taken office in June 1952, announced on May 25 that he agreed with Engineer Commissioner Prentiss that relocated U.S. 240 should follow Rock Creek through the park into the District. The commissioners had previously endorsed the concept of a parkway only in principle. Now, Camalier told the Chillum Heights Citizens’ Association, that without the parkway, Washington businesses would “dry up.” [“Camalier Indorses Plan for Parkway Link to Route 240,” *The Evening Star*, May 26, 1953]

On June 12, the Maryland State Roads Commission met with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission to request approval to use the Maryland section of Rock Creek Park for the southeastern leg. This permission would be needed because the planning commission owned title to the land. The commission deferred action until it could consult with opponents. However, the roads commission pointed out that while the planning commission held title to the lands, that meant the title actually was held by the State. If the planning commission denied use of the parklands for the expressway, a legal wrangle would result.

At the same time, the roads commission filed condemnation proceedings in Montgomery Circuit Court to block a 1,400-unit apartment development at Grosvenor Lane and U.S. 240. The development was on land needed for an interchange linking Wisconsin Avenue with the southeastern leg of Washington National Pike. [“Roads Group Acts to Block New Apartments,” *The Evening Star*, June 12, 1953]

Senator Nye appeared before the Maryland planning commission in a 90-minute plea to block the State’s plan to route the southeastern leg of U.S. 240 through the Rock Creek Valley. He disclosed a letter from Secretary of the Interior McKay calling Rock Creek Park one of the capital’s greatest assets. “Any adverse use of the park property which would be destructive of its natural beauty would be nothing less than tragic.” Senator Nye interpreted Secretary McKay’s letter to mean the Eisenhower Administration opposed use of the park for the expressway.

He also said conferees on the Capper-Cramton Act bills were holding off on reporting a conference report until they see what the planning commissions do on the issue. He did not suggest that he or his group had pressured conferees. He said, however, “I should go out of my way to see that no other funds are appropriated” under the Capper-Cramton Act if the expressway is allowed to go through the park.

As Senator Nye put it, “The roads commission is forcing you to be a leverage in the District to further destroy Rock Creek Park.” In dealing with the roads commission, he had never seen an agency “caught in so many falsehoods.” An attorney for the Chevy Chase Land Company agreed that the roads commission was an “arrogant, irresponsible group that concedes to no one.”

Senator Nye told the planners that his group favored construction of the outer circumferential and the widening and extension of Georgia Avenue, 16th Street, Connecticut Avenue, Massachusetts Avenue, and River Road. These arterials would provide needed access without the loss of

parkland. [“Parkland Funds Held Up by Road Plan, Nye Says,” *The Evening Star*, June 19, 1953]

On June 25, State roads officials appeared before NCPC in closed session to argue in favor of Alternate B. NCPC argued that under the Capper-Cramton Act, NCPC and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission must approve any plan for a road in Rock Creek Park. The legislation stated:

The title to the lands acquired hereunder shall vest in the State of Maryland. The development and administration thereof shall be under the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission and in accordance with plans approved by the National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

The planners contended that roadways were covered by the term “development.”

Hardening Positions

The following day, Chairman McCain issued what the *Star* referred to as a “fighting-word statement.” The roads commission would proceed whether NCPC or the Maryland planning commission approved the proposal. The statement said the commission had concluded “after an exhaustive study extending through the past several years that for a number of reasons only one logical and available route remains for the location of the main Western highway Route 240 into the District of Columbia.”

He stated that “few unsolved traffic problems” existed in the State such as this one. With resources in hand and agreement from Federal and other highway authorities, “The Maryland State Roads Commission cannot fail in its duty to acquire the right of way and build Route 240 into Northwest Washington as a modern dual limited-access route.”

The expressway would serve traffic that was presently using radials “planned for the horse-and-wagon traffic” of years past. The time needed for rush-hour traffic between Maryland and central Washington had doubled in recent years “due largely to the increased number of motor vehicles and the increased number of traffic lights.” Allowing this situation to continue would render Maryland communities on either side of the park as “secondary areas because the people with means will save their time and energy and reduce their costs by taking advantage of the bridge and highway systems which reach into Virginia and for which great improvements will shortly be built without the opposition of any one on the Virginia side of the Potomac River.”

For Maryland commuters from Wisconsin Avenue to Georgia Avenue, the Rock Creek Valley was “the only remaining central location in which a modern high-speed arterial highway can be located.” Not building the expressway would “doom to ever-increasing traffic strangulation a present population of 100,000 people.” As that population increased, ignoring “this vital need” would be impossible.

Further, McCain challenged the authority of either planning commission to block Alternate B:

The State Roads Commission is further of the opinion that the State of Maryland has never granted highway jurisdiction to either the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission or to any other national agency, superseding the State's paramount right to build arterial highways to transport its citizens from one portion of the State to another.

Under the Capper-Crampton Act, planning commissions had only "a joint advisory jurisdiction for park development and recreation planning." They were "in no wise to infringe on or eliminate the rights and obligations of the State of Maryland to provide arterial communication services for its citizens and the citizens of other States." [Beveridge, George, "Officials See Planners Today On Park Route," *The Evening Star*, June 25, 1953; Beveridge, George, "Roads Chief Denies Planners Can Block Rock Creek Project," *The Evening Star*, June 26, 1953]

In response to McCain's request that NCPC and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission approve routing the southeastern leg of the Washington National Pike through the park to the District line, NCPC had intended to study it for several weeks. However, immediately after receiving McCain's letter challenging NCPC's legal authority, NCPC voted to oppose Alternate B.

NCPC denied McCain's legal analysis. In a statement, NCPC explained that the Capper-Crampton Act of 1930 gave both planning bodies control over the Maryland park areas and that it would exercise that power "until a contrary opinion shall be rendered by a court of law." The statement contrasted NCPC's approval of the Inter-County Belt Highway's use of an east-west section of Rock Creek Park near Wisconsin Avenue and Grosvenor Lane with the proposed use of a 1,200-foot section of the park at East-West Highway and Beach Drive for the north-south southeastern leg of U.S. 240 to near the District line and its continuation by District highway officials. NCPC recommended prompt construction of the beltline to Georgia Avenue "as soon as possible to provide a new facility between Route 240 and the Silver Spring area, relieving the East-West highway."

The statement also made clear NCPC's continued opposition to:

. . . the construction of a road of the expressway type in Rock Creek Park south of the inter-county belt route both in the District of Columbia and in Maryland. In lieu of the expressway, the commission favors further development and extension of a park road such as an extension of Beach drive, which might be planned to connect with the inter-county belt route within the confines of the park.

Although NCPC had not previously voted against the proposed southeast leg's use of Rock Creek Park, a spokesman explained the reference to "continued opposition" by pointing out that NCPC had not included the concept in its comprehensive highway plan adopted in 1950.

Prior to NCPC's vote, the commission heard from Senator Nye, who urged the commission to turn the proposal down. He acknowledged that his property would be affected, but that his opposition was based on destruction to the park. [Beveridge, George, "NCPC Vetoes Maryland Leg Of Rt. 240 Plan," *The Evening Star*, June 27, 1953]

McCain told reporters that the “time has come right now” to decide the legal issue. The State was holding up the apartment development near Wisconsin Avenue and Grosvenor Lane pending a decision on Alternate B; the State would acquire the property immediately if the plan were approved. Asked if courts would have to make the determination, he replied. “I don’t know. But the time has come right now to determine if we have the right to build needed roads in parklands. If we don’t we’ll have to readjust our thinking.” He still believed the State’s view was legally correct. “Now, we have to find out for sure just where we stand.” [Beveridge, George, “Maryland Aide Asks Decision On Park Roads,” *The Evening Star*, June 28, 1953]

Unlike NCPC, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission was divided on Alternate B. As Gingery explained, the problem was the “lack of any land but park land available to accomplish the purpose” of the highway relocation. “We have to come to grips with problems,” he said. “If we’re wrong on a proposal, we stop planning it. If we’re right, we take the hell that goes with the planning.”

Blair Lee argued that the impact on Rock Creek Park was only one factor for the Maryland planners to consider. He considered it logical for the District to build the expressway toward Maryland instead of Maryland building it to a dead end at the District line. “That’s like building a house by putting the roof on first.” On July 1, the Maryland planners voted 4 to 2 to support use of Rock Creek Park for Alternate B. Support was conditioned on being able to approve detailed plans when they were available and that trucks would be banned, conditions that the Maryland State Roads Commission had already accepted. The Maryland planners also asked NCPC to reconsider its opposition to Alternate B.

Robert M. Watkins of Prince George’s County, the commission chairman, voted for Alternate B, but was concerned it would dump traffic on East-West Highway, long before the District built the extension into the city. He urged the Maryland State Roads Commission to work with the District Highway Department to get the extension built as fast as possible.

Senator Case of the Senate District Committee revealed that he opposed construction through the park. He wanted to know if NCPC would consider approving Alternate B “in order that the Senate committee might conduct a hearing in the matter.” [Beveridge, George, “Road Planners Seek Decision on Route 240,” *The Evening Star*, June 30, 1953; and “Roads Agency Studies Next Rt. 240 Move,” July 1, 1953, both *The Evening Star*]

Secretary of the Interior McKay wrote to Governor McKeldin on July 8 regarding Alternate B:

I shall oppose any such construction in Rock Creek Park in Washington.

I have spent a great deal of time in the park since I have been here in the department, and I am thoroughly convinced that the people in the District, yes, and the people of Maryland and the residential districts would be making a sad mistake in allowing a big, four-lane highway to come down through the park and destroy one of the loveliest parks in all of Washington.

I sincerely hope that you will be able to convince your Maryland State Roads Commission that it should not desecrate Rock Creek Park with construction of

U.S. Highway 240. ["McKay Attacks Plan To Extend Route 240 Through Park Here," *The Evening Star*, July 8, 1953]

In response to McCain's request that NCPC reconsider its opposition, Acting Chairman John A. Remon replied that another meeting to vote on Alternate B again would "serve no useful purpose." NCPC members remained opposed. Instead, Remon suggested that NCPC and roads commission staff get together to exchange information. "A full exchange of information and ideas might induce either of our agencies to review its view of this matter."

Remon particularly wanted information on reports that the Inter-County Belt Route and

Alternate B would run a short distance as parallel, separate roadways. NCPC previously had thought the two roads would merge through the narrow strip of the park. NCPC was concerned that parallel roadways would take even more parkland than expected and would move closer to residential developments on either side of the park. "The prospect for achieving an early settlement of the entire matter would best be promoted . . . by one or more conferences between our respective staffs." [Beveridge, George, "Planners Reject Plea To Reconsider Stand on Route 240 Now," *The Evening Star*, July 9, 1953]

A *Star* editorial acknowledged the merit on both sides of the controversy, but added:

It is not a controversy that is going to be settled in the public interest, however, if the merits continue to be obscured by name-calling, attribution of ulterior motives and the sort of emotionalism that has become so conspicuous a part of this fight.

The parties, namely NCPC and the roads commission, should "sit down together and reach an agreement in the public interest that is based on hard fact." After all, the Maryland State Roads Commission and its supporters were not "ruthless vandals" determined to destroy Rock Creek Park. NCPC, the Interior Department, and others were not "dreamy visionaries" who preferred to preserve the park because they were "blinded" to rush hour realities. And the property owners that Alternate B would affect were no more "selfish than any other group of property owners would be in the same circumstances.

The *Star* did not believe that Alternate B would destroy the District's Rock Creek Park. "Such a roadway, properly landscaped, might even improve the park by restoring qualities that are being lost now because of heavy traffic over winding park roads that were never designed for such purpose." The problem was that "this highway through the District park is not going to be built in the near future." That raised questions about Maryland's wisdom in "terminating Route 240 at the Maryland gateway to the District's Rock Creek Park."

The editorial pointed out that Maryland and Federal planners had agreed to use the Maryland park for the Inter-County Belt Freeway. Like NCPC, the editors were surprised to learn that instead of running the two freeways on the same right-of-way, Maryland was planning two east-

west parallel freeways through the park. That plan could “not be easily defended” because it “would, indeed, ‘destroy’ that section” of the park.

The editorial summed up the situation by saying that neither the southwest leg of the Washington National Pike nor the Inter-County Belt Freeway were controversial, but they were not going to be built for several years. Alternate B was planned for immediate construction. Juggling the schedule to put the uncontroversial segments first did not seem impossible. But it provided a basis for discussion among the planners and road builders:

Certainly the National Planning Commission and the roads commission should arrange such conferences now and keep at it until they are in substantial agreement. They will reach agreement by such discussion much more quickly than by letters and press statements directed to and at each other.

[“The Wrangle Over Route 240,” *The Evening Star*, July 9, 1953; the same issue contained George Beveridge’s full-page summary of the controversy: “Route 240 – The Problem, Plan, Controversy and Outlook.”]

Looking For Accord

The planners focused on the lack of “complete detailed” information on the State’s plans for the roadway in the park, particularly the structures, fills, and interchanges. Chairman Watkins of the Maryland planning commission directed his engineers to get the information from the roads commission immediately. “We are entitled to know and want to know everything planned in detail,” he said. Commissioner Sidney M. Oliver added, “And if you don’t get it, this commission will descend on the roads men in a body to demand it.”

NCPC’s Remon had written to the Maryland planners suggesting that since they had endorsed Alternate B, they “may now be in strong position to mediate the current issue, if it should develop that any basis exists for a mutually acceptable solution.” However, he doubted a solution was possible “in the present atmosphere of power politics.”

If the State proceeded with Alternate B, NCPC was prepared to go to court, but only reluctantly:

I believe that such litigation, regardless of its outcome, would have a damaging effect on the future relations between the various parties and especially on our requests for future appropriations under the Capper-Cramton Act. [“Area Planners Call for All Rt. 240 Details,” *The Evening Star*, July 10, 1953]

On July 18, House-Senate conferees agreed on the parks portion of the appropriations act. Conferees refused funding for land acquisition for parks in Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties. They agreed on \$100,000 for land acquisition in Virginia to continue construction of the George Washington Memorial Parkway in Fairfax County, as well as a compromise amount, \$126,457 for NCPC operations.

By refusing funds for land acquisition for parks in Maryland for the third straight year, the conferees put the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission in an awkward

position. The commission paid two-thirds of the cost of land acquisition, but if the Federal Government refused to pay its one-third share, the Maryland planners would have to rethink their master plan. Commissioner Watkins said, "We feel we have a very sacred contract with the Federal Government. Maryland has kept faith but Congress has not." ["Funds Refused for D.C. Area Park Projects," *The Evening Star*, July 19, 1953; "Commission to Study Ways to Save Area's Park Development," *The Evening Star*, July 21, 1953]

At the request of Governor McKeldin, McCain replied to Secretary McKay's letter. Given "the terrific development in and around the Metropolitan area of Washington," McCain wrote, all data and engineering expertise indicated "that the only possible way in which this situation can be solved is to utilize the small section of the border of Rock Creek Park." He pointed out that NCPC had approved "construction of a similar parkway in another section of Rock Creek Park." In view of the need and the limited options in highly developed Maryland communities adjacent to the District, "it appears that to provide a satisfactory facility, certain short sections of park land must be utilized."

McCain, in meeting his agency's commitment to address road needs, planned the southeast leg as "a highway of the parkway type." Moreover, the roads commission had agreed to permit the title to the roadbed "to be vested in" the Maryland-National Park and Planning Commission. That commission would determine the types of vehicles that would use the parkway. Since the roads commission did not have statutory authority to prohibit trucks from using the facilities it built, this shift in ownership would allow the planning commission to restrict commercial usage.

Acknowledging that NCPC and the roads commission had different obligations, McCain said the roads commission was "very willing at any time to sit down with the Capital Planning Commission to see if some mutually satisfactory arrangement can be derived that will solve this problem." ["Maryland to Bar Trucks From Park Route 240," *The Evening Star*, July 19, 1953]

At the end of July, planners and road builders made an unpublicized trip to New York to see how that State, famous for its parkways, built roads through parks. Participants in the 2-day trip included Norman Pritchett of the Maryland State Roads Commission; NCPC's Blair Lee III; planning engineers William C. Burrage and Warren Jiauque from the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission; William F. Boardman of the District Highway Department; BPR's Joseph Barnett; and the *Star*'s George Beveridge.

According to the *Star*, they learned that New York strongly resisted construction "of big traffic arterials through parks" if any alternative existed. However, parks occasionally gave way to "necessary new highways." When that happened, "meticulous care is taken to minimize the park damage." New York had miles of "shoestring parks" where no park had existed, consisting of modern, limited-access, six-lane parkways. Such parkways enhanced property values, according to New York officials. One of the important lessons was:

That New York, in contrast to Washington, has learned to resolve differences involving parklands on the merits of each project. In some cases, parks have been held inviolate against highway pressures. In others, highways have been found too important to be stopped.

Storms of protest erupted when highways threatened parks in New York and the Washington area, but conditions in the two areas were different. New York officials gave much of the credit to Robert Moses for resolving these problems:

As city construction co-ordinator, he has a mighty voice in building roads where they are needed. Sometimes they are needed through parks. As the city park commissioner, he has a major say in whether the parks can be used.

At the time, Moses was an admired figure around the country not only for his extensive road and park projects in the New York City area but as a consultant on thoroughfare planning in other cities. He was at the peak of power at this time, able to overcome or ignore critics of his plans.

The Washington area had no equivalent figure:

City planning and park officials said Mr. Moses' stature as a protector of parks has helped hold down the opposition. There is general assurance, they said, that affected park facilities will be rebuilt and additional improvements made.

"Any road that goes through a park is going to do some harm," one park official said. "But the people here have learned that the last man in the world who will do any undue harm to parks is Robert Moses."

(The image of Robert Moses today is very different than it was at the time, in part because of Robert A. Caro's critical biography, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*, Knopf, 1974.)

New York officials would not comment for the record on the Washington controversy, but privately thought an expert could be brought in, not beholden to any group, to clarify the issues by determining whether the park absolutely had to be used and what damage the roadway would do. [Beveridge, George, "Planners Study N.Y. Parkways For Rt. 240 Key," *The Evening Star*, August 2, 1953]

Drawing on the lessons learned in New York, NCPC and the Maryland planning commission recommended staff meetings with the Maryland State Roads Commission, District Highway Department, and BPR for a joint attack on divisive issues. Remon explained:

I don't like this idea of every one going off in his own direction. It's time to get something done and kill off some of the conversation.

Watkins thought the joint approach might help apply the New York principles to the U.S. 240 question. He also thought an outside expert might be brought in, one "whose objectivity could not be questioned," someone of the stature of Robert Moses. He admitted that expecting everyone to agree to such a review might be "a Utopian idea," but he wanted to at least pursue it.

In view of agreement on the joint approach, Nolen held off on his intention to present a solution to the Alternate B controversy. His idea was that Maryland should end the southeast leg of the Washington National Pike at its interchange with the Inter-County Belt Freeway, rather than

continuing it through Maryland's Rock Creek Park to dead end at East-West Highway in the expectation that it would continue at some unknown time into the District. At Watkins' suggestion, Nolen agreed to let staff officials review the plan instead of presenting it to either commission at this time. [Beveridge, George, "Study by Staffs Urged to Solve Rt. 240 Dispute," *The Evening Star*, August 4, 1953]

On August 3, 1953, Senator Nye's group, the Citizens Action Committee for Fair Road Planning, published a full-page advertisement in *The Evening Star* highlighting the agreement between President Hoover and Governor Ritchie regarding ownership and use of Rock Creek Park in Maryland. With an arrow pointing at a box containing the paragraph on the signature page of the agreement, the advertisement's headline was: "President Hoover and Governor Ritchie didn't cross fingers when they signed this!" In view of the intentions of the Maryland State Roads Commission and the District Highway Department, the "challenge to the future of Rock Creek Park is very real and immediate."

As for whether building U.S. 240 through the Maryland portion of the park would be legal, the answer was "an emphatic 'No'" because of the 1931 agreement. Recent actions by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission are "without the slightest weight."

Nye's committee offered a five-step plan for addressing traffic needs based on plans already under consideration. Build an outer belt for bypass traffic from Cabin John on the Potomac to Fox Ferry Point (across from Alexandria) at the southernmost point of the District. Provide better bus and other mass transportation service into the city from suburban terminals to reduce automobile traffic. Put bus bays on Sixteenth Street, Massachusetts Avenue, and Connecticut Avenue, so buses no longer block traffic while loading and unloading passengers. Broaden and improve existing arterial roads in Maryland. Continue to maintain existing roads in Rock Creek Park as parkways, "not four and six-lane expressways and speedways that will ruin the park forevermore."

The group called for a "concentrated effort" to preserve the park:

Between now and August 6th, and at that time, it is to be expected that individual members of the twelve-man National Capital Planning Commission will be under terrific pressure to change their minds, and approve the Rock Creek Park highway program. Possibly, three or four members of the Commission favor approving the use of the park for Highway 240. There is not now the slightest reason to believe that this minority could become a majority, but we can be sure there will be every effort made to cause a majority to favor the park road. **Let us not be caught asleep.**

We hope that community associations and individuals will find a way to let the National Capital Planning Commission know that their position against the expressway idea is in keeping with the best interest of Metropolitan Washington and that we want no such scars in Rock Creek Park as the road engineers would build at a cost of millions to the taxpayers.

A box at the bottom of the advertisement labeled “The Vicious Circle,” quoted F. Biggers: “We spend more and more millions of dollars to build more and more radical super-highways so that more and more thousands of people may drive more and more rapidly to the place where they must wait longer and longer to get into the District where it is harder and harder to move around at all.” [“Citizen Action Committee for Fair Road Planning,” *The Evening Star*, August 3, 1953, page A-15, bold in original. The advertisement did not identify “F. Biggers.”]

Planning for the Inter-County Belt Freeway had been relatively controversy-free except for the concerns about its location in relation to Berwyn and the University of Maryland. The Maryland and Federal planning commissions had endorsed construction of the belt freeway through Rock Creek Park between Wisconsin Avenue and Forest Glen. On August 7, however, NCPC received requests from two citizens groups to withdraw its approval from the belt freeway and continue to oppose use of the park for Alternate B. The two groups, the Rock Creek Hills and Parkwood Citizens’ Association, represented citizens living in the area north of Rock Creek Park between Wisconsin Avenue and Forest Glen. They argued that NCPC, which supported one use of the park and opposed the other, “should be made to conform” its inconsistent positions.

The Parkwood association also raised legal questions, pointing out that the developer of Parkwood sold land to the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission in 1938 with the understanding that the land would be developed “as a parkway to be used and maintained as part of the Rock Creek Park system” The association did not believe NCPC would have approved use of the park for the belt freeway if it had known about the contractual restriction on the Parkwood sale. Residents who bought their homes near the park had relied on that restriction.

Blair Lee’s initial reaction was to tell the groups that “the only possible alternative to the present belt route would be something outside the park which would go smack through both their subdivisions.” Instead, NCPC agreed to a staff review of the request from the two associations. [“Planners Asked To Revise Stand On Belt Route,” *The Evening Star*, August 7, 1953]

Working For Compromise

Following meetings with the Maryland planners, McCain wrote to NCPC on September 16, about a change in plans. The Maryland State Roads Commission was willing to build the Inter-County Belt Freeway between Wisconsin and Georgia Avenues within the coming 4 years. Within that same time, however, the roads commission planned to complete the southeast leg of the Washington National Pike to East-West Highway. By advancing the schedule for the belt freeway for simultaneous completion with the southeastern leg, McCain addressed NCPC’s concern that Alternate B would dump traffic on East-West Highway. Traffic not bound for

East-West Highway area would now be able to use the belt freeway to connect with other arterial roads, thus reducing the number of vehicles reaching East-West Highway. [Beveridge, George, “Roads Agency Offers Rt. 240 Compromise,” *The Evening Star*, September 16, 1953]

Harland Bartholomew, who only recently had become NCPC’s chairman, indicated he was not familiar enough with the dispute to offer immediate comment. NCPC replied to McCain on

September 18 that advancing construction of the belt freeway was “an excellent decision on your part.” However, NCPC asked McCain to give “most consideration” to stopping the southeast leg of the Washington National Pike at the beltline instead of East-West Highway.

NCPC also suggested a joint meeting between the two groups to discuss options, as well as legal issues “which have been raised and which may even have a bearing on the action we have already taken.” This was a reference to the two citizens’ associations, whose attorneys had attended a meeting along with Senator Nye to detail the legal challenge to building the belt freeway through the park. The Inter-County Belt Freeway, they contended, could not be considered a “parkway.” [Beveridge, George, “Planners Ask Joint Parley on Route 240,” *The Evening Star*, September 19, 1953]

With the threat of lawsuits that could delay or block the belt freeway, Watkins of the Maryland planning commission suggested building both freeways as parkways like the George Washington Memorial Parkway or the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway. A commission statement said that parkways would be “well within the spirit and letter of the Capper-Cramton Act.” As another example, the planners cited Fort Drive, the District loop that was planned for land acquired under the legislation. Of course, parkway construction also would address the legal issues raised by the attorneys representing Parkwood. [“Planners Seek To Lift Lawsuit Threat to Roads,” *The Evening Star*, October 2, 1953]

Gingery suggested that all parties make an informal tour of the land where Route 240’s southeast leg was to be built. The tour, which took place on October 11, included Bartholomew, Undersecretary of the Interior Ralph Tudor, Roads Commissioner McCain, District Engineer Commissioner Prentiss, A. B. McKee of the Maryland planning commission, and *Star* editor B. M. McKelway:

The tour started with a look at District streets slated for improvement to handle the increased traffic volume which would pour out of the park if the roadway were built. It followed the proposed route along the eastern edge of the park as far north as Colorado avenue, then along the park’s western edge to the District line and north to Wisconsin avenue.

The officials also examined Maryland park areas affected by the proposed intercounty belt highway across Montgomery and Prince Georges Counties. Mr. Gingery stressed that park areas must be used for the roadways and said delays in construction will only increase the costs.

The *Star* speculated that with Bartholomew, Undersecretary Tudor, and Roads Commissioner McCain “sitting together in an automobile examining a map spread across their knees, while traveling along the proposed Route 240, it was probable that more mutual understanding of the problem was gained than in months of letter writing and statement issuing.” [“Top Aides Take First-Hand Look At Route 240,” *The Evening Star*, October 11, 1953]

By October 30, NCPC and roads commission staff had worked out a plan for the Inter-County Belt Freeway that appeared acceptable to all parties as NCPC prepared to meet on this issue.

McCain outlined the proposal in a letter to NCPC on October 28. The agreement related to the belt freeway, but McCain hoped the agreement would lead to resolution of the U.S. 240 controversy. As the *Star* explained, “The roads commission wants to have the 240 leg drop out of the park a short distance east of Wisconsin avenue, and drop southward across North Chevy Chase to the East-West highway.”

The *Star* summarized the belt freeway proposal:

It would hug the extreme south edge of the park between Wisconsin avenue and Forest Glen, except for a 3,400-foot stretch outside the park and on privately owned property. A 198-foot right-of-way would be acquired.

Mr. McCain said staff members are agreed that for the time being, two 24-foot lanes could serve the dual purpose of carrying both belt freeway and Route 240 traffic over the park portion where the two roads would converge. Later, when the belt route is finished and the 240 leg extended through District portions of Rock Creek Park to downtown Washington, the area could be developed for two dual highways, he said.

The letter indicated Mr. McCain is willing to make two important concessions to the planners. One involves the limitation of a 198-foot right-of-way. The other is routing the belt road outside the park and over private property.

As traffic increased, the width of right-of-way would allow the roadway to carry six lanes.

The use of private property would increase the cost of the belt freeway but he explained:

If we can reach accord on all of our problems in the development of these highways in the park area, it is felt this additional expenditure may be justified.

Regarding the cross-section, McCain wrote:

This section provides for much narrower dividing strips than we normally use in our design and certainly much more restricted than is desirable for safety and comfort. However, any additional width of medium strips would entail a commensurate widening of the over-all section.

He added:

As mentioned above, staff members of each commission have worked out a plan whereby it is deemed that all of the objectives of the several commissions can be attained, with the possible exception of use of parklands for a 1,200-foot connection of the southeast leg of Washington National Pike (Route 240) from Beach drive to the East-West highway. [“Accord Likely On Maryland’s Belt Freeway,” *The Evening Star*, October 30, 1953]

Unfortunately, as George Beveridge wrote in the *Star* on October 31, “The bitter dispute between Capital planners and Maryland roadbuilders over the southeast leg of U.S. Route 240 dragged on today after a conference between the two raised several points of confusion.”

NCPC supported the revised plan for the Inter-County Belt Freeway, built to parkway standards, across Maryland's portion of Rock Creek Park. The planners not did agree on joint use of the roadway for the southeast leg of U.S. 240. They also did not agree that the southeast leg should cross North Chevy Chase and re-enter the park at East-West Highway near the District line. In a letter to McCain, Bartholomew wrote:

In order to prevent any misunderstanding as to this commission's previous action concerning Rock Creek Unit No. 3 for the south leg of U.S. 240, I take this opportunity to restate that this commission approved connecting the proposed southeast leg of U.S. 240 to the belt route in the vicinity of Wisconsin avenue or at some point further to the west.

During the 2-hour meeting, roads commission officials and Maryland planners urged fast action on the southeast leg and belt freeway. Norman Pritchett pointed out that homes under construction in the proposed right-of-way might add \$200,000 to land acquisition costs in the next 30 days. Gingery said that in view of the private development, "We're not calling 'wolf.' The wolf is here now." If the U.S. 240 project were held up, he added, it probably would "have to go not through a measly 5,000 feet of park but through all of the park from Wisconsin avenue to the East-West highway."

Consultant Wilson Ballard told NCPC that when his firm conducted its study, about 76,000 cars crossed the District line between Silver Spring and the Potomac River to the west each day. The volume had increased to 100,000 and would exceed 210,000 in 12 to 15 years. His partner, Joseph Knoerle, predicted that by 1980, 400,000 cars would cross the District line daily and that additional expressways to downtown Washington would be needed.

In that case, Bartholomew suggested that the road commission and planners study "the whole problem" of traffic crossings, not just piecemeal parts of it. McCain replied that he was willing to cooperate in such a study, but did not want the study to "be put in the position of [causing] unnecessary delay" on the Inter-County Belt Freeway or the southeast leg of U.S. 240. [Beveridge, George, "Planners Fail To Indorse Leg For Route 240," *The Evening Star*, October 31, 1953]

In response to an inquiry from Beveridge, Bartholomew, back home in St. Louis, agreed that several points in his letter to McCain were hazy. Bartholomew confirmed that NCPC approved the belt freeway, built to parkway standards, across Rock Creek Park. Although the map drawn as a result of the joint staff meetings showed the southeast leg of U.S. 240 meeting the belt freeway east of Wisconsin Avenue, NCPC wanted the connection west of Wisconsin Avenue and entirely outside the park.

Approval of the belt freeway across the park had no bearing on NCPC's view of including the southeast leg of U.S. 240 in the park. However, NCPC had no jurisdiction over the routing of U.S. 240 outside the park; if the Maryland roads commission decided to build the southeast leg across North Chevy Chase, NCPC could not object. However, Bartholomew made clear that NCPC had not given authority for the southeast leg to reenter parkland near East-West Highway.

As Beveridge wrote:

Under these restriction[s], officials pointed out, it would be possible for southeast-bound Route 240 traffic to pass through 8,000 feet of Rock Creek Park on the belt road, then move over an independent route to just north of the East-West highway park area.

This option would work only if projected traffic volumes on U.S. 240 could be handled on the belt freeway and a new terminal for the southeast leg could be found outside the park near East-West Highway.

Bartholomew made one other point clear:

Mr. Bartholomew told *The Star* by telephone from St. Louis that legal questions played a major part in the planners' action. He stressed that attorneys seriously questioned whether the parks could be used for even the belt freeway. The commission's approval of that road as having "parkway standards" was about as far as it felt it could go "at this time," he said. [Beveridge, George, "Officials to Plan Further Action on Route 240," *The Evening Star*, November 1, 1953]

With these understandings in mind, McCain ordered roads commission engineers to shift the southeast leg to East-West Highway outside Rock Creek Park. By keeping the route out of the park, the roads commission would avoid the planning commission's jurisdiction. The *Star* summarized the plan:

The revised plan calls for the southeast leg of 240 to connect with the belt route near Wisconsin avenue, and use the belt roadway to a point where the belt road dips out of the park.

There, the roads commission would build an interchange and divert 240 traffic off the dual-purpose road and to an extension of the 240 leg heading southward. Instead of entering parkland at East-West highway, however, the road would terminate at a new location still to be determined.

This alternative would involve acquisition of costly property that would not have been needed under the original plan using parkland:

Mr. McCain also disclosed, meanwhile, that roads commission engineers have been authorized to begin immediate land purchases in "tight spots" involved in the right of way.

The "tight spots," he said, are land parcels where development already is under way which would greatly increase land costs.

McCain had given orders to his staff after what the *Star* called "a fast-breaking exchange of telegrams" between McCain and Bartholomew regarding NCPC's position on the two routes.

At the same time, the *Star* reported that J. Joseph Barse, the attorney for residents bordering the park where the Inter-County Belt Freeway was to be built, said a lawsuit was "certain to be filed contesting legality of the belt route's use of the park." The new plan for keeping the southeast

leg of U.S. 240 out of the park, Barse said, “bears out my personal opinion that if consent were given for the belt route that Route 240 also would be built. The belt route is the key to the whole thing.” [Beveridge, George, “State Speeds New Plan for Route 240 Leg,” *The Evening Star*, November 7, 1953]

Barse and Edward S. Northrop filed the suit on November 20 against NCPC to block the use of Rock Creek Park for the Inter-County Belt Freeway. Their six plaintiffs, all owners of land abutting the park, contended that the park use violated the Capper-Cramton Act of 1930 and an agreement reached in 1931 between NCPC and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission that prohibited use of the park “for other than park purposes.” They wanted the Maryland planners to advise the Maryland State Roads Commission that it could not use the park for the belt freeway or “any similar highways,” a reference to U.S. 240.

The suit also asserted the contention of Parkwood and Locust Hills Estates, located adjacent to the park near Wisconsin Avenue, that property had been deeded to the Maryland planning commission in 1939 “exclusively for park and parkway purposes.” NCPC’s approval of the belt freeway, the plaintiffs argued, violated this restriction.

The definition of “parkway” appeared to observers to be the key to the suit. In approving use of the park for the belt freeway as long ago as the 1950 comprehensive plan, NCPC had indicated it did so because of the “parkway” characteristics the freeway appeared to have. It did not, however, define the term.

The Maryland State Roads Commission and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission indicated they would join NCPC as interested parties to the lawsuit. If so, the *Star* pointed out, “the bitterest contestants in the Montgomery County road issues will find themselves allied.” [Beveridge, George, “Federal Court Asked To Bar Belt Road In Rock Creek Park,” *The Evening Star*, November 20, 1953]

The *Star*, in an editorial, summarized the result of the unclear definition of “parkway”:

Two important traffic-relief projects thus will remain in a state of suspended animation until the suit is disposed of. It is to be hoped that the litigation can be settled without long delay. [“To Settle the ‘Parkway’ Dispute,” *The Evening Star*, November 21, 1953]

The Capper-Cramton Act provided for a “comprehensive park, parkway and playground system” for the Washington area. Reportedly, Congress first used the term “parkway” in 1913 when it authorized the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway connecting Potomac Park and the National Zoological Park. *Webster’s Dictionary* first defined the term in 1914 as: “A broad thoroughfare beautified with trees and turf.” AASHO defined the term as well. A parkway was “an arterial highway for non-commercial traffic, with full or partial control of access, and usually located within a park or ribbon of park-like development.”

By contrast, NPR Director Wirth, the only NCPC member who had voted against allowing the belt freeway to cross Rock Creek Park, defined a parkway as “an elongated park, with a road usually used to connect two or more parks.” The George Washington Memorial Parkway, he

explained, was properly named, because it was “authorized specifically to protect land along the Potomac and to connect historic parks,” but neither Suitland Parkway nor the Baltimore-Washington Parkway met the definition.

Although NCPC had not defined the term while approving the 1950 comprehensive plan, Bartholomew now defined “parkway” as a “special type of automobile travelway of more than ordinary width and having park-like characteristics.” [Beveridge, George, “Roads Dispute Poses a Query on ‘Parkway,’” *The Evening Star*, November 22, 1953]

Despite the lawsuit, the Maryland State Roads Commission began negotiating to acquire more than 20 home sites near Rock Creek Park for the Inter-County Belt Freeway. They were in a new subdivision called Rolling Hills east of Kensington Parkway and south of Rock Creek Park. As then planned, the belt freeway would pass through Rock Creek Park east of Wisconsin Avenue, leave parkland west of Connecticut Avenue, and pass through Rolling Hills and other private land before reentering the park south of Forest Glen. [“Plan Is Pushed To Seize Sites in Freeway Path,” *The Evening Star*, December 6, 1953]

The controversy about the routing, however, was no longer confined to local agencies. The proposed use of parks for roadways in the Washington area and elsewhere was becoming a national issue. A gathering at the Hotel Statler of 39 national conservation and scientific research groups, organized by the Natural Resources Council of America, helped focus national attention on the controversy. On December 6, General Grant, the former NCPC chairman, stressed that if the southeast leg of U.S. 240 were built as far south as East-West Highway, keeping it out of Rock Creek Park in the District would be virtually impossible. He denied that such a use would do little harm to the park, as advocates for the road claimed. Senator Nye urged meeting participants to send protests to NCPC, “where our case rests at the present time.”

Chairman Samuel Ordway of the Natural Resources Council called the dispute “one of the major fights for conservation.” The council’s executive secretary, C. R. Gutermuth, said that the threat to Rock Creek Park deserved “as much concern” as encroachments to Yosemite or Yellowstone Parks would receive.

Tom Wallace, chairman of the National Conference on State Parks, told participants that there “isn’t a city in the United States that isn’t threatened by the blunderbuss efforts of a highway commission.” The Rock Creek Park encroachment was an “outrage that is intolerable, impractical and illegal.”

The National Conference on State Parks issued a statement that did not refer to the belt freeway or U.S. 240, but did say of threats to Rock Creek Park:

Use of Rock Creek Park as a right of way would be in sundry ways calamitous to Washington. The precedent would endanger every national, State, county and municipal park, every scenic recreation preserve in the United States, and subject United States culture to well-founded criticism in capitals of nations of the enlightened world.

Throughout the country, parks were “threatened by exploiters whose argument is that parks are ‘free land’ and should be used for roads and parking lots.” [“Route 240 Plan Held Threat to All Parks,” *The Evening Star*, December 7, 1953; “National Fight On Route 240 Shaping Up,” *The Evening Star*, December 8, 1953]

On January 7, 1954, Judge Matthew F. McGuire held a bench conference on the suit seeking to enjoin NCPC from approving detailed plans for the Inter-County Belt Freeway across a stretch of Rock Creek Park. Both sides recognized that NCPC had approved the use of parkland for the belt freeway. Assistant U.S. Attorney Oliver Gasch argued that NCPC should not be prohibited from taking administrative action while the court deliberates on the case. Barse and Northrup expressed concern that if NCPC approved the detailed plans, Maryland would begin construction immediately without waiting for a court ruling. Under an agreement reached during the bench conference, NCPC was free to approve the detailed plans, but the effective date would be delayed to allow for court action. Judge McGuire set a hearing date for late March. [“NCPC May Approve Belt Freeway Plans in Tentative Agreement,” *The Evening Star*, January 7, 1954]

The third section of the Washington National Pike, a 3.8-mile stretch between Hyattstown and Clarksburg, opened on January 18, 1954. This section was the first completed in Montgomery County. Construction had begun on October 1, 1953, on the next 3.7-mile section, which would take the pike to State Route 118 in Germantown. The road commission had begun planning for the next two sections, each about 4 miles long, that would take the pike to Rockville. [“3.8-Mile Stretch of Route 240 To Be Opened About Dec. 15,” *The Evening Star*, November 26, 1953; “McKeldin Will Open Route 240 Stretch,” *The Evening Star*, January 17, 1954]

The Olmsted Brothers

On March 22, the *Star* reported that Chairman Watkins of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission had retained Olmsted Brothers of Brookline, Massachusetts, to prepare detailed development plans for the Inter-County Belt Freeway through Rock Creek Park. As mentioned earlier, Frederick Law Olmsted, who had founded the firm, was a founder of NCPC (then called the National Capital Park and Planning Commission) and a commission member for several years. Olmsted Brothers had been a consultant for development of the 1901 general plan for the District, in 1918 on development of Rock Creek Park, and many other Washington area projects. In a letter to Bartholomew, Watkins wrote:

Because of their outstanding reputation in the field of park design, Olmstead [sic] Brothers were employed to prepare designs which would not only meet the standards desired by your commission and by this commission, but which would be an outstanding contribution to the park and parkway system of the Nation’s Capital”

The firm would design and locate interchanges and connections with the proposed parkway; landscaping for the area through which the road would pass; the type, design, and location of park and picnic areas adjacent to the parkway; foot paths and bridle paths; and placement of recreation facilities in the two park units. The contract also covered recommendations for relocating any part of Rock Creek that may be necessary to make more effective use of the park.

Watkins also said the plans involved developing about 500 acres of parkland on both sides of Connecticut Avenue from East-West Highway to the Kensington-Garrett Park Road. The road would enter Rock Creek Park at Wisconsin Avenue between Grosvenor Lane and Pooks Hill Road, ending at Connecticut Avenue. A second section would begin about 500 feet east of Kensington Parkway, ending at Jones Mill Road and Beach Drive.

A *Star* editorial pointed out that the Maryland planning officials believed that hiring Olmsted Brothers “should allay the fears and misunderstandings” that had delayed both projects. The detailed plans that NCPC received for the encroachment on the park were to be drawn “by consultants known to be advocates and protectors of park land, here and elsewhere.” [“Firm Named To Plan Road In Rock Creek,” *The Evening Star*, March 22, 1954; “Fortunate Choice,” *The Evening Star*, March 25, 1954]

Judge McGuire heard arguments in the Inter-County Belt Freeway case on March 24. Balse and Northrop argued that building the freeway through Rock Creek Park was inconsistent with park purposes as established by Federal laws. They contended that the term “parkways” referred to roads serving the parks, not commuter thoroughfares. Congress, Northrup said, had established proper uses of parkland; NCPC could not add uses.

U.S. Attorney Gasch moved for dismissal. He said that Federal law clearly gave the planners control over park development. As such, the belt freeway was a legitimate park use. NCPC, in recognition of its legal responsibilities, had approved the route through the park on the condition that it would meet proper standards to serve the park. The Maryland State Roads Commission, he pointed out, had recently hired the Olmsted Brothers to design the freeway in accordance with seven criteria NCPC had established.

After the 1-hour hearing, Judge McGuire took under advisement the government’s motion to dismiss the suit. He said the issue was whether the Inter-County Belt Freeway was consistent with park purposes as intended by Federal law. First, he would have to decide the extent of NCPC’s authority to act. Second, he would have to determine whether the proposed freeway was consistent with the use of the parklands. [“Court Studies Dismissal of Belt Road Suit,” *The Evening Star*, March 24, 1954]

On May 4, Judge McGuire denied the government’s request to dismiss the lawsuit. He also denied the government’s motion for summary judgment. In a notation on the government motions, Judge McGuire wrote: “No ruling possible without plans being extant and submitted.” The Olmsted Brothers’ plan, he implied, was the key. [“Court Denies Motion To Throw Out Suit On Belt Freeway,” *The Evening Star*, May 4, 1954]

While awaiting the court ruling and delivery of the Olmsted Brothers’ plans, citizens associations were issuing statements opposing Alternate B through the park for the Washington National Pike. The *Star* reported opposition by the Federation of Citizens’ Associations (April 18, 1954), the Federation of Civic Associations (April 24), and the Northwest Council of Citizens’ Associations (April 25).

