All during the early sixties when we were planning and beginning to build BART, I was bothered by the fact that something would have to be done about the originating commuter trip if the system was to reach its full potential. The 19,000 parking spaces at the outlying stations simply would not be sufficient, and in most of those areas conventional bus service would not be feasible. Therefore, I tried to interest the forerunners of UMTA and a couple of large manufacturers in the development of a battery-powered vehicle that could be used on some sort of lease or subscription basis by as many as 4 neighbors in a given area to reach their BART station. The vehicle would be driven into a special area at the station equipped to recharge the batteries while the commuters were at work.

The idea did not fly at that time for a lot of reasons, one of which was that Abu Dhabi and Qatar were not the household words they are today. But one of the companies—Westinghouse—did quite a lot of work in the area, primarily because of the interest of Don Burnham and George Jernstedt. The idea is still there and is still valid in my opinion, and I offer it for addition to the paratransit possibilities.

Public transit has undergone an amazing metamorphosis in the past decade. As a veteran of the legislative efforts dating back to 1960, I can recall when there was no federal program, no federal employees, no federal money—and little, or no, sympathy for the problems of the transit industry. The year of 1964 marked a modest, faltering step forward, but not much more.

Ten years later, in 1974, public transit had its own federal agency in a department and legislation that committed $11.8 billion dollars to transit during the ensuing 6 years. What is more, for the first time operating assistance funds had been added to capital grants and the other assistance programs. And last, the Highway Trust Fund had been opened to potential use.

The National Mass Transportation Assistance Act of 1974 really marked year 1 in the renaissance of public transit in America. That act, following only months after the sobering Arab oil embargo, established new and urgent national priorities and responsibilities for transit. It is clear that the 3 Es—energy, environment, and economy—will be evermore important in decisions affecting urban areas and that the role of public transit has become an essential consideration. After some 3 decades of virtually complete neglect, the transit industry tried to keep pace with that 1964-1974 decade of evolution and progress and with the new responsibilities being thrust on it.

Transit operators, long ignored and long rejected, found themselves called on to meet new challenges, which for the most part they were ill-equipped to meet. Transit equipment and technology of the 1920s and 1930s were no match for the necessities of the 1960s and 1970s. Research had been ignored. New institutional arrangements
brought entirely new, and often contentious, casts of characters onto the scene. The industry had lost at least a generation of talent, and operators scrambled to find personnel at all levels. As more and more private operations went public, the operators found themselves facing mounting financial problems; for although public policy to a great extent held fares steady, or in some cases reduced them, no such restraint held back labor and other costs. And finally, operators found themselves facing a bewildering and complex new array of attention from politicians ranging from the U.S. Capitol down to the local city hall. They also found themselves faced with instant experts who, as more and more money became available, proliferated and in too many instances produced the "unique" solution to all of transit's ills.

It is the context of this capsule history of the past decade that I would like to discuss paratransit. First, the comments are mine and do not necessarily represent the attitude of the industry because of the simple fact that the industry has no formal position on paratransit. Individual operators have participated in paratransit applications with good results and bad results. The time has come, in my opinion, for the industry through APTA to take a formal and cohesive look at paratransit and to make its views known. To that end, I am recommending to the APTA Executive Committee the early establishment of a special task force on paratransit to work closely with UMTA and with other interested groups in furthering the aims of improved transportation of the public.

That brings me to the first of the points I would like to comment on: Paratransit applications must be promoted in full coordination and cooperation with the transit operator or operators in the affected area. The aim must be to complement and supplement the services offered by the bus and rail facilities, not to compete with or supplant those services. Kenneth Orski has used the phrase "productive partnership" to describe UMTA's attitude toward the appropriate relation between paratransit and conventional transit. I concur wholeheartedly, particularly in such areas as the following:

1. Special service for the elderly and handicapped,
2. Feeder service to line-haul operations,
3. Exploratory service in low-density suburbs to promote new ridership and to build the transit habit,
4. Possible peak-hour service to relieve pressure on often overtaxed vehicles and labor, and
5. Possible late night service on certain routes where the capacity of conventional, fixed-route service is not required.

The twin dictates of energy conservation and prudence with scarce public dollars demand that coordination among the transit and paratransit modes be of paramount importance.

