

Informal Discussions of Selected Topics

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Speakers: James Pickford
Arthur Davis
Anthony J. Catanese
Oscar Sutermeister

The speakers focused on topics that mirrored changing priorities in transportation and land use policies as they affect governmental responsibilities at each government level. Stress was placed on emerging initiatives in the present administration for a new national policy on urban growth and development at the same time that priorities in public programs are either changing or under stress. Note was taken, for example, of a popular vote in one major eastern city that favored job stimulation over environmental regulation, while another panelist stressed that our national concern with growth problems and growth management has not allowed us to concentrate sufficiently on the problems of declining areas.

Transportation programs were seen to provide new initiatives in community building and land development, at the same time that national and state agencies were

unsure of themselves in responding to these initiatives. An example was the opportunity to create multicentered suburban activity centers that is provided by newly planned radial mass transportation systems. State governments and regional agencies were also seen to face an uncertain future as the roles allotted to them in national planning and related programs remain unclear. One panelist indicated that the role of state planning and development agencies remains unclear in an administration that apparently intends to place greater stress on regional solutions to urban problems. At the same time, regional transportation planning agencies were seen to be struggling with their new planning mandates, and some urged a review of experience to date under unified transportation planning programs.

National Land Policies and Programs Affecting Transportation: Group Discussions

Ralph Widner, Academy of Contemporary Problems, Columbus, Ohio
George T. Lathrop, John Hamburg and Associates, Inc., Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Speakers: Mortimer L. Downey
Bruce D. McDowell

U.S. Assistant Transportation Secretary Mortimer L. Downey commented on several activities in the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) including city revitalization (particularly in central cities), equalization of the city and the suburb as residential environments and as economic centers, and energy conservation.

Concerned with city revitalization and equalization of cities and suburbs, Downey urged better planning and programs to stimulate transit investments. DOT will give preference to cities that emphasize public transit (not necessarily subways); this emphasis may become a requirement for participation in some programs. Transportation priorities will shift from highway construction to maintenance and the best use possible of existing facilities. The present administration believes that the process of developing policy is as important as the policy itself.

Secretary Downey also referred to DOT's participation in the Urban Policy Task Force, which is concerned

with a solution to such problems as were highlighted by a visit President Jimmy Carter made to the South Bronx. Downey noted that people usually suggest transportation as a solution, but transportation facilities in the South Bronx already are very extensive. Also, programs of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare currently in effect in the South Bronx are inserting about \$2000 to \$3000/person into the economy annually—close to the concept of the guaranteed annual minimum wage.

Downey also noted that local motor vehicle travel consumes about 22 percent of the petroleum used in this country, that all transportation consumes about 55 percent, and that about half of the energy used for transportation is wasted. There is tremendous potential for energy conservation in transportation but little incentive. Downey urged a policy of pricing energy at its replacement cost; planning should be based on what energy will cost, not what it costs now. Plans should be made to improve energy efficiency, to reduce travel, to reduce