On May 22, Beveridge reported that the Olmsted Brothers’ plan had been submitted:

The Federal planners . . . withheld comment on their first reaction to the plans. But other sources indicated Mr. Bartholomew, at least, was pleased by what he saw.

Maryland citizens fighting the roads, meanwhile, held one of their biggest mass meetings during the week. Spokesmen said it was a strategy session to map new moves. [Beveridge, George, "New Moves Start Speculation On Fate of Park Roadway," *The Evening Star*, May 22, 1954]

After the Maryland State Roads Commission and Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission reviewed the Olmsted plans, officials of the firm and the two commissions flew to Columbus, Ohio, on May 18 to discuss the plans with Bartholomew. He told George Beveridge that the plans had been sent to NCPC staff and that he had instructed them to expedite their review. Neither Bartholomew nor other NCPC commissioners would reveal their reaction to the plans. [Beveridge, George, "Planners Get Detailed Plan On Belt Road," *The Evening Star*, May 21, 1954]

On June 8, the Maryland State Roads Commission and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission approved the Olmsted Brothers' plan and rushed it to NCPC.

Olmsted Brothers included an eight-page statement with their plans. Based on the statement, Beveridge summarized the highlights:

The Parkway Route.

At its west end, Wisconsin avenue would be elevated and split with separated lanes for northbound and southbound traffic. The belt parkway would pass beneath Wisconsin, connecting west of Wisconsin with the southeast leg of U.S. Route 240.

East of Wisconsin, the belt road would hug the southern edge of the park a few feet above park level, except for an overpass at Cedar lane. About a mile east of Wisconsin, the road would dip out of the park through a corner of the Bethesda Naval Hospital property. It would pass about 3,500 feet across private property, overpassing Connecticut avenue and Kensington parkway, then re-enter the park. It would continue to hug the southern part of the park until overpassing Jones Mill road and Rock Creek at Forest Glen. It would leave the park at that point.

Connection Planned.

Roads commission plans call for connecting the belt road, at the point it leaves the park near the naval hospital property, with a continuation of the Route 240 leg. The 240 leg would be extended to the East-West Highway, near Beach drive.

The divided lane parkway would have a maximum right-of-way of about 110 feet, with two lanes in each direction. Essentially, the Olmsted firm said, it will be “a border drive,” with its sides “merging naturally with the flattish floor of the park.”

Park Design.

Olmsted Bros. said Maryland’s Rock Creek Park serves primarily “regional rather than local purposes.” Such local uses as “tot lots” and neighborhood playgrounds, therefore, it said, “should not, in spite of their values per se, be allowed to encroach seriously on the broader over-all values of a naturalistic park of this type and importance.”

On that premise, it proposed four major new recreational areas:

Near East-West highway and Jones Mill road; just north of the parkway near Forest Glen; near Wisconsin avenue north of the point the belt road leaves the park; in a northern park portion paralleling Wisconsin avenue opposite Saul road and Everett street.

Plan Includes Ponds.

The latter three play areas include large ponds suitable for boating and fishing. The recreation provisions include playgrounds, baseball diamonds, court games, archery, and outdoor theatrical area and craft buildings.

In the northernmost portion of the park at Garrett Park road near Wisconsin avenue, the riding stable would be located.

Park Access.

Driving access from the parkway to the park would be provided at Forest Glen, Cedar lane, Wisconsin avenue and Connecticut avenue.

Pedestrian overpasses of the parkway would be provided “for the convenience of adjacent householders” near Wisconsin avenue, at Kensington parkway and at Forest Glen.

Beach Drive.

Instead of Beach drive across the East-West highway and northward into the park, it was suggested that Jones Mill road be widening and improved to link with Beach drive in the Forest Glen area.

Beveridge summarized three points about Beach drive:

1. The present gap between Connecticut Avenue and Cedar Lane should be closed.
2. Beach Drive should be relocated north of the creek where the drive extended south of the creek between Connecticut and Wisconsin Avenues, and
3. The drive should be extended from its terminus at Wisconsin Avenue to Garrett Park Road to open that part of Rock Creek Park to more use.

Exclusive of the cost of the roadway, the improvements included in the plan would cost an estimated \$1 million. [Beveridge, George, "Park Belt Road Put to Planners For Approval," *The Evening Star*, June 9, 1954]

NCPC began considering the plans on June 10. The commissioners also were considering a letter from the Maryland State Roads Commission regarding its plans. The letter said that as traffic increased, the road might have to be widened. Congestion might increase, the roads commission explained, because the Inter-County Belt Freeway would carry traffic from the southeast leg of U.S. 240 through about a mile of the park. The roads commission would deed certain parcels of land to the Maryland planning commission. Trucks and commercial vehicles would be banned. State and county officials would maintain and police the road. The roads commission would submit detailed contract drawings and specifications to NCPC for review. The statements in the letter, the roads commission said, were "a firm commitment."

The Maryland-National Capital and Planning Commission firmly committed to the recreation and other park developments proposed by Olmsted Brothers. [Beveridge, George, "Planners Delay Action to Study Park Belt Road," *The Evening Star*, June 10, 1954]

On June 11, NCPC conditionally approved the Olmsted Brothers' plans for passage of the road across the park. NCPC also indicated it would not object to linking the southeast leg of U.S. 240 to the belt freeway west of Wisconsin Avenue and outside the park. The approval also was given with the understanding that the Maryland roads commission would not build a road south of the park to carry U.S. 240 traffic from the belt freeway to East-West Highway.

Because the pending court case involved only the belt freeway, Federal attorneys planned to move quickly to present the plan to Judge McGuire. However, officials of the Maryland roads commission were reportedly "fighting mad" about NCPC's condition rejecting the link of the southeast leg to East-West Highway. They contended that in the November 1953 exchange of telegrams between the roads commission and Bartholomew, he had not indicated any objection to the link outside the park. Further, Olmsted Brothers had included an interchange in the plan for the connection where the belt freeway dipped south of the park about a mile east of Wisconsin Avenue.

While planners and road officials reacted to NCPC's "bad faith" action, attorneys involved in the court case pointed out that in the end, NCPC did not have any jurisdiction over what happened outside the park. Even with the NCPC condition, Watkins of the Maryland planning commission considered the decision a "clear-cut approval" for the belt freeway. The linkage between the southeast leg of U.S. 240 outside the park was a "matter for the future." [Beveridge, George, "Road Decisions By Planners Renew 2 Fights," *The Evening Star*, June 11, 1954]

On June 30, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission began displaying the Olmsted Brothers' model in the commission's Silver Spring office at 8500 Colesville Road. The model, which cost \$7,500, would remain available for public review until July 12. It would then be transported to the U.S. Federal Court for the District of Columbia. ["Maryland Planners Have \$7,500 Model Of Belt Road in Park," *The Evening Star*, June 30, 1954]

After meeting with other roads commissioners regarding NCPC's condition on the southeast leg, Chairman McCain sent a telegram to NCPC:

If press release of your resolution of yesterday dealing with inter-county beltway is correct, we cannot concur with exceptions designated as A, B, and C, as these three sections involve areas outside of park lands, where full jurisdiction is vested in the State of Maryland.

We believe plans submitted are in full accord with your prior commitments. I am authorized to state that these views are unanimously concurred in by the members of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

The goal of the telegram was to get on the record that the roads commission did not in any way agree with NCPC's conditions. [Beveridge, George, "Roads Officials Ponder Move For 240 Link," *The Evening Star*, June 12, 1954]

Judge McGuire set July 15 for final arguments in the court case, but Maryland roads and planning officials were still angered by NCPC's condition. On June 16, NCPC's meeting included what Beveridge called a "scathing attack" by Maryland officials. Watkins, chairman of the Maryland planning commission and a member of NCPC, read a "strongly worded prepared speech" arguing that the southeast leg conditions imposed "a grave threat" to the belt freeway. He argued that the schedule for constructing the \$29 million belt freeway in the next 4 years was threatened because the Maryland roads commission "might not be able to maintain the present priority" in view of needs elsewhere.

Bartholomew responded that the condition related to the southeast leg was entirely consistent with NCPC's longstanding opposition to encroachment by U.S. 240 on the park. NCPC, he said, was prepared to approve, without conditions, the belt freeway design in the park and a connection for U.S. 240 west of Wisconsin Avenue and outside the park. He pointed out that as an urban planner (and a member of the National Interregional Highway Committee that prepared the 1944 report to Congress on *Interregional Highways*), he was one of the country's foremost advocates of circumferentials; he strongly favored the Inter-County Belt Freeway. However, the design, he said, raised questions about whether the belt freeway was a "true belt distributor route."

Gingery defended the plan to use "this measly 3,000 feet of park" for the southeast leg because of the expense of building it through private residential areas in Bethesda. He contended that NCPC's ulterior motive was the fear that the District would continue the road through Rock Creek Park to downtown Washington.

Engineer Commissioner Prentiss, also a member of NCPC, replied that the District did have such a route in its long-range plan, but not in its work program for the next 10 years.

At Watkins's request, NCPC voted unanimously to support construction of the belt freeway through the park. ["Belt Route Suit Dismissal Plea Set for July 15," *The Evening Star*, June 17, 1954]

The hearing on the belt freeway was extended to July 27 to allow plaintiffs' attorney time for additional depositions.

Judge Edward A. Tamm, instead of Judge McGuire, conducted the hearing. As in the past, the definition of "parkway" was in dispute. Barse had said, "The word 'parkway' has been accepted so widely and used by so many agencies that now it means a hundred different things." The Olmsted Brothers' development plans for the surrounding area were "all window-dressing to try to make this highway fit the category of some sort of parkway." This segment, Barse pointed out, was part of a 36-mile beltline completely encircling Washington. It was, simply, a "major highway" except for the 2.5-mile segment through the park.

Gasch said NCPC's action was consistent with its responsibilities by adding conditions to its 1950 approval. With those conditions, parkways were, in NCPC's view, a "harmonious park use."

Northrop responded that calling the belt freeway a parkway was "just a rose called by another name, and its purpose is not changed in any way." He warned that the project was the "opening wedge to the destruction of our park system."

After hearing arguments for 3 hours, Judge Tamm dismissed the suit, finding that NCPC had acted within its legal rights in approving the use of parkland for the Inter-County Belt Freeway. The arguments by both sides, he said, raised "a number of collateral issues," but he based his finding on congressional action. He referred to laws dating to 1924, as cited by Gasch, as the source of NCPC's authority.

As for the plaintiffs' argument based on conditions placed on sale of the Parkwood land, Judge Tamm advised Barse that this question might better be considered by a Maryland court.

Barse stated that he and Northrop would appeal the ruling and asked for an injunction to halt construction while the appeal was underway. Judge Tamm denied the request. [Beveridge, George, "Appeal Planned With Dismissal Of Parkway Suit," *The Evening Star*, July 28, 1954]

Compromise – Pure and Simple

That Saturday, July 29, in his "This Week in Area Planning" column, Beveridge began:

No matter what happens from now on between Washington's planners and road builders, this qualifies as the week of the big compromise.

For years motorists have been watching a frustrating running battle over major bridge and highway needs. At times the fights have become almost too complicated to follow. And traffic conditions got steadily worse. But within a few days, a basic agreement turned up this week that could serve as a blueprint of future improvements for years to come.

During the week, the Senate had agreed on construction of the Constitution Avenue Bridge just upriver from Arlington Memorial Bridge as well as a bridge at Jones Point for the area's outer circumferential:

Key to the agreement was a general resolution of what will make up the so-called "inner-belt" system of roads around the center of town. The new [Constitution Avenue] bridge, and others agreed to tentatively, will feed directly into the belt. And the belt itself—designed to feed traffic directly to whatever major street the motorist wants to hit—will make up some of the most expensive projects in the city.

It all came about through compromise—pure and simple. Generally, highway officials can see the new routes they want. The plan also preserves the planning principles that have started much of the squabbling.

Beveridge added that, "There's no evidence the bickering is over," since fighting over details was likely:

But, at least, for the first time highway officials have an accepted plan into which the details of specific improvements can be worked out as the city can afford to pay for them.

Also during the week, the bill to establish a presidential commission to study all phases of area transportation problems "came to life." It had passed the House in 1953, but the Senate had added a second commission to regulate bus operations between the District and Maryland. "House-Senate conferees revised the bill Thursday and accepted both commissions." Chances for approval by the House and Senate before adjournment were good.

Then there was the "bitter issue of new roads in Rock Creek Park." Two important decisions had occurred during the week on this issue, "with highway enthusiasts coming out on top in both." In the first decision, NCPC approved plans to extend Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway from its Calvert Street terminus to link up with Beach Drive just south of Klinge Road. Plans included a four-lane tunnel through a rocky hill to get traffic around the eastern edge of the National Zoological Park. The extension would be four lanes as far as the Harvard Street entrance to the zoo, then two lanes wide to the merge with Beach Drive. "Construction is likely to start next year."

Finally, Beveridge highlighted Judge Tamm's finding on the Inter-County Belt Freeway across Rock Creek Park:

Judge Tamm based his ruling on a single point of law—upholding the Planning Commission's right to approve the belt road construction in the park.

But he chastened both sides lightly for “costuming” the facts in “a pageantry type of display,” and added:

I am surprised that counsel on neither side has referred to “the forest primeval, the murmuring pines and hemlocks,” because that seems to be the sentiment that prevails in this argument. [Beveridge, George, “New Belt Accord Eases Traffic Ailments in Area,” *This Week in Area Planning*, *The Evening Star*, July 31, 1954; “Road Extension Plan Approved For Rock Creek,” *The Evening Star*, July 29, 1954. Judge Tamm was quoting the opening line of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s 1847 poem, “Evangeline: A Tale of Acadie.”]

(According to the NPS historic resource study of Rock Creek Park, construction of the Rock Creek tunnel was still a few years off:

The impediment of sharp curves and periodic high water levels, which closed the fords on the road in the National Zoological Park grounds, limited the speed and reliability of the route in the 1930s and 1940s. Highway advocates had anticipated the bottleneck and began lobbying for a tunnel link under the zoo as early as 1933. Park planners concerned with the impact of a traffic artery on the character of the park delayed the project. However, as part of the Mission 66 park improvement program commemorating the 50th anniversary of the National Park Service, a tunnel and road segment was built and opened under the zoo in 1966. The Service later regretted their support of this project because it greatly expanded commuter use of park roads. Today more than 10,000 cars daily utilize Beach Drive as a connecting route from Maryland into downtown Washington. [Bushong, page 145])

On September 17, the U.S. Court of Appeals rejected plaintiffs’ request for an injunction to block construction in the park until their appeal was decided. This decision prompted the Maryland State Roads Commission to consider developing contract plans for the Inter-County Belt Freeway through the park. Legal counsel, according to McCain, advised the commission that rejection of the injunction put the matter “right where it was before the suit was filed.” He continued:

In view of that, the commission has directed its chief engineer to instruct consulting engineers to proceed as rapidly as possible in connection with completion of detailed contract plans for the construction of the inter-county belt parkway which involves the use of certain parklands.

McCain also advised the engineers to work closely with Olmsted Brothers on the final contract designs.

He declined to tell reporters whether the park section would be the first portion of the belt freeway to go to construction. [Beveridge, George, “Decision Due On Quick Start Of Park Route,” *The Evening Star*, September 18, 1954; “Maryland to Hasten Plans for Contract On Belt Parkway,” *The Evening Star*, September 23, 1954]

An Election Issue

Soon, the issue became part of the gubernatorial election between Governor McKeldin and his Democratic opponent, Dr. Byrd, who had resigned as president of the University of Maryland after 18 years to run for Governor. The *Star* said of Dr. Byrd:

He has been assailing his opponent's road policies in recent weeks, claiming excessive fees were paid to engineering consultants and implying favoritism with high real estate commissions to a former member of the State roads group.

On October 20, during a campaign appearance in Rockville, he told reporters, "I would appoint a new commission if I am elected." One of the issues he cited in Montgomery County was the need for a belt highway around Washington "with broad avenues leading into the city." As the *Star* noted, the McKeldin administration was working on such a project. In reply to a reporter's question, Dr. Byrd declined to state a position on extension of U.S. 240's southeast leg to East-West Highway. He said the issue was a local one that county residents should decide. [Preston, Alex R., "Byrd Pledges New Roads Commission in Maryland," *The Evening Star*, October 21, 1954; "Dr. Byrd Retires, Symons Heads U. of Maryland," *The Evening Star*, January 4, 1954]

With the issue raised, Governor McKeldin responded by telegram to an inquiry from State Senator R. Lofstrand, Jr., of Rockville:

I have just been informed today that an alternate plan on Route 240 has been submitted to the Maryland State Roads Commission and the Maryland National Park and Planning Commission which would permit the southeast leg of proposed 240 to reach East-West highway without jeopardizing Rock Creek Park.

I shall direct that the State Roads Commission consider this plan in the light of my desire to save the Rock Creek Park.

The chief engineer of the State Roads Commission has just informed me that there has been no attempt at any land acquisition which would be determinative of the route in question, and I have directed that there be no steps taken for any such land acquisition until the matter is finally and I trust satisfactorily concluded.

Initially, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission told reporters it was not aware of such an alternative plan. Roads commission officials could not be reached for comment. ["Alternate Plan For Route 240 Being Studied," *The Evening Star*, October 31, 1954]

With the election only 2 days away, Dr. Byrd issued a telegram promising that, "If elected, I will find a way of avoiding the use of Rock Creek Park such as the present Republican administration contemplates . . ." He also said he detected "a change of heart . . . in the Governor's eleventh-hour telegram," which he said amounted to "political trickery."

By this point, reporters had figured out that the alternative plan Governor McKeldin mentioned in his telegram had been submitted by Washington attorney Ernest F. Henry, a civic leader who lived near the parklands in question. His alternative plan, which he had submitted several

months earlier, was to build the belt freeway over mostly undeveloped private land south of the park. The Maryland State Roads Commission and the Maryland-Capital Planning and Park Commission had rejected the plan at the time.

Senator Nye sent a telegram to Governor McKeldin seeking clarification on “apparent inconsistencies.” The inconsistencies were prior rejection of the plan supposedly under study and whether land was being acquired for the belt freeway. Senator Nye also asked Governor McKeldin for a more definite stand on the location of the belt freeway and the southeast leg of U.S. 240.

The former Senator also sent a telegram to Dr. Byrd thanking him for “your forthright statement.” His group, the Citizens’ Action Committee for Fair Road Planning, had printed circulars reminding voters to “stand by our friends,” with Dr. Byrd instead of Governor McKeldin listed. [“Park Highway Becomes Issue In Campaign,” *The Evening Star*, November 1, 1954]

The night before the election, Governor McKeldin replied by telegram indicating he would support any alternative that would be feasible based on cost, engineering, and traffic benefit. But as George Beveridge would say, “his wire didn’t indicate he thought there was much prospect anyone would submit such an alternate.”

On November 2, 1954, Governor McKeldin became the first Republican Governor of Maryland to win reelection. Although the mid-term national election went strongly Democratic in Maryland and elsewhere, Governor McKeldin won by around 60,000 votes. As a sign of the strength of Democrats in 1954, Governor McKeldin’s running mates lost the race for Attorney General to Democrat C. Ferdinand Sybert, and for Controller to J. Millard Tawes. (The Attorney General was the number two person on each party’s ticket. Maryland’s constitution of 1867 had abolished the position of Lieutenant Governor and it was not reinstated by constitutional amendment until 1970.)

In Montgomery County, Governor McKeldin won the race by 5,000 votes, but Democrats “swept into office yesterday, capturing all local offices except one seat in the House of Delegates after eight lean long years,” as the *Star* put it. Among the winning Democrats was Edward S. Northrop, one of the attorneys for plaintiffs in the Rock Creek Park case, who defeated State Senator Lofstrand. [Goodwin, Gene, “Byrd Defeated By Margin of 60,000 Votes”; Hoffman, Charles L., “Democrats Win All But 1 Office in Montgomery,” both from *The Evening Star*, November 3, 1954]

Summarizing the election results, George Beveridge speculated in his weekly planning column:

Despite a brave effort, last Tuesday’s election apparently didn’t net anything for the band of nearby Maryland residents who are trying to block construction of the new inter-county belt road in Rock Creek Park near their homes.

If anything, in fact, their prospects may have become a bit bleaker.

They had pressured Governor McKeldin for months regarding use of the park for the belt freeway and the southeast leg of U.S. 240, but backed Dr. Byrd in the election. When Governor McKeldin raised the prospect of an alternative plan that had, as it turned out, been rejected months earlier, project opponents praised Dr. Byrd and demanded clarification from the Governor.

Beveridge concluded with the observation that “Dr. Byrd, who lost the election, won’t have the job of living up to the flat commitment he made to find” an alternative. [Beveridge, George, “Election Seen Dimming Plan To Block Belt Road in Park,” *This Week in Area Planning, The Evening Star*, November 6, 1954]

Undeciding

Citizens groups continued to express their views. Shortly after the election, the North Cleveland Park Citizen’s Association sent a letter to Governor McKeldin opposing construction of the southeast leg of U.S. 240 in Rock Creek Park as well as extension through the park in the District. [“Opposition to Route 240 Extension to Park Voted,” *The Evening Star*, 1954]

Meanwhile, members of the Rollingwood Citizens Association in eastern Chevy Chase were concerned by reports that the terminus south of East-West Highway would point the highway directly at Rollingwood Elementary School just west of Rock Creek Park. On December 6, officials of the Maryland State Roads Commission attended a meeting with a standing-room-only crowd of 300 Rollingwood residents to assure them that the area south of East-West Highway near the school was not in any danger. The officials read a joint statement from the roads and planning commissions indicating that the routing of the southeast leg would not be decided for 60 to 90 days.

The statement denied that land was being reserved for the leg south of East-West Highway, as the residents had heard. As McCain put it, “The whole idea has been pigeonholed.” In fact, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission had approved a plat for a subdivision in the area south of East-West Highway.

Governor McKeldin, according to the statement, had directed the roads commission by telegram to restudy the southeast leg. The delay would allow engineers to complete plans for projects scheduled to be advertised in the near future:

It is obvious that until this additional study is completed, the State Roads Commission is not in a position to make any comments or commitments with respect to the location of U.S. Route 240.

The restudy, McCain made clear, did not preclude the original terminus at East-West Highway near Beach Drive.

Harry Thompson of the NPS informed the audience that his agency was unalterably opposed to the use of Rock Creek Park for an all-purpose highway. He believed that Congress would amend park legislation to define “parkway” in a way that would keep the belt freeway and U.S. 240 out of the park.

Senator Nye addressed the audience in a 25-minute speech. He threatened to use his influence with Congress to secure a change in law that would keep major roads out of parks if the current plaintiffs lose their appeal. The announcement about approval of a subdivision south of East-West Highway was just another attempt to gain support for construction of the road in the park. In addition, he continued his assault on Gingery, saying, “This thing is just as deep in the mud of politics as it can be put there by any one man.” [“Ruling Delayed On Exact Site Of Route 240,” *The Evening Star*, December 7, 1954]

As 1955 began, the Maryland State Roads Commission committed \$59.1 million to area roads, the “most concentrated in Washington area history,” according to the *Star*. This large amount in the overall statewide road plan of \$242 million was because the area experienced the heaviest congestion and had many residential developments underway that would increase the cost of land acquisition for projects unless they could be advanced quickly.

The commission did not include construction of the Inter-County Belt Freeway in the plan. The State hoped to begin construction in 1955, but decided to await court rulings before moving forward on construction of the road between Wisconsin Avenue and Georgia Avenue. The only construction contract on the segment thus far was for a bridge over Cedar Lane just inside the southern boundary of the park west of Wisconsin Avenue, while the State continued surveys, plans, and land acquisition for its 33-mile portion of the circumferential.

Key projects planned for 1955 included:

- Improving River Road as a city street just beyond the District border through a heavily-populated area, and as a dual highway to just beyond Goldsboro. The dual highway would eventually be extended to the southwest leg of U.S. 240 and an extension of Massachusetts Avenue.
- With construction of Washington National Pike underway to north of Falls Road near Rockville (9 miles), the State planned to extend the pike to Tuckerman Lane “and from there southeastward to Wisconsin avenue near Rock Creek Park.” Tuckerman Lane, therefore, would be the dividing point for the pike’s southeast and southwest legs. At Wisconsin Avenue, the southeast leg would connect at a big interchange with the second proposed inter-county belt freeway. Also at Tuckerman Lane, the southwestern leg of U.S. 240 would be built later southward to the Potomac River at Cabin John. [Beveridge, George, “Maryland Plans \$59.1 Million For Area Roads,” *The Evening Star*, January 2, 1955; Beverage, George, “D.C. Area Projects Taking Shape This Year,” *The Evening Star*, January 7, 1955]

On January 26, Bartholomew wrote to the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission to request that “Maryland authorities continue to defer any further commitments on the inter-county belt parkway” before NCPC’s February 3 meeting. He did so after receiving a letter in December from Senator James E. Murray (D-Mt.), chairman of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, indicating that the committee might inquire into the proposed use of Rock Creek Park for the belt freeway. Bartholomew expected to learn more before the NCPC meeting about Senator Murray’s plans.

The Maryland planners replied on January 27 that they had made “very substantial contractual [sic] commitments,” particularly for the Cedar Lane bridge. At the same time, Maryland roads officials were developing detailed plans and acquiring right-of-way for the belt freeway. The planners wrote that they had no authority to require the roads commission to halt or delay work, especially since the U.S. Court of Appeals had declined to do so.

The planners also pointed out that in 1954, Senator Guy Cordon (R-Or.), chairman of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs before losing his reelection bid in November, had sent a similar letter the previous summer, but nothing had come of his inquiry. [“Senate Group May Probe Belt Road Project,” *The Evening Star*, January 28, 1955]

On February 1, Senator Murray went public on the Senate floor about his intentions. He introduced a resolution (S. J. Res. 36) that would require congressional authority for any road built in the District portion of Rock Creek Park. It also would forbid NCPC from approving any highway traversing the park and require it to “withdraw” any prior approvals. The purpose of the resolution was to provide a basis for hearings to determine whether current law was

sufficient to preserve Rock Creek Park against encroachment of its intended purposes. In a statement inserted into the *Congressional Record*, he referred to former Senator Cordon’s concern about “the creation of a new six-lane speedway through Rock Creek Park,” adding:

This modern superspeed highway, while bearing the name of a “parkway,” would of course destroy, in its area of the park, the scenic and recreational purposes for which the park was intended.

Senator Cordon’s inquiry into the matter had not been concluded when Congress adjourned in 1954, but the reports he received “indicate that the threat to the park may be very real indeed.”

Senator Murray praised the “great vision exercised back in 1890 when Congress made possible the creation and continued existence of Rock Creek Park” from the National Zoological Park to the north District line. He pointed out that the Capper-Cramton Act of 1930 made possible extension of the park into Maryland:

Some of the finest residential subdivisions in metropolitan Washington have been developed along each side of Rock Creek Park. These extended acres of Rock Creek Park, were they still in private possession, could not be purchased today for 100 times the cost that was involved when the ground was acquired 20 years ago.

Congress “could not wisely deny the use of Rock Creek Park for crossings by commercial highways.” Many such crossings existed:

But Congress ought to give most serious consideration to the challenge which now prevails in the form of plans which would let expressways and speedways (in this modern day sometimes called parkways) not just cross the park but run through it lengthwise. That challenge allegedly exists at this time with respect to the reaches of Rock Creek Park both in the District and in Maryland.

To supplement his concerns, Senator Murray introduced a letter from former Representative Cramton to NCPC dated June 8, 1954. Representative Cramton, who had been unsuccessful in his bid for renomination in 1930, was “very deeply concerned” about reports of “extensive super-speed highway encroachments” on the park. When he had come to Washington 40 years earlier, he wrote, he had been deeply impressed by Rock Creek Park in the District, but it was clear “that the charm and scenic values of the valley continued into Maryland.” The commission, at the time, “was greatly disturbed about the possible pollution and destruction of Rock Creek by reason of rapid developments of resident sections in Maryland.”

With cooperation from the commission and Maryland officials, Representative Cramton and Senator Capper had created the legislation that allowed for extension of the park beyond the District line:

All of this was park planning, not setting aside a great valley as a possible site for a 4-, 6-, or 12-lane highway. And to open that valley today in any part of it to such superhighway use opens the door wide to ultimate destruction of the most beautiful park any capital city enjoys. There is an attempt in some quarters to call this wonderful park area a parkway. And when they do that they put all the emphasis on the second syllable and would have it become “way,” dropping all emphasis on “park.” It is not a parkway, and was never intended to be a parkway The Capper-Cramton law says nothing about extending a parkway. It does propose and does extend that great park for many miles not as an avenue [for] easy vehicle approach to a city that already has more street traffic than it can endure.

Representative Cramton called on NCPC “to close the door with definiteness to any alluring proposals that involve preeminence of highway use in any part of this park.” The law anticipated that highways were needed for public use of the park, but pending proposals “would reverse the situation and make highway use preeminent.”

Senator Murray concluded his statement by saying that pending the planned hearings, he wished that planning and highway authorities would “refrain from any action that could in any wise alter the present status of Rock Creek Park until such time as Congress shall have the opportunity to consider the subject and prospect from every angle.” [Preservation of Rock Creek Park, *Congressional Record-Senate*, February 1, 1955, pages 1032-1033; “Senate Move Asks Delay in Extending Route 240 Into Park,” *The Evening Star*, February 2, 1955]

(Senator Nye claimed he had inspired Senator Cordon’s inquiry in 1954 and had spoken with Senator Murray in 1955 about continuing the inquiry. The NPS also had recommended hearings on the subject.)

The target of the hearings appeared to be extension of the southeast leg of U.S. 240 through the park in the District “as tentatively planned by the District Highway Department,” not the east-west crossing by the Inter-County Belt Freeway. A *Star* editorial saw Senator Murray’s planned hearing as possibly serving “a useful purpose,” especially since it would “help to clear up some of the misunderstandings surrounding the project.” The issue was “an old one, involving the weighing of modern traffic requirements against the natural desire to preserve park areas from

encroachment.” The editorial urged Senator Murray to keep in mind that linking the Washington National Pike with downtown Washington “is an urgent need that cannot long be delayed.” The editorial concluded:

If the committee can come up with some practicable alternative to the construction of a parkway approach through Rock Creek Park, it will have made a notable contribution to solution of a baffling problem. [“What Is the Alternative?” *The Evening Star*, February 3, 1955]

Harland Bartholomew was in town during this period. In a speech at a luncheon meeting of AAA’s District Advisory Board, he emphasized that a subway through the central business district for high-speed lightweight rail cars might be the answer to the area’s mass transportation problem. The area needed expressways, but in the future, the expressways might be flanked by room for the rail cars. The area also needed additional Potomac River bridges, including the Jones Point, Cabin John, and Roaches Run structures, as well as a ring of highways for crosstown traffic linking to the radial routes in and out of the city, and a complete parkway system, such as found in Westchester County, New York. He was disappointed that the Fort Drive intermediate ring was not being taken seriously, especially since 98 percent of the right-of-way had already been acquired.

In another speech, to the Joint Committee on the National Capital, he stressed the importance of ring roads. He praised cooperation among planners and road officials for agreement on the inner loop network that would ring the congested central business district. The loop would correct a drastic need for “better crosstown traffic facilities.” The much needed outer circumferential, he said, was well along in Maryland, and he hoped the expected new funds for the Interstate System would spur Virginia to activity. [“Subway Is Called Possible Answer to D.C. Traffic Problem,” *The Evening Star*, February 2, 1955; “U.S. Proposals Seen Offering Hope for D.C. ‘Ring Roads,’” *The Evening Star*, February 3, 1955]

Before Senator Murray could begin his hearings, Maryland scheduled construction to begin on the Cedar Lane overpass inside the park. The contract went to Ralph E. Mills Company of Salem, Virginia, for \$143,000. Contractors were poised to begin clearing land on February 21. Roads commission officials stressed that they had let the contract in December and it had progressed “as any other project would.” They had not, they said, speeded it up to get work underway prior to Senator Murray’s hearings.

In reporting on this development, Beveridge also discussed the status of the controversy. He explained that the Inter-County Belt Freeway was not really controversial. What was controversial was that the southeast leg of U.S. 240 was “bearing down on the Washington suburbs from Rockville.” He explained:

The opponents contend the roads commission’s real interest is not in the belt road itself, but in gaining a means of shooting Route 240 traffic into the main part of Rock Creek Park in the District.

Beveridge summarized the history of the belt freeway, noting that it had been on the highway plans as far back as the 1940s, but located north of Rock Creek Park:

At the end of the decade, however, the Maryland officials said, residential development had expanded to such a point that a suitable route could not be found. Also, they said, topography of the land was found to be not suitable. The National Capital Planning Commission, charged with approving park development, agreed.

The first official map showing the belt freeway crossing Rock Creek Park was the 1950 Comprehensive Plan adopted by the National Capital Park and Planning Commission. Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission added the belt freeway to its official highway plan in May 1953, having “decided that a carefully designed roadway would constitute a legitimate development of the park, opening it for wider public uses.”

The State planned to build most of the Inter-County Belt Freeway in the final 8 years of Maryland’s 12-year plan. However, the State was advancing the section through Rock Creek Park between Connecticut and Wisconsin Avenues, NW., to be completed in the first 3 years. Beyond the Cedar Lane overpass project inside the park, the roads commission had acquired more than \$1 million worth of right-of-way outside the park for the belt freeway and was negotiating for another \$500,000 worth of property. The State was overseeing final touches for construction of the park segment of the freeway, with the expectation that the next construction project could be let in the summer. Plans were being developed in conjunction with Olmsted Brothers. Beveridge, George, “Inter-County Road Belt Work To Start Despite Park Dispute,” *The Evening Star*, February 20, 1955]

The Murray Resolution

Senator Murray opened the hearing on February 25 in the large Senate caucus room to provide room for the many spectators. He explained that the purpose of the hearing was to determine if the Inter-County Belt Freeway and the southeast leg of U.S. 240 would harm the park in contradiction of the Federal interest.

However, he received a surprise from Maryland Senator Butler. In a letter that Senator Beall concurred in, Senator Butler accused the committee of intervening improperly in Maryland’s jurisdiction by attempting to block construction of the Inter-County Belt Freeway across the State’s section of Rock Creek Park.:

Regardless of the merits of the plans . . . this is fundamentally an internal matter My state has complied with the provisions of the Capper-Cramton Act by obtaining the approval of the National Capital Planning Commission I respectfully suggest that this committee, by injecting itself into the controversy, may very well be considered to be invading the rights of the sovereign State of Maryland.

Governor McKeldin submitted a lengthy letter, read by Commissioner McCain, objecting on similar grounds to congressional intervention. He cited the 1921 agreement in which Maryland agreed to pay two-thirds of the cost to acquire land for parks and that the parks would be

developed by the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission subject to NCPC approval of the plans.

Maryland, he said, had spent \$1.6 million for Capper-Cramton Act parks, including Rock Creek Park extended, and \$1.5 million for park development. The Federal share of the acquisitions was \$851,000. Governor McKeldin concluded:

The United States is both legally and morally bound by its contracts and it is not only illegal but wrong and immoral . . . to repudiate its obligations.

For these reasons I earnestly suggest . . . that no change in the long-established contractual rights of the United States and this State and its citizens should or can be made without the full concurrence and official action of the General Assembly of this State and with my approval as Governor.

Maryland Attorney General C. Ferdinand Sybert wrote to say that with the matter in court, the resolution was “to say the least, premature and untimely.”

Harland Bartholomew, the first witness, insisted that NCPC’s approval of the belt freeway’s use of the park did not extend to use of the park by the southeast leg of U.S. 240:

Mr. Bartholomew said there was a sharp distinction between building a heavy traffic road in a well established park such as Rock Creek in Washington and the ribbon-like stream valley park extensions in Maryland

“I want to assure you the Planning Commission is extremely jealous of park values,” Mr. Bartholomew declared. “But it also is aware of severe traffic problems which must be solved.”

In planning road systems, he said, it is not always possible to miss all the ribbon parks in the Metropolitan area, but he promised his group will “always insist on a competent park design before it gives approval.”

NPS Director Wirth testified in support of the Murray resolution. He wanted to keep the belt freeway out of the park because as far as he was concerned, it was simply a stepping stone for routing the southeast leg of U.S. 240 along the western part of Rock Creek Park to the District’s downtown.

Senator Russell B. Long (D-La.) asked Wirth about use of the park inside the District and how much a road would harm it:

Mr. Wirth said only a small portion of Rock Creek, in acreage, was developed for active recreation such as golf and baseball. But he stressed the park was dedicated and set aside in 1890 as a wilderness area for city dwellers. “To that degree,” Mr. Wirth said, “all of the park is being used now.”

General Grant agreed with Wirth, testifying that the belt road would violate the Capper-Cramton Act, which made no mention of building highways across park lands. He supported the Murray resolution because it simply “states explicitly” the intent of Congress in approving the Capper-Cramton Act.

Senator Long replied that he could go along with preserving park values if the park were widely used. Otherwise, maintaining a wilderness in the city “may be trying to do more than you can,” in view of other needs, such as congestion relief.

(Later, Senator Long told reporters that his wife pressured him to oppose the road because their home at 4740 Quebec Street, NW., in the Spring Valley section of the city was near the Maryland section of the park. “He added, laughing, that he refused to do so and ‘ran into real trouble.’”)

NCPC counsel William S. Cheatham told the committee that he doubted the legality of trying to force the commission to withdraw its approval for use of the park by the belt freeway. He mentioned the court ruling on the issue, still pending appeal.

District Commissioner Samuel Spencer declined to comment on the Maryland portion of the park. However, he opposed requiring congressional authority for any road in the Washington segment of Rock Creek Park, calling the requirement “unnecessary . . . and burdensome on Congress.” In any event, because NPS controls the park in the District, city officials would need approval by NPS and NCPC before construction of a road could begin on park grounds. The proposal to build the U.S. 240 extension through the District’s park, he said, was not in the city’s 10-year public works plan, so it was at least a decade from being proposed, yet alone built.

Chairman C. Melvin Sharpe of the Committee of 100 on the Federal City supported the resolution because it was “not necessary to appropriate dedicated park land for highways.” For the record, he read letters from former Representative Cramton opposing such use.

At the start of the second day of hearings, on February 26, Senator Murray responded in a statement to Senators Butler and Beall by declaring that the hearing was “in no way involved” with Maryland’s sovereign rights. Senator Murray pointed out that in the District and Maryland, Rock Creek Park was “part of our national park system.” He had received “several hundred letters” from around the country protesting use of the park for the belt freeway, including letters from park groups in Belgium and Japan.

J. Bond Smith, counsel for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, told the panel that the 1931 agreement between Maryland and the Federal Government was a “solemn contract.” Because Maryland had complied with the terms of that agreement, Congress should not change the rules after the fact.

He added that Senator Nye “didn’t get interested until his house was threatened.” He was confident that no court would allow the resolution to be applied retroactively to the belt freeway project.

Senator Nye testified that routing the belt freeway across the park was purely a “hidden back door” for the road commission’s real desire “to build a high-speed expressway through the length

of Rock Creek Park to downtown Washington.” They have never deviated from “this continuing plan” that would “ultimately destroy all of Rock Creek Park in Washington.” The committee was “the last court of resort to prevent a magnificent expressway from coming all the way down to the heart of Washington through Rock Creek Park.” When Senator Murray said the expressway into the city could be blocked if NCPC and NPS stood firm, Senator Nye replied, “Yes, but they would get their way piece by piece.”

He argued that the Maryland States Roads Commission was not really interested in the belt freeway; it had become interested only when NCPC blocked construction of U.S. 240 along the park. Maryland had begun construction of a single belt freeway bridge merely as a way to get U.S. 240 into the District along Rock Creek Park. If Congress allowed Maryland to build the belt freeway, “there is nothing anyone can do to prevent them from dipping down out of the park to the East-West Highway” and eventually into the city. “It may not be called Route 240, but there would be no way to keep Route 240 traffic off it.”

In response to Smith’s assertion, Senator Nye said he lived nearly two miles from the proposed belt freeway and that U.S. 240 between the freeway and East-West Highway would be 300 feet from his home. “I could live with that,” he said. “I defy anyone to show I have a more selfish interest than contributing to preservation of the park.”

As the *Post* reported, Senator Nye had some predictions:

Nye said he favored a circumferential road around Washington, but not through the park. He predicted Maryland wouldn’t build any more than this one strip for 15 to 20 years. He also predicted that the promised truck ban on the park section would not stand up and that other plans to develop the park won’t materialize “in our lifetime.”

Maryland highway officials said he was wrong on all counts. The entire 32 miles of the circumferential road in Maryland will be completed within 12 years, they said.

Other critics on the second day of the hearing included David R. Brower, executive director of the Sierra Club in California, and Senator W. Kerr Scott (D-NC), a former Governor of North Carolina (1949 to 1953). Brower said, “I hope Maryland and Congress won’t sacrifice so much in park values to gain so little, if anything in traffic movement.” Senator Murray appreciated Brower’s appearance because, “it seems to me you express the views of people throughout the country” on whether roads would destroy parks.

Senator Scott said that during his term as Governor, the city of Raleigh had converted part of its park system to parking lots. The city now regretted that decision. “We should be very cautious before doing anything that could hurt the park.”

In George Beveridge’s view, the hearings ended “in sharp conflict” over Maryland’s rights. Senator Murray had told Assistant Attorney General Joseph D. Buscher of Maryland that if the State’s legal position were correct, “I don’t think the resolution will be passed.” He emphasized, however, that he saw “no merit” in that position. Another question was whether the resolution, if approved, would affect the outcome in Maryland for the Inter-County Belt Freeway. Counsel

Smith said he did not think so. “From a legal standpoint, whether this resolution is passed or not, I do not believe construction of the road is going to be stopped.”

Afterwards, Senator Murray told reporters he had not made up his mind and had only wanted the issue to be explored in a hearing. However, he said he would not drop the resolution simply because Maryland officials objected to it. The question will “require a lot of thinking because whatever is done, someone will be affected.” He ordered “an intensive staff study” of the issues, including the legal issues Maryland raised. [Beveridge, George, “Butler Assails Senate Role in Belt Road Row,” *The Evening Star*, February 25, 1955; Beveridge, George, “Belt Road Plan Probe Defended By Chairman,” *The Evening Star*, February 26, 1955; “Senate Roll In Belt Plan Assailed At Hearing,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, February 26, 1955; Beveridge, George, “Belt Highway Inquiry Ends in Row on Rights,” *The Evening Star*, February 27, 1955; Lyons, Richard L, “Belt Route Called ‘Park Destruction,’” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, February 27, 1955]

According to a *Star* editorial, “the target of the Murray resolution to restrict road construction in Rock Creek Park is as yet without form or substance.” The resolution was really about the plan to extend the southeast leg of U.S. 240 to downtown Washington through the park. “Any legislation to control or ban such a parkway before it is even on the planning boards is premature, to say the least.” However, if Congress is going to force Maryland and the District to reroute the Washington National Pike “through heavily builtup [sic] territory, or over present north-south thoroughfares that cannot be widened except at unacceptable cost,” the Federal Government should pick up the extra costs.

