



DEPARTMENT OF
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NEWS

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR F. C. TURNER AT THE OPENING GENERAL SESSION OF THE 28TH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE SOUTHEASTERN ASSOCIATION OF STATE HIGHWAY OFFICIALS, AT ATLANTA, GEORGIA, DECEMBER 8, 1969

STATE TRANSPORTATION POLICY MAKING

It is always a pleasure for me to attend the SASHO Convention and to meet with so many friends and colleagues in the highway fraternity.

I am grateful for this opportunity to talk with you about what I believe is our obligation, as public officials, to broaden our role of service to the public. I would like to discuss the general subject of State transportation policy-making and the responsibilities that we, as highway officials, have in this area. I believe that within the next year or two some crucial decisions for the long term future may have to be made, and I hope I can offer a suggestion or two that could be helpful to the Southeastern States.

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Americans today are the most mobile people in the world, and very much of this mobility is due to the transportation we have labored to build -- highway transportation. We average 5,000 vehicle miles a year of highway travel for every man, woman and child in this country. This is more than ten times the travel mileage of all other modes put together, despite some rather remarkable growths in those other modes.

But, in spite of what we have accomplished for transportation in the past, we are inevitably compelled to look to the future, because this nation is literally on the move every second of every day and night. Its demands for transportation services keep growing at about 5 percent a year and have been steadily growing at this rate for 20 years -- a rate that is about twice our rate of population growth.

In the next 20 years we will probably have to double our present transportation capacity if we are to maintain our required mobility and keep pace with the nation's growth.

In the face of such a huge demand for transportation, any and all modes must be utilized and fostered in a mix that will provide the desired level and most efficient combination of service. Our approach, therefore, must necessarily consider transportation in its totality. It must recognize that the various forms of land, sea and air transport all combine to comprise a single transportation system.

This implies that our policy-making machinery must be shaped to deal with all of the elements of the system if we are to manage

effectively its development and operation.

Creation of the U.S. Department of Transportation year before last was designed to be a partial response to this need on the National level. Within the individual States there is a similar policy-making need, and a number of States individually are now searching for their own solutions.

In looking at this subject of State transportation policy making, we need to begin, I believe, with a clear understanding of the facts of life concerning the transportation system we have today -- the system we start with in building for the future.

Although many people do not recognize it -- and some few others refuse to -- one undeniable and overriding fact is that highways provide the overwhelming proportion of the transportation services used by Americans today -- a set of circumstances developed principally by our individual choices working collectively to decide what kind of a transportation system we want.

Within this total transportation system, highways are clearly the dominant mode. And I don't mean just a little bit more than the rest, I mean from 5 to 100 times as much as all other modes put together depending upon what particular yardstick we may be using. They are the backbone of our whole mobility network.

Within the country's 233 urban areas of more than 50,000 population 99 percent of all person-trips and 98 per cent of all person-miles of travel **are by highway vehicle.**

Likewise in intercity travel, it is estimated that of over one trillion person-miles annually, 88 percent of such travel is by highway.

As you would expect, air travel is also large, but it is second with 93 billion person-miles or less than 9 percent of the total. Thus, the highway modes is more than 10 times as big.

In intercity freight movement, highway transportation does not match the preponderant position it has with passengers, but even here it is quite extensive. Of a total of 1,700 billion ton miles of freight movement, 353 billion or about 20 percent are by truck. Rail, with its longer haul of the heavier bulk commodities, accounts for 42 percent of the ton miles.

But when we go inside all of our urban communities themselves, we find that virtually everything -- and I do mean everything -- moves by rubber tired vehicles operating on our highway and street network. How do all the things we use here in Atlanta for example get around in this place except by highway and street?

If, instead of ton-miles, we use a yardstick of dollars, truck transportation then becomes considerably greater than other modes. The revenues of ICC regulated carriers in 1967 showed \$10.1 billion of truck revenue or 44 percent of the total, compared to \$9.9 billion or 43 percent for rail, but when we add in the cost of goods moved by private carriers not under ICC regulations, the total freight transportation bill is then raised to \$70 billion, of which 73 percent is accounted for by trucks.

Overall transportation expenditures provide another yardstick by which to measure the highway role. Our latest figures, for 1967, show total costs for highway transportation of \$128 billion. This is 82 percent of all transportation costs, or 4/5 of the total; 4 times as much as all others put together, and representing 16 percent of the Gross National Product.

I cite these statistics simply to reflect the fact that when we talk about transportation in the United States we must think predominantly about highways.

In addition, highways tie all the other modes together. Not one of the other modes can be self-contained like highways can be. No one of the others can provide all of the travel required for either goods or services to their final destination and thus must depend on highways at some part of the trip.

