

REMARKS BY ALAN S. BOYD, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, PREPARED FOR DELIVERY TO THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES, AT THE WASHINGTON HILTON HOTEL, WASHINGTON, D. C., 4:00 P.M., MARCH 14, 1967.

43)

By an interesting coincidence, the National League of Cities is meeting on a day of historical significance. Today, March fourteenth, is the anniversary of a very famous American invention.

This particular invention brought great wealth to one part of the United States. It also, indirectly, brought immense grief to the nation as a whole. In fact, it is one of the basic causes of the tragic human problem faced by a majority of our great cities.

One hundred and seventy-three years ago today, Eli Whitney patented his cotton gin.

This simple contrivance, more than any other circumstance, shaped the economy of the South. It made slavery a profitable institution. And to that extent, it helped to make the Civil War a possibility.

The final legacy of the cotton gin appeared long afterwards, when cotton was no longer king, and mechanization had finally come to the Southern farm. Then the great exodus of unskilled farm workers began. By the millions, they migrated north to the big-city slums and ghettos.

Of course, we cannot place blame for this long series of social disasters on an eager inventor. As a modern playwright (T. S. Eliot) has said, "If we all were judged according to the consequences of all our

words and deeds, beyond the intention and beyond our limited understanding of ourselves and others, we should all be condemned."

Nevertheless, I believe that people bearing your kinds of responsibilities must be acutely aware of potential consequences. Only through this awareness can you hope to transform civic leadership from an art to a science.

We are now living in an era which has been fundamentally shaped by another great mechanical contrivance. Like the cotton gin, it has brought immense benefits to our society. But today we are having to reckon with some of the unforeseen, undesirable side-effects of this invention.

I refer, of course, to the automobile.

The automobile has given us immeasurably greater freedom and personal mobility than we once had. It has also set in motion a chain of social problems, affecting the welfare of the entire urban community.

I need not recite to this sophisticated group any of the civic problems associated with urban transportation. You are well enough acquainted with those circumstances which have grown beyond municipal control. Quite properly, you expect the Federal Government to contrive some sound remedies, some feasible measures to cope with the problems the automobile has brought to America's cities.

For government institutions resemble mechanical devices. They must also be invented.

It was the British statesman Edmund Burke who, after observing first the American Revolution and then the French Revolution, arrived at the conclusion that:

"Government is a contrivance of human wisdom to provide for human wants. Men have a right that these wants should be provided for by this wisdom."

The present Administration and the 89th Congress responded to the needs of urban areas by two creative and historic measures: the formation of the Department of Housing and Urban Development in 1965 and the formation of the Department of Transportation in 1966.

These two Departments will very shortly begin a discussion of how they can best work together in solving urban transportation problems.

This discussion will be of particular interest to members of the National League of Cities. For it should and, I believe, will lead to the enlargement and refinement of Federal resources now available to improve local transportation systems.

President Johnson, in his transportation message of last year, stated that although HUD bears the principal responsibility for a unified Federal approach to urban problems, it would need the counsel, support and cooperation of the Department of Transportation on matters affecting the intracity movement of goods and people. He has asked the Secretaries of the two Departments to recommend to him, within one year after creation of the Department of Transportation, the means and procedures by which this cooperation can best be achieved. And President Johnson meant cooperation not only in principal but in practical effect.

The new Department will officially open its doors on the first of next month. You gentlemen are too worldly to be expecting that this will bring an immediate change in anything but references to April Fool's Day. But Secretary Weaver and I will soon thereafter commence a joint study of

how Federal policies and programs--and here I quote the language of the Act--"can assure that urban transportation systems most effectively serve both national transportation needs and the comprehensively planned development of urban areas."

We hope to have our recommendations in to the President well before the April, 1968 deadline.

The Department of Transportation has already inherited, through its component agencies, a substantial interest in urban transportation matters. There is, of course, the Federal highway program of the Bureau of Public Roads, which serves every sizable community in the nation and provides the basis of our pneumatic tire-borne transport technology. As a needed refinement of that technology, Congress has also given the Department the responsibility for administering the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966. And this, with State and municipal participation, will ultimately raise the performance standards for every vehicle and driver on the road.

