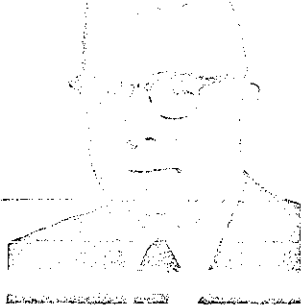


Presented to NLI's
25th Annual Convention



Francis C. Turner

Federal Highway Administrator

future

HIGHWAY

needs

First, I would like to congratulate the recipients of the safety awards and say to you that in the Department of Transportation, the Secretary's number one priority is safety. We also are interested in safety just as you are. We are interested in highway safety, construction safety, industrial safety, and all aspects of it. I would feel that we would be losing ground if in the progress of our highway program we took a high toll of human life in the process. So, one of the things that we accent, not only in our highway program, but throughout the Department of Transportation is the matter of safety and I congratulate you as winners and your organization for the emphasis that you put on this particular part of the activity in which you are engaged.

Please accept my good wishes on your 25th annual meeting and my appreciation for your invitation to speak to you today about future highway needs. Both as individual organizations and collectively as the citizenry of this country our own futures are closely tied to highways.

Congress this year will be considering these highway needs and making policy decisions that are required to properly meet them.

While it is not possible for me to discuss specific proposals as yet, I will try to give you a general picture of our highway needs and some of the policy considerations that are involved.

It was significant, for example, that President Nixon took the first day of this decade, New Year's Day, to sign the National Environmental Policy Act. Remarking then on the work during the past year of his Cabinet Committee on Environmental Quality he said:

"We have devoted many hours to our pressing problems of pollution control, airport location, wilderness preservation, highway construction and populations trends." And he stressed his conviction that "the 1970's absolutely must be the years when America pays its debt to the past by reclaiming the purity of its air, its waters and our living environment. It is literally now or never."

The concern and the urgency voiced by the President are shared these days not only by environmental experts but by a majority of our citizens. We in the highway program are, and have been, well aware of this concern and the implications it has for our future.

Our nation—whether in its cities or its rural areas—cannot live without transportation, and highways provide the overwhelming proportion of that transportation. But highways can and must be made compatible with and enhance the environment, at the same time that they provide essential transportation services.

Furthermore, we must be concerned not only with problems of the physical environment, but also with what might be called the social environment—with the interaction of highways and people, with a highway's impact on individuals and communities.

These comments may sound to you like an unusual way to introduce a discussion of highway needs. But it is obvious that our future highway needs and the ways to meet them cannot be considered in a void, insulated from the rest of our society. Highway transportation, more than any other form of transportation, provides the facilities and the services that will enable the American society of the 1970's, the 80's and the 90's to function. And highway planning, highway decision-making, and highway construction must be done in the midst of that society, in the real world where people live and work and spend their leisure.

To a significant degree therefore, the success of the highway program now and in the future will depend on how well we respond to this situation of fact. It is not a challenge to be viewed with dismay nor timidity, for we have built up many

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resources over the years in the highway program and are far better equipped to meet the situation than some people would have you believe.

Highway builders have been pioneers from the earliest days. And this pioneering spirit doesn't apply simply to the days when we were building frontier post roads for a developing nation, or when newly mechanized farmers were clamoring for roads to town or railhead. We also pioneered in administrative management by creating a Federal-State partnership which has been the world's outstanding example of successful inter-governmental cooperation and which has made enormous contributions to the capital growth and social advancement of the nation.

We have long supported research and development to bring about improvements in engineering and construction, to increase the safety and efficiency of our highway facilities, and to provide needed answers to economic and social questions.

In fact, the highway program has been in the forefront in finding solutions to some of the difficult problems facing many other elements in our society today. For example, the acceleration of the Interstate Highway System construction program in the 1950's required a more effective planning of transportation facilities in urban areas, in view of the great impact of freeways in both serving and shaping urban development. Several States had begun tackling this problem as early as the middle 30's, and on the basis of their experience, we wrote into law in the 1962 Act a Congressional mandate requiring that all highway projects after 1965 in urbanized areas of more than 50,000 population would have to be based on a continuing, comprehensive, cooperative transportation planning process.