Take air travel, for example. Virtually every air traveler requires highways to complete some part of every trip. But more than that, the airplane crews, maintenance operations, air traffic control, passenger food service, and the whole air terminal complex -- couldn't function without highways.

The same applies to rail travel.

So highways are not only a large prime mover of people and goods in their own right, but they also provide essential services to complete the operations of all the other modes.

It's hard to conceive of very many trips or freight movements that don't depend on highways to some substantial extent.

All this points up the importance of highways in the planning of total transportation facilities and the dominant highway interest in such planning.

Highways clearly are the overwhelmingly dominant element in our total transportation system and there is every reason to believe that they will continue to be so in the foreseeable future; there is no alternative in sight which can provide either the volume or the variety of transportation services which are so indispensable to the way of life we Americans have chosen.

Still, with all the massive usage we give our highway system, we are not taking advantage of its full potential. The highways we now have, together with the improvements which we will be making in the future, can provide a large share of the solution to one of our most pressing current transportation problems, which is the need for improved mass public transportation in our urban areas.

We need improved and greatly expanded public transportation to help reduce vehicular volumes in our center cities. And we need it also to provide adequate transportation service to that small group of people who, for whatever reason, do not or cannot use private cars.

This need must be filled without bias for or against any mode. Insofar as the highway mode is concerned, I can assure you that no one is more willing than hard-pressed highway administrators to share with others the heavy responsibilities in meeting the country's transportation needs by any and all means -- both old and new -- or even any

new mode not yet invented. That is why we in the Federal Highway Administration wholeheartedly support enactment of the pending Nixon Administration's Public Transportation Assistance Bill of 1969 which would provide \$10 billion over the next 12 years to cities for additional public transit facilities.

I want to be sure that you understand that this bill would give support to both, or either, rail and/or bus types of mass public transit. As highway people, we accept without argument the position that rail mass transit can do a good job in some certain areas of high population density and ~~the~~ should be provided, where the facts show it to be the best transportation solution.

But we also have to recognize that in most urban areas rail transit is both impractical and uneconomical and therefore will never be built. And so these areas then must rely on bus mass transit. Buses already are carrying 70 percent of all transit passengers in our urban areas, and in all probability buses of one kind or another will continue to be the only form of mass transit in at least 95 percent of our urban areas of 50,000 or more population.

About 70 per cent of our population lives in urban areas now, and by 1985, this will jump to almost 80 percent. As this growing urbanization continues, more and more people will have to depend on bus public transit. But it is important to recognize here that although most all of our future population growth is expected to occur in urban areas, this does not necessarily mean that a corresponding increase in travel

volumes will occur to and from our CBDs -- in fact, such CBD growth is much less than elsewhere in the urban area -- sometimes being zero or even a negative figure in some cases.

Here then is both an opportunity and a challenge for us as highway administrators, planners and engineers. There is a strong challenge to us to increase the efficiency of the highway system and to make it move more people, rather than simply more vehicles.

To do this we need to make bus travel attractive enough to provide a substitute for many of the private cars that now carry commuters back and forth between suburbs and core cities during morning and evening rush hours, and thus provide some decrease in the numbers of vehicles on our streets at these times. For example, a switch of 1,000 persons from automobiles to only 20 bus transit vehicles can bring a reduction of 600 cars on city streets, as a general average, and thus result in substantial freeing up of the traffic movement capability. This number of passenger cars is equal to the capacity of one whole lane on a typical city street. Thus we need to compare the cost and service level of burying a whole lane of streetwidening against the acquisition and operation of a fleet of 20 buses.

We see a possibility of encouraging bus transit by giving buses preferential or exclusive lanes on streets and freeways in order to increase their average operating speed during rush hours. Several experiments of this type are underway, and no doubt other innovations will be forthcoming.

The highway official must see that the public gets its money's worth. This means that he must be concerned with the efficiency of the total highway mode as it serves all of its customers whether they are moving by passenger cars, trucks, or buses. It means that he must be knowledgeable about the total transportation picture, and plan his highways with their controlling and preponderant role, in such a way that they will best serve the public interest by helping to develop and improve the total transportation system.

This has important implications for State transportation policy making.

As a minimum it suggests to me that the scope of the State highway commission and highway department policy-making responsibilities should be expanded to embrace the total highway transportation mode, including the development of bus public mass transit as a means of improving highway efficiency by reducing the need for some major new physical enlargements to existing network routes in the near future or in some cases to eliminate the need for building of new freeways altogether. Support for the movement of substantial numbers of our customers who can conveniently travel by buses instead of passenger cars can cause a deferral of large expenditure requirements of our always scarce highway funds.

The public policy goal usually referred to as balanced transportation, is a term that means many things to many people.

