

HOW PAVEMENTS PAY THEMSELVES



Experience of Many Cities Shows That Good Pavements Add Greatly to All Property Values—Read This Evidence.

Public Improvement Most Effective by Increasing City's Healthfulness and Beauty—Also Pays Best Cash Profits.

There is no case on record where any community has ever regretted the improvement of its roads. This statement is quoted from a bulletin of the office of public works, discussing the increase in land values that results from highway improvement. In a previous article this subject was brought out the general advantages of having well paved streets and those and more of them.

This week we present evidence that no one can controvert to prove that good streets increase property values to an extent rarely in excess of the cost of pavement.

In a general way everybody knows that this is so, but we are now dealing with general impressions. What the taxpayer wants are facts. Here they are, collected from impartial sources.

After reading this evidence any reasonable man will be convinced—if he needs convincing—that the public improvement that counts most toward making city life comfortable, healthy and attractive is also the one that pays the biggest dividend in dollars and cents.

Paving Brings 20 Per Cent Increase.

An inquiry on this point—the increase in property values that result from good pavements—was addressed to E. C. Pa. from which this report comes: "The real estate men of this city when a street is paved, immediately add 10 per cent to the cost of the pavement per foot of the street. For instance, the cost of the pavement in front of a certain piece of property figures \$2.00 per foot of frontage; they would add \$1 per foot to the value of the property, or 50 per cent of the cost of the pavement."

Instances of this kind could be multiplied almost indefinitely. As a result of inquiries sent to forty of fifty city officials, these responses can be noted: "This information comes from small and large communities. The rule holds good everywhere. Read these replies carefully if at all skeptical as to the efficiency of good smooth pavements in boosting the value of your property."

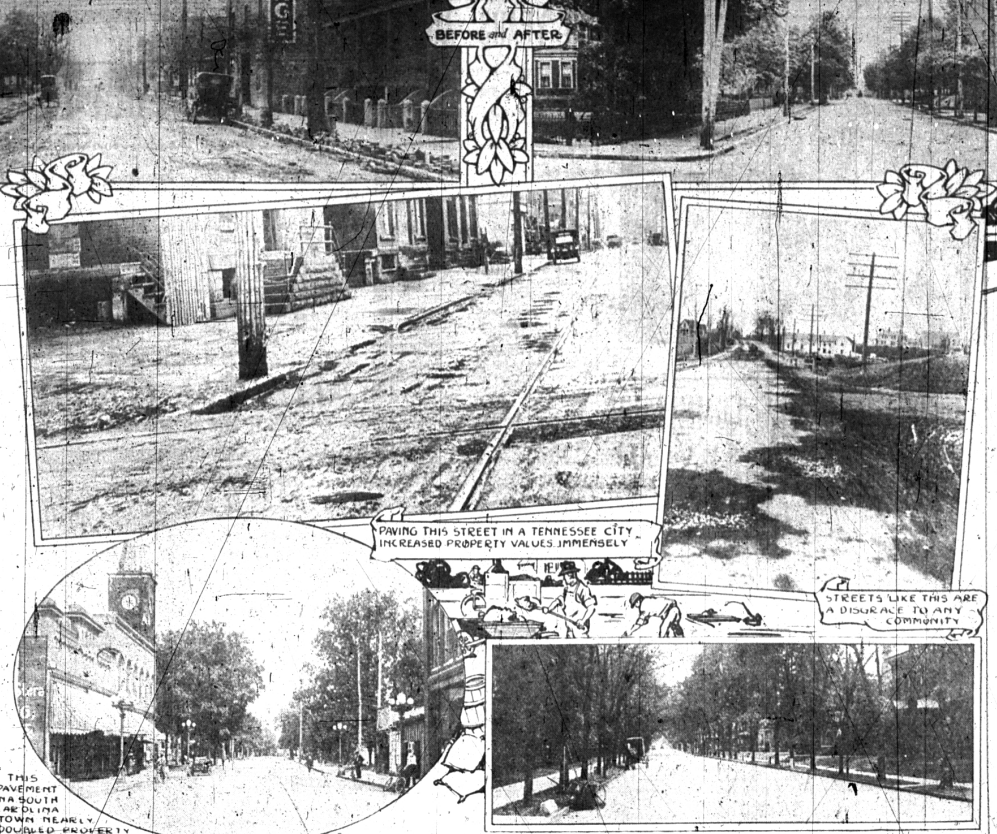
Our estimate is that a piece of property on a paved street is 15 to 20 per cent more valuable than on an unpaved street.—Fred R. Drake, Member of Board of Assessors, Ashburn, N. Y.

Figures relating to this matter vary, but in one instance where a street was improved in 1886 the valuation increased from 60 to 75 cents per foot.—John J. O'Connell, Street Commissioner's Office, Boston.

Property Owners Awe Pleased.

Referring to the extension of a paved street, John C. Moseley, secretary board of assessors of Buffalo, says: "The actual, noticeable enhancement of value by this improvement is difficult to determine, but it is safe to say that, as a whole, it would mean an advance of 50 per cent."

Considerable saving has been done here during the last five years, and



THE KIND OF PAVEMENTS TO BE PROUD OF.

paid for by owners of realty on the street improved. Better prices prevail and land sells more rapidly when on paved streets.—N. Frank, Auditor, Pasadena, Cal.

