

## FEATURE ARTICLES



### THE ROCKVILLE CONFERENCE—

### Key to Needed Transportation Research

#### INTRODUCTION

In these days when improving the total social system is recognized as the goal for practically every government endeavor and when every governmental function is seen to be part of a larger system, the research community quite properly finds it necessary to examine research programs from a broad systems point of view. In transportation research such examination is needed more than ever because of the increasing magnitude and complexity of the problems, because of keen competition for insufficient research funds, and because the likely ten-fold increase in such funds in the near future will bring more careful review from administrators of the cost-effectiveness situation in each research program.

Consequently, researchers in transportation and elsewhere are seeking a dialogue with administrators in order that they may more effectively address the real problems that are being faced by administrators today as well as those that can be seen over the horizon. In recent years there have been many improvements in communication between administrators and researchers. Yet, to date, the exercise can hardly be said to be fully satisfactory. Some researchers still concern themselves with problems of relatively little importance and some administrators still fail to insist that useful findings from research be translated into practice without inordinate delay.

A unique opportunity to look into the minds of administrators is afforded by the following account of a "Joint Conference on the Future Highway Role" held in June 1967 near Rockville, Maryland. Those present were not trying to identify research needs; rather, they were concerned with the future role of highways. The conference included state and local government administrators—those who build highways and those involved with their administration and operation. Co-sponsors were the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators, the American Association of State Highway Officials, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Association of Counties, and the National League of Cities. The Automotive Safety Foundation served as conference coordinator.

The purpose of the conference was to provide a forum for frank, informal discussion of the future role of highway transportation in light of changing concepts and the creation of the new Department of Transportation and the problems among governmental agencies at all levels.

No findings or resolutions were sought. No proceedings were published. The following highlights of the joint conference were published by the Automot-