Through the Federal Aviation Agency, the Department has acquired responsibilities in regard to the nation's airports. Some of the largest of these are located within the corporate limits of the communities they serve and must be integrated with local public transportation facilities. All of the 647 commercial scheduled-service airports now operated in this country have surface-access requirements of relevance to local transportation planning.

Through several of its constituent agencies--the FAA, the Coast Guard, the Federal Railroad and Highway Administrations, as well as the newly-created National Transportation Safety Board--the Department of Transportation has broad responsibilities for overseeing safety conditions in air and ground transportation, including pipelines. I should mention in

this connection the fact that we have grown increasingly concerned over safety conditions in one category that is not now being impartially inspected. I refer to natural gas pipelines which, it seems to me, pose a serious potential safety hazard in urban areas and should, in the public interest, be subject to appropriate engineering standards. I think it might be well worth your while, when you get back to your desks, to inquire about the exact location of natural gas pipelines in your own community, in relation to where homes and schools are being placed.

Your executive director, in his letter of invitation to me, said that you city officials would be especially interested in learning of any new plans of the Department, or of any adjustments in programs which have significant bearing upon the quality of the urban environment. There are two such programs that I would like to discuss.

The first of these was created only last month by the Bureau of Public Roads. It is called TOPICS, and it is our response to the President's call for further work on a problem of concern to all municipalities. This is the effort to increase traffic capacity and improve the traffic flow and safety of existing city streets.

TOPICS is an acronym for Traffic Operations Program to Increase Capacity and Safety. It's designed to provide immediate additional help to the nation's cities in reducing traffic congestion through traffic engineering improvements.

Under this program, the Federal-aid Primary System is being expanded to permit the selection of principal streets and downtown grids to receive Federal aid. It applies to areas of 5,000 or more population. As you know, these streets were not previously considered eligible for Federal-aid highway funds.

The cost of the improvements will be shared by this Department and State highway departments on a 50-50 basis; out of the regular Federal-aid highway apportionments. Subject to Bureau of Public Roads approval, the selection of the streets will be made by the State highway departments in cooperation with local communities.

I should emphasize that streets and grids selected will be eligible for Federal funds only for traffic operation improvement--not for major construction or reconstruction projects. But the types of improvements that can be made suggest the usefulness and flexibility of this program.

For example, you may channelize intersections. You may provide additional traffic lanes on approaches to signalized intersections. You may construct pedestrian grade separations or highway grade separations at complex intersections or railway-highway crossings, where you can demonstrate that improvement is essential to relieve a (crucial) bottleneck along streets of otherwise adequate width.

You may install control systems for a wide range of purposes, such as making traffic signal operations responsive to traffic conditions, diverting traffic from congested areas, establishing a part-time one-way operation, reversing direction of traffic on selected traffic lanes, or for separate bus lane controls.

I cannot, of course, describe all of the possibilities under this program. But let me mention two others that may surprise you.

This program permits the development of separate traffic lanes for loading, unloading, or transferring passengers at surface transit terminals and

intermediate stops--including platforms and shelters within the street right-of-way. It also permits the development of truck loading and unloading facilities where necessary to improve traffic movement.

Three types of streets are eligible for inclusion in this program. It applies to arterial highways and major streets--that is to say, radial, crosstown, and circumferential--that are not already on either the Federal-aid Primary or Secondary Systems.

It applies to most, or all, of the street grid in the downtown area.

And it applies to a limited street grid in other areas having particularly high concentrations of traffic.

You will, of course, have to consult with your State highway department on this matter of street eligibility. I want to say, however, that this is an action program on which work can be started almost immediately. And research has already demonstrated this fact: Low-cost improvement to existing streets, and the use of the latest traffic engineering techniques and traffic control devices, can double traffic capacity and increase average speeds by 25 percent.

The second program I wish to discuss does not have a catchy title. In fact, it is still in the proposal stage. It is an idea for the joint development of urban housing and freeways.

It seeks to economize on both the money and the space that are required for better housing, parks, schools, recreational facilities, and other amenities, along with highways. It seeks to minimize the dislocation of people and business, and the isolation and disruption of neighborhoods, which formerly occurred in freeway construction. It is designed to take

advantage of the great opportunity presented in the next few years, during which more than \$10 billion is proposed to be invested in providing some 2,500 miles of urban freeways under the Interstate program alone.