The kind of coordination I am talking about is exemplified in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area where the Metropolitan Transit Commission not only operates a system of express and local buses but also is responsible for the promotion of car pools and van pools. These paratransit activities were assigned by the state legislature in 1974 and are conducted in cooperation with the state highway department and state energy agency. The transit commission authorized a $500,000 project to demonstrate that a combination of improved bus transit and paratransit, when designed to operate on a fully coordinated basis and to share a common marketing effort, will attract more riders than individual, uncoordinated efforts. In this demonstration, several third-ring suburban communities will each receive improved express bus service, community-centered small bus services, a local transportation information center, and saturation marketing efforts to organize car pools, employee van pools, and subscription bus services.

A related but separate point concerns the desirability of coordinating all financial programs to achieve common aims. Suanne Brooks of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare reported to an APTA management seminar early in 1975 on the plethora of HEW programs designed to promote special transportation for various social purposes. The use of these funds needs to be harnessed in a coordinated manner in much the same way that Tom Povlitz has achieved with the Delaware Authority
for Special Transit. Again, I believe the appropriate coordination to achieve the highest overall level of service can best be achieved by the transit operator. Similarly, I believe that the transit operator is in the best and most logical position to provide the needed overall coordination in the use of UMTA section 16b2 funds. What is more, I believe that UMTA will achieve far greater mileage with the use of these funds through such coordination. As much as the federal involvement in urban transit has grown, our financial resources to do all the things that need to be done are still scarce by any measure, and they simply cannot be wasted.

If paratransit is to achieve the potential that I think is implicit in its various forms and applications, much attention needs to be devoted to equipment. I was dismayed in my review of the 1974 Small Transit Vehicle Survey by the U.S. Department of Transportation to find that many of the financial, maintenance, reliability, and passenger comfort considerations that plague equipment for regular transit also plague the vehicles thus far in paratransit use.

As some of the aerospace geniuses have found on coming into the field, the transit operating environment is a perverse, demanding one. Vehicles and technological solutions that work perfectly well for other applications do not in transit. The small bus project and other current research of UMTA and APTA may provide some of the needed answers, but we must pursue these efforts diligently if we are to succeed in the development of an appropriate family of small vehicles that will meet the rigors of transit usage and the requirements of paratransit applications.

I hardly even know where to begin to address my next point: labor problems in general and specifically section 13c, the labor protective provision of the Urban Mass Transportation Act. This little paragraph has been the source of more swearing, teeth-gnashing, and dyspeptic dispositions in the transit industry than anything else I am aware of. APTA has successfully negotiated a nationwide model 13c agreement in connection with section 5 funds, and we believe it already has served to relieve some of the problems. I frankly do not know what to advise, except to say that there are major problems in this area, and ignoring them will not solve them. In that regard, I was pleased to note that Earl Putnam, of the Amalgamated Transit Union, was on the planning committee for this conference.

My next point concerns licensing and regulations as they affect paratransit. Much work needs to be done if the proper modes in the proper combinations are going to be able to make their contributions to solving urban transit problems. But in our zeal to redress obvious inadequacies, let us not go too far in the relaxation of any regulations that could affect the safety of passengers and too far in the relaxation of regulations that would permit any vestige of a return to urban streets of the kind of illegal jitney service that skimmed the cream of transit patronage and drove more than one public transit operator into bankruptcy not too many years ago. I suspect that those in the taxi industry share some of these concerns.

Finally, I am enthusiastic about the potentials of paratransit in its wide variety of possible applications. Public policy, from the standpoint of both energy conservation and most effective use of scarce financial resources, demands that we explore these potentials to determine what works, what needs to be changed, what needs to be added, and what needs to be discarded. In our searching for the right answers, let us remember that paratransit can be an important part of our solution to urban transportation problems, but only a part. Those who claim that it is the solution are doing a grave disservice, and are ignoring reality. In public transit, there are no easy answers.

Potential paratransit applications must be submitted to the same rigorous cost and social-effectiveness examinations that UMTA is applying to potential solutions in the field of conventional transit. We simply must not let our zeal for simple, seemingly low-cost solutions to our complex urban problems result in the reliance on facile palliatives when what is needed for the 10- and 20-year ultimate solution is much more major. The new emphasis on the incremental approach may, it is hoped, accommodate both types of approach.

We must be vigilant that in our search for short-term answers to urban transportation problems we do not simply reenforce our present, wasteful patterns of metropolitan development. For the long term, we must begin to think in terms of a restructuring
of our metropolitan areas to provide for population movement without predominant reliance on the private automobile. Potential shopping center developers already are getting this kind of advice, and home buyers are beginning to show wariness in buying in farther out sections. I believe both of these indicators will be intensified as the true state of our energy situation is increasingly realized. Because of that energy situation, it will take the best efforts of all of us to provide all we can in all forms of transportation for the public.