



DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

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REMARKS BY FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR
FRANCIS C. TURNER, PREPARED FOR DELIVERY AT
THE 68th ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN
ROAD BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION IN NEW YORK CITY,
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"THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE"

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Let me begin by commending the Road Builders for the recent steps you have taken to broaden your transportation interests. I am delighted that you have invited my colleagues, Mr. Shaffer and Mr. Villarreal, to speak about aviation and urban mass transit and that you have given these subjects new stature in your organizational structure.

Not only do our three administrations interact closely from an administrative or program standpoint, but the forms of transportation we represent are closely interrelated elements of the total transportation system.

For this reason many problems encountered in assuring adequate transportation for a changing and growing nation require cooperative solutions. This is one of the challenges facing the Department of Transportation. It is also a challenge to ARBA, because your members' interests lie in many segments of our transportation network.

Today, I would like to concentrate particularly on the transportation needs in urban areas, since this is where our most difficult problems lie. First let me note, however, that we in the Federal Highway Administration, as well as State highway officials, are well aware of the highway needs of rural areas. Deficiencies do exist in rural systems and any future highway program must provide a level of investment adequate to see that these systems meet acceptable standards for safety and economy.

Comparatively, however, the solutions to our urban transportation needs are considerably more complex and, accordingly, they are receiving high priority in DOT.

Even before creation of the Department Congress declared it to be in the national interest to promote development of multi-modal transportation systems to serve States and local communities. This was in the 1962 Federal-aid Highway Act which required that a continuing comprehensive transportation planning process be carried on cooperatively by State and local communities and that no Federal-aid highway projects would be approved after July 1, 1965, within urbanized areas unless based on this process.

In 1968, as directed by Congress, we submitted the first of a biennial series of reports on the highway needs of the nation. This report recommended that a functional highway classification study be

conducted nationwide, and that emphasis be placed upon transportation needs in urban areas. It was suggested that a Federal-aid Metropolitan Highway System be established in each urban area of 50,000 or more population, based on the findings of the "3-C" planning process, and that local agencies develop the capabilities of participating in transportation decision making. Congress did direct that a functional highway classification study be made, and, significantly, by the States in cooperation with local governments.

The 1970 Needs Report, sent to Congress in January, again emphasizes the importance and need for greater concentration upon urban highway transportation programs. While no formal recommendations have yet been submitted, FHWA and the Department agree that in addition to the "3-C" process, each urbanized area should have an areawide agency with authority to develop a 5-year highway improvement program, and empowered to select priority projects for inclusion in the annual Federal-aid highway programs upon approval by the State highway departments.

The functional classification study will be sent to Congress in the near future as a supplement to the Needs Report. This massive undertaking could not have been completed without the cooperation and expertise of the States, the local county and city governments, and the associations that represent them. The findings will be helpful in

suggesting possible re-alignments of Federal-aid systems, and circumscribing the possible limits of future Federal-aid highway programs.

It is clear then, that planning to meet urban transportation needs is a cooperative effort by all levels of government.

What has also become apparent as we have gained experience with the "3-C" process is the need to strengthen the role of local governments in the planning and implementation of transportation programs. Through this process we are fostering a metropolitan decision making framework. We believe the time has come to formalize such metropolitan decision making with respect to areawide highway transportation planning and programming.

One of the apparent weaknesses in making metropolitan transportation planning effective stems from the fact, as noted in the 1970 Needs Report, that most planning agencies do not have the authority to implement plans. The developed plan is turned over to one or more of the many fragmented units of local government for implementation. These governmental units frequently fail to coordinate their efforts to the degree necessary to effectively implement the plan.

Hence the need to forge closer ties between planning and implementation by encouraging the development of metropolitan agencies which could be responsible for developing both plans and priorities for implementation of creative plans which today too often are simply gathering dust.

Hence also the desirability of a Federal-aid metropolitan highway system within the geographic area of responsibility of the planning agency and serving the needs of both private and public transportation.

Another apparent weakness in implementing metropolitan transportation planning has been the lack of available funds required for the public transportation portions of complementary schemes. This could be alleviated by enactment of the Administration's proposed Public Transportation Act, which would provide support both for bus transit and rail transit.

While we have been grappling with problems of effective cooperation, planning, funding and implementation, urbanization continues and the demands for transportation services accelerate.

In 1969 more than half of all motor vehicle miles of travel took place in urban areas. Automobile travel in most urban areas has been doubling about every 20 to 25 years; that is, at roughly twice the rate of urban population growth.

If we look to projections for the middle-size to large cities, that is, the urbanized areas of 50,000 or more population, we see an estimated addition of 70 million persons to these areas by 1990, bringing their total population to 190 million, or about 70 percent of the national population.

Our 1990 urbanized area populace will travel an estimated 1.3 trillion person-miles annually, an increase of about 85 percent over current levels. And remember this is only personal travel; it doesn't take into account the intra-urban distribution of goods this enormous and

presumably affluent urban population will consume.

This concentration of people, and their potential trips, offers one of the greatest challenges for transportation generally, and certainly for highway transportation.