This was landmark legislation. It gave a spur to urban planning generally throughout the nation.

For the first time all municipalities were forced to face up to and do something about the need for area-wide urban land use planning—since transportation planning is based on land use planning. And for the first time State highway departments and local governments began to engage in a continuing, cooperative planning effort because transportation planning was to include not just highways, but all modes of transportation.

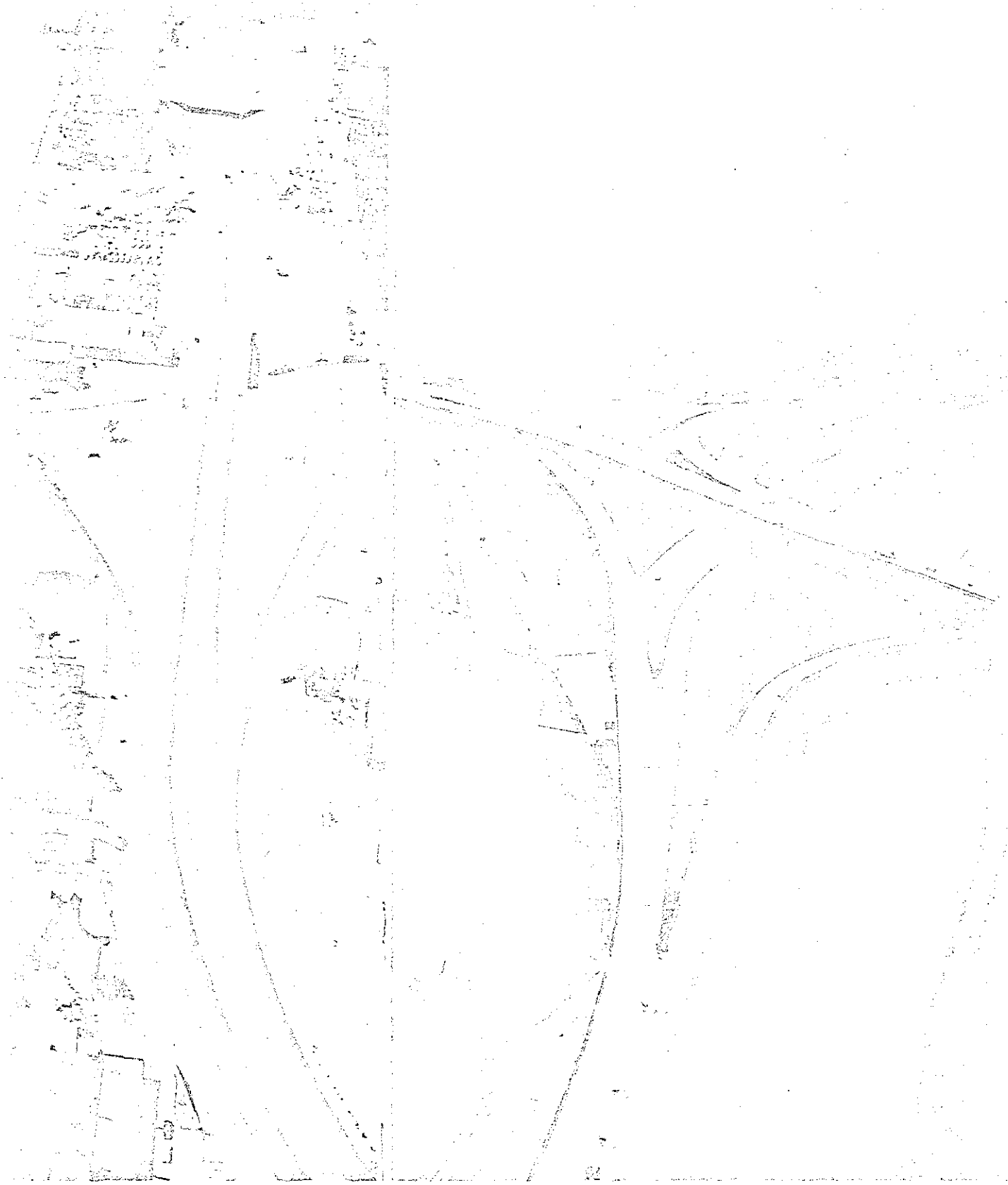
Today, using quite sophisticated techniques, transportation planning is being closely coordinated with the newer regional planning organizations.

