



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION  
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Note to Editorial Writers:

Enclosed is a San Francisco Examiner editorial on the subject of mass transit and highway financing, along with a reply from the Federal Highway Administrator, F. C. Turner, on the subject.

We thought you might want this for your future file.

Sincerely,

*Fred Morrison*

Fred Morrison, Director  
Office of Public Affairs  
Federal Highway Administration  
Washington, D.C. 20591

Enclosure

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20551

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

December 4, 1969

Mr. Richard E. Pearce  
San Francisco Examiner  
110 Fifth Street  
San Francisco, California 94119

Dear Mr. Pearce:

I have read with considerable interest your editorial of October 19, 1969, entitled "Mass Transit and Highway Dollars."

We in the highway program are in complete agreement with your premise that the job of freeways and mass transit systems is to move people (and goods). However, I must challenge your statement that highway builders want to continue building highways to the exclusion of other needs of mass transportation.

In your editorial you state, "People want freeways where freeways are clearly needed... But they don't want freeways where mass transit can do a better job."

In reply to that I only can state in the most emphatic way possible, "Neither do we."

No one in the Federal Highway Administration is committed to the continued construction of more freeways except where competent study of transportation needs dictates that need. Nor do we consider that we are separated in any way from the total transportation needs of the nation -- including mass transit. Highway people pioneered and for years have carried forward the only nationwide comprehensive transportation planning studies.

Mass transit means public transportation by either bus or rail. For that reason, such things as improved highways, exclusive bus lanes thereon, and parking areas near main bus or rail lines are all integral parts of a mass transit system as well as a highway system at one and the same time. More thought and planning now is being given to such projects by the Federal Highway Administration than is being given to the Interstate System of freeways which now is nearing completion. Many portions of this Interstate System within urban areas are capable of handling bus vehicle mass transit and thus provide almost immediately available transportation of this kind long before any other mode of mass movement can be put into service and at far less capital cost.

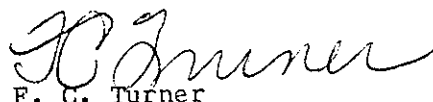
There has been widespread misunderstanding of the emphasis being placed on mass rail transit by the Department of Transportation.- There is no disagreement and no conflict within the Department on that score.

Where rail mass transit can best meet the needs, it certainly should be used. But in my opinion transportation by bus will continue, through the foreseeable future, to be the basis for a successful mass transit system in most of the 233 urban areas of more than 50,000 population in this country.

It is only in those few areas of large and high population density that rail transportation can efficiently carry heavy loads.

One of the primary objectives of the Federal Highway Administration at this time is to make the greatest possible contributions to a mass transit system, through the provision of facilities for buses, which will reduce the number of privately operated automobiles on the cities' streets and freeways. We are working aggressively toward that objective.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "F. C. Turner".

F. C. Turner

Federal Highway Administrator

# Mass Transit and Highway Dollars

**THE JOB** of freeways and mass transit systems is to get people where they want to go and home again. Both means of transportation should be supplied in balance, financed without favor according to need.

Too many highway builders don't agree with that. They have a virtual corner on the available money, which comes from state and federal gasoline taxes. They want all of it spent on highways. Until now they've had their way. But times are changing.

● Francis C. Turner, the country's chief road builder as highway administrator of the Department of Transportation, recently advocated use of federal highway money to subsidize bus operations in urban areas. A few years ago such a stand would have been heresy.

● State Sen. Howard Way, new president pro tem of the California State Senate, recently attacked the power of the highway lobby and called for use of state gasoline tax money to finance other forms of transportation such as rapid transit. Moderate Republican Way capped this defiance of the highway builders by saying he intends to reshuffle the highway-oriented Senate Transportation Committee.

These are straws in the wind that reveal, we think, a decided shift in public opinion — especially urban public opinion. People still want freeways where freeways are clearly needed, as between downtown San Francisco and the Golden Gate Bridge. But they don't want freeways where mass transit can do a better job.

The shift is toward the kind of thing that is happening in West Germany. There, eight cities are building or are about to build new rapid transit facilities financed by a gasoline tax fund split 60 percent for highways and 40 percent for transit.

**OLD WAYS** die hard. Earlier this year Deputy State Highway Engineer Sam Helwer struck out at the "envious eyes and greedy hands" that are trying to get a share of the highway funds.

While denying that San Franciscans as a civic entity are either envious or greedy, we agree with Helwer that they would like to get their hands on some of that money. One good reason is that it belongs to them.

Because of the freeway deadlock, San Francisco will pay \$50 million more in gasoline taxes during the next 10 years than it will get back in highway benefits. It is logical that The City, having ruled out more freeways for the time at least, should use the money instead for BART or any other public transit undertaking it chooses.