Elizabeth Rowe Seen Heading
By Laurence Stern Staff Reporter
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Elizabeth Rowe Seen Heading Planning Board

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Staff Reporter

Elizabeth Rowe, an ardent transit partisan in Washington's current debate over freeways and subways, is now reportedly in line for the chairmanship of the National Capital Planning Commission.

Although the White House declined comment, it was learned that President Kennedy may announce the appointment before the NCPC meets Thursday to take its crucial stand on the city's planned 300-million-dollar Inner Loop Freeway.

Reports last week indicated that Washington financial consultant Walter C. Louchheim, who still is expected to fill a new vacancy on the NCPC, would be designated by the White House as chairman.

Mrs. Rowe, a third-generation Washingtonian who last May became the first woman named to the planning body, would succeed A. M. Woodruff, an Eisenhower appointee, in the top job. A Democrat, she was President Kennedy's first appointee to the Commission.

Last month Mrs. Rowe sided with a four-member majority of the NCPC who voted to withhold approval of four key Inner Loop projects. She supported a motion by Alexander C. Robinson 3d, who said he wanted to be "reconvinced" that the massive Loop project is needed.

The Loop, a proposed 18-mile double-ring freeway around downtown Washington, is the center of a broader community debate over whether new expressways or mass transit should play the dominant role in Washington's transportation future.

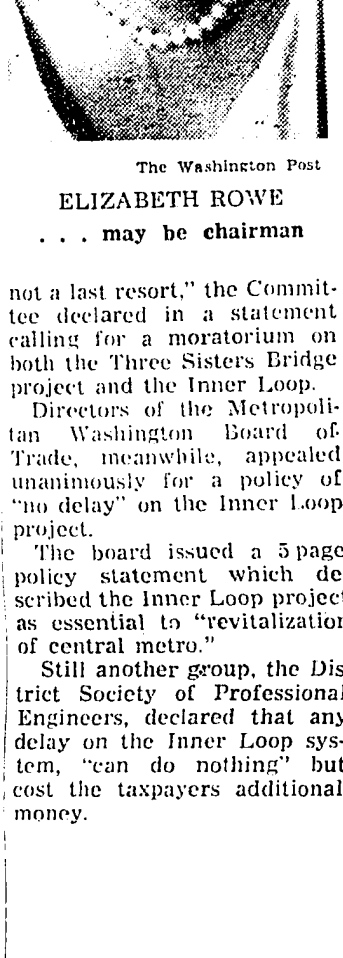
Supporters of the big ring road, to be financed with 90 per cent Federal aid, say it is needed to keep the central city from strangling under the impact of steadily-increasing traffic congestion.

Opponents argue that the freeway will have a harmful social and aesthetic effect on the city. It will also dilute the pressure for mass transit, they maintain.

In other developments the District Democratic Central Committee and Washington Board of Trade took opposite sides yesterday on the Inner Loop controversy.

Democratic leaders, with only one abstention, called on District Commissioners to defer further freeway construction until the National Capital Transportation Agency assesses the prospects for a rapid rail and bus system.

"Transit should be a first, not a last resort," the Committee declared in a statement calling for a moratorium on both the Three Sisters Bridge project and the Inner Loop.



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ELIZABETH ROWE
. . . may be chairman

Directors of the Metropolitan Washington Board of Trade, meanwhile, appealed unanimously for a policy of "no delay" on the Inner Loop project.

The board issued a 5-page policy statement which described the Inner Loop project as essential to "revitalization of central metro."

Still another group, the District Society of Professional Engineers, declared that any delay on the Inner Loop system, "can do nothing" but cost the taxpayers additional money.

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