Serious effort has been devoted to the problem of identifying community goals in order to make highway planning, location and design more responsive to the social and environmental as well as the economic values of the community. While it is admittedly difficult to quantify such seemingly subjective values, we hope that the interdisciplinary contacts which we have developed will prove useful in integrating community values into transportation planning.

Meanwhile, we have over the years developed a long list of these socio-economic concerns that must be considered in the highway location process. To refer to only some of these as illustrations for example, we insist upon early consultation with interested agencies, such as those responsible for fish and wildlife, historic preservation, and parks and recreation. Early consultation offers the best promise for accommodating other public interests and for satisfactory resolution of differences that too often become polarized when confronted at a later date.

The public hearing procedures which have been part of our highway procedures for 20 years have the same objective: that is, to obtain citizen acceptance through early and active involvement and participation of local communities in the highway location and design process.

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We have also urged communities to take advantage of a unique opportunity to meet community needs through the joint development of highway, and particularly freeway corridors. Working with State highway departments, many local government agencies, non-profit corporations

and private interests are providing for multiple use of the highway right-of-way, for such things as parks, playgrounds, parking areas, warehouses, transportation terminals, post offices, fire stations, and even commercial, residential, or educational uses. Joint development also offers exciting possibilities in undeveloped or sparsely developed areas when opportunity for compatible land and transportation development has not yet been foreclosed.

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Another example of how our highway program has led the way for other programs in the social field has been the 1968 Act to provide a plan for producing improved housing for those persons ... businesses displaced from the path of one of our Federally-aided highway projects.

This is landmark legislation. Its requirements concerning decent, safe, and sanitary housing for relocatees, and its provisions for additive payments to owners and tenants have given highways the most advanced piece of social legislation of any public works program. It is turning right-of-way agents into social workers, and it is introducing shanty dwellers for the first time to the comforts of well-heated homes with hot water and modern plumbing. Congress now is proposing to adopt similar provisions for all other public works programs.

While much, much more could be said about our evolving social concerns, I have dwelt on the subject to this extent in order to emphasize its importance in the highway program. I want to make it clear that we in the highway program recognize our social responsibilities and are doing something about them. We are as concerned with the social impact of our program as we are with its economic impact. We know that we must discharge our social responsibilities if we are to meet our fundamental responsibilities of serving the transportation needs of the nation.

The point is, when we talk about transportation needs—or future highway needs—we are not just talking about miles of roads and the cost of engineering, right-of-way and construction. We are talking about joint development, air rights, aesthetics, environmental factors, multiple use, roadside development, scenic enhancement, relocation assistance, safety, traffic operations improvement, equal employment opportunity, improved public transportation, and a host of other things.

But let me assure you that our concern with the social factors in no way replaces or substitutes for the role of highways in the transportation services of the nation nor their impact on the economy as we see them. Rather, many of our social concerns arise from the very fact of the overwhelming predominance of highways in our transportation system and the enormous role of highways in our economy. It is because highways are so predominant that they have such a pervasive influence on all of our lives and our communities and nation.

To illustrate: in urban areas of more than 50,000 population, 98 percent of all person miles of travel today are by highway vehicle; and in smaller towns the proportion is generally 100 percent. In inter-city travel, about 88 percent of all person miles are by highway even after including the long haul trips by fast airplanes.