The editorial concluded that the time to consider the impact is when a definite plan is developed for routing the southeast leg “from one end of Rock Creek Park to the other.” With that time still a good many years away, Senator Murray’s two-part resolution “ought to be put in a pigeonhole.” [“Shooting at a Formless Target,” *The Evening Star*, March 1, 1955]

That, in effect, is what happened. According to an NPS history of Rock Creek Park:

The highway issue was thoroughly ventilated in a Senate hearing on the bill, which was not brought to a vote in either house [Mackintosh, Barry, *Rock Creek Park: An Administrative History*, History Division, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 1985, page 87]

Back to Court

On March 1, the fight over the belt freeway was back in court. Barse filed a suit in Montgomery County Circuit Court on behalf of Mr. and Mrs. R. W. Brownell of 9702 Parkwood Drive in Bethesda abutting Rock Creek Park, seeking to block construction. The suit against the Maryland road and planning commissions raised basically the same issues as in the Federal court case, claiming the two commissions were “arbitrary and capricious” in approving the belt freeway route through Rock Creek Park.

Judge Thomas M. Anderson ordered the two commissions to appear March 16 and “show cause” why he should not halt the project. Judge Anderson’s “show cause” order did not affect any work undertaken before the hearing. [“Taxpayer Seeks To Halt Work On Belt Road,” *The Evening Star*, March 2, 1955]

After the parties responded, Judge Anderson scheduled further arguments for April 7. On that date, he declined to dismiss the suit as requested by the Maryland roads and planning commissions.

On April 28, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia issued its decision on basically the same issues. It dismissed Judge Tamm’s finding upholding NCPC’s approval of plans to construct the Inter-County Belt Freeway across the Maryland extension of Rock Creek Park:

Since the litigation seeks to declare invalid and to enjoin the National Commission from continuing to approve plans for a project which will in fact be built and maintained by the Maryland [Planning] Commission and other Maryland authorities, we think the questions involved ought not to be decided without opportunity to the Maryland Commission to be heard as a party if that is possible.

The Appeals Court ruling did not address whether NCPC had acted within its statutory authority. The ruling left open the possibility that plaintiffs could return to U.S. District Court for a new hearing, but the implication was that Maryland courts might be just as well suited to hear the case. [“State Role Seen In Road Fight,” *The Evening Star*, April 29, 1955]

(Around this time, Maryland found that right-of-way acquisition required careful oversight. State Senator Northrop raised questions about the contract awarded to two real estate firms that split \$750,000 in 7.5-percent fees for obtaining right-of-way for the Baltimore Harbor Tunnel. One of the firms was run by former Roads Commissioner David M. Nichols, who had resigned in 1954. More worrisome were allegations against Ben Du Pre, right-of-way engineer for the Maryland State Roads Commission. Commissioner McCain revealed that Du Pre had been suspended because of his activities in acquiring right-of-way in Montgomery County for the Washington National Pike. He was accused of tipping off land speculators about the State’s plans, receiving a percentage of commissions for land sold to the roads commission, and of being a part owner of land acquired from one of the speculators. [Associated Press, “Roads Agency Faces Quiz by Northrop on \$750,000 in Fees,” *The Evening Star*, March 21, 1955; “Maryland Road Agency Legislative Probe Urged,” *The Evening Star*, June 30, 1955; “Highway Land Deal Case Goes To Jury Today,” *The Evening Star*, March 15, 1956]

(According to the State roads history:

Following an exposé, DuPre [sic] was discharged from state service and went to Mexico City, his native place. When brought back in 1956 under legal immunity as a state witness, he admitted his part in the transactions and that he was paid \$8,500 for the advance information he supplied. The two real estate men who profited were convicted

of conspiracy and fined The state's ultimate loss, after recoupments of one kind or another, was approximately \$12,000, according to a board of real estate appraisal

The Legislature of 1956, at the request of the Commission's Legal Department, moved to plug the loophole revealed by the DuPre case. A statute was passed providing for the preparation of plats or maps showing the location of new highways and the Commission's valuation of each property concerned, such plats to be filed with the Commission "and not to be open to public inspection," with certain exceptions. It was thought that such a procedure would prevent land grabs in the path of future highway construction. [*A History of Road Building*, pages 171-172]

(Once the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 launched construction of the Interstate System, similar right-of-way schemes would be one of the main concerns raising questions about whether the "Greatest Public Works Project in History" was corrupt.)

Meanwhile, Maryland was experiencing a fund shortfall of \$25 million after the General Assembly had rejected Governor McKeldin's tax program. State Senator Northrop headed the special committee established to investigate existing laws providing for mandatory increases in budget items, with the idea of removing some of them. The committee also was to examine distribution of State funds, including receipts from the gasoline tax and motor vehicle registration tax, among counties and municipalities. [Hoffman, Charles L., "Northrop Heads State Hunt for \$25 Million," *The Evening Star*, May 5, 1955]

By the end of May, the Maryland State Roads Commission was facing a \$21 million cutback. The cutback had several causes. Contracts underway were running \$11 million over budget. The State Legislature, which deferred an increase in automobile registration fees, charged about

\$4.5 million in unanticipated, nonconstruction expenses against road construction funds. The State would have to pay \$2.5 million for right-of-way acquisition on the Baltimore Beltway that Baltimore County was supposed to have paid; the schedule had been moved up to accommodate the opening of the Baltimore Harbor Tunnel in 1957.

Ongoing contracts would not be affected. For example, the commission had advertised for bids on the Kenilworth interchange on a 50-acre site, a complex of cloverleaves and bridges linking the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, the Washington-Annapolis Freeway, River Road and Kenilworth Avenue. The estimated cost of the interchange was \$2 million.

(On August 12, 1954, Commissioner McCain announced that the Washington-Annapolis Freeway, then completed between Annapolis and U.S. 301, would be called the John Hanson Freeway. On November 5, 1781, Hanson became the first President following ratification of the Articles of Confederation in March 1781. Maryland had been the last State, on March 1, 1781, to ratify the Articles to begin the "perpetual Union of the thirteen states of America." Hanson's selection as the country's first President may have been a reward for his efforts in securing Maryland's approval of the governing document. The position was mainly a ceremonial post that Hanson held for 1 year, the term the Articles had set for the position. A history of his service stated:

In his capacity as first president of Congress of the Confederation, Hanson established the first cabinet, consisting of secretaries of war, finance, foreign affairs, and state. Ironically, Hanson's first use of the "Great Seal of the United States" was on a 1782 commission authorizing George Washington to exchange war prisoners. Just days before he was to relinquish office, he issued a proclamation authorizing America's first national Thanksgiving Day to be celebrated the last Thursday of every November.

(Hanson had been in poor health during his 1-year term. He retired to his home in Frederick and died on November 15, 1783. [Gay, James Thomas, "Americans: 'first president of the united states,'" *American History*, June 1999, pages 12-14]

(Today, Hanson is largely forgotten outside the Washington area but the name of the first President of the United States survives on a school, a savings bank, other facilities and, of course, the Washington-to-Annapolis Freeway. In the Washington area, the freeway is sometimes referred to as the John Hanson Highway rather than U.S. 50 or I-595, its official designations. [Associated Press, "Annapolis Highway Called John Hanson After 1776 Leader," *The Evening Star*, August 12, 1954])

Several projects set for bids later in the year would be delayed until 1956. These projects included the contract to extend the Washington National Pike from Falls Road near Rockville to Tuckerman Lane and southeast toward an interchange with Wisconsin Avenue near Rock Creek Park. Contracts in 1955 would carry the pike only to Old Georgetown Road, northwest of Wisconsin Avenue.

Roads officials emphasized that the pike project and others in the area were facing "temporary deferral." The cutbacks, while regrettable, would not reduce expenditures during the course of the 12-year roads program. [Beveridge, George, "7 Highway Projects In D.C. Area Hit by Maryland Cutback," *The Evening Star*, May 22, 1955; "Funds Cutback To Delay Roads," *The Evening Star*, May 22, 1955]

The Interstate Map

As discussed elsewhere, BPR released maps of urbanized areas throughout the country in September 1955 with black lines showing proposed Interstate routes. For the Washington area, the map included the circumferential in the general location of today's Capital Beltway with its Potomac River crossings at Alexandria and Cabin John. The Washington National Pike/U.S. 240 to Frederick crossed the belt freeway on a path to Glen Echo where it intersected a route along the Potomac River, roughly parallel to Canal Road, NW., to the planned Inner Loop freeway in the vicinity of the Constitution Avenue Bridge. District mileage totaled about 29 miles.

The map did not include the southeastern leg of U.S. 240 or any arterial interchange in Maryland with the belt freeway between Greenbelt and the southwest leg of U.S. 240. The connection between Baltimore and Washington on the main East Coast route was accomplished by a freeway from Richmond, Virginia, running across the city as part of the Inner Loop Freeway to the Baltimore-Washington Parkway via New York Avenue. A freeway along the east side of the Anacostia River began on the future Capital Beltway east of the Potomac River and ended at the

Baltimore-Washington Parkway. In addition, a northern segment of the Inner Loop Freeway intersected the river route freeway before heading into Virginia in the direction of Strasburg.

BPR said of the maps:

The present approval fixes only the general locations of interstate routes in the urban areas In many instances extensive studies of traffic needs, right of way costs and design problems must precede fixing the final location. [Douglas, Francis P., "Highway Links OK's for D.C.," *The Evening Star*, September 29, 1955]

The absence of the southeast leg of U.S. 240 was a blow to Maryland, but Chairman McCain was undaunted. Appearing before the Rockville Rotary Club, he said Washington National Pike would open between Germantown and Rockville in the early spring of 1956. Contracts for the extension to Bethesda would be advertised in the early summer, with construction to begin in August. ["Rockville Pike Widening Due In 9 Months," *The Evening Star*, November 20, 1955]

On February 21, 1956, the *Star* carried a photograph of the completed Cedar Lane bridge over the headline: "Montgomery Bridge With No Place To Go." The caption read:

This newly completed bridge is the one to carry the intercounty belt road traffic across Cedar lane north of Bethesda. The bridge is ready, but that's all. The contract for the first section of the beltway, a 2-mile stretch between Wisconsin avenue and Connecticut avenue, has not been let and no date set for receipt of bids.

The Maryland State Roads Commission advertised for bids on the 2-mile section on April 18, 1956. The contract covered drainage, grading, and surfacing for the Inter-County Belt Freeway from Wisconsin Avenue near Pooks Hill to Connecticut Avenue about 1,200 feet north of Jones Bridge Road. The work included grading for the "gigantic interchange," as the *Star* called it, linking the belt freeway, existing Rockville Pike (extended Wisconsin Avenue), and Washington National Pike. ["Bids Asked for First Lap Of Inter-County Beltway," *The Evening Star*, April 19, 1956]

After the real estate scandal involving Washington National Pike, Governor McKeldin had established a Commission on State Programs, Organization and Finances headed by Baltimore attorney Harry J. Green. Based on the Green Commission's findings, Governor McKeldin concluded, "Even more obvious has been the need for a strong hand of direction and authority in the affairs of the [Roads] Commission."

By then, the Maryland State Roads Commission was due for what *Star* reporter Gene Goodwin called a "long-rumored shake-up." Part of the commission's problem was inevitable; the projects in the 12-year program inconvenienced property owners and caused financial losses for many of them. The commission's problems, Goodwin pointed out, "began shortly after the \$568 million program was launched." The feeling of distrust grew with the scandals involving real estate for the Washington National Pike and the Baltimore Harbor Tunnel.

On May 21, 1956, Governor McKeldin announced that he had appointed Robert O. Bonnell, to become chairman of the Maryland State Roads Commission on June 15. Bonnell, a Baltimore banker, had been chairman of the Baltimore Aviation Commission during construction of Friendship International Airport, but had no experience in road building. The Governor also replaced one of the other two commissioners with John J. Mullen, a newspaper publisher from Cumberland. The third commissioner, former State Senator Edward T. Bennett of Wicomico County, remained in his position. "We need a general change in the system of administration and I feel it is best that we start out with an entirely new group of commissioners."

Where McCain had earned \$10,000 a year as chairman of the commission, Bonnell would receive a salary of \$25,000 in his new post. "Leaning back in his vice-president's chair at the Fidelity-Baltimore National Bank & Trust Co.," the 65-year old Bonnell told reporters:

I've worked pretty hard all of my life and I must admit I had looked forward to relaxing a bit. But this assignment is just too much of a challenge to pass up. I hope I can do the job in a way that will be rewarding and helpful to the State.

He added, "But I have nothing to lose. I don't need the job nor the money and if it doesn't work out, I'll quit."

Bonnell would tighten procedures, particularly for right-of-way acquisition, but as the State roads history put it, "The work of the Twelve-Year Program progressed with unabated vigor." [Associated Press, "2 Named to Posts In Roads Shakeup," *The Evening Star*, May 21, 1956; Goodwin, Gene, "Road Group Poses Questions," *The Evening Star*, May 27, 1956; Goodwin, Gene, "Bonnell Defies 'Hot Spot' In Maryland Road Post," *The Evening Star*, May 28, 1956; *A History of Road Building*, pages 172-174]

Construction on the belt freeway contract began in July, with the \$980,000 contract to be completed in late 1957. The right-of-way followed the southern bank of Rock Creek on land approved by the Maryland-National Park and Planning Commission. To protect as many trees as possible, special crews had marked more than 100 trees bordering the right-of-way with white paint. The contractor was instructed to use gravel fill and rock walls if necessary to protect the marked trees. ["Inter-County Parkway Link Gets Under Way," *The Evening Star*, July 11, 1956]

As McCain had indicated, the roads commission advertised in late August 1956 for bids to extend Washington National Pike from Chestnut Street to Pooks Hill (1.3 miles) and to Grosvenor Lane (4.5 miles). From Grosvenor Lane, the pike had only a half mile to go to the interchange with Rockville Pike and the Inter-County Belt Freeway. ["Bids Sought On Pike Job," *The Evening Star*, August 29, 1956]

Interstate Program Gets Underway

By then, President Eisenhower had approved the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, which launched construction of the Interstate System throughout the country. The legislation added 1,000 miles to the Interstate System, bringing it to 41,000 miles, and made a national commitment to pay 90 percent of the cost to complete all the mileage to full Interstate standards.

BPR and AASHO had been working on design standards in anticipation of passage of the legislation, which called for adoption of uniform design standards for the Interstate System to accommodate projected traffic in 1975 – shortly after the entire program was to be completed. As with all such standards, AASHO’s Committee on Planning and Design Policies developed them with input from BPR, and then BPR adopted them. The standards adopted by BPR on July 17, 1956, reflected “desirable minimum values” to ensure the new Interstates were “designed with control of access to insure their safety, permanence, and utility and with flexibility to provide for possible future expansion.” The 1956 design standards stated:

Interstate highways shall be designed to serve safely and efficiently the volumes of passenger vehicles, buses, and trucks, including tractor-trailer and semitrailer combinations and corresponding military equipment . . . including attracted, generated, and development traffic on the basis that the entire system is completed.

The 1956 Act had provided maximum weight and width limitations for commercial vehicles using the Interstate System (with a “grandfather” clause for previously legal vehicles). “No funds authorized to be appropriated” were to be apportioned to States that violated these limitations.

The standards focused on rural segments, with urban design standards almost a side issue. For example, design speeds were specified for flat (70 m.p.h.), rolling (60 m.p.h.), and mountainous topography (50 m.p.h.), with adjustments for terrain and development. “The design speed in urban areas should be at least 50 miles per hour.” Medians throughout the network were to be at least 16 feet wide, but narrower medians “may be provided in urban areas of high right-of-way cost.” Similarly, right-of-way width for rural Interstates was detailed in a table listing different numbers of lanes, but in urban areas the width “shall be not less than that required for the necessary cross-section elements, including median, pavements, shoulders, outer separations, ramps, frontage roads, slopes, walls, border areas, and other requisite appurtenances.”

Immediately after the President signed the 1956 Act, Secretary of Commerce Sinclair Weeks announced apportionment of \$1.25 billion in FY 1957 funds to the State highway agencies. On August 1, he apportioned FY 1958 funds, bringing the total apportioned Interstate construction funds to \$2.55 billion. The funds were apportioned based on the same formula as the limited Federal-aid funds the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1954 authorized for the Interstate System (two-thirds based on population, while area and post-road mileage counted one-sixth each).

Beginning with FY 1959 funds, Interstate construction funds were to be apportioned based on each State’s share of the total estimated cost of completing the Interstate System. With this requirement in place, BPR began working with the State highway agencies to determine specific locations for the routes, including those in urban areas, and to estimate the cost of building them to full standards.

By December 1956, Maryland roads officials and BPR were at odds on two routes. One involved the stretch of the Inter-County Belt Freeway crossing Rock Creek Park between Seminary Road and Bradley Boulevard. BPR had deferred approval of this section because the State planned to ban trucks on the parkway section of the circumferential. Under the 1956 Act, the Interstate System was intended to carry all traffic within legal load limits. The head of BPR,

Commissioner C. D. Curtiss, said BPR “has not made a firm decision on whether the park portion could qualify.”

The other dispute involved the 2.3-mile segment of Washington National Pike near Tuckerman Lane in Bethesda and Wisconsin Avenue at Rock Creek Park. Maryland’s Pritchett called it “the most critical road problem we have to resolve in the Washington area.” Tuckerman Lane was the dividing point for the southeast and southwest legs of the pike, but Maryland had not yet scheduled construction of the southwest leg. Construction to Tuckerman Lane was to be completed in 1958, but the lane was not a suitable end to U.S. 240. Pritchett said that without Interstate designation for the segment, “the road couldn’t be built for several years.” [Beveridge, George, “Snarl Threatens 2 Road Projects In Maryland,” *The Evening Star*, December 16, 1956]

(Maryland and BPR also were disputing the location of the Interstate link between Baltimore and Washington. As will be discussed later, BPR wanted to designate an upgraded Baltimore-Washington Parkway as the link – the line shown in the 1955 black line map – thus reducing construction costs. Maryland roads officials vowed to wage a “continuous fight” for construction of a new link. [“Maryland Pledges Fight For New D.C. Expressway,” *The Evening Star*, December 16, 1956])

On January 15, 1957, Maryland and District officials met on the disputes with Federal Highway Administrator John A. Volpe, the first official to hold that newly created title for the head of BPR. (President Eisenhower had selected Volpe as interim Administrator until the permanent Administrator, Bertram D. Tallamy of New York, was able to take the post in mid-February following his confirmation by the Senate). He approved Interstate designation for extension of Washington National Pike between Tuckerman Lane and Wisconsin Avenue at Rock Creek Park. Maryland roads officials expected to award a construction contract for the extension later that year.

Officials discussed the southwest leg from Tuckerman Lane to Cabin John and a link to the District of Columbia. Maryland officials wanted to use the planned George Washington Memorial Parkway to carry traffic into the District. However, NPS officials, who planned to begin construction in the spring, were building the parkway to exclude trucks. They also were not bound by the design standards BPR had approved for the Interstate System. District commissioners had recently approved the extension within the District, and Volpe concurred. The link between the District line and the southwest leg was left open to additional studies that Maryland officials said would take about 3 months.

Volpe left open the designation of the parkway connector between the Inter-County Belt Freeway and the District line.

In addition, officials discussed the Baltimore-Washington link, but left the location up in the air. Volpe approved Interstate designation of the District’s Anacostia Freeway and a portion of New York Avenue between Florida Avenue and Bladensburg Avenue, NE. [Beveridge, George, “U.S. Road Unit Okays Route For Expressway,” *The Evening Star*, January 16, 1957]

On July 19, District, Maryland, and BPR officials convened at the Statler Hotel for a meeting called by Herbert C. Wells, chairman of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, to discuss the issues. The meeting lasted from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. in an attempt to reach agreement on the U.S. 240 and Baltimore expressway links to the District.

The idea of continuing the southeast leg of U.S. 240 into the District via Rock Creek Park had been raised again in recent weeks. In response to the idea, NPS Director Wirth made clear that the Interior Department opposed any highway through the park. He distributed a letter from Secretary of the Interior Seaton promising to continue opposing any such construction.

The southwest leg also was in dispute. The District had let a contract with Clarkeson Engineering Corporation to study a link separate from the George Washington Memorial Parkway. However, Commissioner Bonnell said the roads commission was opposed to any alternative to the parkway for the link:

We are unalterably opposed to the construction of two facilities between Cabin John Creek and the D.C. line. Such a course would be useless duplication, economically unsound, trafficwise unjustified and would unnecessarily disturb and disrupt a large number of valuable properties occupied by tax-paying citizens of Maryland.

With the District reportedly abandoning Rock Creek Park as a route for the southeast leg of Washington National Pike, the city's focus was on the parkway entrance for the southwest leg. A "prominent possibility [was] a road through Glover-Archbold Park [that] would connect Wisconsin avenue above Van Ness street N.W. with MacArthur boulevard west of Georgetown University." NCPC had approved the link through the park, but seven citizens groups in northwest Washington had denounced the approval as "arbitrary and unnecessarily hasty." They wanted a hearing where they could protest the decision.

The meeting also covered the new Interstate link that Maryland wanted to place between the Baltimore-Washington Parkway and U.S. 29/Columbia Pike. "Maryland officials learned, many for the first time yesterday, from the District's Mr. Robertson that the Federal City connection might not be planned as an interstate link." The District had engaged the Clarkeson firm to study the question.

Most issues remained unresolved, but participants agreed on the location of the Cabin John Bridge that would carry the circumferential across the Potomac River between Maryland and Virginia.

Further, in what participants considered a "major action," they agreed to establish a coordinating committee that would meet monthly to seek solutions to regional differences on highway locations. Officials agreed the action was "overdue." Bonnell headed the committee.

After the meeting, Wells said, "It is possible we have made much progress." Still, he was philosophical about the outcome. "One hundred years from today, there still will be problems about issues like those discussed here." ["Parley Fails to Solve Link to Route 240," *The Evening Star*, July 20, 1957]

Glover-Archbold Park

The idea of building an expressway through Glover-Archbold Park was not new.

In 1924, Charles O. Glover and Mrs. Anne Archbold offered 98 acres that they owned in the Foundry Branch Valley (Massachusetts Avenue to Reservoir Road, NW.) to the government exclusively for park use. Congress acted in June to complete the purchase. Subsequently, the National Capital Park and Planning Commission expanded the park to provide recreation for the surrounding residential district.

By the 1940s, the park, nestled among residential neighborhoods, seemed a perfect location for a freeway. The proposal was called the Arizona Avenue Freeway.

Arizona Avenue was named in 1893 as part of a subdivision that the Palisades of the Potomac Land Improvement Company developed beginning in 1890. [Stewart, page 68] The Palisades is a community located in the western corner of the District along the Potomac River at the city border with Maryland. Because of its location along the Potomac River, the Palisades has been a transportation hub from the start. It was crossed by Conduit Road, as mentioned earlier, the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal (reflected today in Canal Road), and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. It included the road to Chain Bridge.

The *Star's* "Affairs in Georgetown" column mentioned creation of Arizona Avenue in October 1893:

The proposed highway over the line of the Foundry branch sewer that is to run from the Loughborough road, near its junction with the Tenleytown road, to the Chesapeake and Ohio canal, at a point near the Independent Ice Company's big warehouse, is to be designated as Arizona avenue. ["Affairs in Georgetown," *The Evening Star*, October 12, 1893]

By the 1940's, the District, like many cities, was developing a highway improvement program. One of the ideas to emerge from this process was the Arizona Avenue Expressway. The idea did not involve converting existing Arizona Avenue to an expressway, but creating an expressway with that name from the intersection of Wisconsin and Nebraska Avenues at Tenley Circle, through Glover-Archbold Park, to Canal Road near the Potomac River. It would provide a bypass of congested Wisconsin Avenue in Georgetown and remove through traffic from Foxhall Road.

The 1946 plan submitted to Engineer Commissioner Young, discussed earlier, presented a plan for post-war highway improvements to take the District to the threshold of the 21st century. The plan included "somewhat lesser scale" improvements, such as "the opening of the valley along Arizona Avenue as a parkway to connect Canal Road with Wisconsin Avenue." The 1946 plan was consistent in many ways with the 1941 plan, but studies since then "have changed the plan to some extent, in that the Arizona Avenue Parkway has been approved as a substitute for the formerly proposed improvement of Foxhall Road as the 'major arterial highway' to serve the area west of Connecticut Avenue"

The pending approval of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1948, the first post-war reauthorization of the Federal-aid highway program, would affect the timing of projects. However, Young listed the Arizona Avenue Parkway for construction in 1950, with completion in 1951. [*Twenty-Four Years of Progress*, pages 74-76, 111-112, 114-115; Thompson, John W., Jr., "D.C. Heads Get Highway Plan Costing Millions," *The Evening Star*, December 13, 1946]

By 1947, the proposed Arizona Avenue Freeway/Expressway/Parkway was controversial because of its routing through the park, as the *Star* explained:

A new feud is developing between the District Government on one side and the National Park Service and National Capital Park and Planning Commission on the other Center of the controversy is the expressway the District Highway Department proposed building through Glover-Archbold Park [It] would be a dual roadway without lights or intersections and would meet the K street skyway now under construction.

General Grant of the planning commission and NPS Associate Director Demaray were opposed for two reasons:

1. The park, about half of which was donated to the Government by Charles C. Glover and Mrs. Anne Archbold for a children's playground and neighborhood park, is needed, they claim, to provide recreation for the highly developed area through which it runs.
2. The expressway, they maintain, would encourage more District residents to move to Montgomery County because it would make it easier for them to get downtown quickly. This, it is felt, would deprive the District of additional substantial taxpayers through the continued process of decentralization. [Kauffman, Rudolph II, "D.C. Planners Disagree on Expressway," *The Evening Star*, July 6, 1947]

Although the proposal was controversial, especially with park advocates, the Arizona congressional delegation was supportive. In December 1947, Senator Carl Hayden (D-Az.), who had been in Congress since 1912 and in the Senate since 1927, introduced a bill directing the District commissioners to prepare plans and construct the expressway with "suitable grade separations and interchanges at appropriate locations along Foundry Branch, following in general the line of Arizona avenue." The bill also provided that Federal agencies were to transfer to the District any land needed for the freeway. This provision, if enacted, would resolve the dispute over the use of parkland. In addition, the bill renamed the project "Arizona Freeway."

Senator Hayden, long a major force on the Committee on Public Works, complimented the District Department of Highways for its initiative, which "clearly demonstrates the imperative necessity for construction of the Arizona Freeway." He added that the proposal "is a fine illustration of advanced thinking in the highway planning field, where there is still time for corrections in the difficult traffic situation." He added that Arizonans "had waited long enough" for a real District street with its name, instead of the "paper" street shown on maps.

Senator Hayden said the freeway would "not only be a credit to the name of my State, but will materially reduce the hazards to life on other routes of travel to and from the business and

governmental sections of downtown Washington.” [Rogers, Harold B., “Hayden Bill Asks Developing of Arizona Avenue,” *The Evening Star*, December 21, 1947]

Representative John R. Murdock (D-Az) introduced the bill in the House. He predicted that the freeway would be a “well-traveled boulevard to facilitate traffic and help motorists avoid congestion on other streets.” He added that, “Naturally, we feel that the youngest State in the Union ought to have this due recognition in the Nation’s Capital.” [“Arizona Avenue Freeway Bill Before Congress,” *The Evening Star*, January 7, 1948]

His bill was assigned to the House District Committee, which held a hearing on the issue on January 13, 1948. Before the hearing, Chairman Everett M. Dirksen (R-Il.) received letters from Mrs. Ann Archbold, one of the original donors of the park, and from the son of the other donor, Charles Glover, who had died on February 25, 1936. Charles C. Glover, Jr., said that construction would “greatly mar the park and detract from its usefulness as a recreation area, the purpose for which it was given and accepted by Congress on behalf of the District.” His father’s donation, he said, was for a park and a children’s playground.

Mrs. Archbold added that she also intended her gift for a bird sanctuary. She, like Glover, Jr., asked the committee “to prevent the destruction and desecration of the beautiful and natural valley of Foundry Branch by a commercial freeway.” [“Glover-Archbold Park Highway Protested,” *The Evening Star*, January 12, 1948]

Representative Beall, chairman of the Subcommittee on Public Service, Streets and Traffic, conducted the hearing. Captain Whitehurst, who headed the District highway agency, and planning engineer Brinkley used maps and charts to explain the proposal. They explained that based on expansion of population and motor vehicles by 1990, the freeway was needed. They estimated the 3¼ mile freeway would cost between \$3 million and \$4 million.

General Grant led the opposition. He explained the commission’s concern about the use of the park as a right-of-way and indicated that the commission might have a compromise proposal. The implication was that the compromise would be an “express parkway.” [Rogers, Harold B., “Glover-Archbold Park Freeway Plan Pushed, Assailed at Hearing,” *The Evening Star*, January 13, 1948]

The subcommittee approved the bill on February 4, changing only the name of the proposed highway to “Arizona Avenue” instead of “Arizona Freeway.” The bill called for the District Department of Highways to build the project instead of putting it under Federal control as recommended by the National Capital Park and Planning commission. Representative Beall said, “The District has a competent Highway Department and should have control.” [“Arizona Avenue ‘Freeway’ Approved by House Unit,” *The Evening Star*, February 4, 1948]

In March, Chairman Dirksen said he was holding the bill for further study. He had met with the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, which recommended construction of a parkway, and representatives of the original donors of the park. He wanted to look into the issue in greater detail.

Representative Beall postponed a March 23 inspection tour for subcommittee members. He stated that not enough members were able to take the tour that day to make it worthwhile. He planned to reschedule the tour, but does not appear to have done so. ["Glover Park Highway Bill Held for Further Study," *The Evening Star*, March 19, 1948; "Beall Defers Inspection Of Proposed Parkway," *The Evening Star*, March 23, 1948]

On April 16, NPS and the District of Columbia approved a memorandum of agreement containing stipulations for developing Arizona Parkway between Canal Road and Van Ness Street in Glover-Archbold Park. The agreement's series of "whereas" provisions referred to the District's acquisition in March 1893 of a 100-foot right-of-way for the Foundry Branch highway that was "not adequate either in its location or width to construct a properly designed highway and to properly serve traffic and provide for adequate access to the park areas."

The District, another "whereas" stated, was willing to change the name of the highway from "Arizona Avenue" to "Arizona Parkway." The parkway "can be made to serve as an access to the park so as to permit of the full enjoyment of the property for park purposes and at the same time supply the needs for traffic in this section." All parties agreed that an all-purpose highway was not necessary; the parkway would be restricted to passenger-car traffic.

The agreement acknowledged the District's view on the "necessity for a traffic-way between Canal Road and Wisconsin Avenue in the vicinity of Tenley Circle, with appropriately developed connections with the K Street Elevated Highway currently under construction and with suitable grade separation structures and traffic interchanges at appropriate locations."

In view of these and other considerations, NPS agreed to make available sufficient right-of-way within the park for Arizona Parkway. Any land made available, but not needed, would be returned to the park. The District would construct the parkway, but consult with NPS during each stage, including preparation of plans, the width of the roadway, and the location and layout of access roads. The NPS would be primarily responsible for the "architectural design of bridges and other structures, including retaining walls and guard walls, and rate and shape of slopes in cuts and fills, the landscape development of the right-of-way, the location and design of park areas outside the curb limits of the parkway surface areas." The District would request PRA participation in the project on a 50-50 basis under the Federal-aid highway program.

Captain Whitehurst told reporters that the city entered into the agreement with the understanding that PRA would provide 50 percent of the cost. He could not yet estimate the total cost. However, with the agreement, the city could begin developing the plans and specifications, but he doubted construction could get underway for another year or more.

One impact of the agreement was that legislation was no longer needed. Congress would not take further action on the Hayden-Murdock bill. ["District, Park Service Reach Agreement on Arizona Parkway," *The Evening Star*, April 16, 1948; the agreement can be found in District of Columbia Appropriation Act, 1960, *Congressional Record-Senate*, May 26, 1959, pages 9094-9095]

President Truman approved the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1948 on June 29. The legislation authorized \$450 million in Federal-aid funds for each of FYs 1950 and 1951. The District's share of the funds amounted to \$5,288,000 each year. Captain Whitehurst was ready with 16 projects to advance with the funds, including:

Arizona avenue from Canal road to Wisconsin avenue, including structures, paving and channelization, total cost, \$3,800,000, estimate of the amount included in this program, \$990,000. ["District Eligible For 5 Millions In Road Funds," *The Evening Star*, July 1, 1948]

Whitehurst Freeway

The head of the District's Department of Highways, Captain Whitehurst, was a 1906 graduate of Virginia Polytechnic Institute. During World War I, he had been based in Washington as a combat engineer officer. After the war, he served as head of the construction division for Wilson Dam at Muscle Shoals, Alabama, before being assigned to the District Engineer Commissioner's office in 1926. Captain Whitehurst resigned in 1929 to enter the private sector, but the District commissioners brought him back as chief engineer and coordinator after they read a plan he had prepared before leaving for streamlining highway management. He became director of the Department of Highways when it was formed in 1930. During World War II, he continued to direct the city's highway development while heading the District Department of Civilian Defense.

In the late 1930s and 1940s, he focused on establishing a thoroughfare plan for the city. Working with the Department of Vehicles and Traffic and PRA, he conducted a traffic survey beginning in 1939. In April 1941, he unveiled the plan for a \$44.45 million construction program to achieve free flow of traffic on Washington's streets – to be completed in 8 years, with funding from a 2-cent gas tax increase to match Federal-aid highway funds where eligible.

One of the biggest projects was an elevated highway on the line of K Street, NW., along the Georgetown waterfront. The Department of Highways' history said of the project:

The need for an east-west limited access highway across Washington, which would serve adequately as a high-speed dispersal artery during the morning rush period, and as an equally rapid means of egress from the central business and Government districts during the evening rush period, was recognized by the Department of Highways in its preliminary highway report of 1941.

Whitehurst's idea for Georgetown was to build an elevated "Sky-Road" in the K Street corridor that would take through traffic off local streets, including the main east-west road, M Street, NW. The elevated bypass would connect Key Bridge with the bridge across Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway between 24th and 27th Streets, NW. Ultimately, the expressway would continue east beyond the park along K Street, beneath Washington Circle, to connect with an improved thoroughfare extending to the Public Library of the District of Columbia in Mount Vernon Square at the intersection of Massachusetts and New York Avenues.

Whitehurst told a *Star* reporter that he had considered, but rejected, improvements in the M Street corridor:

In selecting the various trunk routes, the problem was to choose as near as possible the most direct connection with the outlying residential areas and to select streets along which traffic could be made to flow most freely. Many of the existing streets, it was found [,] were usable in part, while other sections of them were not suited to convey traffic quickly. This led, the director said, to the selection of K street instead of M street as the radial line to the northwest section west of Wisconsin avenue and Key Bridge.

M street already was highly congested, it was not wide enough for a depressed highway and it was undesirable because of the business interests involved. As still another bad feature, its roadway was heavily loaded with underground construction and, to avoid a bottleneck in Georgetown, a subway [for motor vehicles] would be necessary.

It has been suggested that a bypass for through traffic be constructed north of M street. Capt. Whitehurst said this idea was dismissed because it would require expensive property acquisition, would border a residential area, and the eastern terminus would bring congestion back into Pennsylvania avenue and M street at Twenty-ninth street. Moreover, there would be no connection with Key Bridge.

Some of the routes were so obviously the proper streets for the trunk lines that there was little difficulty in selecting them, the director reported. K street to the east, for instance, has a wide right-of-way and involves virtually no property acquisition. It also taps and connects with other main highways, which would make its usefulness much greater, and will do a great deal toward taking some of the load off the congested portion of New York and Rhode Island avenues. [“\$44,450,000 Street, Bridge Program Proposed to Ease Traffic,” *The Evening Star*, April 25, 1941; Jones, Pat, “Radial Street Plan Designed To Eliminate ‘Bottlenecks’ Here,” *The Sunday Star*, May 4, 1941]

Among planners and highway engineers, the idea of elevated freeways in large cities had been considered since the 1920s. They had to overcome the prejudice against elevated rail lines in cities, as consultant Robert Whitten discussed in the 1930 *Report on a Thoroughfare Plan for Boston*. Elevated freeways, he acknowledged, would be subject to the noise, vibration, and blockage of views and sunlight that had given elevated rail lines, “Els” as they were known, a bad reputation. Still, Whitten argued, they were the best option for fitting a freeway into a built-up urban environment:

As a matter of first impression the erection of additional elevated structures in Downtown Boston is very objectionable. The comparison of course is with the present noisy and ugly elevated railway structures. It must be remembered, however, that the proposed upper level roadway will occupy the central portion only of a broad avenue; that it will be but two-thirds the height of the elevated structure in Atlantic Avenue; that great care will be taken in its design to make it attractive and to reduce noise and vibration; that it will be used by motor vehicles and not by railroad trains; that it is probable that hard tire vehicles would be excluded; that a vehicular subway [for motor vehicles] would interfere

with sewers and with present and future rapid transit subways; and that it is not physically and economically possible to take care of the large volumes of traffic on the street surface.

Despite all the likely criticisms, Whitten argued that in view of engineering and financial constraints, elevated highways were the best way to move heavy traffic volumes through Boston's central business district. [DiMento, Joseph F.C., and Ellis, Cliff, *Changing Lanes: Visions and Histories of Urban Freeways*, The MIT Press, 2013, pages 29-30]

Over the next decade, elevated freeways became an accepted tool in urban planning. In 1937, the American Road Builders' Association (ARBA) established a Committee on Elevated Highways, headed by V. G. Iden of the American Institute of Steel Construction, Inc. Captain Whitehurst was a member of the committee. In his first report to ARBA, Iden explained that beyond a doubt, conditions in cities demonstrated that "the greatest need of the age is express highways that will serve the congested centers." However, completely rebuilding cities to meet the needs of automobiles would be foolish:

We must approach this problem from a rational point of view and construct highways that will fit any need that we already have. If streets are too narrow to accommodate the extra roads, these extra roads must be built above and over the streets. Elevated highways affording all the limited features necessary to cope with the problem, and accommodating swiftly moving through traffic, are possible

According to present practice, elevated highways should clear the underlying streets by at least fifteen feet, thereby leaving the surface roads free for truck and local traffic The design should take into consideration the movement of traffic underneath and the types of ramps to and from the elevated highway above, the banking of curves, location of ramps, methods of snow removal and prevention of the formation of ice. The design should fully conform to the purpose of the elevated highway and assure that no matter what the weather conditions, or how heavy the traffic congestion, the highway will prove to be an express highway under all conditions.

Already, engineers were gaining experience in design and operation of elevated highways from examples such as the West Side Highway in New York City, the connecting link in Chicago's Outer Drive, and the Pulaski Skyway over the meadows of New Jersey. [Iden, V. G., "Report of Committee on Elevated Highways," *Proceedings, Thirty-fifth Annual Convention, American Road Builders' Association*, January 17-21, 1938, American Road Builders' Association, pages 492-500]

Toll Roads and Free Roads (1939) and *Interregional Highways* (1944), the two reports that provided the basis for congressional action on the Interstate System in 1944, advocated depressed or elevated freeways through big cities, with depressed freeways being the preferred option. Elevated freeways were especially suitable for commercial or business sections of a city.

Interregional Highways included a drawing to illustrate an elevated freeway. The six-lane road, built at the second story level, spanned the center of the wide ground-level street. Motor vehicles

entered by ramps to the outside lanes, while exit ramps were in the center. The freeway lacked a median; traffic moving in opposite directions was departed by what appears to be metal fencing. Similar fences were located on the outer edges of the expressway. Light poles were placed on poles built into the center fence posts. The caption described expressway operation:

An elevated section of the interregional system as it might be built according to the standards proposed, with central exit ramps and lateral entrance ramps. The sketch suggests the manner in which new properties might conform to curving lines of the expressway in widened sections at access points, and a show window at the elevated level dressed appropriately with the kind of large display that would be needed for comprehension by express traffic. [*Interregional Highways*, page 80 and Plate VIII, also see page 166]

Thus, as Whitehurst was considered an elevated freeway in the K Street corridor, he was advancing an idea that urban planners and highway engineers considered an up-to-date congestion reliever. He was on a committee studying the idea.

Moreover, Georgetown was not the modern, upscale neighborhood of today:

Both the Dupont Circle area and Georgetown had concentrations of wealthy families, the latter also being home to many prominent New Dealers who encouraged the local historic preservation movement. But the inner parts of the city were home as well to the majority of black Washingtonians, most of whom lived in much more modest circumstances. West of the White House, some four thousand African Americans lived near the utility plants, factories, and breweries of Foggy Bottom. Another substantial, though decreasing, portion of the working-class black population was scattered around the back streets of Georgetown. [Miller, Fredric M., and Gillette, Howard, Jr., *Washington Seen: A Photographic History, 1875-1965*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, page 158]

Moreover, the once important Georgetown waterfront was in decline. According to *The WPA Guide to Washington, D.C.*, published in 1942, “Along the river, old warehouses – relics of a once extensive commerce – crumble away beside railway sidings and modern industrial plants.” [*The WPA Guide to Washington, D.C.*, The Federal Writers’ Project Guide to 1930s Washington, Pantheon Books, 1983 (reprint), page 346]

Elevated freeways often were desirable along blighted waterfronts such as the one in Georgetown. As in Washington, planners developed elevated freeways along aging, deteriorating waterfronts in cities such as Boston, New York City, San Francisco, and Seattle.

Whitehurst developed the Sky-Road with little controversy. When the city held a public hearing on May 20 to receive comments on the \$44.45 million plan, the primary concern was the 2-cent increase in the gas tax proposed to pay for the projects. Contemporary news articles did not report objections to either the K Street elevated expressway or other specific elements of the plan. The *Post* reported that the plan “received – with minor reservations – wide support of civic and business leaders at a public hearing in the District Building.” The *Star* stated, “Rather

general support was accorded 'in principle' to the comprehensive long-range plan." The articles reported comments by representatives of organizations during the afternoon hearing, many of whom differed on how to pay for the plan without burdening District residents with the added gas tax. If any citizens spoke during the hearing, neither the *Post* nor *Star* reported their comments. [Wentworth, Howard F., "D.C. Highway Report Wins Wide Support at Hearing," *The Washington Post*, May 21, 1941; "Commissioners Study Mass of Testimony On Whitehurst Plan," *The Evening Star*, May 21, 1941]

On December 4, 1941, Whitehurst announced that construction of the K Street Sky-Road, at a cost of \$2 million, would begin in the spring of 1942, with completion expected later that year. The *Post* described the plan as "a graceful, sweeping 'sky-road' along the line of waterfront K Street." The *Post* added:

Traffic along K Street fronting the river will be undisturbed after the elevated structure is placed in operation, Whitehurst said. Motorists may use either route, depending on their destination and hurry. [Wentworth, Howard F., "Work to Begin Next Spring On Washington's 'Sky-Road,'" *The Washington Post*, December 5, 1941]

Three days later, the surprise bombing of Pearl Harbor propelled the United States into war with Germany, Italy, and Japan.

Whitehurst, in early 1942, was still advancing projects from his 1941 highway program. In May, however, he had to postpone the Sky-Road because of diversion of steel for wartime needs. ["U.S. to Pay 2/3 of 4 D.C. Highways," *The Washington Post*, February 2, 1942; "Priority Puts Off K Street Elevation," *The Washington Post*, May 26, 1942]

During the war, the city expanded in population and a proliferation of temporary offices. Heavy traffic endangered safety and congested the road network. Whitehurst, with his Sky-Road on hold, brought in the Baltimore firm, J. E. Greiner Company, to study the feasibility of converting K Street to a through highway from Key Bridge to eastern terminals at Sixth Street, West Virginia Avenue, and at 15th Street and H Street via Florida Avenue:

The Department's choice of K Street as best suited for this type of development was endorsed by the consultants on account of width, straight line location and contiguity to the business district, and was recommended as essential to the relief of traffic pressure on congested parallel streets.

