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It's always a pleasure to come home - even if only for a short visit - and I'm particularly delighted to be here with a group that has done so much to make Florida such a great place to come home to.

The Department of Transportation has been in business since April 1. And we are at that awkward stage of any successful union. We are still proud to show off the ring but a little embarrassed when people ask us if there's anything we want to tell them.

I wish I could tell you we have come up with the answers to the transportation ills of the country.

But our answers - in transportation as in other fields - are no better than the questions we ask. And mainly what we are doing in the new Department is trying to ask the right questions - to find out what the problems and possibilities in transportation really are.

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In the process, we've discovered how little we really know about so many aspects of transportation.

One reason is that we've never looked at transportation for what it really is - an integral part of our society and our environment, a powerful and pervasive force capable of enhancing our lives or of rendering them all but intolerable.

Until the Department was formed, we dealt, by and large, with each form of transportation in isolation from all others - or as competing with others rather than complementing them.

We were looking at transportation from the wrong end of the telescope.

Now, for the first time, we are looking at transportation as a single system, with all elements working together to serve the total needs of our society.

Most of our concern centers, of course, on our urban areas - where nearly three out of four Americans now live.

And the proportion grows every day.

If there's one thing every urban area shares, it's a transportation problem.

We all know, in outline, how the problem started.

In the early decades of this century, the streetcar, the elevated, and then the subway worked very well in carrying people from home to office or factory because both people's homes and people's jobs were clustered together in relatively small areas.

As the railroads realized that their unused main line capacity could be turned to account by providing cheap commutation service for the journey to work, the middle classes were enabled to move farther out and to live farther apart.

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Sprawl, therefore, began well before the automobile came into widespread use.

The commuter train provided an effective way of collecting people from outlying residential areas and depositing them in the larger cities where they found increasingly attractive employment opportunities.

As automobiles become less expensive and their tremendous flexibility was realized they began to expand the area served by each rail station and then to displace rail commuter services as the engine of dispersal.

The migration of people to the cities accelerated and more importantly suburban areas reached farther out into the country.

With the end of World War II, the dam burst - soaring incomes enabled more and more people to afford better and better houses, as well as cars that enabled them to live farther and farther away.

As suburbs mushroomed everywhere, and anybody who could afford it moved farther and farther away from our central cities, so did the jobs.

But we don't always realize how this whole process has eroded and undermined the life of our cities.

To begin with, we have drained our cities of too much of the human and financial resources they must have to cope with the immense problems that confront them today: crime, congestion, education, pollution, you name it.

We have, except for an atoll of affluence here and there, abandoned our cities by night to the poor and under-privileged.

Victor Gruen, the urban architect and planner, was all too accurate when he observed that: "We have turned our cities into doughnuts, with all the dough around the center and nothing in the middle."

We have the finest highway facilities in the world to take us into our cities where we earn the incomes that we take back with us into the suburbs.

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But we have left the poor in the cities with too little public transportation to take them to the jobs they desperately need, but which have followed us in our flight to the suburbs.

I do not pretend to possess any single, simple answer to our urban ills - in transportation or in any other field.

There is no single answer to our urban transportation problem, because there is no single problem. San Francisco and Chicago and Jacksonville have transportation problems as different as the cities themselves.

For that reason, the "answer" to the so-called "urban transportation problem" will not come out of Washington's mimeograph machines any more than it has come out of Detroit's assembly lines - it will not come from the sudden appearance of some radical new technology - it will not come from an effort to exalt one form of transportation at the expense of any other.

The answer must come, instead, from within each urban area itself - and it must come in the form of a total system suited to the unique needs of each area.

And we've got to start where we are with what we have. There is new technology in the works - but to the extent that it will appreciably ease our difficulties, rather than aggravate them (as, for example, the jumbo jets will compound the ground congestion problem in and around our airports), we are going to have to get through the next few decades by improving what we already have and by using it better.

There's no question, for example, that there is a lot more capacity on most city streets than the congestion that occurs every rush hour might lead us to believe.