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Here is perhaps the most significant social impact of all. Through highway improvements we are reducing travel times and widening the circle of mobility available to people for the things they do in today's world—for trips to work, to school, to church, to go shopping, for recreation, entertainment and cultural activities—and we are providing for the distribution of the goods and service functions we use each day.

In economic terms, highway transportation accounts for over 80 percent of all transportation costs in the United States, and 16 percent of the Gross National Product.

Automobiles and buses account for over nine-tenths of the Nation's cost of passenger transportation, and trucks account for three-fourths of the dollars spent in moving freight.

Obviously, highway transportation has been and will continue to be of fundamental importance to the economy of the United States. Economic necessity along with the social necessity for personal mobility dictate the continued growth and improvement of highway transportation.

Not only are highway improvements vital to continued social and economic growth, they also are needed to reduce the cost and enhance the quality of transportation, especially in terms of safety and efficiency. For example, analysis indicates that opening 1,000 miles of Interstate highways results in saving more than 150 lives a year and preventing at least 6,000 injuries and 13,500 accidents a year for every year into the long future. Savings in travel time from the opening of 1,000 miles of Interstate result in savings of about \$15 million a year, repeated every year into the future; not to mention the additional benefits in comfort, convenience and vehicle operating cost savings.

The production of highway transportation services involve a heavy commitment by labor, business and government. About one-sixth of the labor force and one-fifth of our business firms are in industries directly related to highway transportation.

Highway construction consumes significant proportions of the national production of cement, asphalt, concrete, metal pipe, limestone, and other aggregates. The manufacture and use of motor vehicles consumes major amounts of lead, iron, steel, rubber and petroleum.

In view of the dominant role of highways in the transportation system of the nation and their pervasive role in our economic and social life, it is apparent that a continued high level of public investment in improvement of highway facilities will be necessary to keep pace with the demands of national growth. The special needs of our urban areas, where passenger car travel is doubling every 20 to 22 years, call for particular attention.

Congress is now considering the Administration's Public Transportation Assistance Bill, which would provide \$10 billion over the next 12 years for additional bus and/or rail transit facilities. Buses today provide 70 percent of the transit passenger service in this country, and their expanded usage offers the best hope for reducing congestion and obtaining more capacity utilization from our existing highway system while avoiding the need for additional expensive highway construction and displacements in many of our cities.

For this reason, the Federal Highway Administration is encouraging demonstration projects of express bus service through reserved or preferential use of freeway lanes or by other devices in cooperation with our sister agency, the UMTA.

As you may know, under present legislation the Highway Trust Fund is scheduled to go out of existence in October 1, 1972. Work on the Interstate, not to mention other Federal-aid systems, will extend well beyond that date. This will require that Congress make decisions this year on the future of the Highway Trust Fund, if new obligating authority is not to be shut off entirely or drastically reduced after this year. This applies not only to the Interstate System but also to the so-called ABC roads of our primary and secondary systems.

As a highway administrator I can say that the Highway Trust Fund has been a tremendous success; it has provided the stability and certainty needed for long-range planning, which is absolutely essential to efficient management of the massive Federal-aid program—a program which involves not only the cities and state highway departments, but thousands of contractors and suppliers and other interests in our economic system. I believe the Trust Fund is the best instrument for seeing the Interstate program to completion and for guaranteeing a smooth transition into essential follow-on programs.

With Trust Fund financing assured, I have full confidence in the ability of the highway program to meet the many social and economic challenges facing highway transportation.

And so I say to you that this is a crucial time in connection with both near term and long term policy decisions in the highway program. We are shaping our highway plans to respect all of the social and environmental factors as well as the economic and engineering considerations. These in turn bear heavily on the financing aspects and the total package must be considered during the current year. You and I and our more than 200 million fellow citizens have a large and important stake in the outcome. For these reasons, you have a responsibility to let your wishes in the matter be known to your public representatives as the question is being considered in the Committees of Congress.

Thank you very much for allowing me to visit with you again. e