Greiner calculated that the new thoroughfare would reduce about 60 percent of the traffic on adjacent streets and arterials.

In this heavily developed part of the city, a K Street viaduct was the best option for relief not only for through traffic but for local traffic. Further, the Arizona Avenue Expressway would provide ready access from the Potomac River entrance to the city via the K Street elevated freeway.

In 1944, Greiner worked with De Leuw, Cather and Company to develop a master plan for developing transportation facilities in the central area of the city. As the plan evolved in a 1946 post-war study, the K Street plan was revised to start at 3rd Street, NW, to connect with the Mid-

City Expressway, which, as noted earlier, extended from Canal Street near Independence Avenue across the city to the District line beyond Rock Creek Cemetery. [*Twenty-Five Years of Progress in Highway Development 1924-1948*, District Department of Highways, pages 68-76; “Georgetown Traffic Expediter,” *The Evening Star*, October 8, 1949]

Construction of the \$3.4 million, 1-mile K Street Skyway from Key Bridge to Rock Creek, began on July 7, 1947. The city awarded the contract to Alexander-Repass Engineering Firm of Des Moines, Iowa. The principals were Archie A. Alexander, an African-American, and his white partner, Maurice A. Repass. They had met as freshmen at the University of Iowa, where Alexander was the university’s only black student. A biographical sketch states:

He played tackle for the school’s varsity football team, earning the nickname, “Alexander the Great.” During the summers, Alexander worked as a draftsman for Marsh Engineers, a Des Moines bridge-designing firm, and in 1912 he received a Bachelor of Science degree, becoming the University of Iowa’s first African American student to complete the engineering program.

Alexander worked on bridge projects for Marsh after graduation, but in 1917 formed an engineering firm with a white contractor, George F. Higbee. By the time Higbee died in a construction accident, Alexander had earned a civil engineering degree from Iowa State University in 1925. After forming the partnership with Repass in 1929, their company worked on projects around the country, including several in Washington. In addition to the K Street elevated project, they worked on the Tidal Basin (including the Independence Avenue bridge over the north end of the basin), a grade separation structure for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad; and extension of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway. Repass said the company liked working in Washington, because the “District is a fair outfit to work for.” [“Alexander, Archie Alphonso (1888-1958),” *Blackpast: An Online Reference Guide to African American History*; “Three-Million Dollar Elevated Highway Nears Completion,” *Afro-American*, December 25, 1948]

The District and PRA split the cost, 50-50, under the Federal-aid highway program. Completion was delayed by bad weather and slow delivery of materials, but was expected in 1949. [Millen, William A., “Weather, Slow Deliveries Delay Work on K Street ‘Skyway,’” *The Evening Star*, June 13, 1948]

On September 1, 1948, Captain Whitehurst died at George Washington University Hospital after a heart attack. He had been stricken at his home at 3115 34th Street, NW., and was taken to the hospital where he was pronounced dead at 4:15 a.m. The 61-year old, who had been Director of Highways for 18 years, had just returned from a 2-week vacation and had told associates he had enjoyed excellent fishing.

The *Star* obituary listed many accomplishments, including the Scott and Thomas Circle underpasses, the John Philip Sousa Bridge across the Anacostia River at Pennsylvania Avenue, SE., traffic surveys, his long-range program of street widening and surface improvements, his support for fringe parking garages, and his role in replacing “painted safety zones with the present raised streetcar loading platforms. “At the time of his death, he was supervising

numerous major projects, including the K street elevated highway, the new bridge across the Potomac at Fourteenth street, the Dupont Circle underpass and the South Capitol Street Bridge project.”

The newsletter of the American Road Builders’ Association added that he had served the association for many years, including as first president of its city officials division, treasurer (1940 until his death) and president (1935-1936). He also had been a member of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission and was active in AASHO, which he also served as president (1946-1947). [“Capt. Whitehurst, City Director of Highways for 18 Years, Dies,” *The Evening Star*, September 1, 1948; “Death Halts Distinguished Engineering Career of Capt. Herbert C. Whitehurst, ARBA Treasurer,” *Road Builders’ News*, American Road Builders’ Association, October 1948, page 4]

On September 9, the District commissioners decided to rename the K Street Skyway after the late director: “Whitehurst Freeway.” Engineer Commissioner Young recommended the change. Captain Whitehurst, Young explained, had been more responsible than any one for the city’s “magnificent” system of roads and bridges. “I recommend that the K street structure be named the Whitehurst Freeway, or possibly Skyway or Viaduct. Thus his name will be permanently associated with a structure which is unique in Washington.”

The day before, the commissioners had appointed Robertson, the former engineer of streets, to succeed Whitehurst as Director of Highways.

The *Star* agreed with naming the elevated freeway after the late director:

It was peculiarly the product of Captain Whitehurst’s own thinking in terms of providing in advance the sort of facilities that automobile traffic of the future will make inevitable. Washington owes him much for his courage, his vision and his ability to overcome the resistance of apathy by persuasive assembly of fact. Someday, the “Whitehurst Freeway” will run the course of K street across Washington, dipping below grade or rising above it, to accommodate the sort of unimpeded traffic flow that the future will demand.

The editorial also agreed with the appointment of Robertson, noting that Captain Whitehurst “would have indorsed [him] without reservation.” [“K Street Highway Will Be Named For Whitehurst,” *The Evening Star*, September 9, 1948; “The ‘Whitehurst Freeway,’” *The Evening Star*, September 10, 1948]

As completion of the Whitehurst Freeway neared in October 1949, the District was determining the next big project based on traffic counts in the area and in Maryland and Virginia that planning engineer Brinkley was compiling. As the *Star* pointed out on the eve of completion:

But compiling this report is a vast job and Mr. Brinkley does not expect it to be completed until a year from Christmas. But Mr. Brinkley expects the Arizona avenue Freeway [sic], the next logical step, will be a reality in the near future. This will run through the Glover-Archbold Parkway [sic], through Foundry Branch valley to Tenley Circle, linking up with the Whitehurst Freeway by way of Canal road. [Millen, William

A., “Whitehurst’s ‘Dream’ Freeway Will Be Dedicated Saturday,” *The Evening Star*, October 2, 1949]

The Whitehurst Freeway, the District’s first freeway, opened on October 9 with a ceremony at 27th and K Streets, NW. After speeches by officials, Captain Whitehurst’s 4-year old granddaughter Maria Whitehurst Brownett snipped the red ribbon:

Hazel-eyed Maria, with white ribbons in her blonde hair, stood beside her grandmother, Mrs. Whitehurst, and Commissioner John Russell Young when she cut the ribbon. The big pair of shears was hard to manage but, with determination, she succeeded. The crowd applauded

After these ceremonies, the principals and guests drove over the freeway and the Key Bridge to Rosslyn at the Virginia end of the bridge. [“Whitehurst Freeway Is Opened to Traffic After Ceremonies,” *The Evening Star*, October 9, 1949]

Whitehurst Freeway carried U.S. 29 through Georgetown; U.S. 29 crossed the Potomac River on Key Bridge.

Generations of planners, Georgetown residents, and writers have loathed the Whitehurst Freeway and, as will be seen, wanted to tear it down – that dislike continues to this day. Nevertheless, it stands, still carrying U.S. 29 across Georgetown. However, it had an unexpected consequence on Georgetown, continuing a trend that had begun in the 1930s, as Gutheim and Lee explained:

Construction in 1949 of the elevated Whitehurst Freeway siphoned traffic off Georgetown’s congested narrow cross streets.

The realization of a new Georgetown, a maturing Georgetown as a distinctive community, had produced a strong concerted voice among residents and supporters against allowing the area north of M Street to be altered at will. Responding to these interests, Congress in 1950 declared all of Georgetown a historic district and placed the design of all future construction under the judgment of the Commission of Fine Arts. [Gutheim and Lee, page 252. Congressional action was in the Old Georgetown Building Height and Exterior Design Regulations Act of 1950 (P.L. 81-808); Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall declared the Georgetown Historic District to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a National Historic Landmark in May 1967.]

As another history put it:

One of the area’s few traditionally integrated neighborhoods, Georgetown, became increasingly wealthy and increasingly white. Following the diversion of most through traffic from Georgetown streets, accomplished by completion of the Whitehurst Freeway in 1949, Congress declared the area a historic district. The Commission of Fine Arts had to approve all physical alterations and new construction in Georgetown. As the neighborhood increased in desirability, housing prices rose, and multi-unit dwellings shifted back to single-family occupancy. In the process, Georgetown’s African American

population fell, from almost a quarter in 1940 to 3 percent in 1960. [Miller and Gillette, pages 222-223]

The Glover-Archbold Parkway

In January 1952, the District unveiled its 10-year, \$140 million highway program. It set four goals:

1. Divert all possible “by-passable” traffic from the downtown area.
2. Create greater street capacity in the downtown area.
3. Improve the present main arteries leading to the District’s boundaries.
4. Develop a cross-town route linking the northwest and northeast sections.

The Regional Highway Planning Committee, including Maryland and Virginia representatives, had helped prepare the plan. Among the immediate needs addressing the first two goals was:

Canal Road N.W.—Foxhall road to Thirty-sixth street; Arizona freeway, Rock Creek Parkway, Southwest freeway and Potomac River bridge (vicinity of E street)—Preliminary studies and detail plans for roadways and structures. Cost \$800,000.

A later entry involved construction:

Arizona avenue. Van Ness street to Canal road—Construct parkway, two 24-foot roadways with grade separations and interchanges at Reservoir road, New Mexico avenue, Cathedral avenue and Massachusetts avenue, and with connections over street system to Wisconsin and Nebraska avenue.

The estimated cost was \$3.6 million.

Future needs included improvement to Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway and its extension to the District/Maryland line. [Stepp, John W., “Experts Representing Metropolitan Area Draft 10-Year Project,” *The Evening Star*, January 31, 1952; “\$140 Million Road Plan Urged For District; 1-Cent Gas Tax Boost Proposed for Financing,” *The Evening Star*, January 31, 1952]

The National Capital Parks and Planning Commission quickly joined with NPS officials in objecting to plans for construction in parks. They had not been part of the Regional Highway Planning Committee that identified projects such as extending Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway to the Maryland line. As discussed earlier, they also objected to the plan for the E Street Bridge spanning Roosevelt Island. They showed “forbearance” regarding “that portion of the Southwest Freeway project providing an extension from the Fourteenth street overpass encroaching on the Thomas Jefferson Memorial area and slicing through the tourist camps, tennis courts and East Potomac Park to span the Washington Channel.” [Shepard, Nelson M., “Federal Agency Fears Injury To Parkland in Highway Plan,” *The Evening Star*, February 1, 1952]

On February 15, as part of a 1952 series on “Highways of the Future,” the *Star*’s James G. Deane described how the plan for what was still called the Arizona Avenue Parkway fit into plans for

accommodating traffic in the northwest quadrant via Canal Road. “An elevated highway and a brand-new parkway may be in the Northwest’s future.” After summarizing the long history of the parkway, he explained the two-pronged plan:

The elevated would be a westward expansion of the Whitehurst freeway. The new parkway, through Glover-Archbold Park, would link the freeway—and Key Bridge—with the upper Northwest

Canal road will be widened from Key Bridge to Foxhall road. It will continue to take traffic to and from M Street.

At its west end, the elevated will have three lanes. Midway, one of them will cut across over the canal to carry eastbound cars to M [street]. The other two lanes will connect with the freeway.

Westbound through-traffic will use M street. Eastbound will use the elevated. The structure would be unusual—single-stem piers, supporting the roadway in cantilever fashion. This would leave the canal and its tow-path undisturbed.

Eventually, Canal road will be improved onward up the Potomac, becoming the George Washington Memorial Parkway at Great Falls. It will connect with the new National Pike (Route 240) from Frederick.

Ramps will cross from the elevated to the Arizona parkway. Foxhall road also will connect. [Deane, James G. “Proposed Elevated Highway Along Canal Road Would Link Key Bridge With New Parkway,” *Highways of the Future*, *The Evening Star*, February 15, 1952; the *Highways of the Future* series included 25 installments, running from February 1, 1952, to March 10, 1952]

In the final installment of the series, Deane discussed concerns by park authorities about the E Street Bridge, extension of Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway to Maryland, and the Arizona Avenue Freeway. He explained that the District had owned the right-of-way for a road through Archbold-Glover Park since 1893, that Mrs. Archbold opposed any road, and that Charles C. Glover, Jr., “also once protested a speedway but favors a less elaborate road”:

The planners insist on the road, despite the loss of park value to residents of the area. The main question, assuming the road goes through, is one of ethics: The plan is to call it Arizona parkway, but courtesy to the donors would seem to dictate retaining the present park name, Glover-Archbold, for the road.

District officials, however, were concerned about satisfying the Arizona congressional delegation.

Another concern was that if the parkway were not built, “Foxhall road probably would have to be widened. Foxhall residents don’t want that.” [Deane, James G., “Financing to Be Key problem In \$140 Million Road Program,” *Highways of the Future*, *The Evening Star*, March 10, 1952]

As Deane's series made clear, the road through Glover-Archbold Park was not desired for itself but as a connection in a series of roads linking the Washington National Pike with downtown Washington. On October 27, NCPC approved nearly 74 percent of the District's highway plans, including construction of a dual parkway through Glover-Archbold Park connecting Canal Road with Wisconsin and Nebraska Avenues. [Stepp, John W., "Engineer Group Indorses City's Highway Plans," *The Evening Star*, October 27, 1952]

In January 1953, the *Star* reported that a subcommittee of the Committee of 100 on the Federal City had prepared a "blistering criticism of the District's proposed highway improvement program." The subcommittee members were General Grant, president of the American Planning and Civic Association; John Ihlder, former executive secretary of the National Capital Housing Authority; architect Horace Peaslee; and Tracy B. Augur, a GSA urban planning officer.

Their "scathing, 21-page report" denounced District highway officials for trying to solve immediate problems based on present-day "traffic considerations." Highway planning, the report stated, should begin "with a concept of what the District will be like one, two or three decades hence." They urged the Committee of 100 to reject the overall plan and to endorse individual projects only if they were part of a satisfactory long-range program or were needed because of an emergency. The E Street Bridge was an example of a project that would not be approved in view of its impacts on Roosevelt Island and the Lincoln Memorial grounds

In the long range, the subcommittee expected Federal employment in the city to drop, with employment centers being built "20 to 40 miles, or even farther, from the city." As a result, "the District's primary highway improvement need for the future is a network of . . . expressways, extending radially from points as close to the center as possible outward for distances up to 40 or 50 miles." The report cited such radials as the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, the Annapolis Freeway, Suitland Parkway, Shirley Highway, the Washington National Pike, and a route on the Virginia side of the Potomac River. The radial roads would be linked by "ring roads" that would also serve as bypasses for traffic not bound for the city. The members agreed "in principle" with the inner-belt concept, but did not think the city had proposed a satisfactory plan.

The subcommittee favored converting North Capitol Street as a thoroughfare to carry the Washington National Pike instead of routing it through Rock Creek Park. The use of Rock Creek Park as the District link was, the report said, inferior to a freeway along the Maryland-District side of the Potomac River. A dual, six-lane freeway should run along Canal Road from Foxhall Road to the District Line. Among the advantages cited was that the plan could omit the road through Glover-Archbold Park at a saving of \$3.6 million. ["Federal City Group Blasts Highway Plan," *The Evening Star*, January 30, 1953]

In an editorial on February 2, the *Star* acknowledged "the conflicting views between park conservationists and highway builders over plans for traffic relief." The "steady encroachment" on parks by highways "has been resented, and understandably so" by park advocates. Thus, the subcommittee's "extremely dim view of the Highway Department's construction program for the immediate and near-future traffic needs" was not surprising. "Unfortunately, highway improvements cannot be avoided or left to future generations." The subcommittee "opposed in principle" the continuation of the Washington National Pike through Rock Creek Park and

construction of a parkway through Glover-Archbold Park, while also opposing the E Street bridge designed to relieve traffic in the 14th Street corridor.

The District would like to adopt the long view the subcommittee recommended “but it is limited by appropriations and legislative restrictions.” With the funds available each year, it must do the best it can to “design the piecemeal projects so that they will fit into a long-range highway program.” In doing so, “some park properties will be invaded, from time to time.” Unless park advocates can “offer some more reasonable alternatives,” the pressure to use parkland will continue. “The problem of reconciling the divergent schools of thought is a difficult one, calling for dispassionate conferences and study by all concerned.” [“Highways vs. Parks,” *The Evening Star*, February 2, 1953]

The Committee of 100 on the Federal City approved the part of the subcommittee’s report criticizing the District for planning short-range, stop-gap proposals rather than developing a long-range, primary need program. However, the committee rejected the project-specific portions of the report and asked the subcommittee to try to reconcile its differences with District highway officials and redraft it to be more in line with the approved general principles.

Blair Lee III, NCPC’s executive officer, said he agreed with the general criticisms, but in discussing specific projects, the subcommittee “suffers to a slight extent from schizophrenia.” Beveridge explained:

Mr. Lee said the report, with its emphasis on radial highways, should recognize a need for a new “central area” Potomac River bridge to connect with Virginia’s Arlington boulevard. If not at E Street, he said, such a bridge should be elsewhere to serve Washington’s downtown area.

Mr. Lee also attacked as too expensive a subcommittee proposal that North Capitol street rather than Rock Creek park, might be developed as a new northbound thoroughfare. “The report, to be consistent with itself, should say Rock Creek Parkway might be needed if alternatives are found impracticable,” he declared.

Mr. Lee pointed out that the subcommittee based its objections to the park proposal on traffic considerations, not on an encroachment of park land. The discussion that followed, however, brought out strong objections to the basic idea of yielding park lands to highway uses.

General Grant pointed out that the Committee of 100 was a member of a national group opposing the use of parks for highways. “Don’t let us be the people to say the use of Rock Creek Park is to be given over to be made into a highway,” he said.

Lee did not think a 200-foot wide parkway through the northwestern part of the park would destroy the recreation and beauty of the area.

Citing the *Star*’s February 2 editorial, John Remon said, “I don’t want to see parks destroyed. But I think we must give way at times. The greatest enjoyment I get out of Rock Creek Park is

taking a drive through the park from my house to the Interior Building.” [Beveridge, George, “Critical Report on Roads Plan Backed in Part,” *The Evening Star*, February 4, 1953]

The reason the road through Glover-Archbold Park was needed varied as officials debated the central area bridge and the entrance for U.S. 240’s two legs. For example, the District was considering options for increasing the capacity of Key Bridge. Double-decking the bridge had been rejected as too expensive, but by May 1953, the city was considering whether the sidewalks could be converted to traffic lanes, with new sidewalks built on cantilever structures off the bridge. In addition, the city was considering a two-lane ramp, carrying two-way traffic, from the center of the bridge about 300 feet from M Street to Prospect Street in line with 35th Street. The ramp, in theory, would divert traffic that presently turned left from the bridge onto M Street.

Already on the drawing board were improvements on both ends of the bridge, including the M-Street-Whitehurst Freeway connections. The plans included an elevated roadway for eastbound traffic on the west side of Key Bridge. Traffic would connect with ramps to Canal Road, Foxhall Road, and the proposed Arizona Parkway. [Beveridge, George, “M St. Overpass At Key Bridge Under Study,” *The Evening Star*, May 14, 1953]

Publication of an article about the concepts in the *Star* prompted immediate opposition in Georgetown. The ramp over M Street would carry unwanted traffic into the community, and possibly reduce property values, prompting concerns by the Georgetown Citizens’ Association, whose president, Frederick S. Hill, said “We have always believed we should try to keep through traffic out of Georgetown’s residential areas.” Stephen P. Dorsey of the Progressive Citizens of Georgetown said the group would always oppose solutions to traffic problems that unnecessarily drew additional traffic into the area. [“M Street Ramp Arouses Fears In Georgetown,” *The Evening Star*, May 15, 1953]

On May 25, attorneys Hugh Obear and Grant Wiprud appeared before the Committee of 100 on the Federal City representing Mrs. Archbold. They made clear that she intended to fight attempts to build a road through the land she and Charles Glover had donated. A letter from Mrs. Archbold to the group said they donated the land for park purposes and “for no other.” She did not object to the type of meandering road that exists through Rock Creek Park, but an express highway would be a breach of faith.

John Nolen discussed the history of the proposal, pointing out that the District and NPS had signed an agreement in 1948 following congressional consideration of a bill authorizing the road to be named after Arizona. The situation was complicated by District consideration of a bridge across the Potomac River that would tie into the road through the park.

Mrs. Archbold and Charles Glover, Jr., had opposed the plan at the time, and she intended to resume efforts to block the plan. If the city persisted, she would seek “the aid of the courts in restoring the property to its proper use,” as her letter to the Committee of 100 stated.

After discussing the controversy, the Committee of 100 adopted a resolution condemning the plan. The resolution suggested the alternative of widening Foxhall Road. [“Land Donor Fighting Plan for Expressway In Northwest D.C.,” *The Evening Star*, May 26, 1953]

In September, the District commissioners announced they would hold a public hearing on October 26 to consider street name changes, including redesignation of the proposed Arizona Avenue to Glover-Archbold Parkway. To return the State name on the map, Dalecarlia Parkway between Loughboro Road and Westmoreland Circle would be renamed Arizona Avenue. ["Street Names To Be Considered At Hearing October 26," *The Evening Star*, September 17, 1953]

The District commissioners heard from individuals on October 26 who favored changing the name of the Arizona Avenue Freeway to the Glover-Archbold Parkway. Representatives of Glover and Mrs. Archbold testified in support of the change, as did the Palisades Citizens' Association, the Progressive Citizens' Association, and others. The Arizona congressional delegation indicated it supported the changes. The Palisades representative, however, favored renaming Wheeler Street and Wheeler Place as Arizona Avenue and retaining Dalecarlia Parkway. The association thought that having a Wheeler Street and Place so close together was confusing while Dalecarlia Parkway was aptly named because it was near the Dalecarlia Reservoir.

On November 4, the commissioners approved the name Glover-Archbold Parkway for Arizona Avenue, NW., between Canal Road and Van Ness Street. They deferred action on the contested name change for Dalecarlia Parkway. ["District Heads Weigh Proposals to Change Names of 2 Avenues," *The Evening Star*, October 26, 1953; "Commissioners Rename Part of Arizona Avenue," *The Evening Star*, November 4, 1953]

The commissioners approved changing Weaver Street to Arizona Avenue on January 12, 1954, only after receiving assurances from the Arizona congressional delegation that the change was acceptable. Senators Hayden and Barry M. Goldwater and Representatives John J. Rhodes and Harold A. Patten had let the commissioners know of the delegation's support. The change became effective on February 15. ["Change of Weaver Street Name Gets Support," *The Evening Star*, January 11, 1954; "Weaver Street Changes To Arizona Ave. OK'd," *The Evening Star*, January 12, 1954]

Despite the accord on the name changes in the Palisades area, the Glover-Archbold Parkway remained controversial. As debate continued regarding connection of the Washington National Pike with downtown, the Glover-Archbold Parkway remained on maps as one way of routing traffic without having to acquire homes. City highway officials continued to promote it, but until other disputes were resolved, it remained in the background.

Congress Takes Up the Parkway

In September 1958, the District's \$54 million highway plan included the Potomac River Freeway, the Washington Circle underpass, the K Street Expressway, and, as the *Star* described it, "another long-delayed project, the disputed Glover-Archbold Parkway to link the new river freeway and Upper Wisconsin avenue:

The new Potomac Freeway will follow the course of the present Canal road along the waterfront of Georgetown. It is planned to connect with the west leg of the inner-loop expressway, also to be started next year, at about Twenty-seventh street N.W. At the other end it will join the new Glover-Archbold parkway, which will run through a wooded park starting at Canal road just east of Foxhall road and running northward toward Wisconsin avenue.

The NPS was expected to extend the George Washington Memorial Parkway to the District line to meet the Potomac River Freeway.

The Glover-Archbold Parkway was to consist of "two park-type, two-lane, non truck roadways from 3 miles northward [from] the new river freeway to Tenley circle on Wisconsin avenue." At a cost of nearly \$5 million, the District expected to complete the project in 1963. [Deane,

James G., "\$54 Million Road Plans Pressed by District," *The Evening Star*, September 24, 1958]

By March 1959, the District had completed tentative plans for the parkway through the 2½-mile long park. The dual, four-lane parkway would consist of two 26-foot roadways along the center of the park, with access roads at some cross streets. The facility was designed for a speed of 50 m.p.h. Plans called for relocating much of Foundry Branch, a "meandering brook," in the *Star's* words, with the two roadways on either side of the stream. The plans were firm as far north as Upton Street, with the city's plans beyond that point uncertain. Connections might be with a tunnel under Tenley Circle or the tentative freeway in the Wisconsin Avenue corridor. Regardless of the ultimate northern connection, the District expected motorists to be using the Glover-Archbold Parkway by late 1963. [Deane, James G., "Glover-Archbold Park To Get 4-Lane Road," *The Evening Star*, March 1, 1959]

According to a *Star* summary of planned major highway projects published at the end of the month, the District planned to begin construction of the Glover-Archbold Parkway in the summer. A map showed the parkway as a dashed line, used to show "highways under construction or planned." It connected with the Wisconsin Avenue Freeway, shown as a dotted line ("proposed highways") carrying the southeast leg of U.S. 240 into the District (to be discussed). [Alibrando, Alfred, "Safer and Faster Travel Promised By 1962 on New Area Highways," *The Evening Star*, March 29, 1959]

National Capital Park's Thompson said in June that he wanted to thoroughly study legal issues associated with construction of the Glover-Archbold Parkway before giving final approval to the District's detailed plans. The study was underway, he said, because "we don't want to run the risk of being enjoined by the donors" of the parkland.

Thompson's announcement infuriated Senator Butler, whose Maryland constituents would benefit from the District parkway with its indirect links to U.S. 240. The legal study was, he said, the NPS's "usual collection of monkey wrenches, legal, political and otherwise, in an effort to stop construction of the parkway." He added that Congress had approved the project, an approval that constituted a "mandate":

The hearings are over, the Congress has made its decision and the District is expediting plans for the parkway. We will not have construction delayed for years while the Park Service rehashes old questions in a lengthy but ultimately futile attempt to deprive this area of the much-needed traffic artery.

He said the "obstinate and irresponsible delaying tactics of the Park Service have got to stop."

Harold L. Aitken, who had been become District Director of Highways and Traffic on March 2, 1959, agreed with Senator Butler. Parkway plans had been modified once to meet NPS objections. The revised plan had been submitted to the NPS 4 months earlier. "It's been over there long enough." ["Maryland Planners Ask For Rock Creek Route" and "Park Service Blasted Over Glover-Archbold," *The Evening Star*, June 11, 1959]

In referring to a congressional "mandate," Senator Butler was referring to the fact that Congress was working on the D.C. Appropriations Act, 1960, with a provision that provided \$880,000 for preliminary work on Glover-Archbold Parkway. The legislation was still under consideration, with Glover-Archbold Parkway one of the stumbling blocks to passage.

As usual with appropriation acts, the House took the initiative. The Committee on Appropriations released a report on the FY 1960 appropriations act on March 13, 1959. From the District's highway funds, the committee set aside \$880,000 for the Glover-Archbold Parkway. The House approved the bill on March 16 without discussion of the parkway during floor debate. [District of Columbia Appropriation Bill, 1960, *Congressional Record-House*, March 16, 1959, pages 4279-4288]

In early May 1959, a new proposal emerged for handling traffic between Maryland and downtown Washington. On May 6, a steering committee for the Mass Transportation Survey approved a six-lane expressway, proposed by Bartholomew, from Tenley Circle at Wisconsin and Nebraska Avenues, NW., along Upton and Tilden Streets, and across Rock Creek Park on a high-level bridge across a section known as the Melvin C. Hazen Park. East of the park, the expressway would continue toward 15th Street, then turn south between 14th and 16th Street to connect with the Inner Loop at T Street. The expressway would carry all traffic, including trucks.

The concept appeared to revive the idea of an expressway in the Wisconsin Avenue corridor to connect with the Washington National Pike, a plan the District had rejected just a week earlier (to be discussed later) in favor of the North Capitol Street corridor. General Welling opposed the Bartholomew plan because he did not think the need for an expressway between Tenley Circle and the Inner Loop had been proven.

District Commissioner McLaughlin, who headed the steering committee, emphasized that the new expressway would not eliminate the need for the Glover-Archbold Parkway. The parkway would connect expressway traffic at Tenley Circle with the routes along the Potomac River.

Federal Highway Administrator Tallamy said that based on information he had seen, the new expressway would qualify for inclusion in the Interstate System with its 90-10 Federal-District matching ratio. The NPS liked the idea of an east-west high bridge across Rock Creek Park because it would end discussion of the north-south route through the length of the park to link the Washington National Pike with downtown. [Deane, James G., "Cross-Park Freeway Project Wins Support," *The Evening Star*, May 7, 1959]

The Senate Committee on Appropriations completed work on its version of the appropriations act on May 21. In discussing the appropriation for the Department of Highways, the committee referred to the \$880,000 for the Glover-Archbold Parkway. Following House approval, the Senate committee had "received an extraordinary amount of oral testimony and also communications protesting the building of this road." Recognizing that these comments reflected the "public spirit of the citizens," the committee asked the Engineer Commissioner about the possibility of an alternate site for the road.

General Welling replied to committee staff on May 15 that, "The parkway is an indispensable feature of our traffic pattern." The 1949 agreement with the National Park Service stated that the parkway was considered essential for vehicular access to the park for the greatest number of people. However, General Welling stated, "There is no sensible alternate solution for handling the traffic." If construction were delayed, traffic would "continue to pile up and defer the reasonable use of the park as a recreation area and as a traffic facility."

The committee report indicated that deciding whether to include this funding item in the appropriations act was "particularly difficult in view of the deep interest of the citizens" in preserving the park. However, the committee left the funding in the bill in recognition of the Department of Highways' careful work, which made "it clear that no solution other than Glover-Archbold Parkway is feasible." [District of Columbia Appropriation Bill, 1960, Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate, 86th Congress, 1st Session, Report No. 304, page 6]

Opponents such as Wirth of the NPS thought the committee must be misinformed. He said the parkway would "destroy the value of the Park." Further, he was "dumbfounded" by General Welling's statement, quoted in the committee's report, that the parkway was "essential" to recreational use of the park. "I think any kind of road down there is about impossible if you're going to preserve any kind of park."

Mrs. Archbold's attorney hinted at possible legal action to stop construction. Such a parkway would, Hugh H. Obear said, be a "breach of trust." If the government persisted, he would demand return of the land to the donors and sale back to the city at fair market value.

Opponents added that the committee had not considered the new Bartholomew alternative for linking Wisconsin Avenue traffic with downtown Washington via a high-level Rock Creek Park bridge. It was only 2 weeks old, but offered the solution for getting traffic to the Inner Loop without the Glover-Archbold Parkway. [Deane, James G., "Senate Unit Okays Park Freeway Fund," *The Evening Star*, May 22, 1959]

The Senate considered the bill on May 26, with Senator John O. Pastore (D-RI) taking the lead. He summarized the bill's key provisions affecting all aspects of public services in the District, then paused for comments by other Senators. Senator Paul H. Douglas (D-Il.) asked about the plan for a parkway through Glover-Archbold Park. The Senator, who lived near the park at 3812 Fulton Street, NW., called it "one of the most beautiful parks in Washington," but said that if the parkway were built, it would "in my judgment, be spoiled." He pointed out that although the bill contained only \$880,000 for preliminary engineering, the parkway would actually cost as much as \$5 million, and even \$15 million counting the interchanges at either end.

Senator Wayne L. Morse (R-Or.), who agreed with the concerns Senator Douglas expressed, introduced General Welling's May 18 letter for the record. In it, General Welling summarized the history of the project, beginning:

Since 1893, the District of Columbia has owned a right-of-way 100 feet wide through Foundry Branch Valley which includes the area now designated Glover-Archbold Park. The right-of-way is for an all-purpose major highway, including trucks.

Beginning with the donation of property for Glover-Archbold Park in 1920s and the park's expansion through 1943, the 100-foot right-of-way was now surrounded by parkland, but was still owned by the District:

In the opinion of the corporation counsel, the terms of the donation permit the construction thereon of the proposed parkway, for passenger vehicles only, but do preclude the construction thereon of an all purpose highway such as is permissible on the 100-foot right-of-way (the Government-purchased portion of the park land is similarly available for parkway purposes).

In 1948 the District entered into a formal written agreement with the National Park Service for the construction of a four-lane parkway in Glover-Archbold Park subject to the following provisions

The provisions indicated the parkway would follow the natural contour of the park; be restricted to passenger vehicles; and use a combination of the District right-of-way and park land. The District also agreed to make available for park purposes any portion of the 100-foot right-of-way not used for the parkway.

As noted, General Welling's letter explained that the proposed parkway was a key part of the planned highway network for the area, and its importance was increased by controversies elsewhere:

The possibility of abandoning the Wisconsin Avenue project in favor of the North Capitol Street project makes the Glover-Archbold Parkway facility all the more indispensable for the portion of the city west of Rock Creek park. Furthermore, the parkway is vital to development of the park so as to permit the greatest use, greatest beauty and greatest convenience to the public of Foundry Branch Valley.

Regarding the existing park, a factual memorandum, also printed in the record, stated:

At present park has minor amount of useful, accessible recreation areas and is largely composed of unkempt woodland which is difficult to traverse. Debris clutters some of the area and a sewer line lies on the ground for much of its length.

The District, NCPC, and the consultants on the Mass Transportation Survey agreed that the parkway was "essential for passenger vehicles regardless of the decision concerning any proposed routes in or into Maryland." At NCPC's suggestion, the survey included a link between Tenley Circle and the Inner Loop. "The proposal, intended for interstate traffic, including trucks, was clearly in addition to the need for the four-lane Glover-Archbold Parkway for passenger vehicles."

Senator Douglas, referring to General Welling's comments about the indispensable need for the parkway, warned:

Furthermore, all of us know that engineers love to build highways, and do not have much regard for scenery, trees, or natural beauty. An engineer with a bulldozer tends to be a very ruthless person.

On the day of the debate, McLaughlin, president of the District's Board of Commissioners, wrote to Senator Pastore, who introduced the letter for the record. The Mass Transportation Survey, he said, would urge accelerated highway and parkway construction in the region, with the Glover-Archbold Parkway an "essential item" in the plan. For Congress to defer any item in the survey would "not be in the best interests of the region":

To put it another way, to delete funds from the District's fiscal year 1960 budget for Glover-Archbold Parkway is as unjustified as it would be to delete funds therefrom for the Inner Loop, the Anacostia Freeway, the Potomac River Freeway, and the Southwest Freeway, all of which appear in the final report of the Mass Transportation Survey.

The board, he said, urged the Senate to appropriate the funds for the parkway.

Because of the lengthy debate on the parkway and another issue involving school lunches, the Senate could not complete work on the bill on May 26. [District of Columbia Appropriation Act, 1960, *Congressional Record-Senate*, May 26, 1959, pages 9089-9095]

The Senate returned to the debate on May 28, with Senator Douglas introducing an amendment to strike out the appropriation for the parkway. The current bill asked for only \$880,000, he said, but soon the Senate would be asked for \$5 million for the parkway and that would “probably carry in its wake a later request for \$10 million for interchange connections farther up the line.” He admitted it was “somewhat ridiculous for the United States Senate to be considering a matter of municipal government,” but since home rule in the District of Columbia could not be approved, “we have to act as a board of aldermen for the city.” In view of the controversy and the likelihood of devastation to the park, “the simplest thing we can do is eliminate the appropriation for \$880,000,” at least while other studies are underway.

Senator Morse agreed. “I think the best interests of all interested parties would be served if we postponed this matter for decision for another year.”

Senator O’Mahoney, arguing a procedural point about authorizing in an appropriation act, asked if the appropriation was needed because of an emergency. Senator Pastore replied:

The Senator raises the question as to whether there is an emergency. As a matter of fact, there is hardly an emergency need for any road at any time.

The question is, “When are we to begin it?” The argument is made, “It is all right to build this highway, but let us not begin it this year. It may be all right for next year.”

Senator O’Mahoney protested that he was not making that argument, but Senator Pastore continued:

The argument has been made that the amendment applies only to a postponement. Why postpone? If we are to make the argument that we should never, never, never encroach upon the rustic natural aspects of this particular park, that is one argument. But if the argument is that we must not do it in 1959 but it is all right for 1960, I think the argument which is being made defeats itself.

With other business to consider, some Senators were impatient about the lengthy debate about District matters, but with some interruptions, the debate continued.

When Senator O’Mahoney explained that his only point was that he did not want a highway built through the park, Senator Pastore pointed out:

The question has to be weighed against whether it is desired to facilitate traffic moving into the District. If the Senator wants everybody to walk, and to walk through a park, that is the answer.

Senator Douglas suggested that “better alternative routes” for the needed highway were available that would “not damage the parks and community institutions threatened by the Glover-Archbold Parkway” He added, as he had earlier, “When a highway engineer makes his plans, he tends to destroy beauty.”

Senator Pastore pointed out that it was “a relative matter,” adding that he did not believe the District commissioners “have any innate desire to rape the beauty of a natural park.” When Senator Douglas pointed out that, “That is what they will do,” Senator Pastore replied:

They have esthetic qualities as the rest of us do. But a time comes when people must either walk or ride, or else not go to work. Either they will have to listen to the birds, or else ring the timeclock and go to work. That is the question. If the Senator from Illinois wants the park kept for the birds, that is his privilege. [Laughter.]

Senator Douglas replied, “I want the parks kept for the people. The autos going to work can take other routes.” The parkway was “only a part of a unified plan” for traffic from the west. The plan included the Bartholomew proposal of an expressway crossing Hazen Park for a link to downtown:

The point is that these highways are not primarily designed for local traffic. They are designed for interstate traffic—to take traffic from Highway 240, the continental highway [sic]; and we are now being asked to approve a little spur here. But if we approve it, that approval may very possibly carry with it approval for bringing the interstate traffic down Wisconsin Avenue, and splitting it there at Tenley Circle, with passenger car traffic destroying the Glover-Archbold Park, and with truck routes across eastward, virtually destroying the usefulness of St. Ann’s School and Church, Immaculate School, Sidwell Friends School, the Hearst School, and destroying Hazen Park, and impairing Rock Creek Park, with all the damage which would be done on the east side of the park and to the zoo.

With the protracted debate finally winding down, Senator Morse suggested that District officials had “plenty to do during the next year” with all the appropriations in the bill. In view of the many objections to the parkway, he thought “that no great harm will result from a year’s postponement, for the consideration of this particular matter.” The delay would allow Congress to consider citizen complaints.

Senator Dennis Chavez (D-NM), chairman of the Committee on Public Works, responded to the idea that consideration of the concerns and complaints of the citizen would result in a solution:

It never will be possible—whether under home rule or under congressional responsibility for the District of Columbia—to get the citizens of the District of Columbia to agree on anything. When someone from the northeast section of the city makes a proposal, an objection will come from a parent-teachers group in the northwest section. I know about that situation; I have served on the District of Columbia Appropriations Subcommittee.

Three or four years ago, we appropriated for, and authorized, the construction of [the Constitution Avenue] bridge; but the bridge has not been built, because it is impossible to get the people of the District of Columbia to agree on where the bridge should be built.

I have seen these proposals come and go. It is necessary to have the engineers report on them, and someone must make the determination.

I wish the District of Columbia could make its own determinations. But so long as Congress has this responsibility, I think it is our duty to try to provide a road which is needed for the traffic.

Finally, after more wrangling, the Senate defeated the Douglas amendment, 23-47. With little further debate, the Senate approved the appropriations act, 68-0, with Senators Douglas and Morse voting for the bill. [District of Columbia Appropriations Act, 1960, *Congressional Record-Senate*, May 28, 1959, pages 9267-9287]

The approved bill would now go to conference with the House to reconcile differences between the two versions.

In describing passage of the bill after “a full day,” the *Star* referred to the “deceivingly unanimous vote,” which was expected to have taken place around noon. The final vote took place at 4:45 p.m., largely because of debate about the school lunch program and the Glover-Archbold Parkway. [Bassett, Grace, “Senate Passes D.C. Budget In Day’s Fight,” *The Evening Star*, May 29, 1959]

Conferrees completed work on July 8. The appropriation for preliminary engineering on the Glover-Archbold Parkway had been in the House and Senate bills and was, therefore, not a subject for reconciliation during the conference.

On July 14, the House and Senate approved the District of Columbia Appropriation Act, 1960. The House did so without debate or a recorded vote. The Senate also approved the bill without a recorded vote following brief discussion that included only a confirmation that the Glover-Archbold Parkway funding was included. [District of Columbia Appropriations, 1960—Conference Report, *Congressional Record-Senate*, July 14, 1959, pages 13316-13318; District of Columbia Appropriation Bill, 1960, *Congressional Record-House*, July 14, 1959, pages 13352-13354]

On July 11, 1959, President Eisenhower had sent NCPC’s Mass Transportation Survey to Congress. As discussed elsewhere, the report called for four high-speed subway and surface rail transit lines, 330 miles of freeway throughout the Washington area, and express bus lines using eight of the freeways to link suburbs and downtown.

De Leuw, Cather and Company had provided the recommendations for the adopted report with one exception:

The exception is the addition of the so-called “Wisconsin avenue corridor” freeway from Tenley circle to the inner loop in downtown Washington.

The highly controversial route was added by the study steering committee as a policy decision, although it was not recommended as necessary by DeLeuw, Cather & Co., which . . . said that a Wisconsin avenue freeway should be built between Pooks Hill and Tenley Circle, but that the Glover-Archbold parkway, the intermediate loop freeway and other routes would be capable of handling traffic from that point without a further freeway link to the downtown sector. In fact, the report showed with traffic figures how a

large amount of traffic could be routed from the Wheaton area to Wisconsin Avenue because basic traffic in the Wisconsin corridor was not excessive.

Although the District commissioners were split on the Wisconsin Avenue corridor, the corridor remained in the report. Area officials were split on the issue, but:

District Engineer Commissioner A. C. Welling and Washington resident John A. Remon [of NCPC] filed identical comments saying that a “balanced system” was proposed by De Leuw-Cather and that the additional freeway was “not justified.”

District officials would have to work with BPR to restudy the city’s Federal-aid highway system, including Interstate designations, as a result of the study. [Beveridge, George, “Subway and Road Needs for 1980 Outlined in Survey,” *The Evening Star*, July 12, 1959; along with several linked articles]

President Eisenhower signed the District of Columbia Appropriation Act, 1960, on July 23, 1959 (P.L. 86-104). Mrs. Archbold’s attorney quickly filed suit in District Court seeking to prohibit construction of the Glover-Archbold Parkway. The District Highway Department, NCPC, and NPS had violated terms of the donation of the land by “threatening to use [it] for a major speed highway of from four to nine lanes” Obear asked for a temporary and permanent injunction, contending that the parkway would violate the terms of the two families’ donation of the parkland.

The complaint sought to limit officials to construction of “a meandering narrow park road in keeping with the character of the park.” According to the suit, Secretary of the Interior Krug had written to Mrs. Archbold in January 1948 stating that “conversion of Foundry Branch Parkway to a commercial freeway would be a violation of the purpose for which the land was donated This Department will therefore oppose . . . a divided highway.”

