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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION,
ALAN S. BOYD, BEFORE THE ECONOMIC CLUB OF DETROIT, COBO HALL,
DETROIT, MICHIGAN, ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1968, 12:00 NOON

In my job, flying into Detroit is like flying into the eye of a hurricane. It always seems so calm here considering the transportation storms that, by and large, are generated by the rolling mills of this city. Storms like freeway routes, air pollution, central business district traffic jams, the awesome toll of death and injury on America's roads can sometimes make a Secretary of Transportation feel that the city can no longer live with the American automobile -- which presents real problems because the fact is the Nation can no longer live without it.

What started here as a rich man's sport is now every man's link with jobs, school, supermarket and trout streams. What started here as a cottage industry is now the backbone of the American economy.

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Transportation is one service which Americans need across-the-board. Without it, you can no more fight a war than you can mail a postcard - and there is little that you can do in between.

America's system of transportation, is, by any standard, mammoth. It represents an investment of some \$500 billion. It meets needs as diverse as the 200 million people who use it. It accounts for one of every six dollars in the economy; provides jobs for nine million people; and unites a continent.

Yet the increasing demands on this system already strain its capacity in some areas and the growth to come - compounded by concentration of that growth - could bring it near collapse. Take the year 1975 as a yardstick of growth - a good year because it is so close you can almost reach out and touch it.

By then, the number of private aircraft will have nearly doubled. Commercial air travel will have tripled. Automobile traffic will be up 40 percent. Railroads, which now haul 750-billion ton miles a year, will be hauling one-trillion ton miles. Trucks, now carrying 400 million ton miles, will carry 50 percent more. In fact, if the demand for transportation continues to match America's economic growth, we will have to double in less than two decades the capacity of a system that has taken the lifetime of a nation to build.

President Johnson and the 89th Congress read the danger signals of increased delay, congestion and cost two years ago. They called for more intelligent planning, more research and development and more prudent investment of transportation funds. And they created the Department of Transportation and gave it responsibility for leading the effort to make this country's transportation system conform to the needs of the people rather than forcing the people to continue to conform to the system.

This was just one of many actions by this Administration to give Americans safer, more efficient and more convenient transportation. They include the country's first automobile and highway safety programs; research on high-speed ground systems; efforts to control air pollution and aircraft noise; the start of an investigation of auto insurance; programs to restore fast and attractive public transportation to the cities; a gas pipeline safety program; and legislation to preserve the nation's outstanding air safety record.

But the job of coordinating and improving service in a network as massive and complex as that of American transportation will require analysis, research and comprehensive planning on a scale never before undertaken in this country. And on that job we have only begun.

In our efforts to carry out the mandate of the President and the Congress, we are operating on two levels and in two time spans. On the one hand, we have tried to take a long look into the future - recognizing that, in this age of accelerating change, what we do or fail to do in 1968 and 1969 will in large measure shape the system we have in 1975 or 1985.

On the other hand, we have realized that - no matter how much the transportation system of tomorrow may differ from today's - we must use the system as it exists today as the foundation on which to build.

The fact is that, while the Department of Transportation is little more than a year old, the transportation network of this country has evolved over centuries - starting with the trail the Pilgrims followed inland from Plymouth Rock.

And the money that has been invested by government, industry, and consumers has produced systems that are not only enormous in themselves, they are interwoven into the very life of America - our security, economy, social relations and political system.

Neither their course nor their character can - or should - be altered radically overnight. But they can - and must - be constructively influenced over the long haul.

Transportation has its greatest impact on the greatest number of people in and around cities. Federal highway programs provide substantial funds to state and local governments for nearly 60,000 miles of primary, secondary and interstate highways in urban areas. These roads are the backbone of most urban transportation systems. Like any backbone, they are subject to strains and aches.

Our approach to the problem of transportation in our cities has been based on three assumptions:

First, that we must look at highways or rapid transit or any other mode of transportation not as separate, self-contained operations, but as interrelated parts of total systems for serving citizens.

Second, that we must look at an urban transportation system in terms of the total city and the people it is designed to service; in terms of the human and physical environment in which it operates; and in terms of the citizens whose lives it is capable of disrupting as well as enhancing.

Third, that we must look to our cities themselves to tell us what their needs are - for no city is exactly like another, and a given city's transportation system must depend on what kind of community it is now and what its people want it to be in the years to come.

Despite the relatively brief life of the Department, we have already begun to translate some of these basic philosophies into action.

As a step toward our insistence on dealing with the transportation of a city as a single system, we have recently assumed the responsibilities of the Urban Mass Transportation Administration from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. With all urban transportation now under one roof, we are in a better position to blend together the various ingredients of urban transportation and to coordinate them with the other elements of the national system.

