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REMARKS BY U.S. SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION JOHN A. VOLPE TO THE NEW YORK BOARD OF TRADE, NEW YORK, NEW YORK, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1972

Manhattan Island alone has more of the means of mobility than a great many nations. The transportation problems here are larger -- the challenges greater -- but New Yorkers have shown by example and by experience, an uncanny talent for doing the impossible. When New Yorkers work together, they have the fortitude and the resourcefulness to cope successfully with king-size challenges.

That's why I'm especially glad to be here this evening, and why I'm grateful for this forum. Some of our most responsive and expressive audiences are the people not directly in the transportation business, but who see the transportation function as vital to the well-being of the community.

In this respect, New York and the New York Board of Trade rate special mention. Governor Rockefeller or the New York State Department of Transportation, Mayor Lindsay or the New York City Transportation Administration, Bill Ronan or the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, can't do the job alone. The unfolding of urban transportation progress depends on the conviction of the American people that adequate, up-to-date, efficient public transportation is a necessity in every city in our Nation.

That conviction is taking root and growing, thanks to organizations like the New York Board of Trade and the civic-minded businesses represented here this evening. The initiative, participation and support of industries and agencies not primarily in the business of providing transportation can make the margin of difference in generating public willingness to plan, promote and pay for the vast programs in transportation improvement essential to good urban mobility.

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I know how earnestly and effectively the Board of Trade has worked to foster that partnership. I know how desperately everyone who lives, works or does business in New York wants faster, more efficient transit. I know you would take little pride in New York being the largest city in the world if you did not also feel that it is the best.

When I was here nine days ago, Dr. Ronan's people took me for a ride on one of the new M-1 rail commuter cars. We rode out to Tarrytown and I can tell you it was a pleasant trip. The new cars are attractive, quiet and comfortable: A preview of what every commuter can expect in the not-too-distant future.

My purpose in being in New York that day was to finalize the latest Federal grant of \$40 million to the MTA, to help buy 202 new subway cars. You will recall that last June we provided an initial \$63.4 million for 320 subway cars.

Tomorrow morning we are breaking ground for the Second Avenue subway. The first-phase Federal grant of \$25 million will get construction started on the first leg of the project, between 97th and 119th Streets.

This subway has long been needed -- it was originally proposed just after World War I -- and be assured we stand ready to provide further financial assistance as the job progresses. The State has certified this project to us as the first priority of transit business in New York City, and we shall treat it accordingly.

The tempo of transportation improvement is picking up sharply in New York, and it serves as a kind of metronome for the rest of the Nation. It is gratifying to come to New York these days and hear the good sounds of transit construction underway -- in all the boroughs -- and to know that modern buses, subway cars, and commuter rail cars are joining the transit fleets in ever-increasing numbers.

This renaissance in public transportation is due in part to the larger Federal resources available as a product of the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1970, proposed by President Nixon and passed with strong bipartisan Congressional support.

But the new day that has dawned for public transportation is also a result of greater civic concern by all segments of the urban community. There is a growing consensus that urban transportation affairs are too complex -- too important to the quality and character of the community -- to be left to transportation people alone.

In addition to my rail tour the other day, I have had the opportunity to try out a number of new urban transportation systems in recent weeks.

Earlier this month I was in San Francisco to help dedicate the new BART System and to ride the first segment of that rapid rail network on the East side of San Francisco Bay.

From the Bay Area I went to Pueblo, Colorado, where our state-of-the-art rapid transit cars were rolled out for testing. They incorporate every good feature the designers could think of -- as well as a few untried (but worth trying!) concepts. Those cars, by the way, will be here in New York -- on the MTA -- for some "real life" testing shortly after the new year.

Day before yesterday I was in Morgantown, West Virginia, to inaugurate the first Personal Rapid Transit -- "people mover" -- system to go into operation in the United States. Just a few days earlier we had announced that another PRT demonstration project -- the first to be applied to a busy, downtown urban area -- would be built in Denver.