Simon A. Merkel, secretary of the board of assessors of Pittsburgh, gives two instances of the increase of property valuation as a result of paving. One of these is on 10th street, which was paved in 1907. The value of property on this street increased \$18,000 in value in four years. Another piece of property on Sandusky street between Penn and Duquesne ways increased from \$1,900 to \$1,775 per front foot.

In 1907 an area was annexed to this city, where property sold in 1885 at \$11 per front foot, when the city paved it. In 1910 owners of the property sold \$150 per front foot for the same property which in 1907 sold for \$11.—City Auditor, Richmond, Va.

Always Raises Value.

Paving always has caused an increase in value of abutting property, and also of other property in the neighborhood. This increase usually greatly exceeds the cost of the paving.—City Assessor, Sioux City, Ia.

There can be no doubt but that property owners and does take on subject value by reason of an outlay for paving in front of it.—City Auditor, Spokane, Wash.

As an instance of the increase in value of property as a result of paving,

Charles M. Slocum, deputy city engineer, Springfield, Mass., mentions Catherine street and Walnut street, where paving raised the valuation of the property 25 per cent.

William F. Richards, assessor of the District of Columbia, says that he has known of cases where "the mere talk of improvement" has raised values two and three years before actual work was done, and also of many cases where land prices that were on the downward grade were arrested by roadway improvement.

"I am of the opinion that land has increased at least 25 per cent as a result of street paving, whether charged against the abutting property or paid for out of general revenues. In no case in our city have lots sold for less than double the cost of the pavement in excess of the value of the lots before paving. Where lots sold for \$1,250 before paving they sold for at least \$1,500 afterward.—Nicholas A. Glaser, City Assessor, Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

A Great Factor in Building.

Last spring there was some talk in Allentown, Pa., of cutting down its paving program. At once there was a storm of protest from the citizens. The local newspapers gave voice to this general feeling, and one paper, the leader, responded with a published conviction.

"It is a long time since we have seen a city so bold as to do more or less paving when it has a reputation as being a clean and progressive city. It

tended materially to attract population and was a great factor in the wonderful building record that placed Allentown at the top of American cities in the erection of new houses the past four or five years.

"The city's own investment was small. All the city ever did was to pay for the street intersections, the property owners and transportation companies doing the rest. And it paid.

"The valuation of property on West street from Hamilton to Walnut before paving in 1907 was \$10,720, and the present assessment with paving is \$12,000.

"On Twelfth street from Liberty to Both avenues the gain with \$1,700 spent for paving was more than \$90,000 in assessment on an investment of \$1,700.

"On Eighteenth street from Hamilton to Walnut the gain in value was \$30,000 on an investment of \$250 in paving.

"A Kansas authority on paving answered an inquiry by saying: "It is a hard proposition to make any definite statement as to what extent paving enhances the value of property; it will increase the value of cheap residence property—that is, in the best residential sections the property value is enhanced more by good paving than by cheap sections. But no matter what kind of property is involved, it becomes more readily salable and more readily rented if the street is paved

and the sale price and rental price will be higher.

"In the little town of West Plains, Mo. there was a tract of land ninety feet front that was apparently unsalable before the street was paved—that is, the owner could not find a purchaser for it. After it was paved, an informed man was sold for \$1,500 in advance of what was asked for before it was paved, and the pavement assessment that it amounted to about \$400.

"The property owner in a small city, without making a study of the proposition, very likely conceives the idea that street paving is expensive and hard to pay for. One of the best public improvements here I know of is the law governing public improvements of the cities of the second class in Kansas. Under this law the city at large pays for all intersections; the balance is assessed against the property affected by the paving.

Tax Burden Light.

"These assessments can be paid in ten annual installments. And it will therefore be seen that the payment for pavement does not work a hardship upon the property owners. In fact, the fact that the deferred payments cannot bear more than a 6 per cent interest rate, the city gets a good bargain, saved \$50 for the paving job. We see that the annual tax will be but a trifle over \$10 per acre of the street now paved, and that no one who has had the

advantages of good paving would ever turn up for such a small yearly tax.

"Although there is no doubt whatever as to the increase of property values as the result of paving, this is not the best argument for this improvement. The best reason for street paving is that it adds so substantially to the comfort, health and attractiveness of any community.

There is a lot of truth in this statement, as every one can testify who has lived on a well paved street and on one that was either muddy or dusty and uneven. But what we wanted to point out in this article was that good pavements pay a good money investment, and that we have demonstrated, if you are at all conversant with that investment in paving depends, among other things, upon how good a pavement is obtained—not necessarily how expensive. But how good of its kind and how well adapted to local conditions. Brick, for example, is a good pavement under some conditions, but it is noisy, hard on cars and unnecessarily costly. Various forms of bituminous pavement have been developed to meet varying needs—about as capable as asphaltic concrete, for example, for highways of lesser importance. All of these forms of pavement are equally good as long as they meet the needs of the community, and they are equally good as long as they are not too expensive. We want pavements, but we want good ones that will last long after the memory of their cost has passed away. We have quoted the statement of Captain Mark Brooks, assistant engineer and commissioner of the District of Columbia, that "cost" and "durability" are considered, but that "durability" is the most important factor in the selection of a pavement. He says that the most important factor in the selection of a pavement is its ability to stand up under the most severe conditions of use. He also says that the most important factor in the selection of a pavement is its ability to stand up under the most severe conditions of use.

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