

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT THE FUNCTIONING OF URBAN OFF-STREET MOTOR VEHICLE TERMINALS

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SYNOPSIS

The author urges a realistic approach to the terminal facility program, especially for the congested downtown areas of large cities. He feels that it is time to stop talking and writing too much about types and physical functions of parking facilities as such, and to find out how to get the facilities built where they can function most effectively.

Mr. Lovejoy mentions the powerful influence of terminal facilities on the pattern of urban highway transportation. He stresses the community of interests to be considered in relation to the functioning of terminals, detailing them under five principal headings —(1) the city as a whole, (2) the downtown business, store, theatre, bank, etc, (3) mass transportation facilities, (4) parkers of automobiles; (5) private parking enterprise. As examples of the straight-forward approach to the solution of the urban parking terminal problem, the paper contemplates the use of municipal credit to get cheap money, and the taking of property for terminals by condemnation.

It is pointed out that already about 15 States have passed statewide enabling legislation allowing the use of condemnation proceedings in obtaining sites for off-street terminal facilities, while about 15 other States have similar legislation applicable to specific cities, towns, or counties. Thus it becomes evident that there is considerable experience and plenty of inclination to accord parking facilities special legislative attention. Of still more interest to the author is an observable trend toward the placing of terminal facilities under a separate agency or a separate division of an existing governmental agency, for establishment, regulation or control.

Assurance is given that present-day methods and techniques of determining terminal facility requirements in cities are very reliable, so that a parking agency can make accurate determinations to guide its course. The two important questions to be answered by an agency are these.—(1) how can parking terminals function to the benefit of a whole community? (2) how can a program be implemented that will bring these beneficial functions into play?

Perhaps the best way of explaining just what functional characteristics of motor vehicle terminals I should like to talk about here today, will be to tell the kind of functions I shall not discuss. I shall leave out, the purely physical functioning of parking facilities as such, and try to bring into clearer perspective the primarily important characteristics of terminals through which must come the coordination of a community of interests, wherein lies in very truth the solution of each municipal parking problem, in the broad interest of the whole community.

There is no denying that the establishment of suitable terminal facility programs must express the coordination of a variety of interests. Indeed, the multiplicity of interests involved and the individual and personal characters of

many of these interests, makes difficult a wide public appreciation of the true place occupied by terminals in respect to the whole of municipal highway transportation.

I believe it would not be found far out of the way to say, that among nine out of ten automobile owners the solution of the terminal problem lies in the answer to the question—"where am I going to be able to park my car?" Terminal facilities are thought of too often simply in terms of spaces for cars, or trucks, or busses. The real questions are these, first how can parking terminals function to the benefit of a community, and secondly how can a program be implemented that will bring these beneficial functions into play.

Functionally the parking facility exercises a very powerful influence upon the pattern of

urban highway transportation. Looming biggest, probably, among the causes for this influence are the locations of parking facility sites in reference to the purposes of trips by parkers; and the schedules of parking rates. Terminals may thus be made to function so as to attract short-time business or the shopper-parker, and on the other hand to discourage the use of facilities by the all-day employee-parker, who might be expected to reach his job by mass transportation.

Admittedly the ownership of an automobile carries with it no inherent right or priority to the occupancy of parking space anywhere. If, however, the owner or operator of the automobile is able and willing to pay a fair price for the occupancy of parking space, in a downtown business and shopping center for example, it presumably should be made available to him; that is, if the classification of the automobile as a necessity of life by the Bureau of Labor Statistics is correct. If for any reason the needed parking facility is not available, because of construction cost or lack of proper site for instance, then should come into play a method of coordinating the community of interests mentioned before, so that the desire of the parker, the advantage of the business house or department store, the preservation of urban property values, the interest possibly of private parking enterprise can all be adjusted in relation to each other, and the functioning of terminal parking facilities be rendered effective.