The suit asserted that construction of the parkway would “cause irreparable injury in the wanton destruction of the memorial which she created in memory of her father”

Aitken responded to reporters’ inquiries by saying the District could build the parkway on the 100-foot right-of-way it owned along the centerline of the park, as permitted by the 1948 agreement with NPS. However, doing so would require deep cuts in the hilly terrain of the park:

A divided highway is better suited to the topography. We believe a parkway such as we are planning will improve the park.

Although NPS had backed away from the 1948 agreement, Aitken referred to a White House memorandum covering an agreement reached April 16 regarding the Washington National Pike’s entrance into the District. The memorandum stated that NPS agreed to build a divided parkway along the Potomac River, from Cabin John “to an intersection with the Glover-Archbold Parkway.” This plan would allow pike traffic to follow the circumferential to Cabin John, then proceed to the Inner Loop on the new parkway. The *Star* explained:

As part of this plan, the District agreed to widen Wisconsin Avenue to eight lanes from the District line to Tenley Circle and a “four-lane divided parkway down Glover-Archbold Park for passenger-car and bus traffic only, as per a 1948 agreement with the National Park Service.” [“Donor Fights Highway Plan,” *The Evening Star*, July 26, 1959]

The District, in a motion filed on September 1 in response to the suit, mentioned the 100-foot right-of-way the city had acquired for a highway in 1893, long before the Glover and Archbold families donated their land for a park. Further, because Mrs. Archbold donated the land to the government, she “now has no right of interest” in the land. Further, the District claimed, she could not show how the parkway would “invade any property in which she has an interest.” [“District Claims Right-of-Way,” *The Evening Star*, September 2, 1959]

Charles C. Glover, Jr., joined Mrs. Archbold’s suit on September 2.

On December 10, before District Court Judge Burnita S. Matthews, Assistant Corporation Counsel John A. Ernest contended that the suit had been filed prematurely and should be dismissed. He explained that the parkway plan had not been approved by any agency. NCPC came closest to approval by passing on the “basic concept” of a freeway system in the Washington area that included the Glover-Archbold Parkway.

Mrs. Archbold’s representative, attorney Edmund D. Campbell, informed Judge Matthews that Congress had appropriated \$880,000 for the project, and that the Highway Department’s budget for FY 1961 included \$1.6 million for the parkway. Judge Matthews wondered if waiting for final approval would be too late in view of the concerns raised in the suit. [“Glover Park Road Suite Held Premature,” *The Evening Star*, December 10, 1959; “Parks Group Enters Dispute Over Parkway,” *The Evening Star*, December 11, 1959]

Judge Matthews decided on January 27, 1960, that Mrs. Archbold and Mr. Glover were entitled to a trial on their suit. She questioned the validity of the 1948 agreement between the District and NPS. She doubted their authority to convert parkland to highway use. This finding was, as the *Star* put it, a “set back” for the city. The District would have to put its plans on hold pending the outcome of the trial:

Past law cases generally show that the Government which accepts land for park uses can’t divert it to other purposes except through condemnation, said the judge. [“Glover Freeway Foes Win Right to a Trial,” *The Evening Star*, January 28, 1960]

Getting U.S. 240 into the District

As Maryland upgraded the Washington National Pike to a freeway, it had identified two entrances to the District via southeast and southwest legs. As discussed earlier, both legs were in trouble even before construction began on the freeway’s Frederick end. In 1946, Maryland officials had planned to run the freeway near Gaithersburg, west of Rockville and Bethesda “to take traffic off Wisconsin avenue leading into Washington.” However, protests by property owners in the Bradley Boulevard area prompted the Maryland-National Capital Park and

Planning Commission to propose a route farther west “through relatively undeveloped land.” This western route would extend north from MacArthur Boulevard near Cabin John, continue through Cabin John Run Valley and Thomas Valley to Tuckerman Lane before intersecting with the Washington National Pike near Gaithersburg. [“Threat to Drop Freeway Made By Planners,” *The Evening Star*, May 18, 1947]

In February 1952, the Regional Highway Planning Committee acted on a 10-year highway program for Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties. The program included the following:

Washington National pike – River road via Thomas Branch, Cabin Branch and Bogley Branch, bypassing Rockville and Gaithersburg to present terminus at Germantown road southwest of Hendersons Corner. A limited access divided highway.

Washington National pike truck cutoff – Wisconsin avenue at Grosvenor lane, northwest to Washington National pike south of intersection of Montrose road and Seven Locks road. Will be part of Inter-County freeway.

The program included the Inter-County Belt Freeway (Washington National Pike to Baltimore-Washington Parkway), the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, Washington-Annapolis Freeway, and Suitland Parkway. [“Action in Week Due on Maryland Roads Program,” *The Evening Star*, February 11, 1952]

By 1957, officials had still not pinned down the location for the entrance. In late January 1957, Clarkeson Engineering Company provided a preliminary report on alternatives for the U.S. 240 entrance to the District, favoring a Potomac River route. When the firm’s Harold Aitken, the future highway director, explained the plan to NCPC, Bartholomew said he favored a different alternative, namely running the pike through the Bethesda area to the District line, passing near Wisconsin Avenue to meet the Glover-Archbold Parkway at Tenley Circle. His favored route would follow the parkway to Whitehaven Parkway, then turn eastward to meet the Inner Loop near Sheridan Circle at Massachusetts Avenue and R Street. This alternative would have the advantage of not “dumping heavy traffic downtown.” It also would serve more traffic than a route along the Potomac River.

Aitken explained that Bartholomew’s preferred alternative would result in removal of “hundreds of homes.” The District planned to build the Glover-Archbold Parkway, which would be needed along with the Potomac River Freeway to handle future traffic.

Clarkeson’s preliminary report called for shifting the west leg of the Inner Loop from its approved location between 23rd and 24th Streets, NW., at Washington Circle in Foggy Bottom slightly west to accommodate the Potomac River Freeway. Connecting the two at the approved location would be “costly and difficult to build, possibly requiring three- and four-level interchanges.” Moving the Inner Loop west of Washington Circle would “be a little less costly to build and have a better design” than at the approved location. [Beveridge, George, “Shift Called Possible In ‘Inner Loop’ Plan,” *The Evening Star*, February 1, 1957]

The day after the Clarkeson presentation to NCPC, General Lane criticized NPS for not extending the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway northward into Rock Creek Park, a plan that NCPC had approved in 1948. Wirth responded that he had not begun the extension, even diverted funds from it, because he was afraid that extending it would encourage the District to try connecting Maryland's Washington National Pike through the park. He added that with the District now planning the Potomac River entrance, he would move forward on the extension. [Beveridge, George, "Park Officials Push Upshur Street Span," *The Evening Star*, February 2, 1957]

In April 1957, the Palisades Citizens Association opposed the leg through its community in the corner of the District along the Potomac River. The association expressed its views after over 250 residents attended a meeting where District officials and consultants explained the plan. Samuel R. Harrison, deputy director of the District Highway Department, emphasized that the District had not officially adopted the plan to route the highway along the river to join the pike near Cabin John. It was, he conceded, favored over other options for the connection between the Inner loop and U.S. 240 along Wisconsin Avenue, via the Glover-Archbold Parkway, or around the Naval Observatory.

A member of the Palisades association's road committee pointed out that Bartholomew, the new NCPC chairman, had said recently in AAA's *American Motorist* magazine that he was opposed to a road along the river because the area was not densely populated; he favored the Wisconsin Avenue corridor. Clarkeson's Aitken replied that in 1955, Bartholomew had testified before a Senate committee that the Wisconsin Avenue corridor would require far more displacement of homes and stores than the river plan.

Residents wondered why the planned George Washington Memorial Parkway would not be sufficient. Harrison replied that the parkway would not be able to handle the expected explosion of traffic in the area. It also could not carry trucks and would not be eligible for 90-percent Federal-aid because it was not part of the Interstate System.

When Aitken explained that the Arizona Avenue Expressway would extend to a bridge across the Potomac River to relieve pressure on Chain Bridge, association member William Smith said, "I am not prepared as a taxpayer to throw Chain Bridge into the river." Smith added:

The question that has not been proved tonight is why we need this road. At a public hearing you will have to have a better reason for this road than that it will gain 90 per cent Federal aid.

The comment drew strong applause. ["Palisades Group Protests River Route Expressway," *The Evening Star*, April 3, 1957]

Alternatives for the DC Entrance

By June, the National Capital Regional Planning Council was eager for a decision on where the Washington National Pike would enter the District. Gingery, a member of the council, said on

June 17 that the council was planning a top-level meeting with Maryland, District, and BPR officials to decide on the entrance in the next few weeks.

NCPC, which strongly questioned the District's preference for a river route, had established a committee to consider alternatives. The committee, by a 3-to-2 vote, favored a route that went through Glover-Archbold Parkway north to Tenley Circle. The route would follow River Road to the southwest leg of Washington National Pike or east of Wisconsin Avenue to some point in Bethesda to meet the southeast leg. On the south end, the route might leave the parkway to link with the Inner Loop near Sheridan Circle, NW., on Massachusetts Avenue, or continue through the park to an east-west link with Canal Road.

City officials were surprised by reports of the new routing. However, before the full NCPC could consider the proposal, District officials rejected it. City planning engineer Brinkley said it would be more costly, do more damage to the park, and would uproot more residents than the District's preferred river route. Brinkley pointed out that as an Interstate highway, the route would have to carry trucks, doing further damage to Glover-Archbold Park that the city was trying to avoid.

Engineer Commissioner Lane considered the proposal ill-advised. He and a BPR official on the committee had voted against the proposal. The proposal, just a concept, had not been subject to a detailed study. "I don't see how the planning commission can settle anything until we get the report of the consultant."

Moreover, Maryland officials did not want a U.S. 240 connection in heavily built-up Bethesda, and District officials felt the same way about any expressway north of Tenley Circle. Brinkley said that such an expressway would require the taking of many homes and arouse heated public opposition. [Beveridge, George, "Planning Unit to Urge Glover Parkway to 240," *The Evening Star*, June 18, 1957; Deane, James G., "District Balks at Hasty Park Route Commitment," *The Evening Star*, June 20, 1957]

Despite the objections, NCPC voted, 5-to-4, to support the new routing, with Bartholomew casting the tie-breaker. Members voting against the routing were Colonel Thomas B. Hunter, the District's Assistant Engineer Commissioner; John A. Remon, NCPC's Washington citizen member; Colonel G. W. Carlson of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; and BPR's H. J. Spelman.

Staff had refined the proposal to present three feasible routings to NCPC for the northern end. Each began at Van Ness Street just north of Glover-Archbold Park, as described in the *Star*:

All three routes terminated just west of Wisconsin avenue at the Maryland line, just across Western avenue from the new Woodward & Lothrop [department store] branch store.

One of the three routes kept to the west side of Wisconsin avenue. The other two tunneled under Tenley Circle to travel east of Wisconsin before crossing back over the

line. The commission said estimated property-acquisition costs of the three ranged from \$1.5 million to \$4.3 million.

As for the southern end, the NCPC majority left open “whether the road should follow Glover-Archbold all the way south to Canal road, or swing eastward on Whitehaven parkway to meet the proposed District inner loop expressway near Sheridan Circle.”

Mrs. Archbold’s attorney urged NCPC to reject the plan, suggesting that legal action might result from this violation of trust.

Wirth was one of those voting for the plan. The decision, he said, put him in “a most difficult” position, because neither alternative – whether through Glover-Archbold Park or along the river – was inviting from a park standpoint.

As for Maryland officials, the *Star*’s George Beveridge said their “precise intentions as to the new road were left thoroughly confused by the discussion.” Maryland had given up on the idea of a river entrance to the city along the Potomac River. The Washington National Pike’s southwest leg was now basically a link in the Inter-County Belt Freeway, providing a bypass for Virginia traffic:

Col. Hunter . . . insisted that the State has assured the District it still could meet the city part of the road near the river at the Maryland line. This, he said, could be done by putting the expressway in the Little Falls Branch parkway, which runs from Bethesda to the Potomac.

However, William C. Burrage, planning director of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, said the Maryland road officials were giving “heaviest consideration” to routes near Wisconsin Avenue and River road.

He noted that Little Falls parkland was acquired under Federal law which might not permit a truck road.

(Little Falls Parkway runs between Massachusetts Avenue and Bradley Boulevard to the Bethesda area.)

NCPC also had before it a minority report. Colonel Hunter urged its adoption because action on the Glover-Archbold Parkway was “premature,” pending receipt of the Clarkeson report on the river route. Bartholomew replied that now was the proper time for NCPC to submit what he called a “planning recommendation.” He said the District was constantly “shoving the commission into a corner” as if NCPC were a “rubber-stamp” for the city’s plans. NCPC’s action was “purely a planning action that always can be reconsidered in light of any later information.” It was, he added, NCPC’s duty to “guide the administrative agencies” at the earliest stage possible of such projects. [Beveridge, George, “Planners Back Park Expressway Route,” *The Evening Star*, June 21, 1957]

Around this time, controversy had developed about the route of the George Washington Memorial Parkway near the C&O Canal from the District line to Great Falls in Maryland.

Senator Murray, chairman of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, had received so many protest letters that he asked NCPC to hold a public hearing to secure reaction to the proposed route and possible alternatives, as described by the *Star*:

1. Along the street car tracks east of the approved route in Brookmont [Maryland].
2. On the high bluff along the river edge of Brookmont.
3. Build the parkway on top of Conduit road (MacArthur boulevard).
4. On the hill above MacArthur boulevard.

NCPC held the public hearing on June 21. Nolen, the commission director, told the 50 or so people in attendance that all the land needed for the parkway in its planned location had been acquired with funds from Maryland and the Federal Government on a 50/50 basis. Maryland, he said, had indicated it could not advance additional funds without new sources of revenue.

According to the *Star*:

The protests fell in two groups. One deplored damage to the natural canal area and the other protested impact on private homes in the Brookmont (Md.) area just across the District line.

There also was scant support, however, for the alternate routes and their further destruction of private property. The most common plea was that the parkway . . . be built along the line of MacArthur boulevard.

Neill Phillips, speaking for 14 groups, asked that the parkway be built at least 300 feet from the canal. Edward J. Seymour, representing the Civil League of Brookmont, suggested that the parkway bypass Brookmont and continue via Little Falls Parkway to MacArthur Boulevard. Anthony W. Smith of the C&O Canal Association recommended that the parkway contain only two lanes, not four as planned, and preferred it be built on the hillside next to MacArthur Boulevard. He also criticized NCPC for waiting so long to hold the public hearing and limiting witnesses to 10 minutes each. [“Two Groups Attack Plans for Parkway,” *The Evening Star*, June 21, 1957; “Commission Reaffirms Parkway Route Approval,” *The Evening Star*, August 2, 1957]

As the public hearing indicated, the narrow corridor where District highway officials wanted to run the link to the Washington National Pike was growing increasingly controversial.

With options for U.S. 240 seemingly closing, David Scull suggested a new alternative. Scull, who worked in real estate and was a member of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, suggested building an elevated 7-mile highway over the Georgetown spur of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. The *Star* explained the plan:

The trestled roadway would be about seven miles long starting from Linden or Montgomery Hills where the Georgetown spur pulls off the main line near the head of Sixteenth street extended, and running in a southerly direction around the District, entering near the Army Map Service

The highway would serve as a collector route for Wisconsin avenue, Bradley boulevard and River road in the west, and provide direct access downtown for Route 29, the proposed northern parkway, Georgia avenue and Connecticut avenue, Mr. Scull pointed out.

“It would,” he acknowledged, “be expensive,” perhaps as much as \$10 million a mile, but if it were approved as part of the U.S. 240 Interstate route, BPR would pay 90 percent of the cost. It had the advantages that it would not cut through any parks, could carry trucks, and would not require taking homes for the right-of-way. The idea was “at least worth exploring.” [“7-Mile Elevated Road Urged as Rte. 240 Link,” *The Evening Star*, July 7, 1957]

Meanwhile, the possible link through Rock Creek Park suffered another blow on July 16 when Chairman Murray introduced Senate Joint Resolution 123, cosponsored by Senators Hubert H. Humphrey (D-Mn.), Thomas H. Kuchel (R-Ca.), George W. Malone (R-Nv.), and Richard L. Neuberger (D-Or.), for the preservation of the park. It was identical to Senate Joint Resolution 36, which Senator Murray had introduced in February 1955. He told his Senate colleagues:

Recently the long-deferred and ill-advised plan to bring Maryland’s Route 240 into the District of Columbia through Rock Creek Park has been revived. Therefore, let the introduction of this joint resolution serve as a “No Trespassing” reminder to those who would invade the park.

He also introduced for the record an editorial, “Highway Keep Out,” from the July 12 issue of *The Washington Post and Times Herald* in which the editors admitted they had been wrong:

At one time this newspaper believed, reluctantly, that the highway might be brought down the rim of Rock Creek Park with minimum damage. We are now convinced that we were wrong to envisage this concession, and the subject is one on which we feel quite adamant

Regional planning becomes a travesty when a traffic problem that has been building up for well over a decade is allowed to get to the point at which an invasion of park land is proposed as the only alternative to the razing of substantial numbers of homes. Unquestionably a connection with U.S. 240 must be provided, and there now remains a choice of disadvantages. In the circumstances a route through Glover-Archbold Park may be the least disadvantageous course, inasmuch as the park is narrow and undeveloped and its use does not compare with that of Rock Creek Park or the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal.

The point for the future, however, is that highway planners must be given to understand that the area’s parks are inviolable. Foresighted planning can avoid such dilemmas. The response to proposals to bring U.S. 240 either through Rock Creek Park or along the C & O Canal ought to be a flat and resounding “No.” [Preservation of Rock Creek Park, *Congressional Record-Senate*, July 16, 1957, pages 11796-11797]

The *Star* disagreed. Chairman Murray's determination to preserve the park was "commendable," and the public would agree that "any unnecessary encroachment on parkland by highway builders" is unacceptable:

But unless satisfactory alternatives can be found—and the search so far has been in vain – it might become absolutely necessary to use a strip through the park for a city approach to Maryland Route 240.

The right approach was to explore all options, not take one out of consideration. "And serious objections have been raised to all alternative routes heretofore suggested." In choosing among the alternatives, "it is conceivable that an unemotional, objective study of the various routes would find Rock Creek the least objectionable . . ." ["Wrong Procedure," *The Evening Star*, July 18, 1957]

In reply to Chairman Murray's resolution, NCPC's Nolen told the *Star* that the commission favored the routing through Glover-Archbold Park for the link to U.S. 240. The parkway would provide a link to Wisconsin Avenue above Van Ness Street and MacArthur Boulevard west of Georgetown University. "There is no parallel between the Glover and Rock Creek Park proposals. A right-of-way is available for the Glover road and a right-of-way through Rock Creek Park would upset both property owners and nature lovers."

By contrast, the Montgomery County Council, in a closed meeting 2 weeks earlier, had voted in favor of routing U.S. 240 through Rock Creek Park. Council members concluded that the park route would be less disruptive to Maryland communities than a routing through Glover-Archbold Park. ["Congress Ban Asked on Park 240 Link," *The Evening Star*, July 16, 1957]

As mentioned earlier, area officials met on July 19 to discuss several area issues, including the U.S. 240 link to the District. The meeting ended without a decision on the entrance, but with an agreement to form a regional coordinating committee to consider joint highway issues.

Clarksen Engineering reported to the District commissioners on July 27 regarding its study of the U.S. 240 entrance to the city. The city had told the firm to rule out the controversial Rock Creek Park route. The best alternative, the firm concluded, would bring the all-traffic route into the District along the Potomac River, with one-half mile on structure over the water parallel to the Whitehurst Freeway. The *Star* summarized the 4.6-mile route:

It would extend on the high ground of the Potomac Palisades area from the District line to Dalecarlia filtration plant to the west leg of the proposed innerloop [sic] just west of Washington circle.

It would tie into "feasible" extension [sic] of the highway close to the Potomac in Maryland. State Road [sic] Commission officials have indicated their preference for a riverside location.

By means of a high-level Potomac River bridge in line of Arizona avenue just south of Chain Bridge, the route would provide connections with Virginia portions of the circumferential highway planned to circle Washington

It would be elevated not only over the Potomac (inbound lane) from Georgetown University to Thirty-fourth street, but over Foxhall road and Glover-Archbold Park. The existing Whitehurst freeway would be modified, especially around Key Bridge, and extended to a point near the university to handle outbound traffic. The “over-the-waves” part of the project would be as much as 125 feet offshore.

The number of lanes would range from four to eight as the freeway approached the Inner Loop. More than 300 homes and businesses would have to be acquired for the freeway, with about half for the downtown connection to the Inner Loop.

Clarkeson determined that this option was the cheapest at an estimated \$44.8 million, would do less damage to existing parks and recreation areas, and would improve access to them:

Noting that location of Route 240 anywhere in Northwest Washington would have a substantial impact on existing land uses in the area, the report asserted the recommended site is “the one location that holds this ‘conflict’ to a minimum and still provides a meritorious improvement from a traffic service standpoint.”

As for the Wisconsin Avenue corridor:

The consultant gave this only passing notice with a conclusion it is “not considered practical.” The required 200-foot right-of-way along this heavily-developed thoroughfare would “literally wreck” business establishments, apartment houses and homes, on at least one side of the avenue whose present width now ranges from only 35 to 60 feet. The firm did not even work up a cost estimate on this one.

The river alternative also had aesthetic advantages. It would be “close enough to the canal to provide an inspiring view, yet far enough away to preserve its natural characteristics.” From the north and west, “the approach will offer an excellent panorama with the Washington Monument as centerpiece.” [Stepp, John W., “Potomac Route Proposed for New Freeway,” *The Evening Star*, July 27, 1957]

Reaction from the Palisades Citizens Association was immediate. Colonel Robert B. Curtiss, who had drafted the Association’s April resolution, said:

It still doesn’t make much sense to taxpayers. Why put the road here? The city is already saturated with traffic and other sections are crying for relief, but they insist on building the road here where it’s not wanted.

He pointed out that counting Canal Road, MacArthur Boulevard, the George Washington Memorial Parkway on the Maryland side, and the proposed new connection for the Washington National Pike, highway officials were planning to channel 20 lanes of traffic into the narrow corridor along the river. He called the plan “ridiculous.” The association’s William G. Smith said, “We’ve known this was what they were going to do, but it is still preposterous.” [“Potomac Route for 240 Raises Citizen Protest,” *The Evening Star*, July 28, 1957]

On August 1, NCPC considered the Clarkeson report as well as the Glover-Archbold Parkway issues. Aitken was on hand for Clarkeson to defend the Potomac River alternative. However, the planners decided to await further studies on their proposal to use the Glover-Archbold Park route as part of the plan to connect U.S. 240 with downtown. Experience, Bartholomew told his colleagues, made it “perfectly obvious that, wherever we go, we will encounter problems and protests.” That, he said, was only one of the many factors that would have to be considered.

At the same meeting, NCPC reaffirmed its support for the 5-mile segment of the George Washington Memorial Parkway bordering canal property. It would stretch from Canal Road at Chain Bridge in the District to the planned Cabin John Bridge carrying the outer circumferential across the Potomac River between Maryland and Virginia.

As explained in a NCPC report, the planners rejected four alternatives that Chairman Murray had suggested they study:

1. Routing the parkway along the streetcar tracks would cut Brookmont in half, take 34 homes, and increase costs by \$1.1 million.
2. Building on the high bluff involved acquiring 38 homes and an additional \$900,000 in estimated costs.
3. Building on MacArthur Boulevard, the NCPC report said, was “entirely impractical and inadvisable. It would cost several millions of dollars (\$5.5 million) to properly strengthen the conduit [under the boulevard], for which money is not available, and it would be impossible to control access to any degree along the parkway road.”
4. Building on the hill above MacArthur Boulevard was “impractical” because it would take 40 homes, involve construction of 17 grade separation structures, and raise costs by at least \$10 million.

Regarding the public hearing, the report stated:

The hearing established that the people living in the area have understood for many years where the parkway was projected through Brookmont and Glen Echo, and that almost without exception they favored the location and desired to have it built. On the other hand, those opposed to the established general location were from organizations of people living in other areas.

As for impacts on the canal, the NCPC report stated that only at Brookmont and Glen Echo would the parkway be within 300 feet of the canal, and it could be effectively screened from the canal. [“Planners Sit Tight On Glover Park Route,” *The Evening Star*, August 2, 1957; “Commissioner Reaffirms Parkway Route Approval,” *The Evening Star*, August 2, 1957]

(As discussed elsewhere, BPR approved Interstate numbers in September 1957 as recommended by AASHO. The Washington National Pike/U.S. 240 freeway became Interstate 70-S. However, accounts of the routing debate continued to refer to the route by its original number as will this account until the public and newspapers began using the Interstate designation.)

On October 25, 1957, Governor McKeldin opened the first 1.5-mile section of the Washington circumferential freeway linking Wisconsin and Connecticut Avenues. The ceremony took place east of where Wisconsin Avenue intersects the freeway at Pooks Hill. His wife cut the ribbon. This first segment, Governor McKeldin said, was a “conspicuous symbol” of Maryland’s continuing effort to relieve the “ever-tightening tangle of traffic around our big cities.”

Because the segment went through Rock Creek Park and could not carry trucks, BPR had not accepted it as part of the Interstate System. However, a few days earlier, BPR had approved the adjacent 2.70-mile section carrying the route from Wisconsin Avenue, where an interchange with the circumferential was planned, west to U.S. 240.

After the ceremony, Governor McKeldin and others formed a motorcade to tour other area projects. The Governor joined Commissioner of Public Roads Charles D. Curtiss of BPR and District Highway Director Robertson to open the Kenilworth interchange connecting the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, the Annapolis freeway, and Kenilworth Avenue. The *Star* explained:

The Kenilworth interchange covers a total distance of 3.5 miles in dualized roads and overpasses. It is Maryland’s biggest highway complex of its kind. [“First Section Dedicated Of Circumference Road,” *The Evening Star*, October 25, 1957]

A few days later, Colonel Welling revealed that he wanted to begin building the U.S. 240 entrance to the city as early as 1958. “I’m anxious to start on it as soon as possible.” He planned to hold a public hearing to consider views on the two controversial alternatives for bringing the freeway into the city, whether along the Potomac River or in a corridor in the vicinity of Wisconsin Avenue through Glover-Archbold Park. He estimated that the river route would cost \$46 million, while construction in the Wisconsin Avenue corridor would cost about \$59 million. In either case, BPR would pay 90 percent since the route would be part of the Interstate System. [Deane, James G., “Welling Acts to Expedite D.C. Link to Route 240,” *The Evening Star*, October 27, 1957]

Back to the Public

On November 25, General Welling announced a public hearing would be held on January 6, 1958, to consider four proposed District connections between the Washington National Pike in Maryland and the District’s Inner Loop. The four were limited access highways that would be open to all vehicles, not restricted to passenger vehicles as would a parkway. Whichever route was selected would be proposed for inclusion in the Interstate System.

Two of the routes were through the Palisades area, as the *Star* explained:

The District’s preferred route begins at the District-Maryland line between the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal and the tracks of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. It splits into two roadways, one on the bluff between the tracks and Potomac avenue and the other at the bottom of the bluff along the canal.

The lower roadway meets Canal road at Chain Bridge. The upper roadway remains on the bluff to Glover-Archbold Park.

Then, the westbound roadway would join the Whitehurst freeway; and the eastbound roadway would run adjacent to the freeway.

Director Robertson preferred that route. The Clarkeson proposal was the other choice through Palisades.

NCPC was still working on the third alternative:

This road would run from the District-Maryland line near Wisconsin avenue roughly paralleling the avenue to Tenley Circle; thence along the Glover-Archbold Park to the vicinity of Canal road; thence along the same right-of-way preferred by Mr. Robertson.

The fourth alternative was:

The fourth route to go before the hearing has the same beginning point as the third and then follows Glover-Archbold Park to Whitehaven parkway; thence easterly through Dumbarton Oaks Park across Rock Creek Park and under Sheridan circle.

The expressway was not in Robertson's plans for the next 6 years, but General Welling was eager to develop a construction schedule because the city needed more radial highways to absorb increasing traffic demands between Maryland and downtown Washington. [Bassett, Grace, "Hearings Slated On 240 Links," *The Evening Star*, November 25, 1957]

In early December, NCPC added another aspect to its preferred Wisconsin Avenue corridor routing for U.S. 240. Until this point, the preferred routing split just north of Massachusetts Avenue, with passenger vehicles able to continue on the Glover-Archbold Parkway. All traffic, including trucks, could use the alternative route to the Inner Loop.

The new idea was to build a tunnel from the northwest corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Macomb Street deep under the north side of Massachusetts Avenue for a mile to Normanstone Park near 34th and Fulton Streets, NW. Traffic would continue at grade through the Normanstone Valley, cross Rock Creek Park on a viaduct, then enter another tunnel, this one a half-mile long, ending near Decatur Place and 22nd Street. The expressway would continue to the Inner Loop at Sheridan Circle. This use of tunnels would reduce impacts to the Washington Cathedral and other facilities on the surface.

The tunnel would consist of two bores, each carrying two lanes, bored as far as 140 below the surface. The tunnels would cost about \$30 million, but the commission believed the entire Wisconsin Avenue routing would cost less than the District's preferred routing along the Potomac River.

NCPC presented the idea as a staff study and did not endorse or reject it, but the commissioners thought it should be presented at the public hearing. Commissioner Welling said he was

“completely open” on the U.S. 240 proposals, but was “disturbed” about the late arrival of this new proposal without detailed cost or engineering studies or even NCPC endorsement.

Bartholomew said that District officials regularly complained about NCPC proposals that lacked detailed studies. “We don’t have the funds to make these studies. And I think that until we can have plans made with the exhaustive study of engineering consultants we will always be in this difficult position.” He repeated his complaint that District officials seemed to think NCPC should simply rubber-stamp whatever they proposed. [Beveridge, George, “Route 240 Tunnel In District Proposed,” *The Evening Star*, December 6, 1957]

A staff report to the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission a week later also favored the Wisconsin Avenue corridor. The *Star* described the staff’s recommendation:

The recommended route would leave the Pook’s Hill interchange and continue to Cedar Lane where it would split, the northbound lane running on the east side of Wisconsin avenue and the southbound lane running on the west side of Wisconsin.

The southbound lane would cross Wisconsin at Jones Bridge road and run beside the northbound lane through Bethesda along Tilbury and Waverly streets.

The route would cross Wisconsin again at Grafton street and intersect with Western avenue behind the Woodward & Lothrop store.

The staff report rejected the route through Rock Creek Park because it would require eight or ten lanes to handle all the traffic diverted from Bethesda and Silver spring. “We believe, if well handled, this freeway can be the making of the Bethesda business district.”

After the commission meeting on the plan, representatives of the commissioners, the Maryland State Roads Commission, and the Montgomery County Council indicated they would hold a public hearing on the plan after the District’s January 6 hearing. [“Corridor Route Urged For 240 by Planners,” *The Evening Star*, December 10, 1957]

George Beveridge described the scene for the January 6 public hearing:

One of the largest public hearings [sic] crowds in the city’s history jammed the District Building board room today to hear arguments before the Commissioners on the Route 240 controversy

More than three hundred individual and organization civic leaders—some waving banners—occupied every foot of space in the board room and about 50 sat on benches outside to hear testimony through an amplifying system.

At one point, residents of the Palisades area along the Potomac—irate at expressway proposals through their area—raised banners above their heads from every part of the audience which bore the word “Palisades.”

The display led Commissioner Robert E. McLaughlin to warn that “this is not a political convention. The purpose of this hearing is to advise the Commissioners, not to arouse sentiment.”

The agenda included 58 witnesses, but by the lunch break at 12:15, only the first three had testified.

The hearing opened on a note of bitter controversy, with city highway officials urging a route along the Potomac river to the Maryland line, and Federal park and planning leaders calling for an expressway that would closely parallel Wisconsin Avenue from the Maryland line into the city.

NCPC Director Nolen and traffic planner Robert Keith presented the Wisconsin Avenue corridor proposal that they said would carry twice the number of vehicles near the District line than the river route the city favored. The corridor would relieve congestion on Wisconsin Avenue and other nearby streets in the District and Maryland. It would stimulate business and boost the real estate tax base. By contrast, the Potomac River route would cut through a “low-density, single-dwelling residential area” that should be maintained.

Keith argued that the city preferred the Potomac River route only because of the difficulty of building the needed eight-lane truck-passenger route through Glover-Archbold Park. The recent tunnel option NCPC staff had offered would offset the problem, since it would provide an alternative route for trucks. The suggested two-lane tunnels would not greatly increase the total cost to the District, especially since BPR would pay 90 percent of the cost. He and Nolen emphasized that the tunnel route would not impair the Washington Cathedral, embassies, and other buildings along Massachusetts Avenue.

In the absence of detailed information, they urged the District Highway Department to make obtaining that information a top priority.

The District’s Robertson and planning aide Brinkley defended plans for a six- and eight-lane expressway along the Potomac River and K Street parallel to Whitehurst Freeway, joining the Inner Loop near Washington Circle. “Mr. Robertson attacked the planners’ argument and launched a special criticism against the tunnel route.” Although sufficient studies had not been conducted to determine the feasibility of the route, Robertson said the District had studied the plan enough to know that the tunnels would have to provide at least seven lanes, not just the four being suggested. Total cost would be about \$110 million or more than double the cost of the Potomac River route. The city’s favored route, known as A-2, along Potomac Avenue and Canal Road near the C&O canal, would cost \$13 million less than any Wisconsin Avenue corridor option.

Robertson said that A-2 was better than Route A on the high bluffs overlooking the river and cutting through residential areas in the Potomac Palisades area. Only a third as many residents would be displaced by A-2, which would cause a “minimum net loss of park facilities,” comparable to the loss from NPS plans for the George Washington Memorial Parkway:

Route A-2 would provide a beautifully-dignified entrance to the nation's capital, no other entrance would have a comparable esthetic appeal.

Further, it would provide "the best balance in traffic service" for Maryland and Virginia residents who could cross the river on the proposed new Arizona Avenue bridge.

Harland Bartholomew did not attend, but his statement was read into the record. The Wisconsin Avenue corridor, he contended, was "superior in all respects" to the river route. The first consideration must be the number of motorists served and relief of congestion. On that basis, there was "little question" that the Wisconsin Avenue corridor was the best route because it would draw traffic from a corridor with high residential development.

He would prefer not to see any highway through Glover-Archbold Park, but did not think that concern should rule out the Wisconsin Avenue corridor. "Whatever is best for the community can and must be voted out."

As the day went on, testimony favored the route along the Potomac River or, if not directly in favor of that route, strongly in opposition to the Wisconsin Avenue corridor.

On the second day of the hearing, civic leaders "clashed sharply" on the same issues. Only about 100 people were on hand as the "parade of dozens of witnesses on the 240 controversy moved steadily along at the District Building."

In contrast with the day before, testimony tended to favor the Wisconsin Avenue corridor as the best way to meet the greatest traffic demand. Palisades residents especially attacked the Clarkeson study, which they considered a "misleading and incompetent effort" to justify the decision the District had already made. (District officials later assured reporters that Clarkeson had "a completely free hand" to compare alternatives.)

Overall, the debate featured "bitter attacks and strong defenses":

At one point, the testimony led Commissioner McLaughlin to comment that in two days of testimony he had "not heard anyone say to put this road in his area. Some want to go underground like an ostrich, and others say, just put it somewhere else." [Beveridge, George, "350 Jam D.C. Building For Route 240 Hearing," *The Evening Star*, January 6, 1958; Beveridge, George, "Leaders Clash On 240 Route To Downtown," *The Evening Star*, January 7, 1958]

The Palisades Citizens Association appreciated the opportunity to testify before the District Commissioners. Eight association members had testified. "Our report was good, but we need public opinion to back it up," William G. Smith told reporters. The association would need "a lot of money" to convince the District commissioners to route the road elsewhere. "They'll have to pass it over our dead bodies before we are through fighting." The association was planning an aggressive campaign of letters to newspapers and Members of Congress to stop the river route. ["Palisades Group Lauds Conduct of 240 Hearing," *The Evening Star*, January 8, 1958]

The District's Decision

On January 14, the District commissioners voted to support the Potomac River location for U.S. 240, leaving the District Highway Department to analyze the two options:

The Commissioners expressed strenuous opposition to a location that would follow Wisconsin avenue from Maryland and either pour large volumes of traffic through Glover-Archbold Park or divert it from Wisconsin avenue in a proposed “tunnel route” beneath Massachusetts avenue to downtown Washington.

They said a location along the river within the District “will adequately serve the traffic in the corridor through which it extends and hold to a minimum the conflict with existing land use, land use plans and community development. The engineering, economic and aesthetic values of the selected location are acceptable.”

In a statement, the Commissioners said they “recognize that the construction of an interstate highway anywhere in the District would cause some degree of disturbance and inconvenience to citizens, business interests, and various community programs. The Commissioners are determined the highway will be designed to full respect [sic] to the amenities so important in the Nation’s Capital.”

They added:

“There is unanimous agreement among the Commissioners that legal and moral obligations and sound Government policies dictate against the building of an interstate route in Glover-Archbold Park.”

The Commissioners said their quick decision on the District part of the 240 controversy was prompted partly by the appeal of Maryland officials who have “the real need to set aside as yet undeveloped land for the highway right-of-way.”

The “tunnel route” that NCPC had suggested “has no appeal to the Commissioners”:

“The facility required to serve the traffic assignable to the tunnel is estimated to cost at least \$110 million and is rejectable on the basis of cost alone. Without such capacity there would be a demand for service in Glover-Archbold Park of such magnitude as to be objectionable.

“In addition to the construction cost factor, the tunnel scheme is unsatisfactory because it would put heavy volumes of traffic on the inner loop near the center of the city where volumes assigned by other plans already approach practical capacities.

The commissioners did not offer a view on how the Maryland State Roads Commission should connect U.S. 240 traffic with the river route entrance to the District.

Maryland’s Bonnell said he told District officials that he would give “every consideration to the route they felt was most desirable.” He added, “And we certainly will do that.” He did not say what his preference was, saying he would withhold a decision until after the public hearing the State had scheduled on U.S. 240 for January 29.

Maryland had identified two alternatives:

One plan is to extend the so-called “west leg” of 240 due south from Montrose road to River road, follow River road to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad tracks and follow the tracks to the District line near the Potomac river.

The other is to extend the 240 west leg due south beyond River road all the way to the Potomac River near Cabin John, then to follow the Potomac shore to the District line in the right-of-way planned for construction of the four-lane George Washington Memorial Parkway by the National Park Service.

The problem with this plan was the NPS restriction on trucks. Given the NPS resistance to any change, Congress might have to be approached to secure approval for trucks on this short stretch of the parkway.

Colonel Welling said he did not know when the District would decide on which river route was best for the link to U.S. 240. The project was not in the District’s 6-year plan, but the link might be substituted for one of the projects in the plan if a decision were made. [Beveridge, George, “Route 240 River Location Backed by Commissioners,” *The Evening Star*, January 14, 1958; Beveridge, George, “Maryland 240 Ruling Awaits Jan. 29 Hearing,” *The Evening Star*, January 15, 1958]

Public Hearing in Maryland

The Maryland State Roads Commission, Montgomery County Council, and Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission held a public hearing in the evening of January 29 at Leland Junior High School in Chevy Chase on the U.S. 240 routing controversy. As Beveridge put it “about 1,000 partisan Marylanders” attended to hear the debate on the “Route 240 wars.”

Roads Commissioner Bonnell chaired the three-agency “jury” that conducted the hearing. He explained that U.S. 240 was part of the Federal Interstate System, which was “not designed primarily for large volumes of local traffic.” It was intended primarily for continuous freeway travel across the Nation and for emergency access for national defense. This did not “mean, however, that the roads commission will close its eyes to any chance for relief to local traffic,” while still meeting the national goals. The roads commission, he said, “has not yet selected a route” and would not do so until they review all hearing testimony about the two alternatives – routing the Washington National Pike in the Wisconsin Avenue Corridor or along River Road.

The Seven Locks Citizens Association was the only group that favored the Wisconsin Avenue corridor outright. The Civic League of Brookmont was the only group to favor construction of the expressway on the west side of Rock Creek Park. No one supported the River road location.

Two options had some support. Ten groups, and a joint committee representing 30 organizations, favored the location along the Potomac River between Cabin John and the District line. Advocates said it was the cheapest alternative, would do the least damage to property values, would meet the national defense goals of the Interstate System, and would line up with the District’s approved route.

“This route also drew vociferous opposition from several speakers,” according to Beveridge in the *Star*. They “blasted it as a ‘foolish waste’ of money” because the George Washington Memorial Parkway is being planned to provide the same connection. It also would not serve heavily populated areas to the north and would wreck the Palisades area.

NPS Director Wirth submitted a letter stating that grading work was underway on the parkway. He warned the Maryland and Montgomery County officials that the parkway “should not be considered as potentially available for the construction of any part of Route 240.”

Also receiving support was a call for a feasibility study of a route east of Rock Creek Park following the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad tracks through Silver Spring and Takoma Park to North Capitol Street at the District line:

Advocates of the B&O route contended that it would pass through a heavily populated area to serve all traffic and particularly serve trucks which, for the most part, are destined for the eastern part of Washington

One critic of this plan was Mayor Samuel Powell, Jr., of Garrett Park, a town incorporated in 1898 and located between Rock Creek Park and Maryland Route 355 (former U.S. 240). He charged that the “reckless, indiscreet, mad-dog proposal” would wreck his town as well as the communities of Kensington and Garrett Park Estates.

County council member Robert T. Snure also opposed the rail alignment. In a written statement, he said that on behalf of his constituents, he had no choice but to oppose the alignment. It would damage Garrett Park, as Mayor Powell had said, but also would, as the *Post* summarized, “virtually destroy Kensington. It would, he added, erase too much taxable property from the county rolls.” Further, “it would dump too much traffic on ‘already overcongested arteries’ in the Silver Spring-Takoma Park section”:

Snure said he favors a two-pronged road plan – one route going through Rock Creek Park, another feeding into the George Washington Memorial Parkway under construction along the Potomac.

State roads officials did not comment on this new idea “but it was understood that they have apprehensions about both cost and traffic volumes involved in such a route.”

Former Senator Nye testified on behalf of the Citizens Action Committee for Fair Road Planning. He said that “in our estimation,” a superhighway into the city was not needed. Therefore, he did not take a position on the alternatives. He added that he would not oppose an improved parkway, not an expressway, through Rock Creek Park.

Many witnesses, whether they supported an alternative route or not, “blasted either the proposed Wisconsin avenue or River road locations.” These witnesses “contended that the expressway, built through either of the heavily developed areas, would sever the communities and wreck property values.”

One of the many speakers is worth noting, not because what he said was remarkable, but because he would play a prominent role in later years. Beveridge summarized the testimony:

Darwin Stolzenbach, president, Montgomery County Citizens' Planning Association – There is no justification for a Potomac River Route because it would not serve traffic needs. A fast 240 decision should be avoided until B&O route possibility can be studied. This would serve traffic and avoid fights over use of parkland.

The “jury” adjourned the hearing at midnight but announced that it would resume at 8 p.m. the following evening.

Beveridge summarized the result:

At adjournment time [at midnight], 30 persons had spoken, about half of a scheduled witness list. The speakers alternatively praised and attacked a variety of route proposals—with the emphasis definitely on the attack

Last night's overflow crowd heard overwhelming attacks lodged against proposals to bring the Maryland part of the freeway down either Wisconsin avenue or River road.

