

Lee White

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URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSPORTATION

Historically the location of cities in the United States has been determined largely by the availability of transportation advantages. Since the early days of the Nation to the present time, the Federal, State and local governments have been committed to the provision of transportation facilities to serve our cities, towns and villages. Our modern-day cities with their concentrations of population and industry are possible only because of the availability of facilities to move large volumes of people and goods from one part of the area to another. These facilities induce investments by private enterprise, contribute to the rise in urban land values, and help create taxable resources for our communities. Thus, investments in urban transportation have been and will continue to be a major factor in the economic growth and development of our Nation.

The urban transportation problem has become critical during the postwar period because of three factors:

- (1) The significant increase in the number of people living and working in metropolitan areas;
- (2) The low density patterns of housing and other urban development which force people to locate farther and farther from their place of work; and
- (3) The increasing proportion of daily travel by private cars as against mass transit facilities.

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Our metropolitan populations have grown by more than 33 percent in the past decade. Most of this urban growth has occurred outside of the central cities - our suburban populations have grown by 75 percent. Even more striking is the increased reliance upon private cars for travel within urban areas and the concomitant decline in the uses of mass transportation. In 1945 local rides by railway, trolley coach and motor bus averaged 115 per person a year. By 1950 annual rides per person had dropped to 72 and in 1959 to 38. Meanwhile passenger car registration for the Nation rose from 40 million in 1950 to 62 million in 1960.

capital outlays for
Public Investments ~~in~~ urban transportation from 1952 through 1958 amounted to \$55 billion. These investments represent an opportunity - thus far not sufficiently recognized - to shape patterns of urban arrangement so as to produce a more efficient and healthy environment for our people. The construction of highways, bridges, transit lines and other facilities is a major determinant^a of the direction and density of urban development. But such investments have, for the most part, contributed to time-and-land-wasting patterns of development. Highway construction appears incapable of catching up with increasing sprawl. But we can, if we choose, use our investments in transportation and other facilities to bring about more compact urban areas and shorten

Lee:

I think this figure is shaky.
If you want something like it, let me know

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the daily journey to work of ^{many millions} ~~tens of thousands~~ of people in ~~each of~~ our major urban communities.

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What are some guiding principles for a public policy on urban transportation? Above all, the people in each urban area must have a vision of what they want their area to become. There was a time when most citizens of our towns and neighborhoods in urban areas regarded themselves as independent of their metropolitan neighbors. To an increasing extent this is changing as local officials and civic leaders come to recognize and to stress the interdependence of the communities. As these attitudes change, we see the possibility for improving the institutions which enable people in urban areas to make intelligent decisions about area-wide development. These decisions must be based upon comprehensive planning encompassing the various local jurisdictions and providing for area-wide financial support for area-wide facilities.

Another guiding principle is that we should, to the extent feasible, integrate the various available modes of movement - rail, highway and other forms - into a single system of transportation. This means a unified approach to the planning, financing and pricing of all transportation services.

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We must also induce a more rational use of transportation facilities by means of user charges and heavier reliance upon the pricing mechanism. We should explore the possibility of premiums for those who travel in an efficient way from the standpoint of the community and extra charges for methods of travel which are more costly to the entire community.

While charges can cover some of the costs, the provision of adequate transportation systems should remain a general obligation of government.

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I recognize the urgent nature of the urban transportation problem. There are strong indications that Federal assistance will be required for mass transportation as well as for highway construction. But there are still unresolved questions about the appropriate forms and magnitude of such assistance and about the proposed extent of local sharing in costs and other local actions necessary to assure the most effective uses of Federal funds.

I have instructed the Secretary of Commerce and the Administrator of the Housing and Home Finance Agency to undertake a comprehensive study of these questions and to have recommendations ready for transmittal to the Second Session of the 87th Congress.

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Senator Williams of New Jersey has done yeoman service in focusing the attention of the Nation on the need for vigorous leadership in helping cities to solve their transportation problems. I urge enactment of legislation advanced by Senator Williams and now included in the Administration's Housing Bill presently before the Congress which would provide for technical assistance, demonstration studies and additional planning for transportation in urban areas. Under the demonstration grant proposal the Housing and Home Finance Agency would be authorized to make grants up to two-thirds of the cost of programs which test the workability of projects designed to reduce the need for urban transportation or to improve transportation services.

I am also recommending a large increase in Federal assistance for comprehensive urban planning. At the present time 129 metropolitan areas and almost 1600 small communities are benefiting from this assistance. I have already proposed that the Federal share of the cost of such planning be increased from one-half to two-thirds, and I am urging an increase in the amount of funds available so that our metropolitan areas and smaller communities can move ahead with their planning programs with increased emphasis upon transportation planning.

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I have also called for a large increase in Federal assistance for urban renewal and for a program of loans to communities which decide to acquire land reserves for later development. Through urban renewal and land reserve projects our communities can group activities which need to be close together and thus avoid wasteful cross hauling of goods and long commuting between homes and places of work.

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