



# DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

# NEWS

## OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

12-S-70

REMARKS BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION JOHN A. VOLPE AT ANNUAL MEETING OF CENTRAL RICHMOND ASSOCIATION, THE JOHN MARSHALL HOTEL, RICHMOND, VIRGINIA, 7:30 P. M., WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1970

It is a special pleasure to be here with you members of the Central Richmond Association and the Downtown Retail Associates. I have always maintained that in order to be a successful businessman, you do have to have a little Italian spirit -- and keep close to the store. The businessmen and women of downtown Richmond have that spirit -- and that reputation -- and I am always delighted to meet with the people who are the "doers" and the "movers" in any thriving city.

And I might mention that it was largely because of this city's tremendous spirit and vitality that I was convinced of the need for -- and the propriety of -- an additional \$40-million allocation to revive the Richmond metropolitan area expressways' system.

I want to be very specific in emphasizing that no city in America can long survive without at least a backbone of efficient expressways. The metropolitan area expressways' system for Richmond will provide you with that backbone -- that basic framework -- from which you can then go on to add the special features and "accessories" (so to speak) that are also of great value and importance.

- more -



I want to note that we in the Department of Transportation are no strangers to Richmond. Our Department personnel are working with you on transportation problems and I am happy that our payrolls and our grants are contributing to Richmond's prosperity. Our largest representation here is the Federal Aviation Administration. Its 68 employees represent a combined payroll of nearly \$1-million. And during the past fiscal year, our Federal Highway Administration provided more than \$1-1/4 million to assist your urban projects and your interstate programs within the city limits alone.

There will be additional funds coming, of course, with the special allocation of \$40-million for the Richmond area expressways' system. Even our small Federal Railroad Administration -- with an extremely small field organization -- has an office here in Richmond and contributed to your city's economy.

Statewide, the Department of Transportation spent some \$179-million in the Old Dominion in fiscal '69 and that doesn't include the great many people in our headquarters' installation in Washington who live and pay taxes in Virginia. So you see, we are deeply involved in the economy of your city and State.

I want to congratulate you members of the Central Richmond Association and your Downtown Retail Associates' Committee -- congratulate you for what you have done already -- but more for what you plan to do in the future. Your goals for 1980 are tremendously impressive.

Let me be very clear and explicit about this. I knew this as a private businessman; I saw it happen as Governor; and I know it for sure from my vantage point in Washington. 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 vital, basic necessity.

It is consequently imperative that you businessmen begin thinking now of meeting future transportation demands. And these demands will be far greater than you realize! Our national transportation planning will give you some idea of the kind of expansion you can have in metropolitan Richmond.



We begin on the national scene with the fact that we are adding 6,000 new Americans to our population every day -- that is 6,000 actual increase. But this population is not evenly distributed. It is concentrated in urban areas and this urbanization is increasing. Five years from now 75 percent of our people will live in metropolitan areas -- in other words on 2 percent of the land. To pinpoint it further, about half of America will be living in three highly concentrated and continuous urban zones -- one in California; the second in the Chicago -- Detroit -- Cleveland zone -- and the third begins here in Richmond and stretches north to Portland, Maine.

This expanding and increasingly concentrated population, moreover, will be highly mobile. In the next ten years, air passenger miles will triple. Automobile traffic volume will increase by 50 percent; railroad ton miles will be up by 25 percent; and trucks will be carrying half again as much as they do today. And these trends will continue. The result - ? Within the next two decades we shall have to double the capacity of our entire transportation system.

That's the size of the national challenge. It will give you an indication of your own transportation future. It's time for us -- and for you -- to go to work! We must begin with one assumption. We cannot meet this demand by simply doubling what we now have. The answer lies, rather, in more efficient and more imaginative use of existing facilities, coupled with the development of new and better ways of moving people and goods.

Aviation has already recognized the necessity for efficiency and has now entered the mass transportation field. The new 747 which can carry up to 400 passengers is, in a sense, a vehicle of mass transit.

In recent years 235 public transit companies -- in cities large and small -- have gone out of business. Public transit is losing out in the battle with the private auto, and the tide of this battle must be reversed. We must have balance in our transportation system.

