

## SYMPOSIUM ON "ROADSIDES--THEIR USE AND PROTECTION"

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A SYMPOSIUM on roadside use and protection constituted the first session of the Committee on Roadside Development at the 1953 annual meeting of the Highway Research Board. The meeting was presided over by Chairman Harold J. Neale. Those participating in the panel discussion were: Allan Lee, Design Engineer of the Maryland State Roads Commission; Wilbur S. Smith, Traffic Engineer, Bureau of Highway Traffic, Yale University; Mrs. Vance R. Hood, President, New Jersey Roadside Council; Burton W. Marsh, Director, Traffic Engineering and Safety Department, American Automobile Association; and Fred W. Tuemmler, City and Regional Planning Consultant, College Park, Maryland. David R. Levin, Chief, Land Studies Section, Bureau of Public Roads, was moderator of the Panel.

There is, as most of us know, an intimate relationship between the highway and its roadsides. The highway affects adjacent land uses, often stimulating their development; and, in turn, these land uses affect the movement of vehicles on the highway, often interfering with their safest and most efficient operation.

The purpose of the symposium was to isolate the conditions and consequences that result from the interaction of the highway and its roadsides, each upon the other; and, once having identified the problem, to seek those directions of betterment that will promote greater safety and facility of highway travel and, at the same time, improve the physical and functional character of the adjacent areas themselves. These two objectives are not inconsistent with each other. Evidence a plenty is now being assembled to prove that those measures which improve the character of highway service will also improve the character of the roadsides, and vice versa.

Mr. Lee, a competent highway designer from a forward-looking state, approached the roadside problem from a design point of view. He indicated that considerations that make sense from the standpoint of roadside protection are the same considerations that prompt the designer to do what he does in every-day operations. Mr. Lee emphasized this in terms of right-of-way determinations, in matters relating to access, rural and urban location, the provision of recreational areas, channelization, and other aspects.

Mr. Smith, a traffic engineer of renown, concerned himself largely with traffic engineering matters. He approached the roadside problem in terms of the operational characteristics of our highway accommodations. A plea was made to look at the matter from the standpoint of the safety and efficiency of highway travel, and with a frank recognition of the realities of the situation.

Mrs. Hood, who has urged roadside protection for many years, spoke earnestly for the garden clubs and civic groups. She discussed the Blue Star Memorial Highway movement, and its widespread implications. The memorial highway concept, she said, embraces much more than the mere designation of a particular route with appropriate markers. It envisions, in its deeper significance, the adoption of physical and functional standards which characterize the modern highway. So conceived, the (memorial) highway can become a thing of beauty, and of safety and efficiency as well.

Mr. Marsh, a top official of the motorists group, who has been in the forefront to obtain improvement of the highway corridors, urged that it just does not make sense to expend large sums of highway-user tax funds in the construction of sorely needed major roads unless proper attention is given in advance to the roadside aspect of highway planning and design. If proper roadside designs are developed and put into effect, it will prevent loss of major portions of our road capacity. He emphasized the fact that inadequate rights-of-way frequently cause physical and functional limitations in all attempts to build a modern highway plant. He indicated the need for control of access. He concluded by saying that the roadside is fundamentally an important, integral part of the highway and should be treated as such. It must receive greater attention.

Mr. Tuemmler, a planner who has been associated in an important and practical way with the problems in this field, did an excellent job of integrating the approach toward solution of roadside difficulties--by combining design, traffic, and other considerations. He ventured the opinion that no matter what kind of program one may have in mind, control of highway access should lead the march toward progress. He indicated the potentialities of roadside zoning and subdivision control, and some of the practical achievements in designated areas.

Active discussion followed the presentation of the panelists' formal remarks.

Valuable data have been assembled as a result of a comprehensive questionnaire on roadside protection, circulated among the several states through the good offices of the coordinators of the Roadside Development Committee. The efforts of those who so unselfishly contributed to these inquiries are acknowledged with gratitude and appreciation.

It is planned by those who sponsored this panel discussion on roadside use and protection to issue a separate report on it. This will contain in full the papers of all of the panelists of the roadside protection session, the discussion that followed, a detailed presentation of the questionnaire material referred to above, and much additional data on current roadside protection practices.