And our Federal Highway Administration is actively testing ways to better use the streets and highways we already have -- ways that include off-street parking, special lanes for buses, off-street loading for trucks, so-called convertible streets (which run all one way in

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the morning and all the other way at night), radar-controlled signals on freeway entry and exit ramps, overpasses in city streets to eliminate intersection tie-ups, and so on.

We are also, as you know, supporting demonstration projects to test the feasibility of new high-speed ground transportation - and seeking, in every way we know how, to explore and uncover new ways of improving the public transportation alternatives now available in our cities.

We are looking, for example, at the possibilities of free public transportation - trying to find out just what the various costs and benefits are, and where it might be workable and where not.

One demonstration project of considerable interest to you is the so-called auto-train - a joint government/industry venture - which would carry cars and their passengers between Washington, D.C., and Jacksonville.

An adaptation of the old ferry-boat idea, the auto-train would enable travellers to take their cars to Florida while freeing them of the tiring and time-consuming task of driving them there.

The service is designed to compete in cost, convenience and comfort with long-distance driving along the highway.

As presently planned, a 15-car train designed especially for this experiment would run between Washington and Jacksonville, making the 750-mile one-way trip in 12 hours or less.

We contemplate a one-way fare of about \$100 per car - no matter how many passengers.

The trains would include ample facilities for dining, recreation and just plain relaxation.

A survey we ran last year indicated that the number of people willing to pay \$100 or more for the auto-train service far exceeds the capacity of the 15-car train we propose to run.

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We in the Department of Transportation consider this auto-train project an extremely important part of our effort to overcome what is perhaps the greatest obstacle to the development of genuine alternatives to the private automobile; we have no hard evidence about what people would be willing to accept as alternatives.

And this is what industry and government have to know before either of them can begin to invest heavily in any given alternative.

We expect that ultimately - through sharing in any revenues and through selling the trains to private industry when the tests prove successful - the Federal government will recover its investment in this project.

Unfortunately, we are not moving ahead at full speed on this project.

Congress appropriated no funds for it for fiscal 1968. For the time being, therefore, we are using funds previously appropriated.

We also expect that interested commercial concerns will carry some of the cost of equipment and facilities. And we hope to begin service early in calendar 1969.

This is just one example of the kind of experiment we are supporting - not in the laboratory, but in the marketplace; not as the sole possessors of ultimate wisdom, but as partners with private industry, and with our state and local governments.

And this is the way it must be.

Transportation decisions, as I have suggested, are local political decisions - they must be made by the citizens of these local areas themselves and by the officials they have elected to run their governments.

The Department of Transportation can and will show the decision-makers how to build better, faster and less expensive systems.

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But it cannot - and should not - decide whether or how these systems should be adopted.

This means, for one thing, that our political leaders - Governors, Mayors, and others - are going to have to take far firmer hold of the decision-making reins on transportation issues within their jurisdictions - and take hold at the outset, not merely at the end when an issue has become so critical that they can no longer avoid taking a stand.

It also means that we must cease asking our local and State officials to operate under outmoded jurisdictional arrangements, with inadequate financing, and often without the authority to make the most elemental decisions.

I am proud, indeed, of the fact that - as the Metro in the Miami-Dade area, and the recent decision of the citizens of the metropolitan Jacksonville area to consolidate their local governments - Florida is taking the lead in transforming local government in this country from vestigial relics of the past into vigorous and vital instruments of progress.

I know that many of you strongly supported these efforts to make local government workable.

I urge you not to retire before the job has really begun.

I am absolutely convinced that, in transportation as in all other aspects of urban planning, businessmen and other laymen must get involved in the politics of planning - they must get involved in the substance as well as the selling.

Certainly we need the experts - but urban planning, like other things, is too important to leave entirely to the experts.

And far too many businessmen seem satisfied to service as sidewalk superintendents and suburban sharpshooters.

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Nor is it enough to wait until you've got a package already wrapped up, and then go out and sell it - which businessmen have done, and done superbly, in a number of cities throughout the nation. By and large, the businessman has been reluctant to get involved in the earlier and messier stages of the planning process.

One reason, I suppose, is that he does not feel qualified.

