

Part 1

Principal Presentations

Transportation and Land Use Policy

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This paper discusses an agenda essential to the achievement of a national urban policy and a national transportation policy, efforts that are "the moral equivalent of the space program." The agenda consists of four items: to talk to elected officials, i.e., to inform and guide them; to learn what is happening, for example, in bills affecting transportation; to develop an urban policy that gives adequate consideration to transportation modes and how they relate to population density; and to work on an urban policy and a transportation policy that have interdisciplinary dimensions, i.e., that recognize economics, energy, housing, land use, taxes, and sewer and water policies as they relate to a comprehensive urban policy that includes transportation.

First, I want to talk about what I do as a congressman, how I perceive transportation and land use planning, and how I would emphasize the need for an urban policy and a transportation policy.

I think three words in the conference theme are appropriate as starting points: strategic transportation investments. We are at a strategic place in history and it is not inappropriate for transportation planners and consultants to talk about the word strategic.

In April 1977, President Carter said that we needed an energy policy that is the moral equivalent of war. I would just like to suggest that we need an urban policy and a transportation policy that are really the moral equivalent of the space program. To meet urban and transportation needs requires the same eagerness and the same energies used to get to the moon.

HOW THE PROCESS WORKS

I would like to present four agenda items that may assist you in realizing the extent of the problem and how it may be solved. The first item is to talk to elected officials—and by that I do not mean just writing letters to, or just having casual conversations with, congressmen. However, it may also help to know something of how the process works.

In the first 2 years that I was in Washington, there were 20 000 bills introduced into the House of Representatives. Of those 20 000 bills, 2000 became law and 1600 received a recorded vote on the House floor. Between 800 and 900 recorded votes take place every year.

The 535 members of Congress are average human beings, who have been given the impossible task of sorting through a maze of legislation and coming up with answers. On 95 percent of the votes those 535 people are generalists, voting their best judgment and using the skills available to them. On the other hand, they are specialists only in their committee and subcommittee assignments.

Thus, you and I have to learn how to communicate with one another, talk with one another, and learn one another's specialties. You have to recognize that there are specialists in the House of Representatives in particular fields of interests. You have to figure out who they are and what their responsibilities are; then, you have to go to them and share your ideas and views.

WHAT IS HAPPENING?

The second agenda item requires that you have to learn what is happening. For example, there are three bills that you ought to know about. One is S.208, introduced by Harrison Williams of New Jersey. It passed the Senate and awaits a conference with the House. The second bill is HR.9036. It was introduced by me as a companion bill to S.208. Probably more important than either of these bills is one introduced by James Howard of New Jersey. HR.8648 is going to be the framework around which public transit, highway, highway safety, and bridge legislation will be written for the 1980s and 1990s. In fact, what gets placed in the legislation will have a major impact on what you will be doing during the next 20 to 25 years.

Recently the House Committee on Public Works was given jurisdiction to deal with public transit issues—with legislation concerning the Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA), with bicycle legislation, with legislation relating to something other than just highways. Therefore, for the first time in history, some House members have encouraged the committee to come out with a Federal Aid to Transportation Act of 1978 rather than with an UMTA act or a highway bill. The reason for using such a broad title rather than a highway or a public transit title is to suggest that it is time to put the concept of transportation under one umbrella. It is time to make transportation policies flexible so that they recognize the economic, geographic, and political differences in the makeup of our nation. It is time for us to balance transportation priorities and not simply to emphasize highways to the exclusion of public transit. It is time to develop an adequate stable funding base for public transit. We have had the Highway Trust Fund for a long time, which has enabled us to build a highway system. We have simply said to public transit: "Go to general revenues for your funding."

It is also time for us to end the urban-rural conflict that has prevented any opening up of the Highway Trust Fund and that has entered into the debate each time a public transit bill has come before the House. We have always gone to the floor with an urban mass transit proposal and have tried to convince the rural area representatives that, if we vote for their agricultural bills, they ought to vote for our public transit legislation.

However, this simply is not very positive for the nation.

We ought to begin to develop a transportation system that works and that recognizes the importance of all parts of the system. There are also concerns developing in Washington about fewer new "toys," about the Washington Metro as the prime example of public transit, and about carefully looking at what works in public transit, highway, and bridge repair and replacement.

I would like to review briefly what is in bills S.208, HR.9036, and HR.8648. They will establish a funding level of approximately \$4.2 to 4.5 billion for public transit. We are presently spending \$3 billion. So, the proposed legislation is at least an increased investment in public transit of \$1.2 billion over the next 4 years.

