

# The Values of Urban Transportation Policy

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Although the subject of this Conference is transportation and community values, this paper concentrates on national policy. Permit me to explain why.

I came to my current interest in the politics of urban transportation from studies of the politics of city planning (1). Conventional city planning is regulatory. It strives to discipline and channel the initiatives of others, but it is not itself a source of energy or capital. I had become convinced that regulatory planning could rarely have a substantial impact on American urban development. For reasons deeply rooted in American culture and governmental structure, contests between public regulators and private investors generally culminated in the triumph of the latter.

Public investment seemed to have a much greater potential for shaping urban development. By far the most massive and influential public investments of the moment were those in the field of transportation, most notably the Interstate Highway System. And so I turned to the study of urban transportation policy.

To one fresh from the study of relatively impotent regulatory planning, the most striking things about the Interstate Highway program were (a) the boldness of its plans, which were only mildly constrained by existing land-use patterns, and (b) the regularity with which they were implemented as proposed. It was quickly apparent that these features were products of the funding system. Local governments had never, so far as I could ascertain, used their own resources to drive new highways through developed neighborhoods. Only the advent of 90 percent federal aid had induced states to do so. And the availability of 100 percent federal-state aid had tipped the balance of nearly all local political systems in favor of letting it be done.

This is an observation about American local politics, not about the desirability or popularity of the Interstate program. But it is an absolutely vital point, and it goes far toward explaining why I have focused my research on national policy.

The tendency of American local government is to be conventional in its thought, timid in its action. Particularly where the need to tax is combined with controversy about the proposed expenditure, the instinct of local officials is to opt for inaction. Is local government responsive to demands by the poor? It depends on the issue. Local authorities have done little to redistribute resources, and contend that they can do no more. The reasons they cite include tax competition and the fact that rich and poor are typically in different jurisdictions. But local government is in general very responsive to neighborhood groups, rich or poor, that want to veto proposed programs. This is particularly true at the metropolitan level, where central authority is lacking and most autonomous local jurisdictions themselves look like neighborhoods.

It is worth noting in this connection that most Americans still live in relatively small jurisdictions. In 1960 only 22 percent of the national population lived in jurisdictions larger than 250,000. One who lives in a jurisdiction this size or smaller can exercise a great deal of "veto" influence if he seems to speak for several hundred people. This is a substantial source of grievance in big-city neighborhoods whose objections to highway proposals have been overridden. They believe that a similar number of objectors would have prevailed in the typical suburban jurisdiction, and that official local government support would have enabled them at least to bargain effectively with the state highway department.

When these big-city neighborhoods are black, their grievance is particularly intense, because it is tied up with so many other grievances, and because the concentration of blacks in central cities is widely perceived as a product of discrimination rather than

free choice. (This is not to say that the central cities with large black populations would have built freeways in the absence of federal aid. Given their density and their financial straits, they would have been particularly unlikely to do so.)

It is precisely because the forces for inaction on large-scale and controversial matters are so strong at the local level that state and federal initiative so frequently seem warranted. I am far from opposed to such initiative, but I am extremely interested in the development of grant-in-aid approaches that make innovative and large-scale projects possible, yet are sufficiently flexible to accommodate varying local needs and desires. It is possible for federal and state aid to invigorate local government rather than to supplant it. But this requires the most careful discrimination between those aspects of policy that require federal or state uniformity and those that can safely be varied in response to local preferences.

The vital point to keep in mind is that the structure of choice has a profound impact on the substance of what is chosen. The economist James Buchanan wrote a marvelous article some years back in which he compared the sorts of choices people make in the market with those they make in politics (2). In the market choice situation, he argued, they choose from among the goods and services presently available; they take the overall framework of choice for granted; they assume that their choices will have no impact on the behavior of others; and they express their personal consumption tastes. In the voting booth, they are more inclined to consider what might be, to evaluate the system that shapes the opportunities of individuals, to think about their willingness to bear a portion of the cost of collective endeavors, and to express their values. Similarly, many students of political representation have noted that the same electorate will choose very differently using different electoral procedures: e.g., parliamentary vs presidential system, at-large vs district elections, single member vs multi-member districts, gerrymandered vs equal and compact districts.

All of this is extremely relevant to transportation policy. Highway engineers are fond of saying that the existing federal aid highway program is the product of Congressional decision; therefore, it reflects the democratic will. This is true insofar as it goes, but it does not go nearly far enough. It neglects considering alternative ways in which the public will can receive expression, even within the American political system as currently structured.