What we must be careful to avoid in speaking of balance and coordination is the notion that each mode is somehow exactly equal to, and completely interchangeable with, each of the others.

It must be understood that one mode is almost never an "either-or" substitute for another one. Rather, the several modes must complement each other, with the selection of each mode made to best fit each specific instance and each specific set of needs. The balance we are striving for then is the mixture of modes that is found to meet our total needs in the most satisfactory manner, considering both costs and desired service level. Study and experience demonstrates that in many cases a 100 percent mix of the highway mode alone will best handle the situation. It follows that the distribution of our funding must be guided by whatever modal mix is found to provide the best system, rather than by merely assigning dollars in equal amounts between the modes. Such an arbitrary, dollar -- for -- dollar division of funds will only result in unbalanced transportation development, rather than a balanced development of services.

In the planning task therefore, we must look to the whole of our transportation needs and the inter-relation of these needs to the overall needs of our society. The choice of the individual mode or the amounts of differing modes to produce the proper mix must be based on factual determinations of what combination will produce the most publicly acceptable service level to meet the needs of the particular

situation, with each element of the system complementing the others to produce the most effective whole.

State Highway Departments already have the capability for and through the so-called 3-C planning process are already doing this kind of transportation planning. Highway engineers and planners are already having to make the kinds of decisions I have just described, because highway people have been engaged for a number of years and by statute for at least 7 years, in the cooperative, continuing, comprehensive transportation planning processes in every urban area of more than 50,000 population, and they are the only ones so involved in providing anything which even approaches a total transportation planning process. These transportation planning processes not only form the solid base on which to develop a sound highway program for these urban areas, but they at the same time create the data base on which the entire remainder of a sound community wide transportation program can be selected.

The fact that these are transportation planning processes, and not limited to the single highway mode is significant. It means that our highway program procedures insure that highway decisions are made on the basis of a full consideration of the whole of the transportation needs and possibilities of the community.

It also is significant that this urban transportation planning is based on land use planning and is thus compatible with and supportive of plans for other elements of community development.

Through this process State highway departments are actively assisting all of our communities in meeting their social and economic goals in ways that go far beyond the provision of transportation improvements alone. This is reflected in their encouragement of multiple use projects in which needed community facilities can be provided within the same corridor with the highway. It is also reflected in a keen concern for environmental values -- for serving the public interest in conservation and preservation, for highway esthetics and for all reasonable steps to make highways compatible with their environment, and contributory to many other community goals.

I believe all this is an indication of the maturity, the breadth of vision and the social responsibility of highway officials.

At the same time it points to highway planners as the most qualified group of experts available today to call upon for total transportation planning.

The time has come, as I see it, for highway policy making to expand beyond the highway mode alone as it has already done in the planning function and to include the total transportation system. This means to me that the various States should possibly consider reconstituting their State highway commission or whatever other form of policy-making device they may utilize, in such a way that this body would also provide and be responsible for exercising the necessary overall policy coordination for all urban and State-wide transportation policy, which

directly or indirectly involves use of, or has major effects on the public road and street network.

State highway officials themselves should take the initiative in developing this broadened role as a matter of their public responsibilities.

In summary then, I say to you that it is time for highway administrators to take a major step forward and outward. They are already responsible for the great bulk of the transportation in their respective States, and especially for urban public transportation because it is in most cases entirely by the highway mode. They are responsible for comprehensive urban transportation planning. They are now engaged in the planning of future urban roads and street systems of arterials and feeder routes in preparation for the post-Interstate highway program. Through this and other channels of responsibility, they already have an active, working relationship with city officials in every city in their States, perhaps a larger relationship than that of any other agency of State Government.

In view of this it would seem wasteful, inefficient and unwise to permit the creation of new programs or organizations for the purpose of overseeing the development of a transportation program that already is and will continue to be overwhelmingly by the highway mode, with other modes dependent upon highways, and in most cases relatively small in comparison to the much larger and dominant highway role.

It makes more sense, in my view, to expand on existing capabilities within State highway departments to carry out the coordinated

policy making, planning, and development of the total transportation system, by attaching the needed coordinating capability onto an already going highway policy and administrative body. I recommend that each of your respective State highway departments consider carefully and quickly the suggestion I make to you in order that our total transportation needs -- especially in our urban areas -- may be met on a total basis without the competing kind of philosophy which has influenced some current approaches. We need such larger amounts of transportation that we can not afford to build any facilities that merely provide duplicating or competitive services -- what we do need is facilities designed to complement each other. The way to get these is to build our plans and policy decisions entirely upon the already operation 3-C planning operations which are under way in 233 urban areas -- and apply the same principles to also govern the rural portion of our highway programs. I urge you to lead the way in total transportation planning and the execution of the planning for the benefit of our States and the nation we serve so well.

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