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Secretary of Transportation Claude S. Brinegar today released a report, Low Cost Urban Transportation Alternatives, a study of ways to increase the effectiveness of existing transportation facilities.

"Over-emphasis on massive spending to solve the problems of urban transportation and their companions of air pollution, congestion and excessive energy consumption could result in our running out of both time and money," Secretary Brinegar said.

"More effective use of existing facilities -- particularly our bus systems -- can result in both speedy and relatively inexpensive relief from urban congestion and its related problems," the Secretary said.

"This report helps us," he said, "in redirecting the aim of transportation from the movement of vehicles to the more important target of moving people and goods."

The report, prepared for the Department by R.H. Pratt Associates, Inc. of Kensington, Maryland states:

"Historically the most frequent response to increases in transportation demand has been development of new capital intensive facilities such as highways, rail facilities and airports. This response to transportation congestion and delay is characterized chiefly by high cost and slow implementation attributable to the extensive amounts of time required to fund, plan and actually build such facilities. Too often as a result such facilities are completed long after they are needed and, when finally opened, demand may well overwhelm capacity with crowding and congestion soon reoccurring. The impetus to reinstate the capital facility cycle thus begins anew."

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Little or no serious research has been directed at low capital transportation alternatives, the study found. "As a result, communities are basically uninformed about the concept and implications for planning and community finances are not well understood. Perhaps by default then, capital intensive solutions are likely to be proposed as solutions to transportation crises that might be equally or better resolved through application of less expensive techniques."

The study appraised 21 approaches to more effective use of existing investment in transportation facilities through revisions in operating procedures, technologies or management.

Busways in all forms were found to be the most promising of the low cost techniques reviewed.

The term "busway" covers many applications providing some degree of priority for buses over other vehicles, ranging from simple freeway ramps to lengthy stretches of limited access roadways dedicated to the exclusive use of buses.

"Properly established bus lanes are an ideal means for improving travel times at little or no increase in operating cost. Evidence from bus lanes that actually provide commuters with a time advantage over competitive modes indicates that growth in ridership will occur at the expense of the private auto and other transit modes," the study found.

The 21 transportation concepts analyzed by the Study are:

- Exclusive bus lanes on existing urban arterials.
- Exclusive reserved bus lanes on existing freeways.
- Exclusive busways on specially constructed rights-of-way.
- Work scheduling changes.
- Highway traffic engineering systems improvements.
- Paved railroad rights-of-way.
- High capacity transit buses.
- Organized commuter car and bus pools.
- Freeway metering, monitoring and control systems.
- Free or heavily subsidized transit.
- Line haul feeder systems.
- Airport access improvements.
- Automation of bus scheduling.

- Economic penalties and/or incentives.
- Urban goods movement improvements.
- Para-transit (jitneys, taxis and limosines).
- The Rail Bus.
- Demand actuated bus services.
- Bus traffic signal preference systems.
- Auto driver aids and direction systems.
- The Minicar.

Low Cost Transportation Alternatives is printed in three volumes:

Executive Summary;

Volume I, Results of a Survey and Analysis of Twenty-One Low Cost Techniques;

Volume II, Results of Case Studies and Analysis of Busway Applications in the United States.

Copies of the report may be obtained from:

Office of the Secretary
Office of Urban Transportation Systems (TPI-50)
U.S. Department of Transportation
Washington, D.C. 20590

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