If one really cares about the vigor of local government and the expression of community values in transportation policy-making, he will be led to ask such questions as the following: What would happen if the voters of each state were offered a choice between four or five different levels of highway spending and taxation in periodic referenda? What share would highways get if the federal government aggregated all its current aid programs and distributed the sums involved as block grants to the states and localities? How widely would the share vary from state to state, and SMSA to SMSA? Alternatively, what would happen if the federal government aggregated its transportation aid programs and invited the states to come in with investment proposals—the federal share to be the same (say, one-half) for all approved investments? What if the same invitation were extended to metropolitan councils of governments? To cities?

To ask these questions is to recognize that today's transportation plans are products of a structure of choice, not simply of the democratic will. This structure may or may not require alteration, but it should not be taken for granted. There is a need for constant re-evaluation of its adequacy, particularly with reference to the question: Does national policy leave sufficient scope for state and local preferences to make themselves felt?

Let us turn now to the subject of participation. Some administrators deride citizen participation because they have seen it operate only negatively—i.e., with the aim of vetoing projects. In part this is because highway agencies have made little effort to enlist citizen involvement in their positive planning efforts. But in large part, let us agree, it is because the average citizen can be activated politically only by a severe and immediate threat.

This should suggest something to us. If we value participation, and if most citizen participation is reactive to perceived threats, we should be anything but contemptuous

of "negative" participation. On the contrary, I would argue that it constitutes the very heart of modern democracy. Most initiative in each sector of policy belongs to men who work full time within it. The system's democratic aspect lies in its mechanisms for enabling aroused "amateurs" to constrain them.

The tendency of citizen participation to be negative, then, is anything but peculiar to the highway program. Individuals do not relish being trampled in the name of progress. We may compare the resistance of neighborhood groups to highways with the resistance of labor unions to technological innovations that appear to threaten jobs. Every union in America is oriented toward achieving some control over the rate of innovation, so that its members will not be victimized by the technological forces that are changing this society's skill requirements at a fantastic rate. Neighborhoods do not organize as systematically, but when threatened their reactions are similar.

There are special reasons, of course, why government should be compassionate in its dealings with the victims of its projects. First, the public expects it to set standards of ethical behavior for other institutions to emulate. Second, the government has the power to compel. Private developers cannot force unwilling property owners to sell; thus, they often fail to obtain the land they want, or do so only by paying exorbitant prices to the more reluctant sellers. Those in the path of public projects cannot gain much by holding out individually, but they can in some circumstances gain a great deal by mobilizing politically.

Until the advent of large-scale urban renewal and of the Interstate program in the 1950's, the exercise of eminent domain in densely settled areas was minor in scale. It typically involved a few properties here, a few there—for schools, fire stations, etc. Thus, it is only in the last 10 to 15 years that the politics of resistance to public land taking has become a salient feature of the urban scene. As the largest taker, the highway program has naturally become the central focus of this political activity.

In considering the response of highway agencies to community protests, it is worth keeping their history in mind. Their clientele prior to enactment of the Interstate program was almost exclusively rural. They developed their philosophies, styles, and procedures without ever experiencing significant relocation controversies. Then, in the mid-1950's, they were propelled massively and suddenly by political decision into the urban arena. A few stray intellectuals issued warnings that driving highways through cities would prove quite another matter from driving them through the countryside; but it takes more than a few articles to alter the character of settled institutions. No key political leaders heeded these warnings, so it is hardly surprising that the operating levels ignored them.

The normal thing in America is for each public institution to reflect the values and interests of its regular constituents. Controversy arises when new constituents are encountered who insist that their values and interests be accorded great weight. The first instinct of every institution is to resist such demands. They are perceived both as threatening (at very least, to its mission as currently defined) and as contrary to right reason.

We in the academic community are confronted by the challenge of new constituencies no less than are highway agencies. At the University of Wisconsin, for example, the administration and the state legislature have been resisting black student demands for the establishment of a black studies program. Recently the black students have emphasized that the University already has a Scandinavian studies program. This latter was authorized by the legislature decades ago, apparently without controversy. The legislators were well-accustomed to expressing the values of their constituents of Scandinavian descent.

Examining controversies generated by new constituent groups in the field of urban transportation these past several years, I have increasingly become persuaded that efforts to pinpoint blame are fruitless. What is worthwhile is to ask: What are the most promising potential paths to reconciliation?

We have never been a crude majoritarian society. Our leaders have been oriented toward reconciling minorities, toward persuading them that a conscientious effort was being made to balance their legitimate interests against those of the majority. They

have recognized that social stability and peace depend on achieving a near-universal consensus on the basic decency of the system. This has become more and more important as we have become an urban industrial society—i. e., one so complex in its patterns of interdependence that it is susceptible to being paralyzed by the acts of tiny minorities (a dismal fact whose rate of application seems to be steeply accelerating).