Why? Because in the urbanized areas today about 94 percent of person-mile travel is by automobile, 4 percent by bus, and 2 percent by rail. This reliance on highways -- about 98 percent for personal travel and 100 percent for goods and services -- in urbanized areas is not expected to decline in the foreseeable future.

The importance of the role of non-highway modes in serving urban travel in high density corridors is well established. But even with optimum feasible development of these modes, the vast bulk of urban travel will probably continue to occur on highways.

Our challenge, then, is to increase the efficiency of the transportation services provided by our investment in highways and at the same time to take advantage of the positive influence of highways in shaping more desirable urban environments while reducing their negative influences.

I would like to turn first to the second part of that challenge. As we look to the anticipated growth of our urbanized areas we cannot be certain at this point whether the large metropolitan centers will continue to expand to accommodate the additional population, or whether this growth can be channeled into new communities or the expansion of currently modest-sized areas.

There is increasing interest, as voiced recently by President Nixon, in a national policy on urban growth. Urban development, as history proves, is influenced most strongly by the availability of transportation. Presumably, future urban growth will tend to occur along major transportation corridors, and in areas made most accessible by high quality transportation.

Therefore, we have the opportunity now to assist in the implementation of a national urban policy by applying the highway program as a creative tool to stimulate desired development.

We are all familiar with the unfortunate consequences of developing urban land independent of transportation considerations. Failure to recognize that the two must be planned and developed concurrently will only bring about the subsequent need for corrective transportation measures on land already developed to the point where the provision of new facilities is not only disruptive, but in some cases, impossible to achieve.

The same opportunity to make highways serve community development is present in existing urban areas. Here, growth is expected to occur not in the central cities, but rather in the suburban and exurban areas surrounding them.

Highway facilities now built or planned in the central cities probably will be adequate to serve the downtown areas for some time to come, since most downtown areas are growing slowly, if at all. This is a controlling factor in its effect on a mass transit people-mover facility to accommodate the morning and evening commuter load.

But in outlying areas a greatly expanded urban highway program will be needed. Here is where we will find the additional population. Over 85 percent of all trips in urban areas have their origin or destination or both at home. The highway system needed to provide the flexibility of travel to and from these suburban homes also frees from the restrictions of location many kinds of business, industrial and recreational activities. Thus, future highway programs will have to provide access to these various land uses as well as arterial service.

The challenge is to utilize comprehensive planning to locate and design future urban systems in harmony with community land use development plans, and serve as a means of enhancing the urban environment.

Our program encouraging the joint development of highway right-of-way by other public, non-profit, and private interests in cooperation with the highway department, offers one means to this end.

Measures to increase the efficiency of highway transportation -- that is, by making highways carry more people rather than simply more vehicles -- also help reduce highways' impact on the physical environment and on social values. Through higher capacity utilization of highway facilities we lessen vehicle congestion and reduce the need for expensive new facilities along with the disruption and dislocation they can cause in built-up areas.

Thus we turn to expanded public mass transportation to help solve this problem. What is often overlooked is that most public transportation is highway transportation. In fact, in all but the largest metropolitan

areas public transportation is provided exclusively by buses, and even in cities with fixed rail systems from 50 to 90 percent is by buses.

I don't want to impinge on Mr. Villarreal's presentation, so I won't talk further about the benefits and services of improved public transportation. I will only say we are working closely with UMTA in promoting greater use of buses through such measures as reserved or special bus lanes, and through our TOPICS program for traffic operations improvements.

At the same time, I don't want to ignore the relationship between air and highway travel, since the rapid growth of air travel is a significant generator of urban highway trips, both for the traveler himself and the even larger number of service and operating personnel involved in the operation.

In order to overcome vehicular congestion at airline terminals, it has been proposed that the passenger handling functions be removed from the airport itself to some other location. Passengers would then be gathered at this location and moved by bus or fixed rail to the air strip for transfer to their plane, and vice versa, be returned from the plane to a remote terminal.

It seems to me however that a single central downtown terminal for an airport terminal overlooks the fact that most air trips start at locations scattered throughout the entire urban area, and that for these

travelers a trip to a downtown terminal is even less desirable than a trip by car to a suburban airport.

The way to overcome this, I would suggest, is to locate a series of several airline service "nodes" or "mini-terminals" throughout the urban area where they would be more convenient to the potential customers -- both persons and baggage and cargo. The service nodes then could be connected with the airport by highway bus or limousine, and baggage and freight truck using the size of vehicle and fleet, and the frequency and flexibility of service that might be required.

Maybe that's how highways can help solve one of air transportation's problems, and one of ours, too, because major airports create one of our largest single traffic generators and demand some of our largest road capacities.

In summary, I have tried to indicate our concern with the challenges presented by urban growth. To meet these challenges we need comprehensive and cooperative planning, both intergovernmental and intermodal, and we need the appropriate administrative machinery to implement our plans.

Highways, both in their service to private and public transportation, will continue to play a dominant role in meeting the transportation needs of our nation both urban and rural. We must see that highways make their contribution not only to efficient transportation but also to the social and environmental well-being of our people.