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REMARKS BY MICHAEL CAFFERTY, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN SYSTEMS, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, FOR DELIVERY AT THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CIVIL ENGINEERS MEETING, ON THE PANEL -"THE URBAN TRANSPORTATION/INNOVATION PROBLEM: CAN NEW CONCEPTS HELP?", BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS, JULY 13, 1970

I'd like to talk to you today about new considerations in transportation and their impact on programs and on the physical environment in which they operate. Much of your discussion here has been devoted to technological considerations, technological innovations. Unquestionably in transportation many of the solutions to the problems which we face today will come through the development and application of new systems; new technology for moving people and goods in our urban areas.

Technology can only be successful when it is a component of a total system. It is a cliché in transportation today that we can get men to the moon but in most of our metropolitan areas, we cannot

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move men across town with any degree of predictability, to say nothing of comfort or choice as to the way in which we do it.

It is not my intention to belittle the accomplishments of our friends and neighbors at NASA and I do not intend to cast aspersions on the vitally important role of the men who man our nation's space vehicles; however, I am sure that they will agree with me that the traffic problems which one encounters between here and the moon are not like the traffic problems between downtown and the suburbs at any rush hour. And city dwellers aren't even wearing space suits.

Aside from the moon vehicle, transportation problems are problems stemming from failures in the processes by which society and technology interact and from failures in our institutions. And I would suggest that many of our problems are subject to institutional solutions. Among these we might list the way our transportation systems work, the way they are used and, most important, the way they are planned.

There are three important new considerations which affect the programs of the Department of Transportation, all institutional. First, the new focus which is being given to the environment and to the national desire to preserve and enhance the quality of the environment with whatever tools we may adapt to serve that need. This effort is supported by the Environmental Policy Act of 1969 signed by the President on January 1, 1970. It is also supported by Secretary Volpe's own concern about environmental quality and his establishing within the Department of Transportation mechanisms for coping with the problem.

--Second, the Bureau of the Budget came to the Department last year with a request that we evaluate the urban transportation planning process to see where and how it might be improved. Here again many of the improvements will probably be institutional. Here again technological solutions alone cannot serve the need completely.

--And finally, when Secretary Volpe came to Washington, he identified a third problem area -- the need for urban systems -- which he considered subject to institutional rather than solely technological

solutions. The Department of Transportation itself was created in an effort to bring together and to rationalize into a system a collection of transportation modes, techniques, methods of funding. Nowhere was the need greater than in our urban areas which were being shaped and served by urban freeways and urban freeway revolts, by the highways funded 90% by the trust fund and by faltering and failing municipal and private transit systems, by increasing reliance on airports and increasing concern about aircraft noise, by an automobile population explosion which matched the people-population explosion.

How have these new considerations - these institutional innovations been reflected in thinking about transportation at the Federal level? Secretary Volpe, upon his arrival in Washington, created a new office, the Assistant Secretary for Environment and Urban Systems, headed by J. D. Braman, who resigned as Mayor of Seattle. At the time that he came to Washington, Mayor Braman was the highest subcabinet presidential appointee in the government whose responsibilities by title, included environmental concerns. This was in the beginning of 1969 and continues to be a fact until today.

Secretary Volpe established this Office because his own experience as Governor of this State and before that as Commissioner of Public Works convinced him of the importance of the impact of transportation on the physical environment in which we live.

Too often in the past, transportation planners have devoted their efforts solely to considerations of cost benefit. Too often in the past such planners have given more thought to eliminating the problems of automobile congestion than they have given to the need for eliminating the effects of automotive pollution. They have given more thought to transportation efficiency in the narrow sense than they have given to environmental considerations which might profoundly affect the quality of life.

The efforts of the Department of Transportation have been reinforced substantially by the directives which have come to us as a result of the Environmental Policy Act. In signing that Act, President Nixon

said, "its literally now or never." He added "we are determined that the decade of the 70's will be known as the time when this country regained a productive harmony between man and nature..."

Congress in turn has directed all Federal agencies to improve and coordinate their planning functions, programs and resources in order to :

And I quote:

- (1) "fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations;"
- (2) "assure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings;"
- (3) "attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences;"
- (4) "preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage, and maintain, wherever possible, an environment which supports diversity and variety of individual choice;"
- (5) "achieve a balance between population and resource use which will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities;" and
- (6) "enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources."

With this language, the Congress has, for the first time, attempted to treat governmental actions and their relationship to a broad range of environmental values.

The policies, regulations and public laws which Departments propose are required to give positive consideration to their impact upon the environment in which they operate. To this end all agencies of the Federal establishment are required to:

(again, I am quoting):

- (1) "utilize a systematic, interdisciplinary approach which will insure the integrated use of the natural and social sciences and the environmental design arts in planning and in decision making which may have an impact on man's environment."
- (2) "identify and develop methods and procedures, in consultation with the Council on Environmental Quality established by this Act, which will insure that presently unquantified environmental amenities and values may be given appropriate consideration in decision making along with economic and technical considerations."