Keeping this tradition in mind, I would suggest that the main plausible strategies of reconciliation in the field of urban transport are the following: (a) within the framework of current national policy, increasing the use of side-payments (e. g., replacement housing, highway depression, joint development) to enhance the palatability of highway projects to neighborhoods in their paths; (b) also within the current framework, increasing opportunities for local citizens to impress their views upon decision-makers; and (c) changing national policy to offer much wider scope for the imaginative use of side-payments and for the expression of local values in transportation planning.

I have chosen in this paper to focus on the third strategy. I hope that these introductory pages have explained my reasons for doing so. In brief, they are (a) my belief that the root cause of unrest in the field of urban transportation is the rigidity of national policy and (b) my collateral judgment that the national interest—in social peace, citizen satisfaction, and efficient transportation—would be better served by a policy that left a great many more choices to the state and local political processes.

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In the nation's more densely settled cities and suburbs, the highway program is in trouble. The charges against it have become so familiar that it should suffice here to identify them with brief phrases: unresponsiveness to the diverse needs and desires of its clients, inattention to external effects, resistance to meaningful participation by personnel other than highway engineers in the decision process.

By way of rebuttal, it is frequently noted that the program has been anything but static. Each of the charges is substantially less valid today than it was five or eight years ago. A plausible case can be made that efforts to conciliate the critics have gone too far, resulting in frequent paralysis rather than more praiseworthy action.

It is certainly true (a) that the spirit of resentment in threatened neighborhoods has spread, (b) that their capacity to organize, recruit allies, and secure favorable publicity has flowered, and (c) that the scope of their demands has widened, even as—and rather more rapidly than—the program has adjusted. To some, this merely illustrates that concessions are self-defeating: for every critic mollified, five more are energized. To others, including myself, the lesson is that even more rapid adjustment is called for.

The issue, needless to say, is one of value trade-offs. So I shall not try to demonstrate here that one or the other position is the correct one, either for any particular "here and now" or for all times and places.

What I shall do, rather, is to suggest a number of means by which federal policy in the field of urban transportation might be rendered substantially less vulnerable to the charges—without unduly reducing the potential for action. Is this feasible? In one sense, of course, the answer hinges on one's definition of "unduly". There are few ways, it would seem, to increase program flexibility, planning comprehensiveness, and democratic responsiveness without also increasing costs and delays. But we shall also explore an alternative hypothesis: That this is so only with respect to direct costs and the short run; that with respect to the overall societal costs and the longer run (several years and up) precisely the reverse is often true. The latter, it will become clear, is my own position.

I would add that the total resource base for urban transportation programs is likely to be greater if their support coalition includes the cities than if they are alienated from it. High appropriations are the products of widespread intense support plus the absence of serious opposition. In the 1950's, when appropriations for highways made their "great leap forward", the nation's big cities were squarely behind them. Their enthusiastic support may not have been vital, but their vigorous opposition could well have

proved fatal. The program is today too well established to be in danger of immediate curtailment. But over the years it may find itself in increasing trouble if it cannot be implemented in those portions of the country where traffic congestion is most severe. At the very least, increases will be much harder to obtain than they might otherwise be. Those concerned about priorities for national action will be looking elsewhere. They will probably, in fact, be examining the problems of the central cities, to see what their most urgent needs appear to be. Agencies and programs toward which the cities are hostile will be unlikely candidates for favorable attention.

What, then, are the steps that merit serious consideration as we seek (a) better to adapt federal urban transportation policy to the varying priorities of the nation's diverse urban areas and socioeconomic groups, and (b) to maximize political support for urban transportation investment? The issues are large, and will be with us for many years to come. Thus, I shall not be deterred by the present unfeasibility of some of the ideas that strike me as worthwhile.

Let me begin by noting that the policies of the leading in the Department of Transportation can make a tremendous amount of difference. If they give high priority to the values of democratic responsiveness and broad local option, the career bureaucracies will follow—though often less than instantaneously. But unless they do, none of the recommendations that follow will make much difference. The career bureaucracies can go either way, toward stubborn insistence that the old program priorities and procedures for dealing with critics are good enough, or toward creative political adaptation. They contain both strains in abundance, often coexisting uneasily within the same individual. Which will prevail will be primarily a function of the leadership they receive. At least so I judge.

The key policy directions that I wish to explore are the following: (a) that the systems of highway and transit finance be combined, if not totally then at least sufficiently to permit wide variations in the modal investment balance to fit diverse local circumstances; (b) that the highway program itself become far more flexible in the kinds of projects eligible for support; (c) that serious experimentation with street use pricing in highly congested areas be encouraged; (d) that the urban design concept team and multiple-purpose corridor development ideas be much more widely applied; and (e) that those in the path of new highways be regularly offered a greater planning role and (especially if they are poor) more generous compensation.

