

However, as to the proposed new Federal aid metropolitan system, the involved local government(s) should be given the opportunity of full partnership with the State highway department in selecting and initiating projects and in other decisionmaking—provided that a suitable mechanism exists and appropriate procedures are used to assure reasonable rates of progress.

There may not be a legal metropolitan government agency, but other effective mechanisms for metropolitan planning and decision-making such as councils of governments may exist or can be created. Where legal metropolitan government authority exists, it should have the main if not the sole responsibility for initiating projects in such metropolitan areas. Where no mechanism exists, consideration should be given to requiring that it be created. The increasing importance of the urban problem demands that greater participation by urban government be provided toward solutions.

URBAN-METROPOLITAN NEEDS

Prior to 1944 only quite small percentages of Federal-aid or State highway funds were used on urban projects. In 1944, Federal highway law earmarked 25 percent of Federal aid funds for use in urban areas. From 1944 to 1956 less than a third of Federal-aid highway funds were used in urban areas of 5,000 or more population. Furthermore, for many years urban governments have been able to allocate only very inadequate funds to their street improvement needs.

Yet from 1920 until now, about half of all vehicle-miles of travel have been in urban areas. And the per mile costs of urban road improvements have always been much higher than for rural areas.

In recent years, fast increasing urbanization of population has produced new attention to urban problems and has importantly shifted political power in legislatures.

There is now much more extensive realization of the importance of highway transportation to the life and economic well-being of urban communities. And there is increased acceptance of the appropriateness of much greater emphasis on, and Federal and State financial aid for, urban road needs.

In a number of cities there is also realization of the importance and value of transportation planning and attention to traffic operations—though in relatively few cities is traffic engineering given the status, support, professional manpower, and budget warranted.

The institute urges the Congress to legislate not only a new Federal aid metropolitan system but also to provide new funds solely for the TOPICS program and to make such funds available on all urban arterial streets and highways. It is urged that the amount of such funds be not less than 20 percent of Federal aid grants for highways, exclusive of interstate funds.

The institute also urges the Congress to include in such legislation the provisions which the Bureau of Public Roads included in its administrative "Guidelines for the Traffic Operations Program To Increase Capacity and Safety (TOPICS): as follows:

1. Before a TOPICS program can be approved "it must be supported by a comprehensive areawide plan for traffic operation improve-