The *Post* concluded:

As the hearing neared a close, the two officially proposed routes – an alignment paralleling Wisconsin ave. and another using River rd. – were still unable to muster more than lukewarm support. [Beveridge, George, “Rt. 240 Plans Hit; Hearing Goes on Tonight,” *The Evening Star*, January 30, 1958; Stern, Laurence, and Anderson, J. W., “B&O Site For Rte. 240 Is Assailed,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 31, 1958]

During the first night of hearings, according to Beveridge, the Wisconsin Avenue corridor drew “the bitterest opposition . . . with hardly a nod of support.” As for the alternatives to that corridor - the river route and the new alternative of running U.S. 240 along the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad parallel to North Capitol Street, “the opposition roof fell in on these, too,” on the second day, January 30:

Citizen representatives of the Potomac Palisades region, joined by conservation and nature groups, turned out in force to deplore the proposal that Route 240 be substituted for the George Washington Memorial Parkway along the river in Maryland.

And the so-called B&O route – proposed for the first time only about a week ago – was roundly castigated as a “disastrous” proposal.

Frank L. Hewitt of the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission said the rail routing would be an “economic catastrophe” that would affect apartment buildings, shopping centers, parks, a country club, commercial buildings, and Maryland State Roads Commission property along the route.

Many organizations testified against any river route, but some thought the State should study the rail routing. Others opposed any freeway entrance to the city, preferring a circumferential freeway that could feed traffic to arterials:

They unanimously urged that no effort be made to tamper with the George Washington Memorial Parkway, and contended this would help solve any future traffic problems in the river area. They also contended that a 240 route along the river would destroy recreational values of the Palisades parks and would cause heavy disruption of residential communities.

Only about 175 people attended the second evening of the hearing. “In all, nearly nine hours of steady talking was required to complete the testimony of more than 60 witnesses at the two sessions.” Chairman Bonnell ordered that the hearing record be kept open for 10 days to allow for submission of additional comments.

Bonnell promised a decision would be reached “as soon as possible,” which he estimated would take 30-45 days. Wells of the planning commission said officials would take “at least a preliminary look” at the railroad route, which was so new that no detailed study had been made. [Beveridge, George, “State Officials Push Rt. 240 Decision,” *The Evening Star*, January 31, 1958]

Decision Time

Over the next weeks, officials and citizens expressed their views on how to get Montgomery County traffic into and out of the city.

E. Brooke Lee was one of those who endorsed the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad option. He released a statement on February 1 arguing that the route would not disrupt the Kensington-Garrett Park area. The *Star* reported:

His idea is that instead of following the B&O tracks at Randolph road, the 240 expressway would use the Washington Circumferential expressway between Wisconsin avenue at Pooks Hill and Forest Glen. Only at this point – south and east of Kensington – would it hit the railroad tracks, and then follow them through Silver Spring to the District line.

Mr. Lee said this was the “lowest cost per mile and shortest” route feasible unless Congress permits the 240 expressway to be built through Rock Creek Park. He said it would protect River road and Potomac Palisades communities and would not require the National Park Service to “scrap” part of the George Washington Memorial Parkway along the river. [“Modified B&O Route For 240 Is Proposed,” *The Sunday Star*, February 2, 1958]

District planner Brinkley predicted that without two “high capacity” expressways between the county and northwest Washington, the area would be “traffic-clogged beyond any comprehension” in two decades. At present, 29,700 cars and trucks crossed the District line on Wisconsin Avenue each workday, with trucks comprising nearly 10 percent of the traffic.

Clarkeson Engineering Company projected that by 1980, the total would be 70,000 vehicles daily. Closer to the Potomac River, Clarkeson estimated that MacArthur Avenue and Massachusetts Avenue each averaged 16,645 cars daily; by 1980 a river route for U.S. 240 would carry 34,000 vehicles. The District's planned Potomac River route would take 146,500 vehicles off crowded downtown streets. To make his point about the need for two expressways, he cited the current crossing by Massachusetts Avenue of Rock Creek Park. Trying to pass traffic across the park in 20 years would lead to "strangulation" during peak periods. "It would be like trying to accommodate 1980 traffic with existing bridges. People would just not get through." [Stern, Laurence, "Expressway in NW Vital, Official Warns," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, February 2, 1958]

On February 2, residents of Glen Echo, Potomac Valley, and Palisades staged a protest at the construction site of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. To illustrate their opposition to the Maryland State Roads Commission's plan to ask NPS to cancel the parkway to make way for an expressway in the corridor, the protesters made their point with shovels on Sunday. A photograph in the *Post* showed a line of protesters using their shovels to push dirt in the direction of an idle bulldozer.

A few days later, the Palisades Citizens Association appointed a Roads Committee to lead the opposition to an all-purpose expressway through Palisades park land. The committee's chairman, William Griffith Smith, criticized the city for not considering any options east of Wisconsin Avenue. The committee would study feasible alternatives to a riverside route. ["Women Dramatize Opposition to Palisades Route for 240," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, February 3, 1958; "Reconsideration Is Asked Of River Route Approval," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, February 9, 1958]

Donald Gingery and David Scull of the Maryland planning commission criticized the District commissioners for not considering a route through Rock Creek Park for the 240 expressway.

Scull thought that if Maryland chose the route along the river, Congress should allow construction of a parkway for cars-only traffic along the west side of Rock Creek Park. The river route, he said, "would obviously be of no use to commuters in the fast-growing and already traffic-strangled Silver Spring-Wheaton area." Residents of the area "would be deeply grateful if the request [for the river route] could be coupled with a similar request for permission to utilize a strip along the west side of mile-wide Rock Creek Park as a passenger car, park expressway." He acknowledged that the river route was the "line of least resistance," but added that the Silver Spring-Wheaton area was "unquestionably the area of greatest need and will assuredly remain in that category for many years to come." With most existing roads in the area "impossible of widening," Scull urged Maryland and District officials to conduct "an imaginative search" for a way to relieve "nightmare" conditions east of Rock Creek Park.

The District's refusal to consider the Rock Creek alternative to the river route, Scull and Gingery said, did not preclude the planning commission from recommending the park route. Although Chairman Bonnell had said the roads commission would take up to 6 weeks to consider the alternatives, Scull was convinced that the Maryland State Roads Commission "has already made up its mind" in favor of the river route. ["Wheaton Area Freeway Urged," *The Evening Star*,

February 4, 1958; “Planners Hit D.C. Attitude On Route 240,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, February 6, 1958]

The *Post*'s editors found it “shocking to hear the continued drumfire of criticism aimed at every route for the proposed expressway to bring Route 240 through the Maryland suburbs and into downtown Washington.” Witnesses cited “a back yard, a golf course, a piece of commercial property or plans for a real estate development.” The editors lamented, “Are there no citizens or groups of citizens who can subordinate personal and neighborhood interests to the welfare of the community as a whole?” The editors were not minimizing the inconveniences, but whichever route is selected “is going to cause distress to a large number of families.” That was the price for “the lack of adequate city planning in the past.” Regardless, the price must be paid “for the sake of many future generations as well as this one.” Experts said that two expressways were needed to meet 1980 needs:

So the question facing the District and Maryland authorities is not whether this golf course or that church property or some other real estate development is to be saved. Rather, it is a question of whether public officials of today have the courage and foresight to build for the future as well as the present. If they try only to heed the interests that are most vocal on issues of this sort, they will do nothing or follow the course of least resistance. What they ought to realize is that a vast host of citizens who have had little to say on the subject are depending on them to raise their sights above relatively petty and narrowly local considerations to the major interests of the city of Washington – in 2000 and 2100 as well as in the 1960s. [“Raise Your Sights,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, February 6, 1958]

Representative Hyde, a Bethesda resident (at 5606 McLean Drive), issued a statement on February 10 urging decisionmakers to wait for completion of the Mass Transportation Survey. “I have no desire to add” to the delays, but a delay would be preferable to a mistake. The survey, which began “in anticipation of the very problem we face today,” was embracing “a new form of analysis” that would help officials decide on the best route:

It will conclude that the projected traffic to the central business district will increase to the point where the existing plans for the Inner Loop will break down in the congestion This collapse of the main feature of our present highway plan will have to be prevented at all costs. An additional central city circumferential is one possibility. The recommendations for the improvement of mass transportation will, of course, be one way to relieve the situation. [“Hyde Warns of Rt. 240 ‘Mistakes,’” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, February 11, 1958]

The *Post*'s editors agreed with Representative Hyde that “a little delay” was preferable to mistakes. “Perhaps the officials who are to make the decision can get advance data from the experts who are conducting the mass transportation study and whose report is not due until summer.” Regardless, “they should make certain that Route 240 will not be out of joint with the improved transportation system that the survey is expected to envisage.” [“Route 240 and the Survey,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, February 12, 1958]

On the same day that Representative Hyde issued his statement, Chairman Murray complicated the decision by announcing he opposed any transfer of park property along the Potomac River for expressway use. He recalled that the Capper-Cramton Act authorized the parkway in Maryland and Virginia. "These would have given our Capital City an unusual park and recreational area extending from tidewater along a beautiful gorge and including a beautiful waterfall." However, "short-sighted opposition" on both sides of the river had stalled the project. "Washington appears determined to throw away its opportunity to be the most beautiful capital city in the world by paving its scenic and recreational areas and making them roadways." Extolling the natural advantages of his home State of Montana, he said:

For some time I have considered a bill to move the Capital of the United States out West, where the climate would be much better and the grandeur of the Rocky Mountains might revive in the minds of governing groups some of the spiritual and social values of the founders of the Republic. If Washington can no longer handle traffic without paving parks and playgrounds, then I shall offer a bill to move the Capitol to Montana, amid the Rockies. The bill will also provide an area in eastern Montana prairies where roadbuilders can [use] flat prairie land with a minimum of tree removal and bulldozers.

Washington would become a place where historians could study "prehistoric things like the mastodon bones at the Smithsonian Institution and Republican economic policies."

Because Chairman Murray's Interior and Insular Affairs Committee would have to act on any transfer of park property, his views were a serious obstacle. District Commissioner McLaughlin thought the prohibition against using park property for expressways might not kill the District's favored split-level routing - a divided alignment, with the inbound lane on Canal Road level and the outbound lane on the Palisades level. ["Senator Murray Set to Oppose Riverside 240," *The Evening Star*, February 12, 1958; Eisen, Jack, "Senator Murray To Oppose Use Of Park Lands," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, February 12, 1958]

In early March, with the hearing transcript finally available, the Maryland State Roads Commission began studying the comments received. Their task had a serious challenge, as Chairman Bonnell explained. "We can't build 240 until we know where we're going to meet the District of Columbia." The city favored the river route, but NPS was unwilling to yield its park land for the expressway. Bonnell added, "I imagine the District is attempting to reconcile its differences [with NPS] and when that is done I am sure we can agree." ["County Awaits Decision on 240," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, March 6, 1958]

Pushed by Gingery and Scull, the Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission expressed its frustration to the White House in a letter asking President Eisenhower on March 12, asking him to bring people together to make a decision. In essence, the planners wanted the President to "knock heads together." County officials saw no point in deciding where to route Route 240 without knowing where the District will want to build its segment. Progress, as Scull put it, was being help in the city by "archaic laws and ridiculous prejudices," with the result that Maryland officials were left to "spin our wheels."

The *Post*, on March 13, explained the origins of the letter:

The Planning Commission's abrupt move to bring the White House into the controversy was inspired by a letter received yesterday from Maryland State Roads Commission Chairman Robert O. Bonnell. He asked for another meeting of his Commission, the Planning Commission, and the Montgomery County Council to discuss testimony received during two public hearings on Route 240 in Bethesda last January.

Informed of the planning commission's letter, Bonnell said the Maryland State Roads Commission would be "delighted to have definite information from the District." [Willard, Hal, "Head Knocking Is Advocated To End Dispute," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, March 13, 1958]

On February 21, the Committee of 100 on the Federal City had asked General Grant to prepare a resolution on the Route 240 controversy. He had stated that no park land should be used for the expressway, that other expressways should be built before a decision is made on Route 240, and that in any event, officials should not decide the routing until the Mass Transportation Survey was completed. A month later, he completed the resolution, which favored the Wisconsin Avenue corridor, which would connect with the long-planned Fort Drive intermediate circumferential. The road would be located east of Glover-Archbold Park "to comply meticulously with the terms and full intent of the gift" of the land for park purposes. The resolution also opposed "any use of park land, or land given or purchased for park purposes, as rights of way for freeways or main highways."

The Committee of 100 considered General Grant's resolution on March 28, but not without some opposition. Remon, a member of the committee, said, "The use of each park should be decided on its own merits." Calling the resolution "arbitrary and capricious," he suggested that if a decision were ever made to swap park land for other uses, the committee would be left in an awkward position. Pierre Ghent, a planner and civil engineer, said the committee was "putting itself in a foolish position" by adopting the resolution. No one could predict how traffic increases might affect future decisions.

During discussion of the resolution, the subject of Route 240 came up. Some favored the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad route, while architect Arthur P. Davis promoted his plan for an elevated roadway over the Potomac River near the District shore.

In the end, the Committee of 100 approved the resolution, 17 to 7, along with a second resolution opposing construction of any road in Glover-Archbold Park except a two-lane park drive. [Beveridge, George, "Architects Assail D.C. City Planners," *The Evening Star*, February 22, 1958; "Committee of 100 to Get Grant's Route 240 Plan," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, March 22, 1958; "Federal City Group Asks Park Ban on Main Roads," *The Evening Star*, March 29, 1958; "Use of Parks For Roads Is Opposed," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, March 29, 1958]

On April 22, 1958, Colonel Welling announced that the District, NPS, BPR, and the Maryland State Roads Commission had reached agreement on the river alternative for the U.S. 240 entrance to the District. The agreement had been worked out with former Arizona Governor Howard Pyle (January 1951-January 1955), Administrative Assistant and Deputy Assistant to

President Eisenhower. (Governor Pyle was the President's coordinator of programs between Federal and State officials. [PYLE, HOWARD: Records, 1955-59, Dwight Eisenhower Library, http://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/research/finding_aids/pdf/Pyle_Howard_Records.pdf])

The result of the compromise would not be an Interstate route, however, because trucks would be banned. Beveridge summarized the agreed route:

From downtown Washington near Washington Circle, the District will build an eight-lane expressway paralleling the Potomac River's Whitehurst freeway as far as Key Bridge. This portion will be part of the Federal interstate system, and the Federal Government thus will pay 90 per cent of its cost.

From Key Bridge to the foot of the proposed Glover-Archbold parkway, near the intersection of Canal and Foxhall roads, the freeway will continue as eight lanes. This will be built by the District, but financed by both the District (supplemented by Federal aid funds) and the Park Service.

From Glover-Archbold parkway along the Potomac River to Cabin John, beyond Glen Echo in Maryland, the road will be built by the Park Service entirely with Park Service funds.

Between Glover-Archbold parkway and Arizona avenue, where a new Potomac bridge is planned, the road will be six lanes wide. From that point to Cabin John it will be four lanes wide. The Maryland portion of this river route will be the George Washington memorial parkway, on which the Park Service already has started construction.

At Cabin John the parkway will connect with Maryland's long-proposed Washington circumferential freeway, which will connect with Route 240 south of Rockville and cross the Potomac River on a new bridge at Cabin John.

Route 240 trucks may use the circumferential road, but will not be permitted to use the new river route into town. They may either cross the Potomac at Cabin John or, if headed for Washington, use existing streets such as River road, Massachusetts avenue and Wisconsin avenue. These roads all will be improved.

Colonel Welling said the agreement included the District's plans to build the Glover-Archbold Parkway, between Wisconsin Avenue at Tenley Circle and the new river road, with four lanes for passenger vehicles only. Because NPS had agreed to this plan, officials would not seek additional legislation.

The key to this compromise was abandoning the idea of an expressway that could carry trucks from Rockville to downtown Washington. BPR had insisted on truck usage for any route included in the Interstate System. Now, Beveridge wrote:

A bureau official said today that his office definitely has not abandoned the belief that such an expressway may still be needed at some time in the future. The decision,

however, is that it will not be built immediately, but will await future analyses of traffic needs.

Although the agreement did not include construction timetables, all parties hoped to speed up construction plans.

Wirth said the plan addressed concerns in the Palisades area because it meant NPS would not have to acquire additional property along the river. The NPS was planning “a true parkway that will be fitted into the landscape and be a scenic drive. It will not be a highway such as the District intended to build, or as much of a superhighway as is the Baltimore-Washington parkway.” The eastbound lanes near the District would be built on the level of Canal Road while the westbound lanes would be located on the Palisades bluffs. [Beveridge, George, “Potomac Link for 240 Agreed on by Officials,” *The Evening Star*, April 22, 1958]

The agreement pleased *Star* editors who hoped each agency involved would give their part of the plan “the highest possible priorities for construction.” The positive elements, however, involved “temporary abandonment of the crucial factor,” namely BPR’s “edict” that an all-vehicle expressway was needed between Rockville and downtown Washington as part of the Interstate System. “In effect, the real decision has been to forget such an interstate system connection for the present.” Eventually, officials “may still have to face the job of finding an adequate interstate connection to Route 240 in the future, as traffic increases.” The editorial concluded:

It is encouraging, too, that for the second time in a week the powerful influences of the White House have been used to mediate highway controversies. (Last week end, the White House announced a Constitution avenue bridge agreement.) We hope the President maintains his interest in breaking such administrative deadlocks. [“Major Road Solution,” *The Evening Star*, April 23, 1958]

Even with agreement in hand for the western leg of U.S. 240, the Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission kept an eye on development in the Wisconsin Avenue corridor. By June, planners on the commission staff pointed out that two major buildings were planned in the path of the projected expressway. “We do . . . wish to caution the commission these projects, desirable as they may be, cannot take the place of a freeway through Northwest Washington and the Chevy Chase and Bethesda sector.” Relying on the river route without the Wisconsin Avenue corridor would lull the public into “a false sense of believing that adequate highways had been planned.” An expressway was needed not only in the Bethesda area but even more so in the Silver Spring area. A parkway only for passenger cars through Rock Creek Park was needed, “but this cannot be taken as a substitute for either a Bethesda or a Silver Spring expressway, let alone for both.”

First priority was the Wisconsin Avenue corridor. The planners urged the commission to work with District officials to preserve the corridor between Western Avenue and Tenley Circle. An expressway between Silver Spring and the Inner Loop was needed, but the planners believed it would be “more difficult, more costly, more disruptive of private property” than an expressway in the Wisconsin Avenue corridor. They added that if the Wisconsin Avenue corridor was abandoned “or allowed to die because of inaction at this time,” efforts for a similar expressway

from Silver Spring would be “doomed to failure before they start.” [Hoffman, Charles L., “Plans Unit to Air Rt. 240 Extension,” *The Evening Star*, June 25, 1958]

Commissioner Gingery was one of the strongest supporters of the Wisconsin Avenue corridor. With developers continuing to maneuver in the area, he believed that immediate action was needed to preserve the corridor. On September 13, he accused other commissioners of stalling on plans for the eastern leg of U.S. 240 between Bethesda and the Inner Loop. He thought the Montgomery County commissioners, in particular, owed the public an explanation for their inaction at a time when the situation had reached emergency proportions.

Gingery added that the Mass Transportation Study that would be released soon would demonstrate that relying on the river route for the western leg was an “unrealistic decision.” He urged the commissioners to pressure the Maryland State Roads Commission to include the corridor in its next 12-year highway plan. This step would allow Maryland and District officials to secure Interstate funds for construction. [“Planners Scored On 240 Stalling,” *The Evening Star*, September 13, 1958]

On November 6, the issue came up when the Maryland commission considered a request by developer Alvin L. Aubinoe for a permit for an office building in the proposed right-of-way at Waverly Street and East-West Highway. The resulting discussion of the corridor dominated the all-day meeting. Gingery pointed out that adopting the corridor without acting to advance it would be “frightfully unjust” to the developer. The commissioners decided to seek a meeting with the Maryland State Roads Commission, BPR, the Montgomery County Council, the District Highway Department, and the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce to review the alternative. [“Study Delays Planners’ Rule On 240 Path,” *The Evening Star*, November 7, 1958]

Locating the Inner Loop

On January 5, 1959, the District commissioners held a public hearing in the District Building on the Inner Loop. They were considering:

- The eight-lane Potomac River Freeway,
- Upgrade of K Street from the river to Connecticut Avenue, and
- Location of the Inner Loop between 25th and G Streets and 21st Street and Massachusetts Avenue, NW.

The latter, known as the West Leg, was the most controversial of the three. District highway officials favored a path along 26th Street that Douglas Brinkley said would cost \$35.4 million and displace 480 dwelling units.

The public, as might be expected, was divided. The president of George Washington University, Admiral O. S. Colclough, favored the District’s preferred route, while opposing the route that would affect the university’s expansion plans. The Foggy Bottom Restoration Association had favored the 26th Street route because it expected that vacant land could be used to relocate displaced residents. However, the District had zoned the land for “high density apartments,” which the association opposed. Now, the association preferred the route through the George

Washington University expansion area. Further, the association urged the District to decide the route soon because in the meantime, Foggy Bottom residents were having difficulty selling or financing renovations due to the uncertainty.

Colonel William E. Shepherd of the Georgetown Citizens Association said his group favored the 26th Street route if an expressway had to be built. He said his members preferred improvements to existing streets. "I am not sure we are going to be satisfied with the loop after it is bought and paid for." He asked, "Why should we Washingtonians suffer our fair city to be slashed to pieces so that they [commuters] may tear through it at 50 m.p.h.?"

The Federation of Civic Associations urged the city to establish a relocation service to help displaced residents. The Washington Housing Association, Washington Urban League, National Association of Social Workers, and the National Capital Council of Churches also supported such a service.

The Progressive Citizens Association, out of concern for historic structures, urged that the interchange between the Potomac River Freeway and the West Leg be moved as far east as possible. The current proposal threatened, for example, the Thomas Peter House at 2618 K Street, NW., a colonial house dating to 1795 when the builder gave it to his son, Thomas Peter, and new wife, Martha Parke Custis Peter, George Washington's step-granddaughter. Washington stayed in the house several times while in the area on business related to construction of the new capital city. He stayed in the house on his final visit to the area in August before his death on December 14, 1799. Leo M. Bernstein, whose family owned the house, offered to turn it over to a foundation if it would be used as Washington City Museum. [WPA *Guide to Washington*, page 386]

The Washington Building Congress was concerned that the District's 10 percent share of the \$1 billion Inner Loop might jeopardize expenditures for education, water pollution, police protection, and other city functions only "to shave 20 minutes off commuter's travel time." With the increased number of cars entering the city, the group urged construction of adequate off-street parking, as well as imaginative designs to minimize "this great highway ditch" through the city.

The Washington chapter of the American Institute of Architects questioned whether the Inner Loop would "relieve traffic sufficiently to justify its enormous cost." The group supported the segment south of K Street, but favored holding off on the segment to the north until the city had a rapid transit system, provided more off-street parking, and improved city streets. Spokesman Francis D. Lethbridge said:

There is no point in encouraging the increased use of automobiles by building additional freeways within the city until we have successfully coped with the volume of traffic which existing arterial streets and freeways already pour in upon us. A good rapid transit system is what we need most.

According to the *Star*, "No specific opposition was registered to still another highway project before the hearing—drastic improvement of K street between the Potomac River and Connecticut avenue, including an underpass of Washington Circle." [Beveridge, George, "Loop Network

Plan Backed, Assailed,” *The Evening Star*, January 5, 1959; “Groups Rap Loop Plan For North of K Street,” *The Evening Star*, January 6, 1959]

Despite the District’s opposition, the Wisconsin Avenue corridor was still under consideration, especially in Maryland. The District had abandoned it after holding a public hearing and had reached agreement with NPS and BPR on a river route. Nevertheless, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission staff continued to study alternatives for the corridor. A year earlier, the commission had favored Route B, which ran west of Wisconsin Avenue from the District line to Oliver Street (estimated cost: \$31,022,000). It continued along Wisconsin Avenue to Bradley Lane east of Wisconsin to Glenbrook Parkway.

From there, Route B and Route A were identical. Route A began east of Wisconsin Avenue, then paralleled the avenue between Oliver and Hesketh Streets (\$30,640,000). It cut through the western edge of the Chevy Chase Country Club before cutting one block east of Wisconsin Avenue to meet Glenbrook Parkway at the edge of the Bethesda business district.

Route C followed Route A from the District Line to Bradley Lane (\$30,916,000). From there it shifted about a block east of Route A and B to Glenbrook Parkway, then was identical to those routes.

Route D began east of Wisconsin Avenue along the path of Route B (\$31,415,000). It joined the other routes through the country club before shifting along the edge of the club to the end of the Bethesda business district. It then followed the other routes to connect with U.S. 240.

On January 31, 1959, commission staff revealed that they still recommended Route B because it would do the least damage to residential areas. To aid decisionmaking, the commission planned to hold a public hearing on February 21, again at Leland Junior High School. [“Planning Staff Picks Route B Expressway,” *The Evening Star*, January 31, 1959]

About 400 people attended the hearing, “most of them opposed to the proposal . . . to build the four-to-six-lane expressway from the District line through Chevy Chase and Bethesda to Pooks Hill,” according to the *Star* account. J. Newton Brewer, Jr., one of the commissioners Gingery had criticized the previous year, said that one problem was that neither the Maryland State Roads Commission nor District officials had agreed on a path through Washington. “Our big problem is that the District won’t give us any consideration. They won’t even come to the hearing. The best information I can get from the highest District officials is that Route 240 in the District won’t be built for 15 to 20 years.” Brewer added that while he opposed Route B, if the District would support it, “I may even vote for it.” (A District highway official attended the hearing as an observer.)

In introducing Route B, commission planning director Arthur K. Stellhorn warned that unless the State built an expressway in the corridor, congestion would grow even worse. He anticipated opponents’ arguments by pointing out that the county would lose only about \$125,000 a year in taxes from the properties acquired for the expressway. Moreover, it would not be a “Chinese wall” dividing Bethesda because the 10 to 12 crossings of the route would involve underpasses or overpasses for cross traffic.

Opponents argued that improving Wisconsin Avenue could solve problems for 2 or 3 decades along with removal of parking along much of the avenue. A Woodward and Lothrop department store representative said Route B would take 550 of the department store's 771 parking spaces, irreparably damaging the business. A resident of Bradley Boulevard argued that taking country club property would lead to its gradual replacement by housing developments. Others were concerned about the demolition of about \$4 million in property, while some speakers favored the river route, construction of a subway line in the corridor, a route through Rock Creek Park or along the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad line.

Some supporters among the 30 or so speakers mentioned the 90-percent Federal funding for an Interstate route, the inevitable growth of automobile traffic, and the likelihood that the expressway would draw traffic away from residential communities.

Despite the mix of views, the *Star* characterized the hearing in these words:

The sentiment of those attending the hearing was clear at the outset. They listened politely to those speaking on behalf of the expressway but made no demonstration. They loudly applauded those speaking against it.

The commissioners indicated they would decide the issue soon. [Alibrando, Alfred, "Expressway Plan Hit and Defended," *The Evening Star*, February 21, 1959; Alibrando, Alfred, "Civic, Business Interests Oppose Expressway Scheduled Through Bethesda, Chevy Chase," *The Evening Star*, February 22, 1959]

On March 2, 1959, Colonel Welling announced that Harold L. Aitken, formerly of Clarkeson Engineering, would be the new District Director of Highways and Traffic. He would succeed John Robertson, who had retired. Aitken, a Nebraska native, had been a design engineer with BPR from 1931 to 1951. He headed the Nebraska Department of Roads (1951-1953) and was chief of staff to Civil Defense Administrator Val Peterson before joining the District Highway Department in 1958 as a special assistant to Robertson. The new director lived with his wife and two children at 512 Horner Court in Fairfax, Virginia. ["Harold L. Aitken Named D.C. Highway Director," *The Evening Star*, March 2, 1959]

True to their promise at the public hearing, the Maryland commissioners did not take long to decide against adding the Wisconsin Avenue corridor to the map. After a heated debate on March 11, they voted 4 to 1 against the corridor, with the chairman and three members abstaining.

Gingery cast the only vote in favor of the corridor, calling the commission's decision a "rape of the general public."

Chairman Wells said the decision was "the most important thing that will ever come before us." He said that virtually all the engineers and professional planners favored the corridor. "It's got to come. The longer we put it off, the more expensive it's going to be." He said that District officials were close to resolving the issue of tying in with a Maryland route.

Commissioner W. Lawson King, one of the four negative votes, said he favored the Rock Creek Park routing. He did so despite objections from those interested in “birds, bees, snakes and turtles.” Another commissioner, Alva H. Bender, said, “I spent 23 minutes driving [on Wisconsin Avenue] from Bradley boulevard to East-West Highway.” He added, “We’ve got to have some new transportation facilities.”

Pritchett of the Maryland State Roads Commission said after the meeting that the Wisconsin Avenue corridor was “a good route.” He added, “Obviously, if the corridor doesn’t get on the interstate soon, it will be killed.” [“Planners Vote to Abandon Wisconsin Avenue Corridor,” *The Evening Star*, March 12, 1959]

The commission’s decision meant that it would approve Aubinoe’s permit for the office building at East-West Highway and Waverly Street. However, following the commission’s action, Gingery went to court to secure a 23-day temporary injunction to halt the building.

His action “apparently has spurred area officials into a last, sincere effort to find a solution.” Aitken indicated that District studies underway should result in “something in the way of a least objectionable route” for the corridor. He added that BPR had informed him that to qualify for Interstate funds, the route must be continuous from the circumferential to the Inner Loop.

Chairman Wells thought BPR had agreed to 90-percent Interstate funding of a route from the District line to Tenley Circle if District officials agreed to seek a connection to the Inner Loop. He urged a meeting of all parties to try to resolve such discrepancies and reach agreement on the route. [“Parley Urged to Clear Route 240 Impasse,” *The Evening Star*, March 15, 1959]

In a court hearing on April 3, the developer agreed to delay any action on his building for 30 days to allow officials to try to reach agreement on the eastern leg corridor. Pritchett had testified that during a recent meeting of BPR and Maryland road officials, the District said it would come up with an approved route into the city. The court agreed that after the 30 days, the developer could proceed unless Maryland began condemnation proceedings for his property. [“Builder Agrees To Delay Work,” *The Evening Star*, April 3, 1959]

On April 22, District officials and BPR were scheduled to meet at the White House to discuss the District corridor with Gerald D. Morgan, who had become Deputy Assistant to the President after Governor Pyle left the post on January 31 to become president of the National Safety Council. The *Star* reported that following the Maryland commission’s decision to drop the Wisconsin Avenue corridor from the map, the White House had “apparently ordered” the District and BPR to study alternatives. The meeting was canceled, but District highway officials sent the District commissioners a proposed corridor for the U.S. 240 connection between Pooks Hill and the Inner Loop. [“Plan for Corridor Sent D.C. Heads; Road Meeting Off,” *The Evening Star*, April 22, 1959]

A week later, the District commissioners decided not to build an expressway in the Wisconsin Avenue corridor. In a long meeting, the commissioners indicated they would proceed with the Glover-Archbold Parkway. They might at some unknown time build a six-lane freeway from Tenley Circle to the Maryland line near Wisconsin Avenue if Maryland insisted on building a

route to the District line. However, it would not be part of the Interstate System and would not be eligible for 90-percent Federal funding in Maryland or the District.

Moreover, the commissioners concluded that an expressway in the corridor was not needed. The river route would be sufficient for the west leg of U.S. 240, while east leg traffic could be handled by the Glover-Archbold Parkway and Fort Drive, the intermediate circumferential along the District border that would allow dispersal of traffic to several arterials.

The commissioners were aware that the preliminary Mass Transportation Survey, already released, recommended construction of a freeway in the Wisconsin Avenue corridor. They said that their decision did not repudiate that recommendation, but meant only that it would not be part of the Interstate System. [Beveridge, George, "D.C. Rules Out Freeway Along Wisconsin Ave.," *The Evening Star*, April 28, 1959]

On April 29, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, after a lengthy discussion, decided not to map an Interstate freeway in the Wisconsin Avenue corridor to the District border. BPR had indicated the corridor would be eligible for 90-10 Interstate funds only if the District and Maryland agreed on it, the commissioners had little choice but to abandon the Wisconsin Avenue corridor.

Gingery said the District's action in rejecting the corridor made a farce of the preliminary results of the Mass Transportation Survey. "It means the whole mass transportation survey might as well go up in smoke." As the commissioners knew, the survey had emphasized a freeway system as well as mass transit. He lamented the loss of \$40 million in Federal Interstate funds, but could not reverse the decision. "I'm at a loss to say what is an alternative." All the commission could do now was to let traffic become so congested that residents demanded action.

Vice Chairman Brewer suggested that the District's action could revive interest in a Rock Creek Park routing. "In my humble opinion, a good passenger car road can be built without disturbing the value of the park. It would make the park more available to tens of thousands of people who don't see it now." He urged Chairman Wells to have the planning staff study a new freeway route.

The developer, whose plans had been blocked by a temporary injunction secured by Gingery, said he would begin construction of the office building as soon as the court released his permit. He added that if the Maryland State Roads Commission still planned to build the freeway, he would not block it. [Hoffman, Charles L., "Dropping of Corridor Brings Mixed Reaction," *The Evening Star*, April 29, 1959]

In an April 29 editorial titled "No Wisconsin Freeway," the *Star* said the District's action had "slammed the door on the controversial 'Wisconsin avenue corridor' freeway with a resounding bang."

Still Thinking of Wisconsin Avenue

A week later, a steering committee of the Mass Transportation Survey revived the idea. As discussed earlier, the steering committee had devised an expressway from Tenley Circle that

would cross Rock Creek Park on a high bridge over Hazen Park then meet the Inner Loop at T Street.

The idea, which NPS favored, would work only if an Interstate freeway in the Wisconsin Avenue corridor would connect U.S. 240 at Pooks Hill and Tenley Circle. District officials, who were now considering an expressway in the North Capitol Street corridor to connect the Inner Loop with the circumferential, were skeptical. Director Aitken favored the North Capitol Street plan, but Federal Highway Administrator Tallamy was open to Interstate status and 90-10 funding for the steering committee's proposal if the District supported it and the necessary link to the east leg of U.S. 240.

The steering committee's idea caused officials in Maryland and the District to rethink recent decisions. While the District was thinking of North Capitol Street, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission had gone on record on May 6 in support of the proposed highway through Rock Creek Park to the Inner Loop. Vice Chairman Brewer had said:

There is not a single expressway in Montgomery County except part of Route 240, which ends nowhere and has taken 11 or 12 years to build. We're not serving the people who need to be served.

As planners interested in Montgomery and getting people to town we should come out in favor of the Rock Creek Park route. It wouldn't disturb the park: it would open it up to thousands who don't see it or enjoy it now.

Of course, NPS remained opposed to the north-south park alternative. Acting Director Elvind T. Scoyen made this clear. "I am sure that the National Park Service always has opposed a speedway through Rock Creek and continues to do so The only advantage of building a highway through Rock Creek is that it would be cheaper, but it is a firm policy of the National Park Service that the values of the park are greater than the cost of highways." [Deane, James G., "Cross-Park Freeway Project Wins Support," *The Evening Star*, May 7, 1959]

Pressure mounted on the District when NCPC and the National Capital Regional Planning Council, which were conducting the Mass Transportation Survey, voted to place the Wisconsin Avenue corridor on the official freeway map with a link via the high bridge across Hazen Park to the Inner Loop. They did so only after what George Beveridge called "a knock-down-drag-out joint session" on May 7.

General Welling argued against the plan, but only one of the 14 planners at the session, John Remon, supported the District. Remon argued that the plan for an expressway in the Wisconsin Avenue corridor was not popular in the District. National Capital Parks Superintendent Thompson replied that "no freeway routes are likely to win any popularity contests." He supported the new plan.

The joint commissions approved a resolution drafted by Bartholomew stating that the Wisconsin Avenue corridor had been left off the critical official transportation plan because of uncertainty about a route downtown. Now, a feasible freeway location had been found. Bartholomew

contended that both planning agencies had always supported an expressway in the Wisconsin Avenue corridor, believing that an expressway in the corridor and the Glover-Archbold Parkway were both needed.

Bartholomew said “a combination of errors” left the Wisconsin Avenue corridor off the freeway map. Gingery, who led the debate with Bartholomew, agreed that obviously, the consultants who prepared the map had been in error in leaving the corridor out.

Beveridge ended his report on the joint meeting by writing:

In a session filled with harsh statements, one of the mildest—and most influential—came from James L. Shotwell, a Federal Bureau of Public Roads official, who made it clear that the bureau is anxious to see an interstate expressway connecting Route 240 with the Inner Loop downtown.

In view of the commissions’ action, General Welling said the District commissioners would “consider” the new freeway location. [Beveridge, George, “Area Planners Back Wisconsin Ave. Route,” *The Evening Star*, May 8, 1959]

(Shotwell was Assistant Engineer-Coordinator in BPR’s Office of Engineering.)

The sudden reversal came as Aubinoe received his building permit even as Montgomery County officials considered constructing a county building in Bethesda within the expressway corridor. The president of the County Council, Mrs. Stella B. Werner, said, “They certainly keep us stirred up.”

Commission Vice Chairman Brewer said of the recent developments, “I am still violently opposed to putting that Chinese wall through Bethesda.” The rest of the commission remained divided. However, John A. Floyd, who had abstained in the 5 to 1 vote in March against the corridor, said, “Eventually Washington is going to need a minimum of three, and possibly four, high speed highways into the county.” [“Corridor Issue Stirs Nearby Officials Again,” *The Evening Star*, May 8, 1959]

In what Beveridge called “another day of talk and position-jockeying on the freeway controversy,” the commissions issued a joint statement pointing out that the Mass Transportation Survey, still not yet released to the public, recommended a modern mass rapid rail transit line in the Wisconsin Avenue corridor as well as an expressway. Aware that the commissions were about to approve adding the corridor to the freeway map, the District commissioners had voted the night before, 2-1, against adding it to the plan.

The White House, which would be the recipient of the Mass Transportation Survey, had cleared the joint commission statement, but not any other description of the plan. In fact, District Commissioner David Karrick had asked the commissioners to issue the statement because he did not think people realized the survey was going to recommend the mass transit plan for the same corridor.

Commissioner McLaughlin had cast the vote in support of the freeway in the Wisconsin Avenue corridor. He agreed that a mass transit line was needed in the corridor, but thought a corridor would have to be acquired as soon as possible to be used by the rail line and freeway lanes. Otherwise, acquiring the right-of-way would become so expensive that the transit line might be blocked for years.

In a hastily arranged press conference, Aitken said he would have to restudy the city's entire highway program before advising the District commissioners on the issue. Such a study might take 6 months or more. He said the Mass Transportation Survey called for an estimated \$870 million worth of new freeways, while the District expected 90-10 Interstate funds amounting to only \$355 million. The balance of \$500 million worth of freeways would have to be financed on a 50-50 basis under the regular Federal-aid highway program. For example, the District could consider dropping plans for an Interstate highway in the New York Avenue, NE., corridor to allow the funds to be shifted elsewhere. Alternatively, the U.S. 240 eastern leg traffic might be routed around the circumferential to enter the District in "another corridor" on or near North Capitol Street. [Beveridge, George, "Trains to Be Urged For Rapid Transit," *The Sunday Star*, May 10, 1959]

In June, NCPC Executive Director William E. Finley proposed building tunnels under Cleveland Park and the Bureau of Standards to reduce destruction of homes as part of the Wisconsin Avenue corridor expressway link. The Cleveland Park tunnel would begin west of Wisconsin Avenue near Tenley Circle and surface at Reno Road. The second tunnel would begin under the Bureau of Standards and Connecticut Avenue, emerging on Connecticut Avenue near Hazen Park, opposite the bureau:

Mr. Finley envisions this plan as preventing the destruction of many Cleveland Park homes, the Sidwell Friends School, the Home for Incurables and Phoebe Hearst Elementary School. He said no apartment house or homes in the Connecticut avenue area would be disturbed.

Finley also wanted to assure residents that NCPC had no plans for an expressway along Macomb Street. Such a route was shown on a map that had been prepared when Senator Douglas was fighting the Glover-Archbold Parkway, showing alternatives. ["Two Tunnels Proposed for Cleveland Park," *The Evening Star*, June 27, 1959]

Premature and Divisive Factionalism

On July 9, 1959, the District commissioners and the area's planning agencies delivered the 4-year, \$500,000 Mass Transportation Study to President Eisenhower. Commissioner McLaughlin told reporters, "We found that while the President was obviously not aware of the contents of our report, that he foresees all the significant results." The President, the commissioner said, promised to "do everything possible to help in a quick realization of the results of our survey."

According to the *Star*, Gingery "was delighted when the President opened the meeting by asking, "How about this 240 business?" President Eisenhower did not know all the area's roads and bridges, but he was familiar with U.S. 240, the route he took to the Burning Tree Country Club

for golf and on occasion to Camp David. Author Helen Leavitt, a critic of the Interstate System, recalled the incident:

One of the planners who was present at the 1959 meeting recalls that the President also commented at that time about the heavy commuter traffic he observed during his drives to suburban Maryland's Burning Tree Club for a game of golf. Mr. Eisenhower noted that a large number of automobiles was entering the city, but that most of these carried only one person. He suggested that since these automobiles clog streets and demand precious space for parking it might be feasible to limit the number of automobiles entering the city.

Testifying before the Senate Committee on Public Works in 1960, Gingery recalled General Welling's response regarding U.S. 240: "Mr. President, we are going to put it down beside the Potomac River." This response frustrated Gingery, who told the committee:

Now, if that is not utter confusion, when you find the presentation made by the District Highway Department to run it down the central corridor; as late as last August [sic], the District was telling the President of the United States we were going to run it down the Potomac River which had been completely rejected by the State of Maryland.

He added, "We have got to have some idea what we are doing." ["Area Survey Hailed by Eisenhower," *The Evening Star*, July 9, 1959; Location of Interstate Route 70 South (Maryland and District of Columbia), Hearing, Subcommittee of the Committee on Public Works, United States Senate, 86th Congress, 2nd Session, June 14, 1960, page 49; Leavitt, Helen, *Superhighway-Superhoax*, Doubleday and Company, 1970, pages 298-299]

(During this period, President Eisenhower appears to have realized that, contrary to his vision, the Interstates were being built in cities. Stephen Ambrose, in volume II of his biography of Eisenhower, explained:

Of all his domestic programs, Eisenhower's favorite by far was the Interstate System. By 1959, it was in bad trouble. Construction costs were far higher than had been anticipated, primarily because of the expense of building urban freeways directly through the inner cities, where land acquisition prices and the problems of building the roads were so much greater than in the countryside. In Eisenhower's vision, the superhighways were not supposed to have gone into the cities, but only around them, as in Europe. His objections were not sociological—few if any of those associated with the building of the Interstates anticipated the tremendous effect the urban freeways would have on housing patterns, schools, inner-city conditions, the spread of the suburbs, or the other nearly limitless ways in which the four- and six- and eight-lane highways changed the face of urban America. Eisenhower's objections were to the cost, not the result.

(Why President Eisenhower did not know about the urban Interstates is unclear. He likely was not familiar with the 1939 report to Congress, *Toll Roads and Free Roads*, which discussed the urban freeway network, or the more detailed discussion of urban freeways in the 1944 report, *Interregional Highways*. Members of Congress were well aware of the urban segments as they

debated the proposed program in 1955 and 1956; mayors testified about the benefits their city would enjoy from the urban Interstates.