The Council on Environmental Quality has been working with all agencies in an effort to identify and develop those methods and procedures which will make it possible to insure that what we call unquantified environmental amenities and values are given equal consideration in design planning equal to that given to cost benefit and technological feasibility -- But it does not stop here, in proposing legislation or in "other major Federal actions" -- which significantly affect the environment, agencies must prepare and submit to the Council on Environmental Quality statements on environmental impact before they submit legislation to the Congress or before they approve or move forward on Federal programs and projects. This is called "the 102 statement" and it is designed to factor environmental considerations into the process early enough to make intelligent choice a possibility.

This "102 statement" must set forth:

- (1) the environmental impact of the proposed action;
- (2) any adverse environmental effects which cannot be avoided should the proposal be implemented;

- (3) alternatives to the proposed action;
- (4) the relationship between local short-term uses of man's environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity; and
- (5) any irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources which would be involved in the proposed action should it be implemented.

As you can see this is most pervasive legislation in terms of its real and potential impact on programs such as transportation and other capital efforts. Federal agencies are just now taking steps to incorporate these very specific environmental considerations into their planning and their programs. This is a law which will require some painful readjustments in the old ways of doing business. The Department of Transportation, under the leadership of Secretary Volpe, is setting the pace. By virtue of creating an Assistant Secretary with environmental responsibilities we have a one year lead over other departments in this very important area.

The second institutional innovation, another major effort of the Department which our office is directing, is an evaluation of the comprehensive urban transportation planning process. There is almost common agreement about the need for something better than what we have now.

The Department's evaluation is based on the process as outlined in Section 134 of the 1962 Highway Act which called for "a continuous coordinated comprehensive transportation planning process" for those metropolitan areas with more than 50,000 population. This evaluation is aimed at rationalizing all Departmental planning assistance programs in urban areas. It involves all elements of the Department -- not just the Office of the Secretary, but also the Federal Aviation Administration, the Federal Highway Administration, the Urban Mass Transportation Administration, and in some cases, the Federal Railroad Administration. It is the first such effort, the first attempt to rationalize Federal planning assistance programs for transportation. Once such urban transportation planning is rationalized, we shall have made a significant step toward allowing local government to establish intermodal urban systems. Further, we shall have

responded to a charge of the Congress at the time the Department of Transportation was established -- the establishment of transportation systems, rather than the transportation fragments, or the transportation segments which have characterized such efforts in the past.

In evaluating the urban transportation planning process, the Department is working with the Department of Housing and Urban Development, with 40 Mayors, with 25 Councils of Government, with 50 State Highway Departments, with 250 urban transportation planning agencies and other groups as well.

Through our contacts with the study participants we hope to gain the benefit of a first hand local perspective on urban transportation planning. Each of the participants at the State and local level has been asked to complete a questionnaire which we believe will help us build a Departmental concept of an ideal urban transportation planning process. Perhaps more important, we believe that the study will lead to a melding of existing highway planning policies and procedures with other planning assistance programs in the FAA and in the Urban Mass Transportation Administration. Our goal -- a metropolitan development agency with planning and programming authority for all modes of transportation in urban areas, not just streets and highways, not just airports and airport access routes, not just bus and rail rapid transit facilities, but all of them.

This study of Section 134 and the planning process is being tied to the other studies which we have undertaken which also seek to relate the articulation of transportation goals to urban needs and desires for transportation systems. Such systems should give full consideration to the service which they provide, to the environment in which they operate and to their interrelationship with other metropolitan programs and agencies such as housing, the need for medical and hospital facilities, and educational programs.

Let me tell you what some of these research efforts are.

--We plan to study the impact of the Environmental Policy Act on Department policy, especially that policy which relates to interdisciplinary planning.

--We shall analyze the means for weighing social and environmental considerations as part of the transportation decision-making process.

--We shall undertake a series of case studies in transit planning in order to identify urban areas which are at or near the point of undertaking substantial new investments in their public transit systems.

--We plan to develop a program relating to interdisciplinary approaches to planning and will be aided in this effort by the American Institute of Planners.

--We shall devise a simulation of interdisciplinary transportation planning in order to further the objectives of the National Environmental Policy Act and in order to train all those involved-- planners, municipal officials, bond houses, conservationists, and the average citizen, in the facts of life regarding transportation planning.

--We also plan to study airport and airport access planning to determine where and how environmental factors should be given greater consideration.

We do not suggest that our research and our studies will establish new urban transportation systems in the near future but we are confident that we have brought new factors to bear on transportation planning and on the use of transportation as a tool for urban development.

We are confident that we are closer to the development of urban transportation systems than it has been possible for us to be in the past.

We are confident that we are on our way to the development of tools which will make it possible for us to consider environmental factors in all transportation planning and in all transportation programs.

None of these efforts is narrowly technological. All of these efforts are broadly focused on the process of the institution within which the process works. All of these considerations are very important to those of us who are engaged in transportation planning and we believe that they have even greater significance for those who care about the quality of life in our America's cities and its towns.