The Joint Freeways-Urban Development program seeks to make freeway construction actually contribute to neighborhood development and continuity. We propose that in the same space that may now be devoted to substandard housing or blighted commercial uses, not only a freeway can be built, but replacement housing as well. Also in the same space, we feel that other vital community and commercial facilities can be constructed. And we are confident that if the job is well planned, there will also be room left over for recreational areas or attractive open space.

In other words, we can improve an entire transportation corridor with multiple and complementary uses, by developing the space alongside, over and under the freeways as these are constructed.

In the past, freeways were designed to use a very minimum right-of-way. This, in order to minimize the displacement of people and businesses and the disruption of other community activities. In acquiring that right-of-way, we had to pay not only for the land actually used, but also for the damage to the remainder of the properties.

Our studies show that in many urban situations the cost of acquiring whole blocks of property would be only slightly higher than the cost of acquiring that minimum right-of-way.

To take a specific example. A minimum right-of-way might require only 40 percent of the land area of a city block. But because of severance damages, the cost of obtaining this minimum path might actually equal 80 percent or more of the cost of acquiring the entire block.

For sake of discussion, let us assume that this minimum right-of-way would cost \$8 million, even though only 40 percent of the block would be taken. Then the entire block might very well be acquired for not more than \$10 million.

Some local agency, such as a public corporation or authority, could acquire and clear the full block. Then it would sell back to the highway department the space needed by the freeway for the \$8 million that it would otherwise have cost. Thus, for \$2 million the local public agency would have available for development all of the remaining land, land which might have cost \$6 to \$8 million if purchased separately.

In short, the highway would contribute towards underwriting the cost of other development. There would be no increase in highway expenditures, but there would be a considerable savings to the local community. Your local authority would sell the highway department a three-dimensional easement--in effect, an air tunnel. Then you could make use of air rights over, around, and under the freeway for the development of replacement housing, shops, schools, parks, parking, or other facilities.

Common sense tells us it is not possible to reduce to zero the impact of new highways on urban areas. But this program would minimize any adverse effects while strongly assisting urban revitalization.

Incidentally, there is a bonus. Joint development permits the city to recoup taxable property so often taken off the tax rolls by traditional highway construction.

I must emphasize what may be obvious to you all. This approach requires very energetic local initiative. The Department of Transportation is ready to provide assistance but the initiative has to come from city officials.

You can do this, first, by looking for places in your community where this concept could be applied profitably, and pointing out those possibilities to highway planners. Next, you should investigate the ways in which such a program could be carried out within the framework of existing local laws and customs.

If you do not have a local agency empowered to acquire the land, by all means investigate the possibility of obtaining the necessary enabling legislation.

As many of you are aware, these programs represent somewhat of a departure from previous policies of the agency involved. They correspond to a shift in emphasis within the cities themselves.

There is a growing appreciation of the fact that the efficiency of intercity transportation is inseparable from the efficiency of urban transportation facilities. Airport access is the most conspicuous example, these days. But long-distance trucking terminals, and rail yards and bus depots, and ports and harbors, are all dependent on ancillary services. They especially depend on the existence of a rational and smoothly functioning local distribution system. For, if the internal traffic conditions of a community become unmanageable commerce and industry will seek to bypass the town.

As a case in point, fifteen years ago, the Port of New York handled about one-third of all foreign cargoes moving to and from the United States. But even though the absolute tonnage has remained fairly constant, today the port handles only about 20 percent of the nation's foreign trade tonnage.

On the other hand, if the rational and efficient solutions to a city's traffic problems make inadequate allowances for people, then those solutions must be regarded, in a social sense, as irrational and inefficient.

For this reason, our future transportation decisions must reflect a more complex involvement in urban conservation goals. Obviously, the fate of the city and the fate of transportation are closely interwoven.

In the field of transportation, constant change has been the rule of life. Change has resulted from technological innovation. Change has resulted from competition. Change has resulted from shifts in locations of people and industry. Change has resulted from alterations of consumer preferences, from new life-styles, from new aspirations of the individual, from higher standards of expectation.

Like all services, transportation has learned that in order to survive it must change.

The cities of America are profoundly involved in the same patterns of change. Historically, our great cities have arisen at the transfer points of transportation. Like transportation, cities may also be viewed as a service.

In a manner of speaking, you and I serve the same customer. In the future, let us see if, together, we can arrange an improved service to our customers.