That project will get under way shortly, with an initial operational capability set for the spring of 1975. And, as Bill Ronan and I have discussed on a number of occasions, there's no reason why one or more people-mover systems couldn't be built in Manhattan. It would be an ideal way of shuttling people across town -- a push-button "horizontal elevator" service from the East River to the Hudson River, reducing street congestion and facilitating freight and pedestrian traffic.

The challenge you and I face is to get urban Americans by the millions to embrace these new concepts in public transportation -- to switch from the car to the bus, from taxis to subways or PRT's, to free the surface corridors for essential traffic by supplying attractive and practical alternatives to the automobile.

This is not something that John Volpe or the MTA or the New York City Council can do alone. It takes a massive awareness on the part of the people, a total and sympathetic commitment to the problem in planning councils and at the polls, and a willingness by business and government to think of transportation improvements as profit for the community.

No one can sit in Washington, D. C. and develop a fix for the transportation problems of every urban community in America. But we can, and do, respond to community initiatives. We fund studies, research, development and demonstration projects, and programs of university research to expand the pools of knowledge and provide a wider range of options from which communities can shop for their transportation needs.

And under President Nixon's leadership, we have loosened the purse strings on capital grants for investments in public transportation.

Since 1969, for example, we have provided more than \$235 million in capital grant assistance funds to the Tri-State New York City Metropolitan Area. One result of this investment policy -- and I call it that because we will receive significant dividends -- is better vehicles: more than a

thousand new buses, some 700 modern high-speed "metropolitan" rail commuter cars, as well as more than 500 new R-46 subway cars to replace the 30-year-old units still in use.

These new vehicles -- whether rubber tire or steel wheel -- represent the very latest in public transportation equipment. No more open doors and windows -- air conditioning makes your ride quieter, cleaner, more comfortable. We have come to expect quiet, air conditioned comfort in our motor cars: there is no reason why transit technologies should afford the patrons of public transportation any less.

Along with better vehicles, grants for public transportation are producing better roadbeds and better facilities. Just a week ago, as an example, we awarded the first \$11 million in a proposed \$26.5 million Federal program to assist in the further modernization of the New Haven Division. The project involves the laying of 173 miles of welded rail plus extensive replacement of ties and track resurfacing. Phase one of this program, the purchase of 144 new rail cars, was funded earlier.

A third function of the Federal Grant Program is to get needed public transportation projects started, and to help finance extensions to existing systems. Obstacles to the Second Avenue subway blocked that project for 50 years. Now -- tomorrow morning -- we are able to break ground because the President in Washington and the people in New York City are agreed that without adequate public transportation our urban centers cannot survive.

As I remarked earlier, this realization is gradually taking hold across the country. It begins with the rude awakening that the price of a predominantly auto-oriented society may be too high ... that for all of the benefits of unlimited personal mobility, the costs in congestion, pollution and social discord are unacceptable.

The realization of public transportation's potentials grows with the awareness that there must be a better way -- a better way to move people from one travel mode to another, a better way to treat the environment, to serve public safety, and uphold the quality of urban life.

So in San Francisco they built the BART system. In Boston they extended the South Shore Line to Quincy, and in the first year six million passengers rode that extension. In Philadelphia, the automated Lindenwold Line has cut commuting time from South Jersey and, by taking commuters out of automobiles, has opened the highways and cut travel time for those who do drive. In Atlanta, the citizens voted a one percent sales tax to underwrite improved transportation, including the development of a 50-mile rapid rail system and a network of exclusive busways. In Washington, construction has been under way for more than a year on the 98-mile METRO system. Work will begin soon on a subway system for Baltimore. St. Louis, Miami, Dallas, Buffalo, Houston and other major cities are in various stages of planning for new public transit systems.

In Los Angeles, which cast its lot with the car and started the freeway movement, the city fathers are about ready to take the case for urban public transit to the voters -- with better prospects for approval than at any time in the past. Throughout the country, cities are discovering that no amount of highway construction alone -- in fact, no single mode alone -- can satisfy the growth curves projected for urban travel in the decades ahead.