One way in which we hope to promote this blending is by changing the terms on which we now offer Federal aid to cities for transportation.

Mayors and managers of American cities now have no real choice when it comes to meeting the transportation needs of their people. There is a choice on paper, of course. They can choose Federal funds for Interstate highway construction which are available immediately and at a ratio of 90 cents from Washington for every ten cents from their city; or they can choose mass transportation funds by putting up 33 cents toward every dollar and taking the aid in very small amounts on very uncertain terms. For a hard-pressed community leader, that is no choice at all. We hope to increase the funds available for mass transportation substantially so that the cities will have real alternatives when they have to start drawing working plans for their transportation systems.

Our concern for the cities has led to major revisions in our approach to building urban highways.

We have begun to see that highways, for example, have a critical impact upon the total environment, and unless carefully planned by states and communities, can ruin neighborhoods, add to pollution, displace thousands of poor people, absorb valuable park land, and promote congestion instead of relieving it.

This year's Federal-Aid Highway Act is a historic attempt to deal with these problems and - at the same time - respond to the people's need for better streets and highways.

As President Johnson said when he signed the measure into law, it is "in many respects the most important highway authorization bill since the start of the Interstate Program over a decade ago." It shows - he said - "more of a concern for our citizens than for concrete."

Under this new Act:

-- We can move ahead to complete the Interstate Highway System.

-- As we do so, families - particularly the poor - who are displaced from their homes by highway projects - will receive the help they need to find and move into decent dwellings.

-- We can authorize highway departments to buy rights-of-way in advance to help assure better planned, less expensive routes that cause a minimum of disruption.

-- We can provide up to \$250 million a year in matching funds for cities to improve their traffic flows and cut congestion without resorting to expensive new construction.

-- We can provide financial help for the construction of fringe parking facilities that will tie-in with public transportation and - again - cut congestion in crowded business districts.

-- Highway planners will be required to consider social and environmental factors in determining the location of urban highways.

-- And there will be more effective guarantees of equal employment opportunity in the highway construction industry.

Any transportation system that succeeds only in moving passengers and freight efficiently is by definition a social failure. The criterion is no longer machines, but people. We are discovering for whom and for what ultimate purposes highways are built and runways laid. Mobility is not enough.

What then, will be the shape of the transportation system to come? You can get the clearest picture by examining the concerns of the Department of Transportation today, and by taking a hard look at our encouraging progress in some 400 projects of research and demonstration we have initiated during the last 18 months. There is no phase of transportation save the maritime industry where the Department does not have a mandate for innovation.

We have begun to implement meaningful safety programs on the highways, in the air, and on the rails.

We are committed to the first full-scale study of auto insurance, and the design of safety test cars and better road signs and signals.

Transportation between cities - both in the densely populated areas of the country such as the northeast corridor and the California coast and in areas of more widely dispersed population, such as the Rocky Mountain area - also involves serious problems in urgent need of solutions.

Of the many steps we are taking, three are of particular note:

-- Our projections of transportation trends show that we must anticipate a huge additional amount of air traffic in the years immediately ahead. It will increase even more in corridors already severely congested. We have developed a broad-ranging program that would amount to a major overhaul of - and we think a major advance in - aviation policy.

-- As travel continues to increase in crowded corridors, there is every reason to believe that high-speed ground transportation will increase in importance. Accordingly, we have expanded our experiments with fast trains and with air-cushion vehicles.

-- We are turning our attention increasingly to Vertical Take-off and Landing and Short Take-off and Landing aircraft. Nearly 80 percent of all commercial flights are made between cities less than 500 miles apart. This is not really an efficient distance for many of today's jetliners - not to mention tomorrow's jumbo jets.

We have several studies underway to determine the role that STOL's and VTOL's have in linking up the scattered medium size cities that are likely to become the distinguishing features of America's metropolitan regions in the next decade.

All of our programs of the past and our proposals for the future have as their common goal the notion that transportation is a system designed to serve people and the society in which they live.

It is a means, not an end. And our job - as we see it - is to help make the transportation system of this country more and more a means, not just for moving vehicles and goods and bodies from one place to another, but for helping secure a better life for people.

Carrying out our mandate from the President and the Congress is neither a short-term nor an easy task. We are working with a system that is exceeded in complexity only by the people who use it and we are probably not going to see any dramatic changes in the immediate future.

But I feel about the system much the way the French Marshall Lyautey did the morning he walked onto the grounds of his estate to talk to his gardener.

He said he thought they ought to plant a tree in a corner of the grounds. The gardner said he would get around to it eventually. After all, he told the Marshall, "it will take 100 years to grow."

"In that case," the Marshall said, "plant it at once."

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