The items on this list, of course, vary considerably in the extent to which they involve fundamental changes in current law and practice as opposed to the extension of recent trends and pilot efforts. What unites them is their importance. In the sections that follow, I shall sketch the lines of argument that have led me to these proposals, and suggest more concretely what they might mean in practice. To conserve time and space, I shall omit the usual qualifiers. Let it be clear, however, that my purpose is to stimulate consideration of some general ideas, not to proclaim any hard-and-fast positions.

#### IMPROVING THE BALANCE BETWEEN HIGHWAY AND INVESTMENT

Federal aid for urban highways dates from 1944, has been massive since 1956, and currently totals over \$2 billion annually. Federal mass transit aid, by contrast, dates essentially from 1964, and totals only \$175 million a year currently. The upshot is (a) that the backlog of unmet transit needs is far greater than that of highway needs, and (b) that the current federal aid pattern tends toward widening the gap each year.

Since these may be viewed as fighting words, let me make a few things clear. First, by "transit" I mean everything from taxis, job jitneys, and carpools to rail rapid transit.

Second, I firmly believe that the future of transit lies with systems that utilize cars and buses, particularly those that can supply door-to-door service on demand. I see a strong case for improving the quality of the rail transit systems we already have in half a dozen cities, and for extending the lines in some cases. But the case for new rail transit systems strikes me as singularly weak.

Third, I recognize that transit presently carries only about one-fifth of all commutation trips in the nation's SMSA's and under one-tenth of non-commutation

trips.<sup>1</sup> I do not expect these percentages to grow. Neither do I consider their continued decline over the next several decades inevitable. I am struck by the fact that transit quality is far, far below what is technically possible at quite reasonable cost. I am struck also by the fact that most highway construction after completion of the Interstate System will be justifiable almost solely in terms of rush-hour needs. (This is not to deny that some new highway construction would be a pleasant luxury in the absence of rush-hour demand. But even today there is surely no congestion "crisis" in off-peak hours.) Yet in densely built-up areas new highway construction will often be politically unfeasible, and where highways can be built in such areas they will generally involve immense subsidies to rush-hour commuters from other drivers.

Finally, I am struck by what seems to me a moral imperative. In the course of opting for an automotive civilization, which provides unprecedented mobility for those who can take full advantage of it, the national majority has chosen to ignore the problems it creates for those who cannot. In the automotive era, there are fewer and fewer desired destinations that one can reach by walking or conventional transit. Declining patronage, moreover, has led to the absolute decline of transit, further disadvantaging those still dependent upon it. I do not believe that we can recreate the compact city or do a very great deal to revive conventional transit. But it seems to me that we do have an obligation to those unable to get around by car.<sup>2</sup> The answer in various situations may be dial-a-bus, subsidized taxi fares, or even subsidized car ownership. But it seems only fair that highway users should bear part of the cost.

There is no question but that at present the immense disparity between highway and transit funding has a distorting effect on state and local decision-making. As is frequently remarked, given a transportation "problem", state and local officials typically feel that the choice is between a highway "solution" at virtually no cost to state and local taxpayers (actually a large profit, if one considers the multiplier effects of the federal spending share) or a transit "solution" almost entirely at state and local expense. Again, this is not to deny that the bulk of urban transportation investment should continue to go into highways, but it is to explain why the current preponderance is even greater than it ought to be, and greater than it would be if the federal aid structure were less biased and rigid.

The problem of highway-transit coordination, as far as I can see, is not essentially, or even significantly, one of squabbling bureaucrats. Where mass transit funds are available, highway, transit, and land-use planners tend to relate rather well. Rights-of-way are shared, crossovers built, and stations, parking lots, and interchanges integrated. The key obstacle to coordination in practice is the lack, frequently, of anything for the highway planners to coordinate with.

One method of dealing with the disparity would be simply to increase the level of mass transit funding. A reasonable goal if this route were chosen would be a program level 35 to 40 percent of the level of urban highway aid for a "catch-up" decade, 20 to 25 percent thereafter.

I do not see the President recommending or Congress voting such appropriations from the general fund, however. Nor do I believe that the current overall level of urban transportation aid (highway and transit combined) is unduly low. The problem is allocational inflexibility, not resource inadequacy.