Well, what does all this mean? It means first that it is time for us to contemplate a straight-forward approach to the solution of the municipal off-street terminal problem, and on the basis of coordinating the community of interests concerned. It may mean utilizing municipal credit to get cheap money, it may mean some relatively small loss of taxes, it may mean taking property by condemnation. There is nothing so terrible about all this, is there, considering the objective.

Would you be surprised to learn that laws are already on the statute books of about 15 States authorizing the use of condemnation proceedings in connection with the taking of land for off-street parking-facilities, and for other purposes related to the erection, regulation and operation of these facilities? These laws are State-wide in effect. There is also another series of enabling acts in about 15

other States, applicable to specified cities, towns, counties, and so on. Lastly there is a third class of special laws covering parking facilities as to zoning, special tax districts, and various types of specific regulations. There is, therefore, considerable experience and plenty of inclination already exhibited in many States to accord parking facilities special legislative attention, and still more interesting there is beginning to be an observable trend toward the plan of placing terminal facilities under a separate agency or perhaps a separate division of an existing governmental agency for establishment, regulation or control.

I feel that I am not too far out on a limb in taking the position that the positive approach toward the working out of the municipal terminal facility program should come under a separate agency or division of the city government. To have terminal facilities function as they must to get the results we want in our large cities, it is essential that facility programs be developed, regulated, and controlled by some agency of government which can devote itself wholly to the task, complicated and all-absorbing as it is. That is the only way it seems to me whereby the ever present community of interests can effectively be harmonized in the interest of the community as a whole.

There have been so many failures, so much unsuccessful operation of so-called terminal facilities all over the country, that the men who put their money into these undertakings as well as the parkers who used them must want to know why. The explanation lies in this,—that there were no accurate, scientific analyses made of the parking demand to be anticipated, based on ascertainable data regarding land uses, and the travel habits of the people in respect to their use of the various forms of highway transportation. Without this information to begin with, no real solution of the intricate parking problem either with or without a parking agency can be attained. And there is this to remember, for instance, that the data and values obtained in Philadelphia in reaching a solution of the problem there will not necessarily fit conditions in Seattle. Complete studies are essential in each community.

How much nearer are we than we used to be in the good old hit or miss parking days, to techniques and methods of analysis of data

available to a municipal parking agency, which will guide it to accurate conclusions in making provision for adequate terminal facilities. The answer is—ininitely nearer!—in procedure, in practice, in a fund of already assembled information.

In view of this, the parking agency or division of the city government can go ahead with a feeling of confidence in its work of developing a program of terminal facilities capable of functioning as coordinators of the community of interests, of which the following are typical objectives:

1. *City as a whole*
 - a. elimination of much street traffic congestion, and freeing of the traffic flow,
 - b. reduction of traffic hazards caused by congestion;
 - c. speeding of fire apparatus and other emergency services through the streets;
 - d. stabilization or even enhancement of property values and tax levels in congested sections;
 - e. prevention of disintegration and scattering of principal business and shopping centers
2. *The downtown business, store, theatre, bank, hotel*
 - a. provision of terminal off-street space at suitable rates, in the right locations, as determined by parking demands generated by land uses;
 - b. establishment of parking rate schedules, which will encourage the use and turn-over of space by the short-time business or shopper parker.
3. *Mass transportation facilities:*
 - a. establishment of parking rate schedules at levels which will be unattractive to the all-day worker or employee parker in the downtown congested section,
 - b. reduction in the volume of traffic on streets in the congested areas of cities carrying mass transportation facilities
4. *Parkers of automobiles in downtown areas of cities*
 - a. more convenient location of parking facilities,
 - b. establishment of proper parking rate schedules for desired results,
 - c. improved, regulated operation of parking facilities to insure the unimpairment of vehicles parked

5. *Private parking enterprise*

- a. opportunity perhaps to lease municipally owned terminal facility sites in the right locations for a long period of years,
- b. opportunity perhaps to buy municipally owned terminal facility sites in the right locations at right prices;
- c. opportunity to lease as concessions municipally owned parking facilities

