

In an article in the February 1968 issue of our official publication, *Nation's Cities*, Mayor J. D. Braman, Seattle, Wash., chairman of the National League of Cities' Committee on Transportation, set out seven criteria for determination of the logical and efficient Federal administrative jurisdiction for the urban mass transit program and a copy of Mayor Braman's article is enclosed for the record.

These criteria were developed by the National League of Cities' Committee on Transportation. We have judged the reorganization plan by these criteria. We believe we can endorse the plan because the plan itself and preliminary policies and procedures set forth by the two Departments can, we believe, achieve our goals as stated by Mayor Braman.

Sincerely,

ALLEN E. PRITCHARD, Jr.,
Assistant Executive Director.

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URBAN TRANSPORTATION AT THE CROSSROADS—HARD DECISIONS MUST BE MADE IN WASHINGTON THIS YEAR

(By J. D. Braman)

The most casual scrutiny of our national goals raises the question of just why we, as a nation, choose to place our emphasis in one area as against another. A comparison which comes to mind is the confidence with which we are moving forward in our plans to land on another planet contrasted to our inability to agree on just how we should improve the quality of our urban environment. Reconciling this difference in attitude poses one of the more difficult tasks for any mayor or urbanologist.

A decision that we will land a man on the moon is backed up by a target date and a programmed budget. The fact that present technology is not capable of performing the task is a matter of limited concern. The dollars, the manpower, the creative genius is set in motion, and the obstacles are brushed aside one by one.

Compare this methodology with the attempts to solve social problems. Rather than a planned long-range program with adequate resources backed by a will to move mountains, we must be satisfied with government by crisis. When a problem in the metropolitan areas reaches dramatic proportions, only then do we act.

If crisis be the yardstick of action, the time has come for us to get moving again. The metropolitan areas of the United States are approaching chaos in the area of public transportation. A transportation system permitting expeditious movement of people and goods is an absolute necessity for our urban centers.

In seeking solutions to our urban transportation problems, a balance must be struck in use of the various modes of transportation that will allow each mode to make its maximum contribution to the improvement of our urban environment.

Programs in the past gave only incidental support to the important role which public mass transportation can play in a coordinated transportation program. The Urban Mass Transit Act of 1964 gave form and direction to the Federal Government's concern with the problem of how we develop a balanced transportation system for metropolitan areas. The Housing and Home Finance Administration was given responsibility for this program, properly recognizing the role of public transportation in shaping urban developments.

When the Department of Housing and Urban Development was created, the mass transit program was placed under the aegis of the Assistant Secretary for Metropolitan Development. In the years this program has been operating, lack of adequate appropriations has limited its national impact. The program has, however, acted as a stimulus to many cities and it contains the hope of better days ahead. Congress appropriated \$125 million in fiscal 1968 for the total urban mass transit program. By way of contrast, \$4.4 billion will be made available during the same period for highway construction from the highway trust fund.

The role of public mass transportation once again was reviewed by Congress when it created the Department of Transportation in 1966. President Johnson, in his 1966 message on transportation, requested that the Department of HUD and DOT recommend to him the best procedures to achieve cooperation between the respective Departments in their actions as they affect urban areas. In response, Congress again demonstrated that it recognizes the role of mass transportation as an element of urban development. When it created the Department of Transportation, Congress narrowed the Presidential request by addressing itself to the