Let me emphasize that I have no illusions about being able to do without highways, automobiles, trucks and buses. I am not endorsing a conflict between highway transportation and any other mode. Rather, I am convinced that we need sizable quantities of every mode of transportation we can get. For instance, in our urban areas, 70 percent of all transit passengers travel in buses -- on highways, and this is as it should be. We must make full utilization of all our transportation facilities. We must increase the efficiency of the highway system and make it move more people rather than simply more cars.



At the same time, we must put increasing emphasis on public transportation. We must recognize that clean, fast, efficient movement of large numbers of people in densely populated areas cannot rely on the private automobile.

We must accept the fact that all our proposed social remedies, such as model city projects, health centers, evening college classes, job training centers, suburban employment opportunities and you-name-it, just aren't going to get full utilization if we make automobile ownership an unwritten prerequisite for participation. And to be more direct, customers are not going to shop in your stores if they can't get there.

Public transit has another importance in its promise of relieving traffic jams and cutting down air pollution. I think there can be no question in anybody's mind about the necessity to preserve and protect our environment.

I was privileged to attend President Nixon's presentation of his State of the Union Message and I have no doubt he is going to take every necessary step to cut down pollution. I think he was speaking for all of us when he said: "Clean air, clean water, open spaces -- these should once again be the birthright of every American." I was impressed, too, with his determination that he will win the battle against inflation. I remind you he is waging this fight on behalf of you and I and the other 200-million Americans. We must help him.

Nor do I have any doubt he has the best and correct course in Vietnam and he is pursuing that course with firmness. The war is winding down. We do have fewer American soldiers there than we did last year and the President's policies are showing success.

There is another urgency to public transportation and it is of special import to any downtown business group.

You could very well develop the greatest network of free-ways and interchanges in the world -- you could pour concrete from one end of the metropolitan area to the other -- you could condemn property; demolish neighborhoods; wipe out business blocks; and build parking lots on every corner -- but you would face the very real and very dangerous possibility that you might not have much of a city left in which to do business.

It does little good, however, if you businessmen and we transportation experts are convinced of the need of public transportation but the passengers stay away. And here is the crux of the matter. Public transportation -- in cities large and small -- must offer the passenger advantages in economy or service that he can't get in other modes.



My friends, you and I can cite chapter and verse on the necessity of public transportation but if the passenger finds it easier, faster, more comfortable or cheaper to drive his car -- then that's what he's going to do. The plan, then, is to work now to upgrade public transit.

This is one of the purposes behind a new bill the President has sent to Congress. It proposes a long term, \$10-billion program to provide funds on an assured basis for the construction, expansion and improvement in public transportation in a growing America. This bill provides for half a billion dollars for research and development. Its passage will mean that for the first time we shall be able to apply to public transit the same advanced technology and imaginative thinking that we used in the space program.

Our legislation is bolstered by a budgetary mechanism known as "contract authority" which will enable us to obligate over \$3-billion (for the first 5 years) practically as soon as the bill is signed. It will provide \$1-billion a year for the next seven years of the program. The bill is, in a sense, the public transportation equivalent of the Federal Highway Act of 1956, which launched the interstate system. It has already been reported out favorably by the Senate Banking and Currency Committee, and hearings are scheduled in the House soon. We expect early Senate action on this bill, and we hope the House will follow suit.

If this bill is to become law, we need your help. We need influential people like you to contact your Senators and Representatives and tell them you hope they support the bill. This is the first thing you can do.

The second thing you can do is to lend full support to such worthwhile activities as the Central Richmond Association. How can you help your city make full utilization of existing transportation facilities? To what extent are you profiting by your freeways? Is there a way to better utilize what you already have? Are you looking toward covering segments of highway, to build parking garages as they are doing in Los Angeles? Are you using air space over freeways for desperately needed parklands as they are doing in Seattle?

Are you looking ahead -- as you complete your freeway systems -- to the possible use of median strips for future rapid transit? They're doing it in Chicago and they're doing it in San Francisco.

My friends, there is no way of turning the clock back when you are dealing with the growth of a city -- especially an area, a region, such as metropolitan Richmond. You cannot stop the growth, but you certainly can direct it. The Department of Transportation is interested -- vitally interested.

You will have to come up with new ideas, new thinking, new daring, and new, bold determination if you are to fulfill the bright promise that belongs to Richmond.

If we can couple the individual determination of private enterprise with the resources and dedication of Government at all levels, you can have the greatest city in the country. We look forward to continuing to work closely with all of you.

#####