The major legislative debate focuses on how we fund public transit. Do we set up a Public Transit Trust Fund? Do we expand the Highway Trust Fund into a Transportation Trust Fund? Do we take Secretary of Transportation Brock Adams' suggestion to have a roll-over concept for a 4- or 5-year period, thus ensuring funding for public transit through general revenues? This is a question that you may want to help answer.

I think one of the important contributions made in the bill introduced in September 1977 is changing the three categories of section 3 funding to four categories. Under present law, you can replace your buses, you can modernize your system and replace your rail needs, and you can have new starts. We introduced a new area of concern and divided the funds differently. We suggest that you ought to replace and repair existing buses and rail systems, and you ought to have some money for new starts. We also recognize that in certain areas—for example, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and Chicago—systems are in place that are energy efficient and that have suffered because all of the money has gone to new starts and not to modernization. If we are going to take public transit seriously into the future, we have to make sure that existing systems do not decline to the point of being unusable.

The proposed bills will consider also the kind of rural operating subsidies needed, if any, and the problem of accessibility for the elderly and handicapped. I know that problem has affected a number of you.

URBAN POLICY

My third agenda item concerns the possibility of moving toward an urban policy. Other speakers observed that we ought to be concerned about cities, that we ought to measure a city by its corporate boundary lines and deal with them accordingly. Well, I am not sure that that is very realistic. If we are going to deal with urban policy, we ought to talk about density and not necessarily the boundary lines of a metropolitan area, but they may also define an area that is in fact the best area in which to provide a certain quality of life. Some studies of density and its impact on transportation and on some other areas would be very helpful.

We really ought to look seriously at the quality of life. I think President Carter is right in stating that we have an energy crisis and that we ought to consider a more energy efficient life-style.

It is important for us who are interested in transportation to see the interrelatedness of transportation and some of the other important areas of concern. We ought to move as quickly as possible to work with those persons and agencies interested in putting together an urban policy. We ought to point out to them how transportation can be a complement to urban policy, how transportation can add to energy efficiency, and how federal policy interrelates with transportation modes.

The administration needs to be reminded that fixed-rail transit can work. I know that light-rail systems work in certain circumstances. I know that heavy-rail systems work in certain circumstances. I know that there are multimodal approaches that work, given a certain density, a certain area, and a certain kind of system. We ought to have the flexibility to move within that system. I would hope that we, as transportation planners, consultants, and researchers, could help to make a contribution as to where the lines ought to be drawn and how transportation can play a role in energy efficiency.

INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

The fourth area of my agenda recognizes that, while it is important to talk to elected officials, to know what is happening in the system, and to move toward an urban policy, we will not move very well in any of those directions unless we work on an urban policy and a transportation policy having interdisciplinary dimensions. I am talking about recognizing economics, energy, housing, land use, taxes, and sewer and water policies as they relate to a comprehensive urban policy, including transportation.

A 1975 report of the Office of Technological Assessment noted that:

Federal action could [and I would like to change that word to should] seek to establish strong linkage between existing community development programs and transit programs in order to effect a coordinated national urban growth management policy. Capital grants for sewer systems and water supply systems [should] be tied to the availability of transit services. Mortgages and subsidies for community development in fringe areas [should] be oriented toward multiuse clustered activity centers related to transit. Organized and systematic policies for public investment in the infrastructure [should] serve as an effective lever to guide and manage growth. Major public policy initiatives are required, which [should] respond to the interrelationship between development and transit.

Some people at this conference observed that an interdisciplinary approach has existed for some time. I suggest to you that that approach has not really been applied. The House of Representatives has 185 committees and subcommittees. We are fractured and divided into subgroups and into certain program areas. It is difficult, even in an energy bill, to talk about using some tax money for public transit. It is difficult, when a housing bill comes up, to talk about what kind of subsidies are involved, where those subsidies are going, and how all this impacts transportation.

The President has been talking about a new tax policy as well as an urban policy. Yet, one of the reasons the administration pulled back on tax policy was it recognized that it was encouraging the out-migration, out-dispersion, and write-offs of new investments, new plants, and new facilities; at the same time it was not giving very much credit to reconstruction in existing areas. I think that we have to look at all of those policy questions and their interrelatedness. I do not think that in 1977 we are prepared in the House of Representatives or in the Senate to do it adequately. For example, under a recent Senate reorganization plan, five different committees to deal with transportation were formed. It dealt with those five committees in fractured ways rather than in one overall way.

In essence, we have to find some new models, and those new models are what I think this conference is about.

