

You gentlemen are well aware that no city or region has a monopoly on transportation problems. Cities which were originally designed to give shelter and support for people have been redesigned to accommodate the automobile. The same machine which has served us so well in so many areas threatens to become our master unless we give new thought to the role of the automobile in a city built for people.

Let me use my own city for an example of what I mean. This is a map of the comprehensive plan of Seattle. Long and narrow, Seattle is walled in by Lake Washington on the east and Puget Sound on the west. The heavy gray area represents some of the most valuable industrial and commercial land on the west coast. This small orange rectangle is our business district. It is compact, efficient, and serves as the headquarters for much of the important business of the Pacific Northwest. It represents 17½ percent of the valuation of the city of Seattle.

The central business district is restricted by natural topography to an area eight blocks wide. With two freeways already constructed and a third one in the planning stage for this narrow corridor, it should be plain that there is no space left for additional surface transportation facilities. And highways complicate our life downtown to an intolerable degree.

Highway planners dump the traffic from 12 lanes of freeways on our streets, and we have to take care of these cars by providing distribution roads, parking and other services. We are plagued by congestion and harassed by air pollution. Roads tear out valuable taxpaying properties and encourage the dispersion of the vital business of the heart area and eventually will tend to downgrade the entire tax base of the district. According to present trends, we will have to provide an additional 27,000 parking spaces by 1985—double our present capacity. Perhaps most alarming is that the natural growth of downtown will be choked off. There is an almost predictable limit of how far and how fast it will grow before it starts to feed on itself.

Compare that situation with the benefits which we expect from an integrated transit system. First of all, a transit system will offer virtually unlimited growth and expansion to downtown, in addition to providing fast, safe, easy access to the people who work there. Each lane of transit can carry 40,000 persons an hour, in contrast to the 2,200 people who can arrive on each lane of freeway.

Where the freeway complicates downtown, a transit system would simplify the problem. It delivers its passengers almost to the office where they work. No expensive distribution system would be needed. It eliminates the parking problem and makes it easier for those people who must drive.

A transit system would add to the economic health of the city by preserving and enhancing the primary tax base of the city. Not only the downtown area would benefit from this increased value, but the areas adjacent to the transit system would be made more valuable as well.

Seattle's situation, while different in geography, is certainly no more critical than that of a dozen other cities in the Nation. While we have the advantage of being able to attack this problem before it has become totally unmanageable, we are beset with the problems of rapid growth and development of our entire region. If we are to start construction in time, we must begin planning at once.

On that point, I would like to speak of an amendment which Representative Brock Adams of Seattle has offered to the Mass Transportation Act. The amendment would provide for a most significant advance in the world which the act itself encourages. In simplest terms, the proposed amendment would permit the allocated funds to be used for detailed planning, as well as the presently authorized construction of new transit facilities.

In the terms of the limited funds which are currently available for the development of mass transit, this is the best possible way to broaden the application of the act. Construction costs for rapid transit systems are so immense that a few cities could take all the moneys allocated, and even they would not have scratched the surface of their needs.

By expanding the act to include detailed planning, many additional cities would be able to get started on solving this most pressing need. And the demands for speed are as critical as are the demands for money. Each year that passes, our problems become that much more difficult to solve. Each year that passes, the cities must turn to alternate solutions which are not only