



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION JOHN A. VOLPE AT THE ANNUAL LUNCHEON MEETING OF THE CENTRAL CITY ASSOCIATION, BILTMORE HOTEL, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16, 1969, 12:00 NOON.

I am especially glad to be here, because we in Washington are excited by what is happening in Los Angeles, and we are especially excited about what can happen here in the all-important area of urban public transportation.

We are well aware, back in Washington, that out here you do things "big." But sometimes that means you have big problems. For instance, just this week Marquis Childs wrote about Los Angeles in his nationwide newspaper column. He pointed out that "Every day some 4 million cars race up and down the freeways that slash through every part of Los Angeles County. They burn 8 million gallons of gasoline every 24 hours. This contributes 76 percent of the carbon monoxide in the air, more than half of the hydrocarbons, and most of the lead."

That's "telling it like it is," I'm afraid, and it's a problem that this city will have to solve. Because it's not the kind of a problem you can live with. Too many people have died from it for us to say that.

But at the same time, we know that you are a leadership city -- leading your State in manufacturing, commerce, and per capita wealth. We know that in Los Angeles you have good government-business relations, an attractive natural climate, an aggressive marketplace, and a potentially tremendous future.

And I might mention that the Department of Transportation has quite a stake invested in Los Angeles. For instance, in the Coast Guard our expenditures in the Los Angeles area for fiscal year 1969 amounted to \$1,090,000.

Our Federal Aviation Administration has over 3,000 employees in southern California with an annual payroll of almost \$40 million and fixed assets worth about \$22 million. And, since the inception of the Federal aid to airports program, the FAA has spent some \$44 million in Federal funds here in southern California.

In the highway field California's system of freeways and Interstate highways is known the world over. I don't have the exact Los Angeles breakdown with me today, but since the Interstate program was started back in 1956, the State of California has received some \$2,063,000,000 under the 90-10 program, and about \$670 million under the 50-50 ABC program.

And our newest Administration, the Urban Mass Transportation Administration, has funneled a total of almost \$5 million in capital grants, technical studies, and demonstration projects into the Los Angeles area since 1964. And I might point out, that when the President and I were looking for an Urban Mass Transportation Administrator last winter after the inauguration, we were extremely lucky to get a Los Angeleno, Carlos Villarreal, to fill this important post. I know he's been back here on several occasions to talk with Sam Nelson and the SCRTD people, and he has great plans for helping Los Angeles come up with the greatest transportation development program in the Nation. Carlos is an "action man," eager to get things done -- like me -- and we look forward to great things in the months and years ahead from the people in Carlos' Administration.

I'd like to go back, if I may, to something that ran through my mind while Bill was making his presentation earlier.

And that is this: Los Angeles is growing, it is centralizing, and you do have a transportation crisis.

And I have to be very clear and explicit about this here today. A city which is not upgrading or developing a means by which it can move large numbers of people effectively, efficiently and smoothly from where those people are to where they want to go -- is a city of obsolescence.

I say "obsolescence," because as cities grow in population and in density and as they redistribute population through urban renewal projects and through normal expansion -- they find that property values change radically; that the face of the city isn't what it used to be, and that mobility from one part of the city to another becomes a basic, vital necessity.

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And gentlemen, I say this knowing full well that although Californians love their automobiles, they will have to recognize that we can never provide the mobility they demand and deserve if we restrict ourselves to automobiles alone.

It is an absolute must, if our cities across the country are to survive the growth which is occurring everywhere, that we in this Nation provide fast and efficient public transportation in addition to our network of streets and highways.

Someone remarked to me recently that if a resident in Pasadena wants to attend a Sunday night affair at the Coconut Grove -- transportation is so bad -- he has to make plans for a weekend trip.

Another said -- if you live in Baldwin Hills -- you can't fight City Hall. How can you fight it when you can't get there?

Out of such levity runs a thread of truth.

This city needs public transportation. You cannot rely upon a single mode, and I'll tell you why. You could very well have the greatest network of freeways and interchanges in the world, but there is the very real and very dangerous possibility that you might not have much of a city left in which to do business.

This Administration recognizes -- perhaps to a greater extent than has ever been recognized before -- that transportation is the key to many of the social ills that afflict our metropolitan areas from coast to coast.

The President and I see this in Cabinet meetings -- in meetings of the Urban Affairs Council -- in meetings of the Environmental Quality Council.

We know that job training centers don't really amount to much if there's no way for the dropout to get to them. We know that job opportunities don't really amount to much if the would-be breadwinner can't get there. A new hospital or health center doesn't mean much to the mother with a sick child in her arms if she can't get there quickly and inexpensively. Night school doesn't mean very much to the would-be student if he has no way to get to the classroom.