A first step toward remedying this situation would be to secure authorization for the Secretary of Transportation to approve state applications to use part of their highway

<sup>1</sup>Surprisingly, official figures on the modal split of trips for other than commutation purposes have never been published. About three-quarters of all person trips fall into this "residual" category. I have elsewhere estimated, on the basis of a sampling of recent transportation studies, that the transit share of metropolitan non-commutation trips is 7 to 10 percent (3).

<sup>2</sup>This group, it should be noted, is quite large indeed. In 1964, 12.9 million U.S. households (23 percent) did not own a car. Roughly half of these were in the central cities of SMSA's, where they constituted 35 percent of all households. Of the 9.9 million households with incomes under \$3,000, 46 percent had no car. Of the 5.5 million households headed by persons over the age of 65, 48 percent had no car. The transit interest is a minority, then, but a larger minority than, say, Negroes or farmers. And in urban sections built up prior to World War II, it is a very large minority indeed.

aid apportionments for transit purposes. The aim of broadening the Secretary's discretion would be to enable local needs and political preferences to play a greater role in determining the relative emphasis placed in each SMSA on transit as opposed to highway investment. Most SMSA's would have no desire to divert resources from highway-building to transit, but those that did would be encouraged to develop their ideas for submission as a formal proposal—first to state officials, then to the Department of Transportation. An application to the federal department would have to emanate from an appropriate state agency (where one existed, the state department of transportation). It would require endorsement by the representative metropolitan council designated by the Bureau of the Budget for Section 204 review.<sup>3</sup> Such a procedure would ensure that diversion occurred only where the top responsible state and local decision-makers were agreed as to its desirability.

The very term "diversion" is a hot potato, of course, but I would argue that it is also a red herring. The central point to keep in mind is that the whole system of highway finance is a political construct. Though the system is self-supporting overall, federal revenues are not distributed to the states proportionately to collections, nor have the states ever distributed them so to local units. It is also worth recalling that the level of national investment in highways, and of user charges, has been set by political decision rather than consumer choice in the market place. The Clay Committee, which recommended the Interstate program to President Eisenhower, judged that only 8,500 of the 41,000 highway miles proposed could possibly pay for themselves in tolls. Five thousand of these miles had already been built or were under construction by the states. The Highway Trust Fund has not reimbursed the states involved for their initiative. Thus, the real Interstate program involved 36,000 miles (the Highway Act of 1968 added 1,500 more, for a total of 37,500), less than 10 percent of which could have been financed out of the "farebox".

Moreover, decisions as to what are proper charges against the system of highway financing are necessarily political. Over the years, the definition of such charges has progressively broadened, particularly in connection with (a) compensating individuals and businesses dislocated by highway construction; (b) selecting routes that conform with land-use planning objectives; and (c) designing highways so as to please aesthetically, and so as to minimize their blighting effect on adjacent land uses. Nor would any review of the ways in which highway user payments are being directed by public policy to purposes other than simple "traffic service" be complete if it ignored the trend toward requiring motor-vehicle owners to purchase liability insurance, safety equipment, specified maintenance services, and pollution control devices, whether they wish to or not.

The drift of history, then, is already very strongly toward placing highway policy within a broad urban planning framework. Perhaps it is not an unthinkable projection to imagine Congress approving a plan for combining highways and transit within a single system of urban transportation finance. The decisive argument against the expenditure of highway user revenues on transit has always been political: automotive and highway interests would not stand for it.<sup>4</sup> If their attitudes are different, however, or their

<sup>3</sup> I.e., Section 204 of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 (PL 89-754). It provides for area-wide review—by a single general-purpose planning agency—of nearly all applications for federal public works aid by jurisdictions that lie within metropolitan areas. The area-wide planning agency must, wherever possible, be part of a general-purpose metropolitan government or regional council of elected officials. Most of the designated review agencies are county governments (in single-county metropolitan areas), state governments (predominantly on behalf of small SMSA's), and councils of elected officials (particularly in the large multi-county SMSA's). Parenthetically, I would contend that all state applications for aid to projects (highway included) within SMSA's should also be subject to Section 204 review.

<sup>4</sup> There is also a "moral" argument, but it hardly stands up under close scrutiny. What is the moral difference between one highway user subsidizing another and one transportation system user subsidizing another? Small-town and rural highway users have been subsidized by their urban brethren on quite a handsome scale for the past half-century. These subsidies have been justified in terms of the poverty and special transportation needs of rural people. The arguments have been extraordinarily similar to those made in support of transit subsidies. What has differed has been the organized power of the intended beneficiaries.

relative power is less, in half a dozen or several dozen metropolitan areas, there would not seem to be any national interest in preventing diversion. Quite the contrary.