(President Eisenhower was apparently thinking of Germany's autobahn network that he had seen and used; it was an entirely rural network. General Clay, whose committee put together the President's highway plan, also was fully familiar with the autobahns. However, he may not have understood the urban commitment since the Clay Committee's plan for the program budgeted only \$4 billion for urban feeder and distribution routes over the life of what was thought to be a \$27 billion, 10-year program. If General Clay did not understand the planned urban Interstates, he could not have made it clear to his friend, President Eisenhower.

(Some sources indicate that the President realized the truth about the urban segments during his July 9 meeting with the planning commissioners and District officials about the Mass Transportation Survey as they described the area's freeway network. Ambrose offered another theory:

The evidence that Eisenhower was unaware of this deal [his Administration's promotion of the Interstate System to urban Members of Congress] comes from his reaction to seeing, in July of 1959, while driving from the White House toward Camp David, a deep freeway construction gash in the outskirts of metropolitan Washington. Surprised and appalled by what he saw, when he got to Camp David he called the Director of the Bureau of the Budget, Maurice Stans, to ask for an explanation.

(Ambrose provided an account of the July 9 meeting about the survey:

Unsatisfied with the result [of his call to Stans], he ordered a formal White House study of the urban Interstates [on July 2]. On July 9, he called in the members of the Mass Transportation Survey of the Washington Metropolitan Area and asked them what they were doing about a rapid-transit subway system. The reply was that some \$1 billion would be spent over the next twenty years. The President then "stated his concern that too much of the interstate highway money might be going into connections in the cities." Next, the President asked whether the committee had considered placing a special tax on automobiles coming into the central cities, "it being his observation that it was very wasteful to have an average of just over one man per \$3,000 car driving into the central area and taking all the space required to park the car."

(On April 6, 1960, President Eisenhower participated in a 55-minute meeting with his staff, Secretary of Commerce Frederick Mueller, and Federal Highway Administrator Tallamy to discuss the internal study of the urban Interstates. At the end, he remained unhappy about the urban Interstates, but after Tallamy handed him a copy of the 1955 Yellow Book showing outlines of the Interstate System in urban, conceded they were part of the program. (The Yellow Book will be discussed later.) As a result, the program "had reached the point where his hands were virtually tied." His staff completed a formal report on their review just before President Eisenhower left office on January 20, 1961; President Kennedy and his team ignored the report. [Ambrose, Stephen, *Eisenhower: The President*, A Touchstone Book, Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1985, pages 547-548, citing Memo for record, 9/15, 59, DDE/DS])

President Eisenhower transmitted the Mass Transportation Survey to Congress on July 11 (letter dated July 10). The brief transmittal letter said the report “points out the present and future problems of transportation of people and goods in the Region.” Based on the recommendations in the report, the actions taken in the years ahead “to meet the problems of transportation will have a profound effect on the economy of the entire area, the welfare of its people, and the status of Washington as the Nation’s Capital.” He asked appropriate Federal agencies to study the survey and make such “recommendations as are warranted” to the Congress.

The report, to be discussed later, included a rail transit line and freeway from the eastern leg of U.S. 240 (I-70S) into the District along the Wisconsin Avenue corridor via Bethesda and Chevy Chase, intersecting Fort Drive, and crossing Rock Creek Park to the Inner Loop. The survey also recommended the planned western leg, essentially a segment of the circumferential, and the link from the Cabin John Bridge along the Potomac River to the Inner Loop in the District.

Senator Bible took to the Senate floor on Friday, July 17, to say the Mass Transportation Survey “marks the beginning of a comprehensive long-range program of coordinated action in dealing with these problems.” The Joint Committee on Washington Metropolitan Problems would study the survey report, including its data and recommendations, before holding public hearings. The joint committee “must now face the very largest questions in Washington’s future.” This was because transportation decisions on the area’s transportation were “intertwined with its earlier conclusions on water supply, sewage disposal, land use, and economic development.” Taken together, these matters required “the closest cooperation of all interests, whether Federal or local, urban or suburban, public or private.”

He warned:

Let us not allow ourselves to be diverted, while dealing thus with fundamentals, into the premature and divisive factionalism which invariably surrounds the debate on the merits of specific transportation measures, particular routes, isolated projects, and which many Members of Congress have painfully experienced. What has been shown by the arguments which have raged in recent months over Route 240, Route 66, the Glover Archbold Parkway, except the impossibility of wisely deciding these matters when a comprehensive plan for regional transportation is lacking? We have now the opportunity to create such a plan. If we succeed, it will go far toward solving, or at least putting in proper perspective, not only such difficult past decisions as those involving the location of bridges and expressways, but the still more difficult future decisions our swelling population and the changing times will present. [Washington Mass Transportation Survey, *Congressional Record-Senate*, July 17, 1959, pages 13672-13673]

The Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce had supported the Wisconsin Avenue corridor for the eastern leg of U.S. 240, but with the qualifier: only “if such a route is necessary.” Now, following release of the survey, the group gave the corridor its unqualified support. A spokesman explained that the members had “determined that something must be done in the immediate future to relieve the rapidly increasing traffic congestion on Wisconsin avenue in Bethesda.” The chamber favored construction “at least two blocks to the east of Wisconsin avenue.” [“Wisconsin Corridor Has Chamber OK,” *The Evening Star*, July 20, 1959]

By November, the Maryland State Roads Commission was ready to complete the segment of U.S. 240/I-70S from the north to the \$2.3 million Pooks Hill interchange, the dividing point for the east and west legs. Officials announced that the northbound lanes would open on Monday, November 9. Governor Tawes was expected to attend a ceremony opening the full interchange at the end of the month. [Herndon, G. O., "Pooks Hill Interchange to Open For Northbound Traffic Monday," *The Evening Star*, November 6, 1959]

The Joint Committee Hearings

The Joint Committee on Washington Metropolitan Problems, chaired by Senator Bible and with Frederick Gutheim as staff director, held hearings on the Mass Transportation Survey on November 9-14, 1959. The hearings, which were primarily concerned with the transit recommendations, will be discussed later. [Transportation Plan For The National Capital Region, Hearings before the Joint Committee on Washington Metropolitan Problems, 86th Congress, 1st Session, November 9, 10, 11, 13, and 14, 1959]

Despite the survey's focus on mass transit, the hearing provided an opportunity for criticism of the proposal's highway elements. On the first day of the hearing, Roy W. Johnson, chairman of the American Council to Improve Our Neighborhoods or ACTION (and outgoing head of the Pentagon's space program), said that "the full impact of the Interstate Highway System upon this metropolitan area of 2 million people illuminates a national problem. Washington faces what all our large metropolitan areas must face, the challenge—and the opportunity—of modern transportation."

Regarding the survey's finding that the region needed 329 miles of high-speed, limited-access highways, Johnson said this conclusion was "not the novel conclusion it might appear" because all but 70 miles of the proposed 1980 network were already on the books. He asked whether the additional highways "will restore our already maimed city to health—or is it a crutch that merely eases the pain of a last, fatal illness?" As an illustration, he cited Los Angeles which had "probably one of the most acute problems in the country because of all of the highways." The result, he said, was "that the city is choking and we read in the papers every day of the problem it has." [pages 26-31]

Arthur H. Keyes, Jr., of the Washington Building Congress recommended "a financially feasible 'transit dominant' system (bus and rail-subway), rather than the proposed freeway system with a subway added to handle the traffic overflow at great cost to the taxpayer." Aside from the aesthetic impacts, extensive freeways would obliterate tax-producing properties, thereby imposing an "additional financial burden on the city." He urged efforts to "discourage the ever-increasing use of private automobiles for commuting" as well as to steer interstate and inter-suburban traffic away from the central city by the construction of loops and intermediate loops.

He singled out the Inner Loop. The public, he said, was only "beginning to comprehend the radical changes which the inner loop and its approaches will make in the appearance of the city during the next 5 to 10 years." Unfortunately, the Inner Loop had been authorized before the Mass Transportation Survey began "and prior to any public discussion of it." This meant the city was "virtually committed to what might be called the Los Angeles solution." If the Inner Loop

could not be halted, “then at least much can still be done through sensitive and skillful design to soften the impact of the broad highway design problems, their relation to adjoining spaces, the structural shapes, the use of the land, and so forth.” All, he added, “should be openly discussed.” [pages 71-73]

On the second day of the hearings, Chairman David Finley of the Commission of Fine Arts praised mass transit and attacked the freeway elements of the survey. The central area was already “beyond the saturation point.” To reduce the number of automobiles in the center city, he favored “rapid and comfortable means of transportation” and transfer of centers of employment throughout the city instead of its center. He was skeptical that more freeways were needed, but if they were, as the survey suggested, “care should be taken to avoid destroying vistas and causing damaging scars across the city.” He continued:

Such freeways are in principle an extension of the practice started by the inner loop belt, of which sections are now under construction. The city is being changed to fit the standard patterns of highway engineers rather than to conform to the Washington plan so long established. [page 121]

Grosvenor Chapman of the American Institute of Architects, Washington Metropolitan Chapter, favored bus and rail, including subways. “These sentiments are motivated, in part, by the earnest hope that our present heritage of national monuments, vistas, parks, public buildings, and river banks will not be lost in a confusion of highway ramps, loops and interchanges.” He urged Congress to scrutinize each planned freeway carefully to determine if transit could not provide greater service. [pages 127-128]

On November 10, Louis Justement, mentioned earlier in connection with plans for redeveloping southwest Washington, testified on behalf of the American Institute of Architects. The survey, he said, was based on “a projection of existing tendencies, and on an effort to comply with these existing tendencies, instead of providing a solution that would create a new and more desirable growth pattern based on stimulating changes in the mode of travel used to and from work.” That concept may seem reasonable until carried to the point of \$2.5 billion in costs and we “realize the monstrous city we would produce at such a fantastic cost.” Reconsidering the premises is warranted.

Polls showed that people preferred to commute in their private automobile, but they might think differently “if they were called upon to foot their fair share of the bill through increased taxes”:

We are just beginning to realize how horrible the freeway can make the central city, for the freeway, unlike rail transit, needs a tremendously wide right-of-way, and cannot go underground. The costs of going through a slum area can be accepted, since we want to get rid of the slums anyway. But the cost of going through fine residential areas consists of far more than the acquisition of the right-of-way. The destruction of adjacent values is so great that no acceptable solution can be found

To begin with, let us stop subsidizing the private automobile and endeavoring at great cost to the community to make the use of private automobiles more convenient than mass

transportation. Let us cease the contemplated desecration of parks in the central city with freeways and interloops, and let us merely complete those that are in advanced stages of planning and construction.

If city planning focused on making mass transportation more convenient and efficient, the results would be that “(a) the central city would become a more desirable place in which to live in comparison with the outlying suburbs; (b) the private automobile would become increasingly inconvenient and expensive in comparison with the mass transportation; (c) that mass transportation would be enabled to hold its own and offer better service and/or avoid rate increases.”

In short, “the freeway solution should be rejected because it simply will not do the job.” He cited the Whitehurst Freeway as an example. It was “choked bumper to bumper in the rush hours, not because it is two lanes in each direction or incapable of handling the traffic which seeks to use it, but because the outlets at the east end in the morning and the west end in the evening are incapable of absorbing these two lanes.” Providing four lanes in each direction would only worsen the situation. “And if these bottlenecks at the end are removed, they will simply recur one block farther east or west, for we cannot escape this basic fact.” Ordinary streets cannot absorb freeway traffic volumes. [pages 271-273]

On November 13, Colonel Shepherd testified on behalf of the Committee of 100 on the Federal City and the Georgetown Citizens Association. Attempting to “satisfy the ever-mounting desire of motor vehicle operators for highway capacity and parking facilities will tend to disfigure and bankrupt the city.” He cited the Inner Loop Freeway as an example of his claim that any freeway built in a closely packed urban area “gives rise to serious social and financial problems.” Problems included loss of tax revenue, increased need for parking, dislocated families and businesses, and replacement of public facilities, such as schools, in the path of the freeway. The city cannot, he said, afford to subsidize motorists at these costs:

I sometimes wonder how many taxpayers in this city are aware of these problems and how many know then what the inner loop is intended to do, how much it will cost, and what it will look like when finished.

He stressed that the Inner Loop Freeway was not a single loop, but a double loop:

In order to make room for the freeway and its ramps, block after block of existing buildings will have to be condemned, park land will be taken, and it will all be quite unsightly and enormously expensive, estimated in 1955 to cost upward of \$272,667,000 of taxpayers' money.

Colonel Shepherd pointed out that while the Southwest Freeway was a high priority, its extension west would “squeeze between the Lincoln Memorial and the river,” “pass west of the Lincoln Memorial as a 6-lane depressed facility, open to the sky except for a tunnel approximately 600 feet long,” and “the noise and fumes generated by traffic, particularly trucks using this route, will be most objectionable.” He urged “elimination of highway construction in this area of our city

which could be compared to the sacred precinct of Olympia, now and always protected from incursion by commercial activities.” [pages 782-784]

David Sanders Clark, accompanied by Samuel Spencer, former president of the District’s Board of Commissioners, testified on behalf of the Committee To Oppose the Cross-Park Freeway From Tenley Circle Across Rock Creek Park to the Inner Loop. The committee had formed to protest “attempts by certain overzealous planners” to force approval of “an interstate automobile and truck freeway through the midst of our fine quiet residential areas and through Melvin C. Hazen and Rock Creek Parks, before there had been any public discussion of the proposal, or any proper consideration of the lasting damage it would cause.” Proponents seemed to favor it to secure 90-percent Interstate funding, while the Mass Transportation Survey’s engineering consultants “found no requirement for such a route.” Their statement continued:

Yet this hasty proposal was inserted in the survey report as “The Northwest Freeway Link Between Tenley Circle and the Inner Loop.” This was done despite the vigorous objections of four members of the National Planning Commission and the National Capital Regional Planning Council, including D.C. Engineer Commissioner Welling.

Although the committee had other goals, “we still strongly object to the tactics which were used to promote the Northwest Freeway.” They would present their arguments against the freeway at the appropriate time. [pages 798-799]

Aiming Towards The City

Governor Tawes came to the Washington area on November 30 to open several road projects, each with a brief ceremony. First, he helped remove the last “road closed” sign from a 2.4-mile stretch of Columbia Pike between Cedar Croft Sanitarium and Burnt Mills. It would be designated part of U.S. 29. At a small speaker’s stand erected under a bridge of the Pook’s Hill interchange, he discarded much of his speech on a cold, windy day, but commended the Montgomery County Council for its united front in presenting the county’s needs to the roads commission. Using 4-foot long scissors, Governor Tawes and Council President Werner snipped the ribbon opening the interchange. After lunch, the Governor completed his ceremonial day by opening a 6-mile section of State Route 5 in Prince Georges County between the District and Andrews Air Force Base. [“Tawes Makes It Brief Opening 3 Roadways,” *The Evening Star*, November 30, 1959]

By March 1960, District highway officials wanted to clarify what they had in mind for linking the eastern leg of U.S. 240/I-70S with the Inner Loop within the corridor identified in the Mass Transportation Survey. At the Pooks Hill interchange, traffic would be directed onto the circumferential. At an interchange in Silver Spring where the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad crossed the beltway, traffic would use the North-Central Freeway corridor east of Rock Creek Park to intersect the Inner Loop west of Soldier’s Home. This option, District highway officials believed, would avoid the resistance the Wisconsin Avenue corridor had provoked. [“Route 240 for D.C. Held No New Highway,” *The Evening Star*, March 15, 1960]

When Director Aitken and NCPC Director Finley met with BPR officials to discuss the proposal, Administrator Tallamy rejected it. The link would have to be a direct connection in the Wisconsin Avenue corridor, Tallamy said. Under the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1944, Interstate routes must be “as direct as practicable”; any other corridor was unacceptable because it would add unnecessary miles to the Interstate corridor. Aitken agreed to study the Wisconsin Avenue corridor and present a routing to BPR. Aitken and Tallamy also discussed a third route for Interstate designation between Baltimore and the District through northeast Washington. This route would replace the Kenilworth and New York Avenue links to the Baltimore-Washington Parkway.

Although Tallamy’s position surprised Aitken, he was willing to study the controversial corridor because its rejection would cost the District millions of dollars (an estimated \$85-\$95 million) in 90-percent Interstate construction funds. The unexpected development prompted some speculation about why Tallamy took the position he did. The *Star* reported:

There is a strong feeling in the District Building that Mr. Tallamy’s decision may have been prompted by pressure from the National Capital Planning Commission, relayed through the White House [NCPC] has urged a Route 240 connection in the Wisconsin avenue area.

Aitken, aware that finding a suitable routing would be difficult, rejected any thought of expanding existing Wisconsin Avenue to Interstate standards. Construction was not in the current plans, but pinning down the location would at least allow Maryland highway officials to begin planning a connection between the Pooks Hill interchange and the District line. [Alibrando, Alfred, “District Told To Place 240 At Wisconsin,” *The Evening Star*, March 17, 1960; Alibrando, Alfred, “Wisconsin Corridor Proposal Revived,” *The Evening Star*, March 18, 1960]

A *Star* editorial called finding such a link “Washington’s most durable highway controversy.” Tallamy’s position might, the editorial suggested, revive NCPC’s idea of a freeway in the Wisconsin Avenue corridor to Tenley Circle, where links to the Inner Loop would be provided via the Glover-Archbold Parkway and a car-and-truck freeway across Rock Creek Park. [“Straight-Line Freeway,” *The Evening Star*, March 20, 1960]

Even as District highway officials and NCPC staffers considered the corridor, Senator Case expressed doubts. He wrote to Administrator Tallamy and General Welling on April 28, 1960:

I am somewhat concerned by the proposal to follow Wisconsin avenue—either all the way or part of the way, if that were to necessitate going east through a well-developed residential part of the city and would have anything like an overhead expressway crossing Rock Creek Park and many residential blocks east and west of the park.

He thought the routing should target District slums:

It seems to me . . . the routing of a link of the interstate system through a city—and particularly the Capital City—should cure a blight rather than create one. Offhand, it is

my opinion that any overhead throughway similar to the Whitehurst Freeway, if run through a good residential section, would blight the property on both sides to a serious degree.

On the other hand, it seems to me that if the route should go through an area which is marked for redevelopment or slum clearance, to the extent that the construction results in clearance and improvement, a second benefit will flow from the money expended.

He was considering legislation that would give Tallamy leeway to adopt a less-direct route as part of the Interstate System. A North-Central Freeway could, he understood, have more lanes and carry more traffic than the Wisconsin Avenue corridor, while costing less, thus reducing the Federal expenditure. "I want to be sure the basic law isn't injuring the Federal Government and doesn't have something in it that serves to defeat the maximum service of the highway at the most economical cost." [Alibrando, Alfred, "Case Dubious On Corridor," *The Evening Star*, April 28, 1960; "Case Urges Site Leeway On Highways," *The Evening Star*, May 3, 1960; Deane, James G. "Case Asks Hearing On Route 240 Location," *The Evening Star*, June 12, 1960]

The Inner Loop

The loops or circumferentials as urban bypasses and radial connectors had been part of the District's thinking since at least the 1944 Central Area report submitted by J. E. Greiner Company and De Leuw, Cather & Company. Traffic congestion was delaying shoppers in the central business district and workers in the Federal buildings in downtown. The city was afraid that the problem would drive businesses into the suburbs where traffic could move more freely during weekdays.

The 1944 consultants' report proposed a master plan "for the correction and the future development of transportation facilities in the Central Area of the District of Columbia." The District's 24-year history summarized the proposal:

The master plan evolved by the consultants and presented in the Central Area Report, involved extensive improvements in the existing street layout through the construction of grade separation structures and channelized connections, to form convenient inner and outer belt line distributor routes around the central portion of the city. K Street, situated on the northern rim of this area, was earmarked for further improvement as part of the inner belt route and as a surface distributing artery.

Even if the inner belt route lessened congestion within its confines, "parking facilities in the shopping district were entirely inadequate at present." Building throughways into the heart of the city "would be wasted effort, unless storage facilities were provided to accommodate the increased traffic which would be attracted by the improved highways." The consultants suggested a solution:

The consultants also suggested that certain obsolete buildings in this area be replaced gradually by a type of building more in keeping with the character of motorized transportation in this modern age – buildings which would combine small shops and

offices, centralized service, underground merchandise collection and delivery, and offer parking facilities for clients and customers. They further suggested that land in Government ownership be converted into suitably landscaped parking lots for the accommodation of Federal employees. [*Twenty-Four Years of Progress*, pages 72-73]

This wartime vision of boulevards and one-way pairs of roads proved inadequate to the post-war reality. Transit, which had been boosted to high ridership by gasoline and tire rationing during the war, quickly entered a downward spiral that would cause the companies operating streetcars and buses in most cities to cut service and maintenance, raise fares, and eventually go out of business – leaving transit service to local governments. In the Washington metropolitan area, the use of private automobiles continued to grow along with population and government employment.

In December 1946, the consultants upgraded their proposal for an inner belt by proposing the Mid-City Expressway, as discussed earlier, to provide a bypass of the shopping district for traffic bound for the Federal Triangle, the southwest Mall, and other points beyond the central area:

Justification for the high-cost heavy construction work necessary to the execution of this ambitious project was based on [the] assumption that enormous volumes of traffic would be accommodated, to effect a welcome release in the pressure on other streets serving traffic destined for the Central Area, as well as that of a strictly local character. [*Twenty-Four Years of Progress*, page 75]

The National Capital Park and Planning Commission criticized the plan, especially the expressway portions. Traffic volumes in 1965 could not justify the cost, the commission said, while the traffic drawn into the city on them would overwhelm local streets. While improved circulation might increase business tax revenue for the city, “the opposite effect may well be produced on residential areas in the District which supply three-fourths of the District’s real estate tax income.” The commissioners also considered the city’s proposal to build tunnels for streetcars as lacking technical justification. Such a rigid network would prevent shifts in service to meet changes in employment and population centers.

The commission’s J. C. Nichols favored the intermediate circumferential known as Fort Drive. Nichols, involved in real estate, had been with the commission since its start in 1926. In a rare interview, he said the drive was “more valid today than ever before.” By allowing through traffic to bypass the downtown area, it would slow the suburbanization of District residents and businesses. He disputed recent estimates, such as the \$35 million price tag that District Budget Officer Walter L. Fowler had assigned to Fort Drive. In a report to Commissioner John Russell Young, Fowler had called the proposal “chimerical, useless and making no sense today.” Rufus Lusk, president of the Washington Taxpayers Association, estimated the cost to be \$60 million.

Three years earlier, Nichols said, the District Highway Department had estimated the cost of Fort Drive at \$16,800,000. That proposal included 58 grade separations but, Nichols said, “I don’t believe more than 9 or 10 of those grade separations would be needed, at least not until after the drive was built and more became necessary.”

He was concerned, too, about the radial highways contained in the consultants' proposal. They could lead to decentralization:

You've got to remember that the same expressway which makes it easier to get downtown to the big stores also makes it easier for shoppers to live farther out and shop in shopping centers. We shouldn't make it too easy to get out of the District.
[Kauffmann, Rudolph II, "Planners Blast Road Program, Urban Substitute," *The Evening Star*, March 26, 1947; "Fort Drive Declared By Nichols to Be City's Greatest Need," *The Evening Star*, April 18, 1947]

With the commission developing a broad plan covering all phases of city development in accordance with the Redevelopment Act of 1946, Engineer Commissioner Young wrote to General Grant urging the planners to make "full use" of the 11-year plan developed by Captain Whitehurst for expressways, underground streetcar lines, and terminal parking facilities. General Young also recommended that the commissioners keep in mind the unfairness of current taxation to residents in a city where 50 percent of the land was tax exempt because of public ownership. He urged the commissioners to couple their recommendations with realistic estimates so their plans would not be "futile and academic." The commission had hired Harland Bartholomew as a consultant. ["City Heads Offer Suggestions on Redevelopment," *The Evening Star*, September 28, 1947]

The two bodies—the Highway Department and the planning commission—would remain at odds about the needed transportation facilities. For the commission, shifts in the metropolitan area were a guiding force. Director of Planning John Nolen, Jr., wrote in 1950 that the spread of population was one of the paramount changes. “Thirty years ago only one-fourth of the total population lived outside the District. Now three-eighths live in Maryland and Virginia.” He predicted that by 1980, one-half of the area’s population would live outside the District. One reason for the shift was “a more conscious and definite policy of decentralizing Government activities.” New employment centers in Bethesda and Suitland, Maryland, and elsewhere illustrated the trend. Even so and even with improved mass transportation, “traffic flow will take on characteristics of a circular movement rather than an in-and-out, reversing flow.”

To avoid repeating past mistakes, “we must design our system to separate major movements from the local on-and-off travel which now clogs the existing main routes.” To do this, planners should “encourage suburban focal points for a balanced community life.”

Suburban population centers, as well as the central business and government districts, should be bypassed. “In short, we must have a network of ring thoroughfares with good radials similar to the structure of a spider’s web, with certain routes more strongly emphasizing the form of the basic structure.”

Express highways and parkways would be provided for major movements on radial and circumferential alignments. They would form “the basic structure for the circulation system.” Where expressways were not feasible because of cost or location, major highways with grade separations at select locations were needed as collectors and distributors connecting with the circumferentials:

There will be an outer ring route in Maryland and Virginia about 8 miles out, and an intermediate ring road, the so-called Fort Drive and an inner ring. The latter two ring roads are inside the District of Columbia. [Nolen, John, Jr., “Regional Highway Plan for Washington,” *The Sunday Star*, February 19, 1950]

The idea of a spider’s web was in contrast with the usual contemporary hub-and-spoke concepts of urban transportation planning. It also was inconsistent with the District’s desire to retain population, businesses, and tax revenue.

By 1952, the Inner Loop was the District’s top priority in its \$140 million road program. The *Star*’s James G. Deane, in his “Highways of the Future” series, described it: “The proposed loop runs 10 miles around the city’s heart. Its function would be to shunt motorists away—or help them enter at the right point, faster.” He added:

It would not be a freeway: it would use mostly existing streets. But the benefit would be similar, say city engineers—and cheaper. Even so, the cost would be more than \$24 million.

According to Engineer Commissioner Bernard L. Robinson, the Inner Loop could cut congestion 25 percent in downtown. It was, he told Deane, “all important.” Deane listed the roads included in the loop:

The loop would consist chiefly of one-way streets: Q and R streets in the north, Fourth and Sixth streets east of the Capitol, F and G streets in the Central Southwest, and Rock Creek parkway and Twenty-sixth street on the west. Ohio and Basin drives would be a future link completing the circuit through West Potomac park.

Florida avenue would become the major link on the northeast corner, North Carolina and Delaware avenues in the Southeast. All three, however, remain two-way. In addition, there would be some major construction—an elevated entrance from South capitol street to F, and a bridge across the Washington Channel

The aim is to make the circuit as attractive to potential users as possible; otherwise it won't function.

Only tourists would travel the whole loop; local motorists would use only the portions necessary for their trips.

Deane added that the National Capital Park and Planning Commission agreed with the concept, but its comprehensive plans included a different routing:

There are three major differences: the commission plan shows a new freeway at about T street N.W. instead of Q and R as the north leg; the east leg is a freeway west of the capitol, on Third street N.W. instead of Fourth and Sixth N.E., and the West Potomac Park leg uses Independence avenue instead of Ohio drive, and Twenty-sixth street is not used.

The planning commission position has been that Q and R and Fourth and Sixth streets split residential neighborhoods; the commission frowns on this.

The plan had run into opposition from the area southeast of the Capitol. With private redevelopment expected to turn the area into a “new Georgetown,” the Southeast Citizens' Association was concerned that the loop would bring ruinous traffic into the area. In addition, the national planners were waiting for a report from the RLA on slum-clearance in the Southwest. The highway plan would have to dovetail with the redevelopment plans. [Deane, James G., “Top Priority Given ‘Inner Loop’ To Ease Downtown Traffic,” *Highways of the Future*, *The Evening Star*, February 5, 1952]

Deane also discussed plans for the intermediate loop known as Fort Drive. The first formal plan for the drive was in 1901, “although it had been talked about at least 20 years earlier” as a tourist attraction. The drive would use existing roads and some new streets. Congress authorized acquisition of needed right-of-way in 1930, but the concept gradually became a “belt” as that idea took hold among urban planners. “This is the current conception, and a speedy dual highway is now the design.”

As recently as 5 years earlier, “economy-minded District officials were opposing the project as ‘useless’ and too costly.” They wanted the 700 acres the city had acquired for the drive returned to the District’s tax base. Now, just 5 weeks earlier, the District proposed to spend \$20 million on two major segments of Fort Drive amounting to 8.2 miles of the 23-mile loop: (1) Fort Stevens at Georgia Avenue to Fort Reno at Nebraska Avenue and (2) Fort Totten at South Dakota Avenue to Fort Mahan at Benning Road. Each would be a freeway consisting of two-lane pairs separated by a median:

As a freeway, the drive would help motorists bypass snarls. But it would also be an attractive Sunday drive.

Deane quoted Fowler’s comment from 5 years earlier that Fort Drive “never will be built because there is no need for it and there will be no money for it.” As Deane concluded his article, “It remains to be seen whether he was right.” [Deane, James G., “1901 Plan for Linking Forts Revived as an Aid to Traffic,” Highways of the Future, *The Sunday Star*, March 2, 1952]

Evolving Inner Loop

Cost had been a factor in the District’s thinking about the Inner Loop, but with planning for the Interstate System and its urban configurations, the concept evolved from two-way pairs to an Inner Loop Freeway.

The District hired De Leuw, Cather and Company to design an Inner Loop addressing traffic needs in 1980 without regard to cost. Instead of a single loop, the consultants’ October 1955 report proposed two connected loops that looked like a figure 8 on its side. The western loop had the White House in the center. The eastern loop included the Capitol along the west leg (the segment shared with the eastern edge of the western loop) while the east leg linked Florida Avenue and M Street beyond the intersection of Massachusetts and Maryland Avenues:

The Inner Loop Freeway System recommended herein is approximately 17.6 miles in length—14.6 miles of main freeway roadways, three miles of connecting roadways—and forms a figure 8 around the central district of the city. There are approximately four miles of eight-lane freeway, nine miles of six-lane freeway and 1.5 miles of four-lane freeway. There are six miles of 2-lane, one-way connecting roadways in interchanges and in connections to existing traffic arteries. All traffic lanes are a minimum of 12 feet in width. Center malls separating opposing traffic are 4 feet wide in fill or elevated sections and on bridges and 11 feet wide in depressed sections.

The consultants chose the location for the system based on three factors. The Inner Loop should:

- Be properly integrated with other existing and proposed street and highway facilities,
- Provide for the preservation of historical sites, parks, playgrounds, and institutional buildings insofar as possible, and
- Provide the maximum in traffic service, attracting sufficient traffic to justify its construction in accordance with highest possible standards of design.

They added, "Almost the entire route of the Inner Loop Freeway System is within areas which have been recommended for redevelopment." The system also connected with important arterials:

Routes were selected, therefore, to provide limited access connections between the Inner Loop and the proposed Constitution Avenue Bridge, Whitehurst Freeway, and a new freeway to connect to the Washington-Baltimore Parkway along New York Avenue. Connections are also provided to West Virginia Avenue, Benning Road, John Philip Sousa Bridge, Anacostia River Bridge (11th Street S.E.) including a new parallel bridge to the existing structure, and Highway Bridge as proposed to be improved by construction of a second one-way bridge.

Design standards allowed for safe and continuous travel at 50 m.p.h., although at peak periods traffic might move more slowly:

The freeways will be so superior to the parallel surface streets in safety, capacity, and time-saving features that they will attract vehicles from a wide area even at the expense of somewhat greater distances to be traveled by some motorists.

The consultants designated the segments of the system by their cardinal orientation: West, North/Northwest Section, North/Northeast Section, East, Center, South Route/Southwest, and South/Southeast. The report provided an alternate alignment for the center route involving a tunnel under the National Mall instead of passing through the mall at depressed grade. For the Southwest section along Ohio Drive between the Lincoln Memorial and the Southwest Freeway at Maine Avenue, they provided an alternate route via Independence Avenue.

The total estimated cost of the Inner Loop Freeway System was \$272,667,000. With "a vigorous planning and construction program," the system could be completed in 12 years. During construction, parallel two-way pairs would be employed to keep traffic moving a couple of blocks from the freeway corridor.

The consultants, after studying bus service, concluded that "most of the heavier movements are at right angles to the routes of the Inner Loop System rather than tangential." As a result, the Inner Loop would "not be useful for bus operation . . . except in isolated instances." Some express bus services might use the Inner Loop during peak periods:

Buses making such express runs will use the ramps provided for general use. Since no stops will be made by these buses along the freeway routes, no special facilities need be planned.

Construction of the Inner Loop would "not require abandonment or reconstruction of a major length of any streetcar track presently operated." However, if "all parts of the present rail system are still in use" when the Inner Loop is built, "rail and underground power distribution facilities will have to be installed on cross structures" in some cases.

Because one function of a theoretical inner loop was to be a terminal to keep cars out of the central area, the consultants studied whether to build parking structures over the freeway right-of-

way. They found that the cost of building parking garages above the freeways would be “abnormally high” compared with building parking facilities at ground level. Further, spacing for interchange ramps throughout the system did not leave “weaving” room for additional ramps to serve the parking garages. (A weaving section is the area where vehicles maneuver, sometimes crossing each other, to enter or leave a freeway.)

The consultants also were concerned about safety as motorists would operate in bright sunlight, drive into the darkness under the garages, and then move back into sunlight. “While the human eye can adjust to either level, given sufficient time, it cannot change rapidly enough to meet such problems safely at freeway speeds.”

The consultants concluded that parking garages should not be part of the freeway system. “Rather, such structures should be kept far enough away from them to permit the surface streets between to afford a cushioning effect.” [*Report on Inner Loop Freeway System, District of Columbia*, De Leuw, Cather and Company, October 1955, pages 1-3, 8, 13-27, 51-52, 63-64]

In August 1955, as the plan circulated through agencies, Gilmore D. Clarke and Michael Rapuano, New York consultants for NCPD, urged the commission to adopt the Independence Avenue alternative for the Southwest section, rather than Ohio Drive along the Potomac Park waterfront. Both alternatives “would result in a destruction of park values which should not be permitted.” Aside from the removal of trees, the link, wherever located, would form “wide traffic barriers” that would interfere with enjoyment of the park. Independence Avenue would be less disruptive:

Under the consultants’ plan, the inner belt would underpass the [Pennsylvania] Railroad, Fourteenth and Fifteenth streets, as well as Seventeenth street near Washington Monument. The belt also would underpass Arlington Memorial Bridge and Riverside drive by modifying the present structural arches, and would overpass the southeast approach to the Lincoln Memorial traffic circle.

The entire Ohio congressional delegation also opposed use of the road named for its State as a link in the Inner Loop.

Highway Director Robertson responded that from a traffic standpoint, the city did not have a preference between Ohio Drive and Independence Avenue. However, the Ohio Drive alternative would cost an estimated \$4 million less. [“Independence Avenue Urged as Inner Belt Link,” *The Evening Star*, August 3, 1955]

In the Yellow Book released in September 1955, BPR adopted the Outer Loop and the Inner Loop Freeway System, but did not include Fort Drive. As in the consultants’ report, the Inner Loop was a figure eight but with an extended eastern section that put the easternmost leg on the eastern side of the Anacostia River providing a link to the Baltimore-Washington Parkway. The northern leg crossed the city before dipping south to a Potomac River crossing in the vicinity of Theodore Roosevelt Island. The southern leg crossed the Anacostia River in the vicinity of the 11th Street/Pennsylvania Avenue, followed the Southeast and Southwest Freeways to cross the

Potomac River on the 14th Street Bridge. An Interstate route linked the north and south legs in the center of the city, but no link was provided on the western end.

The Yellow Book map did not include detailed descriptions of the black lines on the map or an accompanying narrative description. The lines for the District and other metropolitan areas were considered aspirational in that the detailed location would be determined by further studies. However, the *Star* summarized the links in the “17.6 miles of limited-access, depressed and elevated expressways” that comprised the Inner Loop:

The network, costing \$15.5 million a mile, is in the form of a giant horseshoe stretching from the Anacostia River to the Potomac River beyond the Lincoln Memorial and back to the Anacostia. Two north-south expressways would connect the long arms of the horseshoe.

More ambitious than any circumferential expressway ever considered seriously for a downtown city area, the road would be four, six or eight lanes wide, depending upon the amount of traffic estimates to use each section.

The freeway loop does not follow existing streets. Instead, it cuts wide swaths through residential blocks, would knock out an estimated 6,800 dwelling units.

The Inner Loop consisted of:

- The projected Anacostia Freeway from East Capitol Street south to the District line. It would connect with the southern sector of the circumferential highway near the projected Jones Point Bridge.
- A cross-town highway using part of the northern sector of the projected inner-belt highway. It would connect with the Baltimore-Washington Parkway by way of New York Avenue.
- The southern sector of the inner-belt highway. There would be a connection across the Anacostia River with the Anacostia freeway, and one across the Potomac with Shirley highway.
- The west sector of the inner-belt. This would have a connection across the projected Constitution Avenue bridge with Highway 50 in Virginia.
- A north-south highway roughly along the line of Third street N.W., which would cut across the inner-belt.
- A highway roughly paralleling Canal road N.W. running from the west sector of the inner-belt to Maryland’s 240.

In 1955, Congress had considered how to fund the Interstate System on a 90-10 Federal-State matching basis, but adjourned without completing the legislation before BPR released the Yellow Book.

As Director Robertson acknowledged, the city would not be able to build the Inner Loop unless Congress found a way to pay for the Interstate System – the issue that killed the legislation in 1955. At an estimated cost of \$272 million, the Inner Loop envisioned by the consultants would take 12 to 15 years to complete. However, the District’s budget could not support the project.

The city received \$5 million a year in Federal-aid highway funds, up from \$3 million a year. District revenue from its gas tax was up \$1 million over estimates. Under the Interstate bill that had failed, the city would have received about \$30 million a year over a 10-year period for regular Federal-aid projects on a 50-50 matching basis and Interstate System projects on a 90-10 ratio.

Robertson was optimistic that Congress would extend the Federal-aid highway program, with “almost a certainty that we will get something more.” He said the Southwest Freeway segment of the Inner Loop through the southwest redevelopment area would get underway in the summer of 1956 regardless of the legislation’s fate. Unlike other District expressways, the Southwest Freeway from the Highway Bridge to South Capitol Street was planned for an urban redevelopment area that had been stripped of virtually all buildings, thus eliminating the source of much of the controversy in other parts of the city. [Douglas, Francis, P., “Highway Links OK’d for D.C.,” *The Evening Star*, September 29, 1955; Beveridge, George, “D.C. Gets Plans for Freeway To Speed Downtown Traffic,” *The Sunday Star*, December 4, 1955; “Loop Road Plan Awaits Decision on Federal Aid,” *The Sunday Star*, December 4, 1955]

Although the consultants’ Inner Loop report was dated October 1955, it was not released to the public until December. Engineer Commissioner Lane told reporters that the report presented “a satisfactory guide” for gradual construction of the Inner Loop Freeway System. Now that “we have the plan,” he said, “we will begin immediately a review of the financial prospects, rated against cost of the program.” General Lane stressed that most of the loop freeway passes through aging areas slated for “urban renewal,” as illustrated by the Southwest Freeway. Construction would be scheduled in conjunction with redevelopment to reduce costs for right-of-way acquisition. [Beveridge, George, “D.C. Gets Plans for Freeway To Speed Downtown Traffic,” *The Evening Star*, December 4, 1955]

A Couple Legs

Almost as soon as the plans were released, the West Leg of the Inner Loop through the Foggy Bottom section of the District became controversial. A NCPC coordinating committee called in developers of two projects to explain their concerns on December 13, 1955. One developer, the Potomac Plaza Corporation, was planning a hotel/apartment/office complex near the intersection of New Hampshire and Virginia Avenue, NW., on the former Washington Gas Light Company property (later to be named the Watergate complex), while Peoples Life Insurance Company had purchased a building site at New Hampshire and F, G, and 25th Streets, NW. The western leg of the Inner Loop would be built west of the two developments. The developers said that with construction of the West Leg still years off, they planned to proceed with their projects. They suggested the city abandon the conflicting highway segment.

To avoid the Potomac Plaza development, District officials had identified an eastern alternative, but it would cut through three blocks acquired over the years by George Washington University for its expansion plans. The university’s treasurer, Henry W. Herzog, said the university expected to grow from 13,000 students to 30,000. “We don’t like to have property that cost us \$1 million taken from us and then have to spend \$5 million or \$6 million for land somewhere

else.” [“Developers Ask Truce on Road; Loop Is Issue,” *The Evening Star*, December 14, 1955; “Planners Weigh Inner Loop Plea,” *The Evening Star*, December 16, 1955]

On December 16, NCPC unanimously approved the city’s alternative route for the Inner Loop through Foggy Bottom. Passing between 23rd and 24th Streets, NW., the route avoided the two private developments, but impacted the university, which owned three of the blocks. This action, the *Star* stated, “resolved one major Washington highway controversy.” [“Planning Board Approves Route For Inner Loop,” *The Evening Star*, December 17, 1955]

George A. Garrett, whom President Eisenhower had asked to work with all parties to resolve issues blocking the southwest redevelopment, submitted a three-page letter to the President on December 21, 1955. Garrett reported that the program “now appears to be fully under way and its ultimate success is assured.” NCPC, Garrett said, had approved the land use plans either finally or tentatively in the case of plans that remained shy of detailed plans.

The final issue had been the dispute between the Zeckendorf plan for a South Mall entranceway in the 10th Street corridor and the Smithsonian Institution’s plans for a National Air Museum. Based on a NCPC recommendation, the Smithsonian Institution would find another museum location. Garrett told the President:

Within 10 years, barring a national emergency, the area could be completely rebuilt, a model downtown urban community which could point the way for the salvation of obsolete city cores through the nation.

The President, in Key West recovering from a heart attack he suffered in Colorado the previous September, replied by letter dated January 1, 1956 (released January 6):

It is indeed heartening to know that the efforts of the agencies cooperating in the project will result in early initiation of construction and in a complete rebuilding of the designated area. Certainly the Capital of this great nation deserves to be a symbol of our best efforts to provide decent housing and attractive urban living. [Beveridge, George, “President Cites Southwest Job,” *The Evening Star*, January 8, 1956]

On February 2, 1956, NCPC approved all elements of the southwest redevelopment plan, subject to a final vote after detailed plans were submitted in coming weeks. District highway officials appeared before NCPC during the meeting in an attempt to postpone the feud over whether the Inner Loop would follow Ohio Drive or Independence Avenue, SW. With minor adjustments on the western end of the Southwest Freeway, the city would be able to accommodate either alternative, thus postponing the need for a decision.

NCPC took up the issue in more detail on February 3. Engineer Commissioner Lane told the commissioners that the District favored Ohio Drive, but was willing to postpone the decision. A connection was needed between Southwest Freeway, already slated for construction in the F Street corridor, at 12th Street, SW., and the two 14th Street bridges over the Potomac:

So he proposed a bridge across Washington Channel, linking the two facilities, and making “temporary connections” to both Ohio drive and Independence avenue. Since the

District has no money to extend the expressway soon anyway, he said, the temporary connections would permit either route to be used when a later decision is made.

The Ohio congressional delegation expressed its view. Representative Thomas A. Jenkins (R), who called himself “the Daddy of Ohio drive,” told NCPC that for many years, “no avenue, street or even alley” was named for Ohio in the District. Now, the two-lane drive along the Potomac River between the Lincoln Memorial and 14th Street was the “pride of the people of the great State of Ohio.” He said he was not arguing from an engineering or traffic perspective, only that “we’re proud of it.” He added that Senators John W. Bricker (R) and George H. Bender (R) agreed with him.