SELECTED COMMENTS

This section highlights some of the comments made by Congressman Robert W. Edgar during the course of a question-and-answer period following his principal address.

What else can you say about congressional recognition of the effect one piece of legislation has on another?

Congress knows that there is an interrelationship. But much of the time, there is a great gap between the legislators and planners. I refer to my first agenda point about talking to one another. I think we have to develop some planning processes that are part of the legislative and administrative processes so that the planners know where we are going legislatively and can input there. It does not do any good to have a year 2000 plan for transportation if that plan never gets communicated to the legislators and the executives who have to administer it. I wonder how many very good plans, saying what has to be said, are sitting on shelves but never really get implemented. It would be helpful if planners did a better job in summarizing their proposals and communicating with elected administrative and legislative officials.

Will subsidizing rural public transportation have an adverse effect on urban areas, thus encouraging more people to move to the suburbs?

Yes, I think such subsidies will. I do not think operating assistance anywhere is very helpful because it causes many problems. That is not to say that we are not going to provide it, but rather that we have a dilemma with such assistance. In the urban area, it has been used pretty much as a bottom line figure in some contract negotiations. Many workers know that they can use those operating subsidy funds as a target figure for getting wage hikes. However, I think there has been an inequity in terms of providing operating assistance out of section 5 funding, while making capital grants only in the rural areas. There seems to be a feeling of compromise there and we ought to deal with that.

My concern is not whether operating assistance should be given to rural or urban areas, but whether public transit investments make the most sense in densely populated areas. We ought to recognize what works in rural areas in terms of transit and use the best and most flexible modes in the most desirable geographic areas. We need to have some rural public transit and to know the kind of operating assistance required. Our present policy and section 5 planning are good examples. The former provides about 10 cents/rider on public transit in urban areas; the latter, about 35 cents/rider in rural areas. That formula does not make sense.

What we suggest in our bill is a two-tiered section 5 formula grant program that would continue the existing program with its formula grants. However, the second formulation priority would go to those cities of over 1 000 000 population. The formula would be related to their ridership and would try to get some section 5 dollars to those areas in greatest need.

This first comprehensive transportation bill would allow \$4.2 billion for transit. Does this sum include funds for highways?

I was misunderstood there. The \$4.2 billion is for public transit; there is an extra billion dollars for highways. There is \$2 billion in Howard's bill for bridge repair and replacement. His bill really includes four titles. The \$4.2 billion is for one title, public transit; that figure also relates to Senator Harrison Williams' bill, to title 3 of Howard's bill, and to the bill I introduced as

well. The Howard bill attaches highway safety to that public transit legislation, along with the continuation of the interstate, secondary, and primary highway programs; urban highway systems; and a new bridge repair and replacement program. However, I do not think that \$2 billion will be spent on bridge repair and replacement. There will be a little additional money in secondary and primary highway funding. But the significant thing is that, rather than taking these allocations out of three separate funds, they are combined. Thus, you can at least see some relationship to highways and public transit.

Ideally, if it were possible, we ought to move toward the suggestion made by UMTA's Richard Page—i.e., block grant concepts, where designated recipients (depending on need) in urban metropolitan areas could receive funding for highways and public transit and the states would administer the rural operating and capital development program. Such action would try to get away from simply having all categories under highway, highway safety, bridge programs, or public transit. It is sufficient to say that the only real first step slated for 1978 in transportation will be dealt with as much as possible in at least one piece of legislation.

At present many categories exist under one bill. A federal bureaucrat tends to administer only that category assigned to a specific agency. What are you gaining by consolidating all categories in one bill?

I think we gain something because such action indicates to the highway people, who have controlled and dominated the legislation for a long time, that there are at least a few other priorities to be considered. On the surface, that may look like a small achievement, but it is not. Introducing public transit only in the House or Senate would probably mean that legislation would never get sufficient votes for passage.

How far would you go in tying sewer and housing policies to transit policy? Would you suggest actively promoting higher density in housing and the location of public housing? Would you support transit ridership? Do you have some specific ideas?

That is a very sensitive area and one that will require a great deal of leadership. We will have to learn how to get a decision maker to be creative. But it is important. We need a transportation impact statement relating to housing policy and sewer policy. Those who are making decisions about housing grants ought to relate them to a transportation investment. Those who are making the investment in sewers ought to recognize where they are putting that sewer. If we allow existing policy, we are giving tax incentives for out-migration of industry. We are subsidizing the dispersal of people and the break-up of farmlands, and we will be continuing in the next 50 years to form suburbs and exurbs at the present accelerated rate.