With this in mind, I hope that eventually we shall witness a transformation (at least with respect to intra-urban travel) of the Highway Trust Fund into a combined Highway-Transit Trust Fund. This would permit the system of cross-subsidies that now operates within the highway program to operate within a broader sphere. (To have any chance of being salable, of course, this policy would have to require that a portion of all transit fares on non-highway modes be paid into the Highway-Transit Trust Fund. Alternatively, non-highway transit modes might be excluded from support out of Fund revenues. I would consider this regrettable but, as noted above, less than crippling.) This is, quite obviously, not a reform for tomorrow, but it does lay bare the destination toward which I think we should be moving.

#### INCREASED FLEXIBILITY IN THE TYPES OF HIGHWAY INVESTMENT PERMITTED IN THE FEDERAL AID HIGHWAY PROGRAM

This and the following section are basically extensions of the previous one. The premise is that, particularly in built-up areas, where land for new highway construction is extremely expensive (in both dollar and social terms), there is a critical need for improved "discipline" in the use of society's existing highway investment. It is, further, that traffic flow should be conceived in terms of people rather than vehicles—a proposition whose practical implication is that multi-person vehicles should be given priority whenever it is possible to discriminate in a congested traffic stream.

These ideas are now widely accepted by thoughtful highway engineers, but they merit vastly greater emphasis in practice.

That there is already movement in the directions indicated is suggested by the history of the federal TOPICS program (Traffic Operations Program to Increase Capacity and Safety), inaugurated on a pilot basis in February 1967. It provides that, in urban areas with more than 5,000 population, federal highway funds can be spent on traffic control as well as construction projects. Previously, traffic control investments could be included as part of the overall design of construction projects (so long as they constituted only a small fraction of total project cost), but they could not be financed separately. Even streets outside the federal aid system are eligible for TOPICS aid.

Among the types of improvements that have been specified as eligible for TOPICS support are development of separate transit lanes and signals; provision of shelters at transit stops; installation of traffic surveillance and control systems to make traffic signals responsive to traffic conditions and, inter alia, to provide separate bus lane controls; and development of truck loading and unloading facilities where this will improve traffic management.

The Highway Act of 1968 gave official recognition to this program for the first time, and allocated \$200 million a year for two years to it. Another \$50 million a year were reserved for fringe parking facilities planned in conjunction with transit investments. These provisions went through Congress without difficulty in spite of expectations on the part of some informed observers that they would arouse a furor.

These programs are still quite limited in the overall context of urban highway aid. Some believe that they must remain so. I believe that they are susceptible of very substantial extension, particularly in our older cities. To fulfill their potential, however, they ought to include the following:

1. Major research and demonstration efforts aimed at upgrading traffic control technology, particularly with an eye toward systems that can give priority to multi-person vehicles;
2. Bus as well as truck terminals;
3. The communications and dispatching systems required to make demand-actuated road transit (otherwise known as dial-a-bus) a reality;
4. Operating expenditures for traffic control personnel (a traffic cop can often do more to alleviate congestion than a major fixed facility whose annual interest and amortization cost would pay his salary several times over); and
5. Research and demonstration work on street use pricing.



The last of these is both so controversial and so vitally important that I shall devote the next section entirely to it. By way of concluding this one, let me say that I believe the TOPICS program should eventually become redundant. Funds allotted for urban highways should be available for construction, reconstruction, and TOPICS-type projects without statutory restriction.

### STREET USE PRICING

There is growing recognition that in and around urban core areas, no feasible amount of highway investment can decongest peak-hour traffic. Moreover, the subsidization of each person-trip by automobile in such areas tends to be extremely great. The justification for street use pricing in such a circumstance is twofold: (a) to secure efficient use of a major societal investment, and (b) to make rapid movement possible for rich and poor alike. As William Vickrey has noted, "Sometimes a facility becomes worthless precisely because it is free. . . . More generally, wherever congestion is likely to occur in the absence of pricing, a facility will be worthless as a free facility than if subjected to an appropriate level of toll." In effect, street use "fares" would constitute a surcharge on regular highway user tax payments, levied selectively in accord with the extraordinary cost of providing service at particular times and places, and the impossibility of providing good service to anyone at such times and places in the absence of restrictions upon demand.

The view is frequently put forth that street use pricing would discriminate against the poor. This is sheer poppycock. Everyone would benefit from the decongestion, but the main beneficiaries would be those currently dependent on transit. Their travel times would be greatly reduced. There would be no reason for their fares to rise, since it would make no sense to charge transit vehicles for congested area street use. Even if the charges were levied against transit vehicles, increased transit patronage would probably permit holding the fare line and increasing the frequency of service. Those sufficiently affluent to continue driving would also receive benefits, but they would have to pay for them. Their payments might be placed in a special fund reserved for the further improvement of circulation within the street use toll zones.