In 1971, the voters in New York City rejected a transportation bond issue because it contained too much money for highways. And on Capitol Hill this month, for the first time in memory, Congress adjourned without voting new funds for highways because enough members of the Senate and House agreed with President Nixon, and with me, that aid for urban public transportation merits the allocation of at least a portion of the Highway Trust Funds. True, we didn't score in our efforts to permit States and cities some flexibility in determining how their urban transportation needs can best be met, but it's only half-time in this particular ball game. When the next Congress convenes, I assure you we will be back on the offense, arguing for the logic of meeting urban transportation needs in ways that will best serve the public and the interests of the total community.

The development of better transportation for our urban centers holds a high priority with President Nixon. He wants the same kind of "success story" for mass transportation in the 1970's as the highway program achieved in the past two decades.

The Capital Grant Program that forms the leading edge in our assault on urban transportation problems will continue to be used in response to needy transit causes wherever they occur, with special emphasis on the problems of our larger cities. From a budget of less than \$135 million in FY 1969, President Nixon has brought funding for public transportation to the billion dollar level. That's an eight-fold increase! And, potentially, that sum can be increased by at least 50 percent, without any additional taxes, if we succeed in winning Congressional support for the Federal Aid Urban Systems Program as a condition of highway legislation.

And as I noted earlier, we are stepping up transportation research and development. That's the foot-in-the-door price for new technologies and new systems applicable to community needs. Under President Nixon, our RD & D funding has increased from \$114 million (1.7 percent of the DOT budget) in 1969, to \$387 million (4.5 percent of the budget) in FY 1973.

And finally, we are pursuing -- under study contracts or in partnership with other agencies -- a variety of low and non capital-intensive ways to increase the efficiency of present systems.

One obvious course is to afford priorities to high-occupancy vehicles -- that is to day, buses and car pools. The success of our Shirley Highway bus lane experiment in Washington, the Blue Streak in Seattle, and the

I-495-Lincoln Tunnel Busway demonstrate that people will go with a system that offers the speed and convenience of express service.

Other possibilities include the use of more fringe parking lots, so people can drive to the bus the way they do to the train; staggered work hours to flatten out peak hour demand; even adoption of the four-day work week, 24-hour work day, or seven-day business week would enable us to get more bang for our buck out of our transportation facilities.

Nationally we must double our transportation capacity in the next 15 to 20 years. We simply can't do that job through capital investments alone. Cities do not have the revenues, the resources or the real estate to duplicate existing transportation facilities. Nor does anybody want to take that approach. The last thing we need is twice as much of everything.

To meet our mobility needs, we may well have to change some of our transportation habits and forego some of the transportation concepts we now take for granted. Is it really logical that city streets can be used for the storage of vehicles, (for parking), as well as for their travel?

Is it logical that every transportation facility must be geared to a peak demand, and underutilized the rest of the time?

Is it logical to insist that highways "pay for themselves" in user taxes when in reality the entire community must bear the social costs of pollution, noise and congestion?

I say that provisions for adequate transportation should always be required in the planning of new commercial developments -- just as water, electricity, sewage and other city services must be assured in advance. If the PATH subway did not run directly under the World Trade Center, for example, could the alternative road, rail and subway systems accommodate the tens of thousands of people who work in those twin towers? That's why transportation planning today must cross borough lines, county lines; even State lines; why it must be regional in every sense of the word; why it must involve public and private members of the community alike; and why the proponents of different modes can no longer afford to go their separate ways.

In this respect, the Board of Trade has done much to foster the partnership of business and government in the New York Area. One of the purposes of your 99-year history has been "To meet the transportation needs of a growing economy." Perhaps you have never done more -- or better -- than in joining the business forces represented in this room this evening to the task at hand.

There is no master plan in Washington that can compete with masterful planning at the local level -- no miracle mode or technological triumph to take the place of community commitment to a public cause.

The record shows that the American economy is still growing. The growth rate of our GNP -- over seven percent -- is second only to Japan's. More Americans -- 82 million of us -- are working now than ever before. And as the awards given here tonight demonstrate so eloquently, never before have we had business leaders so devoted to the interests of the community.

I believe that's the best assurance we could have that the transportation needs of our cities will be met -- and that not only our mobility but the quality of our lives will be improved.

Thank you.

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