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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY ALAN S. BOYD, SECRETARY OF
TRANSPORTATION BEFORE THE MARYLAND FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S
CLUBS, AT THE SHERATON BELVEDERE HOTEL, BALTIMORE, MARYLAND,
ON MONDAY, 7:00 P.M., APRIL 22, 1968

I am delighted to be here tonight. It gives me an opportunity to thank you for the work you have done on highway safety and beautification - and perhaps to recruit you for even more work in the future.

And because so much of the effort still lies ahead, it may be well to point out that your efforts already have made many Americans more aware of the view from the highway.

I base that, in part, on a case involving a man and his wife who took a trip shortly after she promised she would never again scold him about his driving. She did rather well until he dozed at the wheel. And then, in a fairly desperate effort to keep her promise, she yelled: "Look at all those hideous billboards - coming straight at us."

Unfortunately, the case also indicates we have a way to go in the field of highway safety.

We have spent some time during the past month reflecting on our first year's work as a Department. As you know, the Congress responded to President Johnson's request to establish a Department of Transportation on April 1 of last year. And ever since Congress gave us the green light, people have been honking their horns at us.

While we did not exactly make the tires squeal when the light turned green, we have begun to move.

In his message asking for the Department, President Johnson pointed out that one of the major transportation problems in this country is that we have no true system of transportation. Railroads, airports, highways, canals, pipelines - all of these have been built and expanded to meet changing needs at different times. As the President put it: "Our transportation system has not emerged from a single drawing board, on which the needs and capacities of our economy were all charted. It could not have done so, for it grew along with the country itself - now restlessly expanding, now consolidating, as opportunity grew bright or dim."

It did not take us long to discover that no matter how challenging were the problems in other fields of transportation none could match the challenge of moving people and goods in and near America's cities.

Or, to paraphrase President Johnson, we soon found that "our traffic jams have not emerged from a single suburb for which the needs of commuters and capacities of city streets were all charted.

"They could not have done so, for the traffic grew along with the country itself - now restlessly changing lanes, now colliding, as any hope of getting home in time for dinner grew bright or dim."

And so, during the past year, the Department has given a high priority to the problems of transportation in metropolitan areas.

This morning, I testified before Congress on the President's request to transfer the Federal Government's programs in urban mass transportation to our Department. If the Congress agrees, we will have - for the first time in the country's history - a coordinated approach to city transportation. Highway planning and mass transit planning will be able to proceed side-by-side and we will have a good chance - again for the first time - to produce the mixture that is required to make it easier to move in metropolitan areas.

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This afternoon, we took another important step in this direction.

We sent to the Congress what we consider to be the most comprehensive legislation for solving America's urban highway problems that has ever been written.

This bill is not ours, alone, much as we would like to claim it. The bill reflects months and years of study and thought by the Congress, by highway engineers by architects and city planners - by everyone concerned with the relation between transportation and the city.

And I believe it reflects, also, some of the changing values of our society - the realization that cities exist to serve people and that transportation exists to serve both.

When President Johnson asked for a Department of Transportation, he emphasized that future planning for highways or for any other form of transportation should reach beyond the economics of transportation, alone. He made it clear that such planning should encompass not only all transportation needs but the environment in which those needs exist.

The new highway bill is written to carry out that mandate.

Fundamentally, we are asking the Congress to authorize the expenditure of several billions of dollars for Federal aid for highway construction. But the most significant thing about the bill is not the money but the way in which we propose to spend it.

The largest share of the money will be used to finance the completion of the Interstate Highway System. About 6,000 miles of that system is planned for urban areas. But half of that mileage is unbuilt. In city after city, progress on the Interstate system has either slowed to a rush-hour pace or stopped altogether. The last miles are, indeed, proving to be the longest.

This is not because nobody needs or wants those miles of highway.

The most conservative forecasters tell us there will be 156 million cars, trucks and busses in this country by 1990; and some estimates run even higher. So it is not lack of need that is slowing up the program.

The highways have not been built because in most American cities the people who must live with them have asked for a second look at the way we build urban highways. They have not been built because too many people question whether the merit of a transportation system can be judged solely by the speed of the journey it provides. They insist we take into account the noise it generates; the pollution it puts into the air; the number of neighborhoods it shakes up; the impact it has on the appearance of the city.

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The new bill represents the results of that second look.

In addition to funds for completing the Interstate system, the bill provides a quarter of a billion dollars a year for improving the capacity of streets and boulevards that are already in place.

For several months, we have been working with a number of cities to see whether we could break up traffic jams without costly new expressway systems.

Under a program called TOPICS, we have improved traffic signals; added left-turn lanes to prevent cars from having to line up waiting for one car to turn left; built pedestrian overpasses; and created special turn-out areas where trucks could load and unload.

We have helped cities create special lanes for buses so that they could load and unload passengers without blocking cars; and so they could move along the streets without getting caught in the automobile traffic.

All of these steps were based on the theory that our city streets can be used more efficiently than they now are in most cases.

Most schools, for example, are built nowadays with quick-change rooms that can be used either as a gymnasium, an auditorium or for a series of conference rooms. Nobody deliberately schedules a band concert, a basketball game and rifle practice into the same room at the same time. Yet that is essentially the way we use our city streets - mixing cars, trucks and buses, all with different missions, different needs. We are far from solving the problem. But reserve lanes and special turn-out areas represent a beginning.

So far, the tests show that with relatively inexpensive improvements in the street system, the capacity of the streets can be increased by 15 to 25 percent and the flow of traffic speeded up by a like amount. With such a program, for example, you might be able to turn a boulevard into a mini-freeway by tunneling under it every fifth cross-street and by having electrically-operated barriers close off the other cross-streets during rush hour.