Please do not imagine I think cities are all alike, or that every big city requiring a full-time parking agency should proceed to erect its quota of off-street parking terminals. Every encouragement should be extended private enterprise to build and operate facilities, and where large new structures such as office buildings or stores are to be erected in the congested areas of cities, the matter of off-street parking might best be worked out satisfactorily in advance either by statute or agreement. It is to be expected that from now on municipalities will more and more require off-street loading and unloading of merchandise, freight classification and the like, and that over-the-road trucks or intercity busses will operate through terminals outside the most congested parts of cities.

All I am saying is that our cities ought vigorously to push toward, first an accurate analysis of parking terminal requirements, and secondly an orderly effort through a specifically designated agency to correlate the various factors involved. Ultimately it seems to me, parking agencies in big cities will regulate and control all motor vehicle terminal facilities in the interest of public convenience and necessity, because there are aspects of terminals which closely resemble those of public utilities, hence may finally demand similar control.

Whatever the future, however, may bring in progress let us not fail to look the present situation in the face, recognizing that:

we have not foreseen nor provided against the great increase of parking demand in urban centers,
private enterprise has not kept pace with terminal needs,
we have to deal with relatively fixed patterns often of narrow streets, which cannot cheaply be widened;
land values are too high and the right sites frequently unavailable to private enterprise for parking terminals:

private enterprise alone may not be able to find cheap enough money for off-street terminals, because of previous records of failures or low returns from ill-advised investments in terminals.

The Union Square garage in San Francisco represents a realistic approach to a solution of the terminal parking problem, wherein the city made the site in Union Square available at a token rental of only \$5,000 a year, and where the financing was done with private funds from enterprises benefited by the facility, together with Reconstruction Finance Corporation money. In 25 years, however, when this money is all paid back out of garage earnings, the garage will be turned over to the City of San Francisco becoming then a wholly

owned municipal facility. A plan has been advanced in Detroit for the construction of off-street parking space under Washington Boulevard. But it is not necessary to go underground, I cite these cases simply as examples of forthright action against the parking problem.

There is wanted almost everywhere a broader public understanding of the real functions performed in a municipal community by the right kind of parking terminals, in the right places, to obtain the most effective utilization of urban highway transportation in the community interest. The job of educating the public on the subject of parking terminals might well be the first assignment of the parking agency.

APPLICATION OF ORIGIN AND DESTINATION TRAFFIC DATA IN PLANNING HIGHWAY FACILITIES FOR GREATER KANSAS CITY

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SYNOPSIS

The Origin and Destination Traffic Survey of Greater Kansas City was a joint activity of the Public Roads Administration, the State Highway Departments of Kansas and Missouri and the two Kansas Cities

The data relate to 260,000 daily transit passenger trips, internal movements of 198,000 automobiles and 76,000 trucks and 63,000 external automobile trips.

Segregation of various types of trips was necessary to facilitate study. The heavier movements indicate generally the pattern of major desire lines with the intermediate and lighter movements showing a dispersal to all zones. Combined major desire lines emphasize the importance of radial and cross town movements

With these data population distribution can be related to employment in major business and industrial areas. The patterns of the residence location of workers in these areas of major employment discloses much information of value in highway and transit planning.

Relating the 1944 mode of travel to pre-war or post-war conditions shows that 21 per cent of future potential passenger car trips represent transit passengers during the war who stated they would be using their own private means of conveyance when restrictions on new cars, tires and gasoline were terminated. Some of these and 13 per cent of potential passenger car drivers who were automobile passengers might be transit passengers if given improved and faster transit service. Also, mid town sections have many workers in central business districts and adjacent sections who might be reached with modernized transit service.

The large passenger car volumes anticipated on sections of proposed urban express highways show that provision for mass transportation vehicles should be incorporated in the design of express highways if vehicle volumes are to be