A city, really, is nothing more than a center of commerce where people come together to trade goods and ideas. When that city begins to choke in its own congestion, if there is no thread of communication and transportation for the exchange of goods and ideas, then that city is not only becoming obsolescent, that city is dying.

Your presence here today indicates that you are concerned ... that you are not interested in being an eye witness to the death of a city.

It doesn't have to happen here in Los Angeles.

It will not happen if you continue to seek alternatives to your present transportation system.

I know what you are thinking: "We tried to pass a measure that would build a rapid transit system here last fall. We failed."

I say to you: "That was your first effort in 188 years. Nothing that is worth obtaining is obtained easily.

I say to you -- try again.

I think you should put it on the ballot again. I remember when I was Governor of Massachusetts, our State desperately needed a sales tax ... I don't need to point out that no politician likes to go on record as being in favor of any kind of tax. But we needed it and we fought for it. We didn't get it on the first try, nor on the second, or the third. There were too many legislators who thought that support of such a program would be politically fatal. But we knew it was necessary. We knew it was vital. And we kept on plugging. It was finally, on the 14th try, that we got that program through the legislature. And I'll tell you how "politically fatal" that effort was. I was re-elected Governor the following year by the largest margin ever accorded a gubernatorial candidate in the history of Massachusetts because the people knew I had fought for what was right.

I am aware that after the ballots were counted last fall, the analysts gave a number of reasons why the bill failed. One of the most prominent was that there were not enough Federal funds involved.

Well, my friends, with your support we can get those Federal funds, and Los Angeles can forge ahead and grow the way you want it to grow.

You are probably aware of the public transportation legislation that the President and I have proposed to the Congress, but let me touch upon the highlights.

Our bill proposes a 12-year, \$10 billion program to provide funds on an assured basis for the construction, expansion, and improvement of public transportation in growing urban America.

Those of you who were involved in the referendum here last time around know only too well how difficult it is to get public approval to sell bonds when there is no assurance of matching Federal funds a few years down the road.

Our legislation calls for the Congress to firmly indicate its intent to fund an on-going program, and is further bolstered by a budgetary

mechanism known as "contract authority" which will enable cities to undertake long-range projects.

Our legislation seeks the authority to commit funds starting at \$300 million and rising to \$1 billion during the first 5 years, then holding level with an additional \$1 billion each year for the balance of the program.

This program is before the Congress now. As I said, I testified on the Hill just day before yesterday. I pointed out then that we have a bill here that will get us underway on a task that certainly needs doing.

I pointed out that we must have public mobility in this Nation if we are to fulfill our pledges to the disadvantaged, the young, the poor, the elderly and the physically handicapped.

If this bill is to become law, and if these funds are to be made available to cities such as Los Angeles, we need your help and support. If we are to go ahead and get to work with this program, it will be because influential people such as yourselves have contacted your Senators and Representatives and told them you hope they support the bill.

This is the first thing you can do.

The second thing you can do is lend full support to such worthwhile activities as the committee for central planning.

You can take another look at what you already have, and you can determine that you will make full utilization of the facilities that are already in place.

What steps have you taken to make greatest use of your magnificent freeway system? Is there a way you could better utilize what you already have before you go on ahead and take even more land, take more property off the tax rolls? Are you covering over your freeways in downtown areas, building parking garages there? Are you using the air space for desperately needed park land?

Are you making full utilization of your freeway systems for exclusive high-speed bus lanes? I know this has been discussed, and I know that we are working with you now on a project involving exclusive bus ways on Interstate 10. But are you going ahead with this kind of proposal on a wide enough basis? Is there more you could do at the local level, without having to ask for increased Federal funds? After all, what is really involved here is imaginative rescheduling and cooperation with your State Highway Department.

Are you looking ahead -- as you build freeways -- to the possible use of median strips for rapid transit? They're doing it in San Francisco, and they're doing it in Chicago. In fact I was in Chicago just last month

for the opening of the nine-mile extension of rapid transit service down the median strip of the Dan Ryan Expressway. It is now possible to get downtown on the rapid transit in 20 minutes where it used to take almost an hour by automobile!

My friends, there is no way to turn the clock back when you are dealing with the growth of a city -- especially a city like Los Angeles.

Los Angeles is going to be a city. A great city. You cannot stop the growth that is happening here. You cannot say "we're big enough, we don't want to be any bigger."

But you can certainly direct that growth.

The Department of Transportation is vitally interested. Your city could well become a showplace for the Nation.

The entire Administration is interested. As I noted, the President recognizes the fact that transportation could well be the one key factor in freeing the bonds that make city living so difficult for so many.

You will have to come up with new ideas, new thinking, new daring, and new boldness if you are to fulfill the bright promise that belongs to Los Angeles. I hope we can help you reach your goals. We are certainly ready to listen and help.

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