We are now persuaded that this improvement program merits large-scale investment. And our bill proposes to authorize \$250 million a year in matching funds for such work. This would double the amount of Federal money now available for use in urban areas on other than Interstate roads.

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We propose - again for the first time - to provide Federal funds for building parking spaces outside the central business district.

At the present time, the Federal government offers no help to cities that find more and more cars heading downtown and less and less space for parking them. If you saw a man standing by a faucet with a bucket full to the brim, your idea of giving him a hand would scarcely be to turn on the faucet. Yet that is what we are doing to the cities every time we build a new urban highway without providing more space for parking.

In the bill that went to Congress today, we propose to pay 75 percent of the cost of fringe parking if it is built to tie in with a mass transit system that would cover the downtown area.

We propose - again for the first time - to provide funds for advance purchase of land for highways.

Too often, highway planners are forced to sit by and watch whole communities or industrial developments spring up on land they know full well will be needed for a highway in the near future. Under present law, there is no way they can legally buy the land to hold it in reserve.

Our proposal would permit acquisition of that land up to seven years in advance of its actual need. It will permit purchase at lower prices. It will help cities do a better job of advance planning.

We told the last Congress that we want to change the rules under which homeowners, farmers, businessmen are compensated for property that is purchased for highways. Fair market value does not always cover the cost of changing houses; setting up a new business in another location; or starting a new farm. We do not yet have a better formula. We intend to send one to the Congress within the next month.

And, finally, we asked the Congress today to continue our programs under the Highway Beautification Act and the Highway Safety Acts.

We are spending hundreds of millions of dollars to build the Interstate System in the United States. We are spending a good share of that money to build good design directly into the highway itself. That part you cannot always see. So it just makes good economic sense to spend a relatively small amount of money to protect what you can see. And that is what we are doing under the beautification program.

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We have made substantial progress in buying scenic easements to preserve views; in preparing roadside rests; in landscaping; and in screening junkyards.

As of today, sixteen states - Maryland being high among them - have signed agreements with the Federal government under which billboards are controlled along Federal-aid highways.

In the bill we sent to the Congress today, we ask for expenditures of \$85 million in each of the fiscal years 1969, 1970 and 1971.

We regard this as more than a protection of our investment. We regard it as a protection of the countryside, itself - land that looks fairly rugged but turns out to be rather fragile when it comes up against man's capacity for litter.

Finally - automobile safety.

Any discussion of safety must begin with the fact that without your support and the support of others, there would be no national safety law. But the job in many cases has barely begun.

The safety act which has attracted most attention is the one that permits the Department of Transportation to issue vehicle safety performance standards.

We have established 20 standards so far - all of them applying to automobiles manufactured for sale in this country since last January. They involve such features as collapsible steering wheels, interior crash padding, fail-safe braking systems, a new type of laminated windshield which reduces cutting, seat and shoulder safety belts, and systems for wiping, washing and de-fogging windshields. Next January, additional standards will go into effect, requiring such things as head protection to reduce "whiplash" injuries.

The research done so far indicates these devices are saving lives.

But the car is only one factor in highway safety. Under another Act, we are dealing with the other factors - the highway, itself, and the driver in the car.

This Act gives us the authority to set standards for a variety of state and local safety programs - inspection of motor vehicles, driver education, alcohol, highway design and others.

Each standard sets forth a minimum level of performance which state and community programs must meet.

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The Act provides that the Federal government will provide matching funds to help bring every state to higher safety levels.

Maryland has met the standards in several areas. In others, it has not, although bills were submitted to your legislature this year to do so.

One important standard involves the drunk driver. Recent studies show that more than half of all fatal highway crashes involve alcohol. They show that in cases in which a single car has simply run off the road, 75 percent involved heavy drinking.

Twenty-nine States have now passed legislation enacting a so-called implied consent law as required in our standard. This means that when you accept a drivers license, you are deemed to have given your consent to a chemical test if you are ever arrested for driving while intoxicated. Refusal to submit to such a chemical test can be cause for revocation of license. Maryland does not have an implied consent law.

We are proposing to continue and expand the highway safety program. We look to the day when every state will have effective programs of driver education, vehicle inspection, improved licensing laws and other which demonstrably can help guard the lives of Americans on the highways.

Such laws do not come automatically. You must make it clear that you need them and want them. Nor do they automatically save lives. They must be enforced.

I commend you on the work you have done in safety in the past. I look forward to the rewards for society of your continued hard work.

The United States has the best transportation in the world. But, as President Johnson said when he asked for the creation of the Department, it is "not good enough." Not as long as 53,000 people die in highway accidents each year. Not as long as the trip from the airport to downtown can take longer than the flight, itself. Not as long as mass transit remains - for most cities - a relatively slow, uncomfortable alternative to the automobile for transportation in the downtown area.

Recently I ran across this instructive description of the city of the future:

"From the train of moving seats in the darkest building, a visitor looks down on a miniature landscape far away... and finally he beholds the city itself with its quarter-mile towers, huge glass, and soaring among them four-level,

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seven-lane directional highways on which you can surely choose your speed - 100, 200 miles-an-hour. The city has abundant functions: fresh air, fine green parkways, recreational centers, all results of plausible planning and design. No building's shadow will touch another. Parks will occupy one third of the city area."

I found this vision instructive because it is not - as one might imagine - what some city planner in the year 1968 thinks we can achieve in the year 2000.

This description dates back to the 1939 World's Fair. And it refers to the city of 1960.

The moral, I think, is not that we should dream less, but that we should do more.

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