Bartholomew, who opposed Ohio Drive for the Inner Loop, was concerned about the District’s new plan to postpone the decision:

He said any connection with Ohio drive was “a foot in the door” toward its eventual construction as an expressway. And—widening the breach—opposed any crossing of Washington Channel until such time as the District agrees to build a Potomac bridge at Roaches Run, Va.

The commissioners could not agree on the proposed postponement plan. [Beveridge, George, “Way Is Cleared For Final Okay On Southwest,” *The Evening Star*, February 3, 1956; “Pride of Ohio’ Injected Into Inner Loop Planning,” *The Evening Star*, February 4, 1956]

In 1949, Representative Jenkins had led the effort to change Riverside Drive to honor his State. Ohio Street, behind the District Building, had been removed during development of the Federal Triangle area. Riverside Drive ran from the John Ericcson Memorial (honoring the inventor of the screw propeller for ships) at the drive’s intersection with Independence Avenue near the Lincoln Memorial through the Tidal Basin across West and East Potomac Parks along the Potomac River. At the time, according to the *Star*, it was “Washington’s most popular ‘hot weather’ drive.” At his urging, the National Capital Park and Planning Commission approved the change to Ohio Drive on August 5, 1949. The signs went up on August 12 in a brief ceremony with Representative Jenkins. With the change, all 48 States had a named street in the District of Columbia.

Over 300 Ohioians, including Governor Frank J. Lausche and Representative Jenkins, formally dedicated Ohio Drive on July 9, 1950. With rain pouring, Representative Jenkins was master of ceremony. Secretary of the Interior Oscar L. Chapman presented a scroll from President Truman to Governor Lausche and extolled Ohio’s contributions to the country. Mrs. Erma C. Marting of Irontown, Ohio, “Ohio’s Mother of the Year,” snipped the ribbon across Ohio Drive at the tip of Hains Point to officially open the road. Following the ceremony, Miss Mary Jane Hayes, “Miss Washington,” presented a three-layer cake to Governor Lausche, who cut it and passed out the rain-soaked slices. [“Ohio Gets Its Name Restored Along Six Miles of Channel,” *The Evening Star*, July 10, 1950]

(The name “Independence Avenue” was only about a decade older. It was an outgrowth of legislation signed by President Herbert Hoover on February 26, 1931, changing the name of B

Street north of the National Mall to Constitution Avenue. Chairman Delano of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission suggested changing B Street south of the mall as well to honor the Declaration of Independence. Senator Capper introduced a bill to change the name in 1933. The District commissioners approved the bill on January 16, 1934. The *Star* explained:

B Street is the south boundary of the Mall and under Mall development plans the street is to be extended from its present western terminus at Fourteenth street to the Potomac River. There would be a jog in the street at Fourteenth street because of the location of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. ["D.C. Board Approves Street Name Change," *The Evening Star*, January 17, 1934]

President Franklin D. Roosevelt approved the legislation on April 13, 1934. (P.L. 73-150)

Getting Underway

The future of the District's Interstate network depended on approval of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, which President Eisenhower signed on June 29. During the first 3 years of the construction program, the funds would be apportioned by the longstanding formula for distributing Federal-aid primary system funds. After that, Interstate System funds would be distributed based on periodic Interstate Cost Estimates (ICE) that BPR was to complete beginning in 1959 and submit to Congress for approval. After that, each State's share would be calculated on the ratio of the cost to complete its Interstate segments compared with the national cost.

The legislation meant an immediate boost in Federal-aid highway funds from the annual \$4 to \$5 million the District had been receiving. The District expected to receive \$40.5 million in Federal-aid for the first 3 years under the new law, with \$29.4 million of that amount for the Interstate System. The District's share could increase when the ICE formula was used, but the city expected to receive between \$390 and \$400 million overall, to be matched on a 90-10 basis. [Beveridge, George, "District to Map \$400 Million Road Program," *The Sunday Star*, July 29, 1956]

By late August, the District Highway Department had submitted to the commissioners the largest road construction budget in city history. It covered 13 projects with an estimated cost of \$22.9 million, including \$11 million for three projects on the Inner Loop. Interstate projects included the Southwest Freeway (14th Street to South Capitol Street), the Inner Loop segment from South Capitol Street to the Anacostia Freeway), and the West Leg (right-of-way acquisition in Foggy Bottom between E Street, NW., and Washington Circle). The District also planned to use the funds on the Constitution Avenue Bridge (pending congressional action) and replacing the trestle-topped bridge as part of the 14 Street Bridge (minor legislative action might be needed), and the Anacostia Freeway. [Beveridge, George, "\$29.9 Million Asked for Roads," *The Evening Star*, August 31, 1956]

Around this time, the 21 members of the D.C. Auditorium Commission were deciding where to place a proposed civic auditorium and cultural center. The commission, established in 1955, had narrowed the choice to two locations by November 1956. One was in the new Southwest east of

the 10th Street “South Mall” south of D Street and north of the Southwest Freeway. The other possibility, the one favored by the auditorium commission, was in Foggy Bottom west of 23rd Street and south of Virginia Avenue, NW. The Foggy Bottom location depended on where the District ultimately built the Inner Loop through the area.

On November 3, Chairman Garrett of the Federal City Council sent telegrams to members of the commission stating that the council supported the southwest location. A Foggy Bottom location would “create critical problems” for the private developments underway in the area. By contrast, “the location of the Southwest cultural center envisages a ceremonial entrance and link from the Grand Mall to the Tenth Street Mall. An auditorium on this site will be the focal point of the entire rebuilt area and a great asset to the Capital City.”

Engineer Commissioner Lane said he did not know enough about plans for the auditorium to take a position on where it should be built. As for the Inner Loop through Foggy Bottom, the “present approved location, as far as we know, is the proper one.” He added, “The whole feasibility of a relocation is undetermined. But if there are factors we have overlooked, we will listen to them.” [“Auditorium in Southwest Backed by City Council,” *The Sunday Star*, November 4, 1956]

The auditorium commission decided to delay a decision while advisers made “further studies . . . of the several sites considered suitable, and the commission will determine from the responsible agencies the availability of these sites.” Although the West Leg of the Inner Loop as presently located would cut across the middle of the favored Foggy Bottom site, the commission chairman, Mrs. Agnes E. Meyer, indicated that her talks with NCPC indicated that rerouting the West Leg was possible. [Beveridge, George, “Auditorium Unit Delays Firm Decision on Site,” *The Evening Star*, November 27, 1956] (Mrs. Meyer’s husband Eugene owned *The Washington Post*, serving in various leadership roles with the newspaper until his death in 1959.)

Highway Director Robertson was frustrated by NCPC decisionmaking as he made clear when he testified on November 30, 1956, before the Commissioners’ Citizens Advisory Committee regarding a proposal by former District Commissioner Samuel Spencer that NCPC’s five citizen members should be appointed by the District commissioners, not the President. NCPC Chairman Bartholomew opposed the suggestion, which he said would override Federal interests in the capital.

Robertson argued for a change. He said that “delays in obtaining definitive action by the National Capital Planning Commission have consistently resulted in retarding the highway program of the District of Columbia, have produced a continued economic hardship on the motorists of this area by delaying the construction of needed projects and may very well cause the District of Columbia to have certain Federal funds withdrawn unless allocated monies are soon obligated.”

For example, he said, during the 7 years of controversy over the Highway Bridge at 14th Street, rising costs would add \$16 million to the project. “Had the District received greater co-operation and understanding from the planning commission, the District taxpayers would have been saved millions of dollars.”

The controversy over the proposed Constitution Avenue Bridge across the Potomac River “has cost the taxpayers many thousands of dollars thus far on this project without a bridge having been started in this area.” The total was about \$100,000, Robertson said, adding that “this expenditure can hardly be justified as a means of satisfying the NCPC simply because they doubt the integrity or capabilities of responsible public officials or their consultants.”

The West Leg of the Inner Loop was another example. NCPC had approved the location, but was now reconsidering it:

Shifting of this route, he said, would curtail the multimillion-dollar Potomac Plaza project under construction in the area. Also, he said, the proposed Peoples Life Insurance Building would be “endangered by an auditorium site which is astride the original inner loop location.”

“It is difficult,” Mr. Robertson said, “to comprehend how any agencies, private or public, can proceed with any developments in the District with the possibility of this type of action endangering their plans and costing them considerable amounts of money.”

He also cited the District’s preference for routing the Inner Loop along Ohio Drive while NCPC had selected Independence Avenue. “That action will cost the taxpayers \$4.5 million.”

The advisory council decided to send Robertson’s 17-page statement to Bartholomew for his information, but “decided not to request a rebuttal for fear of stimulating continued argument.” [McLean, Hector, “Big Loss Seen In ‘Indecision’ On Planning,” *The Evening Star*, November 30, 1956]

As Robertson’s statement indicated, the location of the West Leg remained controversial and in doubt. NCPC indicated it was reconsidering its approval of the routing in view of its impact on George Washington University. The university added to the controversy in December by announcing a long-range plan for an extensive medical center to be built around the present 400-bed university hospital. Herzog explained that if the West Leg were built as planned, it would leave “no other place in the area where these facilities can be erected and still carry on effective communications and service with the hospital.” He hoped that the route could be shifted to allow not only the hospital expansion but the private developments underway in the area. [Beveridge, George, “GWU Reveals Plans for Huge Medical Center,” *The Sunday Star*, December 9, 1956]

On December 13, the District Auditorium Commission’s concerns prompted NCPC to delay asking the District to consider a location along 24th, 25th, and 27th Streets, NW., for the West Leg. This location, according to a NCPC special committee, would require little property from Potomac Plaza and avoid university property. It also would allow room for an interchange connecting the West Leg to K Street west of Washington Circle.

General Lane responded that the current route had been selected by the city’s consultant as the most feasible. The committee’s suggestions involved “paper plans” that might prove impractical when given detailed engineering review. As far as he was concerned, nothing before NCPC justified additional study. He added that wherever the route is built, “someone will be hurt.”

When NCPC decided to postpone a decision, General Lane said the approved routing remained on the books. The District would proceed accordingly and ask Congress for authority to begin acquiring right-of-way. [Beveridge, George, "Planners Put Off Vote on Inner Loop," *The Evening Star*, December 13, 1956]

The District Auditorium Commission, which was still awaiting a decision on the West Leg, increased the number of possible sites for the auditorium and cultural center to three. The Foggy Bottom site was in an area bounded by Virginia and New Hampshire Avenues on the north, E and Water Streets on the south, and on the east by 23rd Street and the west by 26th Street. The original southwest location was within 10th Street with D Street on the north, Sixth and Seventh Street on the east, and the Southwest Freeway on the south. The commission was now considering a second southwest option, this one bounded by Ninth Street on the east, 12th Street on the west, D Street on the north, and the freeway on the south. "Chairman Agnes E. Meyer disclosed that the commission favors Foggy Bottom, but would not be unhappy if one of the Southwest sites are selected." ["3 Cultural Center Sites Are Favored" *The Evening Star*, January 30, 1957]

On February 1, 1957, Harold Aitken, then still with Clarkeson Engineering, told NCPC he was considering a western shift of the West Leg as the best way to connect U.S. 240 along the Potomac River with the Inner Loop at Washington Circle. Based on the city's current plans, the connection was possible, but would be "costly and difficult to build" because it required an interchange that might include three- and four-level structures for all movements. Moving the Inner Loop to the west would "be a little less costly to build and have a better design" than at present.

Bartholomew was not sold on the Potomac River link to U.S. 240. He preferred a route through Bethesda, along the Wisconsin Avenue corridor to Tenley Circle, then via Glover-Archbold Park to Whitehaven Parkway, with a link to the Inner Loop near Sheridan Circle.

Aitken agreed that this routing would serve more traffic than the Potomac River route that he and District officials favored. However, building the section in Maryland would be very difficult and would possibly require the taking of "hundreds of homes" before reaching the District line. He said that the Potomac River Freeway and the routing via the city's planned Glover-Archbold Parkway, exclusive of trucks, were both needed. [Beveridge, George, "Shift Called Possible in 'Inner Loop' Plan," *The Evening Star*, February 1, 1957]

Aitken returned to NCPC on March 8 for a formal presentation of his plan for shifting the Inner Loop's West Leg to the west. Although the proposal would solve some of the issues involving private development and expansion of George Washington University, it would cut through the Foggy Bottom site favored by the District Auditorium Commission. On the plus side, the western shift would permit the Inner Loop to make "full traffic connections" with the proposed Potomac River link to U.S. 240. Aitken expected the proposed route to cost about 10 percent less than the currently approved route through Washington Circle.

The precise impact on properties had not been determined, but the apartment houses on K Street west of 25th Street appeared to be in greatest danger. The impact on the embassy area would be

the same as caused by the current plan. Regardless of property impacts, Aitken said, his primary concern was finding “workable connections” between the Inner Loop and the Potomac River Freeway.

For traffic service, he proposed a Potomac River bridge between the Key and Chain Bridges. It would connect with the George Washington Memorial Parkway in Virginia and the Potomac River Freeway near MacArthur Boulevard in the District. He recommended the bridge be an extension of Arizona Avenue.

Members of NCPC reserved judgment, referring the report to a committee for study. [Beveridge, George, “Another Route For ‘Inner Loop’ Road Proposed,” *The Evening Star*, March 8, 1957]

The District Auditorium Commission still favored the Foggy Bottom site over the sites in Southwest, but was disturbed that the District did not seem to give a high priority to avoiding conflicts between the cultural facility and the West Leg:

Mrs. Meyer charged that city authorities and Washington business interests have adopted a “cavalier manner” toward her commission’s desire to locate the cultural center in Foggy Bottom Mrs. Meyer said the city heads have handled the matter as one “merely . . . of parochial concern to be settled in the haphazard manner characteristic of the District’s chaotic government.”

Another time, she said all the “squabbling and procrastination” over the issue results from “the fact that the District of Columbia lacks an orderly and efficient government.”

As for the Clarkeson proposal, she told NCPC that her group would pay for a new route study if the auditorium commission could select the consultant.

General Lane agreed that the District Highway Department would meet with the commission’s engineer. He pointed out to Mrs. Meyer that the District had not acted on the Clarkeson proposal and did not, at this time, agree that additional studies were needed. If Congress determined the location for the auditorium and cultural center, as NCPC had recommended, the District would necessarily adjust its plans to comply with congressional decisions. [Beveridge, George, “D.C. Officials to Consult Center’s Group About Site,” *The Evening Star*, March 27, 1957]

On May 3, NCPC members spent half the day in the Potomac Palisades area to see where the planned expressways and parkways, including the U.S. 240 link, were to be built. They also heard from citizen groups, such as the Potomac Palisades Citizens Association. Its representative told NCPC that the river location was the “worst possible route” for an expressway. The group favored the George Washington Memorial Parkway if built in the Canal Road corridor, but the link to U.S. 240 should be built where it would serve more people.

Admiral Neill Phillips of the District Audubon Society told NCPC that if the U.S. 240 link must be built along the Potomac River, it should be combined with the George Washington Memorial Parkway. However, he wanted the parkway built along MacArthur Boulevard to reduce impacts on the C&O Canal and waterfront parks. Other groups agreed with the idea of reducing impacts

on the canal and park area. [Beveridge, George, "Planners Ask Adoption Of Lewis Zoning Report," *The Evening Star*, May 4, 1957]

Congress was considering legislation to extend the life of the District Auditorium Commission, which had expired on January 31, 1957. The House-approved bill extended the commission until the center was built. The Senate-approved version extended the life of the commission and directed it to "select and acquire" a site but did not specify where it should be. During the House-Senate conference to resolve differences between the bills, conferees changed the language to direct the GSA to acquire the site in Foggy Bottom favored by the commission. The conferees voted 7-1 for the change. Representative Broyhill, a member of the auditorium commission, was the lone dissenter because, he said, the Foggy Bottom site would be more expensive than a site in the southwest redevelopment area. He also pointed out that the Foggy Bottom site would remove property from the city's tax rolls, thus increasing its true cost.

In reporting the conferees' action, George Beveridge discussed the conflict with the West Leg of the Inner Loop:

It was learned that District highway officials have drawn tentative alternate routes, however, which could permit the auditorium to be built. These plans, still in the study stage, are being worked out with special consultants for the Auditorium Commission and for the big Potomac Plaza private development, which could be harmed by a major road relocation. [Beveridge, George, "Conferees OK Auditorium in Foggy Bottom," *The Evening Star*, May 10, 1957; "Foggy Bottom Site Hit As Too Costly for Center," *The Evening Star*, March 22, 1957]

On May 15, the Senate approved the conference report extending the auditorium commission and directing GSA to acquire the Foggy Bottom site. However, the House rejected the bill by a wide margin on August 9. Representative Broyhill led the opposition, arguing that the specified site would cost too much.

Mrs. Meyer, watching from the House gallery, denounced Representative Broyhill as a "completely irresponsible person." He knew, she said, that the Foggy Bottom site was less costly than the southwest sites. "Therefore, I think all his statements are unreliable and many untrue." She said, "The whole possibility of having a cultural center is lost unless the House reconsiders." ["House Vote Chills Cultural Program," *The Evening Star*, August 9, 1957]

(With the District Auditorium Commission no longer in operation, Congress continued the goal of the cultural center by passing the National Cultural Center Act, which President Eisenhower approved on September 2, 1958. It established a board to maintain and administer the National Cultural Center for the Smithsonian Institution. The law did not address where the center should be built. Gutheim and Lee described the outcome:

After the work of President Eisenhower's DC Auditorium Commission from 1955 to 1958, Commission of Fine Arts chairman David Finley arranged for the review of several possible sites for this facility and recommended the one on the Potomac River to the US Congress

After the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963, Congress voted to name the center in his honor. [Gutheim and Lee, pages 295-296]

(President Lyndon B. Johnson participated in the groundbreaking ceremony on December 2, 1964. The John K. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts opened on September 8, 1971.)

Searching for Connections

The District of Columbia was still assembling its full Interstate network for approval by BPR, with the U.S. 240 link still a major concern. In June 1957, District highway officials had finalized their plan for submission to BPR on July 1. These were the routes that would, if BPR approved, be eligible for construction in the next 13 years on a 90-10 matching basis.

The *Star* described the plans:

In broad outline, they connect an inner-loop skirting the downtown district with highways leading to Route 240 to Frederick, Md., to the northwest; to Richmond and points south and southwest, and to Baltimore and New York freeways to the northeast.

The District divided its system into five routes:

Route 1 – The still disputed connection to Route 240, running parallel to the Potomac river, \$47 million. The eight-lane roadway, partly elevated and partly depressed, would run from the District line to the west leg of the inner loop. A unique feature would be an extension of the Whitehurst freeway under one span of Key Bridge, one-way west, and a companion eastbound highway under another bridge span.

Route 2 – The Potomac River bridge leading to the west and north legs of the loop onto New York Avenue to the District line, \$141 million. Highway planners have included the bridge on the Federal plan, although the Senate has before it a bill for a tunnel at the Theodore Roosevelt island site.

Route 3 – The Southwest freeway linking the highway bridges across the Potomac with the center loop leg to the New York Avenue section to Route 2, \$95 million. Part of this alternately six and eight lane highway will shoot underground into a six-lane tunnel in front of the Capitol from D Street to Constitution Avenue under the Mall.

Route 4 – The Anacostia freeway alongside the Anacostia River to tie the projected Jones Point bridge to the new Eleventh Street bridge through the southwest to meet the Southwest freeway, \$55 million. This will join South Capitol Street with Route 3.

Route 5 – A continuation of the Anacostia freeway past the Eleventh Street Bridge on the Anacostia side to the East Capitol Street Bridge, \$12 million. At the latter bridge, the road picks up with widened, limited access Kenilworth Avenue to the interchange fanning to Baltimore.

The proposed District network did not include any Interstate highways in the northwest quadrant other than the Potomac River link to U.S. 240. The New York Avenue link to the Baltimore-Washington Parkway was the farthest north of any route in the northeast quadrant. [Bassett, Grace, "\$350 Million D.C. Plans For Expressways Readied," *The Evening Star*, June 19, 1957]

The New York Avenue expressway was planned from the Inner Loop at Florida Avenue to Bladensburg Road, NE., where it would connect with the Baltimore-Washington Parkway. The expressway would be six lanes for most of its length. District highway planner Brinkley said the expressway would include at least three interchanges as well as access ramps to cross roads.

The District's routes would have to match Maryland's and Virginia's plans for their Interstate networks in the Washington suburbs. During the meeting on January 15, 1957, discussed earlier, Federal Highway Administrator Volpe had approved the U.S. 240 Potomac River link to the Inner Loop and a connection at Washington Circle, but the Maryland routing was yet to be determined. Similarly, Maryland was proposing a separate alignment for the Baltimore-to-Washington line that would require a third east-side entrance across the District line (the other two being U.S. 1 and the parkway), rather than the parkway-New York Avenue link the city favored.

Brinkley said the New York Avenue expressway would also provide the connection to the District if Maryland secured approval of a Baltimore-Washington connection separate from the parkway. However, he said the highway department was studying a different connection with such a link because the present Kenilworth Avenue interchange limited the ability to add a third expressway to its capacity. [Deane, James G., "N.Y. Avenue Expressway In Road Plan," *The Evening Star*, June 16, 1957]

The prohibition of trucks on the Baltimore-Washington Parkway was a major factor in Maryland's thinking. BPR favored converting the Baltimore-Washington Parkway to an Interstate highway. The conversion would require transfer from NPS to the State, upgrading the pavement to carry trucks, and almost certainly an increase in the number of lanes, but the cost would be considerably less than that of a separate expressway link. Nevertheless, Maryland road officials preferred a third expressway connecting with the District near the Montgomery/Prince George's County line.

Colonel Welling wanted to pin down the connection. During a meeting of the regional coordinating committee on October 15, 1957, officials from Maryland and the District discussed the new expressway link between the two cities. The committee advised Welling to study a link to be located between Bladensburg Road, NE., and Kansas Avenue, NW. Director Robertson planned to ask Clarkeson Engineering Company to undertake the study.

The committee also considered the U.S. 240 link to the city, but could not resolve differences between the District, which favored the Potomac River route, and Maryland, which advocated a link in the Wisconsin Avenue corridor. ["Planners Still at Odds On Freeway D.C. Route," *The Evening Star*, October 16, 1957]

On October 18, Secretary of Commerce Sinclair Weeks announced designation of 2,102 miles of Interstate highways. The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 had authorized 1,000 miles of this amount by expanding the Interstate System from 40,000 miles to 41,000 miles. The additional miles came from identifying direct-as-practicable locations for previously designated routes. The *Star* reported that the mileage included about 4 miles for the District of Columbia that were not linked to a specific route. Robertson said he would seek BPR approval to use for the new 4-mile

link to the Baltimore-Washington Parkway. ["More U.S. Road Aid Opened for District," *The Evening Star*, October 19, 1957]

Not long after the District approved the Clarkeson contract, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission expressed concerns about the scope of the study. On November 27, the commission asked the District to study the area through the southeast quadrant of the city between Bladensburg Road and Southern Avenue along the southern District line. The commissioners were convinced that with the opening of the Baltimore Harbor Tunnel on November 29, 1957, most of the traffic using the third route between the two cities would come from east of Baltimore. They thought the new expressway should be south of the parkway rather than north as the Maryland State Roads Commission intended. This shift also would avoid the heavily populated areas of Prince George's County and the District and keep truck traffic out of those neighborhoods. In addition, moving the corridor to the southeast would allow it to serve the Anacostia Freeway and the new Jones Point Bridge while providing a better Interstate bypass for East Coast traffic. ["Maryland Planners Oppose D.C. Sector For Expressway," *The Evening Star*, November 28, 1957]

In December 1957, NPS was ready to begin construction of the 3.9-mile segment of the George Washington Memorial Parkway between the District line and Cabin John on land acquired for the project by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. The grading and drainage work would cover only two of the planned four lanes, with the lanes located between MacArthur Boulevard and the C&O Canal. Although building only two lanes initially would reduce local objections to the project, Director Wirth said the main reason for limiting the lanes was the NPS had only enough funds for four lanes. If the project remained on schedule, the two lanes carrying traffic in both directions would open in the spring of 1960 carrying two-way traffic. The second set of lanes would be built after the two-lane section reached Great Falls.

Wirth intended to have plans drawn at NPS expense to extend the parkway into the District as far as Glover-Archbold Parkway, but this routing conflicted with the District's plans for carrying U.S. 240 along the Potomac River. Further, the District's Robertson said he understood NPS would stop the parkway at the District line, with the city responsible for its extension. NPS opposed the city's plan for carrying U.S. 240 along the river, favoring instead the Wisconsin Avenue corridor for the link to the Inner Belt Freeway. [Beveridge, George, "Bids Open Tuesday On River Parkway," *The Evening Star*, December 8, 1957]

On the other side of the city, Clarkeson Engineering Company submitted plans for a 4.5-mile partly elevated New York Avenue expressway between Florida Avenue and a connection with the Baltimore-Washington Parkway. District highway officials were considering the plan. The elevated 1.5 segment would carry traffic from Fairview Avenue to beyond Bladensburg Road. Robertson, who expected the plan to be approved for 90-10 Interstate funds, said construction was not in the current 6-year plan. ["4½-Mile Road In N.E. Weighed," *The Evening Star*, December 19, 1957]

The Foggy Bottom controversy was resolved in November 1958 when District highway officials and NCPC agreed on the location of the West Leg of the Inner Loop. Under the plan, the northbound and southbound lanes of the eight-lane freeway would be close together on the west

side of 26th Street, NW., near the K Street interchange. The expressway would connect with the approach roads for the Constitution Avenue Bridge and meet the eight-lane Potomac River Freeway in what the *Star* called a “gigantic interchange” at 26th and K Streets. The Whitehurst Freeway would provide four of the lanes for the Potomac River Freeway, with the remainder to be built on a new structure.

The plan reduced the cost of the expressway by \$4 million, in part by reducing the impact on buildings in the area. Aitken, now the District’s planning chief, said the plan would not affect any “substantial building now existing in the Twenty-sixth street area.” It would require the taking of a “medium-sized apartment” building west of 26th Street between I and K Streets and a “small apartment” building under construction across the street from it. In addition, the expressway plan required the taking of the Indonesian Embassy, the former home of Evalyn Walsh McLean at 2020 Massachusetts Avenue, NW. (She was a wealthy heiress best known today as the former owner of the Hope Diamond, which is now the cornerstone of the Smithsonian Institution’s gem collection.) [Beveridge, George, “Expressway Okayed For Foggy Bottom,” *The Evening Star*, November 6, 1958; “D.C. Set to Order Expressway Plans,” *The Evening Star*, November 7, 1958]

The *Star*, acknowledging that some of Washington’s highway disputes can “produce irritating delays in needed traffic improvements,” said that in the case of the West Leg, the delay had resulted in “a superior plan which was well worth the waiting.” The earlier plans, with their drastic impacts on the area, “would have been a tragic mistake.” The new expressway “still will cause severe hardships, and this is one of the unfortunate prices the city must demand in order to obtain the traffic relief which only can come from the huge modern superhighways.” Officials, however, “must never relent” in the search for locations that would serve traffic while minimizing “possible disruption of surrounding community values.” [“Success in Foggy Bottom,” *The Evening Star*, November 10, 1958]

In December, Clarkeson Engineering Company submitted a progress report on a connector with Maryland’s third expressway, part of I-95, between Baltimore and Washington. As called for in its contract, Clarkeson identified routes between Bladensburg Road, NE., and Kansas Avenue, NW. The four possible routes through the District’s northeast quadrant linked the Inner Loop with the Maryland expressway, but were oriented to the District links to the Baltimore-Washington Parkway. Clarkeson was to narrow the selection to a single route in its final report in several months. [Barron, John, “Four Routes Drafted For New Expressway,” *The Sunday Star*, December 29, 1958]

Within the District, the Brookland Citizens Association objected to one of the routes because it would cut through property used by public and parochial schools. The route cut through the community between 10th and 12th Streets, NE., with Crosby Noyes School, St. Anthony’s High School, Brookland School, and St. Anthony’s Elementary School in the expressway’s path. [“School Damages By Route Cited,” *The Evening Star*, February 10, 1959]

While District officials were debating alternatives, Maryland selected a route for I-95 in Prince George’s County to the circumferential that BPR had approved. Inside the circumferential, Maryland was unsure, but the *Star* summarized:

However, present thinking is that the freeway would pass east of Knollwood and New Hampshire Estates. It would cross University boulevard West close to University Hills and pass west of the new Princes Georges Plaza shopping center. At the District line the highway would cross at either Gallatin street N.E. or near Michigan avenue N.E.

Maryland is waiting for the District to come up with its route. There is a possibility of an entirely new freeway route in the District or a connection combining a new freeway and a New York avenue expressway from some point west of West Virginia avenue.
[Alibrando, Alfred P., "New York Avenue Crisis Doubles," *The Sunday Star*, July 12, 1959]

In July 1960, Clarkeson Engineering Company offered a new alternative for the Northeast Freeway connection to I-95 in Maryland, the "third route to Baltimore." The best option, the company concluded, was to build it along the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad tracks running through the northeast quadrant, one block east of Catholic University. The freeway, with a mix of six- and eight-lane segments, would begin where the North and East Legs of the Inner Loop meet at Florida Avenue and K Street, NE.:

From there, the freeway would go along Montello avenue, curve north just beyond Holbrook terrace and go over New York avenue and Kendall street on a 1,950-foot viaduct.

At W street, the freeway would go under Brentwood road, Rhode Island avenue and Irving street. From there to Varnum street, the freeway would run alongside the railroad tracks except for skirting around the Catholic Sisters' College and the northwest corner of Providence Hospital.

The freeway would swing east at Varnum and hook up with Maryland's extension just south of Galloway street.

The freeway extension of I-95 would have eight lanes north of New York Avenue, and six to the avenue's south. Interchanges would be built at New York, Rhode Island, Michigan, and South Dakota Avenues as well as Fort Drive. The width of the freeway would be expanded 51 feet to accommodate rapid transit in the median.

The 4.14-mile, \$74-million route would cost more than other options, but Clarkeson concluded it was the best bargain. By running along the railroad tracks, it would be less disruptive to homes and businesses already accustomed to railroad noises. The routing avoided schools, playgrounds, and shopping areas, but would require the taking of 1,095 homes, 103 apartment buildings, 39 industrial sites, and one church, but no schools. The report estimated the cost of acquiring the properties to be \$30.8 million.

At a projected 108,000 vehicles a day, it would handle more traffic than the other options and "affords excellent connections for the urban dweller in his daily commuting to the downtown area." The preferred alternative avoided the Catholic University campus and would be built

below ground level in an open cut “to reduce the disturbance to serenity in the neighborhood.” The route would require use of some undeveloped land of the Catholic Sisters College.

District Engineer Commissioner Welling, who was about to step down, said he wanted to get the study “out on the table” before leaving his post. He planned to submit the study to NCPC for review. One point he was “particularly insistent” about was that the median be wide enough to accommodate a rapid rail line. [“Survey Backs B&O Route For Proposed New Freeway,” *The Sunday Star*, July 24, 1960; Eisen, Jack, “Third Route to Baltimore Would Skirt Catholic U.,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, July 24, 1960]

For one of his final acts, General Welling participated in the groundbreaking ceremony for the Potomac River Freeway at Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway and K Street, NW. On July 25, 1960, District Highway Director Aitken staged an elaborate ceremony for the groundbreaking because it would be Welling’s last in the District before he left for his new post commanding the Corps of Engineers Ballistic Missile Construction Center in Los Angeles:

In addition to two 75-mm. salute guns, which fired off five rounds, a miniature “guided missile” was fired.

The “missile,” about a foot long, was launched by Gen. Welling’s [9-year old] son, Peter, who attended the ceremony. After he pulled the cord, the “missile” went about 30 feet in the air, and then came down again.

As a final touch, Gen. Welling got into the driver’s seat of a caterpillar front-end loader tractor, and picked up the first mechanized shovel-full of the new freeway.

General Welling teased reporters, telling them, “One thing I don’t want you to write is that ‘Gen. Welling held his last groundbreaking as commissioner.’ You can never tell if this is the last.” [“Welling Starts Potomac Freeway,” *The Evening Star*, July 26, 1960]

His successor, Colonel Frederick J. Clarke, had spent 10 years in the Washington area on three previous assignments. He was coming from Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri where he was chief of staff at the U.S. Army Training Center. He said of his new assignment that the post was “one of the choice jobs of the corps of engineers. I was very glad to get it.” A profile in the *Star* said he expected to feel at home in dealing with the District’s construction issues because of his experience in the field. “I strongly favor working with the neighboring town, county and State Governments on such matters as reducing traffic congestion and improving water supply.” He added, “I recognize that many of these things cannot be solved unilaterally.”

Colonel Clarke, who would take his oath of office on August 1, 1960, was meeting with General Welling to discuss the issues facing the District. On August 19, he took a helicopter tour of the city for an aerial view of public works projects. He observed the Jones Point Bridge/Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge project, Glover-Archbold Park, and the Pooks Hill terminus of I-70-S in Maryland. After the flight, he commented that there is “not a great deal of room in the Glover-Archbold Park” for the planned parkway. [Pierce, Charles D., “Clarke Sees Joint Action Cure to Area Problems,” *The Sunday Star*, July 24, 1960; “Col. Clarke Takes Oath As New

Commissioner,” *The Evening Star*, August 1, 1960; “Clarke Gets Copter View of Projects,” *The Evening Star*, August 20, 1960]

On August 29, the Senate confirmed Colonel Clarke’s promotion to Brigadier General.

By November, opposition to freeway construction in northeast was growing. At an all-day public hearing on November 7, 1960, the District Commissioners heard 35 witnesses discuss the East Leg, which was to run along 11th Street from the Anacostia River through Lincoln Park in a tunnel to Florida Avenue, and the Northeast Freeway. One common theme heard during the hearing was to leave Lincoln Park alone. NPS describes Lincoln Park as “the largest Capitol Hill Park,” located “directly east of the United States Capitol Building at East Capitol and 11th Street in the Northeastern quadrant of the City.” The park, which was part of Pierre L’Enfant’s 1791 plan for the national capital, was renamed for President Lincoln in 1867.

William Finley, NCPC’s executive director (1958-1962), testified that his agency would offer modifications for the East Leg to avoid Lincoln Park and 16 homes in the 100 block of 11th Street. The homes, known as Philadelphia Row, had been built shortly after the Civil War in the Federal style of the 19th century. The National Trust for Historic Preservation had designated the row as worthy of preservation. Trust historian Hellen [sic] Deprey testified that the road “has great architectural merit and still retains much of its original quality.”

Witnesses emphasized the hardships the recommended route for the Northeast Freeway would cause businesses, churches, and property owners. Walter B. Lewis of the North Michigan Park Civic Association opposed the route, which he pointed out would take homes owned mainly by non-white residents. “The problem of the race of displaced families cannot be overlooked in the Washington area.” He added, “The housing available to Negroes is practically limited to that found in the District, since very few housing opportunities are offered to Negroes in the suburbs.”

Frank Coleman of the Brookland Civic Association raised the same issue. “Many of these citizens either will be forced to move to areas already congested, or by reason of such a mass migration, will cause congestion in the areas to which they move.” He recommended that the commissioners appoint a housing committee, including white and Negro members, to study the problem.

The “spirited public hearing,” as the *Star* described it, left the commissioners to consider whether to change their plans. [Gimble, Gilbert, “Route Change Pondered For Northeast Freeway,” *The Evening Star*, November 8, 1960]

In March 1961, General Clarke decided on new routes for the East Leg of the Inner Loop and the Northeast Freeway. The East Leg would be placed between 10th and 11th Streets. He disregarded suggestions from citizens who wanted to move the freeway to the 19th Street corridor; his concern was that it would cut into the National Arboretum. He also proposed to include two spurs to serve the new District of Columbia Stadium, then under construction at East Capitol Street. The spurs would follow Benning Road on the north and Potomac Avenue on the south and end in stadium parking lots. (The stadium, which opened in October 1961, housed

Washington's baseball and football teams. In 1969, the name was changed to Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium.)

For the Northeast Expressway, General Clarke recommended that I-95 cross the District line just east of Sargent Road, proceed through the wooded Fort Drive right-of-way to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad tracks. It would stay on the east side of the tracks and cut across Harmony Cemetery, which had been cleared, to avoid residential disruption in Brookland. After crossing the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks, the freeway followed along the east side of West Virginia Avenue to the link with the East Leg at Florida Avenue.

General Clarke submitted his recommendations to NCPC for consideration. [Gimble, Gilbert, "Clarke Shifts East Leg of Inner Loop," *The Sunday Star*, March 26, 1961]

The *Star* appreciated General Clarke's effort to "ease the impact of this major thoroughfare," including preservation of Philadelphia Row. "It also is good news that a proposed route . . . has been laid out, ending uncertainty that was unfair to property owners in that area." Unfortunately, some "disruptive effect" was inevitable, "but we are convinced that the inner loop in the end will benefit the whole Metropolitan Area." ["To Ease the Impact," *The Evening Star*, April 3, 1961]

On April 6, NCPC approved the shifts in the East Leg and the Northeast Freeway, with one exception. Because of NPS objections, the section through wooded Fort Drive was left pending further discussions. In addition, NCPC conditioned its approval on Maryland roads officials providing the I-95 link to the Northeast Freeway without seriously harming Northwest Branch in Prince George's County. [Gimble, Gilbert, "Planners OK Route Change For Inner Loop," *The Evening Star*, April 6, 1961]

Opposition to the plan arose quickly from the Northeast Washington Citizens Association. It joined the Capitol Hill Citizens Association on April 18 in opposing the 10th-11th Street routing of the East Leg. The two associations called for a public hearing to consider the routing. ["Northeast Group Joins Opposition To Freeway Plan," *The Evening Star*, April 19, 1961]

Later in the year, the Capitol Hill Southeast Citizens Association joined the opposition to the East Leg because it would "make Washington a key military as well as political target." As part of I-95, it could be bombed. The association's resolution suggested that "ordinary prudence and a sense of economy would seem to indicate that heavy through-traffic freeways could be built some miles distant from the capital at less expense and remain clear of rubble and open to military, trucking and other traffic in time of emergency." The association asked the District commissioners to determine whether "it is in the best interest of the national defense to locate the principal Maine-Florida truck route through the heart of the Nation's Capital." ["East Leg Protested As Military Target," *The Evening Star*, October 10, 1961]

The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad also was concerned about the routing of the Northeast Freeway. The company wanted to build a spur off Porto Rico Avenue and Taylor Street, NE., to serve the industrial area, but the tentative location of the Northeast Freeway would take this property to avoid taking nearby residences. The company had attempted to secure legislation allowing it to construct the railroad siding. Congress had completed work on the legislation with

Senate approval on September 7. However, President Kennedy had vetoed the bill on September 22, saying, “For the government to encourage the private development of property which it plans to acquire for public use seems inappropriate.” By “public use,” he meant the right-of-way of the Northeast Freeway. In vetoing the bill, President Kennedy took the advice of NCPC’s executive director, William Finley.

A railroad spokesman, Laidler B. Mackall, said the company would build the spur anyway. The route of the Northeast Freeway had not yet been approved. In response, District highway officials said that regardless of the railroad’s action, they would acquire the property rather than displace the many families in the area.

On October 11, Mackall asked the District commissioners to shift the freeway alignment. If the commissioners insisted on retaining the current freeway routing, the railroad recommended an elevated structure similar to the Whitehurst Freeway that would allow the property to remain available for industrial purposes. [“Third Baltimore Route Briefing Slated Friday,” *The Evening Star*, September 27, 1961; “Freeway Shift Asked by B&O,” *The Evening Star*, October 11, 1961]

NCPC also was considering whether the East Leg would harm the city. The manager of the District division of AAA, John W. Childress, said “it is inconceivable” that officials would drop or delay the Inner Loop. [“Freeway Shift Asked by B&O,” *The Evening Star*, October 11, 1961]

Preserving the Lincoln Memorial

The NPS was still looking for ways to avoid traffic impacts on the Lincoln Memorial from the new Theodore Roosevelt Bridge.

On September 26, 1960, NPS Director Wirth held a press conference to announce that he would submit plans to NCPC for a tunnel under the Lincoln Memorial grounds. The tunnel was part of an overall plan for the grounds because, as Wirth said, “There are moments when the memorial is engulfed in a sea of cars It is time that we restored the calm tranquility of the scene by eliminating the buzzing traffic between the Memorial and its reflecting pool.” The plan included:

- Replacing a portion of the traffic circle with a plaza between the memorial steps and the Reflecting Pool, eliminating the traffic that designers had called “a vexing and hazardous” condition;
- Roadways on each edge of the pool with parking lots for memorial visitors, leading to a circle around the Washington Monument grounds with feeder connections to downtown;
- Independence Avenue would be carried through the 1,435-foot tunnel as a link between the Roosevelt Bridge and the Inner Loop;
- The tunnel would consist of two driveways of three lanes each, with traffic out of view;
- The tunnel, designed by the New York firm of Singstad and Baillie, would be built under the memorial grounds but not under any portion of the Lincoln Memorial itself;
- The tunnel entrances would be hidden from view by plantings and grading, with no traffic noise reaching the monument;

- A 212-foot underpass would carry Ohio Drive traffic underground between the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway bridge leading to the Lincoln Memorial to the north entrance of the tunnel;
- Temporary government buildings on the south side of the Reflecting Pool area would be eliminated as part of the project.

As Wirth saw it, traffic on Arlington Memorial Bridge would be reduced significantly when the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge opened, but motorists using either bridge would follow the Reflecting Pool roads between the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument circle. Wirth wanted to secure approval of the \$16-million tunnel plan as soon as possible so the tunnel could be completed before the Roosevelt Bridge opened. (Other aspects of the overall plan increased the total estimated cost to \$20 million.)

The overall plan, he said, would preserve “the dignity, beauty, serenity and magnificent setting of the Lincoln Memorial.” [Gimble, Gilbert, “Tunnel Plan Ready For Lincoln Shrine,” *The Evening Star*, September 26, 1960; Gimble, Gilbert, “‘Bonus’ Seen in Lincoln Memorial Road Plan” *The Evening Star*, September 27, 1960]

The District generally supported the Wirth plan as long as the city would not have to pay for it, but wanted to provide for other traffic movements. During a meeting, General Clarke and Wirth agreed on several points. One concern was that the tunnel plan did not include a direct connection between Arlington Memorial Bridge and the State Department. The District agreed to try to add a direct connection from the north entrance of the tunnel to E Street, NW.

Wirth agreed to a ramp allowing traffic on the Roosevelt Bridge to use the George Washington Memorial Parkway on the Virginia side of the Potomac River. He was concerned the parkway might be overwhelmed by increased commuter traffic, but reluctantly agreed as part of the District-NPS compromise after District officials agreed to yield somewhat on approach roads. The District agreed to seek approval from Virginia and BPR for two-lane ramps from the bridge to Arlington Boulevard that would attract more motorists than the single-lane parkway ramp.

Another gap in Wirth’s plan was a link for westbound traffic on Independence Avenue bound for Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway. The District and NPS agreed to design an intersection at 15th Street for this link. [Gimble, Gilbert, “Parkway Link For New Span Wins Approval,” *The Sunday Star*, October 2, 1960]

NCPC approved the NPS tunnel plan on October 6. Wirth told the commissioners that the Bureau of the Budget appeared favorable to the plan but had not yet approved it. [Gimble, Gilbert, “Planners Okay Tunnel Project,” *The Evening Star*, October 6, 1960]