Another is that businessmen tend to think of the decision-making process in a democracy as something different from the process in business.

If that were true, every new product would have gone on the market without a whimper from the sales department. Every store would have been expanded without a word of warning from the treasurer. And you could say of the board of directors room that there never was heard a disparaging word.

The fact is that the difference between the politics of the community and the politics of business is one of degree and of market.

Elected officials deal not with one unified market or even several neatly identifiable markets but with a multitude of markets, all contending for a different share of the available product.

And they must work - shape their programs and products - within the free-for-all of these contending pressures and often with resources utterly inadequate to the problems they face.

They need all the help they can get - and they need your help most of all.

And I think that when you do get involved in the early - and unruly - stages of the planning process, you will find you have not only a lot to contribute, but a lot to learn as well.

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At all levels of national life, both government and business have been learning, not only to live with each other, but even to like each other a little -- and certainly to understand each other better.

There's no better testimony to that fact than the anniversary we observed - or rather allowed to pass relatively unnoticed - several weeks ago.

November 1 marked the entrance of the American economy into its 81st month of business expansion - a record unrivalled in the economic history of this country, unequaled even by the long business boom that encompassed the years of World War II and beyond.

We are all privileged to live in the most prosperous period in the history of the most prosperous nation in the world.

You wouldn't think so to hear us talk.

We've never had so much to complain about - our eyes smart from the smog, our streets aren't safe at night, prices are terrible, and the payments on our second car are killing us.

And there is, of course, Vietnam.

I have nothing new to say about Vietnam.

I just have the feeling - in all the discussion and debate that I hear - that we have a very real tendency to get all tangled up in irrelevancies. And we tend to lose sight of some of the most elementary facts.

No one denies that it's a difficult and dirty war -- no one feels that fact more keenly than President Johnson.

And no one wants more to bring it to an end so we can devote all our energies to the job facing us here at home.

In Vietnam, as elsewhere in the world, it is peace that we seek, not war - cooperation, not conflict.

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But there are those still who will not leave us in peace - there are those who suppose that because we seek peace we will not defend freedom; that because we enjoy the blessings of such great abundance we lack the will to endure the kind of struggle we face in Vietnam.

For Vietnam is a war of wills as well as a war of weapons. It is a test of our willingness to survive - to surmount - the strain of constant, continual conflict whose end is never clearly in sight.

We are in Vietnam to help hurl back aggression by North Vietnam against the 16 million people of South Vietnam.

We are there to keep the solemn promise of the United States to the government of South Vietnam to help defend that country against aggression.

Most important of all, we are there because the defeat of aggression in South Vietnam is deeply - if not directly vital to the security of the United States.

It is vital because to fail in our commitment to South Vietnam would be to undo much that we accomplished in Korea, in the Berlin Crisis of 1961 and in the Cuban missile crisis of 1962.

We cannot afford to fail.

If we do, we will fail ourselves as well as the people of South Vietnam - if we do, we will undermine the faith of all whose freedom depends upon us, and we will undermine our own faith in ourselves.

Those who most need our strength and our support would forever doubt our word.

Those who most oppose our interests and our ideals would forever doubt our will.

In Vietnam, we keep our promise - and advance our own interest - so that for us and for all men the promise of a world at lasting peace shall come closer to fulfillment.

The price of war is always heavy - and we pay a heavy price for the Vietnam war, in men, in money, and enormous opportunities for progress that we must forego here at home.

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But the price of failure in Vietnam would be far greater.

In the meantime, even with Vietnam, we enjoy today a prosperity unparalleled in our history - and in the history of the world.

Our task is to prove that we can stand prosperity - despite the demands and difficulties of a war we all wish were over - and that we can place that prosperity in the service of those high human ends that must always remain the sole standard of our greatness as a society.

I have no doubt that we can and will - if we remember that the one thing which prosperity, like freedom, cannot stand is to be taken for granted.

Like freedom, it must - on the contrary - be earned anew every day, every week, every year - earned by all of us, business, labor and government, working together.

If we continue to work together, then we will not fail -- at home or in Vietnam.

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