We are going to find ourselves using up natural resources, as well as a great deal of energy, time, and commitment. It would be much more appropriate for us in the early 1980s and 1990s to begin developing a positive response to the quality of life in all areas; there must be a limit to the amount of sewer construction that can occur and to the amount of out dispersal. At the moment, we are decreasing our birth rate and our work force. A determined effort is necessary to ensure that the quality of life within the urbanized setting is secure and sensitive. This does not mean destroying rural America or small-town America; but, given the direction in which we have moved over the last 50 to 75 years, we run the risk within a relatively short time of cementing ourselves from border to border, of allowing ourselves to be

highway oriented, which has aided in the out-migration of people, and, then, of burying ourselves in cement.

I frequently ask: How can we develop life-styles and quality-of-life statements within communities? The answers are not going to be easy. Housing, sewer, zoning, and Internal Revenue Service officials are not going to like the answers. Nevertheless, we need to move in these directions.

Would it be appropriate to merge the Urban Mass Transportation Administration and the Federal Highway Administration?

I think it will be, eventually. But I do not think that we can do it legislatively unless we get strong backing from the President, the Secretary of Transportation, UMTA, and

FHWA. Otherwise, such a merger would be impossible.

Since national urban policy does impact and interact with rural policy, would it be more helpful and useful to consider that topic jointly in terms of a national settlement policy specifically contemplating these interactions? Or is that going to compound the problem?

Ideally, that is where we ought to be moving—toward looking at the totality of the problem. Realistically, the President is committed to an urban policy. Maybe the first step is to secure an urban policy that works, while recognizing that the total picture includes the whole quality of life in both rural and urban America as well as other issues that have been raised.

Public Transportation and Land Use: A Developer's Perspective

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Transit and land use impacts have had a questionable linkage. Public transportation does not work automatically as a tool to assist and enhance the viability of a city. Transit can be a very special economic development tool that cannot stand by itself but that, if coordinated with other leverage mechanisms and if tuned to the strengths of the city, can be instrumental in the rebirth of central cities. Cooperative detailed planning before the route and mode are set and a created capacity to carry out these developments through a public and private partnership are needed.

My exposure to public transportation is threefold:

1. I am usually a commuter;
2. I am a developer in an area where public transit is very important; and
3. I chaired an Urban Land Institute task force that issued a policy statement in 1974 on development policies for urban mass transit station areas.

Based on these experiences, I maintain that (a) operating an efficient transport system is a very complex task, (b) transit development can cause problems for those who try to accommodate it, and (c) there is much we do not know about effective public transportation.

I would like to give you a developer's view of public transit and some of its problems. Then I want to outline my perception of the future of the city and, within that framework, to discuss how transit can fulfill its promise.

TRANSIT EXPECTATIONS

I believe that public transit has been colored by great expectations. Maybe it would be more accurate to say too many expectations. The public's expectations from transit cover at least five areas: mobility, mass transit, relief of congestion, energy conservation, and land use.

Mobility

Mobility appears to be a key word in the transit vocabulary. Providing mobility is obviously the purpose of public transit, but for whom and why? It is meaningless to say that a system should provide mobility for everyone.

Specific groups of the population that can most effectively use the kind of mobility offered by transit need to be identified. I believe we have to be very sensitive to the economic value of mobility, and this sensitivity must be explained to the public. For example, providing mobility for the mobility disadvantaged—i.e., the young, the old, and the handicapped who have no alternative transportation—may be adequate justification for a low-capital investment system, but we need much more extensive justification for a capital-intensive system.

Mass Transit

The word "mass" in mass transit can lead us astray. For example, the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system in San Francisco is carrying only 5 percent of all peak-hour trips. The system is clearly not representative of mass transit. It also fails to meet the special needs of a very important segment of its ridership—the office and service workers in downtown San Francisco. They do not want to end up downtown still some blocks from their final destinations. My feeling is that commuters to downtown San Francisco would have been much happier with a system limited to the highly congested central area but with more frequent access points within that area. The automobile and the bus are today's mass transit vehicles; they will be for a long time. Despite energy costs, I believe the automobile will remain the overwhelming transportation choice for most Americans. Its advantages for most trips in terms of comfort, convenience, and time saved are significant.

Congestion

I tend to agree with Sumner Meyers of the Institute of Public Administration in Washington, D.C., who says there is little evidence that peak-hour highway congestion can be relieved by transit. There seems to be an unwritten law that, if an area has the basic economic vitality to attract and generate a high volume of trips, available street and highway systems will be used to full capacity no matter what the alternatives. There will always be enough people who prefer to use and