Street use pricing would probably make all of the rail transit systems now under consideration appear ludicrous. It has been pointed out that one year's interest charge on the proposed District of Columbia subway system could buy more buses than the number of transit cars that the system will operate. If rapid bus movement over the District of Columbia streets were possible, this would be an overwhelming argument against the subway system. With street use pricing (or some other system of rationing access to central area streets, at least during peak hours), rapid bus movement would be possible. Thus, the cost of the ideological aversion to pricing can be extremely high. It is particularly hard to understand in view of the following:

1. Transit, which the poor do use, is not free;
2. No one has ever argued that automobiles should be free;
3. The trust fund method of financing is generally defended by highway program supporters as being in accord with the American market system, in which as many goods and services as possible are paid for by their users; and
4. Highway cost-benefit studies are regularly used to justify highway proposals on market grounds.

I do have some hypotheses about the origins of the anti-pricing ideology, but they need not detain us here. What is vital is that we move beyond it, not that we explain its roots in the issues and technologies of an earlier period.

Given the strength of political resistance to street use pricing and the need for substantial development work before it becomes a cost-effective option in numerous situations, I am proposing for the moment only that priority be given to research and demonstration efforts. The development of improved technologies for levying street use tolls without impeding traffic flow, and of a body of literature on street use pricing demonstrations, might gradually affect public attitudes.

## TEAM PLANNING, MULTIPLE PURPOSE DEVELOPMENT, GREATER CITIZEN PARTICIPATION, AND MORE GENEROUS COMPENSATION

Having gone on at such length in the previous sections, I shall endeavor to be very brief here. In fact, I shall say nothing further at all about team planning and multiple-purpose development except to make explicit that I recognize they cost money and that outside the most densely settled areas the plausible supplementary purposes to "traffic service" do not involve exploitation of air rights. What they do involve is a wide variety of amenity values, ranging from pollution and noise abatement to beautification and the provision of usable open space. Many highway officials are sympathetic to these values, but their main professional mission (quite properly) is to improve traffic service. I cast no aspersions when I say that it makes no more sense to entrust transportation planning to one profession than national security planning.

With respect to citizen participation, the issue is one of serving conflicting priorities. No formula can suffice as a guide; the need is rather for sensitive and compassionate political judgment. First, there is the need for transportation facilities to serve an extremely mobile population, which desires that the transportation network be integrated at least on a metropolitan scale. On the other hand, a democracy must permit those whose lives are to be disrupted by a public works project the right to express their views in an open forum with all the facts before them. As noted previously, moreover, even in terms of "rational" planning it is essential to provide mechanisms for bringing a wide range of values to bear on functional decision processes. Under the best of circumstances, it is difficult to serve and preserve fragile human values with massive public works projects.

The problem is further compounded by the question of the proper federal role. Should the Department of Transportation stand in judgment when city and state officials are at odds, or when a city government has ruled against the objections of neighborhood groups within its constituency?

I have no firm view on where the ultimate proper balance may lie. I feel certain, however, that to date there has been insufficient opportunity for meaningful citizen involvement. In this spirit, I wish heartily to go on record as supporting the currently controversial "two-hearing" regulation, and to make clear that I view it as an intermediate step, by no means the end of the road. It does not remove authority from the hands of responsible officials. But it does force them to listen, and to give aggrieved citizens the satisfaction of responding with reasoned arguments to their views. Certainly, it is burdensome to sit and listen to garrulous protestors, and to have to go on public record with reasoned explanations of one's judgments, but that is what democracy is all about.

In the current activist climate, I would add, a high priority placed on demonstrating to citizens that their views are taken seriously can help rather than hinder program implementation. Attempts to bowl protestors over no longer work. They lead instead to political stalemate, occasionally to civil disorder. It is painful but vital to recognize that in our past preoccupation with the "costs" of democracy we have frequently taken the "benefits" of social peace and satisfaction for granted.

Turning to principles of compensation, the place to begin is by calling attention to the following landmark provisions of the 1968 Highway Act:

1. That resident home owners shall be paid up to \$5,000 above fair market value where this is necessary to enable them to purchase fully comparable replacement property;
2. That renters shall be paid up to \$1,500 where necessary to achieve the same objective (the payment may be used to subsidize rent for up to two years, or as part of a home purchase down payment);
3. That property owners shall be reimbursed for all expenses incidental to the sale (e.g., transfer taxes, penalty costs for mortgage prepayment);
4. That individuals and businesses displaced by a highway project may elect to receive actual reasonable moving expenses (no arbitrary limit);

5. That displaced businesses (unless they are members of chains) may be paid up to \$5,000 for loss of neighborhood patronage and good will;

6. That each state shall provide relocation advisory assistance to those displaced; and

7. That all payments shall be made promptly, even (where necessary to avert hardship) in advance.

These are certainly the most important kinds of requirements that were needed, and that I would have called for a year ago. If they are vigorously and evenly enforced throughout the nation, most of the steam should depart the relocation issue.

At the same time, I should like to make two further suggestions. First, I would argue that a government-wide mechanism should be developed for paying compensatory damages to households and business proprietors dislocated by federally aided public works projects—of any kind, not just highways—more than once in, say, 20 years. The sum paid should be enough to mollify low-income people for the inconvenience to which they have been put in the interest of progress (as defined by the larger society). An appropriate scale of payments might be something like the following: \$500 for the first household member, \$250 for the second, \$100 for each additional. Business proprietors might be paid a flat \$2,500. These payments would be over and above those required to secure comparable quarters in other locations for the individuals concerned. Needless to say, eligibility in each case would depend on having occupied the premises prior to announcement that they were slated for demolition. (On the other side, public agencies should be prepared to acquire property within a year after any such announcement.)

Second, I would urge a similar provision to discourage the taking of historic sites and public open space. The 1968 Highway Act laudably forbids the taking of such land unless (a) "there is no feasible and prudent alternative" and (b) all possible care is taken to minimize harm to it. The language is necessarily vague, and it does not specify principles of compensation for use where the conditions are met. I would add, consequently, that when public open space is taken, the price should be the cost of its replacement in a comparable setting. If inner city parkland is taken, inner city parkland should be created. When historic sites are taken, I would urge that the price be their development value, assuming the most permissive possible zoning. The excess of the price paid over market value should be placed in special state or local funds reserved for the acquisition of other historic sites and/or public open space.

Before concluding this section, I should like to call attention to the recent Century Freeway experience in the Watts district of Los Angeles. It constitutes a fine illustration of the directions in which I think we should be moving with respect both to citizen participation and to principles of compensation.

The community role in developing both the corridor alignment and highway design was extremely active. The state Division of Highways negotiated seriously with community leaders (continuously, not merely at public hearings), and developed technical analyses of their suggestions. Fortunately, the community, in which a great deal of organizing had occurred subsequent to the 1965 riot, was relatively well-prepared to exploit the opportunity. When it came to the final choice between two plausible corridor alignment proposals, the California Highway Commission chose the one favored by the community over that preferred by the Highway Division staff, thereby incurring substantial additional expense. Agreements were also reached regarding the roles of black contractors and workers in the development process. With respect to these matters, the citizen participation and "compensation" issues were clearly inseparable.

In addition, the Highway Commission (fully supported, let it be noted, by Governor Reagan) stipulated that no resident would be left worse off as a result of the project either financially or with respect to the quality of his housing. To fulfill this promise, it was agreed that highway money would be spent to develop replacement housing on scattered sites. Homeowners were to be left in the same equity and monthly payment positions as before, renters with the same rents.

I do not contend that such elaborate arrangements are appropriate in every case. But where those to be displaced are poor, and particularly where they are also members

of minority groups that suffer housing and job discrimination, the case for applying the Century Freeway precedents should be considered very seriously indeed.

If time and space had permitted, there are a number of other topics that I would have very much liked to discuss, mainly having to do with citizen participation. These include (a) the use of polling and other "outreach" techniques to solicit citizen views during the network and corridor planning stages; (b) the allocation of resources to support advocacy planning on behalf of substantial groups with an interest in generating alternatives to highway department proposals; (c) the use of advisory panels of community leaders, advocate planners, and others with views quite different from those prevailing in the halls of officialdom to interact with the highway department staff on a regular basis throughout the planning process; and (d) the requirement of special procedures or majorities (e.g., in Section 204 review, which I have previously argued should be applied to highway projects) to override localities that object to proposed highway projects within their borders.

In concluding, let us return to the theme with which we began. In the nation's more densely settled cities and suburbs, the highway program is in trouble. Fairness, efficiency, and prudence, I have contended, all point toward accommodating rather than heaping scorn upon the critics. I have identified and reviewed the case for those few program adaptations that strike me as deserving of highest priority. Doubtless others, working through the same exercise, will arrive at different judgments. This does not disturb me. What is vital is that large numbers of those with policy responsibility begin to take fresh looks at their own received dogmas, at the arguments of their critics, and at unconventional ideas just visible over the horizon of feasibility. If I have stimulated even a few to undertake or intensify this effort, my central purpose is achieved.

#### REFERENCES

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